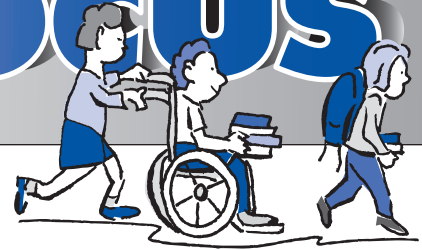


# Family Focus



For families who have a child on an IFSP or IEP and as a courtesy to families who have a child on a 504 plan for the purpose of informing and assisting parents as they participate on their child's education team.

## BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES THAT WORK AT SCHOOL, HOME, AND IN THE COMMUNITY

By: MeLinda Bisek, Building-Based Behavior Intervention Specialist

**A**s our children grow and mature, we often feel a sense of pride in the choices they make and the behaviors they demonstrate. It tells us that they are growing through their developmental milestones. Children's behaviors reflect their curiosity of life as they walk the road towards independence. Behaviors come in a myriad of forms—most of which adults consider either "appropriate or inappropriate." Since these terms can often lead to ambiguity, we may also hear that behaviors are "expected or unexpected." Sometimes we hear, "Oh, that is just who he is," or "this too shall pass" and we don't get too excited about what we are seeing or hearing. Other times, however, behaviors can cause adults and children to feel frustrated, angry, embarrassed, or just simply confused because no matter what we do for the child, it doesn't seem to make a difference. In fact, oftentimes it seems that the more we try to help the child the more intense their behavior becomes. This dance between adult and child really has no barriers. We see it in our homes, schools, and in our community. As adults, we often want to see the behaviors stop on

demand yet our children struggle with being able to quickly resolve or understand what is upsetting them.

All behavior is a form of communication. It serves as a function to either obtain something or to escape. In both situations, those things can be connected to a person's need to obtain or escape attention, to obtain or escape activities or objects, or the need to obtain or escape from sensory stimuli in one's environment. Regardless of a child's age, whether in elementary or secondary schools, we ask ourselves "What is at the core of this misbehavior and what can I do to make it better?" Unwanted behavior can usually be tied to a child's actual or perceived lack of skill to communicate a need or to demonstrate the skills necessary to complete a task. Unexpected behaviors are often masking the child's difficulties with handling frustration and emotions and not knowing how to ask for help. It may be expressing the child's difficulties with understanding expectations or knowing what to do. Finally, the unexpected behaviors may be expressing a child's lack of social understanding and how to interact

*Continued on page 2...*

## Inside this issue!

- Behavioral Strategies . . . . . 1-2, 6, 7
- Director's Corner . . . . . 3, 5
- Parent Resources . . . . . 4
- A must see video! . . . . . 8
- Did you know? ECSE . . . . . 9
- Huskies Buddies at Andover HS . . . . 10
- Adaptive Athletics . . . . . 11

If you would like a translated version of this document and/or further assistance, please contact your child's school or the Family Welcome Center (763-433-4684).

Yog koj xav tau ib qhov txhais ua lus rau daim ntawv no thiab/losyog kev pab ntxiv, thov cuag nrog koj tus menyuam lub tsev kawm ntawv los yog qhov Chaw Tos Txais Tsev Neeg (Family Welcome Center) (763-433-4684).

Si desea una versión traducida de este documento o más información, haga el favor de ponerse en contacto con la escuela de su hijo/a o el Centro de Bienvenida a la Familia (Family Welcome Center) (763-433-4684).

Haddaad u baahatid dokumiintigaan noocisa turjuman iyo/ama caawimo dheeraad ah, fadlan la xariir dugsiga ubadkaaga ama Xarunta Soodhoweynta Qoyska (Family Welcome Center) (763-433-4684).

# BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES THAT WORK AT SCHOOL, HOME, AND IN THE COMMUNITY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

with others or how to understand the perspective of others when there is a difference of opinion. So, what do we do? How can we better support a child when they are showing unwanted behaviors? How can we teach replacement behaviors or reinforce behaviors that we want a child to continue to demonstrate?

First and foremost it is important to remember that all behaviors are about communication regardless if they are positive or negative. As noted by Dr. Ross Green, "Children do well if they can. If they can't, we need to figure out why, so we can help." (The Explosive Child, 2001) Essentially, we need to identify what is causing the unexpected behaviors. We can do this by asking ourselves the following questions related to the functions of behaviors noted above:

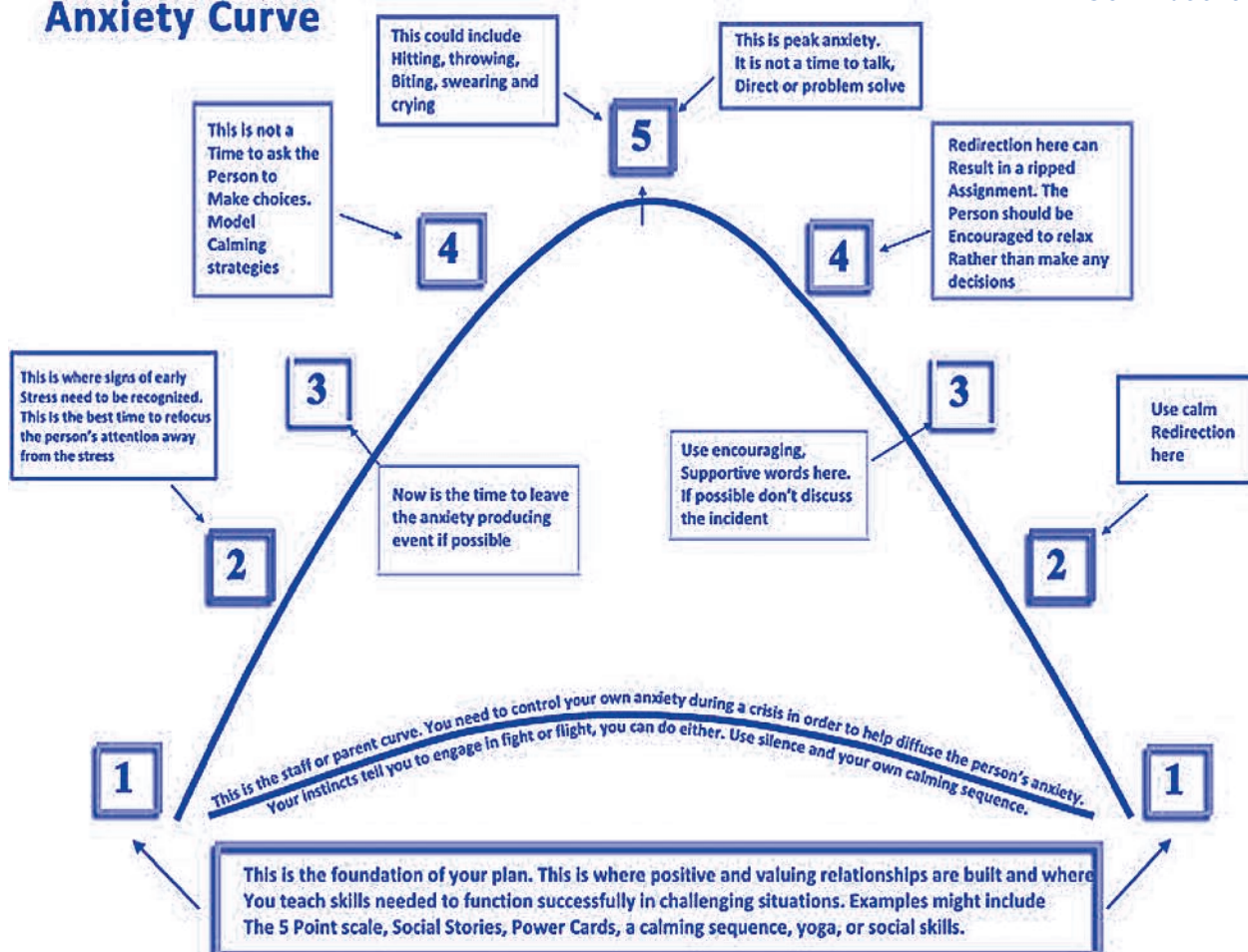
1. What happened prior to the child's behavior? (Antecedent)
2. What did the behavior look and/or sound like? (Behavior)

3. What happened after the behavior? (Consequence)

Once we identify the function of a child's unexpected behaviors, we are in a better position to teach strategies and replacement behaviors for the child. We cannot simply tell a child to do or not do something and assume that they understand the expectation. Likewise, just because a child "should" be able to understand or do a requested task does not mean that they demonstrate the skill or self-confidence to do so. This is especially true if the child has any level of cognitive, social/emotional and/or physical disability. When this is the case, effective behavior interventions will include teaching specifically to the skill deficit(s), changing the environment to be more conducive to the child's sensory needs, providing visual supports to assist the child with knowing what to do, and the adults controlling their responses to the unexpected behaviors. It is essential that there be collaboration between school staff and parents to help the child

*Continued on page 6..*

## Anxiety Curve



# DIRECTOR'S CORNER



**A**s I began thinking about writing this article I was stuck. What could I write that would have some universal appeal and still communicate something meaningful. I started to think of all the stories I have heard that brought a smile to my face or a tear to my eye. I realized that I was the lucky one because I knew so many of these stories. What could be better than sharing some of the best with you?

Anoka-Hennepin has over 37,400 students enrolled, over 5600 have been identified as meeting special education criteria. Almost 600 special education teachers and another 600 paras have devoted their days to serving these kids. At the start of April I asked staff to tell me their stories. Here are a few:

■ There are nine elementary schools with centerbase programming for students with significant cognitive delays. Both general education teachers and special education staff work very hard to include these students in their general education classrooms. Juliana is a student who spends part of her time with her fifth grade peers. Before winter break, Juliana and her other centerbase classmates built gingerbread houses. Juliana put her heart into it and created a great 3-D house. She brought it to her fifth grade classroom to share. As she showed it to her peers, one fifth grade boy smiled and began to clap. Within seconds, the rest of the class joined in. Juliana beamed and announced, "I am really good at this!" Her special education teacher shared that this was the first time she had seen Juliana show such self-pride!

■ We have all been made aware of the fact that the population of students with Autism Syndrome has continued to expand. As with many populations, the needs of the students vary greatly, however, all tend to have difficulty expressing themselves. If you do some searching on the Internet you will likely find that there are more and more stories about successes in communication through tools like Lego play. Many of the staff at our secondary schools have embraced this and are using "Lego's Build to Express" kits designed to improve social skills and communication.

On a recent school day, students at one of our middle schools were informed that one of the assistant principals had unexpectedly and tragically died the night before. Obviously this was a tough morning with both staff and students finding it difficult to process their grief. During her first hour class, the students asked one of the special education teachers if they could use the Legos. The students began to use the Legos to work out some of their thoughts and grief. As they were building, they talked about their feelings and how much they liked the assistant principal (AP). The teacher was overwhelmed by what they built. One student made the AP an angel. One had him behind a desk with a "magic wand" in his hand. When asked, the

*Continued on page 5...*

**Please Join Us!**

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meets the first Thursday of each month (October-May) at the Staff Development Center in Anoka. Dinner and networking starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting is from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Childcare available upon request, you must RSVP. Mary.Gale@anoka.k12.mn.us or 763-506-1362.

## SEAC EMAIL

To contact SEAC parent co-chairs write to:  
Dist11SEAC@yahoo.com



We welcome speaker suggestions, questions and concerns.

## Special Education Administrative Team

### Director and Assistant Director:

- Cherie Peterson -  
Director of Special Education .....763-506-1353
- Marsha Polys -  
Assistant Director of Special Education ....763-506-1359

### Special Education Supervisors:

- Jill Kenyon - Early Intervention Program/LAUNCH ..763-433-4801
- Emily Rustman -  
Early Childhood Special Education (3-5)/LAUNCH ....763-506-6101
- Kathy Ferguson - Pathways .....763-506-7601
- Lori Olson - Bridges .....763-506-7501
- Dr. Kimberly Adams -  
River Trail Learning Center/LO Jacob .....763-506-1901
- Melissa Hayes - Evaluation Team, Sandburg .....763-506-1579
- Carey Raph- River Trail LC/LO Jacob, Setting III EBD ..763-506-1976
- Erin Jensen - Secondary HS's .....763-506-1358
- Dr. Jennifer Babiracki -  
Setting III DCD (elementary) and ESY .....763-506-1367

### Special Education Teacher and Learning Specialists:

- Carol McDonald .....763-506-1351
- Kathy Steffens .....763-506-1418
- Rachel Wick .....763-506-1531

### Special Education Coordinator of Staffing and Finance:

- Darcy Doke .....763-506-1360

# CLIP & SAVE

## Special Education

### Administration Structure

If you have a concern about your child's special education program or would like to speak to one of the administrative team, please feel free to call:

**Director of Special Education:**  
Cherie Peterson .....763-506-1353

**Assistant Director of Special Education:**  
Marsha Polys .....763-506-1359

**Special Education Supervisors:**  
Jill Kenyon .....763-433-4801  
Andover, Madison, Sorteberg Early Childhood Center

Emily Rustman .....763-506-6101  
Oxbow, Johnsville, Riverview Early Childhood Center

Kathy Ferguson .....763-506-7601  
Champlin-Brooklyn Park Academy,  
Eisenhower, Hoover, Pathways

Erin Jensen .....763-506-1358  
Andover HS, Blaine HS, Champlin Park HS,  
CRHS, Anoka HS, STEP, Crossroads

Lori Olson .....763-506-7501  
Jackson MS, Northdale MS, Oakview MS,  
Roosevelt MS, Anoka MS, Coon Rapids MS,  
Bridges

Dr. Kimberly Adams ....763-506-1901  
Evergreen Park, Mississippi, River Trail  
Learning Center

Carey Raph .....763-506-1976  
Andover EBD CB Only, Crooked Lake,  
Monroe, Morris Bye, Epiphany, Evergreen,  
River Trail Learning Center

Melissa Hayes .....763-506-7921  
Franklin, McKinley, Sand Creek, University,  
Wilson, Sandburg, Eval Team

Dr. Jennifer Babiracki ...763-506-1367  
Adams, Hamilton, Sandcreek DCD CB only,  
Ramsey, Rum River, Dayton, Jefferson,  
Lincoln, CBPA DCD CB only

My Child's Casemanager is:

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

# PARENT RESOURCES...

*This section includes resources that parents may want to access depending on the needs of their child.*

## American Society of Deaf Children

800 Florida Ave. NE, #2047, Washington DC 20002  
800-942-2732 [www.deafchildren.org](http://www.deafchildren.org) [asdc@deafchildren.org](mailto:asdc@deafchildren.org)

## The ARC Greater Twin Cities

2446 University Ave. W., Suite 110, St. Paul, MN 55114  
952-920-0855 [www.arcgreatertwincities.org](http://www.arcgreatertwincities.org) [info@arcgreatertwincities.org](mailto:info@arcgreatertwincities.org)

## Autism Society of Minnesota

2380 Wycliff St., 102, St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-647-1083 [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) [info@ausm.org](mailto:info@ausm.org)

## Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

8181 Professional Place, #150, Landover, MD 20785  
800-233-4050 [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

## Children's Home Society and Family Services

1605 Eustis St., St. Paul, MN 55108  
651-646-7771 [www.chsfs.org](http://www.chsfs.org) [welcome@chsfs.org](mailto:welcome@chsfs.org)

## Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

8011 34th Ave. S., Suite 116, Bloomington, MN 55425  
651-631-3290 [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org) [minn@cff.org](mailto:minn@cff.org)

## Downs Syndrome Association of Minnesota

656 Transfer Rd., St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-603-0720 [www.dsamn.org](http://www.dsamn.org) [dsamn@dsamn.org](mailto:dsamn@dsamn.org)

## Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

1600 University Ave. W., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-287-2300 [www.efmn.org](http://www.efmn.org)

## Girl Scouts River Valleys

5601 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN 55429  
800-548-5250 [www.girlscoutsrv.org](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org)

## Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

165 Western Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55102  
800-528-4511 [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org) [info@macmh.org](mailto:info@macmh.org)

## Minnesota Organization-Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS)

1885 University Ave., Suite 395, St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-917-2370 [www.mofas.org](http://www.mofas.org) [info@mofas.org](mailto:info@mofas.org)

## Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association

1000 Westgate Dr., Suite 252, St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-290-6292 [www.msha.net](http://www.msha.net) [office@msha.net](mailto:office@msha.net)

## National Council on Disability

1331 F St. NW, #850, Washington DC 20004  
202-272-2004, TTY 202-272-2074 [www.ncd.gov](http://www.ncd.gov) [ncd@ncd.gov](mailto:ncd@ncd.gov)

## PACER

8161 Normandale Blvd., Bloomington, MN 55437  
952-838-9000, TTY 952-838-0190 [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

## Polaris-Special Needs Scouting, Northern Star Council BSA

763-231-7244 [www.polaris.nsbbsa.org](http://www.polaris.nsbbsa.org) [samberg@northernstarbsa.org](mailto:samberg@northernstarbsa.org)

## United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota

1821 University Ave. W., Suite 180N, St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-646-7588 [www.ucpmn.org](http://www.ucpmn.org) [info@ucpmn.org](mailto:info@ucpmn.org)

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

student said that he had helped him a lot with his "magic". And one student used almost all black. He positioned Lego people, bent over and crying.

Knowing how difficult we all find it to express grief in such a sudden and unexpected time, this story reinforces the work that our staff do on a daily basis. What a great way to help students express the grief they cannot get their arms around.

- Ever hear the one about... A fifth grader who was getting frustrated because his presentation wasn't going as planned. After several frustrating and unsuccessful attempts, he stopped, looked around the room and said, "I guess I'll just have to dance."
- The district has two large programs for students 18-21 with transition needs. As part of a Service Learning class, students at Bridges have partnered with a kindergarten classroom at Ramsey Elementary. The students visit once a month to play games and read to the kindergarten students. Both sets of students truly look forward to these visits.

The Bridges students have also participated with a program called "Cheerful Givers" to put together birthday bags for kids in need. They also put together a coin drive, raising almost \$650 dollars to support the birthday bag project.

- It's not always fun hitting the news but we have had some very big successes. Over the past couple years students in several of our high schools have taken it on themselves to make life better for their fellow classmates with disabilities. Early in the year a young man with Down's Syndrome was elected homecoming king. He wore his crown with pride and joy. Not to be outdone, Andover High School choose a young lady with disabilities as the Snowdaze Queen.
- A number of schools have created clubs and sponsored activities that strengthen the bond between kids. Check out one of the stories about Andover High School's Husky Buddies. The club meets monthly for about an hour and a half. Each general education student has paired up with a peer who has special education needs. The friendships have developed and buddies have acted as teen-agers should- hanging out and going to basketball games. As one of the student organizers of the club said "I don't think they ever get the chance to hang out with, and just be normal kids without the help of a teacher or a parent. You can't just go to a

basketball game by yourself, so I think this makes high school a lot more fun," <http://kstp.com/news/stories/S3705867.shtml?cat=1>

- This year students in the centerbase program at Lincoln and at Anoka Middle School have been very excited having an "artist in residence" work with them to explore their creativity with visual arts.
- It is sometimes very difficult to see the struggles that some of our students have to go through. But it is incredibly uplifting when we see a student do something they never could do before. We are at the beginning stages of a true miracle for one of our students. This little girl was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. As she gets older she gets weaker and weaker. In January of this year her mother told the IEP team about hearing about something called "Magic Arms" that she thought would help her daughter use her arms more functionally. The occupational therapist at the meeting started to do some research and found an e-mail address of a Delaware company. She sent out an e-mail asking for more information and got a phone call 10 minutes later. Unbelievably, the man calling worked with the company that makes "Wrex Arms". He happened to be in Anoka and had been trying to find a child in Minnesota that could trial the "magic arms". Things moved quickly. See a child using the Magic Arms at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoZ2BgPVtAO>

Find out more by checking the Magic Arms Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Magic-Arms-for-the-World/616804565080190>

The stories keep coming and I continue to see a common theme from staff. So many have shared that their jobs can often be stressful and challenging, but that this is balanced and often overwhelmed when they see their students overcome obstacles. When I think about special education staff I often am reminded of the quote by Forest Witcraft:

"A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

*Cherie Peterson*

Director of Special Education

## Behavioral Strategies That Work at School, Home, and in the Community Continued from page 2...

generalize new skills and replacement behaviors in multiple settings in order to increase self-regulation and independence.

A common question that parents and teachers ask is "How do I know when I should provide an intervention and what type of strategy should I use?" The key is to be proactive instead of reactive. A valuable tool to help with this is the anxiety curve and 5-Point Scale from Kari Dunn-Buron and Mitzi Curtis.

When we start to see a child's behaviors change from doing what is expected to starting to show behaviors such as work refusal, arguing, or emotional outbursts, then we know that the child's stress and anxieties are increasing. At this time it is important to reduce the expectation of the child and move him/her away from what is causing the stress. If that does not happen, the child will likely move from a Level 2-3 on the anxiety scale to a Level 4-5 which will result in a total shutdown or meltdown of some type. When this happens it takes much longer for all people involved to recover and restore the relationship.

Of course, there are many other types of strategies that both school staff and family members can implement on a daily basis to assist a child in learning to self-regulate their emotions and behaviors. Depending on the child's age will of course influence what strategies to use. The following are some very easy strategies to implement that can quickly diffuse many stressful situations:

### CALMING STRATEGIES:

- Deep breathing—Breathe in through the nose for 5 seconds, hold for 5 seconds, breathe out through the mouth for 5 seconds; repeat 5 times
- Teach the child statements she can say or think to herself when starting to feel upset: "I'm okay;" "I can do this;" "It is okay to walk away and take a break;" "I can ask my teacher for help;" "I will skip this problem and come back to it later;" etc.
- Create a climate of "Yes." Instead of saying no to the child when a request is made, say "Yes, you can \_\_\_\_\_ when you first \_\_\_\_\_;" "Yes, if \_\_\_\_\_"
- Reduce the verbal interactions when you see the child becoming stressed or upset; use gestures or written notes to communicate, when needed.

Giving the child time and space with no verbal directives can also help quickly defuse a potential outburst.

- Recognize when the child needs personal space, free from people being too close, talking too loud, etc.
- Provide positive reinforcements when observing the child demonstrating positive, expected behaviors. Specifically acknowledge the expected behavior when the child is 'trying' to do the task in order to encourage his continued efforts. ("I really appreciate how focused you are in completing your math assignment" or "I am really proud of how hard you are working at cleaning your room.")
- Use a neutral tone of voice and facial expression when the child is demonstrating unexpected behaviors. Redirect the child to the expected task by using gestures or simply stating in a calm voice, "What are you suppose to be doing?" Give the child think time to respond. Reinforce with positive a comment or nonverbal gesture/expression when he complies.
- Provide a safe space or room to calm down.

### ACADEMIC/HOME TASKS:

- Provide a clear set of expectations and rules.
- Prepare child ahead of time of any changes in his schedule or routine.
- Use visual schedules that show a child's routine throughout the day. This can also include the child's morning routine before coming to school and afternoon routine for completing homework;
- Use a visual work system that shows: a) what work do I do? b) how much of it do I need to complete? c) where do I put the work when I'm done? d) what do I do once I have completed the work? This work system can also be used to list multi-step directions so the child does not have to remember each directive.
- Simplify work tasks or expectations by using the phrase "First \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_." For children who may struggle with remembering and sequencing, include these terms using a visual as well.
- Recognize when the environment is too stimulating and make adjustments. E.g., use

*Continued on page 7..*

## Behavioral Strategies That Work at School, Home, and in the Community Continued from page 6...

more natural lighting instead of classroom lights; reduce voice volume in the room; limit amount of visual stimuli on the classroom walls or home environment; eliminate clutter in the room, etc.

- Decrease power struggles by providing simple directives, predetermined consequences and consistent rules. Refrain from verbal exchanges when people are upset or frustrated.

### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL:

- Take a specific skill deficit, break it down into small steps, and teach each individual step until the entire skill is mastered. Provide opportunities for role-playing, modeling, and practice so the child can become comfortable with the new skill. This is especially important when teaching social skills both at home and at school.
- Teach students the difference between a large problem and a small problem and how to recognize when they are possibly creating a larger problem than what is necessary. Teach

problem solving skills and strategies.

- Practice self-advocacy skills with the child in a safe, nonthreatening manner.

The process of learning skills to self-regulate our behavioral and emotional responses to experiences is a lifelong process. Fortunately, there are many people and resources available to families and children every day to provide answers to questions and support when uncertain. The goal is to remember that all behavior is communication. How we respond to that communication is the key. A quote that was recently presented from an unknown source states:

“What we sometimes see as a failure to BEHAVE properly is actually a failure to COMMUNICATE properly.”

# PROJECT POWER!

## Community Education's Special Needs Program

**F**or most of us, many of our best memories revolve around spending time with our friends. Other than family, they are the people that we rely on during both good and bad times. When high school ends, maintaining those relationships can be especially challenging for those with special needs. Project Power can help provide that link through classes and activities for adults (age 18+) with developmental disabilities. Fun social activities and learning opportunities are provided in the areas of arts and crafts, cooking, community outings, music and theatre, sports and exercise and special events. Project Power also promotes inclusion in a variety of community education

programs. We are always looking for new ideas and ways to improve our program to serve our participants.

To view current activities, check out the Anoka-Hennepin Community Education website at [www.discovercommunityed.com](http://www.discovercommunityed.com) or call 763-506-1290 to join our mailing list and receive a current copy of the Project Power catalog.



# SADDENED BY THE LOSS OF A DEAR COLLEAGUE

**N**Andover High School is extremely saddened and in disbelief by the sudden loss of our colleague, Deb Kupka, DCD Centerbased Special Education Teacher, Andover High School. The Special Education Department feels as though we have lost a part of our family and are relying on support from one another to get through this difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers are going out to Deb's family as we feel that we know them so well through our many years of working with Deb. We would so lovingly refer to her as "Cupcake" because a former student called her that by mistake. Through all of her health concerns, Deb would come to work with a positive attitude and a smile on her face. She was always striving to be a positive presence in our department and throughout our school. Even on days when she was not feeling well and felt she was being a little grumpy because of it, she would ask us, "Did I sound grumpy?" She never wanted to let the way she was feeling at times impact her co-workers or her job. She truly loved coming to work and put so much love and attention into all of her students because they meant the world to her. If you look at her school website, it states "Every day is a gift"...Deb lived this quote though her actions and attitude everyday as she entered our building. Our hearts will forever be saddened by the loss of a friend, colleague, and our special education family.



# SEAC

SEAC is a group of parents and staff within the school district working together to strengthen our Special Education Community. Everyone is welcome.



**We have two goals we'll continue next year:**

- Creating Positive Intervention Resources
- Recruiting Members for SEAC; any parents and staff within our district

SEAC meets the first Thursday of each month, October through May. Dinner and childcare are provided. Questions about SEAC can be sent to Mary Gale at [Mary.Gale@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:Mary.Gale@anoka.k12.mn.us) or 763-506-1362.

Look for your SEAC flyer to come home with your child(ren) each month. If you are not getting the SEAC flyer, please contact your child(ren)'s case manager.

## A must see video! Check it out!



**T**he committee members of SEAC, consisting of parents and special education staff, had an idea two years ago to create an educational video. The goal was for students who receive special education services to describe how it felt to have a disability that required accommodations or modifications within the classroom. A camera crew was found, willing participant identified, filming and editing

commenced, and an incredible special education advocacy video is the result. This must-see video can be found on the district webpage at: <http://anoka.k12.mn.us/Page/81>

Anoka-Hennepin  
Special Education  
Website

**There are  
a variety  
of resources  
to explore.**

**CHECK IT OUT!**

**[www.anoka.k12.mn.us/specialeducation](http://www.anoka.k12.mn.us/specialeducation)**



# DID YOU KNOW.....?

By Emily Rustman, Special Ed. Supervisor, Early Childhood Special Ed. (ECSE) (3-5),  
Janice Connelly and Rachel Maschke, ECSE (3-5) Leads

## Did you know.....?

- Anoka-Hennepin has two Early Childhood Special Education sites in the district.



- One site is located in Coon Rapids and the other is located in Brooklyn Park.
- Early Childhood Special Education services children ages birth - five years old in various home, childcare, and preschool settings.
- Early Childhood Special Education service providers include teachers, speech clinicians, occupational therapists, physical therapists, deaf/hard of hearing teachers, audiologists, nurses, and blind/vision impaired teachers.

## Our Early Childhood Special Education Mission

Anoka-Hennepin Early Childhood Special Education's mission is to collaborate with students and families to adapt to the diversity of the community where education, relationships and family matter. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) comprises all services to special education students from birth to kindergarten.

## Our Early Childhood Special Education Vision

Anoka-Hennepin Early Childhood Special Education is a community that generates a positive environment and takes the level of commitment to our students, families and staff to new heights.

## What do services for students birth to three look like?

Children with disabilities ages birth to three are serviced in their home or in

their childcare, which is the natural environment for children in that age group. For birth to age three students who are serviced in the home or within their childcare settings, service providers focus on the child and family individual routines and needs focusing on coaching caregivers and collaborating with other service providers to offer the student and their family resources to increase the student's overall progress.

## What do services for students ages three through five look like?

Children ages three through five with disabilities are serviced in a preschool classroom or in their childcare site. In the childcare and preschool settings, services are often based on play and embedded learning throughout the typical preschool routine. Early Childhood Special Education emphasizes teaching functional classroom routines and skills to prepare students for Kindergarten.

## Does the birth through five program offer any events for students or families?

Each school year, birth to age five holds a Family Fun Night at each site where families can come together to engage in various activities in the school, eat dinner together, and socialize with other families. The three through five program also holds four Celebrations throughout the year to engage students in special events and activities, such as seeing a fire truck, going sledding, participating in track and field, or celebrating I Love to Read month.

## Where can I find more information?

We have a website where you can obtain additional information about our birth through five program located at: <http://tinyurl.com/p35fbc7>



# HUSKY BUDDIES

By: Margaret Madsen - 11 grade General Education Student

I walked into the doors of Andover High School for the first day of my junior year with the mindset that it was simply going to be another year of high school; but Husky Buddies has changed this mindset for the better. I can see and even feel the difference this club has made throughout the school, from walking through the hallways to seeing these students in class, this club has worked wonders.

A seemingly simple idea came to Isaac Doppenberg and Brynna Marusic one day; more so a spur of the moment decision to create a club that no school has even "tested." In its raw form, Husky Buddies is a chance to link the general education students with the special education students; truly giving the special education students a chance to really be teenagers, which many of the adults in their lives forget that they are. This club gives them a chance to really see high school for what it is; going to sporting events with your friends, watching movies and eating way too much junk food, and dancing to today's pop hits.

Yet before these special bonds were made, many were worried that the general education students and the special education students would be shy and uncomfortable around each other, more so intimidated by the unknown. Yet, the first event of the year was full of laughter and conversation. Beyond Husky Buddy events, the bonds between the two groups of students can be seen everywhere. At lunch, for example, my friends and I sit with four of the special education students who so happen to share the same lunch hour as us. I honestly can say that the special education students and the general education students love each other. We have grown as a community because of these wonderful students. I cannot go one day without one of the Special Education students, asking me when the next Husky Buddies is. My response always is, "soon, I promise."

Amazingly, what began as a charitable way to serve the special education students, is now as meaningful to me as it is to them. The meaningful relationships that Husky Buddies has created make it hard to imagine that at one time the two groups were separate. Ultimately, these new,

unexpected friendships are what have made Husky Buddies so special. For years to come the club will blossom into something truly wonderful and will be rooted into Andover High School's club options. As for next year, Sarah Hanson and I will be taking over and have endless ideas for club activities.



# CORINNE FORE, SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER RUM RIVER ELEMENTARY



**L**ike most people who choose teaching as a profession, I love working with young people — knowing that I’m making a difference in their lives, and walking alongside them as they gain knowledge and master new skills. I enjoy watching them learn and grow, seeing their amazement and disbelief at concepts previously unimagined.

I was fortunate to have been inspired by many fantastic teachers and professors throughout my own education — whether learning to read in kindergarten, or examining the complex dynamics between student outcomes and levels of inclusion in graduate school. Those awesome educators inspired me to follow in their footsteps, to strive to teach “my own kids” that education doesn’t just open doors and opportunities, it also opens hearts and minds.

Teaching is an important, demanding, rewarding, and many days exhausting profession, but it’s so much more than that. And in special education, that’s particularly true. For me, teaching is a career with countless intangible benefits, and nowhere are those benefits clearer to me than when I’m providing individualized instruction to students with special needs. I love working to understand and mentor children with so many unique gifts and challenges. I share in their delight as they conquer their fears and successfully deliver the presentation they have worked so diligently on; I join in their disappointment when they struggle to grasp a challenging math concept.

Perhaps most importantly, though, is the way “my kids” have changed my worldview in a way I’d never have imagined. **Though I am their teacher, they’ve given me the best education of my life.**

## ADAPTED ATHLETICS FOR GRADES 7-12

By Ted Johnson, Developmental Adapted Physical Education Teacher

**A**dapted athletics is an interscholastic athletic program for students, grades 7-12 with cognitive or physical impairments. It is NOT Special Education and NOT adapted physical education. Students compete in one of two divisions, CI, for students with cognitive impairments (full scale IQ of 70 or below on the most recent evaluation) or PI, for students with diagnosed and documented physical impairments that affect motor function or gait pattern, or cardio/respiratory impairment limiting intensity and duration of physical activity.

We participate in four different sports, indoor soccer in the fall, floor hockey in the winter, and bowling or softball in the spring. Students who participate are eligible to earn varsity letters. Our district has experienced a great deal of success in all sports, most recently the PI team finished second and the CI team finished third in the Floor Hockey State Tournament. The softball season has been underway for about a month. Both teams recently participated in a pre season tournament at Robbinsdale Armstrong High School. Each team won the championship in their respective divisions and each team is currently undefeated in conference play.

One of the captains of the PI team, Ben Schmitz, is a tenth grade student at Andover High School. Ben has been involved with adapted athletics for four years playing on the PI (division for students with physical impairments) Soccer, Floor Hockey, and Softball teams.

Ben was elected to the All Tournament Team at the 2015 Minnesota State High School League State Tournament for his play as goalie. Ben’s team finished second in the tournament. Ben agreed to answer the following questions about adapted athletics in the Anoka Hennepin School District.

### How long have you been doing adapted sports?

I started playing in the program when I was in seventh grade. The 2011-2012 school year. This is now my fourth year in the program.

### What adapted sports have you been part of?

For the Anoka-Hennepin program I have participated in soccer in the fall, floor hockey in the winter and softball in the spring. I also participate in Courage Center wheelchair softball in the summer. I have been a part of this program for four years. And I am part of the MN junior wild sled hockey program in the winter. The winter of 2015 was my first year participating in this sport.

### What have you liked most about being part of adapted sports?

I enjoy the fact that anyone with a disability still has a chance to play sports and be a part of a competitive team. The state tournaments are really fun and competitive and the best part of all is the people you meet and get to be part of a team with.

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## Special Education Department

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### Adaptive Athletics Continued...

#### How has adapted sports helped you?

It has allowed me to stay physically active. It is made me more outgoing and taught me how to become a leader. I have enjoyed being a captain and leading by example on the field. I have gained new friendships.

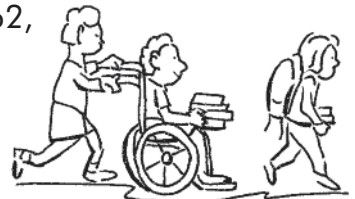
#### What would you like to tell other students about adapted sports?

If they are hesitant about joining, but really enjoy sports I would encourage them to give it a try because the adaptive sports program is very fun to be a part of. All sports are fun and different in their own ways. It is always fun to be a part of a team, you learn sportsmanship, team work and it is so much fun to play these sports.

If you would like more information about how to have your son or daughter get involved in adapted athletics, please contact us at 763-506-2437.

**T**he **Family Focus** newsletter will be mailed out approximately two times a year to Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 11 parents of students on IEP's and 504 plans.

- If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter please call 763-506-1362, leave name and complete address.
- If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please call 763-506-1362, leave name, complete address and state you do NOT want this mailing any more.



## FAQ - Email us!

In future Family Focus editions we will answer questions from our readers in the areas of school services, community services and family services. If you have a question you would like addressed email us at: **Dist11SEAC@yahoo.com**