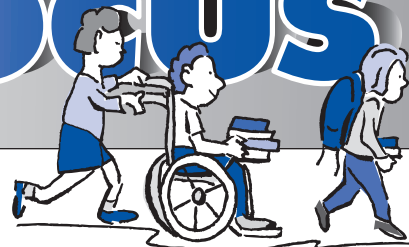


Family Focus



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.

MY SON'S JOURNEY WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

By: Angela Panning, parent

My oldest son Owen, now 11, was diagnosed with Autism when he was three years old. His greatest need continues to be speech, since it can be very difficult to understand him clearly due to his severe Apraxia. After several years of therapy, a "communication device" was suggested, since Owen was making little progress with his verbal language. But a Dynavox trial when he was five years old had inconclusive results and our insurance company refused to cover the cost of the heavy, expensive device. I honestly believed a breakthrough was coming anytime, so I just wasn't ready to give up on my son talking more.

But many years of therapy later, Owen was still struggling with his speech. More therapists and a better insurance company later, Owen tried another trial with the new, lighter Dynavox Compass that was much more successful. Working with his therapist and the Dynavox representative, Owen finally received the communication device he had needed for so long at the age of ten. While I am still on a learning curve with the device, Owen has done very well with it and has since graduated from speech!

After attending a recent SEAC meeting, where speaker Carol McDonald (Teaching and Learning Specialist, Sped, Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD)) spoke about Assistive Technology (AT), I realized that my son's journey using AT actually began much earlier and that AT includes not only devices but also services and other products that are used to improve the functional capabilities of children. As I listened to Carol, I recalled the many "tools" that his therapists and teachers had utilized, from the very first visuals or picture symbols (which I still have on



Inside this issue!

- Journey with Assistive Tech 1-2
- Keeping Children With or Without Special Needs Safe and Ready 2
- Director's Corner & Admin Phone List 3, 5
- Parent Resources & Clip and Save 4
- Adaptive Athletics 5
- HOPE for Youth & SEAC 6
- Polar Plunge CRMS and PACER Partnership - TIKES 7

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 ntiv, 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).

MY SON'S JOURNEY WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

my fridge), to the timers and social stories we used to help him adjust to changes.

Through many years of therapy, school IEP meetings, and my home coping strategies, I realized Owen had been using various levels of AT since he was first diagnosed with Autism. As he got older, I worked with his therapists and IEP teams to learn more ideas on how to help him, including using a highlighter for tracing his numbers and letters, special paper for writing, color-coding techniques, pencil grips for writing, and the use of special picture books, toys, and educational videos to help him learn new skills.

It became obvious that Owen was a "visual learner", so after quickly outgrowing the "talking picture frames", a therapist set up an iPad trial using Proloquo, which Owen had used at school before. This went well and Owen enjoyed using the iPad, but not always exclusively for communication. There were also

concerns about the Proloquo program growing with him. Even so, we invested in an iPad for Owen because he took to the technology so well and we couldn't deny the benefits of it for him, with supervision. But it wasn't until Owen received his Dynavox Compass that it really clicked for him. The Compass is similar to an iPad in size and use, yet it will be able to grow with him as his needs change.

Today, thanks to his "talker", as he calls it, Owen is able to participate in conversations and answer questions with not only his family and teachers, but also random people who he would not have been able to communicate with before. With more independence, Owen is growing up every day and loves initiating conversations with other kids now.

Thanks to Assistive Technology, my son has come out of his shell and is able to show the world the boy I always knew was there.

KEEPING CHILDREN WITH OR WITHOUT SPECIAL NEEDS SAFE AND READY

By Donald Jackson, Co-Chair, SEAC

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities is one resource for families who have children with disabilities. Donald Jackson, Co-Chair of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) found an interesting article on their website that he would like to share with you about safety and the importance of being prepared. Listed below are some important points from the article he read in which he felt were critical to know about being prepared for an emergency.

What would happen if there was an emergency that took place in your home? Having an Emergency Plan prepared ahead of time could help save your child's life and/or yours. An Emergency Plan will help prepare and guide your child in terms of knowing what to do, before it happens.

Reviewing different possible emergency situations and practicing what to do with your family member is the key for keeping safe!

One idea is to let your neighbors know your child has needs and ask if they would be willing to help your child out in case of an emergency. Write their names and phone numbers on a list and place the list on the refrigerator door or kitchen cabinet. Also outline some important information about your child's needs.

Full 2015

Hello, my name is _____

I am writing this letter to share personal information with my teachers. In many ways I am like other kids my age - we all have strengths and needs. I am sharing mine with you so you can get a better picture of my learning style.

My Strengths:

- Strength 1:
- Strength 2:
- Etc.

My Needs:

- Need 1:
- Need 2:
- Etc.

I am learning how my _____ impairment impacts my daily functioning, and also how to advocate for myself so I can manage school and life as independently as possible.

Thanks for understanding,
Student Name _____

List of Needs: On the list, provide some brief points about your child's needs. For example - what they don't like; how to talk to them (direct face to face contact), will they let you touch them; what to do if your child is scared and how to calm them down; what medication they are taking; who his/her doctor is and where they can they find their Emergency Backpack (if they own one).

Phone List: Put on your list, a phone list of people who could care for your child in case you have to go to the hospital. For example - a relative, friend, or County Case Worker.

Others topics to add to the list: What disability your child has; whether your child wears a Hearing Aid, has a Service Dog and/or uses a Walker

Emergency Backpack: The Emergency Backpack may have your child's medications, extra clothes, shoes, and/or boots, their favorite toy, or whatever they like.

You may also decide to add some water, snacks, a whistle, garbage bags, working flashlight, radio, batteries of all sizes, etc.

Some other items you may want to add may be a copy of your insurance and ID card, cash, notebook and pen. Put your emergency backpack where it's easy to get to in case you have to leave your house fast.

Resource: Minnesota Governors Council on Developmental Disabilities website.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



A Over our recent winter break I was thinking about the work that we do in special education and realized that many in the community may have no idea of the services we provide. Anoka-Hennepin serves over 38,000 students. Approximately 14% of these students meet one of Minnesota's 13 disability categories and are served under an Independent Educational Plan. The scope of our services extend from meeting the needs of infants and toddlers in their home through our Early Intervention Program through services to students in transition programs after they leave high school.

Early Intervention Program: Last year we served over 450 babies and toddlers in their home or day cares. Children are referred to the program through a variety of sources including families, doctors or other community members.

Early Childhood Special Education Program: Children ages three to five are served in a variety of sites including day care settings, Head Start, Community Education sites and both Riverview and Sorteberg Early Childhood centers. Last year we served approximately 550 students.

K-12 Special Education Programs: The majority of our students with special education needs receive services in their neighborhood schools. Some students require a higher level of support through our center based programs. The district has clustered students with higher level needs at schools located in different geographical regions.

STARS Programs for students with significant developmental cognitive delays: The district has nine elementary programs, as well as programs in each of our secondary schools. The programs use "Structured Teaching and Related Strategies" to address the functional and academic needs of the learners.

EBD Programs for students with significant emotional-behavioral disorders: The district currently has center base programs in three elementary schools and two of our middle schools. These programs are designed to meet the emotional/behavioral needs of these learners while they support their academic instruction.

LAUNCH Programs for Learners with Autism and other unique Challenges: The district also has programs at three elementary schools as well as two middle schools.

Center base programming for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: The district has seen a significant shift in this population over the past 10-15 years. In the past there were center base programs at all levels, but with the increasing use of Cochlear Implants we have seen the needs of this population shift. At this time the district serves students who have significant hearing disabilities at one of the district elementary and middle schools.

River Trail Learning Center: River Trail serves students with significant Emotional/Behavioral Disorders or those with significant mental health issues. This program services students K-12.

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: mary.gale@anoka.k12.mn.us

We welcome speaker suggestions, questions and concerns.

Special Education Administrative Team

Director and Assistant Director:

- Cherie Peterson -
Director of Special Education763-506-1353
- Marsha Polys - Assistant Director of Special Education
and LAUNCH763-506-1359

Special Education Supervisors:

- Jill Kenyon - Early Intervention Program, Andover Elementary,
Madison, Oxbow Creek763-433-4801
- Emily Rustman - Early Childhood Special Education (3-5)
and Johnsville763-506-6101
- Kathy Ferguson - Pathways, Andover HS,
BHS and CPHS763-506-7601
- Lori Olson - Bridges, AMS, CRMS, JMS, NMS,
OVMS and RMS763-506-7501
- Erin Jensen - River Trail Learning Center/LO Jacob, Compass, AHRHS,
AHTHS, STEP and Step Ahead763-506-1901
- Heather Johnson - River Trail Learning Center/LO Jacob,
AHS and CRHS763-506-1920
- Melissa Hayes - Evaluation Team, Sandburg,
Franklin and Wilson763-506-1579
- Carey Raph- Setting III EBD, Crooked Lake, Eisenhower,
Epiphany, Evergreen, McKinley, Mississippi, Monroe, Morris Bye,
and University763-506-1358
- Dr. Jennifer Babiracki - ESY, Adams, CBPA, Dayton, Hamilton,
Jefferson, Lincoln, Ramsey, Rum River, Sand Creek ...763-506-1367

Special Education Teacher and Learning Specialists:

- Carol McDonald763-506-1351
- Kathy Steffens763-506-1418
- Rachel Wick763-506-1531

Special Education Coordinator of Staffing and Finance:

- Darcy Duke763-506-1360

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 Peterson763-506-1353

Assistant Director of Special Education:
Marsha Polys763-506-1359

Special Education Supervisors:
Jill Kenyon763-433-4801
Andover, Madison, Sorteberg Early Childhood Center, Oxbow

Emily Rustman763-506-6101
Johnsville, Riverview Early Childhood Center

Kathy Ferguson763-506-7601
Andover HS, BHS, CPHS, Pathways

Erin Jensen763-506-1901
River Trail Learning Center/LO Jacob, Compass, AHRHS, AHTHS, STEP, Step Ahead

Lori Olson763-506-7501
Jackson MS, Northdale MS, Oakview MS, Roosevelt MS, Anoka MS, Coon Rapids MS, Bridges

Heather Johnson763-506-1920
River Trail Learning Center, AHS, CRHS

Carey Raph763-506-1358
Crooked Lake, Monroe, Morris Bye, Epiphany, Evergreen, Eisenhower, McKinley, Mississippi, University

Melissa Hayes763-506-7921
Franklin, Wilson, Sandburg, Eval Team

Dr. Jennifer Babiracki ...763-506-1367
Adams, Hamilton, Ramsey, Rum River, Dayton, Jefferson, Lincoln, CBPA, Sand Creek

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 asdc@deafchildren.org

The ARC Greater Twin Cities

2446 University Ave. W., Suite 110, St. Paul, MN 55114
952-920-0855 www.arcgreatertwincities.org info@arcgreatertwincities.org

Autism Society of Minnesota

2380 Wycliff St., 102, St. Paul, MN 55114
651-647-1083 www.ausm.org info@ausm.org

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

8181 Professional Place, #150, Landover, MD 20785
800-233-4050 www.chadd.org

Children's Home Society and Family Services

1605 Eustis St., St. Paul, MN 55108
651-646-7771 www.chsfs.org welcome@chsfs.org

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

8011 34th Ave. S., Suite 116, Bloomington, MN 55425
651-631-3290 www.cff.org minn@cff.org

Downs Syndrome Association of Minnesota

656 Transfer Rd., St. Paul, MN 55114
651-603-0720 www.dsamn.org dsamn@dsamn.org

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

1600 University Ave. W., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55104
651-287-2300 www.efmn.org

Girl Scouts River Valleys

5601 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN 55429
800-548-5250 www.girlscoutsrv.org

Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

165 Western Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55102
800-528-4511 www.macmh.org info@macmh.org

Minnesota Organization-Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS)

1885 University Ave., Suite 395, St. Paul, MN 55104
651-917-2370 www.mofas.org info@mofas.org

Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association

1000 Westgate Dr., Suite 252, St. Paul, MN 55114
651-290-6292 www.msha.net 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 ncd@ncd.gov

PACER

8161 Normandale Blvd., Bloomington, MN 55437
952-838-9000, TTY 952-838-0190 www.pacer.org

Polaris-Special Needs Scouting, Northern Star Council BSA

763-231-7244 www.polaris.nsbbsa.org samberg@northernstarbsa.org

United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota

1821 University Ave. W., Suite 180N, St. Paul, MN 55104
651-646-7588 www.ucpmn.org info@ucpmn.org

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Transition Programs: The district has two programs that serve students who are ages 18-21:

Bridges programming offers functional and vocational focus on the acquisition of skills necessary for increased independence in the community through continual learning. Students at Bridges are likely to need some type of continued living and employment support.

Pathways is a secondary special education program designed to offer life skills and vocational training to assist students in gaining the skills necessary for independence within the community.

The Anoka-Hennepin Special Education Program shares the mission and vision of the district "It is the primary mission of the Anoka-Hennepin School District to effectively educate each of our students for success."

To fulfill this mission, the special education department is accountable to:

- Providing a caring, highly trained and effective staff that use research-based best practices.
- Providing learning opportunities that meet the individual learning needs of each student.
- Monitoring student achievement to maximize each student's learning.
- Promoting high achievement for all students.
- Acknowledging parents' roles as their children's primary educators and partnering with them to increase student success.
- Improving connections with the community to foster public involvement with and understanding of our educational programs.
- Providing a safe and respectful learning environment.
- Using all resources efficiently and effectively.

We value the involvement of the community, especially the parents and family of our learners with special education needs. We are also here to serve you.

Cherie Peterson
Director of Special Education

ADAPTED ATHLETICS

By: Kim Peschong

A Adapted Athletics is an Interscholastic Athletic Program for students seventh through 12th grade.

Students compete in one of two divisions - CI or PI. The CI Division is for students with cognitive impairments, while the PI Division is for students with physical impairments.

Congratulations to the Anoka - Hennepin Mustangs! This Fall the PI Division took the state soccer championships, while the CI Division placed third. In Spring 2015, the PI Division took the softball state championship!

For more information on Adapted Athletics:

CI team

Soccer, hockey and softball: Bill Newell at 763-506-2438 or bill.newell@anoka.k12.mn.us

Bowling: Reina Weir at 763-506-2442 or reina.weir@anoka.k12.mn.us

PI team

Soccer and hockey: Sue Opat at 763-506-4933 or suzanne.opat@anoka.k12.mn.us

Softball: Pete Kutches at 763-506-8550 or pete.kutches@anoka.k12.mn.us

Bowling: Jody Wahl at 763-506-5681 or jody.wahl@anoka.k12.mn.us



A huge thanks goes out to coaches, parents and supporters!

HOPE (HOMELESS OUTREACH PREVENTION EDUCATION)

By: Anoka-Hennepin Schools, Karrie Schaaf

The HOPE (Homeless Outreach Prevention Education) office is a department within the Anoka-Hennepin School District that offers assistance to students and families in transition, experiencing homelessness and/or those at risk of housing instability.

Our main focus is to connect students and families with community resources and appropriate supports. This encompasses a variety of resources addressing needs related to food, clothing, shelter, emergency financial assistance and employment.

Our department has three primary functions.

1) Identify students experiencing homelessness as directed by McKinney-Vento, the federal law that protects a student's educational rights and educational stability, and provide community and staff training on McKinney-Vento and the identification of students experiencing homelessness.

Karrie Schaaf (763) 433-4685

2) Connect with McKinney Vento identified students and families to discuss basic needs and provide resources to support basic needs,



housing stability, school transportation and educational supports.

Maralynn Kubacki (763) 433-4686

3) Refer students and families to community resources and support district staff in finding resources that support students and families, and collaborate with community partners to increase basic need support for students and families.

Staci Martin (763) 433-4695

The HOPE office works in collaboration with one another and numerous community partners to support Anoka-Hennepin students and their families.

The HOPE office provides McKinney-Vento training to district staff and offers community events to increase awareness around students and families experiencing homelessness.

For more information about the HOPE Office, visit the Anoka Hennepin website at: www.anoka.k12.mn.us

Select: Departments → State and Federal Programs → Resources for Families → Homeless Outreach Prevention Education (HOPE Office)

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 three goals we'll continue next year:

- Increasing Anoka-Hennepin staff involvement with the committee
- Gathering Parent Input about SEAC through a Parent Survey
- Developing and Distributing two Family Focus Newsletters

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 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.



CRMS POLAR PLUNGE

Coon Rapids Middle School has plunged into frozen waters for 4 straight years. Participating in the Special Olympics Polar Plunge, they have raised a total of \$25,051.35 for Special Olympics. The past two years CRMS was able to register for the Give Back Get Unified fundraiser offered by Polar Plunge. This means that teams receive 35% of the funds they raise, up to \$3,500. The money goes directly back to the school's special education department. In 2014, CRMS Special Education received a check for \$3,304 and in 2015 a check for \$1,800. Their goal this year is to raise \$10,000 in donations. The CRMS jump team consists of participants from Administration, secretaries, teachers, paras, custodians and friends/family of those participating. They always welcome new jumpers or donations!



Anoka Hennepin's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Partnership with PACER

By: Jill Kenyon, Special Education Supervisor

Anoka Hennepin's ECSE Program is one of three ECSE programs in the state of Minnesota paired with PACER on a project called TIKES. TIKES stands for Technology to Improve Kids' Educational Success. TIKES is a five-year project, which began in 2013 and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the project is to help parents and teachers maximize the use of Assistive Technology (AT) by children with disabilities ages birth to 5.

All families currently in the ECSE program have the opportunity to participate in TIKES. By participating in the project you have the ability to attend free parent workshops on a variety of assistive technology topics, have individual or group consultations for your child and receive one-on-one training on technology tools your child is using or may use. Parents participating also receive a free membership to PACER's Simon Technology Center library – which contains 2,400 pieces of apps, software and hardware

As part of the project, PACER is providing hands-on training and coaching for both parents and

professionals. PACER is also helping the program improve our lending library so families have the ability to use AT devices. Teachers and parents are learning about the latest technology available and how AT requirements can be written into a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The TIKES team has developed a Child-Centered AT plan to help teachers and families make the most of the IEP or IFSP process.

The TIKES project has been an exciting time for families and professionals in ECSE. If you have a child in the ECSE Program and you are interested in becoming a part of the TIKES project, please let us know. You can contact Jill Kenyon at jill.kenyon@anoka.k12.mn.us or Emily Rustman at Emily.rustman@anoka.k12.mn.us



Special Education Department

2727 N Ferry Street
Anoka, MN 55303

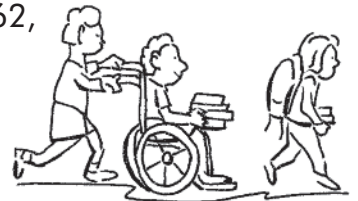


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The **Family Focus** newsletter will be mailed out approximately two times a year to Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 11 parents of students on IEP's and 504 plans.

- 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: **mary.gale@anoka.k12.mn.us**