

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired

March—April 2014

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Springtime in the Rockies

By Tanni L. Anthony

It is Spring with the telltale signs of the color green returning to the earth. Flowers are starting to poke their heads out of the ground and that glorious emerald lace is visible on the trees. The warmer temperatures are already urging us to pack away sweaters and coats and dig for short sleeves and sandals. Our urge is to throw off the weight of winter and start anew. As Lilly Pulitzer notes, *"Despite the forecast, live like it is Spring!"* I also love this quote to bring on the Spring spirit, *"I stuck my head out the window this morning and Spring kissed me bang in the face"* (Langston Hughes). Time to get some fresh air and fresh perspective!



There are lessons to be learned in this new season. Don Larson described it very well, *"Spring is when you feel like whistling, even with a shoe full of slush!"*

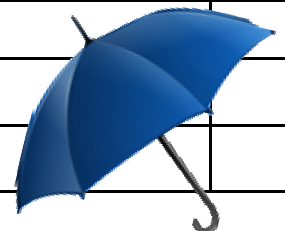
As the snow melts and Spring rain (and Colorado snow) come, new puddles form. We can stay inside, be sad about the gray skies, or find our rain boots and find the wonder of a great splash!

Watch any small child who confronts a rain puddle. Does he go around the puddle? Not on your life. Does she ask to be carried over the puddle? No way! That puddle is not a barrier—but something to be experienced!

The puddle on the sidewalk is to be stomped, splashed, and enjoyed for the fun of the wet, the sounds of the stomp, and the spray of the splash. So find your Spring puddle and stomp away! Happy Spring to each of you!

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Blind Students Learn to Fight Back!

By Dawn Orcutt, Senior at Horizon High School, Adams 12 School District

For blind and visually impaired students from District 12, Friday, December 13th was celebrated by learning some vital skills to take with them into the world as independent people. Sergeant Kevin Orcutt of the Thornton Police Department took the afternoon to explain and demonstrate the importance of self-awareness, safety, and self-defense. Held at the Adams 12 administrative facility and attended by 10 students with visual impairments, the two-hour class included a lecture on how to utilize one's common sense in every-day life, as well as the opportunity for the students to learn, hands-on, several basic defensive moves to protect themselves in an emergency situation.

"This class can help kids learn to defend themselves," explains vision Para Dannyel Adams. "I like that it's more focused on kids who are visually impaired. A lot of times people focus on visual demonstration, but here we're able to show them what to do, and give them the tools they need to defend themselves."

Kevin Orcutt kicked off the session by asking the students what the skills they were going to be learning were good for. Many answered accurately that self-defense would come in handy when being followed, violated or attacked by another person.

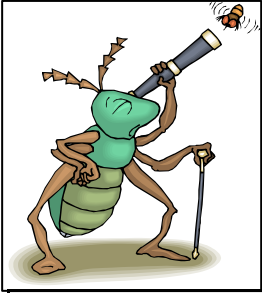
The students also showed a clear understanding that they might be singled out for a dangerous encounter due to their disability. When asked in what situations the defensive skills might be crucial, high school student Elizabeth Romero replied, "Say you're in downtown Denver, and a creepy guy is trying to get ahold of you for your brand new iPhone. He might want to take advantage of you because you are blind."

Still, though these young people were able to comprehend that their blindness could make them a target, they also recognized that their visual impairment leaves them with a leg up in at least one important area. A lack of sight causes a person to pay much more attention to their other senses, including their sixth sense of knowing when someone is near them, and feeling when the person has stopped being a friendly stranger and become an intruder into their personal space.

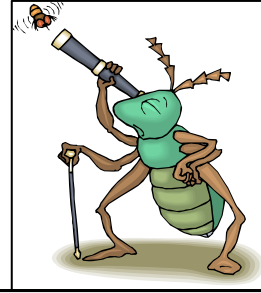
Sergeant Orcutt used most of his two-hour time allotment by having students and volunteers pair up with a punching bag between them. He visually demonstrated each move while simultaneously explaining what he was doing, then had the volunteers verbally and physically coach their partner as to how to perform each move on the bag. The students got hands-on instruction on how to not only recognize when they are in danger, but also on how to protect themselves against an offender.

It is possible to erase the stereotype of a person with a disability who is helpless to keep themselves safe. Thanks to many people, such as Sergeant Kevin Orcutt and the TVIs of District 12, who desire to see their students become competent adults, blindness need not be a perpetual weakness.





LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



| REGION | DATES | PAPERWORK DEADLINE | SITE COORDINATOR |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Southern Region (CSDB) | April 11, 2014 | Wednesday, March 26, 2014 | Donice Fennimore |

Metro Region Recap

By Debbie Haberkorn

The Metro Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held February 27 through March 1, 2014 at Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver. This three-day clinic provided evaluations for fifteen students from seven administrative units (Adams County District 12, Adams County District 27J, Adams-Arapahoe County District 28J, Anchor Center for Blind Children, Arapahoe County District 5, Arapahoe County District 6, and Douglas County). Fourteen sets of parents and thirteen TVIs attended the evaluations with their students. The LVE Clinic Team would like to thank Anchor Center for Blind Children for hosting the clinic and Amber Rundle-Kahn for coordinating the clinic. Thank you to the TVIs and parents who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the clinic. Dr. Theune would like to give special recognition to Barb Galgano for her ingenuity in *decreasing* the font size in one of her student’s books to encourage the student to use her low vision devices. Way to go Barb!

Low Vision Clinics Coming Your Way - Be Prepared

We are down to our last low vision clinic of the year! For many TVIs, this has become a standard annual event in their region. For new TVIs, this will be the first time to partake in great opportunity to address the low vision device needs of our Colorado students. Whether you are a newbie or a veteran, please take time to do your part to help the involved students and families be prepared for the clinic and to have the best follow-up experience possible with any prescribed devices.

Your onsite coordinator will be sending out the required paperwork. Please take time to complete the forms so that the clinic team has advance information on each student. Dr. Theune needs an eye report that has been completed within three years of this appointment. The student's eye care is the responsibility of the family's eye care specialist. We ask that you come prepared with examples of your student's work products.

It is an expectation that the TVI attends the clinic with his or her student. Please be on time. If you need to cancel, do so as soon as possible. Ask questions and seek assistance on how to follow-up with any prescribed devices. It takes a team to make our clinics a great success - so please do your part to ensure a great experience for your student. ***To those who have been to a clinic this school year —be watching as Tanni will be sending an online survey for you to complete so we capture RESULTS information. Many thanks!***



Spotlight on Prader-Willi Syndrome

Information retrieved from: <http://pwsausa.org/>
http://www.medicinenet.com/prader-willi_syndrome/article.htm
<http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/prader-willi-syndrome/overview.html>

What is Prader-Willi syndrome? Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS) is a complex genetic disorder present at birth that affects many parts of the body. Although it is considered a rare condition, PWS is the most common known genetic cause of obesity in children. It is estimated to occur in 1 in every 15,000 individuals. It affects both males and females of all races.

What Causes Prader-Willi syndrome? Approximately 70% of PWS cases result from an abnormality on the 15th chromosome, specifically a deletion on each segment of the paternal chromosome in each cell. Another 25% of those with the condition have 2 copies of chromosome 15 inherited from the mother instead of 1 copy from each parent. This occurrence is known as maternal uniparental disomy. In the remaining 5%, the syndrome is caused by a chromosomal rearrangement called a translocation, or by a mutation or other defect that abnormally inactivates genes on the paternal chromosome 15. Each of these changes results in a loss of function in a critical region of chromosome 15. These genetic changes happen as random events during the formation of reproductive cells or in early fetal development. However, it is possible in extremely rare cases for the affected individual to have inherited the genetic change responsible for PWS.

What Are the Symptoms of Prader-Willi Syndrome? PWS is seen in infancy as affected newborns have low birth weight for gestation. Often, they have almond-shaped eyes, a narrow bifrontal skull, have low muscle tone, and have delayed motor development. Babies may also have trouble with eating and as a result gain weight poorly (failure to thrive).

The years between ages two and five are considered the second stage, called thriving too well. Mild to moderate intellectual impairment and learning disabilities become more apparent. Behavior problems become frequent, including stubbornness, temper tantrums, and compulsive behavior. Additional features of this condition include distinctive facial features, short stature, and small hands and feet compared to the body. Some people with PWS have unusually fair skin and light-colored hair. Both affected males and affected females have underdeveloped genitals. Puberty is delayed or incomplete, and most affected individuals are infertile.

Affected children have a flaw in the hypothalamus part of the brain that registers feelings of hunger and fullness. Therefore, an insatiable appetite is developed, which leads to chronic overeating (hyperphagia) and obesity; a condition which lasts a lifetime. To compound this problem, children with PWS need less food than their unaffected peers because of their reduced muscle tone, which in turn burns fewer calories. As a result, some children develop type 2 diabetes mellitus, the most

common form of diabetes. This puts individuals with PWS at risk of developing other complications, one of which is eye disease associated with diabetic complications.

Reported ocular findings for patients with Prader-Willi syndrome include iris hypopigmentation with compromised visual acuity, moderate to high refractive error, (need for glasses) and strabismus (poor eye alignment). Individual patients with this syndrome have also been reported with cataracts, congenital ocular fibrosis syndrome, diabetic retinopathy, and congenital ectropion uveal.

How is Prader-Willi Syndrome Diagnosed? Signs of PWS may be seen at birth. If PWS is suspected by a doctor, genetic testing is available. In adolescence, laboratory tests can determine morbid obesity, blood glucose intolerance, and high insulin levels. Those with PWS may also show right-sided heart failure and knee and hip problems.

What is the Treatment for Prader-Willi Syndrome? There is no medical prevention or cure, so early diagnosis of PWS is vital. Families with a member affected with PWS should establish a predictable routine early on to support the child's behavior and diet needs. Knowing the cause of their child's problems allows parents timelier access to coping strategies, information networks, and support from a variety of professionals. The use of growth hormone may improve physical strength, ability, and height, increase lean muscle mass, decrease body fat, and increase stamina and bone mineral density.

In some cases, medication may be used; however, the essential strategy is still a careful structuring of the individual's environment and consistent use of positive behavior supports. The numerous ocular, systemic, and functional abnormalities of patients with Prader-Willi syndrome make it mandatory that they are followed routinely by eye care specialists for eye care needs.

What is the Prognosis for Prader-Willi syndrome? With support systems, people with PWS are able to complete school, achieve in their outside area of interest, and be successfully employed. It will be important to establish and maintain strong support systems such as family, various professionals, and residential services to assist individuals with PWS to achieve their goals.

What are the Educational implications? It takes a team of professionals to help students with Prader-Willi syndrome overcome and learn to deal with the challenges they face. Most students may require specialized school instruction and related services such as speech language therapy and occupational therapy. The school nurse may also be involved to help students with health concerns as well as educate school personnel about health issues. Because of high family stress in managing many aspects of PWS, the school psychologist and/or a social worker may also be a part of a student's educational team. If the child does experience visual impairment, a teacher certified in visual impairment will likely be a member of the education team.

Resources:

US National Library of Medicine:

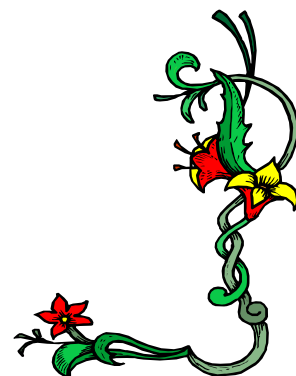
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH00572/02>

Mayo Clinic:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prader-willi-syndrome/basics/definition/CON-20028982>

Foundation for Prader-WilliResearch:

<http://fpwr.org/about-prader-willi-syndrome>





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Off to College in 2014? Scholarship News!

- On a state level, the NFB OF COLORADO distributes a total of up to \$15,000 in scholarships to legally blind Colorado residents. Scholarship winners must agree to attend the 2014 NFB national convention in July (expenses paid). The application is available on the www.NFBCO.org website. For additional information about the program, contact Buna Dahal, NFBCO Scholarship Committee Chairperson, at 303-758-1232 or email her at: buna-dahal@dynamicbuna.com>. **The application deadline is April 15, 2014.**

Part C Modules



Transition from early intervention services (IDEA Part C) to preschool (IDEA Part B) or other appropriate services is an important step in a young child's life. Two new training modules are available in NICHCY's curriculum on Part C of IDEA 2004, *Building the Legacy for Our Youngest Children*. They look in detail at what the Part C regulations require for transition planning and activities that must occur as toddlers in early intervention approach their third birthday. Click on the links below:

- Module 8 | The Transition Process and Lead Agency Notification to the LEA and SEA
<http://nichcy.org/laws/idea/legacy/partc/module8>
- Module 9 | Development of the Transition Plan
<http://nichcy.org/laws/idea/legacy/partc/module9>

Assessment Window School Year 2014-15

The tentative state testing windows for 2014-2015 (below) are also on the Assessment Unit site: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/generalinfo>. The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) encompasses the new Colorado-developed science and social studies assessments and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)-developed English language arts and mathematics assessments. Next year is the first time all CMAS assessments will be administered operationally. Please review carefully.

| Assessment | Grade | Tentative Windows |
|---|---|----------------------|
| CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies | 12 | 11/03/14 to 11/21/14 |
| CMAS: PARCC Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)* | 3-8, High School | 3/09/15 to 4/03/15 |
| CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies | 4 and 7 (Social Studies) 5 and 8 (Science) | 4/13/15 to 5/01/15 |
| CMAS: PARCC End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)* | 3-8, High School | 4/27/15 to 5/22/15 |
| ACCESS for ELLs® | | |
| Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening | K-12 | 1/05/15 to 2/06/15 |
| CO ACT | Initial Test Date | Make-up Test Date |
| Grade 11 | 4/28/15 | 5/12/15 |

*An additional window for PARCC testing may be available in fall 2015 for high schools with block schedules.

3D Print Braille Puzzles

Fittle is a new 3D printing application project created by Indian post-graduate student Tania Jain to help people with visual impairments learn Braille. 3D printing can totally change the life of those with visual impairment because this physical medium is perfect for those who rely mainly on their sense of touch. The Fittle project also makes it easier — and more fun — to learn Braille.



“Fittle” comes from the words “fit the puzzle”. The app consists of downloadable .stl files that make a particular shape. By matching the pieces together through their physical connections children can form a word and, by reading the Braille letter on each piece, they can associate that term to the shape they just made. To hear the correct pronunciation of the word, Fittle has that app. So far, 4 models have been released: a fish, a car, a baseball bat and a train and can be downloaded free from Thingiverse. At the end of last year Fittle teamed with social 3D printing network 3D Hubs to reach out to its current 1,500 subscribers to help people, who have, know or work with children with visual impairment, get access to Fittle, even if they do not own a 3D printer.

To learn more, go to: <http://www.thingiverse.com/search?q=fittle&sa=>

Braigo Braille Printer Invented by 12-Year Old



Shubham Banerjee, a seventh-grader from Santa Clara, CA, has created a braille printer using pieces from his Lego Mindstorm EV₃. This may prove to be a low-cost accessible solution for people who are blind and disadvantaged worldwide. The printer, called Braigo (a blend of the words Braille and Lego) costs \$349. This makes it much more affordable than other Braille printers, which can cost more than \$2,000. He plans to make the design instructions available free-of-charge on the Internet.

Presently, Braigo is programmed to produce the letters "A" through "Z". In a YouTube video he demonstrates how to print the letter "Y," and then shows how to easily combine letters to form words, like "cat." Enhancements can be made to the software; Banerjee now plans to program Braigo to print the numbers 1 to 10. To learn more go to: http://www.cnn.com/video/?/video/business/2014/02/21/qmb-lego-braille-printer-shubham-banerjee-intv.cnn&video_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2F It is also available on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/BraigoPrinter>

Assistive Tech (AT) in ACTION Video Series: Meet Brody!

Meet Brody, a bright young sixth grader who uses assistive technology to help him write and participate in class. In this video we also hear from Brody's teacher and the AT Specialist for Brody's school. The AT in Action series is sponsored by the Family Center on Technology and Disability (FCTD) and PACER Center. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), this fully-captioned series is designed to strengthen awareness of AT devices that help individuals with disabilities participate fully in school, at home, and in the community. To view, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FCTDvideo>



Accessible Science Website Has Brand New Look!

Perkins announces the launch of the redesigned Accessible Science website! Join the online community! Registered users may post questions, activities, resources and more. This website features searchable resources by subject matter, product reviews, and interactivity among site visitors and contributors, including a way to share favorite teaching strategies. Earn two continuing education credits for each activity submitted with no limit to number of submissions! Check out the blog for fresh content on a variety of topics related to making science accessible to students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities. Don't have an account? Go to: http://www.perkinselearning.org/user/register/as?utm_campaign=accessible%20science%20events%20spring%202014&utm_source=science%20announcement&utm_medium=email.

Introducing the Odin VI Cell Phone

The ODIN VI talking cell phone is 100% accessible to people who are blind. It speaks everything displayed on the screen, speaks the keys pressed and even prompts users to perform certain functions. Create a contacts list and move through it to hear the names out loud. Write text messages and hear incoming messages spoken. Access the call log to check for missed calls. The ODIN VI speaks caller ID, amount of battery charge, signal strength and time and date. Users even choose between different voices and a white on black or black on white display.



Assistive Technology Resources

Lime Lighter Music-Reading Solution Low Vision Users: This app from Dancing Dots is a music reading system for low-vision singers and musicians to magnify and mark sheet music on a PC monitor. The solution combines Dancing Dots Windows-based music reader, notation and OCR software, a PC, monitor, music stand, and foot pedal. Component options vary with each product. Visit: <http://www.dancingdots.com/limelighter/limelightermain.htm?nl=1>

Texthelp Study Skills Highlighter Tools enables students to highlight and group key facts and collect words to look up during research. The free tools—designed for all grade levels and types of content—are available on the Google store in Add-On area for Google Docs and Sheets. Go to:

<http://assistivetechnology.about.com/od/TechnologyforReadingWriting/p/Texthelp-Software-Helps-Print-Disabled-Students-Read-And-Write-With-Confidence.htm?nl=1>

National Braille Press Updates Guide for Blind iPhone Users: NBP has released the 3rd edition of its comprehensive guide for blind/visually impaired iPhone users. *Getting Started with the iPhone and iOS 7: An Introduction for Blind Users*, by Anna Dresner (\$24.00) provides tutorials on all aspects of iPhone orientation, navigation, and use. Visit:

<http://assistivetechnology.about.com/od/BrailleTechnology/p/National-Braille-Press-Promotes-Tactile-Literacy-And-Braille-Technology-Innovation.htm?nl=1>

Listen to Kindle Books Using VoiceOver is a free iOS app giving users access to over 1 million Amazon Kindle books, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, and PDF files on their iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch. It is compatible with VoiceOver, a screen reader built into Apple OS X and iOS devices, giving the blind/visually impaired audio access to all Kindle content. See

<http://assistivetechnology.about.com/od/AudiobookPlayerOptions/qt/Listen-To-Kindle-Books-Using-Voiceover.htm?nl=1>

just for PARENTS

Interactive Site for Parents

This is an interactive site sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and supported by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (their parent organization). If you have a question or need an opinion on raising a child who is blind this is the place to go. To check it out, go to: blindkid@nfbnet.org

Developing Friendships: A Preschool Priority

<http://www.afb.org/store/Pages/ShoppingCart/ProductDetails.aspx?ProductId=eDevFriendships&ruling=Yes>

This webinar presented by Mindy Ely provides a three-pronged, practical approach to helping children develop success in the area of social interactions. First, participants will explore avenues for helping children WANT to interact with others and with their environment. Then, we will learn strategies for teaching children to successfully enter into a play situation. And finally, participants will investigate teaching methods for maintaining a social situation that can lead to true friendships. Participants will leave the webinar with a checklist that can be used as a tool to identify a child's strengths and weaknesses in the area of peer interaction skills. This tool will allow teachers to become intentional as they help children with visual impairments learn the art of building friendships. There is a cost for this webinar.

2014 8th Biennial LCA Family Conference

When: Friday, July 18—Sunday, July 20, 2014

Where: Embassy Suites Hotel, Waltham, MA

Hosted by the Foundation for Retinal Research, this will be a unique opportunity to learn the most current information on Leber's Congenital Amaurosis (LCA) directly from researchers and doctors working on treatment and cures. Meet other families who are affected by LCA. Plus, medical exams, ERG's and blood draws for gene identification will be offered! To find out more or to register, go to: www.tfrr.org.

Connecting Families

There are several organizations that can connect families to advocates in Colorado. PEAK Parent Center is Colorado's Parent Training and Information Center. PEAK has parent advisors on staff and can provide families with the names of advocacy organizations. For more information, visit:

- PEAK's website at www.peakparent.org.
- The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People (www.thelegalcenter.org) and
- The Arc of Colorado (www.thearcofco.org) are other resources for families looking for advocates.

If your family is looking for support groups and/or trying to connect with other families, Parent to Parent of Colorado is a useful resource - www.p2p-co.org

The Parent Information and Resources page on the CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit's website has information about conferences and training opportunities. Every year CDE offers three Parents Encouraging Parents Conferences for families and educators throughout Colorado.

For more information, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Parents: If you are moving out of state or your child has graduated, please be in touch so we can remove your name from our newsletter mailing list. If your child is still enrolled in a Colorado school district and you have a new mailing address, please be in touch with your address changes.

TVIs and COMSs: If you have any changes in program contact information, please help us out and send Tanni these changes.

Thanks to everyone for helping to keep our mailing list up-to-date! Send changes to:

anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175, Denver, CO 80202. Or leave a voice message at (303) 866-6681. Thank you so much!

just for PARENTS

Military Families

The DoD has developed a terrific online resource for parents in the military who have children with disabilities -- Education Directory for Children with Special Needs, http://apps.militaryonesource.mil/MOS/f?p=EFMP_DIRECTORY:HOME:0

Originally devised to be a review of services for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the public schools on or near an installation, it was expanded beyond ASD to also look at services for children with behavioral/emotional impairments and intellectual disabilities. This past December, DoD completed its review resulting in a directory that contains general information about early intervention and special education services available on or near the installation(s) for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. You will see that the directory has two components:

- The Early Intervention Directory focusing on early intervention services for children birth through 3 years old.
- The School-Age Directory focusing on education services for children with special needs, 3 through 21 years old.

Both directories provide tools and resources (Tools for Making a Smooth Transition) to help with the transition to a new location. The site has been shared with and is used throughout DoD and the Military Departments. Although named 'Directory for Children with Special Needs,' the directory can be and is used by many families who are transitioning with a school-age child. The directory has assisted them in identifying school districts (on or near the installation) responsible for the provision of educational services to military children. Knowing the districts and schools is helpful when a family is considering where to live - especially if they will reside off the installation. The Directory is designed so that all the user has to do is select the state, and then the installation sponsor will be assigned to get a list of the early intervention agencies and school districts. Links then take them to the early intervention agencies', school districts' and schools' websites.

NAPTAC

We are pleased to introduce the **Native American Parent Technical Assistance Center** (NAPTAC). EPICS (Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs) was recently awarded the NAPTAC cooperative agreement by the US Department of Education - Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to provide 3 levels of Technical Assistance to all OSEP funded Parent Training & Information Centers (PTI) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRC). The ultimate goal of the NAPTAC is to build the capacity of the Parents Centers to effectively serve Native American parents of children and youth with disabilities. We look forward to the many partnerships, networking and collaborations to come. To download a NAPTAC informational flyer, go to:

http://www.parentcenterhub.org/?utm_source=NAPTAC+March+2014&utm_campaign=NAPTAC&utm_medium=email

You may also go to our main website:

<http://www.naptac.org/> OR contact us at 1-888-499-2070 or directly at 505-767-6630 and we will be glad to assist you.

Check out some of our partners by visiting their websites:

Center for Parent Information and Resources:
http://www.parentcenterhub.org/?utm_source=NAPTAC+March+2014&utm_campaign=NAPTAC&utm_medium=email

Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network:
http://www.tadnet.org/pages/485-about?utm_campaign=NAPTAC&utm_medium=email&utm_source=NAPTAC+March+2014

Learning How to Make Friends

Article retrieved from the AFB Family Connect website:
<http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsites.aspx?FoldeID=21&SectionID=77&TopicID=357&DocumentID=3887>

Kayla's 2nd-grade class left the lunchroom and went out for recess. Once she was outside, Kayla walked around the edge of the playground with her cane in hand. Although she sometimes stopped to listen to the groups of children playing, she never asked if she could join one. The others didn't seem to notice her. Kayla's experience isn't uncommon. Many children have trouble making friends, but without the visual cues that others use to interact, children who are visually impaired may need extra help in knowing how to get started. Consider a different scenario:

Joshua arrived early at school and joined the kids who were eating breakfast in the lunchroom. As he sat at his table, he heard some classmates greeting each other. Joshua spoke up, "Hey, did anyone see 'The Simpsons' last night? Man, the part where Bart got an A on his test was really funny!" Alberto, sitting next to Joshua, sounded uncomfortable when he said, "I didn't know you could watch TV. I mean..." "Sure I do," Joshua said. "I can understand from the voices and sounds, and some shows have a special description track that tells me what's happening. 'The Simpsons' is my favorite program. What's yours?" Soon all the boys were laughing.

Tips for Promoting Friendships

Most people are social by nature; the ability to form relationships is an important contribution to your child's development. However, children who are visually impaired may need help learning to make and keep friends. There are things you can do to help your child socialize with others her age. Find out what kinds of things are "in" for children your child's age and expose her to them. If she's familiar with what peers enjoy, she'll be more comfortable starting and/or joining a conversation.

Our society often judges people by their appearance; therefore, children your child's age are more likely to socialize with her if she dresses and acts like them. Notice the clothes and hairstyles of those her age to help her dress to fit in.

Encourage your child to invite a classmate or two home. It may be easier for her to engage in a smaller group and familiar surroundings. Have suggestions

ready if she doesn't know what to do. Have the kids do an art project or play a game. If your child is holding her own, then withdraw and let her interact with the others.

Encourage your child to think of ways she can help others. If she's good in math, for example, she can offer to help a classmate with homework. When reciprocating, avoid having your child give things like cookies or candy; it might look like a "bribe" for friendship. Sometimes a verbal "thank you" is all that is needed.

Practice is Important

Children with typical vision learn how to interact by imitating others. We don't always realize that specific social skills can be taught and learned: i.e., how to approach a potential friend, how to have a conversation, and what gestures to use. Your child may need to practice social skills like these to really master them.

Role-play about how to approach a peer who is a potential friend; take turns playing your child and then the new friend, and practice ways to start and maintain conversation. Give realistic feedback. Also role-play to practice having/maintaining longer conversations, like saying "uh huh" to show you're listening and asking questions about what the other person is saying. Provide opportunities for her to talk with other family members and friends, and ask them to give her feedback on what she is doing well and on what she can improve.

Your child may be missing the chance to interact because she doesn't see others' expressions and gestures. Teach her body language, such as facing someone in an alert, relaxed, and friendly way, and talk about how and when body language is used for communicating. Practice nonverbal gestures together so she understands them more fully. Observe your child when an opportunity to interact arises, and afterward give her feedback. You may find that with feedback she can learn to monitor her own social interactions.

Focus on Common Interests

As with adults, children gravitate toward those with whom they have a common interest. Help your child find an interest that she can do with others. If she likes animals, try volunteering at an animal shelter with others her age. If she likes science fiction, then invite a classmate who also likes science fiction to your house to watch the latest video based on a book by a popular author. With encouragement, opportunities and practice, your child can enjoy the rewards of socializing and friendship.



Family Learning Retreat 2014

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

33 North Institute Street
 Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903
 719-578-2100; www.csdb.org
 June 13-15, 2014

The Family Learning Retreat (FLR) will be returning to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind June 13-15, 2014. The FLR is a three-day retreat focused on families with a child who is deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired or deafblind. This is an opportunity for families to meet other families while networking, learning and having fun together.

Parents /adults will attend workshops with topics such as assessments, instruction and accommodations, creating and understanding IFSPs and IEPs, role models sharing life experiences, and by request, the moms and dads breakouts groups will return.

Children will participate in supervised recreational activities within the youth program. Check-in and dinner begin Friday June 13, 5:00-7:00 p.m. followed by an opening session. The retreat ends by noon on Sunday, June 15. Lodging will be available Friday and Saturday nights in the CSDB dormitories. Meals provided include Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch, and Sunday breakfast.

The cost of the Family Learning Retreat is only \$20 per adult and \$10 per child under the age of 18 years. Spanish and sign language interpreters will be provided upon request. Parents will be responsible for providing any assisted feeding or medical procedure their child requires. A nurse will not be available during the Family Learning Retreat.

Come and relax. Make new friends. Experience a valuable learning opportunity.

Questions or to register, contact Mary at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind at mcuccaro@csdb.org or (719) 578-2270.

For Spanish speaking participants, contact Gloria Romero (719) 578-2288 or gromero@csdb.org.



ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

O&M Songs for Young Cane Travelers

Contributed on the O&M Listserv by Michael Byington on March 10, 2014

(To the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus," and of course these words only work if the child is using a roller tip.)

*The tip of the cane goes round and round
So it will show (Insert name of child) what can be found
The tip of the cane moves left and right
It will show where to go in the day or the night.
Yes the tip of the cane goes round and round,
And back and forth like a clock that's wound.
The tip of the cane goes round and round
To show (insert name of child) what can be found.*



(To the tune of "Old McDonald Had a Farm"): *Old McDonald had a farm
Let's arc to and fro.
Cuz on this farm he had a cane
Let's arc to and fro
With a swing to the left and a swing to the right
Here a Swing,
There a swing;
You can find everything.
Yes, Old McDonald had his cane
So he walked down the lane.*

If the child is using an assistive mobility device because they are not yet ready for a cane, there are songs that can be made up for those things too. Assistive mobility device, however, is hard to sing or rhyme with, so I usually instead call this device a push-push. To give credit where credit is due, I borrowed this term from my internship supervisor, Tyler Hamilton.

(To the tune of "Alice's Restaurant"): *You can go anywhere you wish
Because you have your push-push.*

Eric Levy also shared, "I am teaching a 3 year old basic cane technique. I used an O&M version of London Bridge with him to get him to keep his cane tip out in front and on the floor. It worked like a charm."

(To the tune of "Ants came marching on the ground, one-by-one") This song was posted by Jill Brown.

*Cane tip sweeping on the ground
left and right
Cane tip sweeping on the ground
left and right
Cane tip sweeping on the ground
left and right so we don't fall down
Cane tip sweeping, left and right
On the ground in front, boom, boom, boom*





DOTS OF INTEREST



GET READY FOR BELL 2014!

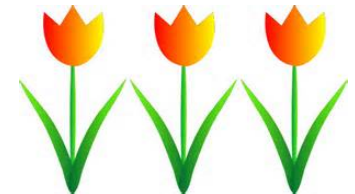
The BELL Program, a project of the NFB Jernigan Institute, is a two week day camp experience for blind and visually impaired children ages 4-12. Officially the letters B.E.L.L. stand for “Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning”, but for the kids, the letters stand for F.U.N. Both beginners and more accomplished Braille readers will gain confidence in reading and writing while engaged in games, crafts and exciting outdoor activities. There will be two BELL camps this year. The BELL program in Colorado Springs is being held from July 14-25, 2014 on the campus of Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind (CSDB). The second BELL camp will be held in the Westminster area from July 21 through August 1, 2014 at the Rocky Mountain MS Center, which is located at 8845 Wagner Street.



The programs will be led by certified Braille teachers as well as others who love Braille and use it every day. There is no cost to attend, but families will be encouraged to volunteer at least one day during the programs. Space is limited, so call soon to request an application. For additional information contact Michelle Chacon at mchacon@adams50.org or phone 303-456-9000.

Check out the program video on You Tube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aBTNcasZPQ&sns=em>



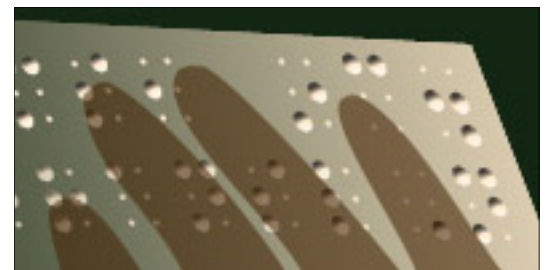
UEB Chart Available for Download from Duxbury, Systems, Inc.

Duxbury has a one page chart/list of UEB symbols available as a pdf for download from their site. Along with the BANA and British Braille charts, it can be found at:

<http://www.duxburysystems.com/braillechart.asp>

or to go directly to the pdf of the UEB chart, here's the URL:

http://www.duxburysystems.com/images/ueb_black.pdf



DOTS OF INTEREST



Braille Challenge

By Diane Covington

Thirty-one students who are blind/visually impaired, from 11 school districts and CSDB registered for the Colorado Braille Challenge, hosted at CSDB. Thirty additional students participated in activities celebrating braille. These activities were broadcast live on the internet to teachers of the visually impaired who chose to connect. Twenty-eight volunteers from the community assisted CSDB staff members to implement the event, including many volunteers from the Colorado Center for the Blind. We appreciate the sponsors, CSDB, the Braille Institute, Humanware, Seedlings and the National Braille Press! Fox TV News reported the story, showing fingers flying on braillewriters, and the Gazette published a photo of the students competing. Thank you to everyone who encouraged their students to attend and for those who helped make the Colorado Braille Challenge a success.

The winners are as follows:

Apprentice

Jasmine McCandless, Jefferson County District RE-1, TVI Melinda Carter – 1st
Victor Jiron, Denver County District 1, TVI Melinda Holtz – 2nd
Richard Scott, CSDB – 3rd

Freshman

Jaden Diaz, Denver County District 1, TVI Elsa D Angelo – 1st
James Bewley, CSDB – 2nd
Tyrone Bagsby, CSDB – 3rd

Sophomore

Deyannira Villa-Cazares, Denver County District 1, TVI Marci Reid - 1st
Elizabeth Koren, CSDB – 2nd
Jaylen Anders, CSDB – 3rd

Junior Varsity

Izayah Mendoza, Boulder County-St. Vrain Valley RE-1J, TVI Sally Burch-1st
Jordan Rodriguez, Jefferson County District RE-1, TVI Jessica Hank-2nd
Christina Laty, Douglas County District RE-1, TVI Shelley Moats -3rd

Varsity

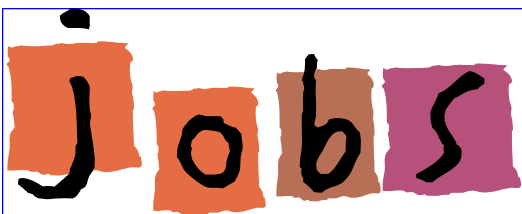
Alyssa Foster, CSDB-1st
Destinee Brown, Denver County District 1, TVI Melinda Holtz -2nd



APH offers recreational books in braille (Quota funds can be used). The National Library Service has graciously granted permission for this offering. These titles have been added to the APH *Louis* Database

where you can find thousands of titles produced in accessible formats.

Go to: <http://www.aph.org/advisory/2014adv03.html#P3>



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for this school year or the one starting in fall 2014. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your job openings. If you know of an anticipated opening in your part of the state, please begin working to recruit someone into our field by ensuring he or she has an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. This may be a paraeducator, a brailist, and/or a colleague already in the teaching profession. Please work with Dr. Paula Conroy to learn more about the UNC distance education / graduate program to prepare TVIs and O&M Specialists in Colorado!

TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairment

COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist

Southern Region Jobs

- ✓ Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind is actively recruiting and accepting applications for the 2014-15 school year. For details about what positions may be open, please contact Chelle Lutz at clutz@csdb.org or (719) 578-2114.

Western Region Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE) for San Juan BOCES. Please contact HR Director Paula Sublett at (970) 247-3261 x 203 or psublett@sjboces.org.

Metro Region Jobs

- ✓ **Program Director** (1 FTE) - Anchor Center for Blind Children. Please complete an application at: info@anchorcenter.org

TVIs and COMSs—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE teaching and support services licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing in the future with part-time or sub work. Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement!






Calendar of Events

2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014

- April 8** Southern Region TVI Meeting—CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.)
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 9—12** CEC 2014 Annual Convention & Expo—Philadelphia, PA.
Visit: <http://www.cec.sped.org/Home/Professional%20Development/Annual%20Convention>
- April 11** Southern Region Low Vision Clinic—CSDB
Contact: Donice Fennimore at dfennimore@ppboces.org
- April 11—12** Student Connect 2014 Western States Seminar—CO Center for the Blind
Contact: Antonio Rozier at arozier@cocenter.org or 404-376-5661
- April 14—May 2** CoAlt State Testing (Note: Grade 12 Science & Social Studies TBD, Fall 2014)
 Grades 5 & 8— Science AND Grades 4 & 7—Social Studies
- April 16** Vision Coalition Meeting—CO DVR Office
Contact: Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- April 23** Colorado ACT Initial Testing—Grade 11
- April 24-16** CDE Annual O&M Training—Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Tanni Anthony - Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- May 1** Due date for textbook orders for the 2014-2015 school year to CIMC
- May 3** FAST Saturday Program Field Day—CO Center for the Blind
Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x 222 or bbatron@cocenter.org
- May 7** Colorado ACT Makeup Testing—Grade 11
- May 13** Southern Region TVI Meeting—CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.)
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- June 6—August 1** Earn & Learn/Summer for Success College Prep Programs—CO Center for Blind
Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x 222 or bbatron@cocenter.org
- June 9—27** Confidence Camp for Elementary Kids—CO Center for the Blind
Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x 222 or bbatron@cocenter.org
- June 15** CIMC due date for tech equip/textbooks *Districts billed for unreturned items



More Calendar of Events

2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014

- June 27—28** **3rd Annual American Conference on Pediatric CVI—Omaha, NE**
 Visit: www.childrensomaha.org/upcomingconferences
- July** **CIMC to begin invoicing AUs** for equipment /books not returned in complete, usable condition (includes missing/damaged volumes)
- July 1** **CIMC to mail invoices to Special Education Directors** for student assessment fees based on 1/6/14 enrollment of students identified as VIIB
- July 14—25** **NFB of Colorado B.E.L.L. program—** CSDB, Colorado Springs, CO
 Contact: Michelle Chacon at mchacon@adams50.org or 303-456-9000
- July 14—August 1** **Initiation to Independence Program (MS students)—**CO Center for the Blind
 Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x 222 or bbatron@cocenter.org
- July 18—July 20** **2014 8th Biennial LCA Family Conference—**Waltham, MA
 Visit: www.tfrr.org
- July 21—August 1** **NFB of Colorado B.E.L.L. program—** Rocky Mountain MS Center, Westminster, CO
 Contact: Michelle Chacon at mchacon@adams50.org or 303-456-9000
- July 30-Aug 3** **AER International Conference –** San Antonio, TX
 Visit: www.aerbvi.org
- September 1** **Due date for AUs to submit payment** of CIMC invoices to CSDB

2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016 2016

January 4 Official Date for Full UEB Implementation in the United States!

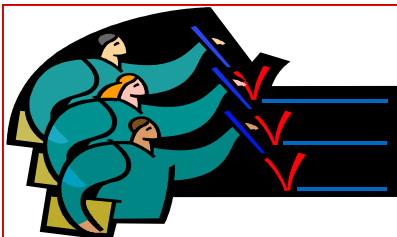


AER Conference 2014

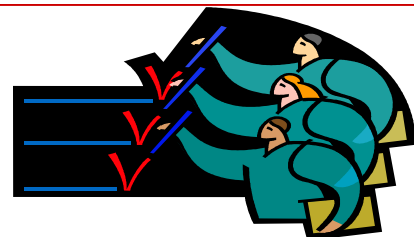
The conference will be held in the Grand Hyatt on the River Walk, a stunning venue for developing your expertise, networking with colleagues, and enjoying the sights and sounds of the area. We encourage you to make your plans early to attend this stellar event. More than 800 professionals and practitioners

will be in attendance, ranging from Educators, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Low Vision Specialists, University Preparation Professionals, to vendors and parents. This year's conference will include: keynote speakers on Recreation for Life, current technology and Non-24 Hour Sleep Disorder; "Learning Labs" to provide hands-on training in UEBC, iPad use, symbols and meaning, and more; dozens of division tracks focusing on field-specific areas; an Exhibit Hall, featuring vendors and products critical to your work; opportunities for CEUs required for certification and credentialing; tours of the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

For more information or to register, go to: <http://aerbvi.org/international2014/>



CHECK IT OUT!



New Saturday Program at the Colorado Center for the Blind! **FAST**---**F**un **A**ctivities and **S**kills **T**raining

CCB announces the launch of their new FAST Saturday Program that meets the first Saturday of each month. Some Saturdays will simply focus on having fun as skills are developed. On other Saturdays, will be focused on a variety of challenge recreation activities.

May 3: FAST Saturday Program

This is a field day! Goal ball and beep baseball are some of the fun sports the kids are sure to love!

June 6—August 1: Earn & Learn Program and Summer for Success College Prep Program

These programs for high school students, are 8-week residential programs that focus on Braille, cane travel, technology and daily living skills. Both will focus on non-visual techniques and will have a large amount of challenge recreation activities. All students will attend the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind in Orlando.

June 9—June 27: Confidence Camp for Kids

This is a 3-week day program for elementary aged kids. Space is limited so please call or email for an application.

July 14—August 1: Initiation to Independence Program (Middle School students)

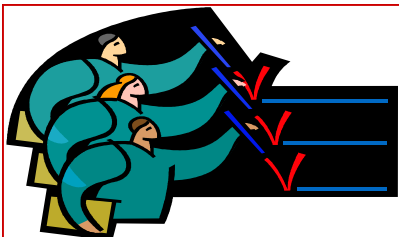
This is a 3-week residential program that will focus on Braille, cane travel, technology, and daily living skills. These students will also participate in a variety of challenge recreation activities. To RSVP to these events or if you would like to get more information on these events or the CCB summer contact Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x 222 or bba-tron@cocenter.org.



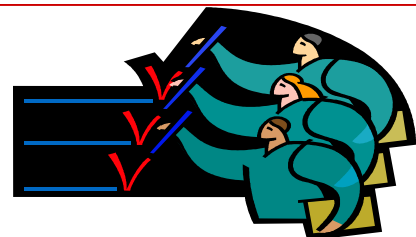
Music Over the Summer



The Colorado Music Festival and Center for Musical Arts (CMF & CMA) is a one-of-a-kind organization that provides a broad spectrum of music education opportunities and world-class performances to citizens throughout Boulder County and beyond. CMF & CMA is a full member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education and has the core belief in “**Music for All... For Life!**” The CMA (the education wing of the CMF) offers many summer lessons, performance options and group classes for students. This is achieved, in part, through the Heartstrings Program, which consists of an Instrument Bank to provide low-cost instrument rentals and Tuition Assistance so that everyone can afford to participate. For more information go to: comusic.org



CHECK IT OUT!



Upcoming Professional Development Offerings



April 7—Online Workshop: Autism and Visual Impairment: The Better Together Curriculum

This course will provide theoretical and practical information for teaching social communication skills to the growing population of students with combined challenges of visual impairment and autism. Through reading, discussion and hands-on practice, participants will improve their confidence and skills in working with this challenging group of students.

April 21—Online Workshop: Assistive Technology in Minutes for Blind & Multiple Disabilities

Individuals who experience a vision loss and other multiples disabilities need a variety of assistive technology solutions and now. Over 80% of these solutions could be created in five minutes or less using everyday tools and materials. This amazing hands-on, on-line learning course will inspire you to think creatively outside the box and will challenge you to use an assortment of materials to create solutions in minutes.



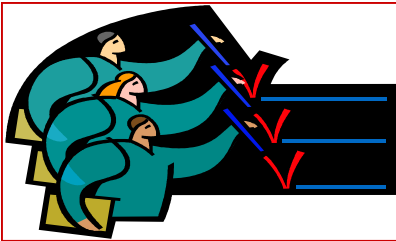
***Spring is when life's
alive in everything!***

(Christina Rossetti)

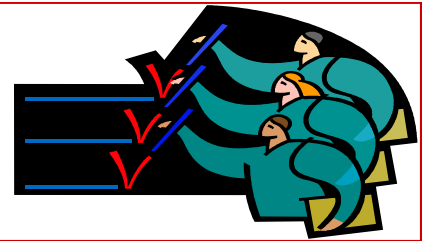
Tip Sheet - Transitions of Children with Autism

A new tip sheet for parents on OT's role in supporting the transition to preschool for children with autism is now posted on the AOTA website:

<http://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Youth/Autism/Living-With-an-ASD-Tip-Sheet.pdf>



CHECK IT OUT!



More Upcoming Professional Development.....



Assistive Technology Partners Anschutz Medical Campus

Thursday, April 24, 2014—Creating eBooks, Integrating Progress Monitoring Tools, Broadcasting & Sharing Content! Aurora, CO. Distance locations in Colorado Springs, Durango, Haxtun & Lamar, 8:30 am—4:30 pm

Dan Herlihy shows you how to create accessible eBooks and e-content including interactive storybooks, accessible materials to support core curricular content, and more for iPads, Androids, Chromebooks and computers using a wide variety of free and inexpensive apps and online solutions. Next, learn how to create and integrate progress monitoring tools, such as embedded comprehension questions and multimedia supports. We will also cover the very important task of how to move eBooks from one app, program, device or platform, to another. Finally, learn how to broadcast your books onto an IWB (Interactive White Board) as a “Big Book” to promote engagement and student participation and/or simultaneously broadcast an eBook live from your computer or iPad to multiple devices (and platforms) in your classroom. Switch accessibility to eBooks on the iPad, Android and Chromebook platforms will be demonstrated, and as always - much more!

BYOD for iPads, laptops, tablets, etc. List of apps and programs for iPad, Android, Chromebook and computers will be provided for pre-installing before the session.

To register, download the informational brochure and registration form from our website: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/programs/atp/Events/Documents/HerlihyeBooks.FlyerRegForm.pdf> -or to register online-

https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/UCO/event/showEventForm.jsp?form_id=167135

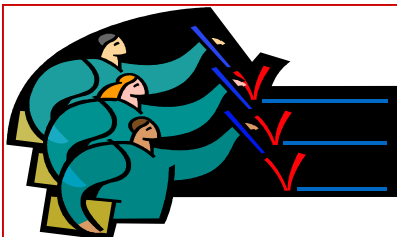
Tip Sheet on Mealttime Routines

A new tip sheet for parents on Mealttime Routines has been added to the AOTA Childhood Occupations Toolkit.

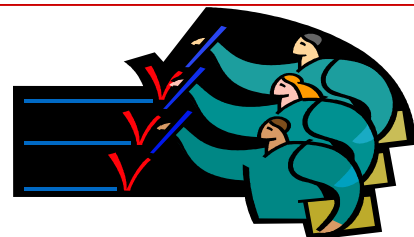
<http://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Youth/Establishing-Mealttime-Routines-for-Children-Tip-Sheet.pdf> To view the entire toolkit, please visit <http://www.aota.org/Practice/Children-Youth/Early-Intervention/ChildhoodOccupationsToolkit.aspx>

CDE Webpage on Visual Impairment, Including Blindness

Tanni maintains a webpage specific to visual impairment, including blindness on the CDE website. All TVIs are recommended to have this webpage in their list of favorites! It has a host of information including the state eligibility criteria for visual impairment, including blindness; the forms for the regional low vision clinics; the braille competency testing procedures; local/state/national resources ... and a good bunch of other stuff. Please be sure to put this in your browser: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>



CHECK IT OUT!



Approved Interim Reading Assessments for the READ Act

The READ Act requires the state board of education to approve a list of interim reading assessments for use in identification of significant reading deficiencies and progress monitoring for students in kindergarten through third grade. In the fall, CDE conducted an assessment review process and presented recommendations to the state board at their December 2013 meeting.

After conducting an appeal process for assessments that did not meet state criteria, the department presented final recommendations for state board approval at their February 2014 meeting. The state board approved seven English and three Spanish reading assessments: aimsweb; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills Next (DIBELS Next), Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL); Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST); i Ready; ISIP Early Reading, ISIP Early Reading Spanish; Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Español; and STAR Early Learning.

Districts have until Tuesday, July 1, 2016 to transition to the approved interim assessments. The department will conduct an additional assessment review process prior to this date. For more information, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>.

STUDENT CONNECT 2014 WESTERN STATES SEMINAR

Attention all high school and college students! **On the weekend of April 11 & 12**, students from across the West will gather at the Colorado Center for the Blind for an exciting seminar. You will hear from experts and share ideas on all aspects of getting from high school to college graduation and going on to find a job. From the classroom to the sports field, all the tough questions about how to be a successful college student will be addressed. Don't miss your chance to CONNECT...

- Connect to the latest innovations in science, technology and math for blind students.
- Connect to scholarships, employment and internship opportunities, and blind professionals.
- Connect to the largest network of blind students in the United States!

For those requiring overnight accommodations, a block of rooms has been reserved at the Hampton Inn, Highlands Ranch for a rate of \$89 per night with free shuttle to the CCB. Registration will be \$50 and will include Friday lunch, Saturday lunch, and Saturday dinner. To REGISTER or get more information contact Antonio Rozier at arozier@cocenter.org. You can also call 404-376-5661.

SEEKING CHILDREN IN GRADES 3-12 FOR A READING STUDY

Laura Bostick, Research Associate at Louisiana Tech University, is conducting a study to measure the impact of reading mode (large print, Braille) on a child's desire to read for pleasure. She is looking for volunteers between the ages of 8 and 22 years who are in grades 3-12; vision impairment must be the primary disability. The participants must be on a reading level that is no more than two years below grade level and able to read for at least ten minutes. Sessions may be videotaped for up to one hour. The study results will help in developing practices for preparing teachers. If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact Laura at lbostick@latech.edu or (318) 257-4554.



colorado connections

- ☞ Thanks to CSDB for hosting the Braille Challenge on January 29, 2014. A special thanks to the following TVIs for making the trip to the campus of CSDB with their students for the celebration of braille: **Cheryl Leidich; Elsa D'Angelo; Jasmine Gomez; Jessica Hank; Leslie Kelly-Watrobka; Melinda Carter; Melinda Holtz, and Shelley Moats.** A big Thank You also goes out to the three TVIs who administered the contest with their braille readers in their home districts: **Deb Mendoza; Marci Reid, and Sally Burch.**
- ☞ There are so many reasons to celebrate braille competency in Colorado this past couple of months! Hats off to the following people who completed CDE braille renewal clock hours: **Kyle Berns, Jenn Langley, Taryn Galow, Jamie Lugo, Karin Hensel, Leslie Kelly Watrobka, Edie Smith, Morgan Turner, Mary Chambers, David Gooldy, Donna Keale, Berta Weidemeyer, and Angela Sims.** Congratulations to **Angela Sims, Edie Smith, and Donna Keale** for earning her CDE Braille Renewal Certificate and to **Erin Keller, Grace Katolas and Genevieve Anderson** for earning their CDE Certificate of Braille Competency. A big thanks to proctors **Brenda Shepard, Lucia Hasty, Julie Wetzstein, and Sarah Sonnier.**
- ☞ Welcome to **Jen Klyczek**, who is a new teacher at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. She is working in the Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Programs at the center this semester. Jen's background is in Early Childhood Special Education and for the past 7 years she worked as an ECSE for a local agency; providing home based services for children birth-three. Jen is currently finishing her Teacher of the Visually Impaired MA and licensure through the University of Northern Colorado and plans to graduate this May. Jen shares that she is very excited to be a member of the Anchor team and to be joining the TVI community!
- ☞ **Retirement Party!** The Anchor Center for Blind Children will host a retirement party for **J.C. Greeley** on the afternoon of Thursday, June 12 at 3:00 p.m. It will be held at the Anchor Center and will be a tea. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Anchor Center at 303 377-9732. The Anchor Center has also established a Judith Greeley Scholarship Fund in her honor if anyone wants to contribute.
- ☞ **Lisa VanDam** started working at CSDB in September and moved from Michigan. Lisa is a recent graduate from Western Michigan University's Orientation and Mobility master's program. This is her first job in the field and she notes, "I am loving it!" Since Lisa has moved out to Colorado, she has been really into taking her Siberian husky hiking. She loves the mountains! A belated welcome to Lisa!
- ☞ **Dr. Kay A. Ferrell**, professor of Special Education, has been named winner of this year's M. Lucile Harrison Award, UNC's top faculty honor. Awarded by the Office of the Provost, it recognizes a faculty member with a long career of professional excellence in teaching as well as in professional activity and service, all accomplishments that marked the career of M. Lucile Harrison. Dr. Ferrell, a member of the UNC faculty for 22 years, will be honored at spring commencement ceremonies in May and will be profiled in an upcoming feature story appearing in UNC's e-newsletters and the UNC home page.
- ☞ Baby News! Congrats to **Brooke** and **Chris Miller** on the birth of their daughter Tracey Ann, who was born on January 24, 2014 and was 6 pounds, 13 ounces and 18.5 inches long.
- ☞ More Baby News! Congratulation to **Debbie** and **Juan Mendoza!** Welcome to Liliana Grace Mendoza. She was born on March 2nd, and was 5 pounds, 11 ounces and 19 inches long.
- ☞ Hats off to **Dr. Tara Mason**, who has completed her Ph.D. with Texas Tech University. We are so glad to have you in our state, Tara!

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