



Winter 2002-2003

Update from the Director of Special Education

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Focus on Early Literacy	2-3	<p>This edition of Inside is opening the New Year with a focus on Early Childhood. On a personal level, I am excited to see these articles, because I started my career many years ago working with preschool children. Additionally, I know that early intervention is a focal point of the No Child Left Behind law which emphasizes early literacy intervention. We know that the Reauthorization of IDEA will also look closely at early intervention and most likely promote the use of scientifically based research practices with our youngest students. So, a newsletter on Early Childhood is timely and useful as we look to the future of education for all of our students in Colorado in this New Year.</p> <p>Second, I want you to note that we have a new addition to our newsletter. The Special Review: Special Education Law Issues is an addition that we intend to include in all future publications. Our intent is to highlight specific legal issues that might be of interest to you. In this one, we are providing guidance on the definition of "parent". I hope that you find this informative and useful.</p> <p>As you receive this, there will undoubtedly be drafts of bills on the Reauthorization of IDEA already introduced in Washington, D.C. We will want to watch this legislation closely and be sure to let our voices be heard as the months unfold. I will do my best to provide you with up to date information as the issues emerge and please let me know what you are hearing as well.</p> <p>Finally, I want to remind you that 2003 marks the 20th annual celebration of the social work profession. Under the updates section, we highlight the power of social work. Happy New Year!</p> <p>Sincerely, <i>Lorrie Harkness</i> State Director Special Education</p>
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www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped

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The purpose of the Inside Special Education newsletter is to serve as a medium for the dissemination of information pertaining to special education in the state of Colorado and the activities of the CDE Special Education Unit. This newsletter is designed to disseminate information on professional issues, procedural changes, and upcoming events to Colorado educators.

All views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Colorado Department of Education or the University of Colorado-Denver.

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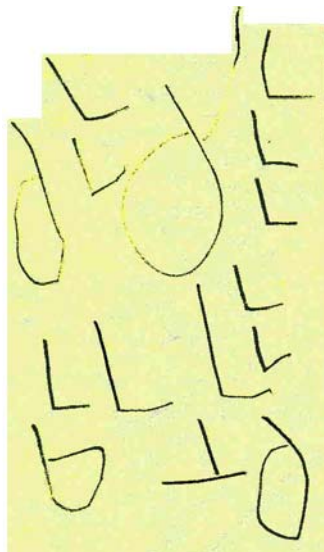
Lorrie Harkness

Focus on Early Literacy

President Bush's initiatives such as Leave No Child Behind and Good Start, Grow Smart have focused much attention on the importance of early experiences which support literacy development. While encouraged by increased focus on the early years, experts in the field of early childhood education are concerned that with the strong movement to strengthen literacy outcomes for all children, teachers, caregivers and families will resort to inappropriate instructional strategies that may yield short term gains, but produce harmful results in long term literacy development. At the very least, the tendency may be to use what Assistant Secretary of Education, Susan Neumann, refers to as "developmentally inefficient" techniques. **She cautions against resorting to drill and practice, dittos and workbooks, and literacy activities that are conducted out of context and that disrupt the course of quality routines in early childhood care and education environments.** Such activities take time and energy away from the activities that are essential to literacy development.

So, what should parents and educators be emphasizing with young children? Recently, at the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative Residency Roundtable for Language and Literacy, Dr. David Dickinson of Boston College was asked to share his latest research findings which are related in detail in the book he co-authored with Patton Tabors, Beginning Literacy with Language. As indicated by the title, Dr. Dickinson places the focus of early literacy development on language:

- ◆ Familiarity with sounds and cadences of the language of books
- ◆ Enjoyment of books, positive memories
- ◆ Experience of language-infused interaction with adults
- ◆ Playful back-and-forth "conversations"
- ◆ Building receptive vocabulary
- ◆ Routines to support language use



Three opportunities were identified by Dr. Dickinson as critical to reading and writing development. First, the

(Continued on page 3)

When Young children are exposed to the uses of print and have many tools and opportunities to experiment with writing, they spontaneously make letter forms in the course of their play. This sample was collected from the block area.

(Continued from page 2)

opportunity for extended discourse using language that removes the speakers from the present context and increasingly uses inferences, predictions, evaluations, etc. has been strongly tied to overall literacy outcomes. Dr. Dickinson's research has also established a strong link between the size and complexity of a child's vocabulary and later phonological awareness. Finally, with regard to writing, his studies have shown that children in preschool classrooms that include a "writing center" that includes displays of spontaneous "emergent writing" samples collected from the children scored higher in measures of writing abilities later in their school careers.

The following outline developed by Susan Neuman, describes early childhood literacy development. The entire document is available from the U.S. Department of Education and is entitled What Research Reveals: Foundations for reading instruction in preschool and primary education

Phase One Goals for Preschool

Children can

- ◆ Enjoy listening to and discussing story books
- ◆ Understand that print carries a message
- ◆ Engage in reading and writing attempts
- ◆ Identify labels and signs in their environment
- ◆ Participate in rhyming games
- ◆ Identify some letters and make some letter-sound matches
- ◆ Use known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language (especially meaningful words like their name and phrases such as "I love you")

CDE Early Literacy Resources

- Building Blocks to the Colorado K-12 Content Standards for Reading and Writing
- Literacy Connections – A page within the CDE website describing resources and grant writing opportunities around literacy initiatives
- ◆ Early Childhood Outcomes Project – Joint project between CDE and UCD to develop innovative methods to capture and describe outcomes of early education



Recent research has linked positive writing outcomes to exposure to a writing center available to young children, including displays of their writing.

PRESCHOOL MODELS AND CHILDREN'S LATER SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Noting that preschools are under increasing pressure to offer instruction in basic academic skills to help improve the academic performance of American schoolchildren, researcher Rebecca Marcon

of the University of North Florida sheds light on the continuing debate over teacher-directed versus child-centered preschool models in an article recently published in the Internet journal "Early Childhood Research & Practice."

In a follow-up study of children in an urban school district, Marcon looked at these children as they prepared to leave the primary grades and again a year later when they were scheduled to enter fourth grade. The study examined children's report card grades, retention rates, and special education placement. The sample was 96% African American and 54% female, with 75% of the children qualifying for subsidized school lunch and 73% living in single-parent families. Three groupings were selected as examples of the divergent preschool models operating in an urban school system: children who had (1) child development-oriented teachers who facilitated learning by allowing children to actively direct the focus of their learning, (2) more academically oriented teachers who preferred more direct instruction and teacher-directed learning experiences, and (3) teachers whose beliefs and practices fell in between the other two contrasting models by endorsing a combination approach.

Marcon found no significant differences in the academic performance of children who participated in any of the three preschool models at the end of their fifth year in school; however, by the end of their sixth year in school, children whose preschool experiences had been academically directed earned significantly lower grades compared to children who had attended child-initiated preschool classes.

Marcon concluded that children's later school success appears to have been enhanced by more active, child-initiated early learning experiences, and their progress may have been slowed by overly academic preschool experiences that introduced formalized learning

experiences too early for most children. As Marcon notes, "Pushing children too soon may actually backfire when children move into the later elementary school grades and are required to think more independently and take on greater responsibility for their own learning process."

The complete article, "Moving up the Grades: Relationship between Preschool Model and Later School Success," is available on the Internet at <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n1/marcon.html>.

Early Childhood Research & Practice features articles related to the development, care, and education of children from birth to approximately age 8. To view the entire article, go to <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n1/marcon.html>.

For further information, contact: Dianne Rothenberg, rothenbe@uiuc.edu



Mesa and Douglas Take Part in Early Childhood Outcomes Project

By: Jason E. Glass

There is no mistaking that education has moved into a culture of data driven accountability. High stakes student testing and a push for ongoing formal program evaluation have put school districts and the state not only in the business of educating children but also being able to prove that they are affecting positive change. Until recently however, this culture had bypassed Early Childhood programs because of difficulties in quantitatively assessing the development of children this young. However, with the pressure mounting for schools to demonstrate results for all children at all levels, the search is on for an appropriate and honest way to bring accountability to Early Childhood programs.

In a collaborative project under the direction of Dr. Barbara Smith - the University of Colorado at Denver, Mesa County Schools, Douglas County Schools, and the Colorado Department of Education have undertaken a project that will assess Early Childhood programs on three fronts: 1) the quality of the preschool classroom environment; 2) levels of stakeholder satisfaction and; 3) child growth on developmental outcomes.

To date, most of the attention has been focused on the third front, the development of child outcome indicators. The first hurdle was deciding on which aspects of development we should be evaluating. Using the Colorado Building Blocks as a starting point along with other academic research in Early Childhood education, Dr. Phil Strain and Dr. Gail Joseph of UC Denver developed a reflection based tool focusing on six developmental outcomes. Using this tool, teachers assess each of their children in Social Emotional development, Daily Living Skills, Language and Communication, Fine and Gross Motor Skills, Cognition and Approaches to Learning, and Early Literacy.

With older children, focusing on academics makes measurement easier as these can be readily captured with a paper and pencil exam. But using this method to assess the development of children between 3 and 5 is

obviously not appropriate. In this project, teachers assess students using a reflection based method on what they have seen and experienced in the classroom for each child. This allows students to be assessed in natural environments without having to resort to contrived assessments like demonstrating a task on demand or answering questions out of the context of real life.

Currently, select pre-schools in Mesa and Douglas county schools are taking part in this project. Next year, 10 school districts will be able to "opt-in" to the program and their teachers will receive training and support materials from the Colorado Department of Education. It is hoped that the participants in this program will be able to demonstrate the quality work they do for Colorado's pre-schoolers and ultimately improve learning for all children in these programs.

For more information on this program please contact:

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or

Linda Askew
Project Coordinator – Early Childhood Outcomes
University of Colorado, Denver
303-352-3617

The LEAP Project Positive Outcomes for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

LEAP (The Learning Experiences: An Alternative Program for Preschoolers and Parents) project is designed to train and assist local school districts in developing and implementing a highly effective, developmentally appropriate and a less costly means of service delivery with positive child outcomes for young children with autism spectrum disorders. The project, funded in part through the Colorado Department of Education, works with three districts each year for a period of two years of intense training and monthly onsite mentoring.

The efficacy of the LEAP Project has been studied extensively. Results of longitudinal studies include significant reductions in autistic symptoms after two years of intervention, marked developmental progress, more social engagement, no signs of developmental regression and reduced signs of stress and depression with families involved in the program.

Currently, LEAP is working with Northeast BOCES, Poudre School District and Mesa County School District teams and are in a follow-up year with Greeley and Gunnison districts. Douglas County schools have recently been identified as a LEAP demonstration site.

For more information about LEAP, contact Phil Strain at Phil_Strain@ceo.cudenver.edu.



"Pumpkin, pumpkin,
pumpkin, pumpkin,
pumpkin. They're a
family!"

By Cory

IEP Development Options Unique to Colorado's Preschool Services

By Jane L. Amundson and Nan Vendegna,
Colorado Department of Education

Although there are many similarities in guidelines between K-12 and preschool services, there are also some things unique to the preschool years that allow flexibility for districts and for families in how to meet the needs of young children with disabilities.

Age Eligibility

Under Colorado's School Finance Act, administrative units are permitted to serve eligible children and count them on the state count for PPOR beginning at age 2 years 6 months, provided that the child will turn 3 years of age during the first semester. *Note: In order to count the child on the federal (December 1) count, the child must turn three by December 1st.*

Administrative units are strongly encouraged to exercise the option to serve 2 ½ year olds in order to ease transition for young children entering the program and to allow districts to receive funding for children who otherwise may be served for many months of the school year without state or federal funds.

Transitions, even the tiniest transition from one activity to another during the day, are very difficult for young children. Transitioning into preschool services is a major transition involving adjustment to new caregivers, routines and environments and can also be particularly challenging to families as they grapple with changes in service delivery models and their child's earliest exposure to public school. Traditionally, children who turned 3 years of age in the fall would enter preschool on or around their third birthday rather than begin at the beginning of the school year with the rest of the preschool group. The new preschooler's adjustment to the new setting, however, is slowed and complicated when the existing preschool group has already mastered routines, made friends and established play schemes and rhythms. Further, if the child does not begin until their third birthday and this falls after the October count date, the administrative unit will not be able to count the child and must

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serve the child the rest of the school year with no state funding.

Preschool Settings

Inclusion for preschool age children means serving that child, to the greatest extent possible, in settings where the child would be found if he/she did not have a disability. Integrated setting requirements mean the extent to which the child is educated with children who do not have disabilities. In Colorado, the early childhood system has capitalized on braided funding opportunities to create integrated environments for children by bringing special education funding, CPP, tuition, and in some cases, Head Start funding, together to join diverse groups of learners at the preschool level. Some districts have found ways to serve children who have disabilities in community settings.

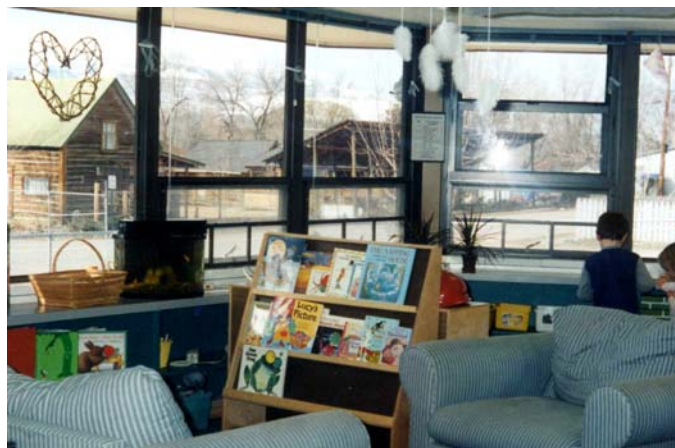


Eligibility

Eligibility for preschool age children must be established using a score on a standardized instrument of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean or below the 7th percentile. Because of the limitations of formal assessment with this age group, however, teams are encouraged to utilize more authentic assessment strategies in all areas of development with a standardized instrument used in the area of concern only. This is different from eligibility determination for infants and toddlers where standardized testing is permissible, but not required and not encouraged.

One unique characteristic of preschool eligibility in Colorado is that a child under six could be made eligible for *motor interventions only* using the Preschooler with a Disability label. This is especially appropriate for children with sensory integration disorders or physical challenges that are impacting the child's overall development and access to the preschool curriculum.

Colorado early childhood services have some unique features that are often unknown or are confusing to IEP teams who primarily serve K-12 students. For more information on these or other preschool policies, please call (303) 866-6943.





SPECIAL REVIEW

SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW ISSUES

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS—IDENTIFICATION OF PARENTS

Visit the Special Education Law Website:

- For Parents Rights and other special education informational brochures:
www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/spedlaw.htm
- To view the updated Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act:
www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/ECEARules2002.pdf
- To view the IDEA Amendments of 1997: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/Policy/IDEA/index.html
- To view recent Due Process Hearing Decisions:
www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/DueProcess.htm
- To view recent Federal Complaint Decisions:
www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/FedComplaints.htm



DEFINITION OF PARENTS UNDER THE IDEA

Although natural or adoptive parents who reside with a child are parents within the meaning of IDEA, other adults may also be considered parents under the IDEA as well. Any of the following individuals may be a parent, for purposes of rights and responsibilities under the law:

1. Natural or adoptive parents.
2. Guardian (other than the state for children who are state wards.)
3. Person acting in the place of a parent.
4. Surrogate parent.
5. Foster parent.

34 CFR 300.20

PERSONS ACTING AS A PARENT OF A CHILD

An individual may meet the definition of a parent under IDEA if he is legally authorized to act as a parent and has no conflict of interest that would render him incapable of adequately representing the interests of the child. *Ysleta Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 29 IDELR 1093 (SEA TX 1998). The U.S. Department of Education suggests a person should be considered to be acting as a parent if he has ongoing day-to-day involvement in the life of the child and personal concerns for the child's interest and well-being. For example, this can include a grandparent

or stepparent with whom a child lives or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare. 34 CFR 300.20(a)(3).

CHILDREN WHO LIVE WITH RELATIVES

IDEA does not address who the parent is in cases where a child with a disability is living with a relative other than his parents. The resolution of this issue is left to the states. Generally speaking, a parent must live with the student and have a relationship with the student that can be characterized by a universally recognizable familial-type label, such as "guardian,"

"stepparent" or some type of blood relative. *Family & Children's Center, Inc. v. School city of Mishawaka*, 19 IDELR 780 (N.D. Ind. 1993).



STATE LAW DEFINITIONS OF PARENTS

STATE LAW DEFINITIONS OF PARENTS

A state may define the term "parent" more expansively than does IDEA, giving a wider range of individuals or entities the ability to represent children in IDEA claims. *Family & Children's Center, Inc. v. School city of Mishawaka*, 19 IDELR 780 (N.D. Ind. 1993)

LIMITATIONS ON PEOPLE WHO CAN ACT AS PARENTS

A state may limit the ability of

(Continued on page 9)

IDENTIFICATION OF PARENTS (continued from Page 8)

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certain individuals who have legal responsibility for a child to be deemed a person acting as a parent. *Ysleta Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 29 IDELR 1093 (SEA TX 1998). OSEP has provided Guidance on how Part C regulations address the obligations of a lead agency to protect a child who is a ward of the state, and certain limitations when appointing a surrogate parent, if one is needed,

Letter to Baker, 35 IDELR 10 (OSEP 2000).

TRANSFER OF PARENTAL RIGHTS TO STUDENTS UPON THE AGE OF MAJORITY

States can choose to transfer a parent's rights to students who are competent to act on their own behalf upon reaching the age of majority. 34 CFR 300.51. However, where such a transfer of rights takes place, parents will



always retain the right to receive all notices sent by school districts under IDEA. Beyond that, each state decides the extent to which school districts must take actions to keep the parents in the loop.

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The age of majority, for special education students in Colorado, is 21.

COLORADO'S DEFINITION OF PARENTS UNDER THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL ACT (ECEA), 1 ccr 301-8

2.07 Parent and Educational Surrogate Parent

2.07(1) Parent shall mean biological parent, adoptive parent, guardian or person having legal custody of the child.

2.07(2) Educational surrogate parent shall mean a person who has training and is assigned

to represent the child in all educational decision-making processes



pertaining to the identification, evaluation, educational placement of the child and the provision of a free, appropriate public education to the child whenever the parent of a child with a disability is unknown, cannot be located, is unavailable or the child is a ward of the state.

An Educational Surrogate Parent must be appointed by the Special Education Services Unit of the Colorado Department of Education.

OSEP EXPLAINS PART C'S 'SURROGATE PARENT' RULES

OSEP 2000. Part C regulations require the lead agency to appoint a surrogate parent for a child when necessary to protect the child's IDEA rights. However, the agency is prohibited from naming as a surrogate any person who provides early intervention services to the child or to any family members. Employees of state

agencies are also ineligible to serve. OSEP noted that a foster parent may act as a child's "parent" if permitted by state law and provided IDEA requirements are met. In the alternative, a guardian may serve as a parent, but not if the state itself is the guardian for a ward of the state. *Baker, Letter to*, 35 IDELR 10.



Individuals with Disabilities Education

Law Report, Cumulative Digest & Tables, Volume 34-36, 2002 LRP Publications, p. VIII-148.

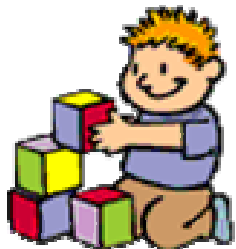
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Catching Up

Updates from Special Education



Charting a Course for the Future—A Transition Toolkit



Growing up is not easy! It is even more complicated for young adults with disabilities. Far too many students with disabilities leave school lacking the academic, technical, and social skills necessary to find and/or maintain employment, and often the jobs they do find are low paying and offer no health benefits.

As students prepare to move from school to community living and employment, good program planning can help them become independent, productive adults. Identifying the challenges students will face as adults, plus preparing and assisting them to meet those demands successfully, requires careful transition planning which begins at the earliest age possible.



This kit is designed to help teachers, parents, and students:

- ◆ Understand the transition concepts and processes;
- ◆ Determine and conduct appropriate assessment activities;
- ◆ Successfully complete the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to meet transition compliance requirements;
- ◆ Develop comprehensive long-term student plans for transition using a portfolio checklist to frame the process;
- ◆ Access appropriate agencies and resources;
- ◆ Use the transition planning process to ensure that student's move from school to post- secondary education, community living and employment with appropriate support

This is available at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/transresources.htm>

Guidelines for Paraeducator Qualifications

In order to close the achievement gap, those students who need the most help with their learning need to be taught by highly qualified teachers and paraeducators.

The No Child Left Behind Act, passed on January 8, 2002, provides a new standard for paraeducators (Title I, Part A, Section 1119). The most recent draft guidance, published November 15, 2002, provides additional clarification on the intent of the law.

We believe that the Reauthorization of IDEA will also strengthen requirements for the training of paraeducators.

At CDE we are currently in the process of developing guidelines for paraeducator qualifications to assist local education agencies in ensuring that paraeducators are adequately trained and supervised. Additionally, we hope to provide resources to help local districts determine how to assess and access training for paraeducators.

Look for the Guidelines for Paraeducators on the CDE website (www.cde.state.co.us) in February, 2003.



Resources

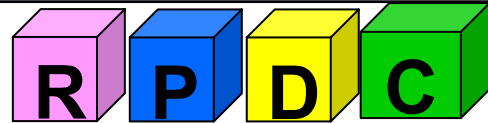
CDE - Special Education Services Unit is pleased to introduce the *Guide to School Mental Health Services*, the *Cooperative Planning Handbook for Youth with Developmental Disabilities* and the newly revised *CDE/DVR Cooperative Services Handbook for Youth in Transition*.

The *Guide to School Mental Health Services* is designed to assist school personnel, students and their families in understanding and accessing mental health services in school and during transition from school to adult life. It is also intended to be a resource for school mental health professionals as they work with educators and families. The *Guide to School Mental Health Services* may be used as a foundation for developing services for students with social/emotional problems who need mental health interventions to benefit from education.

The *Cooperative Planning Handbook for Youth with Development Disabilities* was developed in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Services and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The information in the handbook is designed to assist agency services providers, educators, students and their families in planning and coordinating transition services for youth with developmental disabilities. Examples of cooperative services between education, DD services and VR services are included.

The *CDE/DVR Cooperative Services Handbook*, originally disseminated in 1999, has been revised to reflect minor changes that were a result of the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. The Handbook was designed to assist DVR staff, educators, students and their families in coordinating school and vocational rehabilitation services as youth are preparing to transition from school to adult services and desire an employment outcome.

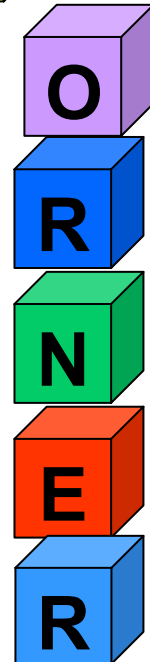
Permission to copy is granted. All three handbooks are available on the CDE website to be downloaded and printed at no cost. The website is www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped. You may also request additional copies by calling Wendy Ulibarri at (303) 866-6799 or e-mailing her at ulibarri_w@cde.state.co.us.



By Lois Adams, Colorado Department of Education

For the last 4 years, the Colorado Department of Education has been developing a regional model to provide professional development. Regional Professional Development Councils (RPDC) now exist in each region with membership representing many professional and family viewpoints. The councils identify professional development needs, plan and provide activities to meet the needs and evaluate efforts. As a result, some excellent training has come to all areas of our state. Highlights of these accomplishments are described by region.

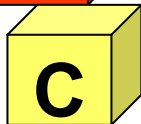
For comments or more information, please contact the appropriate Regional Professional Development Coordinator.



Region: West Central

Regional Coordinator: Dick Dowell, rdowell@attbi.com

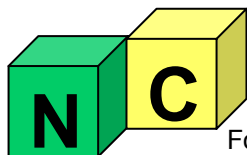
West Central Rolls On!



The four priorities targeted this year include implementing school-wide behavioral supports; introducing differentiated curriculum, instruction, and assessment (DCIA); ongoing para-educator training; and building positive parent/school relationships.

One component of the DCIA training this year has been to support math workshops for general and special educators at various instructional levels. This year's para-educator event is scheduled for February 2003 and has become an ongoing opportunity for support staff to keep abreast with the increasing responsibilities of paras. Parent/school partnerships were strengthened in a regional workshop last October where 250 parents, educators, medical and other professionals spent three days attending workshops together in order to develop more effective teams with goals to improve results for all students.

The West Central Professional Development Council actively seeks input from a variety of sources in the planning for regional training opportunities.



Region: North Central

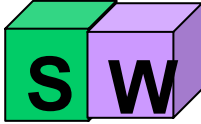
Regional Coordinator: Betty Moldenhauer, moldenhauerib@attbi.com

For the 2002-2003 school year, fifteen Collaborative Learning Teams were established (5 for Differentiating Instruction, 5 for Literacy and 5 for Positive Behavior Management), with 10 or more educators per team. The teams are choosing a related instructional text for study. They are participating in ten one and one-half hour sessions with a kickoff and culminating session.

Another project currently is the provision of mini-grants for supporting Behavior Evaluation Support Team (BEST), which are available to special education directors. Centennial BOCES is the administrative unit providing leadership and facilitating the projects.

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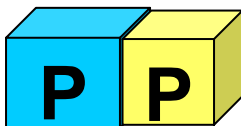
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Region: Southwest

Regional Coordinator: Sandra Berman LaFrance,
lafrance@frontier.net

Numerous teams of educators across the Southwest region are currently participating in a training initiative that addresses differentiating curriculum, instruction, and assessment through professional learning communities. The initiative focuses on the content of differentiating and incorporates best practices in professional development and adult learning into its design. The project is designed to build regional capacity in meeting the needs of all learners. Participants are increasing their ability to use effective pedagogy and sharing this information with colleagues throughout their schools and districts.



Region: Pikes Peak

Regional Coordinator: Peter Matthews,
pmatthew@mail.uccs.edu

"Supporting School Improvement Efforts" will be presented at the "Courage to Risk 2003 Collaborative Conference on Special Education." We hope to provide insight into the process of building effective educational practices in schools to benefit all children. A brief overview of the 11 schools from 10 districts in the Pikes Peak Region that are part of the Supporting School Improvement Efforts will be given.



Region: North East Region

Regional Coordinator: Ann Blackburn,
annb@kci.net

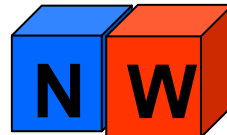
The Northeast Regional Professional Development Council has continued to support 2 major professional development initiatives in the Northeast Region. The 2 initiatives are 1) **School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports** and 2) **Differentiating Curriculum Instruction and Assessment**. **Paraprofessional education** is another area of regional need that the RPDC addressed, implementing a plan for educational financial support for paraprofessionals in the region.



Region: Metro

Regional coordinator: Jane Keen,
keen_j@cde.state.co.us

A series of powerful and interconnected workshops and classes are providing outstanding regional professional development opportunities. Working with the Front Range BOCES for Teacher Leadership to offer a variety of classes and workshops throughout the Metro area, the Metro Regional Professional Development Council has planned opportunities in Literacy Development, Differentiating Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Behavior Management.



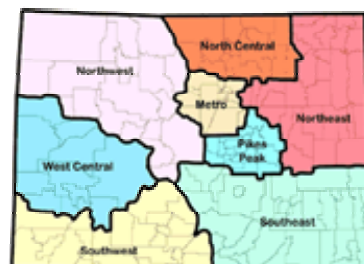
Region: Northwest

Regional Coordinator:
Valinda Yarberry,
yarberry_v@cde.state.co.us

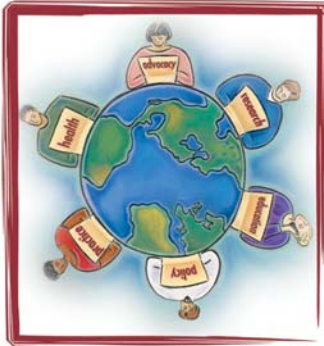
The Moose is Loose!

With the mighty moose, the regional mascot, leading the charge the Northwest Regional Council for Professional Development (RCPD) is living up to their motto – Mountains Organized for Ongoing Staff Education. This becomes a monumental undertaking when you consider that the region covers nearly 25% of the state, from Salida in the South to the Wyoming and Utah borders in the north and west. Undaunted by this mere obstacle of great distances and high mountain passes, the RCPD and it's governing board, the Northwest Council for Professional Development (NCPD), offer duplicate courses at different locations and work closely with all 19 school districts to provide training and coaching relevant to local teachers.

The staff development activities focus on improving reading, writing and math skills of all students with additional opportunities for teacher training in Differentiating Instruction.



**preserving rights.
strengthening voices.**



...the power of social work

The theme for the 2003 National Professional Social Work Month campaign is **“The Power of Social Work: Preserving Rights and Strengthening Voices.”** As this year marks the 20th annual (official) celebration of the social work profession, we have chosen a theme that underscores the commitment social workers make in improving all communities through legislative advocacy, service delivery, research, and education.

Preserving rights. As dedicated advocates for children’s rights, as well as all other civil rights, social workers continue to lead efforts that enhance human well-being. They shape programs and policies that strengthen individual lives and improve the society in which we live.

Strengthening voices. Social workers also work to empower those who are frequently unheard. They open doors of

access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need. Whether they work in direct practice, administration, education and research, or policy development, professional social workers are trained to make an impact. Every day, the quality of life for millions of people is improved as they learn to use their own personal power, to build brighter futures for themselves and their families.

School Social Workers Improve Local Education Systems

School social workers are one of the few resources in schools for addressing personal and social problems that potentially inhibit a student’s ability to learn. There are nearly 10,000 school social workers in the United States today, and approximately 400 in Colorado, who realize that students who are hungry, sick, or worried about their families cannot achieve as well in school as students who do not have these concerns.

School social workers, like many Americans, are concerned about the growing social problems affecting our youth—including substance abuse, teen pregnancy, HIV infection, suicide, abuse and neglect, and family violence. As a critical link between the school, the family, and the community, school social workers help make these environments more beneficial to students.

School social workers provide a range of services including:

- ◆ Assessment and diagnosis of students for special education services;
- ◆ Individual and/or group counseling with students experiencing mental health or social difficulties;
- ◆ Setting up student assistance programs and providing supports for all students;
- ◆ Crisis intervention;
- ◆ Encouraging parent participation through phone contacts and home visits with parents who are overburdened;
- ◆ Navigation of systems and accessing resources for students and their families; and,
- ◆ Meetings with teachers.

In the context of group work, school social workers run counseling groups for students and work in classrooms. They may also offer support for struggling parents or facilitate staff meetings designed to encourage school change. Overall, school social workers are viewed as experts in understanding human behavior, mental health issues, relationships, and interventions. They focus on individual strengths and connect students, families, and communities to resources that foster success and achievement.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Mar 2-8 **Celebration! School Social Work Week**
- Mar 6-8 **Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference** - Parents encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences are family centered conferences designed to offer support, information, and education to parents who have disabilities and professionals who provide them support. PEP promotes the partnerships that are essential in support and including children with disabilities and their families in all aspects of the school and community. For more information, contact the PEP Hotline at (303) 866-6846, via email at heck_k@cde.state.co.us or download the brochure at: www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/PEP_brochure.pdf
- Mar 27-29 **National Invitational School Social Work Conference**—Presented by the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) at the Crystal City DoubleTree Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. For more information, call the conference hotline at (847) 289-4642.
- Apr 11 **Sliver Grants** - New application criteria is posted at www.cde.state.co.us/cde/sped/slivergrants.htm. Funds are for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2004. Since the applications are due early, applicants will know if they are funded in early June (therefore, funded projects can begin July 1 without any delays. For more information, please contact Cyndi Boezio at boezio_c@cde.state.co.us or by calling (303) 866-6853.
- April 22 **6th Annual Business and Education Partnership Conference** - Connecting Communities, Classroom and Careers . . . Equipping Youth for Academic and Workplace Success will be held at the Marriott Southeast, Denver, Colorado. For more information, contact bepartners@juno.com or call (303) 410-6579.
- May 1-3 **Colorado School Nurse Conference** - For more information, contact Judy Harrigan at harrigan_j@cde.state.co.us.
- Jul 17-18 **Culture of Childhood Summer Symposium** - For more information, contact Juanita Kirkpatrick at kirkpatrick_j@cde.state.co.us.
- 2003 **Regional Child Find Meetings** - Regional Child Find Meetings will be held throughout the year. For dates see the Colorado Department of Education website and for more information contact: Nan Vendegna at (303) 866-6602 or via email at vendegna_n@cde.state.co.us.



Request for Information or Mailing Changes

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THE MAILING LIST:

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SEND THIS INFORMATION TO:

Kelli Roark, Inside Special Education Coordinator
Colorado Department of Education, SESU
201 East Colfax, Room 300
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