



T/TAC Bulletin

The Training and Technical Assistance Centers at Virginia Tech and Radford University

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Conquering Change: Prepare, Support, Empower

by Alice Anderson

People of all ages are challenged by change. Transitions are changes we face such as struggling to adjust to a new job, a move to a new residence, or the empty nest when our children grow up and leave home. As we ponder how difficult transitions can be for even the most successful adult, we suddenly realize how overwhelming transitions can be for children and youth, particularly for those with disabilities who often lack the repertoire of coping skills typically possessed by same age peers.

Think about children and their families. They face the challenges of adjusting to the potentially frightening transitions from family to preschool, from preschool to kindergarten, from one school to another, and from high school to the ultimate transition outcomes of work, further education, and community living. The enormity of this is emphasized by the fact that many students experience great difficulty in even the seemingly simple daily transitions such as ending playtime to prepare for school dismissal, or ending the science experiment to begin writing up the lab.

So, the question arises... how can we make transitions smoother for children and youth? We can help them by preparing them with information and personal strategies, supporting them throughout the process, and empowering them to ultimately be in control and self-advocate.

Prepare

Preparation for life transitions must begin at a young age. It is exciting that early childhood special education is making advances in inclusionary practices so young children can better acquire adaptive skills through interaction with same age peers. Simple transitions in a child's day may be eased by a cue from the teacher or parent that a change in activity is going to happen "in three minutes" and helping the child come to closure on the current activity.

As children mature, preparations for major transitions should be ongoing. The students and their families need to know that formal planning for the transition from school to adult life begins by age 14, and that from that point the student's input into their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) will be required by law. This means the student will need to learn about their own strengths and weaknesses, be able to talk to others about their disability, and be able to explain accommodations that will help them succeed. The earlier this begins the better. Children can begin to practice these skills as they make their many school based transitions from one environment or teacher to another.

Some parents may find it difficult to accept the fact that all rights will be transferred from the parents to the youth at age 18. Therefore, instead of over-protect-

ing our children with disabilities we must prepare them to make decisions, problem-solve, and self-advocate. Some youth with significant disabilities may need other adults as guardians, and in those cases there must be preparation to begin the time-consuming court petition for guardianship

An Inside View

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New Ideas for Planning Transitions to the Adult World

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well before the youth reaches the age of 18.

Support

We can support decision-making and self-advocacy in students by asking students for their opinions and prompting them to express their own needs, interests, and desires. For example, we can include children in their IEP meetings well before the age of 14. To be supportive during the meeting we must perceive and connect to the student's level of understanding as goals and objectives are discussed. Remember, when you ask students for their opinions, be sure you clearly acknowledge and value their responses. During the meeting make eye contact with the student, check with the student to see if he/she agrees with the plan, and have the student sign the IEP on the participant page.

Empower

Empowering children to successfully navigate the transitions in their lives will facilitate their success across life situations. Remember a disability must not lower expectations for participation in life, so we must directly teach decision-making and goal setting skills and create opportunities for students to practice those skills. In addition, we can help students develop support networks by providing them with information about school and community resources and facilitating communications in a supportive environment. When adults, who children perceive as having the power, sincerely respond to the concerns and ideas the student expresses, the student will feel important, respected, and empowered.



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How Research is Informing Practice

The special education field has come a long way since 1984. Today, transition is seen as more than providing service routes in the individual's movement from high school to employment—it is seen as a comprehensive approach to educational program development consisting of an alignment of student goals with educational experiences and services.

Since the early 1980s, federal law has underscored the need for comprehensive transition planning and broadened its focus. The 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that:

- Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
- Is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests.
- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

IDEA also states that transition planning must be part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and begin at age 14. By age 16, the IEP should contain a statement of needed transition services for the child, including, when appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or needed linkages. Further, students must be invited to attend their IEP meetings if the purpose of the meeting will be to consider the student's transition service needs.

These new requirements reflect a body of research—much of it supported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)—that describes what constitutes quality transition programs for students with disabilities. OSEP's investment for over two decades has been key in providing practitioners with a sound basis for planning transition programs. But as practitioners implement models and embrace new requirements, they are finding new issues that must be addressed.

A Framework for Implementing Transition Programs

"The most frequently asked questions about transition planning focus on the what, who, and how of delivering transition-related instruction and services," explains Paula Kohler, researcher at Western Michigan University and the Transition Research Institute at the University of Illinois. To answer these questions, Kohler and her colleagues developed a taxonomy of transition practices for students with disabilities. After reviewing the literature, model projects, and exemplary programs, they organized the findings into five categories that are relevant for organizing schools and instruc-

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tions to facilitate transition. The categories are:

- **Student-focused planning.** The IEP is the planning vehicle for implementing the transition requirements specified in IDEA. Student participation in the process is essential, and self-determination skills are considered to be fundamental for participation. The IEP should include identification of valued and attainable postschool goals.
- **Student development.** Research indicates that work quality, attitude, social skills, and academic skills are related to postschool employment. On-the-job training that includes work-based and school-based learning enhances employment rates.
- **Interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration.** IDEA requires collaboration on both the individual planning and community planning levels. Interagency collaboration focuses on programs, systems, and service delivery. Interagency coordinating bodies should include all stakeholders, including consumers, family members, service providers, and employers.
- **Family involvement.** Research indicates that parents and family members should be involved in transition planning. Because many families are involved in transition activities, practitioners should capitalize on their strengths and abilities.
- **Program structure and attributes.** To implement transition programs that reflect the above categories, schools and programs should be organized accordingly. Educational programs must be based upon postschool goals

and a variety of curricular options must be available to students.

For Kohler, the question of who carries out these practices is just as important. "In a national implementation survey, we confirmed that it takes more than a special education teacher or a transition specialist to implement these practices—it takes the entire school community."

According to Kohler, many researchers concentrating their attention on addressing issues related to how elements of the taxonomy may be implemented.

Please share
the *T/TAC Bulletin!*
Route it, pass it to a
friend, post it on a
bulletin board!
There are at least 2
copies in every school.
Let others know that
T/TAC services are
available to educators.

Summer Camps in Regions 6 and 7

A Leg Up Therapeutic Riding Center
P.O. Box 1257
Abingdon, VA 24212
540/628-8492 Call Sarah Lawson

Camp Virginia Jaycee
2494 Camp Jaycee Road
Blue Ridge, Virginia 24064
540/047-2972
540/947-2043 Call Everett M. Werness

Respite Program Summer Camp
Alleghany Highlands Community
Services Board
Mental Retardation Services
P.O. Box 533
Clifton Forge, Virginia 24422
540/863-1620 Call Betty L. Crance

Camp Easter Seal-West
Route 2, Box 534
New Castle, Virginia 24127-9566
June-Sept. 540/864-5750
Oct.-May 804/633-9855
Call Deb Duerk
Email: debd@campeasterseal-va.org

MDA Summer Camp
Roanoke Muscular Dystrophy
Association
Professional Park
4502 Starkey Road
Roanoke, Virginia 24014
540/772-3237 Call Tanya High-Brooks

River's Way Outdoor Adventure
Center
889 Stoney Hollow Road
Bluff City, TN 37618
423/538-0405 Call Tom Hanlon
Email: tom@riversway.org

This list of camps was compiled by
The Respite Resource Project, Virginia
Institute for Developmental Disabili-
ties. For more information about
summer camp programs located in
other parts of Virginia, contact
Monica Uhl at (804)828-8587.

Bits and Bytes

by Glenna Gustafson

There's a wide variety of information found in these sites on transition. *The Nuts and Bolts of Transition* is a great tutorial to develop an awareness of transition issues for professionals, parents and the general community. Another site, *What Students in Special Education Need to Know About the Transition Years*, is a tutorial designed for students.

Websites

Don't forget that you can access these links directly from the T/TAC homepage <http://tac.elps.vt.edu/htmldocs/UsefulInformation/BitsBytes.shtml>.

The Nuts and Bolts of Transition <http://www.vcu.edu/rrtcweb/techlink/courses/course1/opening.html>

Project TechLink is funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant. This is an online tutorial dealing with transition issues. Don't just stop at visiting this section of the site. There are a variety of other tutorials found here.

What Students in Special Education Need to Know About the Transition Years (ages 14 - 22) <http://www.sna.com/switp/yourlife/>

This site was designed by an organization in California, but the core content is applicable for all students. It walks students through some concrete steps in planning for their transitions.

Life Skills for Vocational Success <http://www.workshopsinc.com/manual/>

This is applicable to anyone interested in teaching life skills as a means to increasing the chance of vocational success.

Transition Summaries <http://www.nichcy.org/transitn.htm>

This series of publications focuses on preparing youth with disabilities to make the transition from high school to the adult world. Over 60 lessons to teach life skills can be found here. As well as numerous links to other disabilities sites.

The ERIC Review on School-to-Work Transitions <http://www.accesseric.org/resources/ericreview/vol4no2/index.html>

This issue of *The ERIC Review* explores the topic of preparing young people to make the transition from school to work.

Steps Project – Steps Toward Educational Progress <http://www.louisville.edu/edu/edsp/transition/>

A project developed by the Special Education Department at the University of Louisville links together state of the art instructional practice at the secondary level along with improved career development and job training strategies.

Deaf Students in Transition Education and Employment Issues for Deaf Adolescents <http://www.gallaudet.edu/~cadsweb/transiti.html>

This report discusses prominent issues regarding the postsecondary employment and education of deaf youth.

Critical Issue: Improving School-to-Work Transition for All Students <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/stw/sw0.htm>

This site provides an overview of various transition practices and programs found across the United States.

Did you know...

Plugged IN - The Monthly CCV Software Academic Newsletter offers a variety of specials, contests, and lesson plan links to subscribers. To subscribe, send an eMail to editor@ccvsoftware.com with **subscribe** in the subject line.

Check out

<http://tac.elps.vt.edu>

After reviewing more than 600 responses from our recent needs assessment, first let us say THANK YOU to all who responded. We read every single response and use the valuable information you provide us in planning for next year's activities. We are always extremely interested in perceptions from the field.

This year we had several individuals indicate they did not know how to get information about T/TAC or what library materials are available through T/TAC. We operate from one large mailing list. If you received the needs assessment, you also receive the newsletter and any other mailings we send out. If you are not on the mailing list, please call 800-848-2714 or 231-5167 and add yourself to our list.

Finally, the best and most comprehensive way to learn about our services, *including a fully searchable, annotated bibliography of our entire library*, is at our website <http://tac.elps.vt.edu>. Not only can you search our library holdings, you can submit a library request while you're online.

Bookmark it!

When "Shifting Gears" Is a Problem

by Barbara Flanagan

Educators typically think of "transition" as the time and preparation necessary to ensure that children successfully move throughout school; that is, between elementary, middle, and high school or from high school to post-secondary and community settings. However, at its basic level, transition is the ability to "shift" from one place or activity to the next. Some children who have an unusual difficulty with transitioning at this basic level may be experiencing problems with temporal-sequential organization. Children who do not have a real understanding of time and who are limited in their ability to organize and plan are susceptible to experiencing transitional disorganization. Children with transitional disorganization experience difficulty "shifting gears" between activities and may find it hard to prepare for what is coming next. Some children may speed recklessly through activities while others may seem to perseverate or focus too hard or too long on one activity finding it hard to shift to the next activity.

In supporting these students, be sure to work with other school personnel to develop consistency in procedures and strategies across the school environments. Developing a simple self-monitoring system that can be used to track progress in developing new behaviors can assist with all related issues. Below are additional strategies teachers can use to help children who experience transitional disorganization to successfully "shift gears".

Difficulty settling down to begin work

- Assign a peer to provide an appropriate role model.
- Have a routine, "warm-up" transition activity to signal the beginning of work (e.g., get out materials, sharpen pencils, solve a brain teaser).

Difficulty transitioning to a new activity

- Provide prompts or signals (e.g., 5 minute warning) that indicate the end of an activity and the beginning of an upcoming transition period.
- Structure time so the child is aware of exactly how much time remains to complete an activity and when to be finished.
- Have the child time activities in order to monitor his/her own behavior and accept time limits. Provide child with time later in the day to complete activities in order to assure closure.
- Assign shorter activities and gradually increase the length of the activities as the child is successful.
- Use a timer to indicate the end of one activity and transition to a new activity.
- Gather child's materials or have child put away materials to signal the beginning of a transition time.

Rushes from one activity to the next

- Explicitly teach and reinforce a simple, 3 step self-monitoring strategy that the child can conduct at the end of each activity. (e.g., Is my work complete? Is my work neat? Have I checked my work for mistakes?).
- Provide more than enough time to finish the activity then decrease the amount of time as the child demonstrates success.
- Give one activity at a time.
- Assign shorter activities.
- Give instructions before distributing activity.

Trouble adjusting to a new setting, routine, or set of expectations

- Give the child extra support and guidance needed to help with adjustment.
- As much as possible, maintain consistency in daily routine.
- Inform child of changes to the routine in advance--use an individual schedule.
- Identify expectations for new settings and routines.
- Teach the skills to be successful in the new situation.
- Avoid activities that tend to overstimulate the child *and* look for signs of overstimulation.

Difficulty getting books and materials home

- Make sure to give adequate time for child to collect and pack the appropriate materials.
- Immediately after each activity have child place items that need to go home in his/her backpack.
- Provide a set of books for home.

Diminished compliance with daily routines

- Teach daily routines as you would any skill.
- Provide clearly stated expectations for all situations.
- Provide an individual schedule.
- Frequently review expectations.

Slowness with routines

- Assign a buddy to provide an appropriate role model or to assist child.
- Be flexible, give the child more time to complete routines.

Early Childhood Corner: Involve Families to Ensure Successful Transitions for Young Children

By Deb Schwabe

Early childhood programs devote special attention to the all-important transition that occurs when young children prepare to move on to kindergarten. Transition planning is a process which should literally span the entire school year and involve a wide array of key stakeholders in both the sending and receiving programs. Transition planning has been the subject of previous T/TAC workshops and if you are interested in this aspect of early childhood transitions, please contact Deb Schwabe to request more information. The focus of this article is how the early childhood educator can support families preparing for the transition to kindergarten. Two specific areas, skill building and emotional support, are highlighted.

The Virginia Preschool Initiative Program, Title I Pre-K, ECSE, Head Start and other locally funded pre-k programs prepare their young students for kindergarten through a variety of classroom activities which may include visits to kindergarten classes, group discussions, role playing, storytelling, art projects and more.

Involve Families

An essential component of successful transitions for young children is the involvement by families in this milestone in family life. For many families the event of their child going off to school as a kindergartner signifies the real end to the most dependent phase of early childhood. This separation from family is far more significant to some than the separation during the preschool experience. Early childhood educators play an important role in preparing families for this significant event. With encouragement and support, both in skill building and the emotional aspect of heading off to kindergarten, educators may ease a family's preparation.

What can the early childhood educator do? First, encourage skill building activities and games of all sorts to maintain basic skills acquired in the pre-k program. Building on experiences and knowledge in areas of language development, problem solving, self-management and social skills lay a foundation for success in kindergarten.

Survey Kindergarten Teachers

If not already a feature of your transition plan, survey kindergarten teachers at the receiving school and have them suggest the top 3 to 5 self-management skills (rather than academic) they feel are critical for incoming students to possess. These skills may range from putting on jackets and shoes independently to being able to follow two-step directions, to recognizing their name in print or being able to convey their full name and address when asked. Use judgement if academic skills are strongly urged by kindergarten teachers for the incoming student. Each early childhood program will have its own emphasis on the level of academic focus that is appropriate for pre-k children. Incorporate the kindergarten teacher defined items with other activities that are familiar to the child from their pre-k program and are fun for the family.

Summer Take Home Packets

Consider including in an end of the year event, a make & take family activity session, focused on preparing summer take home packets. These packets could contain activities which highlight the skills begun in the pre-k program. Encourage games of letter recognition using environmental print; sorting (possibilities here are endless with classifica-

tions of color, size, shape, texture using common household items). You will know best the skills your students may need to practice over the summer. Through a make & take workshop, activities may be custom-made to cater to specific children and the skills which need the most practice.

Emotional Support

Emotional support for children and families facing the transition may be provided and modeled, by teachers and parents who have previously been in the similar pre-k program and who have experienced a successful transition to kindergarten. Educators able to facilitate this family-to-family connection provide a vital link to an available resource for families heading into the kindergarten experience. Help family members understand that children will likely express their own fears and uncertainties about starting kindergarten. Encourage a role play session in which the adult acknowledges the child's fear or concern with reflective listening skills ("Oh, so you're feeling kind of worried that you won't have a friend to sit with at lunch?"). Emphasize the importance of honoring a child's feelings and encouraging them to go further in explaining how they are feeling rather than dismissing them with a well intentioned, "oh, you'll be just fine."

Dispel Uncertainties

When meeting with adults, it is important to address *their* underlying concerns, fears, and questions that may make them uneasy or uncertain about the new experience awaiting their child. As an early childhood educator, you are in a position to direct families to accurate and positive information that can dispel uncertainties. Gather titles of children's books addressing separation issues,

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beginning school or other examples that require coping with a new situation. In *The Right Book The Right Time, Helping Children Cope* (1997), the authors have compiled fiction and non-fiction titles which address a wide variety of issues facing children and families. Under the heading "Separation Anxiety," the authors list the title *Into the Great Forest: A Story for Children away from Parents for the First Time*. The overview reads: "A dream within a story helps a young boy overcome his fears about the first day of school."

Consider sharing with families a pamphlet published by NAEYC titled: *So Many Goodbyes: Ways to ease the transition between home and groups for young children* by Janet Brown McCracken.

Your efforts in directing families and children in a positive direction toward the transition ahead will impact many lives. Your role as early childhood educator completes the full circle as you relinquish your young children to their next great adventure in education: kindergarten.

(If you wish a sample of the pamphlet, *So Many Goodbyes*, or other materials supporting transitions for young children, contact Deb Schwabe at (800) 848-2714.)

Grindler, M.C., Stratton, B. D., and McKenna, M. C. (1997) *The Right Book The Right Time, Helping Children Cope*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

*Don't forget the
Second Annual Early
Childhood Partnership
Conference
July 6-7 and July 27-28*

Limited Scholarships Available

Transfer of Rights for Students with Disabilities Upon Reaching the Age of Majority

SUPTS. MEMO. NO. 44 March 10, 2000

FROM: JoLynne DeMary Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction

We are pleased to provide a resource, *Transfer of Rights for Students with Disabilities Upon Reaching the Age of Majority in Virginia*, to be used as an interim procedure for the transfer of parental rights in special education that occurs when a student with a disability reaches the age of majority. The age of majority in Virginia is 18 (Code of Virginia §1-13.42). The purpose of this resource document is to provide schools, students, parents, and families with useful information about who may make educational decisions after a student has reached age 18.

School personnel inform a student and the parents, one year prior to the student's eighteenth birthday, that the transfer of rights will occur at age 18 and efforts are made to provide a full explanation to the student of the applicable procedural safeguards. Please note that the school's responsibility is limited to informing students and parents of the transfer of rights.

It is the parents' right to pursue any of the following vehicles in making decisions on behalf of their adult students. However, in the absence of documentation of the use of these vehicles, the rights afforded to parents of special education students are transferred to the child upon reaching the age of majority. Parents retain the right to be notified of meetings and may be invited to participate in meetings by either the school or the student as an "other person, with special expertise" member of the individualized education program (IEP) team.

The attached resource presents the three ways recognized by the Virginia Department of Education for a parent, family member, or other person to be appointed to make educational decisions on behalf of an adult student. These are as follows:

1. The parent requests to be the court-appointed guardian and is given authority to make educational decisions at a guardianship hearing before the judge.
2. The parent assists the adult student to appoint or designate, in writing, a competent adult of his or her choice to make educational decisions through the power of attorney, signed and executed by the adult student and a Notary Public.
3. The parent or other competent adult pursues certification that the adult special education student is unable or incapable of providing informed consent in making educational decisions and is considered to be the "educational representative."

The first two options are currently available through state law. The third option is in proposed revisions to the Special Education Regulations and is considered "interim" until those regulations are finalized. The third option was developed to give parents an additional vehicle for making decisions for their adult student.

The resource document provides information for students and parents about a number of issues related to the transfer of education and other rights to an adult student upon reaching the age of majority in Virginia. We recommend that this document be copied and shared with all students aged 17 and older and their parents.

Upon approval of the Virginia Special Education Regulations, the interim procedure in this document will be finalized. The Department of Education will publish the Transfer of Rights document and make it available for dissemination statewide.

Should you have any questions about this material, you may contact the special education technical assistance specialist for your region

<http://tac.elps.vt.edu/>

AAC and Transitions: Being a Competent and Independent Communicator is Key!

By Lora Kingma

When children transition from grade levels and ultimately on to the working world, being independent and successful communicators is essential. This fact holds true for those students using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems too.

Independence and Self-Advocacy

Remembering that all individuals have the desire to communicate, we must help our students using AAC become as independent in their communications as possible. Students using AAC should be given many opportunities to communicate with those around them and make choices for themselves whenever possible. As students transition to higher grades and then on to the working world, they must be self-advocates to be most successful. Families and professionals can help facilitate self-advocacy by encouraging children using AAC to take on responsibilities and to make more choices on their own.

For example, students using AAC should help program their own devices and decide where pictures should be placed. They can help decide what messages they want programmed and ultimately take on bigger responsibilities in the use of their device.

Core Vocabulary

As we work with children who use AAC devices, we must always remember to teach these students to build sentences from single words or phrases as opposed to creating the sentences for them. A core vocabulary should be established at an early age. Core words programmed in the device should be able to be carried across all environments. We should then make sure that the student has

numerous opportunities to communicate in the school and in his/her community to enhance independence. Leadership opportunities for students using AAC should also be offered as frequently as possible.

Life Plans

It is very important that professionals help support families of students using AAC as they begin to develop life plans for their children. Family members need to be provided with all the information they need to make informed choices regarding the AAC device itself as well as how their child will use it successfully in their environment. At home, children using AAC need to be able to communicate with family members in a way that is comfortable and natural regarding their particular lifestyle. They need to experience lots of success when they are communicating with family members and friends in the home and community environment.

It is our duty to become *involved* in family centered planning as opposed to *controlling* the planning process. As families are planning for their child's future, we need to help this process by discussing what is important to the family. Supporting these priorities then creates the plan.

Developing Relationships and Networking

Building relationships within the community helps students who use AAC to have varied experiences outside of the home. Opportunities for communication expand as students develop friendships. As relationships with others outside of the home evolve, work opportunities may also be established. Networking may begin thus creating smoother transitions

to the employment setting. Making connections to community and networking with others should start as early as possible in order for smooth and successful transitions to take place for those students who use AAC.

Reference: Carlucci, D., (1999, March 1). Successful Transitions. *Advance 9* (9) 21-23.

There is no singular transition. Beyond graduation, each phase of an individual's life may require transition planning.

Remember there are multiple hills to climb in the very long journey that is a person's life.

Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D.
December 1997

IDEA 1997: Implications of the Transition Requirements

Excerpted from *National Transition Network Policy Update January 2000* University of Minnesota

One of the purposes of IDEA section 300.1 is "To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living;" The explicit statement that special education and related services are intended to prepare students for employment and independent living makes it clear that educators, parents and students must consider adult outcomes as they plan for students' school experiences.

Content of the IEP (Section 300.347)

Regarding content of the I.E.P. (Section 300.347) appendix A to Part 300 of IDEA final regulations (p.12470) state:

The IEP requirements under Part B of the IDEA emphasize the importance of three core concepts:

- (1) *the involvement and progress of each child with a disability in the general curriculum including addressing the unique needs that arise out of the child's disability;*
- (2) *the involvement of parents and students, together with regular and special education personnel, in making individual decisions to support each student's (child's) education success; and*
- (3) *the preparation of students with disabilities for employment and other post-school outcomes.*

Once again, preparation for employment and post-school results is central to IEP development and should help to focus the IEP beginning at least by age 14, or earlier if deemed appropriate. According to Section 300.347(b) the I.E.P. must include:

(1) *For each student with a disability beginning at age 14 (or earlier if determined appropriate by the IEP team) and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the student under applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's courses of study (such as participation in advanced placement courses or a vocational education program); and*

(2) *For each student, beginning at age 16 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or needed linkages.*

The requirement at Section 300.347(b)(1) focuses attention on how the child's educational program can be planned to help the child make a successful transition to his or her goals for life after secondary school. For example, for a child whose transition goal is a job, a transition service need might be teaching the child how to use public transportation.

A statement of transition services needs should relate directly to the student's goals beyond secondary education, and show how planned studies are linked to these goals. For example, a student interested in exploring a career in computer science may have a statement of transition services needs connected to technology course work, while another student's statement of transition services needs could describe why public bus transportation training is important for future independence in the community.

By beginning to discuss transition at least by age 14, it is hoped that the IEP team will work with each

student and the student's family to select courses of study that will be meaningful to the student's future and motivate the student to complete his or her education.

Site Based Workshops

Beginning August 1, 2000, T/TAC will offer a limited number of school-based or site-based workshops. These are workshops conducted at your school or in your school division. Requests will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. All workshops are full or half day presentations for school staff or teams. Listed below are some of the site-based workshops available for the 2000-2001 school year. To learn more about this opportunity and how to formally request a workshop, contact Barbara Flanagan at 800-848-2714 or 540-231-6875, or look for more information in the fall newsletter.

√ *Getting Acquainted with Augmentative Communication: Features and Considerations in Matching Devices with Communication Needs*

√ *Positive Behavior Supports*

√ *What Parents would Like Us to Know: Ideas for Building a Stronger Special Education Team*

√ *Writing and Teaching with Social Stories*

√ *Designing and Implementing Adaptations and Modifications*

√ *Assistive Technology- A new Journey: An Introduction to Assistive Technology*

√ *Going to Preschool!*

√ *Fostering Emergent Literacy/ Emergent Math Skills in Young Children*

State and National Conferences

Virginia Assistive Technology System Conference 2000

Assistive Technology, Advocacy & Employment: Preparing the Person, Preparing the Workplace
May 25-26, 2000
Fairfax VA
For information: (800) 552-5019

Virginia Department of Education and schools in southwest Virginia present:

Technology Splash
June 20-22, 2000
Abingdon, VA
For information: (540) 628-1834

The 2000 Autism Society of America (ASA)

National Conference on Autism
July 2 – 5, 2000
Atlanta, GA
For information: (800) 328-8476

National Federation of the Blind National Convention

July 2 – 8, 2000
Atlanta, GA
For information: (410) 659-9314

Second Annual Early Childhood Partnership Conference

July 6-7, 2000
Williamsburg, VA
For information: (804) 828-6847
Or July 27-28, 2000
Roanoke, VA
For information: (800) 848-2714

Alexander Graham Bell's 2000 Convention

Sound of Freedom
July 8 – 11, 2000
Philadelphia, PA
For information: (202) 337-5220

17th Biennial Convention

Yours, Mine, Ours: Creating Community Connections
Sponsored by American Society for Deaf Children
July 12 – 16, 2000
Washington, DC
For information: (202) 651-6060

Eleventh Annual Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) Conference

July 18 – 21, 2000
Las Vegas, NV
For information: (804) 278-9187

National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Annual Conference

July 25 – 30, 2000
Washington, DC
For information: (202) 833-4456

The Virginia Division on Career Development and Transition

Summer Institute
July 27-28, 2000
Richmond, VA
For information: ((703) 993-3670

International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) 2000 Biennial Conference

AAC in the New Millennium
August 2 – 6, 2000
Washington, DC
For information: <http://www.isaacconference.org>

National Down Syndrome Congress 28th Annual Conference

August 4 – 6, 2000
Washington, DC
For information: <http://www.ndsccenter.org>

Transition Opportunities for Professional Partnership Services

by Mary Angle, Celeste Rutherford and Emily Sword, Lebanon High School, Russell County Schools

The Special Education Department at Lebanon High School in Russell County is completing a two-year grant, Transition Opportunities for Professional Partnership Services (TOPPS), funded through the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Board for Developmental Disabilities. This project is designed to increase employment opportunities for students with mild to moderate disabilities. In the beginning, employers were surveyed as to their interest in working with the school in developing job placements. A team of local employers and school personnel was developed. The team devised a list of essential job skills and teachers began emphasizing the identified skills in the classroom to prepare students for job shadowing experiences and future employment.

One exciting experience for students with moderate disabilities is "Errand Running". Each week, staff members at Lebanon High School submit errand requests that can be performed in the community during a two-hour period. These errands consist of paying bills at a variety of businesses, grocery shopping, going to the bank, mail delivery and pickup, and even taking pets to the vet. This creates opportunities for students to practice skills in the community and it enhances social and community awareness, strengthens academic abilities, promotes responsibility, and fosters independence. Another benefit is that not only have the students met the community, but the community has met the students and has been impressed by the mannerly, friendly and efficient way in which they conduct business.

The TOPPS grant has enabled students to develop job skills and find career opportunities. Since this partnership began, nine students have gained employment.

Virginia Department of Education

Website

The Department of Education is sending this message to make administrators, teachers and parents more aware of the wealth of resources and information available on the department's Web site. The Web site address is: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>.

There you will find information concerning educational policies and initiatives as well as departmental assistance to schools. Other subjects on the Web site that may be of interest are:

- State Board of Education members, meetings, dates and proceedings;
- School reform and accreditation;
- Communication to schools via Superintendent's memos;
- Contact information for Department of Education staff;
- Resources for use with the Standards of Learning;
- Teacher education and licensure information;
- SOL test information;
- Legislation affecting education;
- Departmental news and press releases.

The news and press release section provides quick access to important information in a timely manner. The information that follows is an example of what you can expect to find in this section. Add the department's site to your bookmarks and check it frequently to remain current with educational issues affecting all Virginians.

Comments Sought on Proposed Technology Standards

The Board of Education is seeking public comments on proposed

Standards of Learning for Computer/Technology to be completed by grade 12. These standards affirm the Board's commitment to high academic standards and to ensure mastery of skills, which will result in students who are both computer literate and competent in the application of technology tools to support their learning needs. The proposed standards may be reviewed at the Department of Education's web site at <http://www.pen.k12.va.us>.

The Computer/Technology Standards by the End of Grades Five and Eight identify technology skills for improving student learning through the integration of technology across the curriculum. Mastery of these basic skills results in students who are both computer literate and competent in the application of technology tools to support their learning needs.

It is the Board's position that in grades nine through twelve, technology skills continue to be integrated across the curriculum, not taught as a separate class. The expectation is that all teachers will be responsible for the student's mastery of these skills. While the proposed standards also identify essential skills for the student's appropriate use of existing and emerging technology tools for communication, productivity, management, research, problem solving, and decision making, the goal is that students in these grades expand and build upon these skills to achieve a higher mastery in the use of technology; therefore testing is unnecessary.

Written comments may be submitted prior to May 12, 2000 directly to Lan Neugent, Assistant Superintendent for Technology, Department of Education, PO Box 2120, Richmond, VA 23218-2120. Comments may also be e-mailed to: echsol@pen.k12.va.us.

Staff Directory

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**Leslie S. Daniel, M.S.,
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**Diann Eaton, M.S.,
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**Selina M. Flores, M.Ed., Early
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Coordinator**

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Training and Technical Assistance Center
 VPI & SU
 222 Lane Hall
 Mail Stop 0254
 Blacksburg, VA 24061

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Blacksburg, VA 24060
 Permit No. 28

Address Service Requested

The mission of Virginia's Training and Technical Assistance Centers is to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth–22 years) and children who have disadvantages or are at-risk for school failure (birth–9 years). The Centers provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth.

T/TAC Services

- ✓ on-site consultation
- ✓ T/TAC-based consultation
- ✓ telephone consultation
- ✓ team planning
- ✓ library loans
- ✓ assistive technology loans
- ✓ information searches
- ✓ regional workshops
- ✓ long range planning
- ✓ transition services
- ✓ referral services
- ✓ linking & networking resources

School Divisions Served

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <i>Region 6</i> | <i>Region 7</i> | |
| Alleghany Highlands | Bland | Pulaski |
| Botetourt | Bristol | Radford |
| Covington | Buchanan | Russell |
| Craig | Carroll | Scott |
| Danville | Dickenson | Smyth |
| Floyd | Galax | Tazewell |
| Franklin | Giles | Washington |
| Henry | Grayson | Wise |
| Martinsville | Lee | Wythe |
| Montgomery | Norton | |
| Patrick | | |
| Pittsylvania | | |
| Roanoke City | | |
| Roanoke County | | |
| Salem | | |