

The Coalition

FALL 2011

Family Resource Center for Disabilities & Special Needs
Parent Training & Resource Center (PTRC)

Successful 14th Annual Conference

On September 17th, the Family Resource Center held its 14th Annual Conference on Disabilities and Special Needs with the theme "Transition: A Life-long Process." Held at The Citadel in Charleston, the conference began with the Donald Bailey family's inspirational account of their journey to create College Transition Connection. The College Transition Connection (CTC) works with select colleges and universities in South Carolina to design, create and fund transition and post-secondary opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities. (<http://collegetransitionconnection.org/>) Thanks to this non profit organization, their son Donald, Jr., and other young adults with disabilities are able to experience college just like their peers.

Following this moving talk (and audience favorite), participants were able to choose between two workshops. One, presented by Rene Reese, Coordinator for Career Development with the R.E.A.C.H. program at the College of Charleston, continued the message that college is an option for children with disabilities. The concurrent workshop targeted those interested in Baby Net/ SC First Steps and the Early Childhood programs available at our local schools. This was presented by Geri Conners, Supervisor for BabyNet, and Jocelyn Clark Quiggle, Coordinator, Berkeley County School District.

Just before lunch, we heard from Melinda Hawk about the Family Resource Center's "Transition Toolkit", which was distributed to parents and educators at the conference. We also received updates from several local agencies about new transition initiatives within the lowcountry.

After lunch, two more concurrent sessions were held. Karen Lurhs, Guidance Counselor, Charleston County School District, and Donna Mundy, Consultant, Institute for Educational Leadership, provided helpful tips for transitions within the school, between schools, and from grade to grade. Across the hall, Jim Hughes and Mariele Castro from Goodwill Industries teamed with Jim Orgel, Counselor for

Students with Disabilities, Trident Technical College, to help their audience explore more options for Post Secondary Life.

In addition, participants enjoyed a tasty catered lunch, visited resources tables presented by various community agencies, and supported the work of the Family Resource Center with purchases at the silent auction tables. All in all, a great conference experience!! We hope you will join us at our next conference scheduled for 2012.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

**Congratulations
to Deserving Advocates**

One of our favorite parts of the annual conference is the opportunity to recognize outstanding advocacy efforts made by those in our local community. This year we were honored to present awards to:

Advocate of the Year
Martha Gomez

Educator of the Year
Dr. Susan Shope Thomas

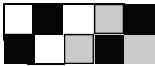
Parent Advocate of the Year
Dr. Robert Scharstein

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Wonderful News!!

The Family Resource Center (FRC) has been awarded a 5 year grant from the US Department of Education to continue the services of our Parent Training and Resource Center (PTRC). Go to page 2 to learn more...

IN THIS ISSUE	
PTRC Update & Changes	2
A Holiday Social Story	3
Transition Toolkit Update	4



Changes at Family Connection

After five years as Area Coordinator of Family Connection in the Lowcountry, Meagan Labriola has resigned from her post to pursue some other interests. Meagan has been a supporter, advocate, and friend to many, many families of children with disabilities in the lowcountry. We send her thanks and the best of luck in all future endeavors.

Even though Meagan was hard to replace, Family Connection has hired a new Area Coordinator. Tracie Hayward comes to Family Connection with extensive experience in public relations and management along with a lot of great energy and ideas! Tracie's first day was November 21st and she can be reached at 843-556-5010 or by Email: thayward@familyconnections.org. Welcome Tracie!!



Thanks & A Big Thumbs UP to Our Supporters

We would like to acknowledge those who helped make this year's Conference a huge success. Volunteers went above and beyond to secure (and make) donations. We couldn't have done it without you! So here's a special "Thanks" to the following people, whose generous donations to our silent auction, helped make it one of our best ever!

- Bed, Bath & Beyond
- Boone Hall Plantation
- Charleston Battery
- Charleston Riverdogs
- South Carolina Aquarium
- Middleton Place
- Children's Museum of the Lowcountry
- Community First Bank
- Betsy Roebuck Filippone
- Isabella Dewitt
- Joyce Nielsen
- Melinda Hawk
- Nia Green
- William Reinecke
- Noni Langford
- Mary Kral
- Kay Ciganovic
- Joe Bonacci

Special Thanks to: The Citadel, Psychology Department, Dr. Conway Saylor, Brian Duke. The Developmental Disabilities Council, Office of the Governor, and a Thank You to ALL of our Silent Auction Shoppers!!

PTRC Updates & Changes






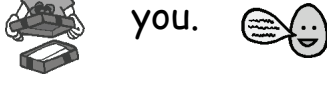

The FRC is honored, once again, to be the recipient of one of 10 national awards to implement a community parent resource center for families in Berkeley, Dorchester, and Charleston Counties. The PTRC has been supporting families through this funding since October 1999. Since that time more and more new families seek assistance each year. While we served over 4 times as many new parents last year as we did our first year, the amount of funds available to do so has not increased in over 12 years. While this is great news, we've had to learn how to do more with less. As a result, we've had to make some changes in our programming.

In the past we have presented an annual Disabilities Conference. This will now become a biennial conference with the next one scheduled for 2013. To provide outreach during the alternate years, we have added a level of support in the form of IEP Fairs. Watch the next newsletter for announcement of the 3 Fairs that will be held next year at various locations throughout the tricounty. In addition, there will be less focus on maintaining Satellite Sites.

Also, we must closely monitor the amount of time Peer Parent Mentors can spend with each family. The purpose of the PTRC is to help parents build the skills and understanding necessary to become their child's best advocate. As always, the families seeking Mentor assistance will receive

A Holiday Social Story

Holidays can be stressful for everyone; this is especially true for some of our youngsters with disabilities. We are often around new family members and friends who might not understand our child's challenges. Expectations may run high, maybe at the expense of understanding. Sometimes, embarrassing moments can result. Manners are important and we want to make sure we teach our children to respect the feelings of others. Even if it's something as simple as knowing the polite way to accept a gift - even if it's a gift we don't like!! Social Stories are a recognized way to teach new skills and improve social interactions. You may find the following social story helpful if your child is one of those who is prone to "complete honesty."

 <p>Getting a Present</p>	<p>Soon it will be time for lots of holidays.</p> <p>Christmas Channukah Kwanzaa</p> 	<p>Sometimes people give each other presents during holidays.</p> 	<p>If I get a present, I might or might not like it.</p> <p>I want I Don't</p> 
<p>It is polite to say "Thank you" for a present even if you don't like it.</p> 	<p>If someone gives me a present I will smile and say Thank you.</p> 	<p>It makes people happy when someone says thank you for a present.</p> 	<p>This social story was put together by Susan Clark with assistance from Boardmaker '95</p>

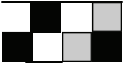
If you'd like to learn more about using social stories with your child - or if you'd like more samples of social stories - please contact the FRC (266-1318) and ask for Susan.

National Study on Parents of Children on the Autism Spectrum

Ann Liesen, MA is a Doctoral Candidate at Oakland University in the School of Education, Department of Counseling, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan. She is conducting a dissertation study examining the relationship between parent's perceived stress and quality of life satisfaction when raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). If you are a parent raising a child with ASD between birth and 21 in your family home at least 50% of the time, she welcomes your participation. You may contribute to this study by answering a survey as honestly as you can. The survey should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes of your valuable time. To participate simply click on the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AutismParentResearch>

If you know someone that is parenting a child on the autism spectrum who may be willing to participate, please forward the survey link to them. Ms. Liesen is seeking parents of children across the entire spectrum of the ASD community. She thanks you in advance for your time! Your contribution will help inform best practice for supporting parents of children with ASD. The Study closes on January, 31, 2012 @ 11:59pm (EST). For more information you may contact Ms. Liesen by e-mail at: AutismParentResearch@comcast.net.

Ordinarily, The Coalition newsletter includes a list of area support groups. Those pages have been omitted in this newsletter but will return in future editions. If you are in search of a support group, you may find archived Coalition newsletters with support group lists on our website at www.frcdsn.org - just click on the "ptrc" tab and scroll down. Or give the FRC a call at 266-1318.



Distribution of Transition Toolkit Begins



Have you started thinking about what your child will do once high school is over? Transition planning can seem overwhelming and more than a little scary. The Family Resource Center (FRC) is committed to helping families prepare for important decisions regarding their child's future. Through funding by a grant from the SC Dept. of Education, and in partnership with key stakeholders, we have completed the Toolkit and thanks to some helpful students at Goose Creek, West Ashley, Wando, and Stratford High Schools, it is ready for distribution. If your child is 13 or 17 years old, has an IEP, and attends school in Berkeley, Dorchester, or Charleston Counties, your school has a free copy for you. Ask for the Transition Toolkit during the first IEP meeting when transition is discussed at age 13 or during the IEP meeting when your child is notified of their age of majority status. If the school is unable to provide you with a Transition Toolkit, please call us at the FRC (843-266-1318) to request a complementary copy. The Toolkit is also available on our website (www.frdsn.org).

One of the purposes of the Toolkit is to help parents and students develop measurable post-secondary IEP goals. Although every student is unique and their education plans individualized, most post-secondary planning can be categorized into three critical areas: Education, Employment, and Independent Living. The Toolkit is designed to provide guidelines and suggestions related to information young adults need to know – and the skills they need to develop – to experience the best postsecondary outcomes. We hope this resource will help the user identify realistic, challenging, and achievable post-secondary goals and assist in planning the special education programs that will help students attain them.

Funding for this project prevented the FRC from providing the Toolkit to *all* students in the tri-county between the ages of 13 and 21. However, if you can't access the Toolkit through our website and want to learn more, please call us at the FRC office to obtain a copy.

Have You Seen the Transition Toolkit?

If you have, we're interested in your opinion. If you'd like to share it, please answer the following questions. Either mail, fax, or email your response (all contact info is listed on the newsletter return address). At some point we may have the opportunity to make changes or updates. Your feedback is important. Please rate the information on a scale of 1 - 5, with 5 being the highest score.

- 1) Were the materials provided easy to read and understand? ____
 - 2) Was the layout of the Toolkit easy to navigate? ____
 - 3) Was the information comprehensive? ____
 - 4) Did the information improve your understanding of the transition needs of the target population of students age 13 - 21? ____
 - 5) Will you use the information provided to develop transition goals for a student with an IEP? ____
 - 6) Are you the parent of a child with a disability? Yes ____ No ____.
- If yes, please provide your child's age ____.
- Please note if you are a Parent ____; Student ____; Teacher ____; Other (specify) _____

Please provide additional comments if you wish.

PTRC Updates

Continued from Page 2

the Parent's Manual and help during a few IEP or 504 Plan meetings. However, the Mentor's help is not meant to be on-going or long term. We just don't have the funds for this level of service. When needed, Mentors can help parents understand the methods of dispute resolution that are in place when there are disagreements with school decisions. We are thrilled to offer Mentoring services to families in the tri-county, but it must be noted that Peer Parent Mentors are not lawyers, service coordinators, social workers, mental health professionals, or "hired guns."

All of our programming is designed to help parents understand the range of options available to their children with special needs. We encourage everyone to take advantage of our training workshops, IEP Fairs, Biennial Conferences, Lending Libraries, Newsletters, and knowledgeable office staff. We look forward to the next 5 years of helping families help themselves.

Language and Early Literacy Activities: Free and Reproducible

Washington Learning Systems is making available, at no cost, parent-child early literacy activities in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Somali, Burmese and Russian. These materials include home and community activities for adults and young children (birth to five) that encourage early language and literacy development. They are appropriate for children with disabilities as well as children who are developing typically.

Each of the activities includes an activity description, and hints for making the activity fun and developmentally appropriate. An activity checklist helps parents and caregivers notice their children's skills, and also cues adults to examine and grow their own interactions with children.

The materials are made available by Angela Notari-Syverson and colleagues, and may be copied and distributed as long as they are not sold. The development of these materials was supported in part by Grant H324M020084 from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and by funding from Washington Learning Systems.

To download materials go to <http://www.wlearning.com> and click on the button that says "Literacy Resources" on the home page. You will need to create a log on account using your email address and a password. For questions please contact: Mary Maddox (206) 310-7401 or mmaddox@wlearning.com

Who Can Help

From the desk of Elaine Mulligan (NICHCY)

Here at the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), we like to think of ourselves as your central source of information and resources on special education. Sometimes, though, you'll need information from outside experts on a child's disability, state-level procedures or resources, or parent supports. That's where our State Organizations Search comes in handy. That's when you need to visit our website: <http://nichcy.org/who-can-help>

How to Search: See the sidebar on the right of this page? It's there on every page on NICHCY's website. Under "Quick Links," you'll see [State Organizations](#). Clicking on State Organizations will bring you to our state search page. There's a brief, handy tutorial video posted there, or you can check out the options for yourself:

Select the **Type of Organization** you're looking for from the drop-down menu. Your choices are: state agencies, disability-specific organizations, organizations for parents, and other disability organizations.

Choose the **state** (or states) you're interested in by clicking on one or more boxes in the "Pick a State" list. Feel free to select several states, or even ALL states (warning – you get a super-long list when you select all).

Then just click on the "**Search State Organizations**" button to get your results!

Then What? Our database includes hundreds of organizations, so you're bound to get a pretty robust list. Be sure to scroll down the list beyond the first few – they're grouped alphabetically by type of organization or disability, so the one you're looking for might be lower down the list. Once you've found what you're looking for, you can use the buttons at the bottom of the page to generate a PDF, print your results, or share them via social media networks.

In the Future So, the next time you're looking for the contact information of an organization in your state that addresses disability-related issues and concerns, remember our State Organizations Search page! It can help you find who's who in your state...from your state vocational rehabilitation agency, to a source for information on spina bifida, to your state's Parent Training & Information Center or Community Parent Resource Center, to.....so much more. Enjoy!

Websites We Like

This one was recommended to us by our "PTRC Personal Trainer" Dr. Mitch Yell, Professor in Special Education at USC. [Intervention Central](#) provides free resources to help struggling learners and implement Response to Intervention. Check it out: www.interventioncentral.org



1575 Savannah Highway - Suite 6
 Charleston, South Carolina 29407
 Phone: 843-266-1318
 Fax: 843-266-1941
 www.frdsn.org
 Email: frc@frdsn.org

family resource center
 FOR DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS, INC.

NONPROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 237
 CHARLESTON, SC

Save the Date to "Party 4 a Purpose!"

to benefit the

Family Resource Center for Disabilities and Special Needs

Thursday, February 9, 2012, From 6:00-9:00



Mad River Bar & Grille
32B Market Street, downtown Charleston

A \$5.00 cover charge will directly benefit the FRC and buy you a drink!
Also, plan to shop our silent auction for your favorite Valentine!

Want to Help? We are recruiting "guest bartenders"
You do the work, the FRC keeps the tips!!!