



**Family Resource Center for
Disabilities & Special Needs**

**Parent's Resource
Manual for
Special Education
Services**

**Parent Training and
Resource Center**

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The Parent Training and Resource Center (PTRC)

The Parent Training and Resource Center offers support and training to families accessing special education services for their children with disabilities. The Parent Training and Resource Center is supported by a grant awarded to the Family Resource Center for Disabilities and Special Needs from the United States Department of Education.

This manual is compiled as a resource for the PTRC Peer-Parent Mentors and the families they support. ***The materials in this manual may be duplicated, however the materials must always be furnished to families without charge.***

This Manual was created to provide a basic understanding of the laws, practices, and procedures related to the education of children with disabilities and special learning needs. The information presented here is not legal advice and should not be used as a legal resource.

For more information about the many services available through the Parent Training and Resource Center, please contact:

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YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S BEST ADVOCATE

- * Welcome to Holland**
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- * Back-to-School Tips**
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WELCOME TO HOLLAND

by Emily Perl Kingsley.

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives.¹ You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

The Twelve Commandments for Parents and Children with Disabilities

*by Virginia Richardson
PACER Parent Training Coordinator*

- I. Thou art thy child's best and most consistent advocate.
- II. Thou hast valuable information about your child. Professionals need your input.
- III. Thou shalt put it in writing and keep a copy.
- IV. Thou shalt try to resolve problems at the lowest level but not hesitate to contact a higher authority if a problem is not resolved.
- V. Thou shalt keep records.
- VI. Thou shalt seek out information when needed.
- VII. Thou shalt take time to think through information before making a decision.
- VIII. Thou shalt have permission to be less than perfect. Important lessons are learned from both successes and failures.
- IX. Thou shalt not become a martyr. Decide to take a break now and then.
- X. Thou shalt maintain a sense of humor. It is great for your emotional well being and that of your child.
- XI. Thou shalt always remember to tell people when they are doing a good job.
- XII. Thou shalt encourage thy child to make decisions because one day he or she will need to do so.

Disability, Special Education, & Related Glossary of Terms

Accessible: Easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, or use safely, independently and with dignity by a person with a disability (i.e., site, facility, work environment, service or program).

Accommodations: Tools, materials, techniques, and procedures that provide equal access to instruction and assessment for students with disabilities. Designed to "level the playing field" for students with disabilities, accommodations are generally grouped into the following categories:

- Presentation (e.g., repeat directions, read aloud, use of larger bubbles on answer sheets, etc.)
- Response (e.g., mark answers in book, use reference aids, point, use of computer, etc.)
- Timing/Scheduling (e.g., extended time, frequent breaks, etc.)
- Setting (e.g., study carrel, special lighting, separate room, etc.).

Aids for Activities for Daily Living (ADL): Self-help aids for use in activities such as eating, bathing, shopping, home maintenance, etc.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. "Adequate Yearly Progress" is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year.

Affective Domain: The classification of functions by the individual involving emotions and feeling.

Affirmative Action: Proactive action to accomplish the purposes of a program which is designed to increase the employment opportunities of certain groups, which may involve goals, timetables, or specifically outlined steps to be undertaken to assure that objectives are reached. The Americans with Disabilities Act does not mandate affirmative action for persons with disabilities, but does require that covered entities ensure nondiscrimination. Title 5, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act does require that affirmative action be taken in employment of persons with disabilities by Federal contractors.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS): A disease caused by a virus that destroys a person's immune system. The AIDS virus, known as HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), severely weakens the immune system causing a person to be highly susceptible to a variety of infections. These infections may not normally be considered serious, but could become life-threatening to a person with AIDS.

Administrative Hearing: Formal judicial process where appeal is heard.

Administrative Officer/Hearing Officer: Person in charge of and decision-maker for formal appeals hearing.

Age Equivalent Score: In a norm-referenced assessment, individual student scores are reported relative to those of the norming population. This can be done in a variety of ways, but one way is to report the average age of people who received the same score as the individual child. Thus, an individual child's score is described as being the same as students that are younger, the same age, or older than that student (e.g. a 9 year old student may receive the same score that an average 13 year old student does, suggesting that this student is quite advanced).

Aids for Activities for Daily Living (ADL): Self-help aids for use in activities such as eating, bathing, shopping, home maintenance, etc.

Alternative Education Placement (AEP): An alternative classroom setting used to improve classroom behavior and address needs that cannot be met in a regular classroom setting.

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR): A variety of procedures for resolving disputes. ADR is a fair and efficient alternative to court adjudication that must be entered into voluntarily by all parties. Some of the more common ADR procedures are arbitration, mediation, and conciliation.

Alternate Formats: Formats usable by people with disabilities. These may include, but are not limited to, Braille, ASCII text, large print, and recorded audio.

Alternate Methods: Different means of providing information, including product documentation, to people with disabilities. Alternate methods may include, but are not limited to, voice, fax, relay service, TTY, Internet posting, captioning, text-to-speech synthesis, and audio description.

Americans with Disabilities Act: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It mandates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in areas such as employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

Aphasia, Expressive: The lack of ability to communicate orally.

Aphasia, Receptive: The inability to communicate aurally (listening).

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA): A systematic process of studying and modifying observable behavior through a manipulation of the environment. Its principles are often applied in teaching individuals with autism and other developmental disorders. It uses an experimental approach of manipulating the environment and tracking alterations in behavior to understand and manipulate functional relationships between behavior and environments.

Apraxia: Difficulty in performing purposeful motor output, in the absence of paralysis or sensory limitation, due to brain lesion or dysfunction.

Aptitudes: Native and acquired characteristics that indicate a capacity for future success in learning.

Arbitration: Process that is more formal than mediation but that also involves a neutral third party; after presentation of both sides a third person decides issue. Normally the third person has experience in the area.

Assessment: Provides information and data which answer a specific set of questions for future planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Assessment, Formal: Provides data through the use of standardized, norm, or criterion-referenced instruments which have specific directions for administration, scoring, and interpretation.

Assistive Technology: Assistive technology is any item or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Attention Deficit Disorder: Attention deficit disorder, commonly referred to as ADD, is a neurological disability characterized by inappropriate attention skills, impulsive behavior, and in some cases, hyperactivity. ADD is marked by chronic behaviors that last at least six months and appear before age seven. The behaviors may include: fidgeting, difficulty remaining seated, difficulty following instructions, leaving tasks uncompleted, and appearing not to listen when others are speaking.

Attention Span: Duration of time one can attend to a specific task.

Auditory: Relating to hearing

Auditory Association: The ability to relate to material (words and concepts) presented orally in a meaningful way.

Auditory Discrimination: The ability to distinguish (to discriminate) between sounds which are heard and sounds which may be somewhat alike.

Auditory Dyslexia: Difficulty translating speech into writing; difficulty distinguishing between certain sounds of speech accurately; and difficulty establishing sound with written equivalent.

Auditory Figure-Ground: The ability to concentrate on the task at hand despite the presence of other sounds (voices, miscellaneous noises) within the same environment.

Auditory Memory: The ability to remember information received through the auditory channel.

Auditory Processing: The ability to act upon auditory information in order to generalize, abstract, classify, integrate, etc.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD): An inability to accurately process and interpret sound information. Students with APD often do not recognize subtle differences between sounds in words.

Auditory Reception: Auditory decoding; understanding spoken words.