



Pyramid Parent Training/ Operation Positive Change



Volume 6, Number 3

Newsletter

May, 2003

Mediation-

A Tool to Resolve Special Education Disputes

Conflict between parents and school officials is normal and predictable. Most parents want the "best" services for their children. School officials are only required to provide "appropriate" services for children with disabilities.

Like it or not, parents have to negotiate with school personnel for special education services. A way parents and educators can work toward mutual solutions is by mediation.

Mediation is a process that is paid for by the state that can be used to resolve disagreements between the parents and the school district for providing services to the child. A trained and impartial professional facilitates the mediation process. A mediator does not take sides, but helps each person clearly communicate their concerns, find common ground and explore possible solutions. The mediator does not make problem-solving decisions, but rather helps all participants reach their own mutually agreeable resolution.

*Always go to an IEP
with someone!*

*Never sign an IEP
that has been developed
without you and/or that you
don't fully understand!*

*Experienced Pyramid
Parents will be there for you!
Just call!*

827-0610

If you have to go to mediation, you have to prepare by doing the following:

- Organize your documents. Record dates and notes on them. Make three copies; keep one for yourself, give one to the party involved and one to the mediator.
- Identify issues you want to discuss during the mediation process.
- Make a written list. This will help you address all your concerns in an organized manner.
- Consider all possible solutions to the problem.
- Ask a parent advocate for help. A parent advocate can answer your questions and may attend the mediation.

There are no guarantees

Mediation, contd. on page 2

Family Leadership Academy Update:

Parents as Experts, Advocates, and Teachers

On April 12, 2003, parents came together once again to participate in the Family Leadership Academy. Building on prior trainings in IDEA rights and effective teamwork, Ted Quant from the Twomey Center presented on leadership skills in relation to conflict. Ted stressed that conflict is not always bad, that there can be more than one winner and one loser in a conflict, and that there is more than one "right way" to handle conflict. In fact, there are several styles of handling conflict, and we all use every style at different times and in different situations. We all worked together to identify different emotions and different conflict styles, as well as to develop strategies for making times of conflict with schools opportunities for effective improvements in our children's lives.

The Academy is sponsored by Pyramid and Families Helping Families as part of the Louisiana State Improvement Grant (LaSIG). LaSIG programs and funds have been instituted at several schools

LaSig, contd. on page 4

Mediation: from page 1

that mediation will lead to a written agreement. If you participate in mediation and do not reach an agreement with the school district you may make a request for a due process hearing.

If you and the school district agree, some or all of the mediation agreement may be given to your child's IEP team. If that happens, then a meeting should be held to incorporate the relevant parts of the agreement into the IEP and to proceed with implementation.

Mediation and negotiation are not easy. Natural responses to conflict are fight and flight. Despite these difficulties, parents and school districts are encouraged to use negotiation and mediation to resolve disputes about educating children with disabilities. This way parties work together, and they are in control of the outcomes.

Contact Michelle DeVille at the Pyramid Parent Training office at (504) 827-0610, if you have any questions or comments.



The Good Things We See in Our Kids

Young Writer

by Joyce Monroe, Mother



James Monroe

My son, James Monroe, is 10 years old. He is in the 5th grade and attends school at Valena C. Jones. I want to share something he wrote:

The Flying Tennis Shoes

If I had flying tennis shoes, I would go to San Diego, California to watch all of the San Diego Chargers Games.

They are my favorite football team. I would root for my favorite player, Ladean Tomlins.

When football season is over, I would go to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to watch the 76ers basketball games. At the games, I would root for Allen Iverson who is my favorite basketball player.

After basketball season, I would go to the north and south pole, plus I would go to Egypt, Africa, Asia and Europe with a visit to Russia. Then it would be off to Canada, South America, and Australia. I would have a great time.

Finally, I would go to Antarctica and all around the world having fun.

TIPS FOR PARENTS: Inspiration comes from one's heart and soul. Help your child embrace his or her inner creativeness.



We would like to hear from you.

If you would like to have your child featured in the Kid's Corner section please call us at the Pyramid office.

We will send you a short form to fill out and return along with a current picture of your child. Call us at 827-0610.



*Hoa Nguyen
Receives
Outstanding
Service Award*

Hoa Nguyen, the Pyramid Parent Training Program's parent associate for the Vietnamese community, was awarded a plaque in appreciation for her dedication and service to families of children with disabilities. She is pictured here with Ursula Markey, Co-Director of the program.

~ S U M M E R C A M P I N F O R M A T I O N ~

Camp Rainbow

(Jefferson Parish Parks and Recreation-Eastbank)

Where: Metairie Playground
-1521 Palm Street in
Metairie

• Before and aftercare
available

When: Session 1— June
9-June 27; Session 2—July
7-July 25

Time: 9:30am-3:00 pm
Cost: \$190 per session

Camp Sunshine

(Jefferson Parish Parks and
Recreation-Westbank)

Where: Call Reble Luke at
349-5000

When: Session 1— June 9-
July 3; Session 2—July 14-
Aug 8

Time: 7:30am-5:30pm
Cost: \$240 per session

Music Camp

Call Stephen Foster for more
information 488-0103.

Special Friends Camp

(St. Bernard Parish)

Where: Call Donna Schultz at
277-0063

When: July 7-18, 2003

Time: 9:00am-4:00 pm

Monday through Friday

Cost: \$60 a week, and a \$30
registration fee

ATTENTION PARENTS: If enough parents are interested in a summer camp in the New Orleans area, Volunteers of America will put together a camp site. There will be a weekly cost for the camp. If you are interested, contact the Pyramid office. Please remember to respond in a timely manner so the VOA can provide a camp for your children.

LaSig: from page 1

throughout the state to simultaneously improve the educational experiences of students in general and special education. A very important piece of this initiative requires meaningful and consistent parent input and involvement at all levels of the education system. In New Orleans, LaSIG has been implemented at Abrams Elementary, Colton Junior High, Abramson High, Landry, Augustine Middle, Little Woods, Banneker Elementary, McDonough 28 Junior High, Bell Junior High Elementary, and Woodson Middle.

The next meeting of the Family Leadership Academy will be May 10th from 9am – 3pm at the Fine Arts Center. If you would like more information on the Academy or LaSIG activities, call Celeste (see below) at 827-0610.



Celeste Hannah

It is such a great pleasure to be working with Pyramid Parent Training! My name is Celeste Hannah, and I joined the Pyramid Team last Fall. Currently, I am working as Pyramid's liaison to the Louisiana State Improvement Grant (LaSIG).

I received a Master of Social Work degree from Tulane University in 1998, and since that time, I have been blessed to find jobs that let me focus on my love of community, policy, and advocacy work. New Orleans has become home since I moved here in 1997, and I look forward to working with the Pyramid Family to make it a place of opportunity, learning, and joy for all of our children.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE "BESE BOARD"

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) was established as a constitutional body in 1974, becoming the administrative policy-making body for elementary and secondary schools. In addition, BESE became the governing Board for vocational-technical education, special schools, and units in Special School District No. 1.

BESE is composed of eight elected officials from eight BESE districts and 3 at-large members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Louisiana Senate. Members serve a four-year period concurrent with the Governor's term. In addition, a student member is selected each year to serve on the Student Standards/Assessment Committee. BESE members do not receive a salary but are approved to receive the same per diem as State Legislators and are reimbursed for travel expenses associated with BESE business.

In addition to the roles described above, BESE's duties include the administration of the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund, or 8(g), and budgetary control for elementary, secondary, and vocational-technical schools. BESE also sets policy for the assessment of teachers/administrators and student performance; serves as the local school Board for the state's special schools; coordinates educational programs in Special School District No. 1, which includes state correctional institutions and mental health facilities; and administers the state's Charter Schools Program.

A good deal of BESE business is conducted through a system of 10 Standing Committees. The President of BESE appoints at least three BESE members to each committee, including a Committee Chairman. Committee meetings are held during the week prior to BESE's monthly meeting, usually held every fourth Thursday. BESE Standing Committees include: 1. Board Relations/Strategic Planning/Administration: The numerous duties of this committee include administering the State Superintendent's evaluation.

BESE, contd. on next page

2. 8(g)/Louisiana quality Education Support Fund:

This permanent trust fund was established in 1985 by the State Legislature in anticipation of a settlement of the 8(g) amendment to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. 8(g) is intended to provide grants for programs that enhance elementary, secondary, and vocational-technical education. At present, the fund amounts to more than \$832 million, with annual interest equally divided between BESE and the Board of Regents.

3. Financial/Audit Review:

The duties of this committee include developing a formula each year to equitably distribute funds to parish and city schools.

4. Legal/Due Process: The duties of this committee include serving as the court of last resort for conflicts arising from Board actions prior to action in the judicial court system.

5. Legislative/Policy Oversight

6. Quality Educators

7. School and Community Support: The duties of this committee include considering transportation services as a school support issue.

8. School Standards/Accountability: The duties of this committee include establishing criteria based on gathered data for rewards, corrective actions, and other school classifications; and reviewing and approving the school approval process.

9. Student Standards/Assessments: The numerous duties of this committee include determining necessary inter-

ventions based on student and school assessment results; setting minimum standards for high school graduation; implementing policies to raise student and school performance; providing for education needs of special populations; and providing for adequate textbooks.

10. Vo-Tech

In addition to these Standing Committees, BESE has established several Advisory Councils that provide recommendations to appropriate committees. Council members are appointed and approved by BESE. The Advisory Councils include:

- Adult Education Advisory Council
- 8(g) Advisory Council
- Nonpublic School Commission
- Parish Superintendents Advisory Council
- Special Education Advisory Council
- Louisiana Education Assessment Testing Commission
- MFP Study Committee
- Proprietary School Commission
- Teacher Certification Appeals Council
- Textbook and Media Advisory Council.

Current BESE members for each district are as follow:

District 1 (St. Tammany) – Donna Contois

District 2 (Orleans) – Keith Johnson (BESE Secretary-Treasurer)

District 3 (including Jefferson, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, & Terrebone) – Gleny Lee Buquet

District 4 – Walter Lee

District 5 – Dr. James Stafford (BESE Vice-President)

District 6 (including Tangipahoa and Washington) –

Dr. Richard Musemeche

District 7 – Dale Bayard

District 8 – Linda Johnson

The three at-large members appointed by Governor Foster are Paul Pastorek (BESE President), Gerald Dill, and Leslie Jacobs.

Certainly, BESE is an important body to be familiar and active with as we work to improve education in Louisiana. If you are interested in learning more about BESE, give us a call at Pyramid.

Note: Information for this article was found on the Louisiana Department of Education website at — www.doe.state.la.us

Información Importante Para Padres De Familia

Es su hijo o hija suspendido de



PARENT
ASSOCIATE COL-
UMN

Betty De
Paz-Ureña

la escuela con frecuencia? Ha sido expulsado alguna vez? O por alguna otra razón, usted esta preocupado por el comportamiento de su niño? Sí, sí hay algo que usted

puede hacer ahora mismo! Consulte sus inquietudes sobre el comportamiento del niño con el director del colegio y con su maestro. Hágalo por escrito y por correo o envíe la carta a la escuela de niño y retenga una copia para usted.

En las escuelas existen varias maneras positivas de apoyar a un niño con problemas de comportamiento. Usted tiene el derecho de preguntar y participar en la reunión del equipo de asistencia estudiantil o "Student Assistance Team(SAT) para que los maestros aprendan más sobre su niño y para ofrecer sugerencias de como trabajar juntos. Por favor, asegúrese de obtener toda la información apropiada acerca del historial de la suspensión.

Es muy importante que haga llegar esta carta a la escuela de su niño inmediatamente. Esto podría hacer toda una

diferencia en la manera en que se trate el comportamiento de su niño. Incluyendo esta carta dentro del historial del niño, podría ayudar a obtener asistencia mediante el Acto de Educación de Individuos con Discapacidades (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 34 CFR Sec. 300.527). Llame a las oficinas de Pyramid Parent

Training para más información acerca de IDEA al teléfono (504) 827-0610.

Favor vea ejemplo adjunto de la carta.

Carta que expresa preocupaciones de comportamiento.
Favor guardar una copia en su historial.

(Esta carta no tiene que ser escrita a máquina pero si tiene que estar firmada por usted)

(Fecha)
(Nombre del Director de Escuela)
(Dirección de la Escuela)

Estimado(a) (Nombre del Director):

Yo soy el padre de (nombre completo del niño), estudiante de su institución. Me permito escribirle para pedir su consejo y asistencia para ayudar a mi hijo(a) a resolver ciertos comportamientos problemáticos. En mi opinión, estos comportamientos impiden que mi hijo(a) rinda lo máximo en la escuela. (Dé algunas razones de porque esta preocupado, por ejemplo: peleas, falta de atención, ira, etc.)

Le agradecería reunirme con usted para hablar sobre estas preocupaciones. Durante horas de trabajo, usted me puede localizar al siguiente número de teléfono (No. de teléfono).

Gracias por su asistencia. Espero recibir su respuesta por teléfono o por correo, dentro de los siguientes diez días.

Atentamente,

(Firma del Padre)
(Nombre del Padre)
(Dirección)

cc: Pyramid Parent Training

ATTENTION ALL PARENTS



The Pyramid Parent Training program is looking for parents whose children attend one of the following schools: Colton, McDonough #28, Woodson, Banneker, Abrams, Augustine, Little Woods, Phillips, Abramson, Landry Middle, You can participate in the Louisiana State Improvement Grant process.

If interested and want more information, please contact Danielle at the Pyramid office, (504) 827-0610.

"Plain Talk" with PARENTS about READING

When: Wednesday, May 21st
Time: 9:00am-12:30pm
(Breakfast and lunch will be served)
Where: Southern University Gym 6400 Press Drive
Questions answered:
• At what grade level is my child reading?
• What do I do if my child is being left behind in his reading?

Join, Superintendent Anthony Amato, the U.S. Department of Education (OSEP) and the Center for Development and Learning (CDL), in a focused conversation with you.

REGISTRATION IS EASY: JUST
CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL
BY WEDNESDAY, MAY 14!

Pyramid's Male Appreciation Luncheon

On June 14, 2003, Pyramid Parent Training would like to honor those men (fathers, brothers, teachers, counselors, neighbors, etc.) who have positively touched the lives of your children with a Male Appreciation Luncheon at Zachary's Restaurant from 10am-2pm.

Seating is limited, so ladies please register yourself and your male guest no later than June 11, 2003 by phoning 504-827-0610 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Remember to use your resources: The Total Community Action Telephone Tape Library Directory (Dial: 504-827-2277)

Call for the answers parents are looking for, here are some of the questions:
Series 1700 Special Education — Questions Parents Ask

- 1701 I think my child may need special help in school. What do I do? What is special education?
- 1702 Who is eligible for special education?
- 1703 How do I find out if my child is eligible for special education?
- 1704 What happens during an evaluation?
- 1710 How can I get more services for my child? How can I support my child's learning?
- 1711 Questions Parents Ask About Individualized Education Program (IEPs).
Who develops my child's IEP?
- 1712 So, can I help with my child's IEP? What should I do before the IEP meeting?
- 1713 What happens during an IEP meeting?
- 1714 Can my child's IEP be changed?
- 1717 Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- 1718 Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disability (PDD)
- 1725 Spina Bifida

And much more . . .

Tambien, Seciones in Español: llame 504-827-2277

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- HOME OWNERSHIP
- LAW
- PARENTING
- SENIOR CITIZENS
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- SUICIDE PREVENTION
- TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION
- VIOLENCE

Autism Workshops



PARENT
ASSOCIATE COL-
UMN

Lynne Kelly-Far-
lough

On April 4, and April 26, 2003, Dr. Bart Sevin of The Center for Excellence in Autism and Lynne Farlough presented a workshop on the effective practices in the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The workshops were held in Lake Charles and Monroe Louisiana. Twenty-three (23) parents were in attendance. The workshop included: an overview of the features of

evidenced-based practices, a description of specific evidenced-based practices from Applied Behavioral Analysis and the perspectives of a parent of a child with ASD regarding personal experiences with evidence-based practices and other treatment approaches.

Lynne shared with parents her experience with the use of Positive Behavior Support strategies with her daughter, Jayde at home, at school and in the community.

The parents were very excited to hear about a treatment like PBS to help their families live a full life.

Upcoming Workshop: May 17

There will be a workshop in New Orleans on May 17 at The Louisiana Center for Excellence in Autism from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

You can contact Samantha Hardesty at 504- 942-8217 for more information.

Autism Support Group Meetings

On April 9, 2003, Pyramid parent Karen Gonzales hosted her Westbank autism support group meeting. Nine parents attended the meeting. Vera Harrison, the mother of a 30 year old daughter with autism was the guest speaker. Vera has been with Pyramid for many years. She shared with the parents her experience of raising a child with autism. She also was able to give parents some insight on raising an older child with autism. Parents were happy to receive this wealth of knowledge from Vera.

Lynne Farlough also attended the meeting. Lynne provided parents with information on Individualized Education Plans and other resources available to them. Karen holds her support group meeting every second Wednesday of each month.

Upcoming Meeting: May 31

Lynne Farlough will host an Autism support group meeting on May 31 at the Pyramid office located at 2552 St. Philip St from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The guest speaker will be Dr. Gina Kunz, program director of LSU's Early Childhood Development Clinic.

Dr. Kunz has a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Louisiana State University in psychology with a specialty in school psychology. Dr. Kunz completed her pre-doctoral internship in the Department of Psychology at the Monroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center. At MMI, Dr Kunz provided clinical services on campus and in out-state clinic to children and adolescents with behavioral disorders and academic deficits. We look forward to Dr. Kunz sharing her expertise with our parents.



CHILDREN & ADULTS WITH
ATTENTION-DEFICIT/
HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

**Does your child have trouble paying attention in school?
Has the school called you to pick up your child due to disruptive behavior?
Does your child seem to be sad all the time?
Do you feel all alone and don't know where to go for help?**

**Join us for a
Free Community Forum
on
Child Mental Health
Focusing on
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders**

Saturday, June 7, 2003

Dillard University

2601 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA

8:30 a.m. Registration

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Free Lunch for the first 200 to register

Sponsored by:

Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)

U.S. Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)

Co-Sponsors: Dillard University & Office of Mental Health, Region I

Call (504) 468-5400 for more information

Usted No Esta Solo!

Desarrollo del liderazgo

Asistencia para su hijo(a) con problemas de conducta

Asistencia individual

Seminarios

Almuerzos educativos

Recursos y referencias

Ayuda con I.E.P.

Educacion sobre las leyes en educacion especial

Reciba ayuda gratuita para su hijo(a) con necesidades especiales

Llame Pyramid

Parent Training

Telefono: 827-0610

You Are Not Alone!

Leadership development

Help with your child's challenging behaviors

One-to-one assistance

Workshops

Power luncheons

Resources and referrals

I.E.P. help

Training in special education law

Get free help for your child with special needs

**Call Pyramid
Parent Training**

Quý vị không phải là người duy nhất với sự khó khăn này!

Sẽ đào tạo phẩm chất và tinh thần lãnh đạo.

Sẽ huấn luyện và giúp đỡ quý vị về phương pháp trong năm những trẻ em khó tính.

Mỗi gia đình sẽ được một thành viên giúp đỡ.

Hội thảo sự giáo dục trẻ em tàn tật.

Đàm thoại trong bữa ăn trưa.

Nguyên liệu tin tức và chuyển tin/thông tin.

Sẽ giúp đỡ về cách phát triển chương trình học tập cá nhân cho mỗi trẻ em.

Sẽ giải thích cho quý vị về luật pháp của hệ thống giáo dục cho trẻ em tàn tật.

Sự giúp đỡ miễn phí.

Xin gọi Pyramid Parent Training

Điện thoại: 827-0610

May

CALENDAR EVENTS

Saturday, May 31: Autism Support Group Meeting —

Where: 2552 St. Philip street

Time: 10am -12pm

Saturday, June 7: Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD) —

Where: Dillard University Time: 8:30 am-4 p.m.

• For more info call 504-468-5400

Saturday, June 14: Male Appreciation

Luncheon — Where: Zachary's Restaurant

Time: 10am-2pm

Saturday, June 21: Best Practices in Early Intervention — Where: Zachary's Restaurant Time: 10am-2pm

Call 827-0610 to register for these events and to request a stipend if needed.



TO:

The Pyramid Parent
Training Program
2552 St. Philip Street
New Orleans, LA 70119