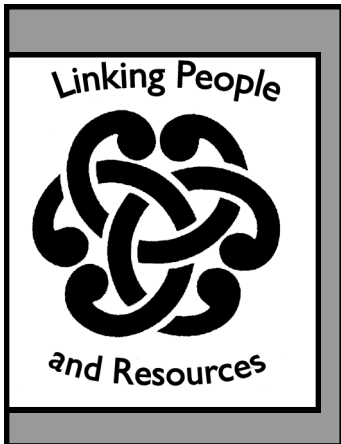


Regional Wrap-Up

Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU

Welcome Judy!



Region 5 T/TAC is delighted to welcome Judy Bland as a T/TAC Coordinator. Judy comes to T/TAC from the Harrisonburg City Public Schools where she was a middle school special education teacher for many years.



Judy also taught in a private school in Colorado for seven years. She has a wealth of teaching experience in self-contained, resource, and collaborative settings. In addition to public school classroom teaching, Judy has provided inservice training in school divisions, served as clinical faculty, and taught as an adjunct instructor at Eastern Mennonite University. Judy has degrees in elementary and special education from Boston University and in learning disabilities from the University of Northern Colorado. At T/TAC, Judy will begin the process to become a SIM professional developer and will work with other coordinators to provide T/TAC services in inclusive practices and instructional strategies. Contact Judy at blandja@jmu.edu or 540.568.3147.

Update on Autism!

Autism Competencies Available

The Virginia Autism Council has developed a set of Skill Competencies for supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

This document addresses the following areas: general autism, individualization and support strategies, communication, social skills, behavior, and sensory. To download a copy of the skill competencies, please visit www.autismtrainingva.org.

New Resource for Parents of Children with Autism

The Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit was created specifically for families to make the best possible use of the 100 days following the diagnosis of autism. The kit contains information and advice collected from experts on autism as well as from parents of children with autism. The 100 Day Kit includes a week by week plan for the next 100 days, as well organizational suggestions and forms that parents/caregivers can use to help with the paperwork and phone calls, as they begin to find services for their child. The kit is available on line in pdf format for all to view and download. Users also have the ability to personalize their own kit with local resources in their area. Go to http://www.autismspeaks.org/community/family_services/100_day_kit.php for information about any of these options.

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Go Green!

Receive the TTAC Newsletter electronically.

Contact Loretta 540.568.6746 or ennislg@jmu.edu for information.

Early Childhood Chatter

Early Childhood Language and Literacy

The U.S. Department of Education's "Doing What Works" Web site recently added content on Early Childhood Language and Literacy, which focuses on two recommended practice areas: develop phonological awareness skills and utilize interactive and dialogic reading practices to improve language and literacy skills. It includes recommendations outlined in five research reports previously released by the Department's Institute of Education Sciences on early childhood education. It is available at <http://dww.ed.gov/priority_area/priority_landing.cfm?PA_ID=7>.



New "On the Go" Early Literacy Materials Available

Washington Learning Systems has posted a new set of free parent-child early literacy materials entitled *On the Go*. The set includes 14 activities that can be used outside the home (in the car, while walking, during bus rides) with children from birth through preschool. They were developed with support from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and are appropriate for children with disabilities, as well as children who are developing typically. The materials are available online at <<http://www.wlearning.com/Guide.html>>.



A Thinking Guide to Inclusive Childcare

Disability Rights of Wisconsin recently developed a guide entitled *A Thinking Guide to Inclusive Childcare* (2008) that provides tools and strategies to help child care staff better understand the needs of individual children and promote inclusive experiences for families and children. It is available online at <<http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/thinking-guide-to-inclusive-child-care.pdf>>.



Virginia's Star Quality Initiative

Is a voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) which provides early childhood programs a roadmap for continuous quality improvement, while also giving programs the positive community recognition they deserve for their continued dedication to achieving higher standards and improving quality for young children.

The five performance standards in the QRIS are education, qualifications, & training; interactions; staff to child ratio and group size; learning environment and instructional practices; and partnerships with families and communities. Each has indicators that must be achieved for each Star level. The selection of these standards and indicators were the result of a thorough review of the research literature and best practices in other states suggesting positive outcomes for children when early care and education programs focus on improving in ways aligned with these five standards.

Based on the achievement in each of the five standards, a program may receive "Rising Star" status or one, two, three, four, or five stars. For more information on the Star Quality Initiative, QRIS raters and training, technical assistance and grants for quality improvement, and financial incentives linked to achieving higher level of quality, visit <http://www.education.virginia.gov/Initiatives/EarlyChildhood/qris_overview.doc>.



School Readiness in Virginia

The School Readiness Task Force of the Governor's Working Group on Early Childhood Initiatives has developed a definition of school readiness that not only includes benchmarks for children, but also for the families, schools, and communities that nurture and support them. They have defined school readiness as "the capabilities of children, their families, schools, and communities that will best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond." Each component has an essential role to play and no one of them can stand on its own in developing school readiness. The task force has provided descriptions that can inform, guide, and motivate adult players to adopt a more active role in the process.

In order to define, assess, and track school readiness, objective research-based benchmarks for each component of school readiness have been developed, and clear strategies for measuring progress toward them have been identified. Developers recognize that children develop holistically, with growth and development in one area dependent upon development in other areas. A ready child is prepared socially, personally, physically, and intellectually within the developmental domains addressed in Virginia's six *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*: literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, physical and motor development, and personal and social development.

For the complete text, go to <http://www.education.virginia.gov/Initiatives/EarlyChildhood/Virginia_Definition_of_School_Readiness.doc>.

(VAECE Viewpoint, Vol. 2007-2008, No. 3, Spring 2008)

Surfin' the Sites

Summer is over, the beach gear is packed away, but you can still go surfing! Here are a few sites worth surfing on the Internet!

Everyday Life Program: There are many interactive lessons, with audio & text directions, on topics such as Food (how to bake, grill safety), Shopping (make a grocery list), Work (fill out a job application), Money (use an ATM & count change), Maps, Plans & Schedules (use a bus map, and many more lessons). Complete a short tutorial & the lessons will make a lot more sense & you can understand how low-literacy learners would be instructed to complete the lessons. <www.gcflearnfree.org/everydaylife>.

Money & Math: Learn the basics: Ever have trouble with basic math, calculating percentages or using fractions? Do you have questions about savings, interest, or credit? Visit this Web site: <www.gcflearnfree.org/math>.

Computer Training: Many of these lessons are primarily text & new ones are video-based with text. The lessons include: Getting Started (computer basics, Internet safety), Using Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and more), and Exploring Life (career & workplace development). Visit the site at <www.gcflearnfree.org/computer>.



Professional Development Opportunities

September 29-30: STAR Program Training – Autism, Hospitality House, Fredericksburg,

Contact Crystal Beard at 540.372.1127 or <cbeard@cityschools.com>. Registration form is available at <http://www.ttac.odu.edu/Conferences_2008/Star.pdf>.

October 3 & 4: PECS Basic Training, Norfolk. Contact: 1.888.732.7462 or <pyramid@pecs.com>. Registration: <www.pecs.com/index.php>.

October 9-11: Capitalizing on Middle Schools, VA Middle School Association Fall Conference, Greater Richmond Convention Center & Omni Richmond Hotel. Visit <www.vmsa.org> for information.

October 10: Autism Spectrum Symposium, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Contact: GWU Office of Disability Support Services, 202.994.8250 or <dss@gwu.edu>. Registration form at <<http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/AutismSpectrumSymposiumOctober2008>>.

October 21: Insight 2008 Topics in Autism, Sheraton Park South, Richmond. Contact: Cheryl Bishop at 804.828.6947 or <cebishop@vcu.edu>. Registration form at <http://www.vcu.edu/ttac/autism/pdf/insight_2008.pdf>.

October 24 & 25: OAR's 6th Annual Applied Autism Research and Intervention Conference, The Westin Arlington Gateway, Arlington. Contact: 866.366.9710 or <conference@researchautism.org>. Registration at: <www.researchautism.org/news/conference/index.asp>.

October 27: AAC and Floortime™ for Students with Significant Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders, Hilton Norfolk Airport Hotel, Norfolk. Contact Jean Bondy at 757.683.4333 or <jbondy@odu.edu>. Registration at: <http://www.ttac.odu.edu/Conferences_2008/Mira_Shah.pdf>.

November 10-11: 19th Annual William & Mary Symposium on Professional Collaboration and Inclusion Education, Williamsburg Marriott Hotel, Williamsburg. Visit <www.wm.edu/TTAC> for information.

November 17-19: Autism Workshop - Shaping the Future, Virginia Institute of Autism, Charlottesville. Contact: 434.923.8252. Registration form at: <www.viaschool.org/workshops.htm>.

April 29-30, 2009: *Creating Connections: Virginia's Early Intervention Conference*. Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke.

June 22-26, 2009: *10th Annual Content Teaching Academies*. James Madison University, Harrisonburg.