

THE T/TAC TELEGRAM

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Northwestern
Consortium



T/TAC

Linking People & Resources

Page

1-2 Welcome Back,
T/TAC Transitions

2-3 Early Childhood
Transition

4 School to School
Smooth Moves

5 Three Transition Tips
to Prevent Problem
Pupils

6-7 Teaching Self-
Determination

7-8 Conferences and
Workshops

Northwestern
Consortium T/TAC
This newsletter is a
collaborative effort by the
Northwestern
Consortium of the
Training & Technical
Assistance Centers
(T/TACs), which
includes James Madison
University, co-directed by
Cheryl Henderson and
Melinda Bright, and
George Mason
University, directed by
Lynn Wiley.

Placement, editing,
and graphic design
of the T/TAC
Telegram by
Allison Toguchi
and Kieno Simeon

Welcome Back

by Cheryl Henderson and Melinda Bright

VDOE T/TAC Region 5 at JMU

Happy New (school) Year! Personnel from the Virginia Department of Education Training & Technical Assistance Centers, Region 4 at George Mason University and Region 5 at James Madison University, hope you had an enjoyable summer and welcome you to what we hope is an exciting, fun, and productive year of learning.

Summer vacation to the classroom...a transition that affects us all. Thus, it's no coincidence that transition is the topic of this issue of the *T/TAC Telegram*. Whether we move from school to school, school to work, work to vacation, job to job, send a child to college, marry, divorce, add or lose family members, and so forth, what we know about transition

is that it is a lifelong process that affects us all. Webster's defines transition as "an act, process, or instance of changing from one state, form, activity, or place to another." Transition is change, it's inevitable, and can sometimes be stressful (even though the change may be a positive one) for those involved. Research provides us with information about strategies for, as well as barriers to, effective transition.

As students transition in schools, from early intervention to early childhood, early childhood to school age, or school age to the adult world, we as educators must work with colleagues and parents every step of the way to make smooth moves. What we know works in schools is trust and positive attitudes among all parties involved in the transition process, open communication, administrative support, shared ownership, and acceptance of

parents as partners. The school system should have in place policies and procedures for transition at all levels, including timelines and responsibilities of identified team members. Time for sending and receiving staff to collaborate, and identified strategies for communication after transition services are implemented are also important practices to incorporate into the process (Christensen, Hetrick, & Mandell, 1999). Regardless of the type of transition, well thought-out, evaluated plans and strategies are needed for all types and age levels of transition; making them age appropriate is the key. T/TAC libraries have resources on transition that we'll be glad to share with you. You may also check our websites for links to sites related to this and numerous other topics

(see back page of this newsletter for contact information).

Future issues of our quarterly newsletter this year will focus on the topics of paraprofessionals, assistive technology & reading in the content areas, and data-driven instruction. We hope you enjoy reading them. In the meanwhile, while you and your students transition into the new school year, take a few minutes for yourself and read this issue of the *T/TAC Telegram*.

References:

Christensen, K., Hetrick, S., & Mandell, C. (1999). *Using co-facilitated, interactive parent-professional partnerships to facilitate transitions*. Presentation at International Division for Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs and Their Families, Washington, DC.

**"Research provides us
with information
about strategies for,
as well as barriers to,
effective transition."**

(References Continued)

Webster's II: New Riverside Dictionary (Office Edition). (1984). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.



T/TACs
Transition, Too!
Cheryl Henderson
and Melinda Bright
Region 5 T/TAC at JMU

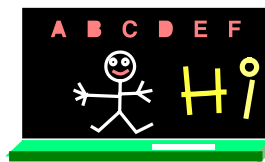
During the 2003-2004 year, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) changed the mission and priority focus of the T/TACs. In keeping with the policy implemented last year, the scope of T/TAC work will again focus on content area priority projects. Those projects include:

- √ Academic Review Participation and Follow-Up Technical Assistance,
- √ Assistive Technology (AT),
- √ Autism,
- √ Alternate Assessment,
- √ Enhanced SOL Scope and Sequence,
- √ Reading and link to Virginia's Reading First program,
- √ Early Childhood Transition & Effective Practices,
- √ Instructional Support Team (IST) sites,
- √ Instructional Strategies (Kansas Strategies),
- √ Parent Involvement,
- √ Positive Behavior Supports, and
- √ Secondary Transition Outcomes Project.

Activities addressing these needs will be priorities for statewide activity. VDOE staff serves as project leads, with each regional T/TAC represented on the project work groups. It is the task of the project groups to determine the most appropriate methods to provide training and technical assistance related to each project focus. Activities might include regional or statewide training or conferences, on-line training, and/or statewide dissemination of materials and information resources.

Traditional T/TAC services remain available to you and include a lending library, quarterly newsletter, linking

and referral to other sources, on & off-site consultation (including via phone and e-mail), and training and conferences. *Please note, however, that content related to the priority projects listed above will be addressed by the project work groups. Other training and technical assistance priorities will be given to personnel in schools needing improvement as designated by VDOE (accredited with warning or not making AYP).* Please direct any questions to the appropriate T/TAC for your region (Region 4 office is located at GMU and Region 5 office is located at JMU). You may also access our websites for information. We look forward to meeting and working with you during the 2004-2005 school year!



**Early Childhood Transition:
But He's Too Little
for School!**
Cheryl Henderson,
Region 5 T/TAC at JMU

Under Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, children with identified special needs are eligible for special services from birth. Part B of the federal legislation requires public school systems to provide services from age three, but Virginia regulations mandate public schools to provide the programming from age two. As children make the transition from Part C to Part B, the refrain, "But he's too little for school!" is often heard. What can parents and providers do to ease the transition process from one program to another? Fortunately, there is a technical assistance document available, *Early Childhood Transition from Part C Early Intervention to Part B Special Education and Other Services for Young Children with Disabilities*, which provides guidelines about the roles and responsibilities of early intervention and public school systems in implementing a seamless services delivery system for Virginia's young children. The document was published last fall and has been widely distributed in the Commonwealth. It is available on the state department of education's website <www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/ta.shtml>, as well as on the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia website <www.infantva.org>.

Once the smooth transition has been made from Part C to Part B services, what can a teacher do to make transitions within the school day just as seamless?

- Consider the daily routine, activities, and spaces in which the children will have to make transitions (circle to small group, classroom to cafeteria, etc). Then identify specific proce-

dures for those transitions. Many teachers post their schedules on the wall, sometimes only listing the printed words. But most young children can't read! Attach visuals (pictures, photos, graphics) to the words that are clearly identifiable to the children. Better yet, make a visual schedule of the day and allow the children to manipulate the visuals as each activity is completed and the new one is ready to begin. For example, after circle time have a child remove the picture of circle and place it in a "finished" spot, then have him put up the picture of what's next (art, work time, etc.). In this way children not only see what's happening but also learn the often difficult time concepts of now, later, finished, next, and so forth. In addition to using a visual schedule, other ways to signal transition between activities or spaces might include ringing a bell, singing a special song, moving in a certain way such as hopping or slithering like a snake (if you're studying animals or working on gross motor skills!), flashing the lights, carrying an object from one space to another. Most early childhood teachers teach using themes; incorporate the themes into the transition activities. Ideas are only limited by your imagination!

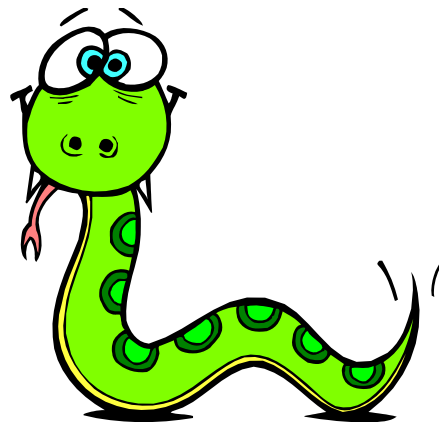
- Maintain communication and cooperation between staff and across programs. The paraprofessional needs to know the transition routine, as do the resource teachers, therapists, and other school personnel. Keeping others informed helps eliminate questions as to why the children are skipping, taking giant steps, or carrying toy farm animals down the hall. In the absence of the teacher, substitutes and others should strive to maintain consistency for the children.
- Prepare the children for transitions. Once they are acclimated to school, involve them in the planning for the transitions within their school day. Changing the pictures on the visual schedule might be a helper job assigned each day or each week. Children are creative and may enjoy brainstorming transition activities. Keeping them involved could also help provide them with ownership of their classroom.
- Keep the parents informed about the daily routine so they can discuss it with their children at home, maybe even practicing emerging skills or learning new songs and

fingerplays. Some types of activities may even be used at home, thus easing transition changes at home (ex: home to school, bath to bed) and also providing consistency with school activities.

Using the many resources available, including guidance documents from Virginia's early intervention and education offices, T/TAC libraries, personal knowledge of child development, and imagination, early childhood teachers can make transition between and within programs a smooth move. Remember, we're working with young children. Make it fun!

Resources:

- Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (rev. ed.)*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Henthorne, M., Larson, N., & Chvojicek, R. (2000). *Transition magician 2: More strategies for guiding young children in early childhood programs*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Larson, N., Henthorne, M., & Plum, B. (1994). *Transition magician: Strategies for guiding young children in early childhood programs*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Lazzari, A.M. (1991). *The transition sourcebook: A practical guide for early intervention programs*. Tucson, AZ: Communication Skill Builders.
- Pianta, R.C., & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). *Successful kindergarten transition: Your guide to connecting children, families, & schools*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.





**School to School
Smooth Moves
Brenda E. Fogus,
Region 5 T/TAC at JMU**

So often a student will have been performing very successfully in school, following rules and the schedule, negotiating the halls independently, working with staff and peers most productively, and then a new year starts and things seem to inexplicably fall apart. Upon closer inspection we frequently find this student has moved from one building to another, for instance from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school, and has done so without the benefit and support of a transition program. There are many facets to a move from one building to the next as students progress; planning ahead can certainly help the process go more smoothly. This type of transition planning is not unlike others. It should be individualized and some students will need more support while others will need little to no special support. Consider the following for helping students move from one building to another more comfortably and successfully.

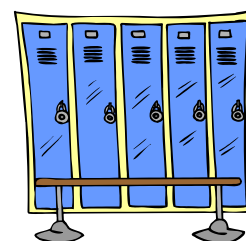
Plan ahead and early. Because some students will need to make multiple visits to the new building and team members may need to be invited to meetings, consider each student's needs in the fall so that your teams can have plans made and in action by late winter or early spring.

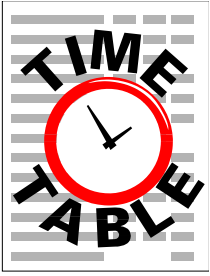
- Include receiving team members in meetings before the school year ends. Include teachers, both special and general education, instructional assistants, other school staff like cafeteria workers, bus drivers, the school nurse, custodian, etc. as needed.
- Spend time between teams considering how to help students become acclimated into the social culture of their new school. Forming peer relationships and developing a peer network can be very challenging and some students will need direct support in this area.
- Consider observations for the current team members to learn more about the changes coming for the student and to

help plan instruction that can better prepare students for changing and newly needed skills. A typical example of a newly needed skill is working a locker combination.

- Consider observations for receiving team members to learn more about the student while s/he is in action in a comfortable, familiar environment.
- Plan visits for the student with activities of relevance, such as working on their schedule, seeing the new room, completing some task in the classroom, and touring the building. A final, follow-up visit during the teacher work days just as school begins in the fall can really set the stage for that first day back.
- Discuss behavioral expectations for the new building, schedules, and new activities with the student and his/her parents.
- Share examples of favorite assignments and activities that might be used in the beginning of the year to help students feel successful and comfortable in their new environment more quickly. It can be very supportive to a new team if the parting team actually provides start-up activities, ready to go.
- Include parents in the process from the beginning and establish a workable system of on-going communication so they can stay involved.
- Compile relevant information into a file to pass along:
 - o Current IEP
 - o Strategies tried and known to be successful or unsuccessful
 - o Student interests
 - o Individual needs
 - o Tips for helping the student through stressful or crisis moments

As with any individualized planning, transition planning for students moving from one building to the next in your system can be time consuming. In the end, however, there will be less stress for everyone and a higher level of success if the time investment is made on the front end. For more assistance with this type of planning, contact representatives from the receiving building (teachers, guidance counselor, or administrators). Also consider consulting your T/TAC library.





Three Transition Tips To Prevent Problem Pupils

**Tony Tallent,
Region 5 T/TAC at JMU**

Think about the last time you went into a new restaurant, hotel, or even a new home of a friend. Did you question the host about things that immediately caught your eye, or relate some tidbit of information you had heard informally about a new appliance that the owner purchased? Did the host give you a tour or were you free to explore on your own? Now think about the last time you went to look for a major purchase of your own. Perhaps a new car, a new home, or some other large ticket item in which you planned to invest a large monetary amount. Did you duck the salesperson at the car lot, come equipped with a “Just looking” sign plastered across your shirt and your old track shoes on your feet, or wait until you were sure that no one was at the home for sale you were interested in then sneak up and peek inside the windows?

Even though the situations described above are transitions into environments that people choose to enter, the actions and behaviors exhibited can be directly related to how many of our children respond to new environmental challenges. Now think about students transitioning into your room after the summer or students who are on a field trip. Are some of their behaviors so out of the ordinary when compared to our actions in similar situations? Each person has his own responses to an exposure to the demands of a new environment. Below are listed three basic tips to lessen the anxiousness and behavior problems many students display when they are expected to transition into a new environment.

- √ Wilde, Kogel, and Kogel identify priming as a technique of presenting material of similar nature and in similar format as it is to be presented the next day or next class session. Priming is a technique of presenting material of similar nature and in similar format as it is to be presented the next day or next class session. This is done while trying to elicit the desired behavior responses. If your group plans to visit a museum, try showing a computer or slide presentation with some of the more famous pieces that may provoke undesired behavior reactions if viewed for the first time in the setting. This will allow you to address why a

certain piece of artwork was done the way it was and what the artist was trying to communicate without you or the class being embarrassed in front of a gallery full of patrons.

- √ Have a structured schedule that you share with the students prior to entering a new situation. Schedules allow students to know about time limits in advance. Developing an awareness of time is often a skill many people never fully develop. By using aids such as a visual schedule to prepare students prior to entering an environment, as well as using an auditory, visual, or vibrating timer while in the environment to communicate time constraints, will allow students to be better prepared for transition. (Visit <http://www.usevisualstrategies.com> by Linda Hodgdon)
- √ Allow time for exploration of the new environment or some other physical activity, especially if inactivity such as extended travel has preceded arrival. While you want to keep to a schedule, make sure the natural urge for a child to explore is allowed to run its course. Often we expect students to enter new environments and switch immediately to learning mode. If the class has spent the last two hours on a bus going to the art museum, don't expect them to be ready to contemplate the cultural relevance of Van Gogh and Monet the second they step off the bus. If exploring the interior environment is either impractical or impossible, allow them to wander around the perimeter of the museum to discuss its shape, or walk in a nearby park before heading inside.

These tips are just a sample of the variety of techniques available to help teachers and students with transition issues. Resources containing more techniques can be obtained by visiting your Regional T/TAC lending library or visiting the library online at <http://ttac.cisat.jmu.edu/> (Region 5) or <http://www.kihd.gmu.edu/ttac/> (Region 4).

References:

Wilde, L.D., Koegel, L.K., & Koegel, R.L. (1992). *Increasing success in school through priming: A training manual*. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California at Santa Barbara.

Hodgdon, L. (2004). UseVisualStrategies.com. <http://www.usevisualstrategies.com>

**Success in the Adult World:
Teaching Self-Determination
Transition From High School to
the Adult World**

**Sally Chappel,
Region 5 T/TAC at JMU**

Employers like it; post-secondary training and education wants it; research supports it; communities expect it; and individuals need it. Self-determination is a "concept reflecting the belief that all individuals have the right to direct their own lives" (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003). It is knowing one's self and what is important. By acting on this knowledge, one can ask for help and expect help from others. This gives one the ability to help make one's life what one wants it to be (Fowler, 2003).

Research has demonstrated that students who have acquired self-determination skills when in high school have a stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood (Bremer et al., 2003).

When time warrants a systematic approach to teaching self-determination, then it may be best to utilize the large number of self-determination curricula that has been developed. These are available through the T/TAC library and are listed at the end of this article. However, teachers are most often faced with busy schedules and limited time for teaching self-determination. The following represents some of the key knowledge and skills that students should acquire prior to leaving high school.

1. One of the most important lessons that students with disabilities can learn is who they are and what strengths and challenges they possess.

Students benefit from open and supportive acknowledgement and discussion of their disability. Often students are protected from making mistakes that tend to enable the student to avoid the details and potential ramifications of his or her disability. Students need to know themselves and understand how their disability impacts academic learning, relationships, employment, participation in their communities, and need for supports. With this knowledge, students are better equipped to develop plans, make decisions, and learn from experience. It is important to note that learning experiences need to be reasonable so that students do not lose a sense of personal empowerment. They will learn from their failure when given the opportunity to try the experience again using a different strategy (Bremer et al., 2003).

2. Students learn most effectively through real world experiences. This basically involves taking risks, making mistakes, and reflecting on outcomes. Through these experiences a student can test his or her strengths and limitations and then begin to identify short and long-term goals (Bremer et al., 2003).

3. It is also important to provide choices for students that will ultimately impact their lives. Choice making does not simply mean asking what job a person wants or what class a person wants to take, but means providing students an opportunity to make meaningful decisions about his or her own future. Students should be provided the means to communicate their desires and then have others accept their choice.

Through the understanding of their disability, including knowledge of strengths and limitation, real world experiences, and making choices, students can make better decisions about their interests and hopes and dreams for the future. School personnel, families, community providers, and service coordinators can better provide support to students who have acquired knowledge and skills in this area.

References:

Bremer, C. D., Kachgal, M. & Schoeller, K. (2003). *Self-determination: Supporting successful transition*. Retrieved May 2, 2003, from <http://ncset.org/publications/printsources.asp?id=962>

Fowler, B. (2003) *Be true to yourself! Follow your dreams! Self-determination*. Unpublished manuscript.

"Students benefit from open and supportive acknowledgement and discussion of their disability."

Library Resources: Self-Determination Curricula Student-Led IEPs: A Guide for Student Involvement (Authors: M. McGahee, C. Mason, T. Wallace, & B. Jones) – JMU only

Next S.T.E.P.: Student Transition and Educational Planning (Authors: A.S. Halpern, C.M. Herr, B. Doren, & N.K. Wolf)

A Practical Guide for Teaching Self-Determination (Authors: S. Field, J. Martin, R. Miller, M. Ward, & M. Wehmeyer)

Self-Determination Strategies for Adolescents in Transition (Authors: S. Field, A. Hoffman, & S. Spezia)

Steps to Self-Determination: A Curriculum to Help Adolescents Learn to Achieve Their Goals (Authors: M. Wehmeyer, M. Agra, & C. Hughes)

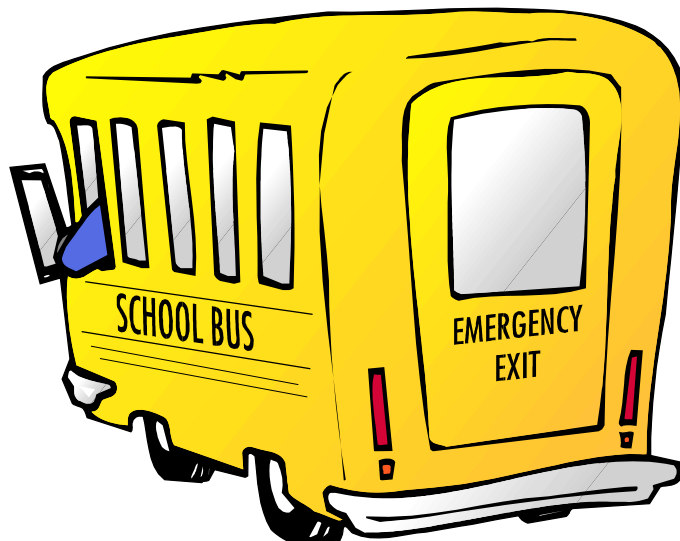
The Self Advocacy Strategy for Enhancing Student Motivation and Self-Determination (Authors: A.K. Van Reusen, C.S. Bos, J.B. Schumaker, & D.D. Dreschler) – JMU only

TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE WEBSITES

Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition <http://www.dcdt.org/>

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition <http://www.ncset.org/default.asp>

Virginia Department of Education: Special Education & Student Services: Transition Services for Students with Disabilities <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/transition/>



CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

Transition Practitioner's Council (TPC) 2004 Fall Meeting

When and Where: October 7 at the American Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, VA

Sponsor: TPC

Contact: E-mail Sally Chappel, Region 5 T/TAC @ JMU
chappesl@jmu.edu

Designing Behavior Support Plans for Students who Engage in Problematic Behaviors: Cathy Pratt, PhD., Director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism

When and Where: October 13 in the College Center, Ballroom A at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA

Sponsor: Commonwealth Autism Service and Region 5 T/TAC at JMU

Contact: Call 1-800-649-8481 or www.autismva.org

Going Beyond Accessibility To Universal Design: Principles and Applications of Accessibility, Fair Housing Act and Universal Design for Single and Multi-Family Uses

When and Where: October 13 at the Doubletree Hotel in Charlottesville, VA

Sponsor: Waynesboro Disability Services Board

Contact: Charles F. Downs 540-942-6718

Facing the Challenges 2004: Keynote Speaker is Robert Brooks, PhD.

When and Where: October 15-16 at the Harrisburg Holiday Inn in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Sponsor: Learning Disabilities Association of Pennsylvania

Contact: (610) 458-8193 drodesl@aol.com

SpecialNeeds SpecialKids Conference and Vendor Fair: Featuring Carol Kranowitz, author of The Out-of-Sync Child

When and Where: October 16 at the Holiday Inn in Silver Spring

Sponsor: SpecialNeeds SpecialKids, LLC

Contact:

www.specialneedsspecialkids.com/conference.html

Environmental Factors in the Causation of Atusim: Implications for Therapy and Prevention with Paul Shattock

When and Where: October 20 at the Marriott West Hotel in Richmond, VA
Sponsor: Commonwealth Autism Service
Contact: Call 1-800-649-8481 or www.autismva.org

22nd Annual Closing the Gap Conference

When and Where: October 21-23 in Minneapolis, Minnesota
Sponsor: Closing the Gap
Contact: www.closingthegap.com/

Applied Autism Research and Intervention Conference

When and Where: October 29-30 at the Key Bridge Marriott in Arlington, VA
Sponsor: Organization for Autism Research
Contact: www.researchautism.org/

TechKnowledge 2004: Special Topics in Assistive Technology

When and Where: November 3-4 at the Holiday Inn Select Koger Center South, Richmond (1 or 2 day options available)
Sponsor: VDOE T/TACs at JMU, ODU, and VCU and the Children's Hospital of Richmond
Contact: Children's Hospital Education Department to register (1-804-228-5845 or 1-804-321-7474)

23rd Southeast Regional Conference: International Reading Association

When and Where: November 7-9 at the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center in Savannah, Georgia
Sponsor: Georgia Reading Association and the International Reading Association
Contact: www.reading.org/

National Association for the Education of Young Children 2004 Annual Conference

When and Where: November 10-13 in Anaheim, CA
Sponsor: NAEYC
Contact: www.annualconference.naeyc.org or call NAEYC at 301-694-3379

Special Education Law Mini-boot Camp: Peter and Pam Wright

When and Where: November 12-13 at the Virginia Beach Higher Education Center
Sponsor: Commonwealth Autism Service
Contact: Call 1-800-649-8481 or www.autismva.org

Blazing the Trail: 2004 Annual TASH Conference

When and Where: November 17-20 at the Reno Hilton in Reno, Nevada
Sponsor: TASH and the University of Nevada, Reno
Contact: www.tash.org/2004reno/about.htm

20th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families

When and Where: December 5-8 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, Chicago, IL
Sponsor: Division for Early Childhood/Council for Exceptional Children
Contact: www.dec-sped.org/annualconference

Literacy in Autism and Other Developmental Disorders: Susan Norwell

When and Where: December 6 at the Sheraton Park South in Richmond, VA
Sponsor: Commonwealth Autism Service
Contact: www.autismva.org/



SAVE THE DATE

Technology, Reading and Learning Difficulties: 23rd Annual Conference

When and Where: January 27-29, 2005 in San Francisco, California
Sponsor: Don Johnston Incorporated and Co-sponsored by the International Reading Association
Contact: www.trld.com

Virginia Council of Learning Disabilities

When and Where: March 3-5, 2005 at the Dulles Hyatt on Route 28 near Dulles Airport
Theme: "Research in Context: A Capital Idea"

Virginia's 2005 Transition Forum

When and Where: March 14-16 at the Williamsburg Marriott
Sponsor: Virginia Transition Council
Contact: www.radford.edu/~conf-serv and click on View programs and Events

**James Madison University
T/TAC Contact Information**

T/TAC
MSC 9002
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807
540-568-6746 (phone)
1-888-205-4824 (toll free)
540-568-6726 (fax)

Reid Linn, Principal Investigator
540-568-6379
linnrj@jmu.edu

Cheryl Henderson, Co-Director
540-568-3774
hendercl@jmu.edu

Melinda Bright, Co-Director
540-568-7923
brightmb@jmu.edu

Tony Tallent,
High Incidence Disabilities Coordinator
540-568-3147
tallente@jmu.edu

Gina Massengill,
High Incidence Disabilities Coordinator
540-568-3348
massengk@jmu.edu

Ed Kelliher,
High Incidence Disabilities Coordinator
540-568-2608
kelliher@jmu.edu

Sally Chappel,
Secondary & Transition Coordinator
540-568-8095
chappesl@jmu.edu

Brenda Brady,
Assistive Technology Coordinator
540-568-3585
bradybm@jmu.edu

Brenda Fogus,
Low Incidence Disabilities Coordinator
540-568-7051
fogusbe@jmu.edu

Debbie Yancey,
Low Incidence Disabilities Coordinator
540-568-7924
yanceydm@jmu.edu

Judy Hensley, Secretary
540-568-6746
henslejk@jmu.edu

Sherry Hussey, Fiscal Technician, Sr.
540-568-7949
husseysd@jmu.edu

Region 5 T/TAC

James Madison University
MSC 9002
Harrisonburg, VA 22807



Linking People and Resources