Years ago systems that provide support to families who have children with disabilities and mental health needs created programs and services that professionals determined would help families. This model of service development often did not result in better outcomes for children and their families. Research and experience now indicates that programs and services designed with the “voice” of the potential recipients have much better outcomes.

The community of disability advocates use the saying, “Nothing about us, without us” and children’s mental health advocates promote, “Family Voice and Choice” to help guide their work. Both of these statements are powerful and convey the sense that, we as families and individuals who are the participants of the programs know what we need and what would help.

Is there a service or program that your family participates in that you have ideas about how to make it better? Would your ideas also help to improve the service for other families? If your answer is YES, then your voice matters and can make a difference.

Most local and state governments, agencies, schools and non-profits have processes in place to gather input, sharing your voice can increase awareness and educate decision makers in your community. There are countless committees, taskforces and councils that have family/youth involvement built into the membership. Much of the programming, services and policies are decided in these meetings. Your voice can help guide the development or improvement of programs that work for your family and many families as well.

Providing your “voice” is often called systems advocacy. Systems advocacy is about improving programs and services to better meet the needs of the population the system is serving. Changing systems can sometimes take a long time, but the end result can be very positive, and has the highest probability to improve services for the greatest number of children, youth and families. The personal reward for your systems advocacy efforts are high; imagine your voice helping to change a policy that improves access to afterschool activities for children with disabilities and mental health needs. If we all get involved and share our voice, share what works and what doesn’t, we will make a difference for each other and for families we don’t even know. Contact us at Nevada PEP for information on where you can get involved and share your VOICE.

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Congratulations, Nilza Shellhamer, Family Advocate Award Winner!

By: Alex Cherup

The Nevada PEP family would like to congratulate Nevada PEP Board Member Nilza Shellhamer for receiving the “Family Advocate” award at the Nevada Disability and Law Center’s (NDALC) 2016 Advocacy Awards. The award is given to “Someone who advocates on behalf of his/her family member.” Nilza’s commitment, love and passion for Nevada PEP and her daughter Jessica are unmatched, her efforts in the community represent Nevada PEP’s spirit of promoting high expectations, family engagement and the will to make a difference for families and children with disabilities. A resident of Carson City, Nilza serves with excellence on the Nevada PEP Board of Directors. Over a decade of support and service for Nevada PEP, Nilza has been devoted to the cause. Although advocates do not fight for special distinction, acknowledgement of recognition is important to illustrate the power of advocacy.

Every year, NDALC honors “outstanding individuals who have made extraordinary efforts to protect and advocate for individuals with disabilities.” As the state’s Protection and Advocacy system, NDALC provides legal and advocacy support for individuals with disabilities statewide. On behalf of Nevada PEP and advocates throughout the state, thank you Nilza for all that you do!
### PEP GOVERNING BOARD
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Alex Cherup, Transition Services Manager

### STATEWIDE FAMILY NETWORK DEPARTMENT
Dorothy Coleman, Family Support Services Manager

### SATELLITE OFFICE
Kelli Walker, Transition Services Manager

### PEP STAFF

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<tr>
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### GETTING FAMILIES READY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITIONS

By: Robin Kincaid

Making a transition in the early childhood years can be exciting but also an anxious time, particularly for parents of children with disabilities. These tips can help make for a smoother transition: using a collaborative team approach to involve families, setting transition goals, and focusing on the individual needs and strengths of children. During the transition to school, children take part in an increasing number of places. For example, children might leave a preschool, family child care provider, or the home to participate in an early childhood classroom, and maybe an afterschool program or new community class. The one constant across the transition is the family, and for this reason, families share an important responsibility in providing children with stability, comfort, and a sense of what to expect.

Here are some tips that parents can consider using to prepare their child for the transition:

- Have your child visit the classroom and meet the teacher
- Take pictures of the school and the classroom and use the pictures to talk with your child about starting school
- Be familiar with your child’s strengths and needs. It’s also helpful to share your child’s likes and dislikes
- Meet with the IEP team for a transition meeting to discuss child’s present levels, parent concerns, goals, related services, and accommodations. Parents are part of the IEP team that decides placement and must consider the maximum opportunity appropriate to learn with children who do not have disabilities—in academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities.
- Consider gradually increasing the amount of school hours to give the child an opportunity to adjust to the physical and emotional demands of school. Be familiar with Senate Bill 515 that provides for parents to elect to send their children to ½ day Kindergarten rather than full-day.
- Encourage relationships with other children and acknowledge the anxious feelings they may have about the transition or interacting with their new friends
- Arrange play times with other students who will be in your child’s classroom.
- Engage in activities such as telling stories; doing puzzles and playing math, and science games; and singing songs
- Read books with your child about going to school to help them be introduced to school expectations.

A smooth transition to school is one in which children come to make new friends; understand and follow the rules and academic expectations of the classroom. Learning those skills can increase the likelihood of children’s positive social, emotional, and academic outcomes in years to come.

### CONGRATULATIONS MAGDALENA

By: Char Frost

In November, the 27th Annual Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH) Conference was held in Phoenix, Arizona. This annual conference is a national conference dedicated solely to issues impacting children and young adults with behavioral health challenges and their families. This year FFCMH introduced a new award for a Parent Support Provider that demonstrates overall excellence in the provision of support to families who are parenting children and youth experiencing behavioral health challenges. The award is named for a pioneer in the movement of family peer support, Jane Adams who was there with her daughter to present the Jane Adams Peer Support Award to Magdalena Ruiz, Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP), Family Facilitator for Nevada PEP.

Magdalena has demonstrated extraordinary skills and dedication in the provision of support to the families she serves; Nevada PEP joins the Federation of Families in recognizing not only her accomplishment, but also her empathy and genuine caring for the families that she works with. Congratulations Magdalena!
Ayude a su Hijo a Concentrarse en el Aprendizaje

¿Tiene su hijo problemas para concentrarse en la escuela? ¿Le parece que la tarea y otras actividades pueden ser un reto para su hijo para completar? Aprenda acerca de las dificultades que tienen los niños con el enfoque, sus diferentes estilos de aprendizaje y las estrategias que pueden ayudarle a ayudar a su hijo enfocarse mejor.

Bullies, Acosados y Espectadores: Respuestas que Funcionan

Mientras que el bullying no siempre deja moretones o fracturas de huesos, puede dejar cicatrices emocionales profundas que duran toda la vida. El bullying es un problema grave que se produce a lo largo de nuestra escuela todos los días y, sin intervención, el bullying puede conducir a serios problemas académicos, sociales, emocionales y legales. No te pierdas esta clase de respuestas al bullying que realmente funcionan.

Diga Adiós a los Comportamientos Desafiantes de su Hijo

Los comportamientos desafiantes en los niños y los jóvenes están frecuentemente mal entendidos. Este taller explorará los efectos de comportamiento y estrategias para ayudar a los niños mantener un comportamiento apropiado en la escuela, casa y la comunidad.

Entrenamiento del IEP

Este entrenamiento guiará a los padres a través del desarrollo de cada parte del Programa de Educación Individualizada (IEP). Los padres obtendrán conocimiento necesario para participar de manera efectiva en las reuniones del IEP.

¡Seis Consejos de Abogacía que Gira de un No a un Sí!

¿Estás cansado de que le digan “No”? Usted es el experto en su hijo y usted sabe las necesidades de su hijo. Aprenda cómo conseguirlo con estas seis estrategias de abogacía increíbles!

LIBRARY REVIEW

Dyslexia: An Unwrapped Gift

By: Kelly Figueroa

Dyslexia: An Unwrapped Gift, which provides insight into the experiences of individuals with dyslexia. Individuals in the video talk about growing up with dyslexia and how they often were made to feel as if they were not “smart” enough because of their learning disability, nonetheless, these obstacles did not restrict their success. In addition, the video identifies different prominent figures in history with dyslexia and the important contributions they have made to the world. Further, the video highlights how people with dyslexia excel with visuals and possess important skills in our increasingly visual world as we move from words to images. Dyslexia: An Unwrapped Gift is an encouraging video with a message that having dyslexia is like having a new way of seeing the world. To watch the video, or find other resources swing by our office’s resource library and check it out!
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- U.S. ARMY JROTC
- Whole Foods Market

Sponsors for 2016 Run Walk Roll Against Bullying

Our biggest thanks go out to all of our dedicated volunteers who worked so hard to make this event a success. Without their help and support, this event would not have been possible. Our sponsors and community partners also outshined themselves with their generosity. We sincerely appreciate the following businesses for their support.

Nevada PEP hosted its 6th annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying on a picture perfect day in September to kick off October as National Bullying Prevention Month. A record crowd gathered at the UNLV Moyer Student Union. The crowd cheered after opening announcements so graciously provided by PEP’s Governing Board Chairman Mr. Bryce Loveland and Executive Director, Karen Taycher. The festivities began with the presentation of the prestigious “Front Runner for Children Award” honoring Nevada’s most deserving, long time champion for children’s issues, Senator David R. Parks, he has served our State for 30 years and has lead Nevada’s ground-breaking legislation on anti-bullying and cyber-bullying laws. A very moving and uplifting presentation by the Las Vegas High School JROTC Wildcat Battalion Color Guard immediately followed by the National Anthem performed by Patt Mueller, who for 9 years sang for the Seattle Mariners.

The crowd cheered at the arrival of Grand Marshall Ricardo Laguna as he thrilled spectators with his bike riding antics and everyone agreed there is no one quite as charming as Ricardo as he wowed the crowd with his tricks and stunts upon his Champion BMX bike. Emceeing the event for the second year in a row was the infamous; Chet Buchanan. Chet provided his awesome talent and entertaining personality to the event. He was sure to mention the generous donors and sponsors and highlight some of the top notch raffle prizes. Chet took command as he recognized and acknowledged the incredible sponsors of the twenty- two schools that were generously sponsored by community partners, such as the eight Findlay Dealerships who sponsored nine of the Clark County schools this year.

Families were treated to face painting and balloon artistry by Amazing Face Painting as well as appearances by several famous area mascots including McGruff the crime dog, Smokey the Bear, Cosmo of the Las Vegas 51’s, Hey Reb and Lil Reb of UNLV’s Running Rebels, Panda Expresses Big Panda was on hand and some of the schools even brought their very own Mascot. The Guardians of Tomorrow provided by the Super Hero Foundry and Several Disney Princesses and characters from the movie Frozen provided by Party Ever After, enchanted the crowd during onsite registration and throughout the marvelous event.

Nevada PEP Governing Board Member Trish Leavitt, the Event Chairperson, worked tirelessly from start to finish ensuring the event was a tremendous success. The collaboration and teamwork of PEP’s Board Member Regent Sam Lieberman, Board Member Rita Varney, staff and VIP volunteers, and the countless community partners all working together to raise awareness and taking steps to end bullying was incredible. Thank you to each and every one who contributed and supported this remarkable event, without you this would not have been possibly. See you next year!!

By: Diane Lombardo

Continued...
Positive Behavioral Interventions  By: Robin Kincaid

When a child with a disability experiences behavioral challenges, including those that result in suspensions or other exclusionary disciplinary measures, appropriate behavioral supports may be necessary to ensure that the child receives Free and Appropriate Public Education.

US Department of Education, Office for Special Education, (OSEP) Policy Letters provide guidance and clarification regarding implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through two types of issuances: OSEP Memos and Dear Colleague Letters. OSEP issued a Dear Colleague memo dated August 1, 2016, on the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and clarified the following:

- IEP teams must ensure that a child receives meaningful educational benefit by including or revising necessary behavioral supports in the IEP. Failure to do so could be a denial of FAPE.
- IEP’s should contain behavioral supported evidence and could be facilitated through a school-wide multi-tiered behavioral framework.
- Behavioral supports must be designed to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals and make progress in the general education curriculum.
- Intervention and supports may include instruction and reinforcement of school expectations, violence prevention programs, anger management groups, counseling for mental health issues, life skills training or social skills instruction.
- Incorporating appropriate supplementary aids and services could include behavioral supports necessary to enable a child with a disability to be educated in regular classes.
- Program modifications or supports for school personnel may include training, coaching and tools to appropriately address behavior needs. This will allow school personnel to better implement effective instructional and behavior management strategies.
- Appropriately training teachers and other school personnel to provide required behavioral supports to children with disabilities

The OSEP Dear Colleague Letter also concluded that short-term removals/ suspensions or other exclusionary disciplinary measures generally do not help reduce or eliminate the reoccurrence of misbehavior and may mean that the child is not receiving meaningful benefit and could constitute a denial of FAPE. Additionally, short term suspensions and other exclusionary discipline measures significantly interfere with a child’s instruction and participation in other school activities.

When parents are concerned about behaviors, they can talk with the IEP team about the need for individualized behavioral supports and refer to the guidance in this letter. Ask what and how behavioral instruction will be taught during your child's school day. Parents are an essential part of the IEP team and their input in the IEP development, incorporating specific behavioral interventions, is an opportunity to add strategies toward reducing or preventing the behaviors and turn the focus to learning and feeling successful in school.

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- Casa Blanca
- Casa de Shenandoah
- Cheesecake Factory
- Children’s Discovery Museum
- Chipotle Mexican Grill
- Chuck E Cheese
- Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf
- Crystal Palace Skating Center
- David Barton Gym
- Fast Lap Karts
- Gravady
- Grimaldi’s Pizza
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- Hush Puppy
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- Mob Museum
- Olive Garden
- Orleans/ Basketball
- Outback Steakhouse
- Panda Express
- PePe’s Tacos
- Pete Rose Sports Bar & Grill
- PF Chang’s
- Pole Position Raceway Indoor Karting
- Pump It Up
- Red Lobster
- Rio Voo Doo Zip Line
- Rogue Toys
- Roys Hawaiian Fusion
- Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park
- Slotzilla
- Sport Social
- Springs Preserve
- Sprouts
- Trader Joe’s
- Trish and Andy Leavitt
My Family Story - A Volunteers Story

When I became involved with Nevada PEP, I had been involved with Department of Family Services for approximately 2 years. My children have mental illness and were spread out amongst group homes, foster homes, Caliente Youth Facility and some experienced frequent hospitalizations as well. At that time I felt that there was no hope for me to regain custody of my children. No one listened to me because I came off as angry to everyone I spoke to in the department. I used my family specialist at Nevada PEP to vent to and she helped me learn new skills to speak to the people in the Department. I learned how to express myself and my concern for my children’s well-being in an effective manner. Also, at that time there was an educational surrogate appointed for all of my children in which I asked the judge to remove it and was able to make all the decisions regarding the education of my children. I now have all of my children back in my care and I was able to find permanent housing. My family specialist gave me hope that things would turn around and they did.

Bullying Prevention

Every adult in a child or youth’s life has a role to play in preventing bullying. According to stopbullying.gov, parents and other trusted adults can:

- Help kids understand bullying by talking about what it is and how to stand up to it safely. It’s also critical to let kids know how to get help. Checking in with kids often about how things are going in general and really listening to them will help keep those lines of communication open. We can also help our kids identify trusted adults that they feel comfortable talking to who can be a person that they’re able to talk to if they feel that they or someone else is being bullied. The adult can give them support, advice and encourage the child to report the bullying as well.

- One of the easiest ways to prevent bullying is by encouraging our kids to do an activity that they love! Finding a special activity or hobby not only boosts self-esteem, but also increases access to other peers with similar interests.

- Finally, modeling kindness and respect towards others will translate to kids who do the same.

For more information about how to talk about bullying and bullying prevention visit: www.stopbullying.gov or www.nvpep.org

**Did You Know...?**

Did you know that in 2004 the first Disability Pride Parade was held in Chicago with a turnout of 2,000 people?
Congratulations PEP Staff Anniversaries

Nevada PEP has a wonderful team. Their dedication and longevity to Nevada PEP is truly admired and recognized. The following staff members have made their anniversaries in the past months. (Left to right)

- Karen Taycher 21 Years, Natalie Filipic 12 Years, Stephanie Vrsnik 16 Years, Robin Kincaid 17 Years.
- Chad Uhl 5 Years, Magdalena Ruiz 4 Years, Diane Lombardo 11 Years, Robin Renshaw 17 Years, Char Frost 6 Years, Havander Davis 5 Years.
- Kelly Figueroa 2 Years, Michele Jennings 1 Year, Kenny Taycher 2 Years, Zelinna Palma 1 Year, Bob Humphreys 3 Years.
- Kelli Walker 3 Years, Alex Cherup 2 Years, Cheri Day 8 Years.

Introducing Secretary of Education, Dr. John B. King

By: Gwen Robledo

In March of 2016, Dr. John B. King assumed the role of U.S. Secretary of Education. Secretary King is a strong believer in the power of education who began his career as a high school social studies teacher in Boston, Massachusetts and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Since then he has achieved success throughout his career, such as co-designing and co-directing the curriculum for Roxbury Preparatory Charter School. Under his leadership, the school became the highest performing urban school. After this chapter in his career, Dr. King became the youngest New York State Education Commissioner and the first of African-American and Puerto Rican descent. In this role, he improved the quality of education for the state of New York. Federally, prior to his role as Secretary, Dr. King was the Department’s principal senior advisor in 2015. Dr. King will bring these diverse experiences to his new position to support the education of all Americans.

http://www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/king.html?src=hp
Helping Families Build Connections with their Child’s School

Families of children with disabilities can often feel disconnected and may have difficulty in building relationships with their child’s school. They may have had meetings or conferences that did not go well or feel judged or lost as to what their child needs to be successful in school.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), originally passed in 1975, all eligible children are entitled to a “free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment required to meet their needs.” As written, the law requires that parents be involved in the creation of Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), which help to determine a specialized education program for their children. Beyond this legal mandate, IDEA also acknowledges the unique importance of home–school partnerships for students with disabilities.

Often when we think of parent engagement we think of the efforts focused on getting families to help the school to achieve its priorities rather than supporting families in working toward shared goals and aspirations for their children (Search Institute 2015; “Don’t Forget the Families”).

There is a national shift to encourage schools to engage families as full partners in their child’s education by nurturing key character strengths and supporting their children’s educational success.

Studies show that when parents, students and school staff are encouraged to value relationships there is an increase parent’s feeling more engaged and involved in schools. When there is at least one caring professional on the campus that will listen a trusting relationship is built, and it is more likely the families feel more emotionally invested in their child’s school. Connections with students are also key to success. Identifying a person that a student can connect with can help when a student is feeling anxious or frustrated. In turn, if parents have a connection, they may feel more confident in resolving problems and advocating for their child. Increased student success happens when there is continuity of communication, support and caring between home and school.

Volunteer Corner

I have volunteered in many places in my life. However I have never found a place so filled with people who work so hard to help others. Nevada PEP is a place filled with compassion and empathy. It is a place where no one passes judgement on anyone else. I enjoy every day of volunteering. I have been on a weekly schedule for over a year. It is so nice to know that through volunteering, I am helping PEP make a positive difference for so many families.

Did You Know...?

Did you know that the Father of the Independent Living Movement, Ed Roberts, a man with polio, fought to attend University of California, Berkeley in 1962 after he was rejected from attending the university?
For certain students who receive special education services with significant cognitive abilities, the Nevada Alternate Assessment, or NAA, is available as a state grade level assessment of alternative achievement standards. Assessments items are given in the subjects of Reading and Math (grades 3 to 8 and grade 11 for these subjects) and Science and Writing (grades 3, 5 and 11 for these subjects) sometime between March 1 and May 31, 2016. The NAA is administered as direct observation of tasks that represent specific skills linked with grade level content that is administered and graded by your student’s teacher. Tasks are recorded on video and scored a second time by an observer who watches the video to ensure accuracy. Importantly, the IEP Team determines if a student participates and there are six questions used as an indicator if the NAA is a good fit. With the recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), there are new standards related to the NAA, including that no more than one percent of students tested in a certain subject can participate in the NAA and that parents are clearly informed about the specifics related to the assessment.

What is the NAA? By: Alex Cherup

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<td>1. Is the student receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through a current IEP?</td>
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<td>2. Does the student demonstrate cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that limits full participation in the general education curriculum and state-wide assessments even with supplementary aids, accommodations, and modifications?</td>
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<td>3. Does the student require substantial modifications, adoptions, or supports to meaningfully access the grade-level content?</td>
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<td>4. Does the student require intensive instruction to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills necessary for application in school, home, work, and community settings?</td>
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<td>5. Is the student’s level of educational performance not primarily the result of specific learning disabilities; social, cultural, economic, or language differences; visual or auditory impairments; emotional-behavioral disabilities; or excessive or extended absences unrelated to the student’s disabilities?</td>
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<td>6. Has the IEP team informed the parent/guardian of the consequences of the student participating in the Nevada Alternate Assessment (e.g., modified diploma vs. standard diploma) and of being judged against alternate achievement standards?</td>
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Choose your goal and keep your eye on it. Never give up. Perhaps you will need to change your plan and approach you goal from a different direction, but don’t quit. Keep thinking. Keep re-planning. Keep going.

- Jonathan Lockwood Huie

The Importance of Self-Advocacy By: Robin Renshaw

Teaching self-advocacy skills to your son or daughter with a disability is an important part of your child’s transition to adulthood. As a self-advocate, your child has the tools to achieve goals and more likely achieve success out of school. There are some helpful tips you can develop and practice with your son or daughter during their transition years identified by the PACER Center, such as encourage your child to:

- Speak up;
- Learn about their disability and, if they chose, how to share information about their disability in both school and work;
- Listen to the opinions of others when making decisions, even if those opinions are different than others;
- Learn how to take responsibility for themselves;
- Know their rights and responsibilities;
- Know where to get help or who to go to with a question to learn how to get help;
- Know their strengths, needs and desires;
- Know what accommodations support them best and how to ask for these accommodations;

Although it may take time for your child to learn these skills, the benefits are far reaching. Remember, your child has observed your advocacy skills in action as an advocate throughout their life, so they have a positive role model. And, once your child masters these skills, they will not only have the capability to advocate for themselves, but also advocate for others with disabilities!

Strong accommodations are vital for taking statewide assessments. While learning the structure for the new End-of-Course exams for Nevada's students, parents can rest assured that students are still able to continue to use accommodations during tests. Although not specifically listed in The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, generally an accommodation allows a student with disability to take the same assessment as a student without the disability through a change in timing, format, schedule, or setting. Further, to access accommodations during a statewide assessment, the Nevada Department of Education requires a form entitled “Testing Accommodations for Students in Special Education and 504 Programs” that contains approved accommodations for a statewide assessment or the option to select special accommodations that are added to your child’s IEP or 504 Plan and provided to the test administrators.

Accommodations are available for both students with an IEP or a Section 504 Plan. Some types of accommodations used by Nevada students with disabilities during tests include: Braille, Multiplication Tables, or a Large-Print Test booklet. To determine the best accommodations for your child during a statewide assessment, turn to your child’s IEP or Section 504 Plan. Like every part of your child’s IEP or Section 504 Plan, accommodations must be based on your child’s individual and specific needs.

During the IEP Team or Section 504 Plan discussions, accommodations for exams can be crafted based on the individual determination of the Team and a review of accommodations used in your child’s regular classroom instruction. The “Testing Accommodations for Students in Special Education and 504 Programs” can provide additional support in choosing accommodations.

Once accommodations are determined for your child’s needs, these accommodations should be used throughout your child’s school day so your child is familiar with these accommodations when taking the test. Your child will also have the chance to try out the accommodations to make sure the accommodations fit your child’s individual and specific needs.

Importantly, the state of Nevada also allows for “Special Accommodations” not listed on the required form. Specifically, accommodations that are not listed on the form “Testing Accommodations for Students in Special Education and 504 Programs,” form can be requested in advance in writing to the Nevada Department of Education Test Security Officer as early in the year as possible.

View the form from the Nevada Department of Education at this address: http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedonvgov/content/Assessments/Docs/IEP_504_Accommodations_2017Final.pdf

Updates: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in 2014, programs and high expectations for youth with disabilities have expanded greatly. Over the past two years, the law has challenged the status quo. Some of the exciting elements of the law and corresponding regulations include:

- Competitive integrated employment is the optimal outcome for youth with disabilities.
- Youth with disabilities have access to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including job exploration counseling; workplace readiness training; and instruction in self-advocacy with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- A greater emphasis on providing services out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities.
- Since July of 2016, there are new conditions that must be met before a youth under the age of twenty-four years old is given a subminimum wage placement.
- Service providers, such as American Job Centers and the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, must provide accommodations and equal opportunity to youth with disabilities when receiving these services.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act continues to increase the opportunity for youth with disabilities to have the highest expectations during the transition from school to adulthood. Read more about the changes from the PACER Center: http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/laws/workforce-innovation.asp
Welcome to our newest edition of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program! This program honors and recognizes the extraordinary people who have made a difference in our lives and in the lives of our children with special needs. We have wonderful and truly devoted people throughout the state of Nevada who have given that extra hand to help our children. So sit back and enjoy these heartfelt stories!

hand in hand
together we can!

William Andrews
Teacher

Although our son no longer attends Quannah McCall Elementary school with Mr. Andrews. Mr. Andrews was instrumental in bringing our son up to speed and bring out the best in him. He worked tirelessly to guide and nurture our son to the level where he is at today. Although still in kindergarten, our son reads at almost a 2nd grade level. His comprehension and communication has vastly improved. Needless to say Mr. Andrews helped lay a strong foundation for my son’s academic future.

Selma Zakai
Parent

Juan Arias
Inventory Control Clerk

I am nominating Juan Arias for the “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” award! In our office he is in charge of organizing, creating, and distributing basic need items to students who are homeless all over the Clark County School District. For many years he has facilitated a special partnership with Helen J. Stewart to work with students who have special needs. The students come to the HOPE office and they work with Juan to help create basic toiletry bags and backpacks. Juan loves the students and always makes them feel at home with encouragement, snacks, goodies, and friendly conversation. He gives the students a boost in their confidence as they are completing their job skills training. He is patient and helpful no matter what student behavior arises. I am much honored to work with Juan and believe he is a true unsung Hero!!! Thank you!

Velvette Williams
Parent

Katherine Bernardo
Therapist

Kat has been an amazing support to me for my son. She will recommend what the school should be providing for my son and she will encourage me to fight for my son’s rights.

Laura Weigel
Parent

Mike Bernstein
Children’s Mental Health Consortium

Mike Bernstein has participated on multiple community committees, task forces, and boards throughout his tenure with the Southern Nevada Health District. On the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium, he has been a champion for children’s mental health for 10 years and has served as the Chair of the Public Awareness Workgroup. In that time, he has worked tirelessly to reduce stigma associated with mental health and increase awareness around suicide and suicide prevention efforts. Mike’s efforts have also included activities to reduce incidences of bullying in schools and increasing the general public’s awareness of the impacts of bullying on youth. With every contribution that Mike made to further the efforts of the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium, he did so with passion and commitment that could not be mistaken or go unnoticed.

Nevada PEP

Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
Community Partner

Nevada PEP is privileged to recognize Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as a recipient of our “Hand in Hand” appreciation award. We are honored to have Mr. Bryce Loveland, Shareholder Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as Nevada PEP’s Governing Board Chairperson; from folding training flyers to conducting Board meetings Bryce demonstrates his commitment to community service. Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck is an amazing company and is a true community partner. For the last five years they have been a generous sponsor of PEP’s Run Walk Roll Against Bullying program, many Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck employees and their families participated in the event. Last year, Brownstein adopted Hallie Hewetson Elementary School and sponsored the school to attend the Run Walk Roll Against Bullying. We are proud to acknowledge all of their continued support and dedication to Nevada PEP and the many children and families in our community.

With sincere appreciation,
Nevada PEP
Tony Canales
Football Coach

Tony Canales is an amazing person and coach, he runs the Junior Crusader Youth Football Team. He has coached for more than 8 years, which proves he genuinely cares by giving our youth a positive outlet. He personally sponsors my child and more than 20 other children. He provides registration fees, uniforms, football gear, rides to and from practices or games. Most importantly he provides a positive environment for boys between the ages of 5 and 14 to help them stay out of trouble. Tony Canales is not only a great coach, but an OUTSTANDING MENTOR!

Thank you for devoting your time and energy year after year, you are truly an amazing individual!

Feleasha Harris
Parent

Michael Deagostelo
Parent

I would like to nominate Michael Deagostelo, the father of my child for the Hand in Hand, Together We Can award. Our daughter was diagnosed with Selective Mutism, which requires a lot of patience. We have tried other sources to help our daughter but the only one who manages to gain her trust is Michael. My husband has been very understating and supportive; he helps her with homework, attends parent conference meetings regularly and I would like to add he has the patience of an angel. Thanks to Michael our daughter is learning a lot she’s completing her homework and turning them in on time. I know she wouldn’t be where she is now if it wasn’t for him.

Michael, we love you and appreciate everything you do for us!

Severiana Lorza
Parent

Aurelia Dias
Parent

I am nominating Aurelia Dias for the “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” award. We met 6 years ago in a local church. Since then we have discovered that our children have similar disabilities, as parents, we understood each other. Aurelia is an incredible person that is constantly showing what unconditional love really means. She takes care of my children while I run errands and when I do not have time to cook she makes sure that my children are fed. I am beyond grateful for Aurelia and her husband who also helps us.

Aurelia, thank you for all the love and help you give to my family without ever asking for anything in return. You are truly appreciated!

Nora Hernandez
Parent

Bob Humphreys
Advocate

When my niece came to live with me, there were a lot of challenges we had to face concerning her education. It seemed like everywhere we turned, everything was against us, until Bob Humphreys from Nevada PEP became our Family Specialist. He has been the most helpful person we’ve encountered on this journey. He has gone above and beyond to help me find valuable resources that I would have never found on my own. I am so very thankful that when everyone else seemed against us, we had Bob on our side! He deserves to be recognized for the hard work he has done to help my family and many others, what a valuable resource Bob Humphreys is!

Sabrina Bradley-McLaughlin
Aunt

Marie Alice Pantoja
Parent

My mother has eleven children of her own who she raised. She went on to start a home day-care business where she cared for children for many years. After her youngest son lost his wife and mother to his children to cancer; my mother made the decision to commit and dedicate herself to help raise her grandchildren. She provided them with the love and support they needed after losing their mother at such a young age. You could say a mothers job is never done.

Blanca E. Gonzalez
Daughter

Did You Know...?

Did you know that in 1962 Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics in honor of her sister, Rosemary, who had an intellectual disability?
Thank you Piero’s Italian Cuisine Restaurant

By: Stephanie Vrsnik

Nevada PEP would like to thank Piero’s Italian Cuisine Restaurant for helping Nevada PEP families. This year Piero’s Turkey Gobble helped over 150 of PEP’s families with a delicious Thanksgiving dinner including all the trimmings. This is a perfect opportunity for our families to enjoy a delicious thanksgiving dinner with family and celebrate the holiday together. Each year PEP families enjoy this wonderful festive feast free of charge. Piero’s have been opening their doors to Nevada PEP’s families for over 10 years. We are so thankful for the partnership and privileged to be included in their charitable giving for our families in the community.

Pam Roberts
Therapist

Pam Roberts has been a pillar of support to our family. She has almost become a part of our family. The past two years have been a trying time for us. I firmly believe that had it not been for Pam, we would’ve been in a much worse place. We love Pam and wish all the best for her and much success, so that she can keep helping people like ourselves.

Selma Zakai
Parent

Danielle Rodriguez
Professional

Danielle works with the Shinning Star organization, she has been our family’s Safety Worker for two months. She taught my family and I how to become closer by helping each other out. Danielle is a very loving and caring person. She is always ready and willing to help. We want to thank Danielle for her amazing work and for everything she has taught us.

Tia Flowers
Parent

Kim Sedway
Professional

I would like to nominate Kim Sedway, the schools nurse for the Hand in Hand, Together We Can award. She is a very positive person; she has been very attentive and understanding to my sons needs. My son is nonverbal and his needs have to be addressed in a sensitive caring manner as he cannot communicate his needs. Kim has gone above and beyond in helping my son overcome his anxiety while being in school. She has helped my son adjust to the schools environment along with a few challenges. I feel comfortable and happy knowing Kim is caring for him while he’s in school. Kim is an OUTSTANDING person!

Kim, we appreciate and thank you for being a huge part of our lives.

Adele Hancock
Parent

Janelle Frank Pearce
Advocate

Janelle Frank Pearce is a true advocate and deserving of a Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Award. She has participated in multiple committees and effort to improve mental health services in Las Vegas throughout the years. Her personal and professional commitment, as a longtime member of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, has ensured that decision-makers were aware of the mental health service needs. In 2013 she was unanimously elected as the Chair of the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium. During her tenure on the Consortium, Janelle has proven herself to be an outstanding advocate for families and children who are struggling with behavioral and/or mental health issues by providing thoughtful consideration to all points of view on any given topic. Her leadership style has been one of advocacy delivered with quiet dignity, strength and resolve which has resulted in improved collaboration across the community to improve access to care for all children, youth and their families.

Nevada PEP

Save The Date!

One Big Day...
One Big Community...
Give Where You Live...

Point, Click, & Give
Thursday, March 23, 2017
during 24 hours of Giving
*Schedule a Big Give Reminder Email NOW by Going To:

www.Reminder.NVPEP.org
Did You Know...

Did you know that in 1996 the Telecommunications Act was passed making computers, telephones, closed captioning, and many other telecommunication devices and equipment be made accessible?

**Question:** My child is having behavior issues at school, I am afraid he’s disruptive to the other kids in the class. Is there a way to address that in his IEP so he can still be successful in the general education class?

The “consideration of special factors” section on the IEP guides the team to consider if your child’s behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others. One of the things you can do to address behavior in the IEP is to request a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). An FBA is a process of collecting and analyzing information to help determine why problem behaviors occur. In this process the team, including the teacher, any staff working with your child also collects data to help develop the FBA and the Behavior Intervention Plan. A school psychologist and/or a certified or licensed behavioral specialist can help the team better plan and implement strategies to help your child be successful.

As important as a good FBA and Behavior Intervention Plan is the requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), that each teacher and provider must be informed of their responsibilities to implement the IEP, including any accommodations, modifications, and supports needed for the child, which includes the Behavior Intervention Plan.
The “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program recognizes those individuals who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with disabilities. Nevada PEP would like to help you give recognition to a special person for their outstanding efforts. You may nominate a teacher, professional, therapist, family member or someone whose efforts have had a positive impact on a child’s life. All nominees will be honored with a uniquely designed lapel pin and a certificate of recognition. Their “story” will be featured in our quarterly newsletter, as well as appear in Nevada PEP’s Annual “Hand in Hand” Yearbook. Please limit your entries to ONE nominee per form and no more than three nominations a year per family. Please limit each entries to one hundred words or less.

Your Name: _________________________________________________________
Your Address: ________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip Code:  _________________________________________________
Your Phone, Email, Fax (optional)  ______________________________________
Your permission to use your name and print your story:  □ yes  □ no

Name of Honoree: ____________________________________________________
Honoree’s Address:  ___________________________________________________
City, State, Zip Code:  _________________________________________________
Honoree’s Phone Number:  ____________________________________________

Please write your story about this special person here:
### Mission Statement

To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

### Annual Membership Information

Annual membership dues are $25.00 per family, organization or professional.

Please provide the following information:

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<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION</td>
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<td>PHONE EMAIL</td>
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<td>CHILD’S NAME</td>
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<td>DATE OF BIRTH</td>
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- I am a parent/caregiver.
- I am a professional working with children.
- I am a concerned member of the community.
- Enclosed is a tax deductible donation in the amount of $___________ to help support the efforts of Nevada PEP.
- I would like to be a member of Nevada PEP, please waive the annual dues.
- I would like to volunteer.
- I would like to receive the monthly E-POST.

Your donation to Nevada P.E.P., Inc. may be tax deductible. Please consult your tax advisor. #88-0301113

Please make checks payable to:
Nevada PEP

The Nevada PEP PTI Center was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Contents of the “PEP POST” do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and endorsement is not assumed.

### Nevada PEP Social Networks

VISIT US ONLINE AT www.nvpep.org

- Helping Families Build Connections with their Child’s School
- Upcoming Events
- Run Walk Roll Against Bullying 2016
- Positive Behavioral Interventions
- Bullying Prevention
- What is the NAA?
- The Importance of Self-Advocacy

It is high time that the ideal of success should be replaced by the ideal of service.
- Albert Einstein

### Nevada PEP is a participating agency for:

- United Way of So. Nevada
  Designated gift # 2192
- United Way of No. Nevada
  & the Sierra Designated gift #27052
- MGM Mirage Voice Foundation Designated gift #120885
- Combined Federal Campaign #29441