2017 will be remembered by parents and special education advocates as the year of high expectations based on our children’s individualized strengths and needs. On March 22, 2017 the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a unanimous decision in the Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District case. The court set a higher standard of expectation for schools, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), “to offer an Individualized Education Program that is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in the light of the child’s circumstances.”

In December of 2017 new guidance was provided by U.S. Department of Education. The questions and answers in the document (http://bit.ly/2j3YkJy) gives us more information about how the new standard should be considered by IEP Teams. The Department shares this promising statement, “Now, as a result of Endrew F., each child’s educational program must be appropriately ambitious in light of his or her circumstances, and every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives.”

The Supreme Court decision and the U.S. Department of Education guidance underscore that educational programming for children with disabilities eligible under IDEA should be individualized, and designed to improve both academic and functional performance. Additionally, children with disabilities must be given access to instructional strategies and curricula aligned to both challenging State academic content standards and ambitious goals, based on the child’s unique circumstances.

Schools will need to have information to show that IEPs are implemented and the school is providing special education which includes: related services; supplementary aids and services; program modifications; supports for school personnel; and allowing for appropriate accommodations based on the Endrew F. standard.

IEP Teams which include the parent and student, as appropriate, will now need to consider how special education and related services have been provided and if the instructional approaches, supports, and services have been effective; and if the expected rate of growth has been achieved. If the school or the parent believe that expected progress towards annual goals is not being met, the IEP Team must revise the IEP, as appropriate, to address the lack of progress.

As parents we have hopes, dreams and high expectations for our children’s future. Being an active member of our child’s IEP Team is essential to their progress and success. Our children can reach their dreams when schools and parents work together with individualized decision-making and high expectations.

**Remember the “I” in IEP and IDEA: Individualized**

_By: Karen Taycher, Executive Director_

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**Desserts in the Desert**

_By: Stephanie Vrsnik_

Live to Give is dedicated to helping non-profits raise awareness and create a positive community, they have been partnering with local organizations in the community since October 2015. The Live to Give team Angel Escamilla & Leticia Apablaza organized the 2nd Annual Desserts in the Desert event. Nevada PEP is honored to be the organization that benefits from this amazing event.

The beautiful Sancho’s Mexican Restaurant was the perfect venue. Local vendors were set up outside on the patio with their scrumptious desserts, and wonderful brewed coffee. Families were also invited to enjoy delicious meals from the menu, with the proceeds coming back to Nevada PEP.

Sylvia from the Dave & Mahoney morning show emceed the event. Families enjoyed the face painting, live art, knocker ball, a photo booth and a live DJ added to the fun outside, while inside acoustic performances were mastered by Ms. Jessica Manalo who delivered live entertainment, singing while accompanying herself on guitar. Nevada PEP’s dedicated volunteers worked hard at the registration and raffle tables. PEP Board members were on hand to enjoy the event and present Live to Give team with an original piece of art as a token of our appreciation.

Among all the positive feedback, we all heard one comment repeated many times. “This is a great event; please do this again next year.” We get the feeling this will become an annual event for Nevada PEP. Our deepest appreciation to Live to Give for supporting Nevada PEP, we are looking forward to the 3rd Annual Dessert’s in the Desert. As the saying goes “it’s a sweet way to give back”. 
What is Child Find?  
By: Tiffany Montgomery

The Child Find program located in each school district searches for and evaluates children who may have a disability. It is important to identify children that are showing delays or struggling to keep up with other students, so that services can be designed to help children make progress in school. According to IDEA (The Individuals with Disability Education Act of 2004), school districts are required to have policies and procedures in place to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, (ages 3-21), regardless of the severity of their disabilities. Depending on the parents’ concerns, evaluations in areas such as social emotional, academic and behavioral can be completed to see if the child is eligible and may need special education and related services. To learn more, ask your local school district about their child find process.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Crisis Plans  
By: Robin Kincaid

Does your child with a disability also have behavioral or mental health challenges at school? If so, behavioral assessments and your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be used to address those needs. When a child’s learning is affected by behaviors, the special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (IDEA), requires a school to provide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Under IDEA, the individualized interventions and supports are developed by the IEP Team and written into a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP is designed to teach and reward positive behaviors, which can help prevent or stop problem behaviors in school.

With Parental consent, the school gathers information for a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) which must be completed within 45 school days. Using the results from FBA is a good start to develop (or revise), the student’s Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP should:

• describe the problem behavior,
• give a best guess as to why the behavior occurs,
• include positive strategies, program changes, and additional supports,
• and include strategies on how to teach appropriate replacement behaviors.

Working with the IEP team to develop a Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP), is an important part of the IEP process. After development, the school will collect information on how the BIP is being implemented and if providing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is helping the child in school.

There are also some children who may benefit from a Crisis Plan as part of their IEP. A Crisis Plan is an action plan developed for how to respond to support a child at specific times when he or she may be at risk of harm to self or others related to mental health or behavioral health needs. A child’s Crisis Plan should be developed by individuals knowledgeable about the child such as school staff, the child’s mental health professional and parents.

A Crisis Plan should include:

• what a child’s crisis looks like,
• clear steps the school will take to support a child during a crisis
• information on who to contact for assistance
• how to work together with the youth during the crisis
• how to know when the crisis is over
• when to notify parents

Parents can work together with their child’s IEP team to create individualized plans that lead to success in school. Parents can also provide the team important information on strategies that they use with their child. Parent and school communication and collaboration is an essential part of creating effective plans that help children learn to manage their behaviors in home, school and community settings.
Are You Ready for “The Talk”? Puberty is often a confusing time for children with disabilities as they try to understand the changes their bodies go through and emotions they may be feeling. Learn how to teach your adolescent important skills, like understanding appropriate relationships, boundaries, social skills, and keeping up with hygiene. Feel more confident as you get ready to have “the talk”!

Bullies, Targets, and Bystanders: Responses that Work While bullying doesn’t always leave bruises or broken bones, it can leave deep emotional scars that last a lifetime. Bullying is a serious issue that occurs throughout our schools everyday and, without intervention, bullying can lead to serious academic, social, emotional, and legal problems. Don’t miss this class full of responses to bullying that really work.

Bullying Prevention: Everyone’s Responsibility Participants will learn about the types of bullying, how to intervene when bullying happens, and how to encourage students who witness bullying to take action. This session will also cover the roles schools play, laws and policies, and bullying prevention strategies.

Considering College? Learn What’s Available and How to Get It This workshop will guide you where to go, what to ask, and how to apply to help you get ready for “the talk”! You are the expert in your child and you know what your child needs. Learn how to get it with these six amazing advocacy strategies!

Getting the First Job Both parents and students will learn an overview of the realities of employment for youth. Topics include career planning, the role of families, and suggestions to increase the likelihood of being hired for a job.

Help Your Child Focus on Learning Is your child having trouble concentrating in school? Do you find that homework and other tasks can be challenging for your child to complete? Learn about the difficulties children have with focusing, their different learning styles, and strategies that can help you help your child focus better.

How About Transition Planning: Navigating Your Future Transition planning is an important step in preparing students with disabilities for life after high school. Participants will learn how to help students achieve their dreams and goals.

How is My Child Reading? Come and learn about how students are taught to read. This workshop helps families have a better understanding of reading terms and will help when families are talking to their child’s teacher about academic progress.

IEP Clinic Workshop This workshop will walk parents through the development of each required part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents will gain knowledge about how to effectively participate in IEP meetings.

Making the Most Out of Your Baby’s Early Intervention Services Parents who have concerns about their child’s development often feel overwhelmed and unsure where to turn. Early intervention services can help your infant or toddler with a disability learn, grow, and meet milestones. This workshop is for families of children under the age of three who want to learn more about the free services that are available to enhance their baby’s development.

Positive Behavior Approaches for Parents Learn about evidence-based practices that support preschoolers to be successful and a statewide project, the Nevada & TACSEI Pyramid Model Partnership.

Say Goodbye to Your Child’s Challenging Behavior Challenging behaviors can leave many parents and teachers feeling frustrated and ineffective. Positive Behavioral Interventions (PBI) is a proactive approach that can assist children achieve social, emotional, and academic success. This workshop will introduce you to powerful tools that will have you saying goodbye to challenging behavior.

Six Advocacy Tips that Turn No’s into Yes’s! Are you tired of being told “No”? You are the expert on your child and you know what your child needs. Learn how to get it with these six amazing advocacy strategies!

Understanding Section 504 - A Civil Rights Law This new workshop is designed to provide an understanding of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504. Their purpose is to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.

Upcoming Events NEVADA PEP TRAININGS

5 Part IDEA Training Series Learn about starting the process to obtain help for a child, writing Individualized Education Programs, rights and procedural safeguards, behavior and discipline in school and transition planning.

Are You Ready for “The Talk”? Puberty is often a confusing time for children with disabilities as they try to understand the changes their bodies go through and emotions they may be feeling. Learn how to teach your adolescent important skills, like understanding appropriate relationships, boundaries, social skills, and keeping up with hygiene. Feel more confident as you get ready to have “the talk”!

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Please contact Nevada PEP for special accommodations to attend our trainings, or to request a workshop in your community.

Southern Nevada – 702.388.8899
Northern Nevada – 775.448.9950
Rural Nevada – 1.800.216.5188
Register online at www.nvpep.org

Working for Change – Using the Power of a Personal Story Learn how to deliver your personal story in a way that catches attention and motivates others to action!

Nevada PEP Support Groups Parent Support Groups in English. Learn about various topics of interest through open discussion with other parents.

Grupos de apoyo para los padres en Español Aprenda sobre diversos temas de interés a través de una discusión abierta con otros padres.

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 Desafricanos 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.

Entrenamientos 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!

Jessica Marie Meligan
May 18, 1990- January 30, 2018

She came into the world almost 4 months premature, and from the very beginning showed herself to be a fighter and succeeded in having a beautiful life; she graduated from Carson High School in 2012. She enjoyed participating in the community, family time and going to the Carson Hot Springs several times a week. Jessica inspired and touched the lives of countless professionals and members of the community. Jessica served as an unofficial special needs ambassador. Her presence will be missed by all.
7th Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying

The Las Vegas community came out in record numbers to celebrate unity, courage and strength with Nevada PEP at the 7th annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying on the beautiful campus of UNLV.

Nevada PEP’s Chairman, Mr. Bryce Loveland kicked off the event by addressing the crowd with empowering comments on disability awareness, positive inclusion and bully prevention. The Las Vegas High School ROTC Wildcat Battalion presented arms as Stephanie Sanchez stepped on stage to deliver her magnificent rendition of the national Anthem.

Meredith O’Connor an anti-bullying activist, singer and model made bullying her platform after being personally subject of bullying in school. Meredith’s music has been featured on Disney, VEVO, Teen Nick, NBM and MTV. Meredith performed her hit song “Stronger”, and shared some inspirational words with the crowd.

Closing remarks provided by Nevada PEP Chairman Bryce Loveland included a special thank-you to RUN WALK ROLL honoree chairperson, Trish Leavitt, PEP Board Members Rita Varney, Regent Sam Lieberman, Kate Lowenhar-Fisher and Regent Allison Stephens. Our deepest appreciation to all of the volunteers, community businesses and leaders, without all of the continued support this event would not continue to be successful every year. Hold on to your seats everyone we can hardly wait for next year’s 8th Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying and always remember “The end of bullying begins with You!”

Sponsors for 2017 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.

**Champion Sponsors**
- University of Nevada Las Vegas
- Nevada System of Care
- Helen Jo & Seaynoah Mayfield

**Hero Sponsors**
- Bonnie Martin

**Trailblazer Sponsors**
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- Findlay Honda in the Northwest
- Findlay North Volkswagen
- Findlay RV
- Findlay Toyota
- Findlay Valley Auto Mall
- Health Plan of Nevada
- Judge Michelle Leavitt
- Juvenile Justice Probation Officers Assoc.
- Leavitt Law Firm
- Montevista Hospital
- MyVegas
- Nevada State Bank
- Our Little World Treatment Center
- Run Vegas Run
- Sletten Companies
- Summerlin Hospital Valley Health Systems
- The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas
- The Lovaas Center
- Trish & Andy Leavitt
- UNLV Disability Resource Center

**Dignitary Sponsors**
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- Amy & Jim Leavitt
- Boyd Gaming
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- Chronie & Robert Marshall
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- Las Vegas 51s
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- Robert Purdy
- RSG Accounting & Consulting, INC.
- Southwest Airlines
- Steve Leavitt
- Spring Mountain Treatment Center
- Sunrise Casablanca Las Vegas
- Suzy & Harley Nichols
- U.S. ARMY JROTC
- Whole Foods Market

Continued...
Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada

Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada is a statewide chapter under Youth M.O.V.E. National, a youth inspired and youth led organization that encourages and empowers our peers to unite together to develop self-advocacy skills, remove the stigma placed on mental health and create systems change. Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada members participate in community empowerment activities and trainings, attend conferences and sit on various councils and committees. Members are between 14 and 26 years of age and have lived experience utilizing service systems including: mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, foster care, education and homelessness.

At Youth M.O.V.E Nevada we recognize the power of our lived experience and have high expectations for success. We are a strength based bridge to improving support services for youth, by youth, through our shared stories. Together we work within the community to promote a youth-guided approach to provide youth voice at all levels of the Nevada System of Care. Here at Youth M.O.V.E. we understand the integral role that youth play in the shaping of our future and we work for the day when youth are fully recognized for the vital role they play in society. For more information about YMNV or to become a member to get involved in future meetings and activities, check out our website at www.nvpep.org/youth-move.html and don’t forget to follow us on social media! Facebook: facebook.com/youthmovenv, Twitter: @YouthMOVEnv, and Instagram: @YouthMOVEnv.

Volunteer Corner

By: Ginny Rader

As a new resident of Las Vegas last year, I was pleased to find Nevada PEP as a place that welcomes volunteers. For a newcomer to the area, volunteering at PEP is a great way to learn about the community and the many resources it provides. Volunteers provide support to the professional staff who works with families of children with disabilities. The volunteers help in the PEP office with assembling materials and supporting the staff, and in community activities such as back to school fairs, walk against bullying, and fund raising projects throughout the year. PEP is an extended family for the families with whom they work—they help negotiate the “system”, finding the resources families need for making their children successful. They are great people to work around, dedicated and caring. Volunteers are valued and appreciated. I am happy to be a part of the PEP family and hope to influence others to become a part of the PEP volunteer team.

Raffle Sponsors

- Adventure Dome
- All Family Fun Center
- AMC Rainbow Promenade
- American Legion Auxiliary #14 Juniors
- Bahama Breeze
- Bike World
- Blue Man Group
- Bone Fish Grill
- Bonnie Springs
- Brio @ Tivoli
- Buca di Beppo
- Carraba’s
- Casa Blanca
- Casa de Shenandoah
- Cheesecake Factory
- Children’s Discovery Museum
- Chipotle Mexican Grill
- Chuck E Cheese
- MGM Cirque Shows- Beatles Love
- Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf
- Disneyland
- Gameworks
- Gaming Goat
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- IN-N-OUT
- Jet Blue
- Joe’s Crab Shack (Henderson)
- King Putt
- Kneaders
- Lake Mead Cruises
- Las Vegas Ice Center
- Las Vegas Motor Speedway
- Laser Quest
- Lazy Dog
- Lettuce Entertain You
- Lion Habitat Ranch
- Lisa Leviton/Build-A-Bear
- Loues
- Macayo’s Mexican Restaurant
- Massage Envy
- Mob Museum
- Olive Garden
- Orleans/Basketball
- PF Chang’s
- Pole Position Raceway
- Primm
- Pump It Up
- Rogue Toys
- Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park
- Sonio’s Café
- Southwest Airlines
- Sport Social
- Springs Preserve
- Sprouts
- Stratosphere
- Trader Joe’s
- Triple George
- Trish Leavitt
- Vegas Golden Knights
- Vegas Indoor Skydiving
- Wal-Mart
- We Rock The Spectrum Gym
- Whole Foods
- Wildfire Lanes
- Yassou Greek Grill Cafe
My Family Story - A Volunteers Story

I reached out to NV PEP about 7 years ago. My son was having challenging behaviors in all settings and was struggling academically in school and he was being bullied in school by a group of kids. He was so angry, and depressed. I was afraid for my son’s safety and I didn’t know how to help him. My family specialist supported and guided me to advocate for my son’s rights. I learned so much, most of all I learned how to speak up and not agree on everything the school says. It was a big challenge for us because I don’t have a car, so I had to learn how to use public transportation. Regardless of that, it did not stop me from going to every single meeting at school and taking my son to therapy. My family specialist has taught me persistence and has filled me with valuable information that I will share with other parents. I have learned about prior written notice, IEP process and required team members. I still have a lot of learning to do, however I am not afraid of speaking up anymore. My son has good grades now and the bullying stopped, thank you NV PEP!

System of Care Retreat

At the beginning of November the Nevada System of Care (SOC) brought together state staff and community partners for a retreat to discuss what progress has been made in expanding SOC and get input on future direction. In total almost 100 providers, parents and youth representatives attended.

SOC invited Erin Espinosa from the University of Maryland School of Social Work to facilitate the meeting. Erin brings a wealth of knowledge about Systems of Care in other state and best practices. The participants were able to ask questions and have discussions about needs in our state and how best to address the barriers that many families experience while trying to find appropriate, evidence based practices to help address their children’s mental & behavioral health care needs.

The day ended with a group activity to help establish priorities going forward and recommendations to the Division of Child and Family Services and the System of Care Workgroups. They SOC Workgroups are open to the public and participation of families and youth is always welcome! If you would like more information about SOC and future meetings please contact Char Frost at cfrost@nvpep.org or 702-388-8899 or the SOC website ddfs.nv.gov/Programs/CMH/SOC/Nevada_System_of_Care.

Did You Know...?

1995: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
Paul Hearne, a longtime leader in the disability community, achieves his dream of creating a national association to give people with disabilities more consumer power and a stronger public voice, with the creation of the American Association of People with Disabilities.

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

- Les Brown
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)

Elisa Kline 1 Year, Kenny Tauch 3 Years, Robin Renshaw 18 Years, Diane Lombardo 12 Years, Zelinna Palma 1 Year.

Roslyn Timmerman 1 Year, Gwendolyn Robledo 1 Year, Cheri Day 9 Years, Tiffany Montgomery 1 Year.

Havander Davis 6 Years, Magdalena Ruiz 5 Years, Joanna Gonzalez 1 Year, Chad Uhl 6 Years.

Nicole Rush 1 Year, Liliana Resendez 1 Year, Yvonne Penkalski 1 Year, Char Frost 7 Years, Theresa Rodriguez 1 Year.

Michele Jennings 1 Year.

Karen Tauch 22 Years, Natalie Filipic 13 Years, Stephanie Vrsnik 17 Years, Robin Kincaid 18 Years.

Priorities Established by US Department of Education

By: Robin Kincaid

In October, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVoss, announced a list of the following priorities for the US Department of Education. These priorities serve as a guide when the department is making decisions on which grants to fund.

- Empowering Families to Choose a High-Quality Education that Meets Their Child’s Unique Needs.
- Promoting Innovation and Efficiency, Streamlining Education with an Increased Focus on Improving Student Outcomes, and Providing Increased Value to Students and Taxpayers.
- Fostering Flexible and Affordable Paths to Obtaining Knowledge and Skills.
- Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills that Prepare Students to be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens.
- Meeting the Unique Needs of Students and Children, including those with Disabilities and/or with Unique Gifts and Talents.
- Promoting Literacy.
- Promoting Effective Instruction in Classrooms and Schools.
- Promoting Economic Opportunity.
- Encouraging Improved School Climate and Safer and More Respectful Interactions in a Positive and Safe Educational Environment.
- Ensuring that Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families Have Access to High-Quality Educational Choices.

The department said that its 11 initiatives would apply to about 80 competitive grants, amounting to an estimated $4 billion over the 2018 fiscal year.
Educational Update

High Expectations in Early Childhood Education Classrooms

By: Robin Kincaid

Inclusion is creating a community in classrooms that includes both students with and without disabilities. Research shows us that not only is inclusion a best practice, but it benefits ALL kids!

Some of the benefits relating to inclusion are: including young children in preschool classrooms, providing opportunities to learn from their peers, learning the same curriculum, sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships. It is well documented that the beginning years of all children’s lives are critical for building the early foundations of learning and wellness needed for success in school and later in life. During these years, children’s brains develop rapidly, influenced by the experiences they share with their families, teachers, peers, and in their communities. Like all children, it is critical for children with disabilities to be exposed to a variety of rich experiences where they can learn in the context of play and everyday interactions and engage with their peers with and without disabilities. In partnership with families, high-quality early childhood programs can facilitate the experiences that foster learning for all children. Children with disabilities who attend inclusion classrooms are often supported by parents and professionals who have high expectations for their future.

To prepare for school, families might consider participating in the following kinds of activities:

- Helping the child practice being with groups of children by participating in a playgroup, church nursery, Mom’s group or meetup group.
- Helping a child make transitions between activities can help a child adjust to routines in the classroom.
- Visiting the classroom to help the child become familiar with the environment and staff.
- Determine with the IEP team if any additional equipment or staff are needed to provide supports.

Sharing information with the school staff about the child’s response to these activities will help parents’ partner with their school team and participate in the IEP development. It is important to ask questions and develop a relationship with school staff that provides a basis for the child to make progress and sets the path for learning in inclusive classrooms.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 was the first federally mandated law demanding equal rights to individuals with a disability.
Parents have you ever wondered “what will my son or daughter do after high school”. Students, families, and school staff can start thinking about this question when the students get to middle school. The Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 388.133 (3)(4)(d) states “If the pupil is 14 years of age or older, transition services includes the courses of study of the pupil; and if the pupil is 16 years of age or older, transition services include, without limitation: the development of employment and other objectives for living as an adult after the completion of school”. One of the most important things for students with disabilities to do while still in high school is to participate in transition assessments and transition planning. Both the assessments and the transition plan help engage students to focus on future planning for life beyond high school. Transition assessments need to be age appropriate and are related to training, education, employment and independent skills. The assessments are to be given on both academic and functional achievements of the student. Student and parent interviews and interest inventories can also generate information. The information gathered from the assessments helps the family, student, and the school staff to write measurable post-secondary goals for the transition plan. Good transition assessments and planning will help our students to have a smooth transition from high school into adulthood.

What are Transition Assessments

Believe it can be done. When you believe something can be done, your mind will find the ways to do it.
- David J Schartz

The Nevada Road to Graduation, 2017-2018

In 2013, Nevada changed its graduation requirements. In order to graduate with a regular diploma, Students must still complete their required course work, take tests required by the state and earn 22.5 credits in certain subjects. For the graduation cohorts, 2017 and 2018, students must participate in four End of Course Examinations known as the EOC. For students in the graduation cohorts 2019 and beyond, students must pass four End of Course Assessments. Starting in 2018–19 the EOC final will count at 10% of the student’s final grade and increase 5 percentage points each year until reaching 20% of the grade in 2020–21. Students will also need to meet any district requirements. All students must take a college and career readiness assessment in Grade 11. The following informational pamphlets explain the new high school assessments and graduation requirements. There are specific course requirements and a detailed description can be found at http://www.doe.nv.gov/High_School_Graduation/
Helping students understand and navigate the world outside of home and the school environment is an important piece of successful transition to adult life. Community Based Instruction (CBI) is a service that can be written into a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).

CBI is an exciting opportunity for students to do hands on learning in their community. This is more than a field trip; CBI is designed by the IEP team to teach specific life skills. So if every skill is taught to be used in a functional way, it only makes sense that we should be practicing those skills in the community. The skills learned while engaging in CBI can range from learning about bank accounts, using public transportation, to planning visits to the grocery store.

Throughout the student’s high school years, CBI can be geared towards measurable post-secondary goals as well. Post-secondary goals are something that the student is working towards for after high school. The students CBI can be visits to college campuses and employment information fairs. These activities will help students learn more about different opportunities within the community. By starting early and keeping students motivated, Community Based Instruction can support students with understanding a variety of different concepts that they may not experience in a school setting.

There are many benefits to CBI such as it can improve self-determination and self-esteem, as well as providing a variety of different life experiences. It is important to start early so that students can practice skills in the natural environment. To learn more about CBI, contact Nevada PEP or visit our website and review “Inspiring Possibilities: Parent Tips For Transition Planning”.

New and wonderful opportunities are happening for youth with disabilities and this was made possible with the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Excitingly, WIOA promotes high expectations and many new opportunities for youth with disabilities. One of the focuses of WIOA is that individuals with disabilities should have an opportunity to access competitive integrated employment; defined as full-time or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to individuals without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities.

WIOA encourages schools, community agencies, One-Stop Career Centers and the State Vocational Rehabilitation agency to work in collaboration to support young people with disabilities to receive the post-secondary education and training they need to enter the workforce.

Youth and their families can learn more about what is available under WIOA during the transition planning process at their IEP meeting. To learn more check out the schedule of webinars and training workshops on Nevada PEP’s website.
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!

Andrew Campbell
Teacher
I would like to nominate my grandson’s teacher, Mr. Campbell. Not only is Mr. Campbell great with his students, but he goes above and beyond for them. He’s so passionate about what he does that he doesn’t let the children’s behaviors influence his love of teaching children with special needs. When asked how he keeps so calm, he replies, “I choose to teach them not only how to read and write, but show them that somebody cares.”

Noemi Quiroz
Grandparent

Robert Fowler
Challenger Little League Coach
Robert Fowler deserves to receive the Hand in Hand award. For the past 25 years Robert Fowler has volunteered his Saturday mornings to the Challenger Little League Division. Coach Woody, as he is known at the ballpark, was an assistant coach to a team called the “MUDHENS.” He had a friend whose son played on the team. After 5 years of playing baseball his friend’s son had become Woody’s “Angel” in the outfield. Coach Woody has been the Coach of the Howlers, Crashers and most recently the Senior Division Legends.

Coach Woody continues to support the Challenger Little League of Southern Nevada by volunteering his time and encourages family and friends to assist him. Woody is a Task Force Member and Coach and is employed at NV Energy. Some of his responsibilities are assisting in the fundraising (the Challenger Division received a donation from NV Energy) and planning of the Awards Banquet. Woody is always friendly with the players, parents and supporters of the division. He is safety minded and encourages the players to be the best they can be. He’s also the “pitcher” of Challenger Little League of Southern Nevada’s only over the fence 2 homeruns!

Patrice Gardner
Professional
Patrice Gardner works for Nevada Early Intervention Services; she has helped my son who has Beckwith–Wiedemann Syndrome and my family whenever we need anything. I know I can always count on her for the help and support. She’s hands on and a wonderful person. I’m proud to nominate Patrice for the “Hand in Hand Together We Can” award. She is the meaning of this nomination.

April Ortega
Parent

Melinda Golightly
Daughter
Melinda Golightly is an amazing young woman that has gone through a lot in her life. Her sister has multiple disabilities and Melinda takes care of her like no other. She has stood beside my husband, Dan, and I as we fought tooth and nail for her sister. She spends time teaching and helping her sister; and is always there for her. I have never known a kinder, more gentle person than Melinda. She loves her sister with a true and beautiful love that astonishes me daily.

Michelle Metheny
Mother

Amanda Hayes
Professional
We were referred to Amanda by our DCFS caseworker, upon case closure to help our family coordinate with each other and the multiple professionals’ involved in our families lives. She has been so helpful organizing meetings every month and informing us of resources available. I feel confident closing WIN services and moving on with our lives. I’m so grateful to have met Amanda. She has been a huge help and a great friend. We adore her! Thank you, Amanda!

Kindra Mettert
Parent

Deanne Hicks
Teacher
Ms. Hicks is an incredible teacher! She has gotten to know my granddaughter very well. She has been patient with
her and has worked so hard to help her stay on track and keep her calm. Ms. Hicks would even come to my granddaughter’s CFT meetings for support. I could contact Ms. Hicks whenever my granddaughter was having a bad day or was in a bad mood. She also helps me come up with new ideas on how to help her with schooling. She was even willing to come to my granddaughter’s new school and talk to her new teacher about what works best for my granddaughter. I would like to thank Ms. Hicks for everything she has done for my granddaughter and me.

Barbara Davisson  
Mother

Jassica Kim  
Teacher

I would like to nominate Jassica Kim, she’s a Special Education teacher in the Kid’s Program. Jassica has helped me along with many others through my daughter’s journey. I came to her at a time where there were many uncertainties; although she, herself, was new at teaching. She had a certain way of comforting a “Helicopter Mom.” Along the way she has made us feel very included and informed about my daughter’s education and progress. In such moments like good or bad behaviors, what she ate or hadn’t, and discovering new favorite things or dislikes. She always makes time to fill us in on my daughter’s day. Jassica along with her two amazing aides have had such a heartfelt impact in our lives. She has fought for my daughter and believed in her. We definitely need more teachers like her. She has amazing talent and compassion for children. From the bottom of our hearts we would like to say to an advocate, educator, and a friend that she has truly been a blessing in my daughter’s life.

Linda Hua  
Mother

Melissa King  
Teacher

My son had never been successful in public schools. He has received various levels of treatment. He was placed in Mrs. King’s classroom at a public school and she has been so remarkable with him. They formed a bond right away. She’s highly advanced in how to handle children with exceptional needs and for the first time in his life, he’s in a public school and loving it. Thank you, Mrs. King!

Kindra Metttert  
Mom

Daniel Metheny  
Husband

Almost two years ago, Dan, stepped into my life and took on the role of a guardian parent to my 19 year old daughter, who has multiple disabilities. He never batted an eye lash, turned her away, nor looked down on her in anyway. He has shown an unconditional love that only a true father gives. He supports, encourages, and fights for her every day. He has high expectations for a full and healthy future. We are truly blessed to have Dan in our lives.

Michelle Metheny  
Wife

Mathew Montgomery  
Husband

I would like to nominate this Hand in Hand award to such a supportive, loving and wonderful dad to two children who absolutely adore him. He goes above and beyond for them in any aspect that he needs and is a great shoulder for me, his wife, when I need the support as well. He’s always the calm in any storm and continues to learn how to advocate for his children with taking on classes and projects that help broaden his horizon with options in the community and in legislature. Our kids could not have asked for a better daddy. We love you to the moon and back!

Tiffany Montgomery  
Wife

Kara O’Brien  
Teacher

Miss Kara is amazing, polite, kind, smart, and caring. She’s been absolutely amazing with my daughter for the past two years and two summers. She goes above and beyond for my daughter and all of her students. When I drop off my daughter at school, I feel secure because of her. I never have worries. Miss Kara is an amazing person. We need a million of her teaching our children with special needs. She’s awesome!

Kansas Caperell-Sierra  
Parent

Did You Know...?

1996: ACCESSIBLE COMPUTER AND TELECOMM EQUIPMENT
The Telecommunications Act passes and requires that computers, telephones, closed captioning, and many other telecommunication devices and equipment be made accessible.
Congratulations Robin!

In October, Robin Kincaid was honored by the Clark County School District program, for the outstanding partnership with the FACES (Family Engagement and Community Services) program. Robin has coordinated with the FACES program to provide trainings to parents at schools all over Clark County, by providing workshops for over 500 parents in both English and Spanish. With Robin’s strong leadership this partnership has continued to grow, more parents have the opportunity to learn. Nevada PEP and the FACES program partner to ensure success for all children. Nevada PEP provides trainings such as Bullies, Targets, and Bystanders: Responses that Work, IEP (Individualized Educational Program) Workshops, at the family’s local school, this provides more of an opportunity for parents to attend and build stronger relationships between families and their schools. Some of the comments parents have shared after the workshop...

Tony Priest
Challenger Task Force Member

I would like to nominate Tony Priest to receive the Hand in Hand recognition award. Tony is a Challenger Task Force member and also Challenger Little League of Southern Nevada’s field and equipment manager. Tony arrives @ 730 am every Saturday morning during baseball season. Tony is the “first” one there preparing the field; spraying the playing area with water, dragging the diamond smooth, chalking the baselines and cleaning the spectator bleachers of trash. Once the field is prepped for playing, he inspects the equipment for serviceability; repairs any bats or helmets if repairable. Tony sets up shade for the announcer stand and over the bleachers during the hot summer mornings. When the last game is completed, Tony collects the equipment and secures the diamond until the next Saturday. Tony is instrumental to a successful Challenger Division game and season. During the Challenger All-Star game, Tony becomes the grill-master of hotdogs. Tony receives volunteer hours threw his employer who in return makes a donation in his name to the Challenger Division for our awards banquet.

Paul Rogers
Paradise Ranch Owner

Mr. Paul Rogers is the owner of Paradise Ranch, a provider of H.A.T, or well known as Horse Assisted Therapy. The Ranch is Home to many rescue horses. Mr. Paul (as our son affectionately calls him) is an honorably discharged Marine with a degree in Psychology. He made an immediate connection with our son. Our boy has worked with horses before. However, the first time he ever actually rode one was at the Paradise Ranch. He waves and even speaks while riding the horse. He even smiles and laughs out loud. Mr. Paul figured out that my son enjoys being photographed. He often video tapes the sessions. This has proven to be quite motivational and productive. We are grateful that Paul is working with our son. He does exercises on and off the horse. This improved not only his speech language skills, but also his cognitive abilities, spending time on sorting, and sequencing; as well as socialization and fine motor activities. We are blessed to have Paul Rogers in our lives. Many thanks PARTNER!

Stephanie Swango
Teacher

When I requested an evaluation for my daughter, she could hardly read or write at all. Her self-esteem was very low and she hated to go to school because it was embarrassing. The last two school years with Ms. Swango have been wonderful. My daughter has gained so much from her. Thank you Ms. Swango for your dedication to my daughter!

“If it wasn’t for Ms. Swango, I wouldn’t know how to read and write now.” –KF

Diane Lombardo
Mother

Save The Date!

Celebrando Hispanic Festival

Come One, Come All
Saturday, April 28, 2018
Sammy Davis Jr. Plaza
Free Community Celebration
Food, Music, Community, Culture
CelebrandoFestival.com
Follow Us @CELEBRANDOFESTIVAL
Thank you to all of our amazing Hand in Hand Sponsors for their generous support. Their contribution continues to make it possible to honor and recognize the extraordinary people who support Nevada’s children and families. For more information on becoming a Hand in Hand sponsor, contact Nevada PEP or go to www.nvpep.org

Did You Know...?

2006: HISTORY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS ENTERS CURRICULA
The first bill requiring that students in a K-12 public school system be taught the history of the disability rights movement is passed, largely due to the efforts of 20 young people with disabilities from the state of West Virginia.

Why does the school ask me about my child’s strengths?

There are several reasons why schools ask about your child’s strengths. First, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team to identify and focus on a student’s strengths as part of the process to develop an appropriate IEP.

Secondly, when we approach a student’s learning from a strength based model, we focus on their unique strengths rather than just the deficits for example, a student who may struggle with reading, may excel in math or computer coding. In the U.S. Department of Education publication:

A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youths with Disabilities (May 2017), identifying students strengths leads to meaningful transition planning for all aspects of one’s life.

Parents are essential in ensuring that their valuable knowledge and understanding of their child is shared throughout the IEP process. It has been said often that parents are their child’s first teacher and are essential IEP team members with an expertise to contribute to the IEP process.
“Hand In Hand, Together We Can”

NOMINATION FORM

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 entry 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
NAME

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

PHONE EMAIL

CHILD’S NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

☐ 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

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Nevada PEP Social Networks

VISIT US ONLINE AT www.nvpep.org

It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.
- Henry David Thoreau

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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

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