

PICs -n- Pieces

Parent Information Center & Parent Education Network Wyoming State PIRC

Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc.



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In This Issue:

What We Want for WY	2
Extended School Year	3
Early Intervention Pages	4
Dentistry Head Start Home	5
PEN's Good apple Spotlight	6
PAWS New Vendor and Tips	7
What's Happening in WY	8
Parent & Afterschool Conf	9
Pens' Parent Educators	10
21st Century Grants	11
Friendship	12
Importance of Recess	13
Subscription Information	15

What We Want for Wyoming Students: *Change Led by Schools*

An Open Letter to Wyoming's Schools

Dear Wyoming Schools,

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has offered our Wyoming schools a great deal. In Title I schools alone, the impact is over 26.2 million dollars. That impact will yield great opportunities for Wyoming children in our schools with the highest priority. However, because it is a stimulus package, the whole idea is to get the money out there as soon as possible, to stimulate the economy. Yet, herein lies the problem. What do schools do with all the money to make the greatest impact in the **education of our students**? Not to mention what will each district be able to continue to provide after the money is long gone? The Parent Education Network would like to offer a proposal to those schools facing an influx of financial resource that will dwindle to zero over the course of the next two years.

Of all the research-based programs available to schools today, most schools overlook the one that will provide them with the greatest output: **engaging stakeholders in a partnership**. We are not saying that schools are not working with stakeholders (parents and community members). What we are saying is that very few of Wyoming's schools actively engage stakeholders in a partnership role. Many school officials feel that involving parents will take extra effort from them and their staff and that parents and community members are really not capable of understanding the critical workings of educating children. Many more feel that involving parents is something completely separate from education. Often we hear that "parents are good for help when needed, they fill the fundraising and volunteering capabilities that schools outline for them, but other than that, we don't have the time to teach them what we are doing with our students." PEN's argument for that is **why not?** Why not take the group of parents whose children are given to you to educate, and build a partnership with them to fully impact the success of our students? Why not embrace the community you serve and bring in experts to offer resources you are not able to provide alone? Why not throw away the educational methods of the past 100+ years and make a change in our educational systems that throws open the doors and welcomes the input of those not directly educated in education?

Do you remember when the school was the center of the community? Are those days forgotten? Schools have moved away from the center and now stand alone on the edges of town, meeting their own standards and doing education their own way. But, when schools fail, what happens? The community rises against them, demanding change. What has happened to our children? What has become of our communities?

They are now segmented into tidy little diagrams—illustrating schools, parents and communities. When did we become diagrams of subgroups? Why aren't **we as a community** educating our children for the increasing demands that their future will require?

(Continued on page 2)

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act offers Wyoming an opportunity to reinvest in its communities, to reinvest in the future of our children. No longer should it be acceptable for the input of the community to be looked at as a checkmark in a checklist of items needed for compliance. Meeting the letter of the law is a far cry from meeting the spirit of the law. NCLB, however faulted and underfunded, was written with the hope that stakeholders would be involved in the process that is education. It was not intended to be a checklist so schools could say simply, “We are doing that”. Just because it was not clearly stated, “Schools must form a partnership with stakeholders”, does not give our schools the excuse for simply notifying parents in a timely manner, and/or sending out/publishing the required documents for choice. When has good enough ever been enough for Wyoming?

Schools must lead the change needed to affect the greatest amount of our children. For this to work, schools must change. Schools must begin to realize the need for the community. Schools hold the power to form the partnership. That partnership must signify equal say, equal value and equal representation.

The Parent Education Network, Wyoming State PIRC, is funded for this purpose. As a grant recipient from the Federal Department of Education, it is our role to ensure that schools do not assume a “business as usual” model. It is our role as the Wyoming Parental Information and Resource Center to help schools understand the thing that is missing in their buildings and districts. No longer are we just that *parent center*. We are an organization of educated individuals in education and family-school partnerships. We strive to know all that our schools are required to do, whether it is Title I mandates or Positive Behaviors Interventions and Support. We make *your* business, *our* business. We know that the one thing missing in Wyoming’s schools is as simple as a relationship. Relationships take time. Time is not something that educators have a lot of. That is why we were funded. We are working with schools every day to try to help them create the change that is needed to yield the greatest amount of impact. We know that it is not the one-shot professional development that schools send their staff to regularly. In order to fully maximize a change in behavior, training must be over time, with required product or demonstration of implementation. The only way for professional development or integration of curriculum to make the greatest impact is when teachers buy in. It is no different with stakeholders.

Why would stakeholders feel any responsibility toward the success or failures of our schools if they are not committed or engaged?

Our proposal to Wyoming’s schools of valued educators and administrators, is that you look at this funding as an opportunity to take our schools in a new direction. Join with us in taking our students to the next level of academic success by engaging our stakeholders in the task of building a partnership centered on the educational needs of our students. The focus should have never been moved from the student to the school. We need to join together and build the relationships necessary to make change possible. Instill a sense of pride in the heart of our communities—our schools. Change like this takes time. We ask that schools take the two years of funding that is offered by the ARRA to embrace change and initiate partnerships with stakeholders.

Let the Parent Education Network and/or parents work with our schools to:

- ☑ **Form action teams of ALL stakeholders to lead change in your school.**
- ☑ **Change the dynamics of your school by forming a partnership with your stakeholders.**
- ☑ **Ensure that your stakeholders are not checks on your compliance list.**
- ☑ **Help Wyoming to become a leader in partnership schools.**

With the sense of urgency to spend those stimulus dollars, we ask you to consider this question in closing—Is this truly the best education that we as Wyoming citizens can provide? Or can we embrace the change that is offered us, stretch out our arms and form a partnership in our communities that has been lacking for quite some time?

Thank you for all you do for our students. It is our sincere hope that you will look outside of your school walls to the community whose livelihood so depends on your successes or failures. We realize that schools cannot fully educate our children without the support and input of all stakeholders who bring additional dimension and depth to the learning of our students. Whether in the classroom, or life, we need to realize the important role all can bring to the table.



Together We Make a Difference!

Krista Sweckard,

Family -School Partnership Coordinator
Parent Education Network

Extended School Year — Not Just Summer School

It is now the time of year that families need to consider their child’s need for extended school year services (ESY). ESY services are not the typical summer school or another type of summer program provided for a large group of students

and should help the student achieve the goals for him/her to be a successful, productive citizen.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Wyoming Chapter 7 Education Rules Governing Students with Disabilities define Extended School Year (ESY) as special education and related services that:

Some issues/factors the IEP team might consider when deciding upon whether or not ESY should be provided are:

*Are provided to a child with a disability –
Beyond the normal school year;
In accordance with the child’s IEP;
At no cost to the parents of the child; and
Meet the standards of the WY Department of
Education.*

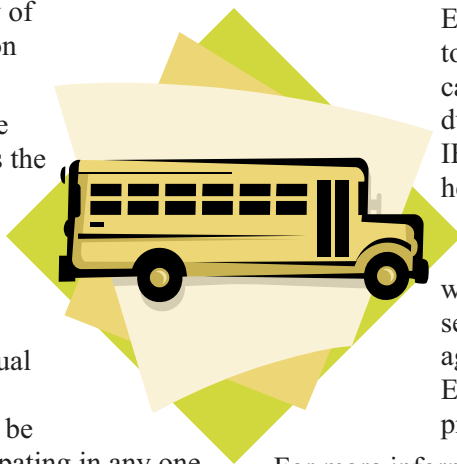
- ◆ How long it will take the child to recoup (recover) any previously learned skills in the fall (regression)
- ◆ Category of disability
- ◆ Severity of disability
- ◆ Rate of progress
- ◆ Availability of alternative resources
- ◆ Behavioral or physical problems
- ◆ Parent’s ability to provide an educational structure at home
- ◆ Areas of the child's curriculum that need continuous attention
- ◆ Ability of student to interact with students who do not have disabilities
- ◆ The student’s vocational needs

Extended school year services must be provided if a student’s IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary to provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the student. FAPE means special education and related services that:

Extended School Year services can be for more than academics. The IEP team should ask the question of whether the learning that occurred during the regular school year will be “significantly jeopardized if ESY services are not provided. These reasons may be the loss of social, behavioral, communication, academic, or self-sufficiency”.

1. Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge;
2. Meet the standards of the state
3. Include preschool, elementary school or secondary school education in the state, and
4. Are provided in conformity of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

When considering the need for ESY, the team will determine if the student needs the services to continue to move toward accomplishment of the goals and objectives written in the student’s IEP. As the team decides if a student needs ESY services, and any of the summer programs happen to address the individual needs of a student and if they are appropriate for the student, there would be nothing to keep the student from participating in any one of the summer programs as part of ESY services.



Eligibility for ESY services cannot be limited to only particular types of disabilities, nor can they unilaterally limit the type, amount or duration of those services. If a child is on an IEP and some of the above factors exist, then he or she may be in need of ESY services. A parent may request an IEP meeting to determine ESY eligibility. All students with disabilities must be considered for ESY services at least annually. If a parent does not agree with the IEP team’s judgment regarding ESY services, he or she may follow the procedures for due process.

For more information or questions about ESY, call the Parent Information Center at 1-800-660-9742

An issue for ESY is whether the progress made by the student during the regular school year will be significantly jeopardized if he or she does not receive continued educational programming which is extended during the summer months. ESY services are provided on a case-by-case basis specific to the individual needs of each student,

Source: Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Guidelines for the Provision of Extended School Year Services for Students with Disabilities. These guidelines can be downloaded from the WDE website at www.k12.wy.us.



Wyoming Early Intervention Council

"WORKING TOGETHER TO EXTEND THEIR REACH"

The Early Intervention Council's mission is to provide statewide direction and support to insure exemplary coordination of community based early intervention services for children with developmental needs and their families.

Children’s Learning Center in Jackson receives \$50,000 grant from anonymous donors

(Jackson, WY, Feb. 2009) An anonymous group committed to quality child care has agreed to donate as much as \$50,000 by matching every dollar contributed to Children’s Learning Center between now and June 30 with two dollars.

“This is a great time for donors to support the first nonprofit merger in Jackson,” said Judy Montagne, CLC Executive Director. “Every day we are seeing the benefits and increased savings of joining a pair of organizations with similar goals and vision. Today’s dollar goes a lot further toward our goal of providing comprehensive, high-quality services for young children, birth through age five.”

On January 1, 2008 the two leading childcare providers in the community merged. Community Children’s Project (CCP) and The Learning Center (TLC) became Children’s Learning Center (CLC). Children’s Learning Center has about 80 employees and serves nearly 350 children daily.

“Many of our families need assistance,” said Lety Liera, CLC Education Director. “Childcare is expensive everywhere, and families here are already challenged by the high cost of living in Jackson. When one parent loses a job, a scholarship may help keep the kids in childcare so that parent can look for a new job. Otherwise, a cycle of poverty may begin for that family.”

Donations support educational programs in Teton County, including Head Start, Early Head Start, childcare for infants and toddlers, and preschool programs for older children. Funds are also critical in helping buy new materials for children, training for staff, and scholarships. Additionally, free developmental screenings are conducted throughout the year for children in Teton and Sublette Counties, totaling about 400 annually.

For more information, or to donate, call the Children’s Learning Center at (307) 733- 1616.

New baby book for families

A book with simple ideas for developing positive routines with babies is available at no cost for families in Wyoming. Called "You and Your Baby", this book offers suggestions for interactions with babies during everyday activities such as: feeding, playing, changing, bedtime and saying hello and goodbye. Written in English on one side, and Spanish on the flip side, this little book also has pages for mom, dad or family member to add a photo or write down a favorite memory of baby.

The book is funded by the John P. Ellbogen Foundation, Ruth R. Ellbogen Foundation, Zero to Three Better Baby Care Campaign and is a sponsored Initiative of the Wyoming Community Foundation.

These durable and colorful books will be distributed to Wyoming families by Public Health Nurses, Physicians, Childcare Providers and others who work with families of children birth to 18 months. Copies are also available by calling the Parent Education Network at 1-877-8900-9736 today!



Call us for your copy today!

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Head Start Dental Home Initiative in WY



Oral Health is integral to the healthy physical, social-emotional and intellectual development of every child. Unfortunately, many children in America suffer from poor oral health and a lack of access to oral health care.

The 2000 Surgeon General's Report, "Oral Health in America," noted that not only is dental caries the most common chronic disease of childhood, but that low-income children suffer from twice as much tooth decay as more affluent children. Current statistics indicate that 28% of all preschoolers between the ages of 2 and 5 suffer from tooth decay, but in Head Start programs, decay rates often range from 30%-40% in 3-year-olds and 50%-60% in 4-year-olds. Head Start leadership, staff and parents have identified poor oral health as *the single most important health issue* facing Head Start programs nationwide. The emphasis placed on oral health reflects an understanding that oral health education, prevention, and early diagnosis and treatment are key to healthy development for Head Start children.

The federal Office of Head Start (OHS) has awarded a five-year contract to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) to help create dental homes for Head Start children throughout the U.S. A dental home is a source of comprehensive, continuously accessible, coordinated and family-centered oral health care provided by dentists.

Although the initiative will not directly fund dental services, AAPD's efforts will help Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) children access oral health care through the development of a national network of pediatric and general dentists who will provide quality dental homes for HS and EHS children. AAPD President Beverly Largent reflects on the potential impact of this initiative in her statement, "I am convinced that the AAPD Head Start Dental Home Project will be the foundation that will ensure future dental homes for Head Start children, and children's oral health care will become a priority for the nation."

The AAPD-OHS collaboration will help provide parents, caregivers and Head Start staff with the latest evidence-

based information on how they can help prevent tooth decay and establish a foundation for a lifetime of oral health. Dentists also will be offered information to enhance their understanding of the needs of the Head Start / Early Head Start population.

Head Start is unique in that it provides comprehensive services to enrolled children and families enrolled in HS and EHS. These services, which focus on parents, include case management, support services, parent education and opportunities for parent involvement. Head Start Performance Standards require that HS children receive an initial dental exam and have a dental home. Comprehensive services reinforce performance standards and can assist parents in overcoming some of the barriers to good oral health. As one California pediatric dentist stated, "My experiences with the two programs in my area now and one in a previous practice location have shown me that Head Start changes these families dental health future, and it is a pleasure to support that."



Recognizing that establishing dental homes for almost one million children enrolled in Head Start programs annually is no small task, AAPD has turned to other professional dental organizations to develop collaborative partnerships to accomplish this goal.

For more information about how you can become involved in this important initiative, please visit the AAPD web site at www.aapd.org/headstart/.

"Not only is dental caries the most common chronic disease of childhood, but that low income children suffer from twice as much tooth decay as more affluent children"

— Surgeon General

PEN's Family-School Partnership Connections...



Good Apple Spotlight Award

Lovell Elementary Blogspot!

PEN's Good Apple Award goes to Lovell Elementary's Parent Council for moving their program into the technological age. Wow is the best word to describe it! The Parent Council, under the direction of Tashie Lundberg have recently posted their very own Blog! The blog has pictures and information regarding upcoming and past events that happen at Lovell Elementary in cooperation with the Parent Council. What a fabulous way to market the educational success of your school and your children—Congratulations Lovell Parent Council! Check out the blog for yourself at: <http://www.lesparentcouncil.blogspot.com>



Photo: a Dad and son at one of Lovell Elementary Parent Councils activities for family involvement this year: Dads for Donuts.

PEN Partnership Reception and Summit Held in Cheyenne with Karen Mapp



Anne T. Henderson, Vivian Johnson, Karen L. Mapp, and Don Davies

The Cheyenne community came together for PEN's Partnership Reception in Cheyenne, March 23, 2009 at Little America to build new relationships to support our children's learning. Families, educators and other community members from Cheyenne and surrounding area came to hear Karen Mapp, Ed.D of Harvard Family Research Project and one of the nations leading research experts on family engagement. Governor Freudenthal was on hand to provide opening remarks and welcome Dr Mapp, who shared ideas about why partnerships are valuable to our children's academic success. The following day, March 24, 2009, a summit was held to bring together teams of school leaders of parents, Title 1 staff, principals and educators, to discuss and develop action plans to take back to their districts and schools to increase family engagement in linking to learning for increased student achievement. Welcoming, honoring and connecting (to learning) and building meaningful relationships with families and communities members were key points discussed.

For more information on building strong action plans, call PEN at 1-877-900-9736.

Autographed copies of *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson and Don Davies, are available at a special rate of \$20.00 at the Parent Education Network Call us to purchase your copy today!

What pushes your button? Check out PIC and PEN's new blog at www.wpic.org or www.wpen.net



New PAWS vendor announced as testing window begins

Cheyenne – Wyoming schools began the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS) testing on March 11. The assessments include tests in reading, writing and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and in grade 11, as well as science in grades 4, 8 and 11. The testing window is open through April 15, 2009. Schools have the option of testing their students at any time during the testing period. Students are expected to spend approximately nine hours total on the various assessments.

Dr. Jim McBride, Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction, announced today that the Department has awarded a new contract to Pearson Education (NCS Pearson, Inc.) to administer the assessment through December of 2012. McBride said that Pearson Education won the contract after an open bidding process that included bids from four interested parties.

“As we begin the 2009 testing process, the Department can also send an important message to our schools, students and citizens that we will have stability and quality with PAWS in the years ahead,” McBride said.

PAWS is an accountability measure designed by Wyoming educators and national experts. The assessment is unique to Wyoming and offers educators opportunities to design their instructional practices around the real instructional needs of their students. This assessment meets the requirements of the federal law, No Child Left Behind.

“We have weathered a number of storms with regard to PAWS,” McBride said. “Our earliest experience with Harcourt, Inc. could even be called rocky. Through that process we have made modifications to the assessment. “We have improved the use of technology in delivering the

test,” he said. “Many, many processes have been improved and refined at the state and local district levels. The new contract will also allow the Department to hold Pearson Education accountable for what it has agreed to provide if it fails to perform as expected.

“An important development occurred when Harcourt, Inc. was purchased by Pearson Education. The new leadership at Pearson Education was able to keep the best of what Wyoming had identified in the Harcourt process and brought in very qualified assistance where needed,” McBride said. “When the time came to award the new contract, Pearson Education had put its stamp – that of an international leader in education technologies and assessment – on the Wyoming bid.”

The term of the current contract with Pearson Education is four years and will end on December 1, 2012, for a total of approximately \$40 million to deliver the Wyoming Assessment System, which includes the PAWS, the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students-Alternate (PAWS-ALT) and the Wyoming English Language Learners Assessment (WELLA).

Consistent with past federal budget assistance for state assessments, it is expected that federal funds will be utilized to pay for approximately 37 percent of the contract and state funds will be used for the remainder. The state contribution recognizes the fact that the Wyoming-designed system is unique in meeting the requirements identified by Wyoming educators.

Source: Tim Lockwood, WY Dept of Education



Tips for the PAWS

It's time for the PAWS again- the system of assessing our children's growth and performance- specifically in reading, writing, math and science. The assessment design provides information for teachers to make decisions regarding how to provide instruction through out the school year. It allows a teacher to be able to re-teach with specific standards where students might not have learned the concepts they need. So that there can be on-going conversations over what each student has learned, the PAWS results are available within one month of testing.

- Let your child know that testing is important and that he/she should do the best he/she can on the test.

- Be sure your child gets plenty of sleep during the testing days.
- Provide your child with nourishing meals, especially during the testing days.
- Be sure your child is to school on time.
- Visit with your child about the testing at the end of the day.
- Do something calming and fun with your child to help him/her relax.
- When test results come back, talk about the results with your child.
- Praise your child for doing his/her best.

What's Happening in Wyoming

WY Council for Exceptional Children

April 13-14, 2009

Casper—Hilton Garden Inn
with Dr Steve Edwards on
Teaching skills students need in
the 21st century
workplace place.



Call: **Dr Bob Bayuk**
347-2435 or
bbayuk@tribcsp.com

Wyoming School Psychologist Association (WSPA) Conference


April 23-24, 2009

Casper - Best Western Ramkota.
Featuring Robert Greenleaf

For more info contact:

Deb_Black@ncsd.k12.wy.us

Camp Carpe Diem June 25-27 at Uinta County Youth Camp

 Uinta Co. School District # 4 and the Governors Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities are hosting a summer camp for students with a developmental disability and/or seizure disorder between the ages of 8 and 21 years old.

Held at the Uinta County Youth Camp, the goals of this camping opportunity are to promote independence, build self esteem, increase social skills and have fun!

For more information or to request an application:

Lori Jensen phone: 307-782-3136
Uinta Co School District # 4
PO Box 130
Mountain View, WY 82939



Other supporters include: Wyoming Game and Fish, Uinta County Commissioners, Wyoming National Guard and Common Ground.

Western States Regional Early Intervention Conference Sponsored by Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind April 23 –25, 2009

The WY Department of Education and the Deaf Blind Project are pleased to announce the Western Regional Conference. This conference is geared for educators, therapists, early interventionists, and public health nurses who work with students who are visually impaired, blind, hard of hearing, deaf, deaf-blind or multi-disabled.

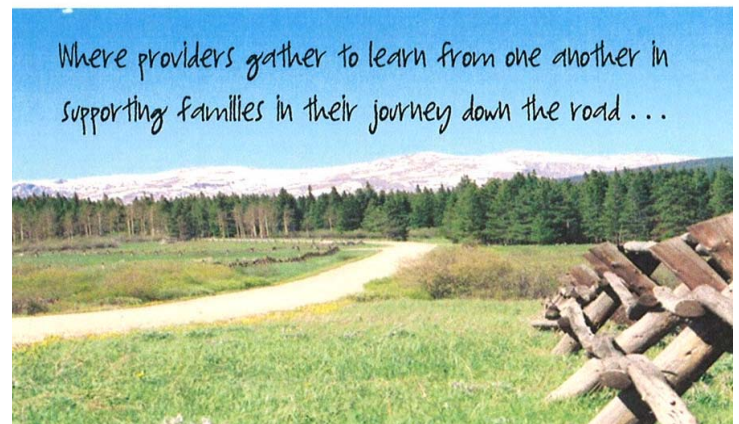
Wyoming has partnered with the Western regional states: AZ, CO, NM, NV and UT to host a conference, and this year the caliber of presenters is phenomenal.

The conference will be held April 23-25, 2009 in Colorado Springs at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort.

Keynote speakers

Patsy Pierce, PH D., CCC-SLP of University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill— residential facilities. She specializes in children with severe, complex communication needs.

For more information: mbrady@csdb.org
(719) 578-2260 or
register online at:
www.csdb.org and click on conferences.



Improving Educational Outcomes for Students with disAbilities Parent Conference

April 25-26, 2007
Hilton Garden Inn– Laramie

A parent conference for families of children with disabilities will be held in Laramie April 25 & 26, 2009 at the Hilton Garden Inn. There is no registration costs for families, and stipends to cover lodging and mileage are available. Respite care provided with pre-registration.

This year there will be two separate tracks– one for general disabilities and the second on autism.

Keynote Speaker, Roger Crawford, CPAE.

Roger is America's Possibility Coach who has been living and sharing a message of optimism and courage for over 25 years. He is a leading authority on developing human potential and breaking through self-imposed limitations to conquer change and reach levels of achievement previously thought impossible. Overcoming obstacles and transforming adversity into victory have defined Roger's life story. Because he has a physical disability, he has learned to turn trial into triumph. Roger is passionate and uniquely qualified to teach the Possibility Principles of Purpose, Perspective, Precision and Perseverance.

A Sample of Sessions for the Autism Track

Social Skills for Children with Autism:

Helen Nychka, M.S., CCC-SLP

Strategies for Children with Autism:

Douglas Scambler, Ph.D. & Athena Lickel, M.S.

Interventions for Students with Autism & Anxiety:

Judy Reaven, Ph.D.

Strategies for Children with Communication Disorders:

Sarah Dike

Transitional Services for Students with Disabilities:

Clay Dokken

For more information or to register call:

1-888-875-4383

Sponsored By Wyoming Department of Education, UPLIFT, ATTAIN– New Horizons in Autism, WIND– Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, and Wyoming State Autism Task Force

Wyoming Afterschool Alliance 1st Annual Conference in Laramie June 3-5, 2009

For the first time in Wyoming, afterschool program providers will have an opportunity to gather together to share ideas, best practices and strategies on how to implement and expand quality programming in their communities. The Wyoming Afterschool Alliance (WYAA) conference will be held in Laramie at the Hilton Garden Inn on June 3-5, 2009.

This conference is designed for school based and community based 21st Century Community learning Centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H Clubs and Parks and Recreation Centers and child care providers. Our goal is to provide training, technical assistance and networking opportunities for afterschool practitioners, supervisors, directors and policy makers from all across the state as well as the opportunity to learn new skills and hear about the latest research available that impacts this profession. We are also pleased to announce that Serve Wyoming will be sponsoring a Pre-conference Session on June 3.

Serve Wyoming's mission is the enhancement of community and the empowerment of citizens through the development and promotion of service opportunities. For more information about Serve Wyoming, please visit their website at www.servewyoming.org.



Other sponsors of the WYAA annual conference are John B. Ellbogen Foundation and the Wyoming Department of Education. For more information on the conference, please call WYAA at 307-335-9922 (WYAA) or check Wyoming Afterschool Alliance's website at www.wyafterschoolalliance.org.

*WYAA is a sponsored initiative of the
Wyoming Community Foundation*

Meet Parent Education Network's new Parent Educators for *Parents as Teachers*



LiEnisa Martinez, Powell.
LiEnisa is new to Wyoming and has most recently been working for a child care facility in Cody. She has 15 years of experience in early childhood education including being a center director of child development centers, a prekindergarten teacher and trainer of early childhood education staff throughout the

southwest. LiEnisa is looking forward to working with the many families and providers in Powell.



Tammy Dexter, Riverton
Tammy is a Wyoming native and has taught for over 20 years in both Riverton and Big Piney. After graduating from the UW with a BA in Special Education K-12 and General Education K-6, Tammy taught in Riverton at Jackson Elementary for 14 years and also at Big Piney High School at the

Learning Resource Center. She has experience as a Career Education Facilitator and an extensive background in child development, behavior, autism and learning

difficulties. Prior to college, she worked with adults with disabilities at the Wyoming State Training School, so she has a rich understanding of the diversity and strengths of many children and families. Tammy believes wholeheartedly in *PAT*'s mission that "parents are their child's first and most influential teacher!"



LiEnisa and Tammy's role as a *PAT* parent educator is to support and empower families by providing the information and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life. To do this, they will offer many services to families, including the following: personal/home visits, where they will share age-appropriate child development information with parents, help them learn to observe their own child, address their parenting concerns, and engage the family in activities that provide meaningful parent-child interactions; parent group meetings, helping families identify and connect with needed resources.

Together We Make a Difference!

Communication Tips for Infants and Toddlers

- Talk naturally to your child and use a lot of different words. Talk about what your child is doing and what your child sees.
- Take time to listen to your child. Respond to what is said so your child knows you have been listening.
- Read to your child often and start early.
- Accept some speech mistakes as your child develops. Don't ask your child to slow down or repeat.
- Have your child's hearing tested if you find you have to repeat a lot or have to talk loudly to get your child's attention.
- Seek professional help from an ASHA-certified audiologist or speech-language pathologist if you're concerned about your child's communication development. (*American Speech- Language- Hearing Assoc*)
- Don't wait to get help for your child if you suspect a problem. You and your family members know more about your child than anyone else.
- Early identification and treatment of hearing, speech, and language disorders can prevent problems with behavior, learning, reading, and social interactions.
- If your child is being raised in a bilingual home, use vocabulary from both languages in everyday interactions.

Some resources for more communication tips to stimulate good speech and language skills:

- Beyond Baby Talk by Apel and Masterson
- Talking on the Go by Dougherty and Paul

Nation’s Healthiest Schools: Rawhide Elementary

Rawhide Elementary in Gillette (Campbell County School District No. 1) has been ranked second as one of the nation’s “Healthiest Schools” by *Health* magazine. Education officials in every state were asked for school nominations based on food and nutrition, fitness and activity, health education, and healthy building materials and practices. Rigorous criteria from the state of Wisconsin and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program framework was used to score nominees. The top-10 schools were reviewed by an expert panel, and each panelist awarded a score to each top-10 school; these scores were added to each school’s first-round score to yield the final ranking.



21st Community Learning Center grant winners announced

“**Cheyenne** – State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Jim McBride announced the 17 communities that have been selected for the fifth cohort funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants for after-school programming.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21 CCLC) programs support the creation or expansion of community learning centers, which can be located in elementary or secondary schools or other similarly accessible community facilities.

The programs provide academic enrichment opportunities to students, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low performing schools.

21 CCLC centers provide a range of high-quality services to support student learning and development, while at the same time helping parents by providing a safe environment for students during the after-school hours.

21 CCLC programming helps students meet state and local standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to families of participating students.

This is Wyoming’s fifth funding cycle (fifth cohort) for the competitive 21 CCLC federal grant. Currently, 33 other Wyoming communities receive funding through other cohorts of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to after-school programs.

A total of \$1.6 million will be distributed to the fifth cohort school districts/communities each year for the next five years (2009-2013) dependent upon federal funding allocations. Award totals range from \$50,000-\$150,000.

The 17 recipients of 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds include:

- Big Horn County Health Coalition
- Big Horn County School District 4
- Campbell County 21 CCLC Project
- Converse County School District 1
- Fremont County School District 2
- Fremont County School District 6
- Hot Springs County School District 1
- Laramie County Community Partnership, Inc.
- Lights On In Lander
- Lincoln County School District 2
- Natrona County Prevention Coalition
- Peak Wellness Center (Platte County)
- PRACTICE Afterschool Program (Goshen Co)
- Sweetwater County School District 1
- Uinta County/B.O.C.E.S.
- Upton Prevention Initiative
- Teton County School District 1

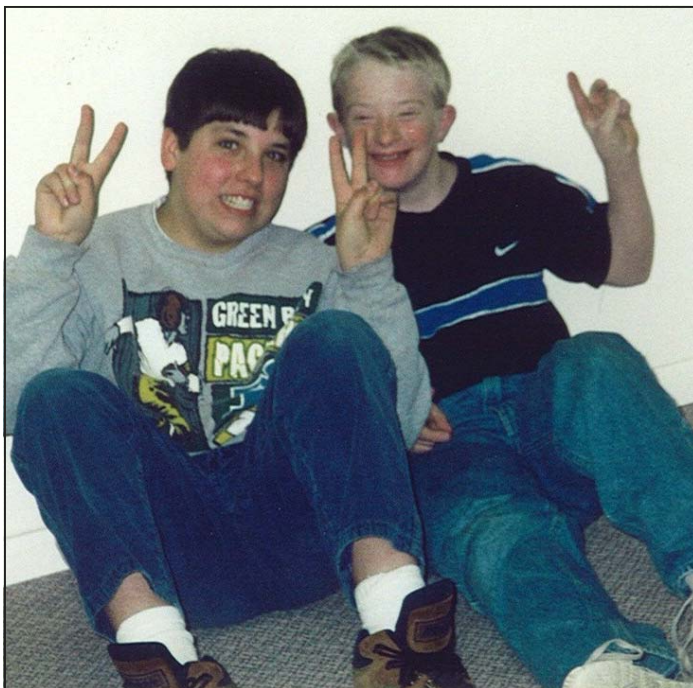
Source: Tim Lockwood, WY Dept of Education

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP

“People who need people are the luckiest people in the world.” Think how important family and friends are to you. Relationships for children and youth with disabilities are also critical to have fulfilling lives. For parents and teachers, students’ developing friendships is more than teaching social skills. It means providing opportunities for young people to interact frequently, intensively, and with supports when needed. It also means letting children interact, play and working together without constant adult presence.

Because developing and maintaining friendships is a life-long process rather than a one-time event, it is a goal that must always be a priority. There are no concrete recipes that work for all children. Hopefully, some of the ideas and strategies listed here will create new ways of thinking about true relationships for children with disabilities.

Friendships typically come from common bonds, experiences, or interests that draw people together. Therefore supporting genuine, typical friendships means more than superficial occasional contacts that are “arranged”, i.e. peer tutoring or so-called “special friends.”



Friendship issues

1. People need to share ordinary situations with ordinary people for relationships to develop.
2. People need to work on developing relationships.
3. People need to see the gifts, talents, and contributions that each person can make, and use those to help develop friendships.
4. Friendships come and go; they change; are unpredictable; are “loose” and hard to get your hands around.
5. Friendships are two-way streets—both parties must give and take in the relationship.
6. Friendships are freely given. (in other words, people are not paid to be with you; they are not getting extra credit for a project; they are not getting a Girl Scout badge. Friendships are not the same as peer tutors, special buddies, helpers and the like).
7. Friends come in a variety of different packages.
8. Most people interested in having many different friends from many different “walks of life.”
9. People need to have a common bond, whether that is poplar music, or eating pizza, or hanging out in the mall or riding horses.

Parents’ Checklist to Help Children Make Friends:

- Have we considered what other children the same age like to do, eat, wear, listen to, etc?
- Have we thought about where children this age like to go and what activities they are involved in?
- Have we included neighborhood peers?
- Have we made our home a “magnet” where kids like to come?
- Have we considered unobtrusive, respectful ways to assist our child to participate in activities with other children?
- Have we checked what activities the local park and recreation offers and what local clubs are in the community?
- Do we encourage our children to go to school events and activities?
- Do our children have ways to contact their friends (phone numbers, e-mail addresses...)?

Source: SPEAK OUT newsletter, PEAK Parent Center, CO.

Add One More to the 3-R's: Recess

The best way to improve children's performance in the classroom may be to take them out of it.

New research suggests that play and down time may be as important to a child's academic experience as reading, science and math, and that regular recess, fitness or nature time can influence behavior, concentration and even grades.

A study published this Feb 09 journal Pediatrics studied the links between recess and classroom behavior among about 11,000 children age 8 and 9. Those who had more than 15 minutes of recess a day showed better behavior in class than those who had little or none. Although disadvantaged children were more likely to be denied recess, the association between better behavior and recess time held up even after researchers controlled for a number of variables, including sex, ethnicity, public or private school and class size.

The lead researcher, Dr. Romina M. Barros, a pediatrician and an assistant clinical professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, said the findings were important because many schools did not view recess as essential to education.

"Sometimes you need data published for people at the educational level to start believing it has an impact," she said. "We should understand that kids need that break because the brain needs that break."

And many children are not getting that break. In the Pediatrics study, 30 percent were found to have little or no daily recess. Another report, from a children's advocacy group, found that 40 percent of schools surveyed had cut back at least one daily recess period.

Also, teachers often punish children by taking away recess privileges. That strikes Dr. Barros as illogical. "Recess should

be part of the curriculum," she said. "You don't punish a kid by having them miss math class, so kids shouldn't be punished by not getting recess."



Dr. Stuart Brown, author of the new book "Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul" (Avery), and a psychiatrist in Carmel Valley, Calif., has collected more than 6,000 "play histories" from human subjects. The founder of the National Institute for Play, he works with educators and legislators to promote the importance of preserving playtime in schools. He calls play "a fundamental biological process." "From my viewpoint, it's a major public health issue," he said. "Teachers feel like they're under huge pressures to get academic excellence to the exclusion of having much fun in the classroom. But playful learning leads to better academic success than the skills-and-drills approach."

Source nytimes.com Feb 2009

Readiness Checklist for Kindergarten

New Wyoming legislation states that each school district must provide at least one (1) full day kindergarten program within their district. With that in mind, and with kindergarten roundup and school registration coming this spring, the following is a list of things your young child should be able to do:

- Listen to stories without interrupting
- Recognize rhyming sounds
- Pay attention for short periods of time to directions given by adults
- Cut with scissors
- Trace basic shapes
- Begin to share with others
- Speak understandably

- Manage bathroom needs
- Look at pictures, then tell stories
- Identify some alphabet letters
- Count to ten
- Bounce a ball
- Begin to control oneself
- Talk in complete sentences of up to 5-6 words
- Sort similar objects by color, size, and shape
- Start to follow rules
- Button shirt, pants, coats, and zip up zippers

Remember children learn new skills and change quickly, so if your child cannot do some of these things now, wait a month or two and then check again.

Source: school.familyeducation.com

About us:



Parent Information Center, PIC:

Outreach Parent Liaisons (OPL) provide local information and support to families of children with disabilities, on their rights under special education law, IDEA. PIC also provides workshops and trainings on IDEA, IEPs, and specific disabilities such as attention disorders, autism and down syndrome. If you are interested in a workshop in your community or making contact with an OPL, call PIC at 1-800-660-9742 or (307) 684-2277, or call:

Betty Carmon, Powell, 754-3430, bcarmon@wpic.org
Serves Cody, Powell, Greybull, Worland, Lovell & Thermopolis area

Janet Kinstetter, Moorcroft, 756-9605, jkinstetter@wpic.org
Serves Moorcroft, Gillette, Sundance & Newcastle area

Anita Schwartz, aschwartz@wpic.org or **Jan Jones** jjones@wpic.org
Cheyenne, 635-3536 Serves Cheyenne, Laramie, Wheatland & Torrington area

Michele Pena, mpena@wpic.org or **Marcy Elton-Meeks**, melton@wpen.net, 247-0075 or 265-6884 or toll free 1-877-265-6884
Serves Casper, Douglas, Glenrock & Lusk area

Tammy Wilson, twilson@wpic.org Serves Green River, Rock Springs Kemmerer and Evanston area



Parent Education Network, PEN:

As the Wyoming State PIRC, PEN provides technical assistance to schools about family friendly practices in education. PEN works with schools to help families understand the provisions of No Child Left Behind, and how to be more actively engaged in their children's learning and education. For more information call **Krista**

Sweckard, Outreach Coordinator at (307) 684-7441 or e-mail ksweckard@wpic.org or contact the Outreach Parent Liaison closest to you:

Marcy Elton-Meeks, Casper, 265-6884, melton@wpen.net
Kelly Rogers, krogers@wpen.net
Serves Casper, Douglas, Glenrock and Lusk

Lisa Heimer, Cody, 899-1443, lheimer@wpen.net
Serves Cody, Powell, Lovell, Greybull and Basin

Crissy Lucas, Lander and/or Riverton, 857-1337, clucas@wpen.net
Serves Lander, Riverton, Dubois and Wind River Reservation

Loree Sanchez, Cheyenne, 635-3536, lsanchez@wpen.net
Serves Cheyenne, Laramie, Wheatland and Torrington

PEN also provides home-based services for children, prenatal through age five, and their families with the *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* program. Certified PAT parent educators are:

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For more information about *PAT*, call **Dara Johnston**, *PAT* Coordinator at 1-877-900-9736 or (307) 684-7441 or e-mail PATinfo@wpen.net.

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Parent Information Center

www.wpic.org
(307) 684-2277
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Parent Education Network

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The road to success is not straight
There is a curve called failure,
A loop called confusion,
Speed bumps called friends,
Red lights called enemies,
Caution lights called family--
You will have flats called jobs, but----
If you have a spare called determination
An engine called perseverance
Insurance called faith
And a driver called virtue
You will make it to a place called success

Author unknown

Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc. (PHP), because of rising mailing, production costs, and our increased distribution number to more than 5,350 parents and professionals, must charge a \$20/year subscription fee to professionals and other interested individuals.

The newsletter remains free to parents, however any donation is appreciated.

Please complete and return the form below so that we may update our mailing list:

I am a parent of a child with a disability and a Wyoming resident. Please keep me on/add me to the list.

If your child has a disability, please list disability: _____ Child's age _____

I am a parent leader in my child's school _____ (name of school).

I am a professional, teacher or other interested person. Enclosed is \$20 for a one year subscription.

My organization/school name is _____ My role/ position is _____

I am the parent of a child with disabilities, but do not live in Wyoming. Enclosed is \$20 for a one year subscription.

Name: _____ Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____
Street City State

This is my: Home address Work address (Please check one) E-mail address: _____

Additional Donation amount _____ . Thank you!

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 5 N Lobban Ave
 Buffalo, WY 82834

For more information
 Contact PIC at 1-800-660-9742
 (307) 684-2277
tdawson@wpic.org

Upcoming Events

**WY Council for Exceptional Children Conference
Casper– Hilton Garden Inn
April 13 & 14, 2009
Call Dr Bob Bayuk at 307- 347- 2435**

**Improving Educational Outcomes for Students with disabilities
Parent Conference
April 25 & 26, 2009
Laramie– Hilton Garden Inn
For more info or to register call: 1-888- 875- 4383**

**1st Annual WY Afterschool Alliance State Conference
on Afterschool Programs
June 3 – 5, 2009
Laramie-Hilton Garden Inn
For more info: call Linda Barton at 307- 335- 9922
or www.wyafterschoolalliance.org**



Information & Referral for
Parents of Children
with Disabilities

**Parent
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