



DECEMBER 2006

# The Family Support Connection

# FOCUS

—News from Minnesota Hands & Voices—

## Plan for smooth transition from high school

The transition from high school to college or work might appear overwhelming at first glance, especially when you consider your child will be leaving the safety net of an IEP behind. But, with thoughtful planning and the right resources, the transition can go smoothly.

In high school, a student with hearing loss is assured a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE) and other rights under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Through the Individualized Education Program (IEP), a student can receive special services such as Speech Therapy and have courses modified to suit his or her needs. After graduation, though, the IEP is gone and so are the protections of IDEA.

Instead, students who continue to a post-secondary school find help in two other laws: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Both guarantee that students with disabilities cannot be denied equal access to facilities, services, activities or opportunities solely because they have a disability. However, there is no IEP team to monitor a student’s prog-

ress, and no one, other than the student, to ensure that accommodations such as interpreters or note-takers are set up for each class. The school must provide these accommodations if they are “deemed reasonable.” But, it’s up to the student to identify the need and request the services.

“In the post-secondary setting the goal is access (ADA, 504 – civil rights), not success (IDEA, FAPE),” explained Kathy Peterson, our Upper Northwest Parent Guide who also is the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Consultant for Disability Support Services at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. “This can be a tough transition for both parent and student.... It’s important to understand the level of independence that will be expected of students in the post-secondary setting.”

In a post-secondary school, students are expected to advocate for themselves. Parents must rely on their children to keep them informed — schools can’t give them access to records without students signing a release. So the parental role changes from one of in-the-trenches advocacy to on-the-sidelines mentoring.

That doesn’t mean that you’ll be sending your child to college without any support at all, though. Colleges vary in the level of support provided to students with disabilities, Kathy explained. Part of the college search process should include contacting the office for disability services to see what level of support each school provides, and choosing a school that fits your child’s needs.

Parents and students also should understand that “equal access” means equal opportunity to participate; it does not mean modifying course content or lowering performance expectations. In college, students with disabilities will be required to meet the same standards as other students. The key word is “accommodations,” not “modifications,” Kathy pointed out.

“There is no set, pat list of what accommodations a student will receive,” she added. “Accommodations are open to negotiation.” Typical accommodations

### Helpful Resources for Transition Planning

*Planning Guide for Minnesota Students (with disabilities) Entering Post-Secondary Education Programs* is a 20-page guide about everything you’ll need to help your child transition from high school. There’s even a section that tells what a student should be doing in each year of high school for transition planning. The guide is available online at [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us) by scrolling over to “Learning Support” and clicking on “Special Education.” From there, click on the Section Link “Secondary Transition.” Or, e-mail your address and booklet request to [mde.special-ed@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.special-ed@state.mn.us).

It appears like every state offers a similar guide. The one from North Dakota even includes a section on how to “be” in college: how to register, what to wear, and how to get along with a roommate. It’s at [www.dpi.state.nd.us/transitn/DSS.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/transitn/DSS.shtm) under “post-secondary book.”

*Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Postsecondary Education*, published by HEATH Resource Center at George Washington University, describes accommodations students can request. It also lists tips on how to prepare for college, and how to request services and address problems. This 16-page guide is online at [www.heath.gwu.edu/PDFs/deaf.pdf](http://www.heath.gwu.edu/PDFs/deaf.pdf), or by calling 1-800-544-3284.

*College and Career Programs for Deaf Students* from Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf is online at [gri.gallaudet.edu/ccg/](http://gri.gallaudet.edu/ccg/).

*Gates to Adventure* ([www.pepnet.org/train.asp](http://www.pepnet.org/train.asp)) is an online training program to help students who are deaf or hard of hearing, ages 14+, transition to college.

*A Nuts & Bolts Guide to College Success for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students* is a 104-page book that includes information on self-advocacy skills, communication strategies, pre-college timelines, financial aid basics, and loads more. The whole book is online at [sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/students.html](http://sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/students.html). This site has many other resources to help prepare for college.

**REFERENCE POINTS** is an online resource to help people with disabilities in transition. It is part of PACER Center’s Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA). Sign up at [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org). Click on “Transition to Work,” which has many resources to consider.

*How the Student with Hearing Loss Can Succeed in College* is a book available in our library at [www.familysupportconnection.org](http://www.familysupportconnection.org).

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## What's Happening Around Town

Dec. 7, 8, 9

See the movie "Forget Me Not" (rated PG-13), acted only in ASL. This Minnesota North Star Academy fund raiser comes to the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 9 at 2 & 6 p.m. Also at St. Paul College Auditorium Dec. 8 at 6:30 p.m. Contact Kevin Kovacs, [kkovacs@mnnorthstarcademy.org](mailto:kkovacs@mnnorthstarcademy.org) for tickets/questions. English interpretation will be offered via FM systems at the showing Dec. 8 and at the 6 p.m. show on Dec. 9. "Forget Me Not" is a suspense-filled thriller about a family that wins the lottery, goes to a cabin and is confronted by a mysterious stranger from the past.

Saturday,  
Dec. 9

Families in the St. Cloud area can attend a Christmas Signed Mass and Party at the Newman Center by the University campus with Mass at 5 p.m., a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. and a Christmas party from 7 to 8 p.m. Bring a dish for the dinner and a wrapped "white elephant" gift for the party.

Saturday,  
Dec. 9

Andover Lions host "Signing Santa Breakfast" from 9 a.m. to noon at Andover Elementary School, 14950 Hanson Blvd. The event includes complimentary breakfast with pancakes and sausages plus free pictures with Santa. Sign up by Dec. 4 with Tom or Candy Conniff at 763-434-6682.

Tuesday,  
Dec. 12

The Tier I Parent/Child Support Group celebrates the holidays with a party from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Parkview Center School, 701 West County Rd. B (Room 108) in Roseville. Open to all families for \$10/family; FREE for families in Northeast Metro 916 school districts. Register with Barb Young at [byoung@nemetrol.k12.mn.us](mailto:byoung@nemetrol.k12.mn.us) or 651-415-5600 ext. 6905.

Friday,  
Dec. 15

The Rosetown Playhouse performance of "Alice in Wonderland" is interpreted in ASL at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are half-price: \$4.50 for adults/seniors, \$3.50 for students, and \$2.50 for children 5 and under. Call 651-792-7414 ext. 2 or see [www.rosatownplayhouse.org](http://www.rosatownplayhouse.org). Roseville Area Middle School Theater, 15 County Road B2.

Friday,  
Dec. 15

"A Christmas Prayer" performance is ASL-interpreted at 7:30 p.m. at Cedar Valley Church, 8600 Bloomington Ave S. in Bloomington. The performance is FREE but you must get tickets. Contact Stacey at [staceyk@cvchurch.org](mailto:staceyk@cvchurch.org).

Saturday,  
Dec. 16

DeafTeen Quest brings teens who have hearing loss to the Holidazzle Parade in downtown Minneapolis from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. The group will meet at the Light Rail station on the east side of the Mall of America (on 24th Ave.). To sign up, contact [COHDeafOutreach@aol.com](mailto:COHDeafOutreach@aol.com) by Dec. 13. DeafTeen Quest is a ministry of Community of Hope and is sponsored by Peace Lutheran Church and Cedar Valley Church.

Sunday,  
Jan. 28

Join us for our annual party at the Roller Garden in St. Louis Park. See the flyer for details or contact us at 651-265-2435 (v), 651-265-2379 (tty) or e-mail [fsc@lifetrackresources.org](mailto:fsc@lifetrackresources.org).



## ASL-Interpreted Performances

### **Best Christmas Pageant Ever**

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 p.m.  
Tickets: \$11, \$9 student/senior  
Weyerhaeuser Auditorium in Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St., St Paul; 651-225-9265.  
[www.steppingstonetheatre.org](http://www.steppingstonetheatre.org)

### **A Christmas Carol**

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 p.m. & 10 a.m. Dec. 13  
Tickets: \$14, \$11 children/seniors  
Hopkins Center for the Arts, 1111 Mainstreet; 952-979-1111; [www.stage theatre.org](http://www.stage theatre.org)

### **A Christmas Carol**

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 p.m. Reduced to \$10.  
St Mane Theatre, 206 Parkway, Lanesboro; 800-657-7025; [www.commonwealththeatre.org](http://www.commonwealththeatre.org)

### **How the Grinch Stole Christmas**

Dec. 13, 10:30 a.m. & Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m.  
Mention the VSA Offer for \$13 tickets.  
Children's Theatre Co., 2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-874-0400;  
[www.childrenstheatre.org](http://www.childrenstheatre.org)

### **A Christmas Carole Petersen**

Thursday, Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m. \$22 tickets.  
Loring Playhouse, 1633 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls.; 651-209-6689; [www.latteda.org](http://www.latteda.org)

### **Disney's Beauty & the Beast**

Saturday, Dec. 16, 4 p.m. Half-price tickets.  
Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, 1900 Nicollet Ave., Mpls; 612-623-9080;  
[www.youthperformanceco.com](http://www.youthperformanceco.com)

### **Altar Boyz**

Saturday, Dec. 23, 5 p.m. ASL must be requested: 612-373-5639;  
State Theatre, 805 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls., [www.hennepintheatredistrict.org](http://www.hennepintheatredistrict.org)

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Our mission is to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing parent-to-parent support.

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## In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,  
Family Support Coordinator

Thanksgiving 2006 marked the sixth anniversary of the Family Support Connection—and, what a year we have had. We kicked off our “Guide By Your Side” program and hired six regional Parent Guides who are highly qualified, trained parents able to provide support to families in their local communities. We also became a stronger, more formal chapter of National Hands & Voices, and had the benefit of sending two delegates to the National Leadership Conference. We have gone statewide and joined forces nationally all in one year.

Also this past year, attendance at our social events has again broken records. We are reaching more people than ever with our newsletter and e-mail alerts. We are receiving more inquiries from parents and professionals than ever before. And, we have developed a collaborative Advisory Board consisting of key stakeholders who are working with us to improve the lives of youth with hearing loss.

**As you might expect**, taking our organization to this level has meant that we have growing financial needs. We continue to resist pressure to charge “membership” fees for services such as this newsletter. Instead, we must ask anyone who is in a financial position to make a contribution to please do so. If your family or the families you serve have benefited from our newsletter and e-mail alerts, please consider a donation. If you have contacted us to get support, information or a referral, please consider a donation. If you have found our lending library, Resource Directory, Fact Sheets, Parent Welcome Letters, website, or other materials to have made a difference, we encourage you to write a check. If you share the belief that parent-to-parent support and access to information about all the options for our youth who are deaf and hard of hearing is vital, please show us through your tax-deductible donation.

Many of you will receive a donation letter in the coming weeks. Please take this opportunity to help us “build better lives for children who are deaf and hard of hearing by providing parent-to-parent support to families.” You can make a difference and be a part of building an exciting future.

Thank you for your past support and have a lovely holiday season.

**Our new Resource Directory is**

**updated and available on our website:**

**[www.familysupportconnection.org/](http://www.familysupportconnection.org/)**

**[html/directorystart.htm](http://www.familysupportconnection.org/html/directorystart.htm).**

## Writing skills focus of June workshop

Minnesota families with children of all ages who are deaf/hard of hearing can attend the Parent/Child Institute at Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) June 8-10.

This innovative workshop, “ABC, Come Write With Me: Literacy through Writing,” focuses on the development of writing skills in children with hearing loss. Writing skills are critical to success both in school and employment.

At this workshop, parents can acquire skills to bring home and apply to improve writing skills in kids from the very young to older kids who have emerging or advanced writing skills. Children also will attend sessions geared to their age groups. Watch for more details this Spring.

## Scholarships offered for DeafBlind

Students who are DeafBlind can apply for scholarships through the American Foundation for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind. Both must be submitted by March 31, 2007. For application information, see [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org) or [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org) and search the keyword “scholarship.”

## FSC adds to staff in St. Paul office

Laura Godfrey is the newest member of the Family Support Connection/MN Hands & Voices’ team. She joins the staff in our St. Paul office following the departure of Robin Coninx.

Laura and her husband, Jason, have a 4-year-old son, Keaton, who has a mild to moderately-severe sensorineural hearing loss in both ears. Keaton’s hearing loss was identified through newborn hearing screening. He wears hearing aids, and attends preschool at a private school.

“I can’t imagine my life without having gone through what we did with Keaton,” Laura said. “I am a better person for having him as a son.”

Laura also is studying to become an audiologist. She said she believes working with other families in our program will greatly enhance her education and training in this profession.

4-year-old Keaton beams between his parents, Jason and Laura Godfrey.



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include interpreters, note-takers, captioning services, assistive listening devices and possibly tutors.

So how do you make sure your child will be a strong self-advocate when it's time to go to college? You can start by including your child in IEP planning, especially in high school.

The benefits of having students involved in their own IEP planning are many, experts say. Students learn to define their strengths and weaknesses and understand why they need specific services. They also gain a sense of empowerment when they influence the decisions related to their IEP.

Research done at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that students with hearing loss get the most out of IEP meetings if they are first taught how to participate. They need to know “the rules” of the meeting: who talks first and how participants are expected to behave. Students who rely on an interpreter should be encouraged to make eye contact with other participants so they feel connected to the group. And, everyone needs to be reminded to take turns and not talk over each other so the student who signs can follow the conversation and have the chance to add to it.

IDEA requires transition planning be addressed within the IEP process beginning when students reach age 14. The IEP form has a place to record the steps being taken to prepare the student for “successful transition to his/her goals for life after secondary school.”

One of these steps may be to invite a counselor from the State's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office to attend an IEP meeting during the student's junior year. VR provides many services to help people who have disabilities achieve their employment goals. High school students with hearing loss can apply for VR services to get career counseling, job training, and a host of other services, including help with choosing and financing post-secondary education.

“Students and parents need be aware that VR is an eligibility program—you must apply for services,” said Rubin Latz of the State's VR office. The State has counselors who specialize in services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. See [www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/vr/main\\_vr.htm](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/vr/main_vr.htm).

### Success Story:

Melissa Miller, a recent graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), remembers what it was like to transition from high school to college and recalls the value of having a strong support network.

“I always had a lot of support from my mom, teachers from Highland Park and others,” she said. “I knew if I needed help with anything at all, I always had someone to go to.”

Melissa started at Century College in Minnesota. Her accommodations included having an interpreter in her classes. After two years at Century, she transferred to RIT, which has a large population of students who are deaf. There, she could request an interpreter who signed in English word order or ASL, or a captionist, and have a note taker, which she calls “a huge lifesaver.”

“College itself is not more difficult for a student with a hearing loss,” she said. “Don't think just because you are deaf you can't succeed as well as a hearing student can—you can do better!”

## IDEA changes impact kids with hearing loss

By Cheryl Johnson & Leeanne Seaver, National Hands & Voices

While several months overdue, the final regulations for the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (actually passed by Congress as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) were posted on the Federal Register Aug. 14. A number of changes will impact children with hearing loss, most notable being a clarification of the responsibilities of school districts for managing cochlear implants and the addition of interpreting as a related service. Other areas for parents to watch are discussed below.

### Cochlear Implants

There have been several legal decisions requiring school districts to provide mapping (programming) services for children's cochlear implants as an audiology service under Related Services and as part of Assistive Technology. As a result of multiple sources of input, Congress responded by excluding mapping services in the statute. Because the proposed regulations were found to be ambiguous, the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education responded in the final regulations with language clearly defining its intentions.

While schools are exempt from “optimizing” cochlear implant functioning, including mapping and maintaining or replacing the CI, they are required to continue to provide other services as determined by the IEP team. These include other related services such as speech-language therapy, support for the child's communication development, and routine monitoring of the CI to make sure it is functioning properly.

*What does this mean?* Parents need to maintain responsibility for follow-up through their CI Center for their child's implant(s) and programming. Schools need to provide the necessary support services so that children have full access in their primary mode of communication to their learning environment, and receive the special education and related service they need to make adequate progress (your goal is always at least 1 year's growth in one year). Implant centers and schools must have frequent communication to develop appropriate goals and to assure that the expected progress with the implant is occurring.

*Carolyn Anderson of PACER adds:* “Please note that the Federal Regulations do not guarantee a year of growth. However, because our DHH children take the same state-level tests and will compete in the same job market as others, parents should expect the same yearly growth for their children as other children are expected to achieve. Sometimes the level of disability may affect the potential for that level of achievement.”

### Routine Checking of Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants

Schools have always been required to ensure that the hearing aids worn by children in school are functioning properly. The new regulations changed the previous wording from “shall” to “must” ensure—adding some subtle strength to the requirement. In addition, a new section has been added that specifically addresses cochlear implants. It requires schools to ensure that the external components of the cochlear implant are working properly.

*What does this mean?* You should include a specific plan in the IEP with your school specifying who is checking your child's hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant(s), how often, the procedures involved, and what they will do when they find a

**IDEA...continued on Page 6**

## Ski lessons at Hyland Hills geared to D/HH skiers

Ski lessons for deaf/hard-of-hearing students and adults are offered once again by the Minnesota Ski Council Jan. 7 - Feb. 4.

The lessons will run from 1 to 2:30 on Sunday afternoons at Hyland Hills Ski area in Bloomington. Cost for the 5 lessons is \$60, which includes lessons, lift tickets and equipment rental (\$50 if no equipment is needed). Lessons are taught by volunteer instructors on a one-to-one basis when possible. ASL interpreters will be available, but may not be provided continuously throughout the lesson. Register for lessons by Dec. 15 (Jan. 2 at the latest).

For more information, contact Paula Werner at 651-699-3942 or Bob Barrett at 763-323-7644.

## Teens invited to retreat

Teens who have hearing loss can attend a winter retreat with DeafTeen Quest March 2 to 4 at Big Sandy Camp in McGregor.

The cost of \$74 covers transportation, room in the lodge, meals and activities, including foosball, ping pong, carpet bowl, rock climbing wall, and hayride or snow tubing depending on weather. The retreat will include teaching, group discussions, ice breaker activities, games, and a bonfire. There will be approximately eight staff attending with at least one adult in each room. Registration deadline is Feb. 1.

DeafTeen Quest is organized by Community of Hope, a consortium of various Christian churches in the Twin Cities serving the Deaf community. DeafTeen Quest serves as a Youth Group for Christian deaf and hard of hearing teens, giving them the chance to gather with signing peers, explore their faith and meet Christian adult role models.

For more information about DeafTeen Quest or the winter retreat, e-mail Laurie Johnson at [ljinterpreter@tmail.com](mailto:ljinterpreter@tmail.com) or [COHDeafOutreach@aol.com](mailto:COHDeafOutreach@aol.com).

**The deadline has been extended to Jan. 15 for the Digital Arts and Animation Competition for students with hearing loss. See [www.rtit.edu/NTID/Arts](http://www.rtit.edu/NTID/Arts) for details.**



## A Little Grin

By Stacie Leeper

When my son was 3, he became “Mr. Independent” and wanted to do everything for himself, including going to the bathroom. On one of these solo trips, he had been in the bathroom about 10 minutes and all was very quiet—too quiet. So, I went to investigate. Before I got to the door, my son let out a blood curdling scream, “MOMMY HELP!!”

I rushed into the bathroom, heart pounding, and found my son standing next to the toilet hysterically screaming, “My hearing aids, my hearing aids!” I glanced at his ears and realized his hearing aids were nowhere to be seen. Fearing the worst, I asked him where they were. His answer: “IN THE TOILET!!”

Without hesitation, I plunged my arm into the poop-infested toilet to retrieve the hearing aids. I squeezed my hand into the pipe being careful not to push them even further. That’s when I heard the squealing. The hearing aids were emitting feedback while immersed in the toilet bowl!

After what seemed like an eternity, I still couldn’t feel anything other than the obvious. I was really cramming my arm way down the toilet pipe in a desperate attempt to salvage those aids. All the while, the hearing aids were squealing away. I was so frustrated, I was literally in tears. I had to force myself to stop, breathe, and think. Then it hit me. I wasn’t hearing the squealing coming from *inside* the toilet. I followed the sound and there they were, lying on the floor *behind* the toilet. They had never been in the toilet at all!

After cleaning up, I asked my son what had happened. He said he had a tickle in his ears and wanted to clean them out with a cotton swab, like Daddy does. But when he removed his hearing aids, they accidentally fell out of his hands. My son learned a valuable lesson that day: never remove hearing aids while sitting on the toilet. I learned a lesson, too: keep a keen eye on “Mr. Independent” whenever he’s even remotely close to ANY water source.

## DVDs feature stories, songs with signing

Several DVDs are on the market that feature holiday themes.

The “We Sign” series for teaching hearing or deaf babies and toddlers to communicate through signing has two holiday DVDs. “We Sign Christmas Carols” includes instruction for religious carols, while “We Sign Santa’s Favorite Christmas Songs” features more secular fare such as “Jingle Bells” and “The 12 Days of Christmas.” Each costs \$14.95 on the website [www.production-associates.com](http://www.production-associates.com).

“A ‘Silent Night’...Christmas Carols in ASL” shows signed versions of familiar Christmas carols. Hayden Riley performs the carols in American Sign Language and Pidgin Signed English to flow with the music. The 15-minute disc includes Silent Night, the First Noel, Joy to the World plus four other well-known holiday songs.

“Winter Holiday Stories” from Scholastic includes a story about Hanukkah (“In the month of Kislev”), Kwanzaa (“Seven Candles for Kwanzaa”), and Christmas (“The Night before Christmas”). The stories are signed with voice interpretation, but no captions.

These DVDs are available at Harris Communications ([www.harriscomm.com](http://www.harriscomm.com)), and some are at Adco Hearing Products ([www.adcohearing.com](http://www.adcohearing.com)). You might also find them at video stores, including VideoUniverse online at [www.cduuniverse.com](http://www.cduuniverse.com).

Harris also sells “Sing ‘N Sign Holiday Time Instructional DVD” with 14 songs for celebrating Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah. This 100-minute disc provides step-by-step instructions for signing the songs. It is captioned, too. Learn more about the performer at [www.gaia-singnsign.com](http://www.gaia-singnsign.com).

“Sing ‘N Sign” also is available free through our library. To look for this and other holiday videos, go to [www.familysupportconnection.org](http://www.familysupportconnection.org) and click on Lending Library. Then search for “holiday” or “Christmas.” You’ll find titles such as “Christmas Stories,” which has ASL storytellers signing favorites like “The Night Before Christmas” and “A Christmas Carol.” There’s also “Santa’s Surprise” and “Simple Signing for the Holidays,” a video in Signed English with voice and captions.

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problem. Parents should keep extra batteries at school and, for a cochlear implant, a back-up processor unit at home. If hearing aids need repair, make arrangements with your dispensing audiologist for a back-up hearing aid to use while the aid is being repaired. Schools should continue to provide the hearing assistance technology (e.g., FM system) to enhance classroom listening to fulfill their obligation to assure access to instruction.

### Assistive Technology Used at Home

Your IEP team may determine that your child needs to use his/her assistive technology, e.g., FM system, at home or in other settings outside of school, in order to meet IEP goals. This is particularly pertinent with preschool children who may attend school for only three or four half days per week yet participate in other language-learning opportunities throughout the day.

*What does this mean?* If you believe that your child would benefit from assistive technology at home or at another setting in the community, discuss your concern with your child's teacher and determine how use of the technology supports attainment of IEP goals. Have specific examples of how the technology will be of assistance and if the district is reticent, ask to trial the unit while collecting data on your child's performance. Keep bringing the issue back to FAPE (a free and appropriate public education): would your child benefit from his FAPE by maintaining the auditory signal available at school while s/he's doing homework, or discussion new language and curricular concepts at home? (Answer: Yes.) Then make sure this aspect of support is written into the IEP.

### Interpreting Services

IDEA now identifies the function of interpreting services as a recognized Related Service, which means that educational interpreters now have a seat at the IEP table, and should be active participants in the development of the student's IEP—not as interpreters, but as part of the IEP team itself.

*Carolyn Anderson of PACER adds:* "Please note that the Federal Regulations do not specifically state that an interpreter is a member of the IEP team. The required team is still the parents, a regular education teacher of the child, a special education teacher of the child, and a district representative. Other members can be added: "At the discretion of the parent or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate," [300.321 (a)(6)]. "The agency" means the school district."

IDEA also expanded the definition of educational interpreting to include computerized transcription and note-taking services (examples: Communication Access Real-time Translation- CART, C-Print, TypeWell). Educational interpreting is an official related services for the first time and include oral transliteration, cued speech transliteration and sign language interpreting.

*What does this mean?* Interpreting services have been provided to students based on their IEP requirements for several years. Transcription services have been less well defined and not consistently recognized nor provided. Parents should consider their child's access needs and discuss the avail-

ability of these services with their child's teacher and school administrators. Determine what resources are available in your community and your state. If they are limited or not available, consider remote interpreting and transcription services. The internet and video relay systems permit these services to be provided from many locations around the US. There are several companies who specialize in these services.

Parents should also be concerned about the qualifications of their interpreter. As a requirement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) you have a right to know if your interpreter is highly qualified according to your state's criteria. Generally, for an educational interpreter to be considered highly qualified, he/she should have passed the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) at the 3.5 level, or your state's assessment for educational interpreters, or be certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Effective advocates should question if the interpreter is proficient in the child's primary mode of communication, how that has been demonstrated and if that competency has been evaluated by a qualified individual.

### Eligibility for Services

Eligibility for special education and related services no longer requires a child to fail! Section 300.101(c) states that "even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course, and is advancing from grade to grade" a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) must be available to any child with a disability who requires the services.

*What does this mean?* This provision is timely as we are seeing more children who are deaf and hard of hearing enter school with age-appropriate skills. Often, these children are being denied special education services and offered only 504 supports. Yet, we know that they can only continue to be successful if the appropriate supports are available to them. If eligibility for services has been an issue for you, it is a good time to revisit your child's status.

It remains to be seen if state laws that have their own eligibility criteria—based on developmental deficits or a discrepancy model—will commit to any direct application of this new federal language. As often happens when state attempt to implement the "theory" of the IDEA, something gets lost in translation. It's going to require effective advocacy on the part of parents and well-informed educators to draw the spirit of Section 300.101(c) into the eligibility discussion. Families with kids who are being punted off case loads because they are doing so well (thanks to early identification and effective support!) should raise this one like a flag and wave it anytime they're told their child is no longer eligible for special education services. But, the mandate won't be enough to win the battle; it's still going to depend on a justified "need" for services. That means we still have our homework to do as parents and advocates. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Special Considerations of the IDEA are a good place to start—this language remains intact in the 2004 Regulations.

Other provisions for instruction in the general education classroom may also have benefits for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Response to Intervention initiative requires the use of more scientifically-based strategies and programs to improve instruction. Better instruction will benefit all students, including ours.

# Family Support Connection Roller Skating Event

*For Families with Children who are  
Deaf or Hard of Hearing*

**Sunday, January 28, 2007**

**4:30 - 6:30 p.m.**

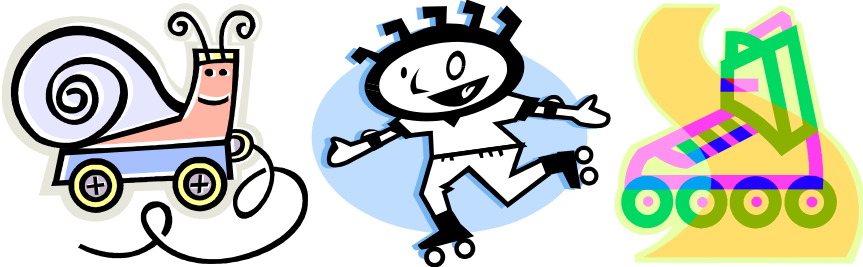
(We have exclusive use of the rink!)

**Cost: FREE!**

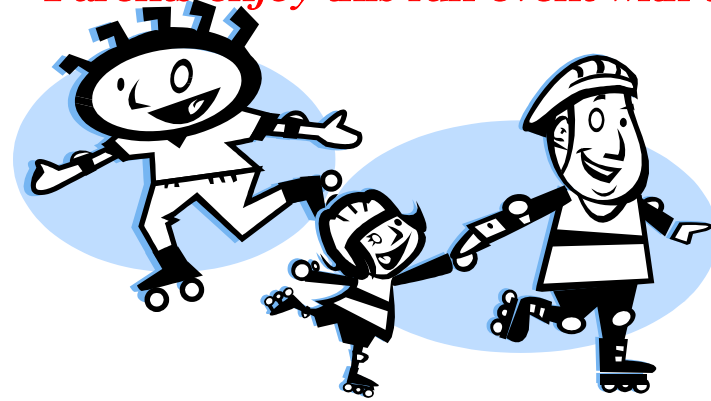
(Donations are welcome at the door)

You will also receive a coupon for a  
**FREE Hotdog, bag of chips and pop!!!**

The Roller Rink will be **closed to the general public** so this is a great way to get out there to test your skating feet, socialize with all of your friends and meet new friends!! It is a lot of fun for the entire family.



*Parents enjoy this fun event with their children*



#### **Directions:**

**From the North:** Take Hwy 100 south to Minnetonka Blvd. Exit. At the end of the exit (stop sign), take a left. Go straight through the lights. Roller Gardens is on the right side of the road next to Marathon Gas station. (You will see a dinosaur on the roof of the Roller Rink)

**From the South:** Take Hwy 100 North to Minnetonka Blvd. Exit. At the end of the exit, take a right. Go over the bridge. Take a left at the lights on Lake Street. Roller Gardens is on the right side of the road next to Marathon Gas Station. (You will see a dinosaur on the roof of the Roller Rink)

**Questions on Directions?** Call Roller Garden at 952-929-5518  
5622 W. Lake Street  
St. Louis Park. MN 55416

#### **Questions on the event?**

Call Family Support Connection/MN Hands and Voices at:  
651-265-2435(v), 651-265-2379 (TTY)  
or e-mail: [fsc@lifetrackresources.org](mailto:fsc@lifetrackresources.org)

**RVSP's appreciated.**

