

# family ties

Fall 2005

A Statewide Publication of Wisconsin Family Ties

Vol. 20, Issue 4

## Back to School

### *Burns Family Style*

**By Jennifer Burns**

**B**ack to school. For parents everywhere it means buying clothes, shoes, pencils, and protractors. For me it's a bit more complicated.

My daughter has multiple mental and physical health problems, so I started getting ready for back to school by making sure I had the Medication Forms completed for each of the medications she needs to have available at school. A separate form is required for each one, and if the medication is a prescription, the doctor has to sign the form.

During the summer, her counselor called me to go over her schedule and discuss which teachers she was to have. Her counselor is great and made an effort to create a schedule that fit my daughter's needs, which isn't easy. That included location of classrooms, selection of teachers, and timing of classes.

Next, I talked to the school nurse. In high school this is easier because there is a full-time nurse in the building. The only problem was her start date -- the day before school started. Yet it was still easier tracking her down than when my daughter attended elementary school. Nurses are shared between schools in elementary school. I needed to speak to the nurse to review the medications that are at school, as well as emergency card information, and my daughter's 504 plan.

I drafted a letter to each of my daughter's teachers explaining her special needs. I dropped these off to the school a few days before classes began. I always include my home and work phone numbers and e-mail address, and follow up by phone or in per-

son about a week after school starts. This gets repeated each quarter as she has new teachers.

you back during lunch or a free period. We tried to get as many physical therapy sessions, doctor appointments, medical tests and other needed appointments done before the school-year started so she wouldn't miss classes. That wasn't always possible, but we did the best we could.

Once school has started, in addition to the usual things, I keep the school updated every time there is a change in medication, diagnosis, or treatment. My daughter misses more school than most children, so we have to stay in contact with her teachers so she can keep up. Also, I can't assume that her teachers know much about her particular problems. Teachers don't take classes in mental illness and how it affects classroom performance, and they don't have knowledge of every type of health problem a child may have.

I have found most school staffs are better informed about physical problems like asthma than psychiatric problems like bipolar disorder. They also are less inclined to be skeptical about a need for accommodation for physical problems. Especially in high school, teachers have a large number of students and find it more difficult to individualize instruction.

As my daughter grows older, I have been teaching her how to educate people and advocate for herself, because soon she will have to do this for herself.

*"I have found most school staffs are better informed about physical problems like asthma than psychiatric problems like bipolar disorder."*

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*Bringing hope to families that include children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral and mental disorders.*

# Off to a Good Start

By Wendy Handrich

It's that time of the year when you hear the familiar "where did the summer go?" question. Despite the fact that most schools are now waiting to open their doors until after Labor Day, it still seems impossible to believe that summer is coming to a close. As a parent and educator I know only too well that the weeks just prior to the start of a new school year are filled with ambivalent feelings for children and parents alike. Children know they will miss their summer schedule and activities, yet feel the excitement of returning to school. Parents are looking forward to settling into a routine, while feeling a bit anxious about the transitions that are in store for their children. Many times the concerns regarding transitions are more significant for parents who have children with special needs.

## Starting the School Year

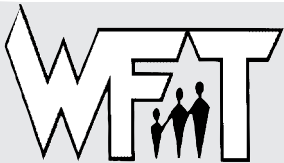
Parents often tell me they are uncertain about when and how to approach new staff with information regarding their child's special

needs. They worry about overwhelming teachers at the beginning of a school year, yet have legitimate concerns about waiting to share information that may be of value to the staff during the first weeks of school. One of the most effective ways I have seen this information shared with school staff is through a simple letter of introduction. The letter is an informal document that provides family insights into a child's interests, strengths and needs and can give school staff a "heads up" on trigger areas that elicit anxiety, social confusion, aggression, etc. Some of the information may already be incorporated into the child's IEP; however, while that document guides the educational experience for the year, the letter of introduction is based on family experiences over time and helps new staff understand what is and is not effective when dealing with specific issues. It's a family's opportunity to tell a teacher about their child's unique personality and interests. The letter can offer specific solutions for difficult settings as a means of helping staff during those first weeks of school when they are getting to know a child. Educators have told me they appreciate the let-

ter of introduction approach, as they can read the information as time permits. They have also noted that it helps them understand a child through the eyes of the family.

Many times school teams and families find it valuable to meet briefly during the first few weeks of the school year. Although this is a very busy time of the year, I often hear that these meetings actually save time and, more importantly, develop a positive, open line of communication for the school year. I would suggest that the collaborative meeting include the regular and special education staff working with the child, the administrator, the family, and any outside specialists involved with the child. This meeting gives everyone the opportunity to meet, ascertain roles and responsibilities and to learn from each other. This is a great time to determine how communication will "flow" between home and school, school and outside specialists, etc. In a nutshell, it is a meeting where communication and trust can be developed, so small kinks can be worked out before they become time-consuming problems.

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Another way to give to Wisconsin Family Ties is online through Community Shares' ePower Project. Visit Wisconsin Family Ties' web site ([www.wifamilyties.org](http://www.wifamilyties.org)), click on the "To Donate On-Line" icon and follow the instructions. Again, 100% of your donation goes directly to helping families that include children with mental, emotional or behavioral disorders.

Thank you for your support of Wisconsin Family Ties and Community Shares of Wisconsin, partners in changing the world in your own back yard!

# A Special Thank You to Special Ed Staff

*At Community Partnerships' 2nd Annual Recognition Ceremony to acknowledge special education teachers and their assistants in Madison in the Spring of 2004, Kimm Hurley-Smith, former WFT board member and CEO of Community Partnerships, Inc., read a heartfelt thank-you letter which she had written for the occasion.*

Dear Special Education Teachers and Assistants,

I come before you today to say:

Thank you for choosing a career that has a special interest in special children.

Thank you for understanding the behavior of children who are often misunderstood.

Thank you for giving the children a second, third, fourth and some times a twentieth chance.

Thank you for remembering the children's triggers, and working with support to help them to calm down.

Thank you for listening to the children when other adults have given up.

Thank you for keeping them in the class when it is the hardest thing to do for you and the other students.

Thank you for knowing that children get in trouble when they are not in school.

Thank you for not taking their behavior personally.

Thank you for calling the parents when their children do something right.

Thank for remembering that their "poor behavior" is only a small percentage of their total behavior.

Thank you for bringing food to feed them when they are hungry, for mentioning an inspiring word when they are unmotivated, for supporting their efforts when they are struggling and for encouraging them to believe in themselves when they are hopeless.

Thank you for taking walks with them when they can no longer sit down.

Thank you for loving them when everyone else just wants them out of the way.

Thank you for expecting the most out of them when they so often give up.

Thank you for understanding their medication needs.

Thanks for time in the IEPs.

Thanks for all your creativity, and understanding that children learn differently.

Thank you for helping me as the parent to know that nothing is wrong with me.

Thank you for giving me support when I run out of answers.

Thank you from all the parents that forgot to tell you how special you are.

Thank you for being all you can be each day for each child that comes your way.

Thank you for helping us all to know that these children belong to all of us and are part of the human family.

Thank you for choosing this special career as Special Education Teachers and Educational Assistants.

## Off to a Good Start *Continued from page 2*

### Classroom Observation

Once the "dust settles" and the school year is in full swing, parents may want to ask the staff when they can observe in their child's classroom. Observations provide parents with the opportunity to learn about instructional accommodations that are being implemented in their child's program. The IEP will tell families what a child will be learning while the observation will help clarify how teachers go about teaching the skills. It also provides parents with the opportunity to see how various behaviors are addressed as well how their child responds socially in the school setting. An observation just prior to the annual IEP meeting will help clarify the present level of performance information that is shared at the meeting. All of this being said, it is important to remember observation etiquette. During the observation, the primary goal should be that the flow of classroom activity be as unaffected by the observer's presence as possible. The observer should make him or herself inconspicuous, which would include not following or towering over the child being observed. No eye contact should be made with any student who may be exhibiting inappropriate or attention-seeking behaviors. Of course, it goes

without saying that no other children should accompany a family member during the observation. Classroom observations can be a wonderful springboard for dialogue and exchange of information between families and teachers; however, any post-conversations should be prearranged and not take place during class time.

### Homework

By far, the most frequent concern I hear expressed when talking to families is homework. Many times families feel as though their lives during the school year revolve around homework and, not surprisingly, frustration and resentment quickly set in. It appears that the most common homework accommodation centers around the amount of time spent on homework. Teachers, with best intentions, "predict" the amount of time it will take to complete the homework, but frequently and for a variety of reasons, the homework takes longer to complete. I have found it to be much more effective to look at homework accommodations in a different manner. First and foremost, we (educators and families) need to look at what the research has to say about homework. Then the special needs of the child need to be considered. Last and cer-

tainly not least, we need to keep in mind the other responsibilities of families and their desire to spend quality time with their children as they play board games, take walks, and read books together. When homework takes up entire evenings, sibling and/or spouse pathology can easily develop. Families need to communicate with the school staff when homework is dominating family life.

Families not only have the right, but the responsibility to be advocates for their children. Educational services are maximized when issues are discussed in a respectful, proactive, positive manner and families, schools and agencies work together in the best interest of children. Best wishes for a school year filled with growth and positive communication!

*Wendy Handrich, the president of The Learning Curve of Wisconsin, Inc., has eleven years of experience in public school administration and fifteen years of special education teaching. She also has experience teaching at the university level. In her current role as an educational consultant, Ms. Handrich provides practical, research-based programming suggestions to school teams that address student needs while capitalizing on the strengths of a child. Visit [www.learningcurvewi.com](http://www.learningcurvewi.com).*

# Kids Talk to Teachers

*We spoke with students with mental health challenges and their siblings about school. Here's what they had to say.*



**Question:** What would you like your teacher to understand about what works / doesn't work for you in the classroom?

*"One thing I really liked was when my teacher said that there was no such thing as a late assignment. It helped me because I tend to work very slowly, but the quality is usually above average. I hate it when a teacher just lectures because I can't write fast enough to take notes, and if I'm taking notes, I'm not listening and able to remember the information."*

- Age 17

*"I don't do [well] in class with lots of people. [Smaller classes] help me to understand or concentrate."*

- Age 15

*"When we do tests, I do not like [it]. I hate it when I get in trouble."*

- Age 10

*"Not good: Math, math, math, math, math, social studies, social studies, social studies, social studies, social studies, spelling, spelling and spelling. Good: Science and computer."*

- Age 12

*"What doesn't work is when teachers just keep talking and talking. Students zone out after one minute of talking. Nap time would be awesome."*

- Age 14

*"If [teachers] actually knew what was going on with students they could help make everyone feel accepted. Most of the time the teachers are clueless to what's going on, so they could work on that...a lot."*

- Age 16

*"I hate it when the teachers lecture the class and have them sit and listen. If the learning process was more active or maybe more hands-on, then students would understand more because they [wouldn't] be bored and just fidgeting around."*

- Age 14

**Question:** School can be pretty tough for kids with disabilities. What would you like your sibling's teacher to understand about him / her?

*"He is just as much a person as anyone without a disability. He can learn just like others but you need to take extra time and maybe go at it in another way. It may take more time, but you need to be patient."*

- Age 17

*"My brother has a disability, but it doesn't matter because he's just like any other kid. Sometimes he's nice and likes to play with me, and sometimes he's not very nice."*

- Age 5

*"If he's getting angry, they need to give him time alone. I'd also like them to know it takes him longer to learn how to do stuff."*

- Age 10

*"I really want the school to understand that my little brother can't [control] what he does. I mean, they put my brother in handcuffs when he was only 7. Why don't they understand he has bipolar? They're so mean to him."*

- Age 13

*"Sometimes my brother is not always paying attention. My brother plays imagination in his head and he is in his own world. That is part of the disability called autism. You need to tap his shoulder and talk to him in a gentle voice. You also need to give him a lot of space so he doesn't feel crowded."*

- Age 12

*"He gets bored very easy and has a short temper. He loves a challenge. He loves math."*

- Age 15

*"My brother is 14 and has trouble in big environments when it starts to get tense, so he needs to have time alone in a quiet place to cool off. It gets hard for him sometimes and just time off without what was going on changes his mood."*

- Age 15

*"It takes her [a] longer time to learn so if the teacher would have one-on-one learning time with her, that would be nice."*

- Age 7

# Making IDEA 2004 Work for Your Child

By Ann Hager and Hugh Davis

IDEA 2004... what does that mean? For those of us who have children in special education we may be familiar with IEPs (Individual Education Plans). IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) is the federal law that guarantees the services and supports listed in our child's IEP. IDEA 2004 incorporates the latest changes Congress made to the law.

Federal laws are regularly changed, or amended. This may occur for several reasons, including gaining a greater understanding of the situation the law covers, the law in practice doesn't function as originally intended, or because the law was authorized for a limited period of time. Since certain sections of IDEA needed to be reauthorized to continue in force, Congress took the opportunity to address what they viewed were some shortcomings of the previous version of IDEA, also known as IDEA 97. Their objectives included reducing complexity, required meetings and unnecessary paperwork.

While there are some definite challenges for families in IDEA 2004, there are also opportunities to improve services for your children. It's important to note that under IDEA 2004, parents are still considered full and equal partners in the development of their child's IEP. Following are some of the more significant changes for children with emotional or behavioral disorders.

## When does IDEA 2004 go into effect?

Most of IDEA 2004 went into effect July 1, 2005 (some provisions went into effect when the bill was signed into law on December 3, 2004). School districts must follow state laws and regulations unless they are inconsistent with IDEA 2004. State law can provide more than IDEA, but if there is a requirement in IDEA 2004 that state law doesn't affect, then IDEA 2004 must be followed. The process for changing state law is beginning. For updates, join QEC's or FACETS' e-lists (see Resources, p. 8).

## Teacher Qualifications

Under IDEA 97, standards for special education teachers were not well-defined, resulting in a wide variation in skill levels. IDEA 2004 establishes standards for "highly-qualified teachers." To be highly qualified, all teachers must be fully certified in special education or pass state special education licensure exams, hold a bachelors degree and demonstrate subject knowledge.

Teachers who hold "emergency" licenses to teach special education are covered under Wisconsin's approved plan to meet the qualification provisions in IDEA 2004, as long as the individual is in a program that can be completed in three years and receives high quality professional development, intense supervision and mentoring provided by the employing Local Educational Agency (LEA).

## Evaluation

**Initial Evaluation Timeframe:** IDEA 2004 requires that an initial evaluation be completed within 60 days from the time the school receives parental consent, or if the state has established a timeframe, within such timeframe as required by the state. Wisconsin state law requires that the LEA notify the parents of the educational placement of their child within 90 days after the LEA receives a special education referral or initiates a reevaluation. To comply with both federal and state law for initial evaluations, schools must complete the evaluation within 60 days of receipt of consent, and make a placement determination within 90 days from receipt of referral.

**Parental Consent for Initial Evaluation and Services:** If the parent of a child does not provide consent for an initial evaluation, or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide the consent, the LEA may pursue the initial evaluation of the child by utilizing due process. This is consistent with prior regulatory interpretation under IDEA 97.

However, parents must consent to their child's placement in special education before an IEP meeting can be held and an IEP developed for the student. If a parent refuses consent for initial special education and related services, or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide such consent, the LEA is not considered to be in violation of the requirement to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

**Frequency of Reevaluations:** Under IDEA 2004, a reevaluation is required at least once every three years, unless the parent and the LEA agree that a reevaluation is not necessary. IDEA 2004 also limits the number of reevaluations to not more than once a year, unless the parent and the LEA agree otherwise. State law requires a reevaluation every three years and when requested by a parent or a teacher.

## What is due process?

Due process is the constitutional guarantee that legal proceedings be fair. It is a safeguard that protects the rights of individuals. In the special education context, it is the process governing disputes and is conducted by an independent hearing officer. It may be initiated by a parent or the local educational agency.

**Specific Learning Disabilities:** In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability (SLD), IDEA 2004 specifies that "a LEA shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or mathematical reasoning." An LEA is permitted to use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures.

Essentially, the law grants greater flexibility to local education agencies to implement new models for SLD identification. With this flexibility comes the concern that standards be uniformly applied to the evaluation of all students. Nothing in IDEA 2004 prevents schools from continuing to use their existing identification method (typically comparing IQ testing to classroom achievement), nor does it prohibit a state from establishing a statewide process for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.

## IDEA *Continued from page 5*

**Parent Tip:** *If your child is being evaluated for a specific learning disability, ask the school about the evaluation method they use and standard guidelines used for identification.*

### Individualized Education Plans (IEP)

**Factors to Consider in Developing an IEP:** Under IDEA 97, key factors that guided the development of IEPs included:

- The strengths of the child
- The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child
- The results of the initial evaluation or reevaluation of the child

IDEA 2004 adds one more factor:

- The academic, developmental and functional needs of the child.

**Parent Tip:** *Consider providing the IEP team, in writing, a list of your child's strengths and your concerns about the academic, developmental and functional needs of your child.*

**Present Levels of Performance:** The statement of the child's present level of performance has been revised to reflect the child's academic achievement and functional performance, rather than educational performance, as required under IDEA 97. While the full significance of this change is unknown at this time, it is clear that all aspects of a child's performance are important to childhood development, including the areas of social and behavioral functioning.

**Parent Tip:** *Parents should consider revising the present levels of performance statement to include descriptions of social and emotional functioning. Also be sure to include your child's strengths in this statement so services can be built upon the foundation of your child's particular skills.*

**Measurable Goals:** Measurable, annual goals continue to be required in an IEP. However, IDEA 2004 eliminates the requirement for benchmarks or short-term objectives for each annual goal except for those students who take an alternate assessment aligned to alternate achievement standards (typically students with significant cognitive disabilities who are determined to be unable to attain grade-level standards even with the best support and instruction). However, benchmarks or short-term objectives are still required under Wisconsin law for all students with disabilities. Until and unless state law changes, IEP teams must continue to include benchmarks or short-term objectives in every IEP.

**Parent Tip:** *Nothing in IDEA 2004 prohibits the development of short-term objectives. Even if Wisconsin law is changed to align with IDEA 2004, parents can still request that annual goals include interim points of measurement to help determine if the goal will be reached by the end of the school year.*

**Progress Reports:** IDEA 2004 eliminates two key requirements for progress reporting that existed under IDEA 97:

- That parents be advised the extent to which progress is sufficient to enable the child to achieve IEP goals by the end of the year
- That progress reports be provided at least as often as parents of non-disabled children.

Rather, it requires the IEP contain a description of how progress toward annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports will be provided. However,

**Parent Tip:** *Request adding a statement to your child's IEP that the school provide progress reports on your child's IEP goals at the same interval as regular school report cards are issued, or more frequently if appropriate. Set the expectation that these progress reports will indicate if your child's progress is sufficient to accomplish each IEP goal by the end of the school year.*

Wisconsin state law still requires that parents be informed of the extent to which their child's progress is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

**Accommodations for State & District Assessments:** Under IDEA 2004, a statement is required in the IEP identifying any individual appropriate accommodations which are required to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state- and district-wide assessments. Accommodations may include changes in test setting (room location), format (oral or written), or timing that don't compromise what the test measures. States are required to develop guidelines on the accommodations allowed on state assessments, which may differ from the accommodations for a child for tests that are part of his/her grade-level curriculum.

**Parent Tip:** *Find out the state- and district wide assessments that your child is expected to take and ask about the content, format, and setting of each. Check to make sure that decisions regarding the accommodations for these assessments are based on your child's individual needs and not his/her disability category. If accommodations that your child uses in the classroom are not allowed by state guidelines during state assessments, pursue the matter with DPI officials.*

### Meetings

**IEP Meeting Attendance:** IDEA 2004 includes substantive changes to how IEP meetings are conducted and when team members must participate. While designed to streamline the process and reduce lost instructional time, these options should be viewed with caution. One change provides two ways team members can be excused from attending the IEP meeting:

- If the team member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed at the meeting
- If the team member, when their area of curriculum or related services will be

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**IDEA** *Continued from page 6*

discussed at a meeting, submits written input to the team prior to the meeting.

IEP team members may only be excused from attending an IEP meeting if a parent agrees to either of these instances in writing.

**Parent Tip:** *Each IEP team member plays an important role in the process, which is designed to develop an IEP interactively at the meeting through exchange of ideas and observations. Therefore, use of the attendance exception should be infrequent. This is particularly true in the case of your child's regular education teacher. Any use of these provisions should be approved by a parent well in advance of the meeting.*

**Meeting Not Required to Change an**

**IEP:** Under IDEA 2004, once the annual IEP meeting has been held, parents and schools may agree to change an IEP without convening an IEP meeting. These changes may be made by amending the IEP rather than redrafting the entire document. However, parents may request a revised copy of the IEP with the amendments incorporated. If the child's placement needs to be changed, an IEP team meeting is still required under state law.

**Parent Tip:** *This approach may be fine for making minor changes to your child's IEP, but caution should be exercised when more significant modifications need to be made. Revisions to behavioral plans, addressing disciplinary issues, or changing the type / frequency of services are all examples of changes that should require a full IEP meeting.*

**Resolution Session:** When a parent requests a due process hearing, IDEA 2004 requires the school, within 15 days of receiving notice of the request, to meet with the parents and the relevant member or members of the IEP team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the request in what is called a "resolution session." The school must include a representative who has decision-making authority and may not have an attorney present unless the parent is accompanied by an attorney. IDEA 2004 permits the parent

and the school to agree, in writing, to waive this meeting or to agree to use the mediation process.

If a resolution is reached at the meeting, the parties must execute a legally binding agreement that is signed by both the parent and the school representative. The agreement is enforceable in state and federal courts, although either party may void the agreement within three business days of the agreement's execution. If the LEA has not resolved the matter to the satisfaction of the parents within 30 days of receiving the request, the due process hearing may occur, and all of the applicable timelines begin.

IDEA 2004 places a 2-year statute of limitations on a parent's right to file a due process claim, with a 90-day limitation on appeals. However, Wisconsin's statute of limitations continues to be one year to file a due process claim, and 45 days to appeal a due process hearing decision.

**Transition**

IDEA 2004 changes the requirement to begin consideration of a student's transition needs from age 14 to age 16. That's where the bad news about transition ends, however. Under IDEA 97, schools had to consider transition issues for disabled students, but did not have to set clear goals for life after school. Under IDEA 2004, the IEP must contain "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills." Additionally, the IEP must describe the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. Though IDEA 2004 does not require the transition statement for 14 year olds, it is still required under state law.

**Parent Tip:** *IDEA 2004 defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities which focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability, to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities. Parents should be able to incorporate goals related to such things as vocational training, daily living skills, and social understanding – and get the services to help your child meet those goals.*

**Discipline**

Unfortunately, Congress decided to keep language from IDEA 97 regarding a child whose behavior impedes his/her learning or that of others, instructing the IEP team to "consider," rather than mandate the use of positive behavioral supports and interventions (we'll have to dedicate a newsletter issue to that subject!). Parents should note that in discipline situations, IDEA 2004 specifies that special education procedural protections do not apply if the parent has refused evaluation or initial services.

**Manifestation Determination:**

Manifestation determination continues under IDEA 2004, but with some significant changes. For children with disabilities who violate student codes of conduct, the law authorizes schools to order changes of placement to an appropriate interim educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for up to ten school days, to the same extent as would apply to a non-disabled student, without making a manifestation determination.

Manifestation determinations must be conducted within 10 school days of a disciplinary decision that results in a change of placement. Unfortunately, IDEA 2004 makes it easier for schools to conclude that a behavior is not a manifestation of the child's disability by eliminating a key factor in the process under IDEA 97: IDEA 2004 does not require a determination of whether the child's IEP and placement are appropriate. Rather, the IEP team must determine if the behavior:

- was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP.

If the school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine either factor is met, the conduct is a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the child's conduct is determined to be a manifestation of their disability, the IEP team must:

1. conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and implement a behavioral intervention plan (BIP), if the school has not done so; or

## IDEA *Continued from page 7*

2. review an existing BIP and modify it to address the behavior; and
3. except in cases involving weapons, drugs or infliction of serious bodily injury, return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and LEA agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the child's behavior is not a result of their disability, IDEA 2004 authorizes schools to apply the same disciplinary procedures as for a child without a disability. Educational services must continue for disabled students, but the placement may be changed. The burden is on the parents to appeal the decision. Under IDEA 97, the child's educational placement didn't change unless the school successfully sued for such change in placement.



**Parent Tip:** *If your child is placed in an alternate setting, carefully investigate to determine if your child's IEP is being fully followed. IDEA 2004 still requires schools to provide a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities, even if they have been suspended or expelled.*

**Placement during Appeal:** Under IDEA 2004, a child remains in an alternate setting selected by the LEA while a parental appeal of the manifestation determination is pending. This is a significant change from IDEA 97, which had a "stay-put" provision that kept the child in their normal educational placement while an appeal was in process.

Hearings of parent appeals of a manifestation determination must be expedited: The hearing must occur within 20 school days from the date of the request and the decision must be reached within 10 school days of the hearing.

**Serious Bodily Injury and Length of Removal:** There are three circumstances under which school personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting, even if the conduct is a manifestation of the child's disability. In addition

to incidents involving drugs and weapons as permitted under prior law, IDEA 2004 now permits a student to be removed for inflicting serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function. Serious bodily injury is defined as bodily injury involving a "substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty." IDEA 2004 also extends the permitted length of removal from 45 calendar days to 45 school days.



**Parent Tip:** *If your child has committed a drug, weapon or serious bodily injury offense that was not a manifestation of his or her disability, the school district may expel him or her permanently (or for any length it chooses). In these circumstances, parents may want to suggest a 45-day interim alternative placement to discourage the school district from proceeding with an expulsion that could be much lengthier.*

**Knowledge of Disability:** Under IDEA 2004, the school is deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if prior to the behavior that resulted in disciplinary action:

- the parent of the child expressed concern in writing to school administrative personnel or the child's teacher, that the child is in need of special education and related services.
- the parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- the teacher of the child, or other personnel of the school, have expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel.

## Other Changes in IDEA 2004

**Research-based Services:** Mandates that special education and related services be guided by peer-reviewed research whenever possible.



**Parent Tip:** *Ask the school about scientific research / evidence of effectiveness to support instructional programming that is being considered. This research-based standard should apply not only to academic programming, but also to programs or services selected to address behavioral issues or other areas.*

**Prohibition on Mandatory Medication:** Prohibits schools from requiring a child to obtain a prescription for a substance covered by the Controlled Substances Act as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation, or receiving special education services.

**Procedural Safeguards Notice:** Requires a copy of the procedural safeguards be given to parents only one time a year, except that a copy shall also be given upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation, the first occurrence of the filing of a due process complaint, and when a parent requests a copy.

## Helpful Resources

### Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

800-442-4563  
www.dpi.state.wi.us

### Quality Education Coalition

800-928-8778 (Jeff Spitzer-Resnick)

### Wisconsin FACETS

877-374-4677  
www.wifacets.org

### Wisconsin Family Ties

800-422-7145  
www.wifamilyties.org

### Bridges4Kids

www.bridges4kids.org

## Dr. Seuss on IEPs



I do not like these IEP's,  
I do not like them, jeeze Louise!

We test, we check, we plan, we meet,  
But nothing ever seems complete.

Would you, could you like the form?  
I do not like the form I see,  
Not page one, not two, not three.  
Another change, a brand new box  
I think we have all lost our rocks.

Could we all meet here or there?  
We cannot all fit anywhere.  
Not in a room, not in a hall,  
There seems to be no space at all.

Could you, would you meet again?  
I cannot meet again next week.  
No lunch, no prep, please hear me speak.

No, not at dusk. No not at dawn.  
At 4 p.m., I should be gone.  
Could you hear while all speak out?  
Would you write the words they shout?

I could not hear, I would not write,  
This does not need to be a fight.

Sign here, date there, mark this,  
check that,  
Beware the student's advocate.

If you will let me be,  
I will try again, you'll see!  
I almost like these IEP's,  
I think I'll write 6,003.

And I will practice day and night  
Until they say, "You got it right."

— Author Unknown

(Reprinted from Indiana Family Action  
Network Newsletter)

## Facilitated IEP Program Continues

Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System (WSEMS) will continue its pilot project of facilitated IEPs during the 2005-06 school year. The pilot, which began April 1, 2004, will study the effectiveness of facilitated IEPs.

Facilitation is a voluntary process during which a neutral facilitator helps IEP team members communicate effectively at team meetings. Facilitating an IEP team meeting offers an early option for resolving disputes, before a potential conflict has time to develop into a more serious dispute. The facilitator is a neutral who assists the whole IEP team. The facilitator is not a member of the IEP team and has no stake in the outcome; the facilitator's role is to assist all team members to communicate more effectively and efficiently.

During the pilot period, WSEMS will assign a facilitator to IEP cases. The facilitators will be selected from the current list of WSEMS mediators who have received specialized training in facilitation of IEPs.

Either parents or school administrators, or both, may request facilitation by telephone, fax or mail. The toll-free phone number is 888-298-3857, the local number is 414-288-1425, the TTY number is 414-288-6129, and the fax number is 414-288-7537. The mailing address is WSEMS, Marquette University, 106 Wehr Physics, P.O. Box 1881, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881.

Both the parents and school administrators must agree to use facilitation. If only one party requests facilitation, the WSEMS Intake Coordinator will contact the other party to

determine if they will agree to the facilitation. If that party does not agree, facilitation will not be used.

Facilitation may be requested for initial, annual, or re-evaluation IEPs. The parents and/or school administrators may request facilitation for any IEPs that may be considered challenging to the participants.

Facilitation should be requested at least two weeks prior to the scheduled IEP meeting date. Cases will be accepted for the pilot project by considering the following criteria: 1) type of disability; 2) location within the state; and 3) age of the child. The pilot project seeks a cross section of representative cases for research purposes.

Facilitation is free to all participants. WSEMS will pay the facilitator with grant funds from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. WSEMS asked for advice regarding the structure of the pilot project from a large group of stakeholders in the special education community at a meeting in late February.

All participants in the pilot study will be asked to complete surveys that will be analyzed by a research methodologist. Depending on the outcome of the pilot study, stakeholder advice, and funds available from the WI Department of Public Instruction, IEP facilitation may be offered as a regular option for parents and schools in the future.

In addition to offering statewide training for groups of parents and schools, WSEMS may be contacted to schedule training about facilitated IEPs

## Did You Know?

In Wisconsin, children age 14 and above can refuse any voluntary mental health treatment despite the wishes of their parents. This includes Currently there is a bill before the Wisconsin State Senate that would change the current law. Senate Bill 226 would put parents in the primary decision-making role regarding mental health treatment for their children up to age 18. If you would like to hear how to join a coalition of parents and let your views be known about this bill, please call Wisconsin Family Ties at (800) 422-7145.

*"It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world  
and moral courage so rare."*

- Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

# What Every Teacher Should Know about Tourette Syndrome

*(This article was originally published in the Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc. newsletter. Tourette Syndrome is a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary movements and/or vocalizations, collectively known as "tics." We believe the experiences and tips provided are helpful for children with other mental disorders as well.)*

## Top Down Organization

Classrooms and schools are top down organizations. The teacher sets the tone in the individual classroom and principals and administrators set the overall tone in the school. If the principal of a middle school is certain that he or she "understand Tourette Syndrome (TS)," but that limited understanding is based on one child with one kind of symptoms, the variety of tics another child presents may be misconstrued as intentional misbehavior.

An otherwise well informed principal recently told educator and TS Education Specialist Sue Conners, M.A., "Don't tell me that burping is a tic!" But of course it can be—as can a myriad of other behaviors that are easily confused with the attention-getting schemes of the class clown. When administrators choose to define TS within narrow confines, teachers don't get the support they need to distinguish "bad behavior" from tics. It's a frustrating situation that can baffle even the best teachers.

Tracey Louis-Charles, mother of eight-year-old Jordan, has a simple piece of advice for teachers—ask the child how he is doing that day. "Children with TS have good days and bad days. It doesn't help to say—he didn't act like that yesterday—because every day is different. My deepest heart's desire is that teachers go that extra mile and take time to pick up on the cues that mean a child is having a rocky day."

Professor Peter Hollenbeck didn't receive a diagnosis until he was an adult, but his experiences in the classroom were very similar to those of children today. "The approval of teachers can be more important than that of classmates, and I think that the grief and rolled eyes that I got from teachers bothered me even more than what I took from classmates."

The top down organization of the classroom gives the teacher the opportunity to set a tone of tolerance and acceptance—or

impatience and disapproval. Every child in the room follows the lead of a teacher who rolls his or her eyes in disbelief or chastises a child with uncontrollable tics. They also follow the lead of teachers who are flexible and take into account the impact of stress on children with TS.

Thirteen-year-old Zak Hollis wants his teachers to understand that children with TS, ". . . may not be able to do something but it does not necessarily mean they are lazy or dishonest. Most kids want to do the best they can but having TS can make some things more difficult at times."

“My deepest  
heart’s desire  
is that teachers go  
that extra mile  
and take time to  
pick up on the cues  
that mean a child  
is having a rocky day.”

## Tap the Experts

Zak Hollis is not a world-renowned expert on TS, but he is an expert on his own experience with TS and is adamant about one point—include the child in the decisions concerning how classmates are to be educated about TS. Some children are made even more uncomfortable by the attention given to their symptoms if they are asked to discuss TS with their class. Others find the experience liberating. Zak's mother wants teachers to tap parents as experts on their individual child's TS. Parents, children and teachers can create a formidable partnership, when they work together.

Parents need to make sure that teachers

have the information they need—even if that means bringing Tourette Syndrome Association publications to school, meeting with teachers before the first day and directing the teachers toward resources of expert advice. Being proactive and making sure that individual teachers have the information they need BEFORE there's a discipline problem or conflict over homework, is worth the extra effort on the part of parents.

One of Zak's favorite teachers, Lynda Hahn, of the Eisenhower Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, emphasizes the importance of communications within the "team" of people responsible for educating the child with TS, including parents, health care providers, and the child.

## The Right Recipe

Since no two cases of TS are alike and the symptoms can be confused with other issues—from discipline problems to a simple case of the fidgets—there is no single recipe for coping with tics in the classroom.

Determining the severity of the symptoms is the first step, but the individual resilience of the child's personality can counter-balance the severity of symptoms. While one child with minor tics may suffer from disproportionate embarrassment, another child with marked symptoms may weather negative social situations with grace.

Accommodations are sometimes the right solution, i.e. extra time for test taking or frequent breaks. Most children can work within the regular class structure with just a little flexibility. The IEP (Individual Educational Plan) can help determine the extent of the necessary accommodations, but all the expert plans in the world are worthless without cooperation and implementation. Starting from the premise that everyone is different and that the objective is to educate all children to the best of their individual potential, puts everyone on notice—don't count any child out!

For Ian Turnipseed, now a college student studying communications, ". . . a desk over on the side, all by myself was what I needed. I was fine and I could do what I had to do in my little area." He acknowledges that the solution isn't appropriate for everyone, and as he grew older he learned that his tics dissipated if he concentrated on what the teacher was

*Continued on page 11*

## Tourette Syndrome *Continued from page 10*

saying. When he was fully engaged, he had "...no time to let anything go."

Clever teachers, parents and children have found individual solutions that enable a child to get down to the business of learning. Sometimes it's a change in the pace of the class, or an alteration in the environment. But being constantly reminded to sit still and stop fidgeting accomplishes nothing.

Lynda Hahn is patient and calm because she has come to recognize the difficulty some of her students have just concentrating for the duration of a lesson. "I believe that the most difficult thing that teachers and paraprofessionals have to deal with in students with TS and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder is the constant interruptions of the student's thinking process. This is something we cannot see until we have worked with a student for some time. I can now tell when he is not concentrating on his work or the question I just posed. The student will often ask me to repeat the question or statement. I calmly repeat what I might have already repeated three times. The interfering thoughts in his head are so disorienting during his learning process."

A teacher who is not aware of the impact of TS on a child's learning process may lose patience and communicate his or her frustration to that pupil. Classical musician Page Vickery didn't get diagnosed until she was already in college. As an adult she has looked back on her days in school and wished her teachers knew just how much energy she was expending just to keep up. "I was working twice as hard to do just as well as the rest of the class. When I fell short, I felt like a failure when in reality I was still churning it out at 200%." The kind of insight and compassion demonstrated by Ms. Hahn would have benefited Ms. Vickery.

Mary Jo Mettler is the Assistant Administrator at an assisted living facility with a degree in education. She has TS and is the Chairman of the TSA Alaska Chapter. Ms. Mettler provided us with a list of very specific and practical tips from her childhood—from a reassuring pat on the back to the identification of tic "triggers."

**Get out of the limelight!** Sometimes a child with TS needs to get away from bright lights and noise, even the innocuous buzzing of fluorescent lights can be too stimulating.

**Human Touch** A child can benefit from a quick reassuring touch—a pat on the back or simply the close proximity of the teacher standing by his or her desk.

**Five Minute Warning** Children with TS—and many other kids—benefit from transition warnings, which are simply reminders that in five minutes, or ten or two, the class is switching activities.

**Identify and Avoid Triggers** Help the child identify and avoid the very situations that trigger particularly difficult behaviors.

**Homework** Homework needs to be approached on a case-by-case basis, because it can be a nightmare for children who have TS with OCD or ADHD, after a long stressful day at school.

### If it Quacks and Waddles

Nearly all the teachers, parents and children consulted for this article focused on the variable nature of TS and how misunderstood symptoms can lead to disastrous educational experiences. Susan Conners can discuss the subject from many perspectives—all her own. She was not diagnosed with TS until she had already been teaching for fifteen years. Ms. Conners' sense of humor has served her well as both a student and teacher with TS.

"We still often struggle with things that quack and waddle but are not ducks. In other words we still unfairly judge children by their quacks and waddles, and use methods of discipline that we used thirty years ago." The understanding of TS, ADHD, and OCD has changed dramatically since Ms. Conners was a fidgeting, quacking child. The resources are also available to teachers and parents, so that these children will be seen "... as just kids who have problems and not who are problems."

### A Teacher's Top Seven for Teachers

Charlene Wheeler Fowler, an Exceptional Services teacher at the Raymond Elementary School in Raymond, MS, sent a list of the seven things she thinks every teacher should know about TS.

1. TS isn't just coprolalia (involuntary use of obscene language) and physical motor tics. The array of tics is astounding.

2. Get used to the noises. When these noises start it is very disruptive, but after a while everyone gets used to them and is able to ignore them.
3. Talk to the student about TS – why he has the urge to make noises.
4. Explain TS to the other students who think he is "getting away with it" each time the teacher ignores a TS-related behavior.
5. Decide what's more important – learning or a class of children quietly sitting up straight.
6. Work with the child developing interpersonal skills.
7. Educate the rest of the faculty and staff about the symptoms of TS

### Memorable Teacher

Many adults with TS can point to one or two teachers that left huge impressions—both good and bad—on their school experiences. Ian Turnipseed remembers his Sunday school teacher fondly. He describes her as "... the coolest lady I ever met." Mr. Turnipseed and his teacher had the benefit of knowing what was causing his tics. Sue Conners recalls an even more exceptional teacher.

"In 1954, Mrs. Pacquin saw with her eyes a 6-year old girl who was blinking her eyes rapidly and jerking her head back and forth and heard with her ears constant sniffing and whistling noises, but with her heart she saw a shy, sensitive child with a lot of potential and that was the child that she taught. Mrs. Pacquin was without a doubt wise beyond her years. What research could not provide her, she made up for in empathy and basic common sense. It was her belief that children would do well and behave if they could. If all of my teachers had been that wise, how different my life would have been."

TSA hopes that one day very soon, children with TS will come home from school and tell their parents about their own Mrs. Pacquin.

*The Tourette Syndrome Assoc., Inc., offers a wealth of expert advice and insight about educating children with TS. Contact them by phone at 718-224-2999; email ts@tsa-usa.org; website: www.tsa-usa.org.*

# Family Fun Day a Splashing Success!

On a beautiful July day, 650 family members from across the state joined us for Wisconsin Family Ties' 10th annual Family Fun Day at Mount Olympus Water Park in Wisconsin Dells. Read on to find out how this day impacted families...



## What Family Fun Day Means to Us.....

*By Sue Schissel*

In order to understand what Family Fun Day means to my family, you would first have to understand what living with chronic illness means to us.

Chronic illness has changed our lives immensely. Medication management, scheduling of clinicians and therapists, researching services and therapies, attending conferences, yearly applications for services, IEP/school support are some of the added parental responsibilities that we handle. Parenting a chronically ill child takes education, endless energy, and the capacity to face and survive extremely frightening realities related to the illness on a regular basis. Chronic illness affects our finances. My family's income dropped in half because I did not return to work. Additionally, our expenses are increased by several services/therapies that are not covered by insurance.

Our family culture is changed by illness. Therapists and clinicians are in our home daily. They are a blessing and I don't know what I'd do without them, but our home life is changed by their presence. We have constant appointments and visitors in our home.

Our experiences out in the community are changed by illness. Social stigmas are alive and well in our neighborhoods and communities. All of these realities significantly increase our individual daily stress levels. Chronic illness also adds stress to our marriages, parent-child and sibling relationships.

Family Fun Day is a wonderful family activity. This is a relaxing stress free day of exercise and fun in the sun. The financial impact is minimal. Traveling by air conditioned bus with a toilet and a video significantly decreases the stress of traveling to the Dells. Medications cause overheating to be a dangerous reality for my son. The video kept the kids happy. This year we listened to parents and children laugh out loud at the movie. A toilet eliminated the need to stop during a total of four hours on the road. This experience is free from social stigma; you see we are all in the same boat. We are all familiar with mental illness and the challenges it brings to our families. Challenges are met with empathy and support. Parents, siblings, and the children with the challenges have the opportunity to support each other and share ideas and knowledge. Family Fun Day is one of my family's favorite memories of summer! We are greatly appreciative to the people that work to put this day together and to the people that provide the funding that makes this day possible!



## Dear Wisconsin Family Ties,

On behalf of Rock County, we wish to extend our gratitude for the Family Fun Day at Mt. Olympus in Wisconsin Dells. This year, 100 children and families from Rock County were able to partake in this amazing adventure. What was particularly touching was that we turned no child away. To have such a treat available is outstanding. This informal day of celebration links us closer to families creating a bond that gets us through the hard times.

It is heartwarming as, all year, people approach us wanting to send a special child who otherwise could not afford this. Somehow, almost magically, the numbers work out with no child being left behind.

Several new families just beginning to work with us attended. Many others realized, perhaps for the first time, how far they have come as a family and with their child. One parent struggling with his own son left with a new appreciation, empowering him with an awareness of how people face more daunting or, at least, different challenges.

One mother wrote Ilah thanking her for the day. The courage of attending the Dells encouraged a heightened level of safety opening the door for her son to go to a camp and join a service club. This is a child who previously struggled being engaged in anything; mom is now energized in a positive way.

As social workers, we are reminded of the challenges parents face daily as well as the potential they possess. Family Fun Day reveals enlightened perspectives that are often missed in our formal interactions. This day, your hard work and generosity, bring us hope and belief in connections.

Thank you for making this possible!

*Sincerely,*

*Ilah Hartung and Rebecca Westrick  
Children's Community Support Network,  
Adolescent Services Center,  
Rock County Human Services Department*

# WFT Plays Important Role in 2005 CCF Conference

By Joan Maynard

For fifteen years the Wisconsin Council on Children & Families, and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services have coordinated the Children Come First Conference. Wisconsin Family Ties has played an important part in assisting with conference planning, offering scholarships to parent attendees, presenting workshops, and hosting receptions.

Joan Maynard, WFT Information & Referral Coordinator, represented WFT at the planning meetings this year and added her ideas and suggestions for the overall conference, workshops, and plenary speakers. We were instrumental in getting Sandra Spencer, Executive Director for the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH) to this year's conference to give a keynote address on "Getting into Gear -- Family-Driven Systems of Care" (watch for more about this in subsequent newsletters). Joan and Ginger Fobart, Family Advocate in Kenosha County and WFT Planning and Support Specialist, met Ms. Spencer at the FFCMH conference held in Washington, D.C in December 2004. Hearing her passion for helping families and systems to work collaboratively inspired us to get her to Wisconsin, especially when the CCF Conference theme became "Working Together Works for Everyone."

WFT staff also participated in two of the 26 conference workshops. Hugh Davis, Executive Director and Ginger Fobart, presented a workshop on "Participating Effectively on Family Teams and Community Boards" where they explored the fine lines between speaking up and being too pushy. Ann Hager, Family Advocate in La Crosse County, led a workshop on "Effective Parent Advocacy." Both workshops were given very high marks. Hugh Davis also participated in the pre-conference Wraparound training.

Besides our usual exhibit for distributing newsletters, brochures, and other information related to children's mental health, this year WFT had a "Gathering Room" for anyone wishing to speak to a Family Advocate. The room was open during and between workshops on Wednesday only and had at least one advocate present at all times with snacks and beverages provided. Attendance was very low, however. Next

year we will provide an alternative way to meet with advocates. If you have thoughts on this, please let us know them.

Another important provision by WFT to the CCF Conference is the parent scholarship program. This year scholarships were awarded to 46 family members to help cover conference expenses of food, lodging, travel and childcare. Debbie Drehmel, a scholarship recipient, sums up what several other recipients conveyed when she wrote, "I want you to know that the scholarships are a wonderful thing for parents like me. I would not have been able to go and would not be able to go in future years if it were not for them." Ms. Drehmel went on to say, "I am still reeling over all the wonderful information that I received and the wonderful people . . . who worked so hard to set this up for us. . . I cannot wait till next year."

Last, but not least, WFT is involved in helping to review this year's conference for its successes and shortfalls and to begin planning for next year. We expect there will be changes, perhaps including the time of year the conference will be held.

This is the second year a children and youth program has been offered. Without further funding and people to help, it is questionable whether this program can continue. As always, your feedback and comments are appreciated, so please let us know what you think about the youth program and the conference in general. Marian Boivin, a WFT scholarship recipient, already let us know what the conference meant to her and to her son when she wrote, "I couldn't believe when my son, Josh, who is shy, went up in front of the group and participated by reading and speaking. I couldn't believe the smile and confidence he portrayed. I learned an enormous amount [of] information."

WFT knows how important the Children Come First Conference is to the efforts in Wisconsin to bring better understanding between families and the services provided to families through the systems of care in our state. "Working Together Works for Everyone" is not merely a slogan. It is important we learn from each other. The CCF Conference helps us to do just that.

## WFT Advocate's Son Wins Award

WFT congratulates Tyler Hager, son of Ann and Mike Hager, on receiving the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families' (WCCF) Child Award given at the CCF Conference in Appleton last July. Each year WCCF awards one outstanding youth who has done "good things" for themselves and others with emotional and behavioral challenges.

Once considered too dangerous to remain at home and a poor prospect for learning to read, Tyler has certainly surpassed everyone's expectations. Now at 14, he is an effective self-advocate, leading his IEP team meetings. Last year Tyler testified at a Wisconsin legislative breakfast, and by all accounts was the star, speaking of what worked and what didn't in dealing with his mental health issues. Tyler continues to advocate both at the state and federal level for improved services for kids like him. But probably most impressive is his compassion and help to kids in his La Crosse community who have difficulty in social settings. To these kids he's a friend.

Congratulations Tyler! You are very deserving of this award, and we're proud of you!



## Mental Illnesses Begin Early

Researchers supported by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) have found that most cases of mental illness begin during adolescence or early adulthood, and that despite effective treatments, there are long delays – sometimes decades -- between first onset of symptoms and when people

receive treatment. This study surveyed 9,282 respondents age 18 or older in English-speaking households. The study concluded that unlike most disabling diseases, mental illness begin very early in life. Half of all lifetime cases begin by age 14; three quarters have begun by 24. Thus, mental disorders

are really the chronic diseases of the young. The survey also found that in the U.S., mental disorders are quite common. To learn more, visit the web site of the National Institute of Mental Health, [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov).

## WFT Support Groups

*If a WFT Support Group is not listed for your area, call the Family Advocate in your region to help you find one, or to help you start a group. Please call to confirm all meetings.*

### Northern Region

Oneida	Jackie Baldwin Jodi Bellile	715-542-3535 715-362-7513	YMCA Multi-purpose room, Rhinelander	1st Wed 6-8 beginning in Oct. (no mtgs. Dec/Jan)
Vilas	Jackie Baldwin	715-542-3535	Northland Pines Middle School, Eagle River	2nd Tues, 6-8 PM (no mtgs. Dec/Jan)
Vilas	Jackie Baldwin	715-542-3535	Arbor Vitae-Woodruff Elementary School, Arbor Vitae	3rd Wed, 6-8 PM (no mtgs. Dec/Jan)
Forest	Alberta Hatmaker	715-478-5965	Call for time and place	4th Monday

### Western Region

La Crosse	Ann Hager	608-784-4657	Varies – call or e-mail Ann at WFTLAX@aol.com for location	2nd & 4th Sat, 10 AM (no mtgs. Jun/Aug)
Monroe/Vernon	Ann Hager	608-784-4657	Varies – call or e-mail Ann at WFTLAX@aol.com for location	3rd Tues, 11 AM
Trempealeau	Ann Hager	608-784-4657	Varies – call or e-mail Ann at WFTLAX@aol.com for location	Varies
Eau Claire/ Chippewa	Chris Richardson	715-839-7903	Call or e-mail Chris at Christine8752@hotmail.com	3rd Sat, 9 AM

### Southeastern/Milwaukee Region

Kenosha	Ginger Fobart	262-652-3031	St. Mary's Lutheran Church, Kenosha	2nd Sat, 10 AM - Noon
Kenosha	Ginger Fobart	262-652-3031	Kenosha Job Center on Sheridan Road	6:30 once a month on a Wed. eve. Call for date. Childcare available.
Waukesha	Kathryn Franke	262-646-4455	First Baptist Church 247 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha	3rd Wed, 6:30-8 PM
Jefferson	Amy Schmidt	920-563-4715	Group is forming; call for time and place	

### Central Region

Waukeshara	Don Sittig	920-787-5120	Varies according to parents needs	Call for time and place
Waupaca/Outagamie	Tina Swinford Lori Prah	920-982-6469 920-982-6143	New London Family Medical Center, Main Entrance	1st Thurs, 6:30 PM

# Conferences *and* Workshops

**Sept 27-28 - Behavior and Inclusion Strategies for Home, School and Community.**

Eau Claire. Dr. Paula Kluth and Maria Bird-West Wheeler present. spectrumtrainingsystems@yahoo.com; 920-882-0332.

**Oct 5 - 7 Wisconsin Family Based Services Association: The Power of Healing Work.**

Pewaukee, Country Springs Hotel and Waterpark. Geared to professionals, but parents may participate. Contact John Rasmussen, 262-548-7640; email: jrasmussen@waukeshacounty.gov.

**Oct 12 - "You're Going to Love This Kid!" Educating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Inclusive Schools**

Waukesha Co Technical College Education Center, Pewaukee, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Presented by Paula Kluth, Ph.D. for the Autism society of SE Wisc. Registration deadline 10/7. An Evening Session just for parents at 7-8:30 p.m. 414-427-9345; assew@assew.org.

**Oct 21-22 - Fall Northwoods Adoption Retreat/Conference**

Luther Park, Chetek, WI. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is the focus. Call Pam Hawkins at 1-888-8446 or 1-800-227-3002.

**Oct 31-Nov 1 - Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services Training Conference**

"Breaking New Ground." Eau Claire, Ramada Inn. www.uwsp.edu/extension/conferences.

**Oct 26 - Individualizing Preschool Inclusion: Needs Assessment and Intervention with Robin McWilliam**

Wisconsin Dells, Wintergreen Resort. Sponsored by the Wisconsin DPI & CESA #1. Birth to 6 families and child-serving professionals. Oct 1 registration deadline \$55. klemley@cesa1.k12.wi.us; FAX 262-787-9501.

**Oct 26 - Social Skills Training for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

Marriott Madison West. Dr. Jim Loomis presenting. www.MapleLeafCenter.com; 802-446-3601 to register.

**Oct 27 - Asperger's Training As it Relates to Employment**

Wausau, North Central Health Care. Susan Stokes presents a half day training (8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.). Call Ava Gray at 715-848-3485 to register.

**Oct 27-29 International Conference on ADHD (Pre Conference Institutes Oct 25-26).**

Dallas, TX Hyatt Regency Dallas Hotel. Call 301-306-7070; www.chadd.org; or email conference@chadd.org.

**Nov 5-6 - WFT Certified Volunteer Training - FREE**

Comfort Suites, Stevens Point. Participants must apply. Only for current WFT volunteers or parents who wish to make a commitment to support other families who have children with emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders. Registration deadline is Oct 14. Call WFT office at 800-422-7145 or email joanm@wifamilyties.org to request brochure and application form.

**Nov 7 & 8 - David Pitonyak We Can Do This! Positive Approaches in Supporting People with Difficult Behaviors**

Milwaukee, Hyatt Regency. Questions regarding program: Marcie Brost at brostmm@dhfs.state.wi.us; Registration: Fil Clissa at fil@tds.net

**Nov 9- 12 - International TASH Conference - The Heart of TASH: 30 Years and Still Beating Strong**

Milwaukee, Midwest Airlines Center. 300 breakout sessions with an emphasis on inclusion, positive approaches, family support and much more. Call 800-482-8274 or 410-828-8274; www.tash.org

**Nov 18-20 - Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health**

17 Annual Conference: Transforming Systems Through Youth and Family Leadership. Washington DC, Renaissance Hotel. For information, go to www.ffcmh.org or contact the WFT office.

**March 14 & 15, 2006 - Open Minds: Implications of Brain Research on the Juvenile Justice System Conference**

Madison, Sheraton Inn. Jalaundrie@wccf.org or wpaget@wccf.org; 608-284-0580, ext 303.

**May 4 & 5, 2006 - Circles of Life Conference**

Wisconsin's Annual Conference for Families of Children With Disabilities and the Professionals Who Support Them. Stevens Point, Country Springs Hotel (formerly Holiday Inn) www.wfv.org/circle/. Questions? Call 608-266-8276.

*"If I can stop  
one heart  
from breaking,  
I shall not  
live in vain."*

- Emily Dickinson

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# family ties

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*Wisconsin Family Ties (WFT) is a statewide organization run by families for families that include children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders. An Equal Opportunity Employer, WFT is funded by individuals, corporations, grants, and an allocation from Community Shares of Wisconsin. Contributions to WFT are tax deductible.*

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Check here to update address. Correct name and address in space above and fax to 608.267.6801 or email changes to info@wifamilyties.org

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■ Joan Maynard, *Information & Referral Coordinator*

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