



Making Connections

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CENTER ON DISABILITIES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT—EDK 293

Idaho Family

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FAB Making a Difference in Reg. 2	2
My Voice, My Choice in ID	2
Assistive Tech in School	2
IPUL Conference Info	3
Family Support & Self Determination	3
Idaho FS Policy Council Position	3
Events Around Idaho	4

What's New with Assistive Tech?

Exciting things are happening in Idaho for people and families who need Assistive Technology (AT)! Many people work together to develop programs that put the technology into the hands that need it. To learn more about these and other ways to access AT in Idaho, contact the Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) through their website: www.idahoat.org or call (800) 432-8324 v/ttd.

WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECH?

Assistive tech (AT) includes any item or piece of equipment that increases, maintains, or improves the functional ability of individuals with disabilities, such as: walkers, adaptive computer hardware and software, reachers, and homemade or commercial devices. Some families have created devices or tools that help their family members because it can be tough to find used or refurbished devices—and some devices can be rather expensive to buy new. You can find tons of info on AT online and in print. For a guide on how families can learn more about AT, check out:

The Family Center on Technology and Disability.

You can order a print or CD version of their guide in English or Spanish by calling (202) 884-8068 or visit them online at:

www.fctd.info

MORE AT RESOURCES:

United Cerebral Palsy of Idaho

Supporting all people with disabilities in their efforts to discover, obtain, and use AT. Check them out at: www.ucp.org/ucp_local.cfm/66 or call: (888) 289-3259.



Save the Date!!

Tools for Life 2007—March 5-6, '07
Boise, Idaho

The Family Support 360 Project encourages everyone who is interested in supporting individuals with disabilities as they transition from school to life beyond. Secondary & post-secondary teachers, providers, job developers, therapists, & especially STUDENTS and their families—this conference is for you.

We heard from many families that the conference last year was great.

The opportunity for kids to learn from each other and have fun together was wonderful for all!

We thank the sponsors for putting on this tremendous conference!

ACCESS IS GETTING EASIER!

The Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) will be helping Idahoans break down a number of barriers to getting the AT they need. Through the Reutilization Program, IATP will work with state agencies, Centers for Independent Living, and community & faith-based organizations to increase the availability of AT for Idahoans with disabilities through establishing systems that identify, store, refurbish, and disseminate equipment to those with the greatest need. AT swaps or low-cost exchanges are already in place; however, storing and tracking inventory is a big challenge. The Reutilization Program is being developed as we speak, but you can contact the IATP or watch for more details as they come available in the Spring at:

Centers for Independent Living Online, you can learn more at:

www.lincidaho.org

Or call: (208) 336-3335 (voice/TTY)

MORE AT RESOURCES:

Idaho Family Support 360

We encourage families who have created their own AT devices to share what they have learned with other families. Through our website, families are the experts! Check us out at:

www.connectingfamilies.net

Tools for Life Sponsor:
Idaho Center on Disabilities & Human Dev.
<http://www.idahocdh.org>
or call: (800) 432-8324 TTY

Tools for Life Sponsor:
Idaho Department of Education
<http://www.http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/>
or call: (800) 432-4601

Tools for Life Sponsor:
Idaho AT Project—Univ. of Idaho
<http://www.idahoat.org>
Or call (800) 432-8324 TTY



Region II - Lewiston Center

For more information on what is available through the Resource Center, call us at 888-746-2655 or email jills@uidaho.edu



It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power.

— Alan Cohen
Author of Chicken Soup
for the Soul Series



FAB Reaching Out to Families in Reg. 2

The Family Advisory Board has really been busy over the summer. To date, they have applied for and received multiple grants to help reach more families in Region 2. We know that family members who experience disabilities often get the most information from other families who have gone through similar experiences. FAB found a way to partner with other community members in Region 2 to help take information about resources to families—where they are in their own communities.

If you would like information about how FAB could help your community, contact the Region 2 Family Resource Center at (888) 746-2655 or via email jills@uidaho.edu.

If you are reading this from Region 2 and want to know more about FAB or how to become involved, don't hesitate to contact the Idaho Family Support 360 Project.

More exciting news from Family Support 360: Soon we will be announcing a new Resource Center

in another Region of the state. We would like to thank the many people who are helping to make this next Resource Center a reality: the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, our Family Support Policy Council, and the families of Region 2.

They, in particular, have helped us see what resources and supports should look like! Thanks to them and a big thank you to FAB!

Lewiston Resource Center: (888) 746-2655

Self Determination Becomes Reality in Idaho

Idaho has worked very hard to bring the My Voice, My Choice Self Directed Community Supports Waiver to life. Adults with disabilities who are eligible and qualify for the DD Waiver, may soon be able to choose the My Voice, My Choice option - where community-based supports are the key.

Right now, Pocatello, Moscow, and Boise are the first to offer this option. There, teams from the Self-Advocate Leadership Network and the Department of Health & Welfare are working together to reach

potential participants as well as to find skilled people to become Support Brokers - one key to the My Voice, My Choice option. The other keys:

- ◆ FREEDOM: planning your own life.
- ◆ CONTROL: over Medicaid dollars.
- ◆ SUPPORT: to be involved in your community as much as you choose.
- ◆ RESPONSIBILITY: for choices and decisions you make.

Individuals with disabilities benefit from a strong team of professional

and natural supports - such as family members, friends, and neighbors. Working together, they develop a plan for supports that work for the individual. For more info:

www.selfdirection.idaho.gov
Support Brokers: can download a job description at the website above, or call Mellie at H&W at (208) 287-1169

Self-Advocate Leadership Network: contact the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities online at www.icdd.idaho.gov or call (800) 544-2433.

More on Assistive Tech in Schools!

Sometimes it is really hard to know what kinds of assistive technology might help our kids or family members. We get used to the struggle because we don't know where to go for help. That is where the Idaho Assistive Technology Project can help.

In cooperation with the State Department of Education, the IATP provides technical assistance to school districts AT NO COST. In 2005-06, this meant 41 school-based assessments were completed. That is an increase from

28 assessments in 2004-05.

One of the key areas that the IATP helped districts with involved communication. Other areas included computer access, reading/writing, cause and effect, adaptive recreation, and listening.

The IATP coordinates with skilled Assistive Technology Practitioners (ATP's) around the state. The ATP's look at the student, the environment, and tasks through observation and input from IEP

team members.

If you would like more information about school-based assessments, contact Nora Jehn at (800) 432-8324 or email her at noraj@uidaho.edu.

As someone who has needed help with AT ideas, these no cost assessments are an incredible resource. If you or someone you know would benefit from an assessment, pass on the info to other families as well as your IEP team.

Idaho Parents Unlimited Conference is Coming!

Mark your calendars for the upcoming IPUL Conference: March 15th & 16th, in Boise, Idaho at the Red Lion Downtowner Hotel. Past conferences have provided many learning opportunities for families.

Scholarships again are available for parents. You can learn about scholarships, registration, and more by contacting IPUL by phone at (800) 242-4785 or visit them online at www.ipulidaho.org.

You can help families in your area by letting them know about the conference and that assistance is available for families who might not be able to afford to attend. Contact Family Support 360 for additional

information on help with costs as well.

IPUL has placed a call for presenters. They have several slots available for presentations that are disability, child, or education related. Presentations should be of interest to parents and families of people with disabilities including infant/toddler, school-aged, and transitional or young adults.

To be a presenter at this year's conference, contact IPUL directly or download a proposal form at:

www.ipulidaho.org.

Your proposal must be in no later than December 15th, 2006.



For more on this great conference opportunity, call IPUL at (800) 242-4785 or visit them online at www.ipulidaho.org



Families & Self Determination - submitted by Jill Smith

The ideas of family support and self-determination for adults with disabilities are sometimes considered opposite perspectives. But the Idaho Family Support 360 Project considers them important supports for each other. With the My Voice, My Choice Waiver option now being implemented in Pocatello, Moscow, and Boise, we thought it was a good time to share our Concept Statement that was developed by the Idaho Family Support Policy Council.

As a parent of a teenager who requires unique and almost constant support, I understand the concerns that many people have when it comes to imagining him

making his own choices and living independently. It is important, however, to remember that all parents want fulfilling, meaningful lives for their children - with or without disabilities. Children grow up and often continue to need our help, our advice, and our support. It is no different for my son. Self-determination does not remove a child from being a member of the family.

Family members, or those an adult considers family, can be some of the most important team members to participate in the My Voice, My Choice planning process. Safety and acceptable risks are real considerations that are part of any support plan.

If you are a family member of an adult who is considering learning more about self determination and the My Voice, My Choice Waiver option, I would encourage you to learn as much as you can before you make a decision for your child based on fear or apprehension.

As my son continues on his path towards adulthood, I will strive to learn what kinds of supports will lead to the life that he would choose. I do not believe my opinion is the only one out there, if you would like to share your thoughts on this important subject, contact jills@uidaho.edu or (800) 393-7290.



Family Support & Self Determination:

People with developmental disabilities report that their parents, or other family members, are often the key to self determination. The support of family members can be essential to a person's independence and self worth.

In some cases, however, parents can be overprotective or may retain too much control over the choices of their adult children with disabilities. When this happens, self determination can be more difficult to achieve.

Family Support services for families of adults with disabilities should not be used as a substitute for individual supports which foster independence and self determination. Family supports should never be used to increase dependence of adults with disabilities on family members or to increase the control exercised over adults by their parents.

Family support services can be very valuable in maintaining and nurturing close, healthy relationships between adults with disabilities and their families of origin or with their spouse and children. By supporting these family relationships, family support assistance can play a key role in fostering greater self determination and increasing meaningful choices for adults with disabilities.

— The Idaho Family Support Policy Council



CENTER ON DISABILITIES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Disability & Pop Culture:

Epilepsy Awareness Campaign: Amy Lee, lead singer of Evanescence, is leading the charge to raise epilepsy awareness in November—Epilepsy Month. Learn more at the national Epilepsy Foundation site.
www.epilepsyfoundation.org

The Young & The Restless: Speaking of Epilepsy, Victor Newman - popular character for decades - has recently been diagnosed with temporal lobe seizures. He has undergone surgery, takes medicine, and has an assistance dog. In another storyline, Devon - a college student who recently recovered from Meningitis - has acquired total deafness. The show has incorporated adaptive technology, interpreters, and Devon's family is exploring Cochlear Implants - the pro's and the con's.

More on Radio, Film, TV: Josh Blue, 2006 winner of NBC's Last Comic Standing, has a ton of great comedy available at You Tube www.youtube.com and at his website http://joshblue.com/index_lo.html

National Public Radio (NPR) - Beyond Affliction, The Disability History Project: <http://www.npr.org/programs/disability/>

Designed for teachers, this site reviews films with themes about or characters with disabilities. <http://www.disabilityfilms.co.uk/>

For those of you with the BBC in your cable package, check out some of the shows having great characters with disabilities. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Disability & the Arts: The Nat'l Arts & Disability Ctr, for info on art and careers in art, thru the University of CA, LA: <http://nadc.ucla.edu/>

VSA arts - Nat'l website: <http://www.vsarts.org/>
Idaho VSA website: <http://www.ipulidaho.org/vsa/index.html>

How can you get involved
with Family Support 360?

The Idaho Family Support 360 Project is dedicated to strengthening the current family support system in the State of Idaho. The 20+ member Policy Council for the Project consists of community partners, agencies, individuals with a disability, family members who have a child with a disability, and advocacy groups.

For more information about our Project, the Policy Council, or how to become involved with family support resources in Idaho contact:
jills@uidaho.edu
208-659-1643
800-393-7290

