Connecting

Spring 2013

vol. 18, no. 1

Athletics for All

Federal guidance issued to schools: increase access to sports

A storm of reactions—reflecting both joy and dismay—erupted in response to a federal announcement regarding inclusion of students with disabilities in school sports. What changes students see may ultimately be decided by courts.

Many parents want their children to participate in sports. Schools and health professionals often laud benefits of participation in athletics — fitness, socialization, character development.

Some parents of children with disabilities who have joined school sports teams report positive experiences. They describe welcoming programs and caring coaches eager to help kids be included. One mom whose daughter with a disability joined the swim team said, “It was an ideal, beautiful thing. I did not anticipate it turning out as well as it did.”

Other families have encountered less welcoming responses from competitive athletic programs. Some report being discouraged from letting their child try out for a team. Some have seen their child’s success in a sport spawn a backlash as competition became more intense. In

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Maureen jokes that her son has always been a surprise starting with the day she and her husband learned their third child was on the way.

Conor arrived four weeks early (surprise!) Shortly after making his debut, he introduced them to a new word—Trisomy 21. Referring to the triplication of the 21st chromosome, Trisomy 21 is commonly known as Down syndrome. “Little did we know that was just the first of many things Conor would teach us,” she said with the characteristic unflappable cheerfulness that has come to be her approach to “surprises”.

More surprises included learning to deal with feeding issues, seizures, behavior challenges, and sibling issues. With the job of parenting a child with special needs, some of the specialized on-the-job training she received helped prepare her for a career assisting other parents. She has learned much about navigating a variety of systems including special education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Arizona Long Term Care Services (ALTCS) and behavioral health (surprise).

“Understanding that participation in the education and health care systems requires the knowledge that there are certain steps that need to be followed,” she explained. “Teamwork is important, and learning the steps to the ‘dance’ has helped us waltz a bit more smoothly through the process of advocating for our child with special needs.”

For more information about our staff, go to http://www.raisingspecialkids.org/about-us/ourstaff.aspx
2009, a student with hearing impairment filed a legal complaint against the Arizona Athletic Association (AIA) after her interpreter, who was relaying the score in sign language and aiding in communication, was removed during a tournament at the request of the opposing team’s coach.

A report from the General Accounting Office that found inadequate inclusion of students with disabilities in sports teams spurred a response from the U.S. Department of Education. The Department issued a letter in January containing guidance on the responsibilities public schools have to provide opportunities for participation in extracurricular athletics. Reaction in the media included cries of protest about costs and feasibility. These were matched by triumphant statements of accomplishment predicting sweeping changes. One advocate claimed, “This is a landmark moment for students with disabilities. This will do for students with disabilities what Title IX did for women.” Title IX led to major changes in the structure and budgets of school athletics programs to open sports opportunities for girls.

While this is a positive development for hopeful athletes who have disabilities, it is important to recognize the guidance is not new policy. It is an attempt to clarify existing federal law including the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which protect access to appropriate public education for students with disabilities.

Access to sports that are more flexible in admitting participants, like track and swimming, may be the first to become more welcoming. But questions arise for students wanting access to “cut sports” that limit who can play, such as football. The guidance states, “Schools may require a level of skill or ability for participation in a competitive program or activity; equal opportunity does not mean, for example, that every student with a disability is guaranteed a spot on an athletic team for which other students must try out.”

The letter asserts that schools must make reasonable modifications and provide aids and services that are necessary to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in sports programs, unless the school district can show that doing so would be a fundamental alteration to its program. This reflects language in IDEA, which states schools "must ensure that each child with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the child’s IEP Team to be appropriate and necessary for the child to participate in nonacademic settings." And "Nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities may include counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the public agency,..."

Development of separate teams is also addressed: “Students with disabilities who cannot participate in the school district’s existing extracurricular athletics program—even with reasonable modifications or aids and services—should still have an equal opportunity to receive the benefits of extracurricular athletics...a school district should offer students with disabilities opportunities for athletic activities that are separate or different from those offered to students without disabilities...for example disability-specific teams for sports such as wheelchair tennis or wheelchair basketball.” If there are not enough participants to field teams for individual schools, the Department suggests remedies such as establishing teams at a district or regional level, or mixing male and female athletes on teams.

“Participation in sports gives kids the opportunity to be social, make friends, or physically develop muscle groups that sometimes are difficult to engage. It also gives kids with special needs a place. All children, no matter what age, race, physical or cognitive ability, need to feel accepted and need to be part of a team or part of a group all working together. Sports give kids opportunities while building confidence and life skills that they will carry for the rest of their lives.”

— Jessica Klein, PT, DPT, c/NDT

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A principle point in the guidance emphasizes the need for an individualized approach for each student. A clear message is sent that schools should not make assumptions about a student’s needs or abilities based solely on a diagnosis or what was done in the past for a different student with a similar condition.

In essence, the federal government is reminding schools that all students must have equal access to opportunities to develop health, fitness, leadership, socialization, self-discipline, teamwork skills, and all benefits that result from participating in athletics. For many students, including those with disabilities, that may mean access to participating in school sports.

“My experience eight to nine years ago was our son was able to be a team manager for the regular education high school soccer team. They really did include him as they gave him some real jobs to do and not just the water boy, although he did that too. His teammates were so happy to have him on the team, they insisted on him getting a letter, which he still wears proudly on a real letterman’s jacket.”

— Art Gode, Parent

The Race of His Life

By: Christopher Bowden

My wife signed our son up for the track team. He was going to participate on a sports team with the typical kids at his school.

Practices were a bit difficult, but the coach was a big help, and students began to encourage Joshua to be part of the team.

At his first meet, Joshua was signed up for shot put and the 100-meter dash. He had a good team of supporters on his side—family members, teachers and school administrators, and the other kids.

The 100-meter boy’s race was called to order, and Joshua had to hustle across the field. When the last group was called, Joshua took his spot on the starting line. He made many attempts to get set in the blocks, but he was determined to get his feet in place. Joshua was ready far in advance. His feet were set; his hands were down; his back was arched way up in the air. He did not have good form, but to me he looked just great.

It took some time, waiting and waiting. Joshua stayed in position, and the excitement was building. BANG, the gun shot and off went the race. All the other boys took off like jackrabbits and left Joshua in their dust. I noticed that Joshua had a smile on his face.

As he reached the half way point, all the other boys were finished, but the excitement for Joshua was growing and growing as he continued to run his own race. There was a contagious enthusiasm running down the track. As Joshua passed people, they suddenly got up and cheered for him. By the time he crossed the finish line every person in that area was cheering, yelling “Go Joshua Go Joshua Go!” The kids were jumping up and down for my son, Joshua. Joshua ran the race of his life and he was a true part of the team.

It was important for Joshua to be part of the team, for other kids to accept him, for parents and teacher to show enthusiasm for Joshua. It was one of Joshua’s proudest moments, as well as his Mom’s and Dad’s proudest moment.

It was awesome. Something very important happened that day — PEOPLE CARED!
When Jenifer arrived home from China with her newly adopted 19-month old daughter, she felt a mix of emotions. Amid the joy of cuddling her new child in her arms and relief at having completed the journey, she felt reasonably confident about being able to meet the needs Maddie would have with a diagnosis of club foot.

It was a shock when four years later she learned that difficulties Maddie was experiencing were due to polio contracted prior to the adoption. Her expectations for her family’s future were changed.

Jenifer struggled to navigate the complex maze of health resources to get Maddie the care she needed from specialists in numerous medical disciplines. “Although we have seen some brilliant and compassionate health care providers, the way our health care system is structured, there is seldom anyone who can help us integrate the complex and sometimes conflicting information we receive. As a result, I have had to become a medical case manager of sorts, a role I find both stressful and unbelievably time-consuming, especially when I really just want to focus on being a mom.”

Today Maddie uses a wheelchair and wears braces on her legs. Finding a way to incorporate fitness and other benefits of athletic activity into her daily routine was a challenge. Jenifer approached Raising Special Kids for assistance. “They helped me find a wonderful pediatric physical therapist who is consulting with Maddie’s school to help integrate her into physical education classes with her peers,” she said. “In addition, they referred us to a wonderful athletic organization called Arizona Disabled Sports, which has allowed Maddie to participate in competitive archery, track, field, and swimming.”

Maddie’s 11-year old brother, who was born with a treatable but rare metabolic condition, loves baseball. Jenifer is now learning to navigate the demands of an active sports life of two siblings.
Register online raisingspecialkids.org or call 602-242-4366 or 800-237-3007. Our office is a fragrance-free environment. Please avoid wearing fragrances.

No Cost Workshops & Training

IFSP Basics
For parents of children birth to 3. Learn the basics of the process for developing an Individualized Family Service Plan.
4/25/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C
6/29/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

Positive Behavior Support
Training on effective techniques for behavior management.
3/26/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C
4/13/13 10:00 - 12:00 noon C
5/3/13, 1:00 – 3:00 pm S**
5/16/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C
6/11/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C

Understanding 504
Learn about the rules and regulations of a 504 Plan and how it differs from the IEP (IDEA).
4/20/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C
3/26/13 5:30 – 7:00 pm N

Parent/Professional Collaboration
Techniques for effective advocacy. What to ask, how to ask for it.
3/26/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C
6/29/13 (Summer School for Parents) C
7/20/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

IEP Basics
Learn about the purpose of IEPs, parents' role in the process, and how to prepare for meetings.
4/20/13, 10:00 - 12:00 noon C
5/2/13, 6:00 – 8:00 pm C
6/29/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

Advanced IEP Training
Receive an in-depth view of the IEP and strategies to help maximize the potential of each student. (Recommended: First attend IEP Basics.)
4/25/13, 6:00 - 8:00 pm C

The Journey to Adulthood
Provide parents with information about physical, emotional and social changes that adolescence and puberty bring to every child.
5/18/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C

Getting and Keeping the First Job
Assist young adults and parents with identifying the importance of employment for youth with disabilities and special needs.
3/9/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C
3/26/13 7:00 – 8:30 pm N
7/20/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

High School Transition
Learn how the transition plan in a student's IEP in high school can prepare for higher education, employment, and life in the community. Resources discussed.
3/9/13 10:00 - 12:00 noon C
5/18/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C
7/20/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

Bully-Free Environments
Learn how to recognize bullying, respond effectively, and build positive solutions.
3/19/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C
5/18/13 10:00 - 12:00 noon C

**Miller-Gold Links Library
9640 E Golf Links Rd
Tucson, AZ 85730

Guardianship
Turning 18, What’s Next?
Making the decision; understanding the process. Learn what guardianship involves before your teen turns 18. You will also learn about alternatives to guardianship.
4/13/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C
5/18/13 10:00 - 12:00 noon C
6/11/13 6:00 - 8:00 pm C
7/20/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

Organizing Your Child’s Records
Bring your child’s special education, ISP, therapy and medical records to this “make and take” session to create your own filing system.
3/9/13 10:00 - 12:00 noon

Functional Outcomes
Helps parents identify goals for their child’s IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) or ISP (Individual Service Plan). Learn how to work with therapists and providers to support your child’s developmental progress.
3/9/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C
6/29/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

Turning 3, What’s Next?
AzEIP to Preschool Transition
Learn how to transition your child from AzEIP services to preschool services provided by the school district.
6/15/13 10:15 – 12:00 noon S

IDEA: What You Need to Know
Learn about the law that guarantees a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities and the role of the parents in special education.
6/15/13 3:00 – 5:00 pm S

Summer School for Parents
See page 9 for details.

Times are marked C, S, or N
Workshop Locations
(Alternate sites marked with *)

Central Arizona (C)
Disability Empowerment Center, 5025 E. Washington St., #204, Phoenix, AZ 85034

Southern Arizona (S)
400 W. Congress St. #158
Tucson, AZ 85701
520-441-4007

Northern Arizona (N)
Flagstaff, AZ
Call for locations
928-523-4870

Organizing Your Child’s Records
Bring your child’s special education, ISP, therapy and medical records to this “make and take” session to create your own filing system.
3/9/13 10:00 - 12:00 noon

Functional Outcomes
Helps parents identify goals for their child’s IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) or ISP (Individual Service Plan). Learn how to work with therapists and providers to support your child’s developmental progress.
3/9/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm C
6/29/13 (Summer School for Parents) C

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6/15/13 3:00 – 5:00 pm S

Summer School for Parents
See page 9 for details.
Al cumplir los 18 años, ¿qué sigue?
Tutela: Tomando la Decisión y Entendiendo el Proceso
Aprenda lo que la Tutela implica y sus alternativas antes de que su adolescente cumpla los 18 años de edad.
3/4/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día
5/13/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día
7/20/13 EVP

El Comportamiento Positivo
El vínculo entre las familias las intervenciones y el apoyo conductual positivo es muy importante.
3/15/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día
4/19/13 9:00 - 11:00 am

Conceptos Básicos del IEP
Aprender acerca del propósito del IEP a través de una visión general del documento y reunión.
4/8/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día
6/29/13 EVP

Conceptos Básicos del IFSP
Para padres de niños de 0 a 3 años de edad. Aprenda los pasos básicos del proceso para desarrollar un plan familiar de servicios individualizado.
6/29/13 EVP

¿Es su Hijo Blanco de Burlas?
Estrategias de Intervención para Padres de Niños con Discapacidades.
*Una forma de abuso en la escuela a través de la intimidación, tiranía y aislamiento.
5/6/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día

Transición de Escuela Secundaria (High School)
Aprenda como el plan de transición en el IEP de su estudiante de Escuela Secundaria (High School) puede prepararlo para una educación superior, empleo, vida en la comunidad y recursos disponibles.
3/8/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día
7/20/13 EVP

Organizando los archivos de sus niños
Aprenda modos efectivos para organizar sus archivos. Los materiales son proveídos gratuitamente.
3/15/13 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Destrezas para ser un Padre Defensor Eficaz
Usted aprenderá:
1) Qué es ser defensor 2) Cómo mejorar sus destrezas de Abogación 3) Cómo hacer una contribución significativa
6/29/13 EVP
7/20/13 EVP

Familias Resistentes
La estructura más básica para una relación de familia saludable, la habilidad de volver de un trauma o una situación difícil.
4/22/13 10:00 - 12:00 medio día

Adquiriendo y Conservando el Primer Trabajo
Taller diseñado para ayudar a las familias con estrategias que pueden utilizar los jóvenes con discapacidades para mejorar sus posibilidades de empleo.
7/20/13 EVP

Resultados Funcionales
Ayuda a padres a identificar objetivos para el Plan Familiar Individualizado de Servicios (IFSP) o el Plan Individualizado de Servicios (ISP) de su niño. Aprenda cómo trabajar con terapeutas y proveedores para apoyar el progreso del desarrollo de su hijo.
6/29/13 EVP

Southern Arizona Workshops
Offered in Conjunction with the Parent Information Network

Participation in the IEP Process
Provides an overview of the IEP; who should participate in the IEP team; how parents can prepare for the IEP; how to handle disputes.
4/26/13 1:30 – 3:30 pm*

Disability Categories under IDEA
This training describes all 13 disability categories under IDEA. Each category is discussed along with some hands-on simulations.
6/15/13 1:00 – 3:00 pm***

Preschool to Kindergarten Transition
Learn eligibility differences and strategies for an effective transition into school age services.
4/26/13 11:00 – 1:00 pm*

Sensory Processing Training
An interactive presentation about sensory systems along with simulations and low-tech solutions.
5/3/13 10:30 – 12:30 pm**

Parents as Partners
Effective IEP Team Skills
Learn why it is important to learn appropriate advocacy skills.
6/15/13 8:00 – 10:00 am***

*Woods Library
3455 N First Avenue
Tucson, AZ  85719

**Miller-Gold Links Library**
9640 E Golf Links Rd
Tucson, AZ  85730

***Arizona Dept. of Education
400 W Congress St Room #158
Tucson, AZ  85701
Keeping Kids Healthy

Handy Resources

brightfuturesforfamilies.org
Valuable information about child development and what to expect, from infancy through adolescence
Helps families form partnerships with their providers
Empowers families to advocate for the health care needs of their children
Encourages families to help their children gradually assume responsibility for their own health care

www.azdhs.gov/phs/immun/iapcoor1.htm
Where/how to get immunizations for your child

www.choosemyplate.gov
Great information on nutrition and activity levels to keep children healthy. Here is a sample of the great information for families.

Some types of physical activity are especially beneficial:

• Aerobic activities make you breathe harder and make your heart beat faster. For moderate activities, you can talk while you do them, but you can’t sing. For vigorous activities, you can only say a few words without stopping to catch your breath.

• Muscle-strengthening activities make your muscles stronger. These include activities like push-ups and lifting weights. It is important to work all the different parts of the body - your legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders, and arms.

• Bone-strengthening activities make your bones stronger. Activities, like jumping, are especially important for children and adolescents. These activities produce a force on the bones that promotes bone growth and strength.

• Balance and stretching activities enhance physical stability and flexibility, which reduces risk of injuries. Examples are gentle stretching, dancing, yoga, martial arts, and t’ai chi.
Family Involvement Survey
Your Participation Counts

As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ’04), the Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) section is required to report how well schools facilitate parent involvement in order to improve services and results for children with disabilities.

Parent involvement has been shown to be an important factor in outcomes for children. This data is gathered from parents of children with disabilities through the Parent Involvement Survey.

You can help influence how services are delivered to children in special education in your school or district by participating in the survey during your school’s designated year.

Not every school participates every year. When your school is participating in the survey, it will distribute a user code to each family of a child in special education. The surveys can be filled out online or as a paper hard copy.

Results of the 25-question survey are reported on the Arizona Department of Education Exceptional Student Services website. Questions address the following topics: Home/School Partnerships, Communication, Family Support, or School Climate. More information is available online at http://bit.ly/WPEytK.

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**Summer School for Parents**
**Two Saturdays: June 29th & July 20th, 8 am to 4:15 pm**

*Disability Empowerment Center*
The Nina Mason Pulliam Conference Center, 5025 E. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85034
Workshops will be presented in English and Spanish.

**June 29**
- IFSP Basics 8:00 – 9:45 am
- Functional Outcomes 10:00 – 11:45 am
- IEP Basics 12:30 – 2:30 pm
- Parent Professional Collaboration 2:45 – 4:15 pm

**July 20**
- High School Transition 8:00 – 9:45 am
- Getting and Keeping the First Job 10:00 – 11:45 am
- Parent Professional Collaboration 12:45 – 2:30 pm
- Guardianship 2:45 – 4:15 pm

Lunch provided. No child care.
Space is limited, please register by contacting Raising Special Kids at 602-242-4366 or online at www.raisingspecialkids.org.

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**Escuela de Verano para Padres**
**Dos sábados: Junio 29 y Julio 20, 8:00 am a 4:15 pm**

*Disability Empowerment Center*
El Centro de Conferencias de Nina Mason Pulliam, 5025 E. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85034
Los talleres se presentarán en inglés y español.

**El 29 de junio**
- Conceptos Básicos del IFSP 8:00 – 9:45 am
- Resultados Funcionales 10:00 – 11:45 am
- Conceptos Básicos del IEP 12:30 – 2:30 pm
- Destrezas para Ser un Padre Defensor Eficaz 2:45 – 4:15 pm

**El 20 de julio**
- Transición de la Escuela Secundaria 8:00 – 9:45 am
- Adquiriendo y Conservando el Primer Trabajo 10:00 – 11:45 am
- Destrezas para Ser un Padre Defensor Eficaz 12:30 – 2:30 pm
- Tutela: Al Cumplir los 18 Años, ¿Qué sigue? 2:45 – 4:15 pm

Almuerzo será proporcionado. No habrá cuidado de niños.
Regístrese en línea en www.raisingspecialkids.org o llame a 602-242-4366.
Deporte Para Todos
Directriz federal enviada a las escuelas: que se incremente el acceso al deporte

Un anuncio federal relativo a la inclusión de estudiantes con discapacidades en actividades deportivas escolares desató un aluvión de reacciones, tanto de satisfacción como de rechazo. En última instancia, los tribunales podrían decidir los cambios que vean los estudiantes.

Muchos padres quieren que sus hijos participen en deportes. Con frecuencia, escuelas y profesionales de la salud alaban los beneficios de la participación en actividades deportivas: forma física, socialización, desarrollo del carácter.

Los padres de algunos niños con discapacidades que han participado en equipos deportivos escolares relatan experiencias positivas. Describen programas agradables y entrenadores cariñosos siempre dispuestos a ayudar a los niños a integrarse. La madre de una niña con discapacidades que se unió al equipo de natación dijo que: “fue algo ideal y hermoso. No esperaba que resultara tan bien”.

Otras familias han encontrado respuestas menos agradables de actividades deportivas competitivas. Señalan que intentaron convencerlos de que no dejaran a sus hijos hacer pruebas de selección para entrar a un equipo o que vieron como el éxito de su hijo en un deporte desencadenó una respuesta negativa cuando aumentó la intensidad de la competición. En 2009, una estudiante con deficiencias auditivas presentó una demanda contra la Asociación de Deportes de Arizona (AIA, por sus siglas en inglés) después de que su intérprete de señas, quien le estaba reportando el resultado y ayudándola a comunicarse, fuese retirado de un torneo a petición del entrenador del equipo rival.

Un informe de la Oficina General de Contabilidad, según el cual no habría una inclusión adecuada de los estudiantes con discapacidades en equipos deportivos, generó una respuesta por parte del Departamento de Educación de los EE. UU. Este Departamento envió una comunicación en enero con directrices sobre la responsabilidad que tienen las escuelas públicas de ofrecer oportunidades para que se participe en actividades deportivas extracurriculares. La reacción en los medios incluyó gritos de protesta por los costos y la viabilidad y declaraciones de satisfacción augurando grandes cambios. De hecho, un defensor de la medida señaló: “este es un momento histórico para los estudiantes con discapacidades. Esto hará por los estudiantes con discapacidades lo que el Título IX hizo por las mujeres”. El Título IX generó cambios importantes en la estructura y presupuestos de los programas deportivos escolares para abrir oportunidades deportivas para las niñas.

Aunque esta acción es positiva para atletas prometedores con discapacidades, es importante destacar que la directriz no corresponde a una nueva norma, sino a un documento con el que se intenta aclarar la ley federal existente, incluyendo la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973 (Sección 504) y la Ley para la Educación de Personas con Discapacidades (Ley IDEA), que garantizan el acceso a educación pública apropiada para estudiantes con discapacidades.

El acceso a deportes más flexibles en cuanto a la admisión de participantes,
como los de pista y la natación, podría ser de los primeros en experimentar cambios positivos. Las interrogantes surgen cuando los estudiantes quieren acceder a deportes que tienen un número limitado de participantes, como el fútbol. La directriz señala lo siguiente: “Las escuelas pueden exigir un nivel de destreza o habilidad para participar en un programa o actividad competitiva; la igualdad de oportunidades no significa, por ejemplo, que todo estudiante con discapacidad tiene un puesto garantizado en un equipo deportivo para el que otros estudiantes deben superar pruebas de selección”.

En la comunicación se afirma que las escuelas deben hacer modificaciones razonables y proporcionar la ayuda y los servicios que sean necesarios para garantizar igualdad de oportunidades en lo que respecta a la participación en programas deportivos, salvo que el distrito escolar pueda demostrar que hacerlo alteraría en gran medida su programa. Lo anterior concuerda con lo establecido en la Ley IDEA, que señala que las escuelas “deben garantizar que cada niño con discapacidad tenga las ayudas y servicios que sean necesarios para garantizar igualdad de oportunidades en lo que respecta a la participación en programas deportivos, salvo que el distrito escolar pueda demostrar que hacerlo alteraría en gran medida su programa”.

En un punto fundamental de la directriz se destaca la necesidad de un enfoque individualizado para cada estudiante. Se envía un mensaje claro: las escuelas no deberían hacer suposiciones sobre las necesidades o habilidades de un estudiante con base únicamente en un diagnóstico o en lo que se hizo en el pasado con un estudiante con una condición similar.

En esencia, el gobierno federal le está recordando a las escuelas que todos los estudiantes deben tener igualdad de acceso en lo que respecta a oportunidades para desarrollar la salud, la forma física, el liderazgo, la socialización, la auto-disciplina, las habilidades para el trabajo en equipo y todos los beneficios derivados de la práctica de actividades deportivas. Para muchos estudiantes, incluidos aquellos con discapacidades, eso supone participar en deportes escolares.
Chuck Smith Family
Meet One of Our Families

Chuck and Nancy Smith began supporting Raising Special Kids (then known as Pilot Parents) more than 30 years ago because a close friend was involved with the organization. The Smiths had no idea when they donated the group’s first computer that their lives and the organization would be entwined indefinitely.

In 1984, Nancy gave birth to the couple’s second set of twins, a pair of girls who brought the number of children to eight. Within a few months of the girls’ arrival, Nancy, a nurse, suspected something was wrong with one of the girls. Their daughter Courtney was first diagnosed with cerebral palsy, then later with severe cognitive disabilities.

Chuck and Nancy both agree that when their daughter was young, things were much easier. “But as Courtney began to grow up,” said Chuck, “that’s when Raising Special Kids made a huge impact.”

The Smiths relied on Raising Special Kids to help them learn all they could about understanding and navigating the special education system, Courtney’s rights, and the Individual Education Plan process.

They decided early on that they wanted Courtney to have the fullest life possible and they wanted her to be visible in their community, so they enrolled her in their neighborhood elementary school, where her brothers and sisters attended class. Armed with the knowledge and information acquired from Raising Special Kids, they worked with the school on an IEP for the first year. “Raising Special Kids helped make us secure in knowing what was right for Courtney,” said Chuck. “They also helped us manage our expectations,” Nancy added. The school, Chuck remembers, seemed surprised that Courtney did not come with a book of instructions.

After Courtney’s first year at the neighborhood school, the administration wanted to move her to a self-contained classroom at a distant elementary school until she could develop language skills. “They didn’t seem to understand that Courtney was never going to talk,” said Nancy. The issue had reached the point of Due Process with ensuing litigation when the Smiths attended Courtney’s second IEP meeting.

When the Smiths arrived for the meeting, they found 12 school administrators, special education experts and a psychologist. Chuck took one look at the room, squeezed Nancy’s hand and stated “This isn’t a fair fight, they don’t have a chance.” Said Nancy, “Raising Special Kids gave us the education and confidence we needed to effectively argue our case.”

Courtney attended a neighboring elementary school; she remained in a typical classroom, with an aide, and continued to be part of the community.

As Courtney got older, Chuck and Nancy, and their children, became advocates for people with special needs, volunteering for Raising Special Kids; serving on state boards and giving presentations at workshops and conferences. Chuck was a Raising Special Kids Board member for seven years, serving as Board Chairman for two years.

The Smiths remain staunch supporters and advocates, giving generously of their time, treasure and talents to ensure other families have access to Raising Special Kids and the same chance to achieve the best possible outcomes for their children with special health needs.
Collaborative Therapies Conference
For parents of children up to 5 years old
Saturday, May 4, 2013
8:30 am - 2 pm
Registration at 8:00 am
Phoenix Children’s Hospital
Mel Cohen Conference Center
Rosenberg Children’s Medical Plaza
1920 E Cambridge Ave., Phoenix, AZ  85006

Developmental Pediatrician
Speech & Language Pathologist
Physical Therapist
Occupational Therapist
Parent and Early Intervention Policy Maker

A panel of experienced parents who have “been there” will share experiences.

No Charge for Families  |  Breakfast and Lunch Included
No Child Care  |  Spanish Interpretation Available

To register please call  (602) 242-4366 or register on line at raisingspecialkids.org.

Thank You to Our Donors
November 2012 - January 2013

10 Minutes for Talking
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Brian Aleksa
Nadine Alfonso
Mary Allen, MD
Nancy Allen
Linda Anderson
Margaret Anderson
Lori Angel Comp
Martin Aronson
Ellen Bobby
Martti Biao
Susan Baker
Pam Baldwin
Paula & James Banahan
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Karin Smith
Robin Smith
Vance Smith
Special Olympics
Michael Stanley
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Please let us know if you’d prefer to have your name listed in a different manner.
Call 602-242-4366 or 800-237-3007 or email kellyw1@raisingspecialkids.org.
Advocacy at the Capitol
As a member of the Arizona Disability Advocacy Coalition, Raising Special Kids joined advocates from across the state to learn about the legislative process and share their views on the issues.

Collaborative Therapies Conference - Tucson
Connie Canant and Monica Winters, Physical Therapists from Children’s Clinics for Rehabilitative Services, join Kathy Gray-Mangerson, Parent Information Specialist, in presenting to families at the conference in Tucson.

Parent Panel at ASU
Students in Speech Therapy at Arizona State University learned directly from parents about families’ daily challenges in raising children with special needs. Parent Panels are arranged through a partnership between Raising Special Kids and college instructors to provide first-hand information directly to students.

We gratefully acknowledge support of statewide trainings
Sierra Vista USD
Cochise County Rehabilitation Srvs Admin
AIRES in Sierra Vista
Marie Arbizo, DDD Employment Specialist
AZ Center for Disability Law
Children’s Clinics for Rehabilitative Services
Kristy Thornton, AzEIP
GeeCee Larrington, OT
Dr. Sydney Rice, Medical Dir of Children’s Clinics
Jennifer Allen & Patti Sorkow, SLP, Children’s Clinics
Monica Winters & Connie Canant, PT, Children’s Clinics
Special Olympics
Challenger Baseball – Tucson
10 Minutes for Talking
Emily Center at Phoenix Children’s Hospital
Steve & Kathy Freeman
Frances Fierros
Crecer Con Amor
Haide Beltron
SANDS
Alta Gasque, Division of Developmental Disabilities
Correction:

In the last issue we described Christopher Tiffany’s appointment to Arizona’s Special Education Advisory Panel inaccurately. It is an appointment by the Arizona State Board of Education.
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A Special Day for Special Kids!

An event for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs
Saturday, March 23, 2013
10 am - 2 pm
McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park, Scottsdale
(located on the southeast corner of Indian Bend and Scottsdale Roads in Scottsdale)
FREE train rides, carnival activities, carousel rides, games, activity booths, clowns, face painting, petting zoo, plus lots of food and ice cream...all for FREE!

Questions? Contact Raising Special Kids (En Español) 602-242-4366 or 800-237-3007.

Visit www.azgives.org to start helping families by donating to Raising Special Kids.