



Families Helping Families

Region 7

Serving: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Webster



Seeing the Whole Child

By: Renee Cho

It's so easy for us to get caught up in managing their disabilities, problems or issues and forget to look at the whole child.

The other day, I was riding the train into New York City, enjoying the peace and quiet, when a mother and her 5- or 6-year-old son entered the car. She sat right across from me, talking to a friend on the hands-free cell phone which was strapped to her arm. She waved her son to sit across the aisle and to play with his Game Boy. For a half-hour, this mom totally ignored her son while continuing her conversation with a friend about getting special services for him, how to get special services, who else had gotten special services, etc. When the child tried to get her attention, she'd wave him back to his Game Boy. Despite the fact that it was incredibly rude to be conducting this conversation in the otherwise quiet car where people were trying to read and work, I was interested in the dynamic between mother and son. When she finally got off the phone, the boy came over to talk to her. She immediately pointed out that he had said a word incorrectly, "No honey, 'target' has a 'g' in it. You have to say the 'g'. 'Ge, ge, ge.' Now say 'target' with the 'g' 10 times." And then she coerced him into saying 'target' 10 times. I felt so sorry for him; another woman sitting nearby rolled her eyes at me. Granted, this mom was trying to get special services for her son, but who knows how much more good it might have done had she sat by him on the train during the ride and had a warm and playful conversation about what they saw out the window? Instead, it was obvious that, in her eyes, he'd been reduced to the sum of his disabilities.

But this forgetting to look at the whole child can happen to all of us. When my older son was a junior in high school and getting ready to apply to college, I focused totally on his grades, his SAT scores, his tutoring, his college applications. College was the main topic of any conversation we had. He finally broke down under the pressure and accused me of being more interested in his college career than he was, and certainly more interested in getting him into a good college than anything else. I had to plead guilty.

Of course it's important to make sure your child gets special services if he needs them, or keeps his grades up, finishes her summer reading, gets on the basketball team, has tutoring on the side, or gets into a good college. However, the precious years of childhood fly by, and if we forget to see our children as whole people, more than just the sum of our ambitions for them, we may not be doing them as much good as we think we are. In the long run, it's just as necessary to share the excitement with your child when he sees an unusual house out the train window as it is to lobby for extra help, just as important to give a warm hug when your kid says something funny as it is to ask if he's done his homework, and just as crucial to comfort your teen when her boyfriend breaks up with her as it is to find her an SAT tutor.

Kids need to know that we accept them for who they are their quirks and special qualities. And we need to let them know that we see them as whole people, because being seen completely is being loved.

Who?	What?	When?	Where?
A family directed resource center for all individuals with disabilities and their families	Providing information, referral, and support through a network of services and assistance throughout Region 7	8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday Drop-ins are always welcome!	2620 Centenary Boulevard Building 2, Suite 250 Shreveport, LA 71104 318.226.4541 877.226.4541 fhfregion7@bellsouth.net www.fhfregion7.com

The Ken Vince Memorial Award

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs hosted the Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Awards Ceremony at the Old State Capitol December 10, 2008. The GOLD Awards annually honor individuals in the disability community statewide for their outstanding achievements.

The First Lady said, "Each recipient of the Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities Award has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to their fellow citizens and to community service. It is Louisianians like these that are working tirelessly each day to improve lives of others, and for that Bobby and I are grateful. Congratulations to each winner – these awards serve to symbolize every life that you have impacted and every life that you will continue to touch."

Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Brandon Burris said, "The GOLD Awards are a special tribute to those who have selflessly served Louisiana's disability community. The GOLD Award winners have achieved remarkable accomplishments and strived to make a positive impact in the lives of others. This celebration not only acknowledges the honors of the award recipients and nominees, but inspires all Louisiana citizens to strive to build a better Louisiana."

Our very own Duane K. Ebarb was the recipient of the 2008 Ken Vince Memorial Award. Ken Vince was a rehabilitation counselor who touched the lives of hundreds of people in Louisiana through his dedication of advocating for persons with disabilities and by dispelling public misinformation regarding disability issues. His commitment to the disability issues generated a greater public awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities and fostered a greater participation in society for the disability community. The Ken Vince Memorial Award is presented to a man with disabilities, recognized for his leadership abilities and achievements as a disability advocate. Duane is currently the president of the Shreveport Mayor's Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities and is the Region 7 Louisiana Citizens for Action Now (LaCAN) Leader with the Louisiana Development Disabilities Council. Great Job Duane Ebarb keep up the work!!



Stipend Money Available!

Do you want to learn more about your child's disability? Have you heard of a new technique that might help him learn? Families Helping Families Region 7 might be able to help you get this knowledge.

There are stipend dollars available for individuals with disabilities and their families who live in the parishes of Region 7. Please apply for these funds if you would like to attend a conference, convention or other activity that will increase your knowledge.

To apply, you may call 1.877.226.4541 or email: fhfregion7@bellsouth.net.

Please have the following information handy when calling to ask for funding or include these details in any email:

- 1) When
- 2) Where
- 3) Registration Cost
- 4) How much you are able to contribute

This is a great opportunity to attend a state, regional or national event that otherwise might not be possible!

Sweet and Short Overview of an IEP

This article was reprinted from <http://research.nichcy.org>



An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. That's why the process of developing this vital document is of great interest and importance to educators, administrators, and families alike. Here's a crash course on the IEP.

What's the IEP's purpose?

The IEP has two general purposes: to set reasonable learning goals for a child and to state the services that the school district will provide for the child. The IEP is developed jointly by the school system, the parents of the child, and the student (when appropriate).

Who develops the IEP?

The IEP is developed by a team of individuals that includes key school staff and the child's parents. The team meets, reviews the assessment information available about the child, and designs an educational program to address the child's educational needs that result from his or her disability.

When is the IEP developed?

An IEP meeting must be held within 30 calendar days after it is determined, through a full and individual evaluation, that a child has one of the disabilities listed in IDEA and needs special education and related services. A child's IEP must also be reviewed at least annually thereafter to determine whether the annual goals are being achieved and must be revised as appropriate.

What's in an IEP?

Each child's IEP must contain specific information, as listed within IDEA, our nation's special education law. This includes (but is not limited to):

- the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, describing how the child is currently doing in school and how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum
- annual goals for the child, meaning what parents and the school team think he or she can reasonably accomplish in a year
- the special education and related services to be provided to the child, including supplementary aids and services (such as a communication device) and changes to the program or supports for school personnel
- how much of the school day the child will be educated separately from nondisabled children or not participate in extracurricular or other nonacademic activities such as lunch or clubs
- how (and if) the child is to participate in state and district-wide assessments, including what modifications to tests the child needs
- when services and modifications will begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last
- how school personnel will measure the child's progress toward the annual goals.

Can students be involved in developing their own IEPs?

Yes, they certainly can be! IDEA actually requires that the student be invited to any IEP meeting where transition services will be discussed. These are services designed to help the student plan for his or her transition to adulthood and life after high school.

For more articles on IEP's, Transition and IDEA please visit <http://research.nichhy.org>

Abuse and Neglect of Adults with Disabilities and Seniors

The purpose of this article is to answer some questions about abuse and neglect of seniors or people with disabilities. It may also help family, friends and caregivers of older adults or persons with disabilities. Abuse is any act or behavior which harms the person. There are different forms of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** is any act of violence or rough treatment that causes injury or discomfort, such as slapping, pushing or hitting. It may include over or under-medicating and the use of physical restraints.
- **Emotional Abuse** is any act which lowers a person's dignity and self-worth. This may include regularly yelling at, criticizing, threatening, humiliating or isolating the elderly or disabled person.
- **Sexual Abuse** is any unwanted sexual act. This may include unwanted touching, kissing or fondling.
- **Financial Abuse** is any act involving the misuse of the elderly or disabled person's money or property without their full knowledge and consent. This includes theft of money, pension checks or property as well as misuse of a power of attorney.
- **Neglect** happens when a caregiver does not properly care for and attend to an elderly or disabled person who cannot fully look after him or herself. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional. It may include withholding food, personal hygiene care, health services, clothing, help or companionship. Neglect may also be self-neglect. This happens when a person refuses delays or is unable to arrange for his or her own care and attention.

Indicators of Physical Abuse: fear of caregivers; unexplained injuries; delay in seeking treatment; over-sedation; unusual patterns of bruises; history of changing doctors; scalp injuries



Indicators of Emotional Abuse: low self-esteem; appears nervous around caregiver; confused; suicidal; avoids eye contact with caregiver; fear of abandonment; lethargic/withdrawn

Indicators of Sexual Abuse: unusual fear of person; stained, torn or bloody clothes; pain and bruising; change in sexual behavior; pregnancy; sexually transmitted diseases

Indicators of Financial Abuse: unexplained missing items; failure to pay bills; inaccurate knowledge of finances; suddenly changing a will; going without affordable necessities; unusual withdrawals from bank account

Indicators of Neglect: malnourishment; wandering without supervision; lack of heat/electricity; unkempt appearance; missing dentures, glasses, hearing aids; skin conditions or pressure sores; untreated medical problems; alcohol or medication abuse

Most victims of abuse and neglect feel depressed and anxious. Although no one should jump to conclusions, do take all of these indicators seriously.

PREVENTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Tips for Family Members or Friends: Learn to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect. Discuss any signs of abuse or neglect. Suggest counseling for the family and tell them about support services. If necessary, offer advice on financial matters. Try to reduce the stress in the family. Find ways to limit the person's isolation. Keep close ties with older or disabled relatives and friends.

Tips for People at Risk: Keep up your relationships with friends. Learn to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect. Report any abusive activity. Keep your money in a bank. Keep your valuables in a safety deposit box. Know your financial position; Deposit your own pension or disability checks or arrange for direct deposit. Join a senior's group or service club. Understand your rights as much as possible. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Tips for the Community: Offer counseling services and self-help groups for abused adults and their caregivers. Make sure that available programs and services are publicized. Educate the public on the aging process and disabilities. Create a network of support and advocacy for seniors and disabled adults and their families.

ADHD: What Parents Should Know

This article was reprinted from www.familydoctors.org

What is ADHD?

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the name of a group of behaviors found in many children and adults. People who have ADHD have trouble paying attention in school, at home or at work. They may be much more active and/or impulsive than what is usual for their age. These behaviors contribute to significant problems in relationships, learning and behavior. For this reason, children who have ADHD are sometimes seen as being "difficult" or as having behavior problems.



ADHD is common, affecting 4% to 12% of school-age children. It's more common in boys than in girls. You may be more familiar with the term attention deficit disorder (ADD). This disorder was renamed in 1994 by the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

What are the symptoms of ADHD?

The child with ADHD who is inattentive will have 6 or more of the following symptoms:

- Has difficulty following instructions
- Has difficulty keeping attention on work or play activities at school and at home
- Loses things needed for activities at school and at home
- Appears not to listen
- Doesn't pay close attention to details
- Seems disorganized
- Has trouble with tasks that require planning ahead
- Forgets things
- Is easily distracted

The child with ADHD who is hyperactive/impulsive will have at least 6 of the following symptoms:

- Fidgety
- Runs or climbs inappropriately
- Can't play quietly
- Blurts out answers
- Interrupts people
- Can't stay in seat

- Talks too much
- Is always on the go
- Has trouble waiting his or her turn

What should I do if I think my child has ADHD?

Talk with your child's doctor. A diagnosis of ADHD can be made only by getting information about your child's behavior from several people who know your child. Your doctor will ask you questions and may want to get information from your child's teachers or anyone else who is familiar with your child's behavior. Your doctor may have forms or checklists that you and your child's teacher can fill out. This will help you and your doctor compare your child's behavior with other children's behavior.

Your doctor will do vision and hearing tests if these tests haven't been done recently.

Your doctor may recommend trying medicine to see if it helps control your child's hyperactive behavior. A trial of medicine alone cannot be the basis for diagnosing ADHD. However, it can be an important part of evaluating your child if ADHD is suspected.

It might be hard for your doctor to tell if your child has ADHD. Many children who have ADHD aren't hyperactive in the doctor's office. For this reason, your doctor may want your child to see someone who specializes in helping children who have behavior problems, such as a psychologist.

What causes ADHD?

Children who have ADHD do not make enough chemicals in key areas in the brain that are responsible for organizing thought. Without enough of these chemicals, the organizing centers of the brain don't work well. This causes the symptoms in children who have ADHD. Research shows that ADHD is more common in children who have close relatives with the disorder. Recent research also links smoking and other substance abuse during pregnancy to ADHD.

Things that *don't* cause ADHD:

- Bad parenting (though a disorganized home life and school environment can make symptoms worse)
- Too much sugar
- Too little sugar
- Aspartame (brand name: Nutrasweet)
- Food additives or colorings
- Food allergies or other allergies
- Lack of vitamins
- Fluorescent lights
- Too much TV
- Video games

What can I do to help my child?

A team effort, with parents, teachers and doctors working together, is the best way to help your child. Children who have ADHD tend to need more structure and clearer expectations. Some children benefit from counseling or from structured therapy. Families may benefit from talking with a specialist in managing ADHD-related behavior and learning problems. Medicine also helps many children. Talk with your doctor about what treatments he or she recommends.

What medicines are used to treat ADHD?

Some of the medicines for ADHD are methylphenidate (some brand names: Ritalin, Concerta), dextroamphetamine (brand name: Dexedrine), pemoline (brand name: Cylert), atomoxetine (Strattera), and a combination drug called Adderall. These medicines improve attention and concentration, and decrease impulsive and overactive behaviors. Other medicines can also be used to treat ADHD.

What can I do at home to help my child?

Children who have ADHD may be difficult to parent. They may have trouble understanding directions. Children who are in a constant state of activity can be challenging for adults. You may need to change your home life a bit to help your child.

Here are some things you can do to help:

- **Make a schedule.** Set specific times for waking up, eating, playing, doing homework, doing chores, watching TV or playing video games, and going to bed. Post the schedule where your child will always see it. Explain any changes to the routine in advance.
- **Make simple house rules.** It's important to explain what will happen when the rules are obeyed and when they are broken. Write down the rules and the results of not following them.
- **Make sure your directions are understood.** Get your child's attention and look directly into his or her eyes. Then tell your child in a clear, calm voice specifically what you want. Keep directions simple and short. Ask your child to repeat the directions back to you.
- **Reward good behavior.** Congratulate your child when he or she completes each step of a task.
- **Make sure your child is supervised all the time.** Because they are impulsive, children who have ADHD may need more adult supervision than other children their age.
- **Watch your child around his or her friends.** It's sometimes hard for children who have ADHD to learn social skills. Reward good play behaviors.
- **Set a homework routine.** Pick a regular place for doing homework, away from distractions such as other people, TV and video games. Break homework time into small parts and have breaks.
- **Focus on effort, not grades.** Reward your child when he or she tries to finish school work, not just for good grades. You can give extra rewards for earning better grades.
- **Talk with your child's teachers.** Find out how your child is doing at school--in class, at playtime, at lunchtime. Ask for daily or weekly progress notes from the teacher.

Will my child outgrow ADHD?

We used to think children would "grow out" of ADHD. We now know that is not true for most children. Symptoms of ADHD often get better as children grow older and learn to adjust. Hyperactivity usually stops in the late teenage years. But about half of children who have ADHD continue to be easily distracted, have mood swings, hot tempers and are unable to complete tasks. Children who have loving, supportive parents who work together with school staff; mental health workers and their doctor have the best chance of becoming well-adjusted adults.



A Note from the Director

Families Helping Families Region 7 and LaCAN would like to say "Thank You" to all of those who attended our Christmas Party. A special "Thanks" goes out to the following listed below for their donations and time. Because of their kind hearts and giving spirit our Christmas Party was a SUCCESS.

Sandra "Sam" Beech
Rep. Henry Burns – House Seat 9
Christ United Methodist Church
Yolanda Clark
Duane Ebarb
Ronnie Ebarb
Laura Head
David Legan
Men's Prayer Breakfast Group
Liz Swaine – Calumette Shreveport Lubricants & Wax's, LLC
United Methodist Women



Why should you Volunteer

Volunteering gives you an opportunity to make a difference to people's lives in your community. You can use your skills and experience to help and enrich the local community. Part of being a great volunteer means you love what you're doing. Find something that you're passionate about or something that inspires you, and then find a need in your community. There are dozens of reasons why you should volunteer - you just need to find the one that feels right.

Great Reasons to Volunteer

- Help others
- Make a difference
- Find purpose
- Enjoy a meaningful conversation
- Connect with your community
- Feel involved
- Contribute to a cause that you care about
- Use your skills in a productive way
- Develop new skills
- Meet new people
- Explore new areas of interest
- Meet good people
- Impress yourself
- Expand your horizons
- Get out of the house
- Make new friends
- Feel better about yourself

Families Helping Families Region 7 is currently looking for volunteers. If you are interested please contact Chanel Jackson at 318.226.4541 or email her at fhfregion7.com.



A Note from the LaCAN Leader

Hi LaCAN Members,

I wanted to wish each of you and your family a Happy New Year. It has been a busy past three months and I just wanted to let you know what I have been doing. Most of my time has been taken up visiting our Legislators in Region 7. Along with Chanel and Sandra "Sam" Beech we visited 15 Legislators to explain how OCDD is trying to reduce the cost of the NOW waiver for the State. This is one of the biggest issues we will face in the 2009 Legislative Session. I also did some of the visit without Chanel and Sam here is a list of the Legislators I meet face to face:

Senator Lydia Jackson

Rep. James Morris

Rep. Jane Smith

Senator Sherri Smith
Cheek

Rep. Roy Burrell

Rep. Henry Burns

Senator Buddy Shaw

Rep. Patrick Williams

Rep. Jean Doerge

Senator Robert Adley

Rep. Wayne Waddell

Rep. Ricky Nowlin

Senator Gerald Long

Rep. Thomas Carmody

Rep. Richard Burford

I plan to put on some workshops after the New Year on Legislative procedures and how the police and courts treat with people with disabilities. Just let me know what issues you would like to be addressed and I will try and set up a work shop. Please feel free to contact me at 226-4541 or 688-4830.

I look forward to another awesome year!

Your LaCAN Leader,

Duane Ebarb

Louisiana Indian Education Association

Louisiana Indian Education Association is looking for 7th - 12th grade American Indian students with disabilities who are interested in participating in the 10th Anniversary Indian Youth Leadership Experience during the weekend of March 13 - 15, 2009 in Bunkie, Louisiana. Stipends to pay the registration fee may be available for those who qualify. Contact Robbie Gray at 800-450-8108 or rgray@dhh.la.gov for more information about registration or to request special accommodations. The applications will be due some time in February.

Board of Directors

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Chanel Jackson
Executive Director

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council's Mission

To ensure all individuals with disabilities benefit from supports and opportunities in their communities so they achieve quality of life in conformance with their wishes.

Through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Congress funds and authorizes the Developmental Disabilities Council to conduct advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities. The Council's efforts are designed to promote the increased self-determination, independence, productivity, integration and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in their communities.

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is made up of people from every region of the state who are appointed by the governor to develop and implement a five year plan to address the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. Membership includes persons with developmental disabilities, parents and representatives from public and private agencies. Several members rotate off the Council each year in October and nominations for new members are always welcomed.

You may contact the DDC by calling 1.800.450.8101 or visit their website: www.laddc.org

Families Helping Families Region 7 programs and this newsletter are supported by the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.

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