

Volunteer Connections

JUNE 2014

Dear Volunteers,

School is out and summer is upon us! I hope you are enjoying the extra time with your families! I want to thank each of you for going the extra mile for the families you serve. I have talked to both parents and educators who have appreciated the professional and thoughtful way you provide support to families. A special thanks to those volunteers who continue to participate in our parent panel presentations. Sharing your parent perspective will help new educators be prepared to serve students with disabilities. I also want to thank our IEP Coaches who continue to attend conferences and trainings in an effort to remain "highly qualified."

Sincerely,

Rebecca

Rebecca Turley
Volunteer Programs Coordinator
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VOLUNTEER REPORTING:

Please take the opportunity to report any volunteer activities you've been involved in. The link below will provide you with 6 different types of activities you can report on such as:

- Direct support to families.
- Conferences and trainings.
- Helping parents with IEP related support.
- Serving on committee's that promote systems change for families who have children with disabilities.
- Outreach promotion of UPC services and events.
- Sharing your family story with educators or participating on a parent panel.

Reporting Link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Volunteer_reporting



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION GIFTS:

ALL volunteers who have provided service and have fully completed the reporting survey will receive an appreciation gift! This is our way of thanking you for your time and dedication in serving parents who have children with disabilities and telling us about it! Each gift will include its own message of appreciation. Please take the time to do your reporting so we can recognize your good works!

IEP COACH CORNER: Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A Parent Guide to Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)

Schools have many ways to help children learn and to ensure those who need additional supports are successful. The Utah Multi-Tier System of Supports (UMTSS) is one way Utah schools provide those supports.

What is the Utah Multi-Tier System of Supports (UMTSS)?

UMTSS is a multi-step process of providing instruction and support to promote the academic and behavioral success of all children. Individual children's progress is monitored and results are used to make decisions about further instruction and intervention. UMTSS is most commonly used in addressing reading, math and behavior, but it can also be used in other areas. The UMTSS process is flexible and designed by school districts to meet the needs of their student.

What does the UMTSS process look like?

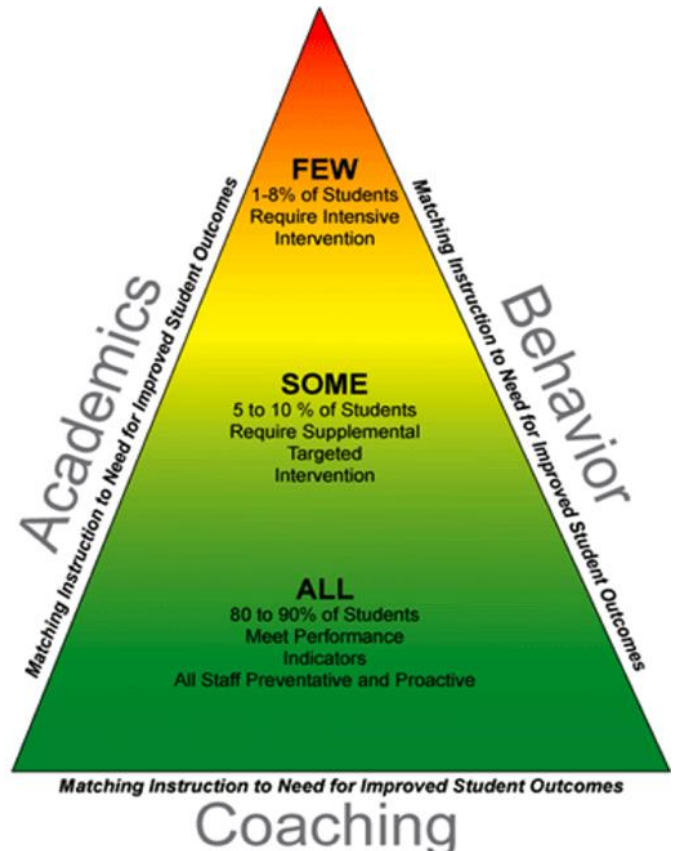
The UMTSS process has three tiers. Each tier provides differing levels of support.

Academics

- In Tier 1, all students receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom. The teacher assists all students.
- In Tier 2, the school provides supplemental instructional support, usually in small groups, to students who need additional support to what they are receiving from the general curriculum.
- In Tier 3, intense instructional support is provided to students with the greatest needs, with frequent progress monitoring.

Behavior

- In Tier 1, all students are explicitly taught positive behavioral expectations. All teachers use a consistent approach to discipline.
- In Tier 2, the school provides supplemental targeted behavioral skill interventions usually in small groups.
- In Tier 3, student centered planning is used to develop customized interventions with frequent progress monitoring.



What are the key components to the UMTSS process?

A key component to the UMTSS process is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom (Tier 1).

Another component of the UMTSS process is that the school conducts universal screenings. Universal screenings review the progress of all students; these screenings are typically given three times a year. Universal screenings help schools identify students who may need more support or other types of instruction.

As a result of universal screening, students may be identified as needing supplemental instruction (a Tier 2 level of support) in addition to the high quality instruction they are receiving in Tier I. Research based interventions are used to support students in the area of need. Research based interventions are teaching strategies or methods that have been proven to be effective in helping children be more successful with academics or behavior. There are many different kinds of interventions and instruction that can happen in the classroom, outside the classroom or in small groups.

Another key component to the UMTSS process is progress monitoring. Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to take a snapshot of how children are doing on a specific skill. It shows how well the intervention is working. It includes observations, tests, and other formal and informal assessments. Progress monitoring helps determine whether an intervention is successful or needs to be adjusted.

Formal guidelines for progress monitoring that detail how long a child will receive a particular intervention and how they will determine whether the intervention is helping the child should be developed by the school.

When the child meets the goals developed by the school, the intervention is no longer needed and the child continues to receive support in the general education classroom. When progress monitoring shows that a child is not responding to the intervention another approach or intervention may be tried. However, when a higher level of support is needed, children are given individualized instruction which further focuses on supporting the skills they need to be successful learners (Tier 3).

What if I think my child needs special education services?

If at any time parents believe their child has a disability/exceptionality and needs special education services, they have a right to request an evaluation for these services. In addition to the information gathered from assessments and interventions during the UMTSS process, other forms of evaluation must occur to determine if a child is eligible to receive special education services. Parent must give prior written consent before this evaluation is conducted.

What 3 tier instructional models are currently being used in Utah?

Utah's 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/3-tierread.aspx>

The Utah 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction provides a process for delivering comprehensive, quality reading instruction for all students, from Kindergarten through high school. The model is designed to provide research-based instruction and targeted interventions that lead to successful reading. The model consists of three tiers, or levels, of instruction: Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3.

Utah's 3-Tier Model of Mathematics Instruction

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/CURR/mathsec/Home/Utah3TierModelofMathematicsInstruction.aspx>

The Utah 3-Tier Model of Mathematics Instruction provides a model for delivering high-quality, comprehensive mathematics instruction for all students from kindergarten through high school.

The model includes guidance in curriculum, instruction, assessment, teacher quality, resources, scheduling, settings, and relationships with community and home.

Utah's Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions Guidelines

<http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/lrbi07-09.aspx>

Utah's Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions or LRBI Guidelines uses proactive strategies to define, teach, and support appropriate behaviors. The guidelines are based on the belief that appropriate behaviors can be taught schoolwide. A positive school environment creates a safe environment where students can focus on learning.

What questions can parents ask to learn more about how UMTSS works in their child's school?

- What curriculum is being taught in my child's classroom?
- What are the targeted interventions that my child's school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?
- What are the formal guidelines my child's school is using for progress monitoring?
- How will I be informed of the progress my child is making?
- What happens if an intervention is not working?

More information about MTSS

NEW! Utah Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (UMTSS) Topical Journal

This journal will define and discuss an educational model being used here in Utah to meet the needs of all students called the Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports (UMTSS). It is important to note that Utah previously had a similar model called Response to Intervention (RTI). Although Utah now officially calls this process the Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports, some districts and individuals may still be referring to this model as RTI. For the purposes of this journal however we will be referring to it exclusively as MTSS, UMTSS or Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports. [Click here to open PDF of the UMTSS Topical Journal](#) or from <http://www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/e-journals/>

Webinar: Reducing Bullying Using MTSS

This webinar is designed to assist parents work with their children and schools to resolve bullying situations using a multi-tiered system of support model. [Click here to view this webinar.](#)

SPECIAL INTEREST

The Power of One Parent, author unknown

"I wouldn't change my daughter for the world but I would change the world for my daughter."

As the parent of a young teenager and a daughter who has Rett Syndrome, it's easy to know why I live a crazy life. But as the saying goes, it's the world that is the problem. Change can come easily, when you know where to start, not that it always will. Recently, a lot of change came to us, overwhelming but worth it in the long run. You see, I realized that change had to start with me. I know, who has time as a special needs parent? I had to find the time and remember that "Multi-Talented" is my middle name.



Becoming active in my community was a new experience for me, having grown up in a military family and living all around the world. Recently, I had an opportunity to try out a new experience with our new hometown, a chance to make it better for both of my children and the community around us.

When we first moved here, I found that taking my daughter to the playground was challenging because she couldn't access a lot of the equipment. I called our local Recreation Department. My timing was perfect; the town was thinking of renovating and including a disability-accessible playground, but they needed community involvement. Monthly meetings were doable, so I just joined in. It was amazing to see the birth of our beautiful playground and to actually build it from scratch! I felt like I was part of the community and my daughter, too. The best part, volunteers working together for two days to build this playground, filled my eyes and my heart. We belonged and we mattered.

With that good experience under my belt, I wondered what other opportunities were out there. In looking at our town website, I was astonished to find that we have a Commission on Disability! Who are they and what do they do? My emotions were stirred when I called and chatted with the sweetest man ever. It was like we were two long-lost friends. I attended the next meeting and gave my ideas as a parent, not a professional, on simple ways to accommodate people with disabilities in community activities. The members were kind and in awe of my knowledge of resources and information. I felt like a rock star. To my surprise, the Chair asked if I would consider joining the Board. They were interested in learning ways to develop and create opportunities for people with disabilities in our community and stated they currently had no parent representation. I felt this opportunity was a great fit for me so I have a new monthly commitment and I am thrilled and honored.

So you see, change can happen unexpectedly and simply, starting with a phone call. Like my inspiring message, "changing the world for my daughter," even if it is in small baby steps; well, at least we are going in the right direction! I would encourage you to make a call, get involved in your local community, and help to make your community a place you're proud to call "HOME."

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

Annual Institute on Special Education Law

The Utah Law Conference is scheduled for August 6th and 7th at the Ogden Eccles Conference Center, 2415 Washington Blvd in Ogden. This conference is designed for administrators, educators, service providers, parents, families, and others responsible for the implementation of IDEA 2004 and the accompanying regulations. National speakers for this conference will include Melinda Jacobs, Julie Weatherly, Lenore Knudtson, Dave Richards, and Jim Gerl. **Scholarships available to interested volunteers.** For more information and to view a draft agenda go to:

<http://www.cvent.com/d/44qshb/1Q>

Dates: Wednesday, August 6 and Thursday, August 7, 2014

Location: Ogden Eccles Conference Center, 2415 Washington Blvd., Ogden, Utah

NEW WEBINARS AVAILABLE ON THE UTAH PARENT CENTER WEBSITE

Webinars are available on the Utah Parent Center website or the UPC's You Tube Channel:

<http://www.utahparentcenter.org/training/webinars/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/UtahParentCenterUPC>

Legal Solutions for Families with Disabilities

This 25 minutes video presented by Lisa Thornton, provides parents and families with children with disabilities an overview of planning and legal needs for parents including: Special Needs Trusts, Guardianship, Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, Letter of Intent and Life Care Plans.

Five Behavioral Issues with Kids with Asperger Syndrome: Why They Happen and How to Fix 'EM

The Utah Parent Center in partnership with presenter, Melissa Genaus, M.Ed are pleased to provide this 50 minute webinar discussing behavior issues for children with Asperger syndrome and related disorders. Melissa will discuss common behavior issues and strategies to change behavior, which behaviors are hard-wired and which are deliberate, and why knowing the source of behavior really does matter.

Housing for Individuals with Disabilities

Debbie Stark, Housing Coordinator for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities, presents an overview of housing options for individuals with disabilities.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Please contact me at rebeccat@utahparentcenter.org or call at (801) 272-1051 if you are interested in participating in any of the following volunteer opportunities. I would love to hear from you!

Seeking new Family to Family Support Group Leaders and/or Co-Leaders Statewide

New Network Leaders should be receiving services, on the waiting list, or in the process of determining eligibility with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD). This allows Leaders to be a resource for individuals and families using these services as well as for other organizations. Networks may have Leaders or other officers who do not meet the criteria related to DSPD. New Leaders will receive ongoing support from the Utah Parent Center and existing Network Leaders. Please contact me for more information.

Parent Panel Requests: The Utah Parent Center is asked several times a year to speak to students at the college level going into both general and special education. Our current parent panel requests come from the University of Utah and Westminster College. Volunteers who participate on the panel share information about their child with a disability and provide insights about their child's educational experience to future educators. It provides parents with a great opportunity to share what has worked well with their children and offer advice and tips on what needs to work better. The students benefit greatly from the 'parent perspective.'

IEP Coach Training: The Utah Parent Center has an ongoing need for parent volunteers who have been trained to help parents successfully go through the IEP process. If any volunteers are interested in receiving this training or know of someone who would make a good IEP Coach, please let me know. New volunteers will need to take our New Volunteer Training as a prerequisite to the IEP Coach Training and will need to fill out a New Volunteer Application. All IEP Coaches need to support parents by attending a minimum of 3 IEP meetings per year to remain active. For more information about this training program please review the following information piece: [IEP Coach Opportunity Program](#)

SPECIAL INTEREST: DISABILITY ISSUES IN THE NEWS

Feds Warn Charters on Special Education

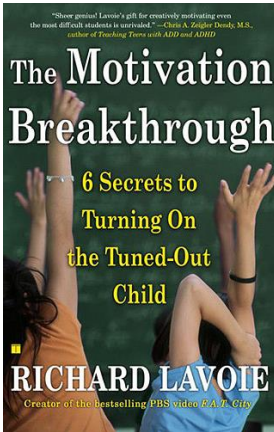
In a "Dear Colleague", letter the U.S. Department of Education said that charter schools have the same obligations as regular public schools to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in addition to other federal civil rights laws. Such responsibilities are the same whether or not charter schools receive federal funding, the Education Department guidance indicates.

Read more: <http://www.disabilitycoop.com/2014/05/15/feds-warn-charters-special/19368/>

Technology Gaining Foothold in Special Education

Special education programs are increasingly relying on tablets, apps and other technology to help students with disabilities despite scant research to support the practice.

Read more: <http://www.disabilitycoop.com/2014/06/09/technology-foothold-sped/19426/>



BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Motivation Breakthrough – 6 Secrets to Turning On the Tuned-Out Child by Richard Lavoie - Motivation is the key to learning. But very few parents and teachers have an effective arsenal of techniques at their disposal. Lavoie's practical, innovative approach begins with a quiz that helps a parent or teacher identify, using six different possible models, a child's motivational style. He then explores each motivational style in depth, presenting proven techniques that can be used in the classroom and at home to break through a child's apathy and encourage and inspire him to succeed and achieve.

CALL FOR PICTURES

The Utah Parent Center is looking for pictures of children or young adults with disabilities engaged in the following types of activities:

- Family Photos – Showcase your family including your child with a disability.
- Using assistive technology
- Participating in a community based activity.
- Showing off a talent.
- Working at a job site.
- Demonstrating a skill.
- Participating in a school based activity

The Utah Parent Center wishes to use these pictures in training and marketing materials which promote the Center's goals and objectives. All parents will be asked to fill out a media release authorizing the use of your pictures. Please e-mail all pictures and completed media release form to cassandra@utahparentcenter.org. **Media Release Form:** [Image/Media Release Form](#)

Please send me information on any event or resource you feel would be valuable to other volunteers. Don't forget your reporting!!! Thank you everyone!
Sincerely,

Rebecca Turley

Volunteer Programs Coordinator

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