

Volunteer Connections

DECEMBER 6, 2013

Dear Volunteers,

During this holiday season I want to thank so many of you who have gone the extra mile for the parents you serve. Many of you have supported parents at IEP meetings, provided consultations, directed parents to resources, helped in the legislative process, attended parent panels and increased your knowledge by attending conferences and workshops. These are just a few of the many activities I know you are actively engaged in. Your work is appreciated and the Utah Parent Center thanks you!

To be a volunteer, it takes...

- Generosity, a willingness to give your time to others
- Understanding, because their lives might be very different from your own
- Empathy, an ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and feel what they must feel
- Compassion, to truly care about making someone else's life better
- Patience, because the process doesn't always go as smoothly as it might
- Dedication, to stick with the project and see it through

You've shown these qualities and so much more. Thank you for all that you do.

Rebecca

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.

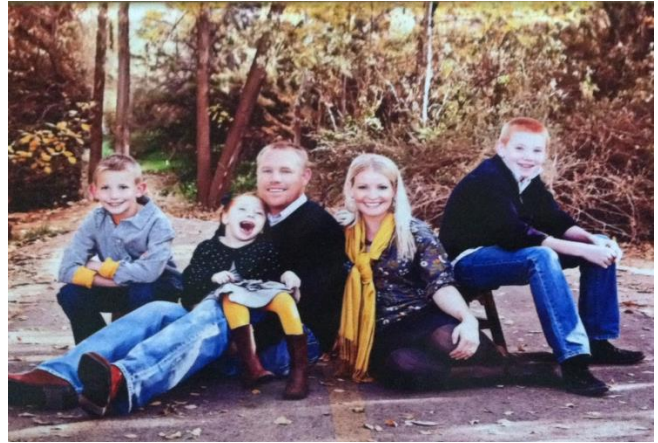
If you have participated in any of these activities, select "yes" when your activity appears on the survey. You will then be asked: When did you participate in the activity?; How much of your time was involved?; and How many people were served?

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!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

It is my pleasure to spotlight Stephanie Anderson, a Network Leader from the Washington County Family to Family Network. Stephanie has lived in St. George for almost 11 years. Her husband of 15 years, Brandon, is a partner and principal land surveyor at Rosenberg Associates. She has three children, Ethan age 12, Grant age 8 and Whitney age 5. Stephanie and her husband are currently building an accessible dream home for their family in Green Valley and hope to be moved in soon.



In 2007, Stephanie gave birth to her daughter Whitney after suffering complications from an amniotic fluid embolism. Whitney suffered a severe lack of oxygen and had seizures at birth. She stayed in the NICU for two weeks. Whitney is currently nonverbal, 100% g-tube fed, uses a wheelchair, and has a baclofen pump, an augmentive speech device, DAFO's, Botox, and a smile that lights up the room. Stephanie describes Whitney as the joy of her family. She will be starting kindergarten this fall after three years of preschool at the Washington County Preschool in Santa Clara.

Stephanie was on the Network board in Southern Utah several years ago, before Dana Ross moved to Duchesne. She has also served for many years in various church leadership positions. Stephanie started the Southern Utah Special Needs Facebook page and the monthly girls night outings for mothers of children with special needs.

Stephanie is an accomplished Leader and we are happy to have her join the Family to Family Support Group Network along with the other Washington County Board Members. I will be highlighting other Leaders from Washington County Family to Family Network in upcoming newsletters.

NEW PARENT MENTOR IN NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Do you have a child with special needs attending school in Nebo School District? Do you have questions or concerns about your child's IEP? If so, there is someone who can help you! Heidi Whittaker is a Parent Mentor with the Utah Parent Center. The Utah Parent Center has partnered with Nebo School District to provide free assistance to families of children with special education needs. Heidi also has a child receiving special education services in Nebo School District. As a Parent Mentor, Heidi can help you by:

- Providing a private consultation in-person, by e-mail or over the phone regarding questions or concerns about the special education process.
- Providing information on the IEP process and your rights and responsibilities under IDEA.
- Helping you prepare for IEP meetings and providing support during IEP meetings.
- Connecting you to resources and supports in your community.
- Providing information about upcoming events in the district and statewide.

To contact Heidi please email heidi@utahparentcenter.org or call at 801.228.8144.

IEP COACH CORNER: Transition to Adult Life **Transition Planning and the IEP**

By Robyn Chidester, Utah Parent Center Parent Consultant

Transition is change. It is passage from one stage to another. We each face many changes or transitions in life, but right now let's specifically talk about transition from school to post-school services and whatever is next for your son or daughter with disabilities.

The change from high school to the adult world can be traumatic. It is difficult when a child turns into a young adult and no longer receives school services. Our youth are changing and the systems that support them are changing. As parents and educators this transition must be anticipated and planned for. If this transition – this change – is to be "seamless" – meaning with no interruption in services – we need to help our sons and daughters decide where they want to go and what they want to do.



Some parents don't think about what will happen after school until a few months before graduation, and then they realize that "the bus won't be coming." If your child is on an IEP, then transition planning with you, your son or daughter, and the IEP Team should begin no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is 16, or younger if needed. Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that is designed to be within an outcome-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary activities in post-secondary training or education, post-secondary employment and independent living skills, when appropriate. Transition services also include courses of study designed to help the student reach his or her post-secondary goals.

When writing the IEP the Team must:

- Actively involve the student in his or her IEP development.
- Base the IEP on the student's needs, preferences, and interests.
- Define the student's desired post-secondary goals.
- Review the student's transition services such as courses of study or multi-year description of coursework, adjusting them as needed to achieve the student's desired post-secondary goals.

The written plan must also specify how different agencies will work together to provide needed services. The different public agencies can be invited to send a representative to the meeting.

Before you start the transition IEP, it is important to understand where your son or daughter wants to be in the future. Sometimes the nature of his or her disabilities makes it difficult or impossible for him or her to think through or talk about ideas and feelings.

The following suggestions may help in preparing him or her to participate more fully in developing a transition plan.

- Begin by asking simple questions. What subjects do you like in school ?
- What are your strengths and challenges?
- What job would you like to do in a few years? If the occupation is clearly beyond his or her abilities, find out the reasons why he or she is interested in a particular job. Discuss other jobs related to his or her interests which might be a better fit for his or her strengths.
- Does reaching your goal require further education or training?

For further information on transition planning see the UPC Handbook "From 'No' Where to 'Know' Where – Transition to Adult Life <http://www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/handbooks> . Also check out the Events Calendar for Transition Workshops at <http://utahparentcenter.org/upcoming-events>

If you need individual information call the Utah Parent Center and talk to a Parent Consultant at 801-272-1051.

Transition to Adult Life Video Modules

The Transition to Adult Life video is available both English and Spanish versions. The video is broken up into four modules as listed below. The module in Spanish is an overview.

[MODULE 1 : Changing Roles and Responsibilities; Parents and Youth Planning for the Future](#)

[MODULE 2 : IEP Requirements and Developing the School Transition Plan](#)

[MODULE 3 : Understanding and Accessing Adult Services](#)

[MODULE 4 : Other Transition Concerns—Medical Care, Financial Planning, and Employment](#)

[SPANISH : De 'NO' saber a donde...A 'SABER' a donde La transición de los Individuos con Incapacidades a la vida Adulta](#)

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & TRAININGS

Save the Date!

2014 Family Links Conference

Friday, February 28 and Saturday, March 1, 2014

Location: Murray High School



The Family Links Planning Committee is working to finalize the program for the upcoming conference. Please watch for more information.

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. This allows Leaders to be a resource for individuals and families using these services as well as for other organizations. A Co-Leader or other Network Officer is not required to meet these criteria. New Leaders will receive ongoing support from the Utah Parent Center and existing Network Leaders.

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: http://www.utahparentcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/IEP-Coach-Opportunity-Program_2012.pdf

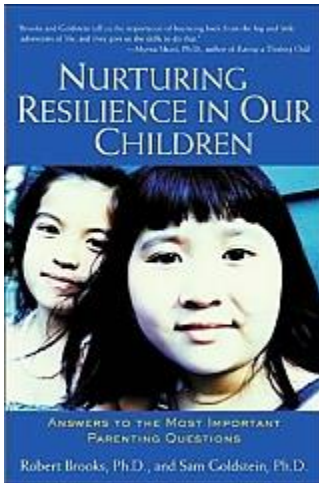
SPECIAL INTEREST: DISABILITY ISSUES IN THE NEWS

iPads Helping Kids with Autism Learn to Speak

Kids with autism may be able to learn to speak later than previously thought and researchers say that iPads could be key. Preliminary findings from a new study indicate that iPads can help children with autism acquire new language. <http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2013/11/19/ipads-autism-speak/18904/>

Parenting Style has Big Impact on Kids with Disabilities

The approach that parents take with their children who have developmental disabilities is directly tied to how cooperative and independent they become, new research suggests. In an analysis of existing studies looking at the influence of parenting on children with special needs, researchers found that when moms and dads employed so-called positive parenting, their kids exhibited greater independence, better language skills, stronger emotional expression and social interaction as well as improved temperament. <http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2012/11/16/parenting-style-big-impact/>



BOOK OF THE MONTH – Available for loan from our Lending Library

Nurturing Resilience in Our Children

by Robert Brooks, Ph.D and Sam Goldstein, Ph.D.–

This book provides answers to the most important parenting questions. You will learn how to help your children acquire the building blocks of resilience and reinforce those lessons on a day-to-day basis. When you instill resilience in your children, you give them the emotional tools they need to resolve problems and make sensible, reasoned decisions throughout their lives. The resilient child also learns how to develop self-control, build interpersonal skills, and handle challenges and frustrations more effectively. If you have questions about resilience and your child, you will find the answers in this book.

If you are interested in borrowing a copy of this book please call the Utah Parent Center at (800) 468-1160. We would be happy to mail you a copy.

TELL US YOUR STORY

The Utah Parent Center is looking for success stories from families who have been helped by the UPC. We will be using the stories and pictures we collect on our website, in marketing materials, and in training publications and resources.

- Did you call the Center for problem-solving help, resources, support, information, training, or materials?
- Did you attend one of our many workshops or the Family Links Conference?
- How did it help you? What did you learn that made a difference?

Send us a short paragraph telling your story and how the caring, competent staff of the Center helped you and your family. Be sure to include a picture (or two!) that we can use when sharing your story.

You could also video record yourself briefly explaining how the UPC helped you. Please e-mail your story, pictures and a completed media release form to cassandra@utahparentcenter.org. **Media**

Release Form: [Image/Media Release Form](#)



Like us on
Facebook

Join the Utah Parent Center on Facebook to get up-to-date information from the Center and information about activities in your area.

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
Parent Consultant and Trainer
[\(801\)272-1051](tel:(801)272-1051) / rebeccat@utahparentcenter.org