



Highlights

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All together now: Quality child care benefits everyone

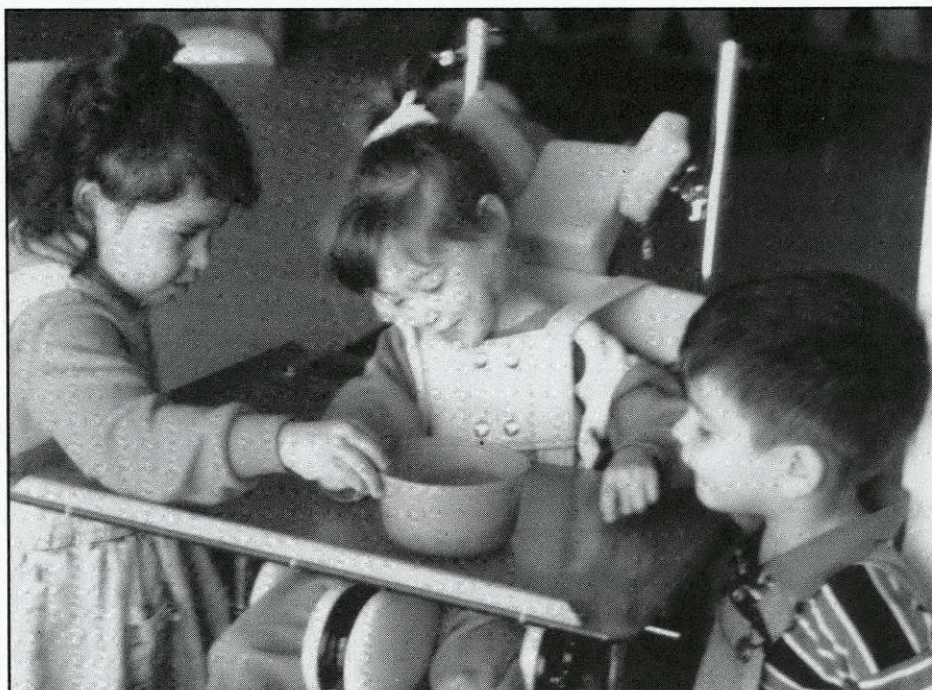
In most child care settings, children never have the opportunity to play a game, eat lunch, take a nap or participate in story time with a child who has a disability. However, kids with disabilities can be fully included in the same child care programs other children attend.

Child care providers who include children with disabilities quickly learn that many of the stereotypes don't apply. Having a disability does not mean an inability to learn, play or interact.

In the past, when parents of kids with disabilities needed child care, they could only get it as a specialized service or respite. More and more people are discovering that quality child care works for all kids. The elements of quality care are the same for children with and without disabilities. This is especially important since more parents are working outside their home.

Additionally, many more children with disabilities have the right to participate in regular child care programs as a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (See related article, page 4).

For these reasons and others, the Dependent Care Management Group received a Texas Planning Council grant in 1991 to create the Inclusive



Maranda Dopp enjoys playing with friends at Wesley Child Development Center in San Antonio. Maranda also is featured in a 14-minute video on inclusive child care that is available free from the Council.

Inside this issue:

- ❖ ADA and child care
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- ❖ 37 more Partners graduate

Child Care Project. In addition to providing training and technical assistance to providers, the project has held two conferences on inclusive child care which brought in local, state and national leaders who shared their experiences, ideas and insights.

The most common theme was that children with disabilities are first and foremost children — children who need what every other child needs — love, acceptance, nurturing and care.

One mother explained that her son, Jesse, started out in specialized care. But he seemed to be saying, "I want to be where the action is," she observed, "where kids are talking and laughing and running around and

See "Inclusive child care" page 2

Call us June 24th to comment on Draft State Plan

We need your input. The Texas Planning Council recently sent a copy of our Draft FY 1995-1997 State Plan Survey to everyone on our newsletter mailing list. Now we need input from people across the state to help us be effective in our efforts to improve the state's service system.

Please call us with your comments on the Draft State Plan on June 24th from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. CDT. Call 1-800-335-7251 or 512-483-4080 in Austin. ❖

Inclusive child care benefits all kids *Continued from page 1*

doing things three year olds do.”

And she wondered how many children are missing that opportunity.

Inclusive child care offers a place where children with disabilities can sit, play, hang out with other kids and be a part of a group, stressed Tricia Legler with the Freedom Center.

“We give kids one of two messages,” she pointed out. “We either tell them ‘You are part of this; you belong,’ or we can tell them ‘You’re different; you watch while the other kids do things.’ And if we do everything in our power to make the kids know that they belong, they will carry that through the rest of their lives.”

Inclusive child care is really not that difficult if you have willing staff who are not afraid and who don’t have preconceived ideas about children with disabilities, explained Nancy Baker with the Texas Department of Human Services. Providers need to see the child first and then the disability. And then figure out how to alter or adapt programs and get all of the children involved.

“What happens a lot of time is that they don’t see this little kid who wants to color or who really gets turned on to rock and roll music,” she explained. “They see the disability rather than the individual person.”

Teachers need to be aware of their own feelings, Gerald Shipley said. If you are worried about a child getting hurt, this can be transmitted to the other children and affect how they interact with the individual.

When we first started providing inclusive care at It’s a Small World eight years ago, Anita Cano said, none of us was trained to work with children with disabilities. “But working on a day-to-day basis, learning by trial and error...we figured out what to do.”

One of the main things they learned is that parents know their child and are available to assist staff in learning about the child’s abilities and what to do.

At first, they were concerned that they would need lots of special equipment, Cano said. But basically they used whatever they had. When they did need equipment, they went to the parents first and then to the local Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) provider or therapist for help.

The staff also was concerned that they weren’t experts on disabilities

what he does, even if that means he has to get other children to assist him. Don’t be over protective.

☐ All children benefit from an environment that celebrates and values individual differences whether these are based on culture, class, ethnicity, level of disability or some other factor.

“We give kids one of two messages. We either tell them ‘You are part of this; you belong,’ or we can tell them ‘You’re different; you watch while the other kids do things.’ And if we do everything in our power to make the kids know that they belong, they will carry that through the rest of their lives.”

and didn’t include any medical professionals. However, they didn’t find anything they couldn’t deal with and soon discovered, “It’s more important to know the child, rather than the disability.” And once again, staff went to the parents and ECI program with questions.

Children all learn from observing each other and interacting, pointed out Kathy Trimbach and Linda Kjerland with Project Dakota in Minnesota. Friendships develop their emotional resources (through fun and coping), cognitive resources (through problem solving and by learning new skills and behaviors), and social skills (through interactions and learning how to join a group).

Speakers also examined the following principles of quality child care which produce most, if not all, of what any provider needs to include a child with a disability.

☐ Give children time to adapt to their new surroundings. Most children are leaving the security of their home and family for the first time when they enter child care. People need time to adjust.

☐ Care must be individualized.

☐ If you are worried about what to do, just sit back, watch what happens and consider what is critical. For example, for a child with physical disabilities, it may be letting him take control of where he goes and

☐ Special adaptations should be done in ways that feel natural and ordinary and which do not exclude any child from the group. Most of the materials already used in child care settings can be used as is or with minimal changes.

☐ Only a few kids need a one-to-one assistant all day; others may need support only during lunch or free play. Unstructured time is often the hardest time for kids, and needs can change over time.

☐ Don’t underestimate child care staff. Follow their instincts. Teachers have wonderful skills. They have been making adaptations for years.

☐ Let kids be kids.

“Children are more alike than different,” explained Lara Lyn Aston with Hopper Primary School. “If you consider all equal and treat all equal, the kids will too.”

She also suggested using a buddy system for everyone, since everyone can use help in different areas, and answering children’s questions honestly and simply.

“Inclusion doesn’t just benefit children with disabilities,” Aston said. “It benefits all children...I feel if we can get all kids included and accepted when they are younger, we can cut discrimination when they are adults.” ♦

From the Executive Director: *All Children Belong in Families*

Hundreds of children in Texas live in nursing homes and other large congregate facilities. While many reforms are underway to improve the care that these children receive, the Council believes that this is not enough. We feel that the State must adopt a policy stating that all children belong in families and then work to make this a reality.

On May 13, 1994, the Council adopted the following Position Statement on Children and Families:

"All children belong in families. Family life gives children love, caring, nurturing, bonding and the sense of belonging and permanence that best enable children to grow, develop and thrive. Children with disabilities are no different from other children in their need for the unique benefits that come only from growing up in a permanent family relationship.

Families of children with disabilities often need supports and services to sustain family life and keep their child at home and included in the community.

Therefore, it is the position of the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities that:

1. All children can and should live in a family. All children need a family to best grow, develop and thrive. All children deserve the love, nurturing and permanency that are unique to family life.
2. Families come in many shapes, sizes and configurations. No matter its composition, a family offers a child a home and a lifelong commitment to love, belonging and permanency.
3. Families should have available the level of supports and services needed to keep children with disabilities in their own homes.
4. To be effective and beneficial, supports and services must be easy to access, family-driven, individualized, flexible to changing needs and circumstances, culturally sensitive and based on functional needs rather than categorical labels.
5. When children cannot remain in their own families, for whatever reason, they still deserve to live and grow up in a family. The first prior-

ity should be to reunite the family through the infusion of services and supports. When that is not possible and the family can remain actively involved in the child's life, the natural family should be a key participant in selecting an alternate family situation for their child, including foster families, co-parenting and adoption.

6. When families are not actively involved in their child's life, permanency planning must occur to allow the child to live in a family.

The Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities believes that when children with disabilities grow up in families, the community at large accepts the value of providing supports to children and families at home so that children remain and become participants and contributors to their communities.

The Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities believes that the state of Texas should adopt a public policy statement recognizing the value of families in children's lives and develop programs, policies and funding mechanisms that allow all children to live and grow up in a family." ♦

Materials and resources assist with inclusive child care

Are you interested in finding out more about how to include children with disabilities in a regular child care program? There is help.

■ **The Inclusive Child Care Project**, a Council grant to Dependent Care Management in San Antonio, provides training and technical support to family child care, child care centers and community resource agencies. They also have regional sites in Houston, Lubbock and San Antonio.

The project has a resource clearinghouse and library; referral services; brochures for parents and providers; a video; and a booklet for sale on adapting materials and adaptive equipment, plus a poster on adapting materials.

The 14-minute video, "ABCs of Inclusive Child Care," features children with disabilities in inclusive child

care settings in San Antonio, as well as parents, child care directors and teachers. The video moves from the initial fear and apprehension about inclusion to confidence in creating an inclusive environment and recognition of its benefits for all children.

For a free copy of "ABCs of Inclusive Child Care," write to Erma Henderson at the Texas Planning Council or call 512-483-4093.

For other materials or information, contact Nancy Hard, director of the Inclusive Child Care Project, or Mary Phillips, project coordinator. Write Dependent Care Management Group, 1405 N. Main, Suite 102, San Antonio, TX 78212 or call 1-800-332-3264 or 210-225-0276.

■ **Me Too, Texas!**, a program of The Arc of Texas, trains child care professionals on providing quality

care in inclusive settings. Topics range from making accommodations and adaptations to specialized equipment, the ADA, and building partnerships with families. For details or a training schedule, call Cheryl Ribich at 1-800-252-9729 or 512-454-6694.

■ **Child Care Management Services** (CCMS) contractors located throughout Texas can purchase child care for eligible parents through the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The program can provide adaptive equipment if required or increased funds for more staff. To be eligible, parents must work or be in job training, meet income guidelines and have children with disabilities. For more information or to get the name of the CCMS contractor in your area, contact Carol Barnes at 512-450-4164. ♦

What child care centers must do to comply with law

By Deborah Leuchovius
PACER ADA Consultant

The following article is reprinted from the *Pacesetter*, January 1993, with permission from the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER), 4826 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55417, Phone 612-827-2966.

Many questions heard at PACER related to enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act are about how the ADA affects child care providers. Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions:

Q: Are family day care providers required to comply with the ADA?

A: Yes. They may not discriminate against children with disabilities.

The portion of a home used for child care would be covered under the ADA. However, many family day care providers have expressed concern that they will be required to make major architectural alterations to their home — such as building ramps or altering bathrooms.

This is probably not the case. Family day care providers, like other child care providers, would not have to make structural alterations to their home if these are not “readily achievable.” This means without much difficulty or expense. This will always be judged in relation to the overall financial resources of a business. What would be a hardship for a family day care provider may not be considered a hardship for a facility that has more financial resources to draw on.

However, family day care providers would still be required to make modifications to policies, activities and procedures that would not be a financial hardship.

Q: Are church-operated day care centers covered by the ADA?

A: No, not by the ADA. Churches and other religious entities are exempted from having to comply with the ADA. If a child care center is operated by the church itself, the church is not required to comply with

the ADA. However, if the church leases space to a privately operated day care center, the private day care center would have to comply with ADA provisions.

Q: Can day care providers charge more for tuition for children with disabilities?

A: Under the ADA, child care providers cannot charge the family of a child with disabilities for the total

For more material on the Americans with Disabilities Act and its implications for Child Care, you can write:

☐ Child Care Law Center, 22 Second Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 or call 415-495-5498.

☐ Advocacy, Inc., 7800 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 171-E, Austin, TX or call 1-800-223-4206 or 1-800-252-9108. Ask for a copy of “Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities by Child Care Providers.” Please call between 12:30 and 5 p.m. (M,T,W,F) and 12:30 to 8 p.m. on Thursday.

costs of having to comply with the ADA. Costs must be spread out to all the families enrolled, or taken as a tax credit or tax deduction.

However, there are some exceptions. It appears that families may be charged for measures which exceed compliance with the ADA, or when a child care provider would not be required to make an accommodation or remove an architectural barrier because it would pose a financial or administrative hardship.

Q: Can a day care center refuse to accept my child with a disability because they are concerned their liability insurance rates will increase?

A: No. Department of Justice guidelines make it clear that under ADA a child care center cannot refuse to accept a child with a disability, or employ a staff person with a disability, because it fears that

its insurance company will raise its rates.

Q: What kind of accommodations would a day care center be required to make under the ADA?

A: Of course architectural modifications are the kinds of accommodations that most people think of. But there are many less expensive accommodations that meet the needs of children with disabilities.

It may mean adapting snack preparation and schedules to meet the dietary requirements of a child with diabetes, or providing games, puzzles and toys that reflect a wide range of abilities and development, or using more visual information during activities that include children with hearing impairments.

Q: Do child care centers have to accept all children with disabilities, no matter what the type or level of disability?

A: No. There are situations where child care providers can legally refuse to accept a child with a disability — if the child poses a direct threat to others, or if providing an accommodation would pose an undue hardship on the provider, or fundamentally alter the nature of the program. But each person must be considered on an individual basis.

Children with disabilities cannot be excluded just because they have a disability, or based on myths and stereotypes about the disability. Providers must make good faith efforts to consider each child individually.

The most important step is that providers and parents sit down together to discuss what the specific needs of the child are, and then see if they are able to meet those needs.

If there are costs involved in making accommodations, providers must analyze whether they would pose an undue burden (significant difficulty or expense). Providers should remember there are tax credits or accommodations, and should investigate outside funding in addition to their own resources before making a final

See “ADA” page 5

Fourth class of Partners in Policymaking graduates

The Council congratulates the 37 consumers and parents who graduated from the fourth Partners class in April. The Partners attended eight two-day training sessions that have prepared them to effectively influence legislation and to obtain state-of-the-art services for themselves and others.

The graduates are:

1. Abel Alonzo, Corpus Christi
2. Kimberly Alvarez, Amarillo
3. Joel Barnett, Groesbeck
4. Jeanie Ann Blair, Houston
5. Oscar Castillo, Lubbock
6. David Dolling, Austin
7. Roy Donathen, Kerrville

8. Mary Durheim, McAllen
9. Matt Foley, Lubbock
10. Feliciano Govea, Austin
11. Deanna Green, Freeport
12. Gwen Hamilton, Pearland
13. Sabrina Hammel, San Antonio
14. Tracey Hawes, Richland Hills
15. Jim Hime, Houston
16. Marilyn Johnson, Henderson
17. Cliff Mathes, Nacogdoches
18. Marene May, Irving
19. Tammy McConley, Cedar Park
20. Beth McDaniel, Austin
21. Tara McMillen, Arlington
22. John Medders, Plano
23. Tammy Meyers, Lubbock
24. Rhonda Onwere, Missouri City
25. Marta Isela Ornelas, El Paso
26. Renee Parker, Amarillo
27. Norma Alicia Perez, Laredo
28. Sherill Poage, Wichita Falls
29. Brenda Reusser, Bellaire
30. Zenitha Rosales, Amarillo
31. Shannon Rydell, Midland
32. Louise Sawaki-Aungkhin, Austin
33. Wayde Shipman, League City
34. Richard Frank Streeter, Victoria
35. Kellie Welden, Seguin
36. James Wheeler, Sugar Land
37. Robert White, Abilene



Partners Address Legislators: Panelists listen to testimony on disability issues from individuals attending the Council's leadership training program, Partners in Policymaking. Pictured are (from left) Leslie Lemor with Specker Pete Laney's office, Rep. Susan Combs, Rep. Elliott Ncishtat, Rep. Glen Maxey, and Kathy Spurgin with the House Human Services Committee.

The ADA and child care *Continued from page 4*

decision on whether or not an accommodation would be an undue burden.

Q: Does the ADA affect extended-day child care for school-age children?

A: Yes. Extended-day child care programs operated by school districts are covered by Title II of the ADA. They may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and must provide access to their programs for people with disabilities.

Again, these providers are required to make accommodations unless it can be demonstrated that doing so would pose an undue burden.

Q: Can a child care provider refuse to accept children with disabilities who are not toilet trained?

A: In the past, many children with disabilities have been excluded from day care centers and nursery school

because of eligibility requirements that children be toilet trained by a specific age. How the ADA affects such policies is a somewhat confusing issue.

One section of the law states that eligibility requirements must not have the effect of screening out people with disabilities, yet another part of the law states that services of a personal nature including eating, dressing and toileting do not have to be provided — unless they are already a service provided by the facility.

So, if a child care center does not provide any assistance with toileting to any child, an admissions requirement related to toilet training might stand. However, if the center changes diapers or provides toileting assistance to any child, the requirement could be considered a violation of the law.

Q: What if our day care center refuses to admit my child because they say they can't afford to make the accommodations necessary to meet my child's needs?

A: If you are not satisfied that your child was given a fair consideration, or that it would not in fact be an undue burden for the child care provider, you may file a complaint with the Department of Justice. It will investigate your cases and can impose fines of up to \$50,000 for a first violation.

You can also file a private suite. Private plaintiffs cannot receive money damages, but can receive injunctive relief — such as a court order requiring the day care center to make the necessary accommodations — and attorney's fees. ♦

Educators challenged to treat all students as unique, not special

"We need to see and nurture the capabilities and talents of all students and personalize education to accommodate diversity in the general program. Our biggest challenge is changing mind-sets in schools focusing on what students cannot do to what they can do."

— Randy Soffer, Inclusion Works!

About 40 percent of all children in elementary and secondary schools nationally and a higher portion in Texas are unlikely to succeed in schools as they presently exist, Dr. Henry Levin told some 900 participants at a conference sponsored by Inclusion Works!* on March 25-26, 1994, in Dallas.

We need to create schools that enrich students' development, schools that are vital, schools that build on who we are as human beings, he explained. Schools that build on children's interests and abilities.

Eight years ago, Levin (who is with Stanford University) founded the Accelerated Schools Program. Now

there are more than 800 accelerated schools across the nation, including some 250 in Texas.

These schools strive to bring students into the richest learning environment and to build on their interests and abilities so they can reach their highest potential. "The talent has always been there," Levin remarked. "What hasn't been there is the system to bring it out in kids. We need to discover and nurture kids' talents."

Emphasizing many of the same ideas, Lee Graber challenged conference participants to value all students and develop their capabilities. An educational consultant, teacher and parent, he pointed out that parents who have children with disabilities are coming to schools now with an agenda in their hands.

"And the agenda is I want an opportunity for my child to learn in typical and natural settings. I don't want my child to be special...I want him to be unique — one of a kind."

Teachers can achieve that, Graber said. Teachers touch individuals'

lives and connect them with the capability that is within them. He added that all resources should focus on energizing and empowering the teacher. "We don't lose teachers because we don't pay them enough...We lose them because we don't value them enough."

As a parent, he remarked, "I want somebody to look at my kid and see a real person. And to develop that real person. Because I can tell you what — some things about him, you aren't going to like. But that's OK. You don't have to like him. But you need to respect him.

"You need to respect his right to learn. And you may begin to like him when you start tapping into some real things in him and you start having that person grow and develop and discover who they are."

Parents want teachers to look at their child and see a person who is capable of doing things, he explained, a person who has thoughts and feelings, who is emotional, and who has spirit and will. And then to build on the child's capabilities.

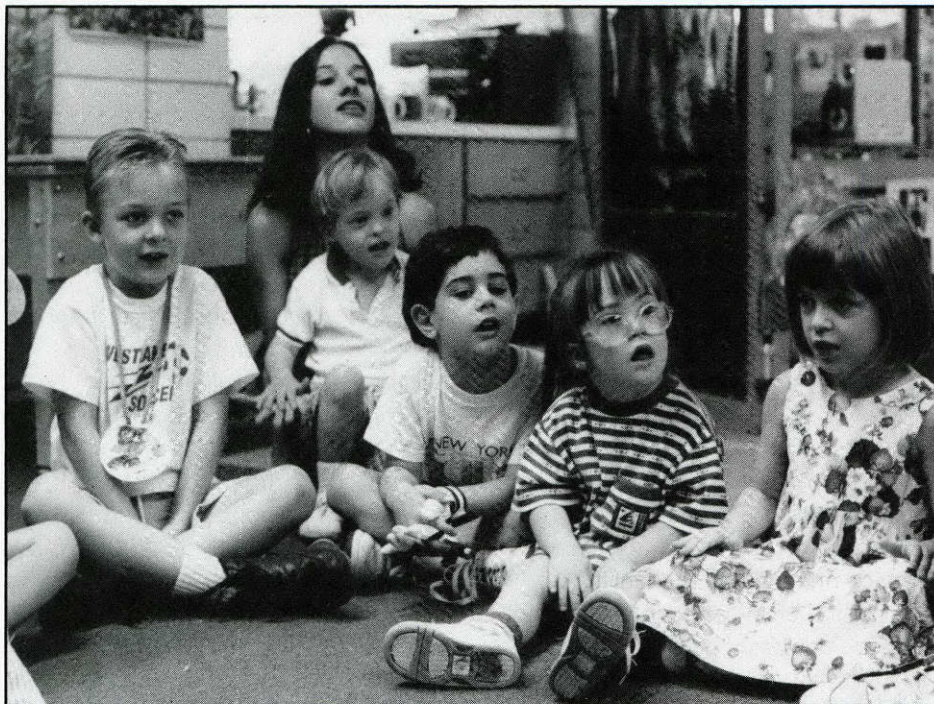
When you do this, Graber said, students "begin to grow and heal and progress in their life and then suddenly parents begin to grow and to heal because now they have something to celebrate."

It's essential to include parents in the school system if you want it to work, he pointed out, because parents provide the foundation of what their children are all about, including kids with disabilities.

But you don't have to have a child with a disability to know what it's like to be a parent, Graber told teachers. "All you have to do is listen, experience and feel. Because there are things to be learned.

"You want to be a good teacher? You'd better be a good student."

He also advised teachers to stop teaching just compliance with trivial rules and regulations. Teach students how to think and problem solve, he added, and make them unafraid to



Children with and without disabilities learn together in an kindergarten class at Eanes Elementary School. Inclusive education was the center of attention at a recent conference and will be addressed at two more conferences being planned by Inclusion Works! (Photo by Richard Orton Photography)

See "Education" page 7

Conference to explore family supports

For the first time, Texas will sponsor a major national conference that focuses on respite and other supports individuals with disabilities need to live successfully in their community. "Connecting the Pieces: Shaping the Supports to Live in the Community" will be held in San Antonio, Dec. 14-17, 1994.

The conference will be hosted by the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TXMHMR), Texas Respite Resource Network (TRRN) and Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities. This is TRRN's fifth national conference dealing with respite.

"People with disabilities need to be a part of and supported by their community," explains Ora Houston, director of TXMHMR In-Home and Family Support Services. "We hope this conference will help us share

ideas that are working, identify issues that affect public policy and shape new models."

Numerous organizations throughout the country provided input on what subjects should be covered in the conference. Topics being considered include: national and state legislation, involving consumers in determining services, promoting the philosophy of individual and family supports, cultural diversity, reaching the unserved and underserved, and developing community resources.

Conference registration is \$125. For more information about "Connecting the Pieces," contact TXMHMR Central Office, MRSP, P. O. Box 12668, Austin, TX 78711-2668; 512-323-3254, or Texas Respite Resource Network, P. O. Box 7330, San Antonio, TX 78207-3198; 210-228-2794. ♦

Council welcomes associate members

The Texas Planning Council is pleased to welcome six associate members to positions which are designed to increase consumer input and participation in Council activities. Individuals serve a one-year term, which is renewable once.

Larry Chevallier (Joinerville) and Ed Rankin (Grapevine) were selected as associate members to the Advocacy and Public Information Committee. Alicia Hudson (The Woodlands; selected for a second term) and Sherri Coles (Arlington) are serving on the Planning and Evaluation Committee. Cecilio Jaime (El Paso) and Laura Warren (Austin) are serving on the Grants Monitoring Committee.

Associate members are selected from individuals who have graduated from Partners in Policymaking, the Council's leadership and advocacy training program. ♦

Encore! More education conferences planned

Due to the overwhelming response to the March 1994 statewide conference, Inclusion Works! is presenting a streamlined version of the conference on inclusive education Sept. 16-17, 1994 in Dallas. Another conference is scheduled April 7-9, 1995, in Corpus Christi.

The theme for this fall remains "Creating tomorrow's dream today... Better schools for all students." The conference will again focus on linking special education practices with overall school reform.

In response to feedback from the

first conference, the two most inspirational speakers, Lee Graber and Dr. Billy Hawkins, have been invited back. Hawkins is the associate dean of the school of education at Michigan's Ferris State University, and shares his experiences in educating students with special needs.

Additionally, more and longer breakout sessions are scheduled this fall to allow participants more opportunities to interact with and learn from parents, teachers, support personnel and administrators about how they have successfully implemented inclusive education.

Conference registration is \$95, or \$80 per person for school teams of three or more people.

Registration will again be limited, so please return registration forms as early as possible. A limited number of stipends are available to help cover conference costs for parents of children with disabilities.

For registration materials for this fall or to get on the mailing list for the conference in April, please contact Josephine at 1-800-235-0390 (inside Texas) or 512-454-6694. ♦

Stipends enable more people to attend conferences, events

To promote independence, productivity and community integration for people with developmental disabilities, the Council continues to provide stipends to organizations sponsoring conferences, workshops and other events in Texas.

Organizations which are interested in requesting the stipends so more consumers and family members may attend an event must submit their application at least 120 days before the event. If multiple organizations are sponsoring the program, only one may apply. Applicants are encouraged to apply early enough to ensure there is plenty of time to publicize the stipends, if approved.

For more details on the stipends program and an application kit, write to Lester Sanders, Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, 4900 North Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2399, or fax your request to 512-483-4097. ♦

Education

Continued from page 6

try and explore. When students make a mistake, treat them like a real person and use it as a learning experience.

And don't be afraid to make waves, Graber remarked. "If you don't make waves, the boat isn't moving." ♦

* *Inclusion Works!* is a project of the Texas Planning Council, the Texas Education Agency and The Arc of Texas which supports school districts in developing inclusive schools.

Training examines changes in Rehab Act and their effects

The 1992 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act took a giant step in increasing consumer choice and involvement in the rehabilitation process. But people need to know about the changes to be able to take advantage of them.

Therefore the Texas Planning Council and Advocacy, Inc., have teamed up to educate individuals with disabilities and their families about changes in vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Their joint effort, the Rehabilitation Act Training Project, will distribute materials and provide training throughout the next year.

"We are excited about some of the new emphasis (under the amendments) such as the streamlined application and eligibility determination process, consumer choice, interagency coordination, services to people who need ongoing supports, and serving underserved populations," explained Tom Tyree, the project's trainer.

For example, there is now a general presumption that individuals with disabilities are capable of employment unless proven otherwise, Tyree pointed out. Additionally, VR clients have choice over employment goals, objectives, services to be provided and service providers.

"The training will allow people to participate more effectively in the rehabilitation process and to obtain the VR services they need and desire,"

he said. Components of the training will include: eligibility criteria for VR; the greater flexibility in providing supported employment; and the increased emphasis on providing assistive technology, transition services, personal assistance and independent living.

The project will provide three types of training:

- An introduction to the VR system and practical information people can use in obtaining services will be presented in at least 20 locations. Plans are currently underway to hold training in Dallas, Houston, El Paso, Lubbock, Crockett and other cities.

- In-depth, skill-building training will be presented in at least five communities, with an emphasis on reaching minority groups.

- General presentations will be

made at specialized conferences on disability issues which bring in people from all across Texas.

The training project is collaborating with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and the Texas Commission for the Blind — which provide VR services in Texas — as well as the University Affiliated Program at The University of Texas at Austin.

For information on the training, contact Tom Tyree, Advocacy, Inc., 7800 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 171-E, Austin, TX 78757-1024; 1-800-223-4206. In Austin, call 454-4816.

For a general handout on the Rehabilitation Act amendments, call Advocacy, Inc., at the numbers just given or 1-800-252-9108 between 12:30 and 5 p.m. (M,T,W,F) and 12:30 to 8 p.m. on Thursday. ♦



Highlights

Highlights is produced by the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities for distribution to Council members, grantees and other interested persons throughout the state. Organizations that serve persons who have developmental disabilities are encouraged to submit news for publication. Inquiries may addressed to Lucy Walker, editor, Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, 4900 North Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2399, (512) 483-4092 voice or TDD (512) 483-4099. Taped copies, braille and other formats available on request.

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