



Inclusive Schools Network™

Great things happen in inclusive schools™.

Inclusive Schools Network News

Volume 4, No. 5, May 2008

The Inclusive Schools Network: Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities throughout the World

*The **Inclusive Schools Network** is a year round web-based resource for families, schools, and communities interested in the topic of inclusive education. While establishing an international network and resource center focusing on inclusive schooling around the world, ISN will offer new products, online events, conferences and opportunities for social networking. **Inclusive Schools Network News** is your source for updates and information about the Inclusive Schools Network, Inclusive Schools Week--and other resources and events related to building more welcoming and supportive schools and communities.*

Look for upcoming news including information about membership opportunities for districts, schools, and individuals at www.inclusiveschools.org or email Kristen Layton at KLayton@edc.org.

***Inclusive Schools Week™** is one of the activities sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network. ISW highlights and celebrates the progress our schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to all students, particularly those who have disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It also provides an important opportunity for educators, students, and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children and youth*

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Support the *Week*: You can make a difference!

Resources

Mathematics for Everyone

Aplusmath.com is an online resource that provides teachers and families with tools to create math support materials. Print flashcards, games, and other items to help students learn basic math concepts. Go to <http://www.aplusmath.com>.

Two new resources from the ICARE Schools Project are currently featured on the Inclusive Schools Website

The ICARE Schools study, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), focuses on the families of students with disabilities and their connections with their adolescent's schools. Over a 4 year period, ICARE staff worked closely with middle schools and their families to unpack and describe some of the innovative approaches and strategies used by schools to engage *all* families in the education of students with disabilities; particularly families from culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse backgrounds. A final step in the study is to develop tools that can be used by schools or family groups to better understand or improve schools for children with disabilities. The two following tools were recently presented at the 2008 Council for Exceptional Children's Annual Convention in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Talking about Transition to High School: A Focus Group Protocol for Families of Students with Disabilities"

Transition to high school was a topic of high interest to families in the ICARE study. Research reinforces their concerns as "students' experiences in their first year of high school often determine their success throughout high school and beyond" (National High School Center, 2007). The ICARE Family Focus Group Protocol was used by the ICARE School Study to engage families of middle-grades students with disabilities in a discussion of transition to high school. High school staff attended the session in order to listen, learn and guide them to relevant contacts and resources. This group protocol can be used as a tool by either a parent group or school staff to discuss the unique issues of transition to high school that students with disabilities and their families face.

"Kids with Cameras: An Activity for Assessing Students' Connections to their School"

Connectedness (sometimes called "school engagement" or "school bonding") is the attachment of students to their school and the belief that the adults in the school care about them and believe in their ability to succeed. Previous research shows that "increasing the number of students connected to school is likely to improve educational motivation, classroom engagement, academic performance, school attendance and completion rates" while decreasing "absenteeism, fighting, bullying and vandalism" (Blum, 2004). The Kids with Cameras was used by the ICARE School Study to obtain information

about what students connect with in the school and a verbal account of why each of these connections is important. Schools can use this activity to obtain this information and to reflect on what the activity communicates about the school and how the school can create more extensive and stronger connections for all students.

Both resources can be downloaded from <http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusivepractices.cfm>

Additional resources on Transition Planning are posted with the Tip of the Month!

ISN Events

Online Registration is Now Live! - High Performing, Inclusive Secondary Schools: A Leadership Institute

Sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network and the University of Central Florida

Two-day Summer Institute: July 9-10 or July 24-25

With Follow-up Opportunities in the Fall

Location: University of Central Florida, Orlando

Whether you are well on the road to building a more inclusive environment at the secondary level or you are just embarking on the journey—this institute will provide the ideas, strategies, and tools you will need to increase successful outcomes for all students. This two-day Institute is specifically designed for teams of general and special educators involved with inclusive education in grades 6-12. Brochures are available now on our website! For more information, or to receive a brochure by email, contact Mai Chen at mchen@edc.org or call 617-618-2189.

For more information, and to download a brochure, visit: <http://inclusiveschools.org/>. Register from our homepage by clicking "**Register Now**", or go directly to the registration site at: <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?eventid=611381>

Save the Date:

8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week! December 1-5, 2008.

Other Events

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day: May 8, 2008

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day will be held this month on Thursday, May 8, 2008. This annual event, sponsored by Systems of Care and other grantees of the United States Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), "raises awareness of effective programs for children's mental health needs, demonstrates how children's mental health initiatives promote positive youth development, recovery and resilience, and shows how children with mental health needs thrive in their communities." This year's theme is "Thriving in the Community", which emphasizes how appropriate services for high school youth can increase positive educational outcomes and reduce their involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. For more information on National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, celebration materials, and related events, visit the System of Care website at: <http://systemsofcare.samhsa.gov/nationalawareness/materials.aspx>

Tip of the Month

Think about Post-Secondary Transition and Exploration this Summer!

Transition Planning is a crucial step in helping students with disabilities achieve stable, positive post-secondary outcomes. The transition planning process helps to establish a common understanding among the student, his/her family, and school staff around the student's needs and goals. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that Transition Planning begin by age 14 and that Transition Services begin by age 16, but it's never too early to start thinking about what a student will need to make a successful transition to adulthood. As the end of the school year approaches, there are many opportunities to help students think about their future.

Summer is a great time for exploring post-secondary education. Increasingly, colleges and universities are offering academic support services to students with disabilities. Students and their families may want to inquire about the availability of these services as they research and visit different campuses. Some states and school districts are also developing concurrent enrollment programs with colleges and universities to give students with significant disabilities age 18 and older a chance to experience higher education and interact with same-age peers while they are still attending their local high school program. IEP Teams may want to consider such opportunities as they plan the student's academic program for next year.

Summer is also a good time for students to gain work experience and try jobs related to their career interests. Keep in mind that students with disabilities may need certain supports to be successful in their summer job, and in many cases it may be useful to foster an open dialogue with employers about the student's needs. Parents and school staff can help to coordinate employment opportunities and appropriate supports, but this can also be an excellent opportunity for students to develop their self-advocacy skills.

Visit the Tip of the Month section of the Inclusive Schools website for links to organizations and websites with useful Transition-related resources: <http://inclusiveschools.org/tips.cfm>

Inclusive Practices Around the World

UNESCO Events Promote International Collaboration Around Inclusive Education

Since 2000, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been monitoring the enrollment of school-age children worldwide. At that time, 164 countries around the world made a commitment to significantly increase educational opportunities and access for all children by 2015, especially girls, children from disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, and children with disabilities.

UNESCO's annual Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report was released last month, and the document's release was supported by a number of international events. In particular, Global Action Week (April 21-27, 2008) included conferences, debates, rallies, and official launches of this most recent EFA report in fifteen countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, DRC Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea, Iran, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Peru and Venezuela. Global Action Week also included the "World's Biggest Lesson" on April 23, an event which involved millions of learners and stakeholders, breaking the Guinness World Record for the largest simultaneous lesson and bringing attention to the topic "Quality Education and Ending Exclusion". In addition, UNESCO hosted an online discussion forum on this same topic throughout the entire month of April.

Inclusive education will also be the main topic of the UNESCO-sponsored 48th International Conference on Education (ICE) in Geneva, Switzerland, November 25-28, 2008.

For more information on the EFA report and the upcoming ICE, and highlights of Global Action Week and the “World’s Biggest Lesson”, visit the UNESCO website at:

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=56438&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Support the *Network*

Here’s how YOU can make a difference

Your purchase of products or tax-deductible contribution supports the work we are doing to support families, schools, and communities around the world to create awareness, build knowledge, and encourage systems change toward more inclusive educational opportunities for all children. We are a nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) organization, and we would be extremely grateful for your support! Celebration Kits, posters, pencils, and much more are available for purchase—and are useable any time of year. Order now to distribute these materials at your upcoming workshops and professional meetings:
<https://www.inclusiveschools.org/order.cfm>.

Download and return your contribution form today:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/support.cfm>

Inclusive Schools Network[™] is an initiative of Education Development Center, Inc.

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