

TVDSA Newsletter



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Editor: Celena Auger

August 2011

Getting Ready for the School Year

Summer is here and in FULL swing. More than likely it is flying by quickly, with many more things you may still want to accomplish with your kids / family. However, we, as parents and advocates, need to start thinking about school. By the end of the month, many will start back at school - new classes, new teachers, and possibly new schools. Hopefully you will find some helpful hints to help you prepare for the new school year in this month's TVDSA newsletter. Preparing a portfolio for your child's new teacher, making sure your child's records are in order, determining whether or not your child's IEP is set for the new school year and preparing your child for a fresh start this fall, can all help your child have a more successful educational year.

Creating Personal Portfolios

The new school year can cause a lot of emotional stress. Parents are filled with hope for a teacher who recognizes the strengths and brings out the best in their child. Children have a new routine, a new teacher and new friends in their class. A portfolio of your child is a valuable resource. It will help the teacher understand your child and will ease your child's transition into a new



environment.

The dreaded IEP is often all the teacher sees on paper. The IEP focuses on the weaknesses, needs and deficits of the child. A portfolio is a positive showcase of the child's hopes, dreams, strengths, interests and gifts. It can often open the door of communication with children with language barriers. It allows for a jump start on the beginning of the year; this is one child the teacher doesn't have to "figure out." Most of all, a portfolio promotes inclusion.

A portfolio can also help build relationships with peers, when shared with the whole class. It tears down the barriers that often come with the unknown. It supports the fact that we are all more alike than different. With this option, copies of a mini-portfolio (or letter) can either be sent home with all the kids or rotate one copy through the class. If rotating the portfolio, getting the teacher on board and having everyone do the same, is even a greater inclusion faucet. The mini-portfolios share the strengths and abilities, and if done educationally, may eliminate some of the fears of the unknown

In This Issue

- Creating Personal Portfolios
- Teacher Approval
- Organizing Your Child's Educational Records
- Tips for Teaching Students with Down Syndrome
- TVDSA Buddy Walk

NEW WEBSITE!

It is HERE! Check out our new website:
idahodownsyndrome.org

The new website will be updated regularly with events and information.

We encourage your involvement!

If you would like us to consider content to be posted on our blog, please contact [Angela Bowman](mailto:Angela.Bowman).

Also, we are on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), if you haven't yet connected with us online, do it today!

between classmates. If done as a full class project, it is great to learn where similar interests lie and helps the children with disabilities have a starting platform to build friendships.

Here are some guidelines for starting a child portfolio:

1. Identify your target audience. Will you be sharing the portfolio with teachers and staff, the current school or in transition to the next school, classroom or peers, coaches, community members, etc.

2. Start with a mission statement. The mission statement should share your child's dreams as well as the dreams you have for your child. Raise the level of expectations (not so low as a worm could crawl over, as often the IEPs seem) and emphasize to the teacher/coach/community member, they are now part of a team and you are all working together.

3. Include the facts. Who is the individual this portfolio is about? Are they a sister? A swimmer? An artist? A future computer programmer? What do they love/hate doing? What are some hints on how to help them with the harder academic areas? How to help them when they are frustrated? What makes them laugh? What do they like to do when they are alone, in a group, with their family?

4. Gather information from others. Ask family members, previous and current occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc, coaches, teachers and friends to summarize their experiences with your child. Possibly including some milestones they have been able to see and experience.

5. Keep it organized. Be as concise and relevant as possible. Organize the portfolio in a logical manner. You want to try to keep this readable within 10-15 minutes at the most. Respect your reader's time. If it is too long, they will either skim or not completely read it through.

6. Eye Candy. Remember no one wants to read a 5 page, single spaced, 10 font document about your child. Add pictures, art work, diagrams or clip art to break up the material you are sharing.

7. Evaluate when completed. Put it away a couple days, then read it yourself. Get perspectives from other family members or close friends before distributing to the target audience.

8. DO NOT include private items: Protect your privacy for safety reasons. Make sure the information would not embarrass you if it was yours. Never include social security numbers, or specific details about schedules, as these can be security issues.

9. Add resources and information. You may want to include a poem, some general background information on Down syndrome, include a list of recommended readings or websites you support and agree with. Or list books that you may have and would be willing to let them borrow to help further their ability to communicate, understand and work with your child.

Calendar of Events

August 3rd-5th:

Summer Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health BSU, Boise ID
Contact: [Catie Mori](#)

August 5th-7th:

NDSC Conference
San Antonio, TX

August 6th:

Movies for a Cause
Presented by Special Olympics Idaho
Boise, ID
"Raiders of the Lost Ark"
8:00pm pre-movie activities
9:30pm movie starts
[moviesforacause.com](#)

August 10th:

IPUL Support Group
Success with the IEP
Boise, ID
6:00pm-8:00pm
Contact: [Angela Lindig](#)

August 11th:

[PEAK Webinar](#): Getting Ready for the School Year 6:30pm-7:30pm

August 13th:

Lil' Buddies Playgroup
3:00pm-5:00pm at Mikaela's in Boise, ID
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

August 16th:

TVDSA Board Meeting
7:00pm-9:00pm
Open to the public at A New Leaf
Meridian, ID
Contact: [Paul Auger](#)

August 20th:

Cool Club & AIM BBQ
4:00pm-7:00pm
at the Gallas' House in Nampa, ID. Contact: [Molly Benton](#) or [Freddie Gallas](#)

August 22nd:

Lil' Buddies Playgroup
10:00am-12:00pm at Aaden's in Nampa, ID
Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

August 30th:

DADs Gathering
7:00pm-8:30pm
A New Leaf, Meridian, ID
Contact: [Jim Yerger](#)

Try to involve your child as much as possible. This makes the portfolio more powerful. Remember this is ultimately for THEM, get their input on design, layout, information to include, and if at a developmental level, even have them write the mission statement/letter (dictated, typed, or handwritten) themselves! Have them color the cover, or design the cover with fancy computer software. The sky is the limit on how to put together a portfolio for your child. Whether you are crafty, enjoy scrapbooking, or are good on the computer, there are so many options and variations you can pursue. If you have the movie making talent, make your child's portfolio a video portfolio. Remember there are NO rules, only guidelines to help you develop a personal portfolio that will open doors, open eyes and allow your child to meet their potential in an inclusive environment.

Sources: Ivy Goldstein's presentation: "Building Bridges: Creating Personal Portfolios That Help Peers, Teachers and Everyone Else Get to Know (and Love) Your Child" at the [Inclusion Works Conference 2007](#) and the IPUL Student Profile Questionnaire

Teacher Approval

By: Jene Aviram

Think back to when you were 6, 8, or 10 years old. Do you remember your teacher? Do you remember how you looked up to her? Her words were golden. Do you remember when you forgot to do your homework or weren't paying attention? Her stern words cut you to the core. Not because she was mean but because you desperately wanted her approval.

School ended and those days were long forgotten. Then my child was diagnosed with a disability. Why didn't anyone warn me I'd become that 8 year old again? I desperately need teacher approval, not for me, but for my child. This is a common sentiment of parents of children with disabilities. So if you're a teacher, therapist, social worker, psychologist, counselor or anyone else that's an authority figure to a child with disabilities - THIS IS FOR YOU!

My child has a disability. I know that. I'm not in denial. How can I be? I live it every day. I have other children. My friends have children. I know the difference. They answer questions, my child might not. They play together, my child might not. They share their thoughts, my child might not.

My child is different. He is on his own mission. I'm happy to be on his side. I am thrilled when he learns something new, no matter how small. I am proud when he accomplishes something I once never thought possible. I take delight in his idiosyncrasies. Please rejoice with me. Please notice his worth. My child is multifaceted. He has weaknesses and strengths. He has deficits and skills. People are always pointing out the deficits. Please join me in noticing his skills.

Teachers: In our meetings, please allow for some time to recognize my child's good points. When you do, I go home

September 7th:

Buddy Walk Early
Registration ends at
midnight!

September 12-18th

DAD's Gathering
Albertson's Boise Open
TVDSA has Clubhouse
Passes! Please reserve
yours by contacting
[Kristie Yerger](#)

September 17th:

Southeast Idaho Buddy
Walk 9:00am-12:00pm
Blackfoot, ID
Contact: [Maria
Neumann](#)

September 23rd:

Parent Network of the
Capital Region 2011 Fall
[Conference](#) :
"Embracing
Differences: Creating A
Meaningful Inclusive
Environment for ALL
Students " Latham, NY

October 8th:

TVDSA Buddy Walk
11:00am-2:00pm
Capitol Building to Julia
Davis Park Boise, ID
Contact: [Melody Witte](#)

October 13-14th

2011 Idaho Partnerships
[Conference](#)
"emPOWERment" Boise,
ID

October 24-25th:

Youth with Disabilities
Secondary Transition
[Conference](#)
Portland, OR

Lil' Buddies

Playgroup Dates:

Saturday, August 13th:

3:00pm-5:00pm
at Mikaela's house
2087 S. Petra Ave in Boise

Monday, August 22nd:

10:00am-12:00pm
at Aaden's House
6616 Rodeo Ranch Dr in
Nampa

Happy Birthday to all of
our August Lil' Buddies!
If your Lil' Buddy has a

walking on air. When you don't, I drive home in tears.
SLP's, OT's, and PT's: When your opening statement is a positive remark about my child, I begin to relax. When you only voice concerns, my stomach twists into knots.

ABA Therapist and Camp Counselors: When you greet me by telling me my son had a great day, my anxiety fades. When you focus on the deficits, your words hurt me deeply all day.

Consultants, Psychologists, and Social Workers: When you begin with positive observations, my heart soars in delight. When you only stress your concerns, my heart splits in two. My child faces judgment at every turn. I invite you to stand apart! Stand strong with us! Unique is good! Let's tell the world! Help me instill pride in my son. Show him his greatness. Try and see his perspective. Praise him as much as you can. By doing so, you improve my child's life and build his confidence. You will motivate and inspire him. He will exceed your expectations and I will be eternally grateful to you.

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For more great resources visit: <http://www.nlconcepts.com>

Organizing Your Child's Educational Records

By: Mary Fornabia, Special Education Resource Specialist

Think about your child's last school meeting. Did the team of teachers, or Committee on Special Education (CSE) have a complete copy of your child's records? Do **you** have a complete copy of your child's records? How can the team make decisions about your child's special education program if they do not have complete and accurate information about your child?

When you take the time to organize your child's records and have them in one specific binder, you will become more empowered and confident as you walk into an IEP meeting. You will gain a sense of control. The special education system generates mountains of paper. You need a simple, foolproof document management system. Keeping accurate school records is critical when dealing with the special education system. Unfortunately, when faced with the day to day "to do" list of life, many times even the most organized of us find ourselves swimming in boxes of papers every time we need a document.

Your child's special education records provide important details critical to their education. They are important documents providing, eligibility for services, history of progress, current present levels of performance, planning for the future, etc. Here is a list of a few different documents that you will see over the course of your child's academic years. You should keep them all!

August or September birthday, please email Kristie, to have your child individually recognized and added to our Birthday list!

Need more information on Lil' Buddies Playgroup? Please contact [Kristie Yeraer](#)

Cool Club & AIM

The Cool Club and AIM will meet on:
Saturday, August 20th

from 4:00pm-7:00pm
at the Gallas' house

Activity: **BBQ** and yard games

Please bring a side dish and either drinks or a dessert to share. The hamburgers and fixings will be provided. If you would like to bring outdoor games that would be great.

For more information or to RSVP, contact [Molly Benton](#) or [Freddie Gallas](#)

DADs Group

The DADs next gathering will be
August 30th
7:00pm-8:30pm
at A New Leaf,
Adult Center
Meridian, ID

For more information, contact [Jim Yeraer](#) or [Paul Auger](#)



- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
- School Evaluations
- Quarterly Progress Reports
- Report Cards
- School District and State Assessments
- School District's evaluations
- Private evaluations / Medical information
- Samples of class work
- Behavior Intervention Plan
- Possibly emails / letter communications between you and the school

Decide what system works best for you: using a different binder for each year; using a different binder for different documents; color coding, tabbing, etc.

This is also a great time to review your child's current IEP, goals, and accommodations. Do you feel it is still a good representation of what your child needs? Do you have some new insight to share with an IEP team at the beginning of the year?

It is time to go "back to school" and be prepared for your child's upcoming year(s). Summer time might be the perfect time to do this.



Tips for Teaching Students with Down Syndrome

from Colorado Springs DS Association Education - Elementary

You can share these with your child's teachers!

1. Have high expectations for your child as a student just as you do at home. Be enthusiastic and encouraging!
2. When planning your student's instructional program, be guided by the his/her individual ability and needs, and not the label of Down syndrome.
3. If your student is highly distractible, seat him/her away from windows and doors to minimize distractions in the environment.
4. Small group instruction may be more beneficial to your student than whole class instruction. Try to also set aside some time for one-on-one instruction.
5. Model the task and give your student many opportunities to perform it. Break down tasks into smaller sequenced steps.
6. Ask your student to repeat or rephrase instructions. Ask your student specific step-by-step questions to make sure he/she has understood the instructions given.
7. Set aside time for frequent review and practice of tasks.
8. Allow your student adequate response time.

Movies for a Cause

presented by SPECIAL OLYMPICS IDAHO

Camel's Back Park,
1200 W. Heron St.,
Boise, Idaho

August 6, 2011

Outdoor screening of "Raiders of the Lost Ark" Celebrate the late days of summer with a movie night under the stars! Movies for a Cause presents an outdoor screening of the family-friendly and blockbuster film, "Raiders of the Lost Ark," at Camel's Back Park in Boise, Idaho. Admission to this movie event is free but all proceeds from food, vendors and donations will benefit Special Olympics Idaho.

Pre-movie activities will begin at 8:00 p.m. with the movie starting at 9:30 p.m.

For more information about Movies for a Cause and sponsors go to www.moviesforacause.org

Come enjoy an evening in the park Bring your Blankets and Chairs. Food Vendors will be available - but you can sure bring your own.

Idaho Parents Unlimited

IPUL Parent Support Group

August 10th

6:00pm-8:00pm

500 S. 8th St. Boise

Topic: Success with the IEP

Learn how to put this communication vehicle to work for your student and how to write meaningful goals.

For more information or to register for this workshop, please contact [Angela Lindig](mailto:Angela.Lindig@spokaneolympics.org)

9. Provide consistent positive reinforcement immediately after your student produces a correct response.
10. If your student makes a mistake, do not say "that's wrong." Ask him/her to try again, or provide the correct response and require him/her to repeat the correct response immediately. Immediate corrective feedback is more effective than delayed.
11. Give clear signals about the end of one activity and the beginning of the next. Use picture cues or audio cues with young children. For example, use picture symbols representing activities or sing a certain song before a specific activity.
12. Present only a few stimuli or objects at a time. For example, if you are using worksheets, create worksheets that do not have too many pictures or sentences with complicated wording. Highlight or print key words in bold.
13. Use concrete objects/manipulatives along with verbal explanations. For example, while teaching counting use manipulatives that are alike in shape, size and color, so that the student concentrates on counting, rather than being distracted by shapes, etc.
14. Be flexible with attaining educational goals. For example, if your student has difficulty writing with a pencil, teach him/her to write using a computer.

From the TVDSA Lending Library

by Mary Anne Murphy

Everyone Counts

by National Down Syndrome Society



Everyone Counts, published by the National Down Syndrome Society, is a K-6 curriculum for teaching acceptance and inclusion in your child's classroom. This program includes an age-appropriate DVD (or video) and one classroom lesson for each grade level, which any teacher can implement. After a few minutes devoted to this lesson, your child's classmates will be better prepared to warmly welcome a classmate who has Down syndrome. The new school year begins soon. If you have any concerns about your child being accepted and welcomed at school, this would be a great time to preview this program and prepare to share it with your child's classroom teacher.

This program is available from the TVDSA library. You may reserve it by contacting the [Librarian](#). For a complete list of the books/DVDs available through TVDSA, check out our [Lending Library](#).

Summer Sign Language Class

Just Kid'n Around will be holding a summer signing camp.

August 1st-5th

9:00am-12:00pm

You can download a brochure and a registration form [online](#).

The Idaho Association for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

AimEarlyIdaho Summer Institute on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health August 3th-5th, 2011 at BSU, Boise, ID. Registration fee is only \$50.00.

The general membership meeting will be from 11:45-1:00 on August 3, 2011 in the Lookout Room in the Boise State University Student Union Building. Lunch will be provided and you don't have to be a member to attend.

More information about the Summer Institute can be found on our website at <http://AimEarlyIdaho.org>

If you have any questions about the meeting contact Carrie L. Mori, PhD, OTR/L, BCP at 208.440.8044 or carrie@aimearlyidaho.org

Conferences, Workshops and Webinars

PEAK Webinars:

[Getting Ready for the School Year](#)

August 11th
6:30pm-7:30pm

TVDSA 9th Annual Buddy Walk

Date: Saturday, October 8th

Registration: Online registration will run from July 7th through September 7th (see instructions below).

On-site registration day of event at Capitol Park from 9:00am-10:30am

Event Time: 11:00am-2:00pm

Location: Starting at Capitol Park, walking to Julia Davis Park Band Shell. Boise, ID

Registration Fees: Online or mailed **AND RECEIVED** by September 7th: \$15.00 for adults or \$7.00 for children (12 & under). Day of event registration at Capitol Park: \$17.00 for adults or \$8.00 for children. Registration fee includes a T-shirt and food ticket. Children registration also includes game tickets.

Online registration has begun! Early registration ends Wednesday, September 7th at midnight. To register go to the Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association [website](#). Scroll down the page and click on the Buddy Walk logo located on the left. This will take you to our Buddy Walk page where you can register and create an optional team page. You may also mail in your registration, but they **MUST** be received **PRIOR** to September 7th!

If you wait to register the day of the walk at Capitol Park from 9:00am to 10:30am, you are not guaranteed a certain size or color of t-shirt.

At Julia Davis Park there will be food, entertainment, games, bounce houses, prizes, Buddy Walk items for sale, informational tables, and more.

NEW THIS YEAR: A Silent Auction! Come and bid on 2 round tickets to anywhere in the US via Alaska Airlines, a basket of Epionce, a beautiful quilt, and more. Make sure you bring your pocket books!

If you have further questions, please email: Melody Witte at buddywalk@idahodownsyndrome.org.



Parent Network of the Capital Region 2011 Fall Conference:

**Embracing Differences:
Creating a Meaningful
Inclusive Environment for
ALL Students**

September 23rd, 2011
Latham, NY

For more information see:
[Parent Network of the
Capital Region brochure](#)

emPOWERment 2011

Idaho partnerships
conference on Human
Services

October 13th & 14th
Boise, ID

Registration begins July
15th

For more information see:
[Idaho Partnership on
Human Services
Conference brochure](#)

r.i.s.e 6th Annual Building
Futures, Youth with
Disabilities Secondary
[Transition Conference](#)

October 24th-25th, 2011
Sheraton Portland Airport
Hotel
Portland, OR



Registration is now open
for the **39th Annual
NDSC Convention.**

To learn more visit the
[NDSC convention website](#)

**Do you have a child that likes to perform?
The Elevated Dance Project Verge Company
needs them!**



Once again, Verge will be performing at this year's **Buddy Walk**, October 8th in Boise. However, they need additional dancers interested in learning a **HIP HOP Routine** to perform at the Buddy Walk beside them. Rehearsals will be weekly at the Elevated Dance Project studio in Eagle, from **4:30-**

5:30pm on Tuesday, **August 30th**, Thursday, **September 1st**, and Fridays, **September 9th, 26th, 23rd and 30th**. We will also probably add one additional practice the week of the Buddy Walk (dress rehearsal), still to be determined.

This opportunity is open to both boys and girls, ages 8 and up, who love to dance and perform (no trained experience is necessary). This is **NO COST** to TVDSA newsletter recipients!

If interested, please contact [Melissa Larson](#) or [Celena Auger](#) for more information and/or registration.

**Don't live in the Treasure Valley?
Can't attend the TVDSA Buddy Walk?
How about supporting another Idaho Buddy Walk?**

Southeast Idaho Buddy Walk

Date: Saturday, September 17th, 2011

Event Time: 9:00am-12:00pm

Location: Jensen Grove in **Blackfoot, ID**

Registration Fees: \$15.00 for adult, \$10.00 for children, and FREE for individuals with Down syndrome if register prior to September 10th. Registration: \$20.00 for adult if register the morning of the event.



For additional information go to www.seidahobuddywalk.com or contact Maria Neumann at 208.317.6211.

**TVDSA Scholarship
Information**

Are you considering attending the NDSC Conference? How about another local or national conference?

Did you know that TVDSA supports members in gathering information at local and national conferences and/or workshops?

The TVDSA Scholarship program is NOT income based, so everyone is eligible.

Please see our [Scholarship application](#) for the guidelines and how to apply today.

For additional questions, please contact our [Scholarship Committee](#).



TREASURE VALLEY
DOWN SYNDROME
ASSOCIATION

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About Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association

For more information, articles, past newsletters and pictures, please visit our website at <http://idahodownsyndrome.org/>

Mailing: PO Box 1404 Meridian, Idaho 83680

Check us out on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!