



TREASURE VALLEY  
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

# TVDSA Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: [Celena Auger](#)

May 2013

## In this Issue

May 2<sup>nd</sup> is the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Idaho Gives Day, and TVDSA will be part of it! Make sure you find out how you too can help!

Mark your calendar for May 14<sup>th</sup>. It is the Annual TVDSA Meeting. In addition to recapping the past year, and annual board vote, come listen to Tonya Maestretti and Celena Auger share what they learned at the PEAK Conference last February.

In this month's newsletter, you will find it packed full with ideas for the summer that will be quickly upon us. Articles include Reading, Extended School Year, Communication with the school (use year round) and Starting with Strengths. It is always important to focus on the strengths and not get caught up with the weaknesses, deficits, and diagnosis.

You will also meet Kristie Yerger. In addition to serving on the TVDSA Board, she is the volunteer leader of Best Buds.

To partake in any social activity, you do not have to be a member or join the subgroup, just come and meet new people and have a good time!

Monthly and archived TVDSA newsletters are available on our website at: [www.idahodownsyndrome.org](http://www.idahodownsyndrome.org) for viewing and sharing.

## How to Find "Just Right" Books for your Children/Adults

How can parents help their children find books that are not "too hard" and not "too easy" but instead are just right"? Here's some advice.

### Five finger rule

Suggest they choose a book that they think they will enjoy. Have them read the second page. Hold up a finger for each word they are not sure of, or do not know. If there are five or more words they did not know, they should choose an easier book.

### Choose a book that is a good fit!

Have them read two or three pages and ask these questions: Will it be an easy, fun book to read? Do they understand what they're reading? Do they know almost every word? When they read it aloud, can they read it smoothly? Do they think the topic will interest them? If most of their answers were "yes", this will be an easy book to read independently by themselves.

### Will this book be too hard for them?

Are there five or more words on a page that they don't know, or am unsure of? Is this book confusing and hard to understand by themselves? When they read it aloud, does it sound choppy and slow? If most of your answers were "yes," this book is too hard. You should wait awhile before they read this book. Give the book another try later, or read the book to them.

### What should parents say when they come to a word they don't know?

Can you sound it out? What are the first and last sounds? Would that word make sense? Does it have a pattern that you have seen in other words? (-at, ack, in\_) You said\_\_\_\_\_. Does that make sense? What word would make sense that starts with these sounds?

### Use Summer Fun to Build Background Knowledge

You don't need to have a book in hand to help your child become a better reader. Interesting experiences give kids a broader framework for new information they might encounter in books. When kids have lots of experiences to draw on, they have a better chance of making a connection with what they read!

### How can you help build background knowledge this summer?

#### Step 1: Take summer field trips

Go to the park, the zoo, the aquarium, a sports event, a historical landmark, or a children's museum. Go on a hike or to a natural attraction in your area. When you're indoors, watch a TV program about volcanoes or the rainforest or marsupials, or use the web to take a virtual field trip to a faraway place.

#### Step 2: Talk about it

Talk about the plants and animals you see, or the rules of a game, or the history of your town, or the new things you learned. Ask questions that get your child to talk, like "If you could be one of those animals we saw today, which one would you be?" or "Why do you think those boulders were shaped like that?"

Continued on Page 3

May 2<sup>nd</sup>:

**Idaho Gives Day** – all day  
<http://idahogives.razoo.com/story/Tvdsa>

May 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>:

**Sprout Film Festival**  
 Egyptian Movie Theater,  
 Boise

May 14<sup>th</sup>:

**TVDSA Annual Membership Meeting** 7:00pm-9:00pm at A New Leaf. Contact: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)

May 14-15<sup>th</sup>:

**Idaho Parents Unlimited Mid-Week Mini Conference**  
 Coeur d'Alene, ID  
 Free for parents!  
 Registration closes May 1<sup>st</sup>!

May 17<sup>th</sup>:

**AIM** 6:00pm for dinner and a movie at Overland Park Cinema  
 Contact: [Freddie Gallas](#)

May 18<sup>th</sup>:

**Best Buds** 11:00am at Little Feather Ranch in Eagle,  
 Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)

May 19<sup>th</sup>:

**TVDSA Calendar Model Search deadline.**  
 Contact: Malu Mulholland

May 21<sup>st</sup>:

**TVDSA Board Meeting**  
 7:00-9:30pm at A New Leaf  
 Contact: [Paul Auger](#)

May 21-23<sup>rd</sup>:

**2013 Possibilities of All Abilities Conference**, Boise

May 25<sup>th</sup>:

**Lil' Buddies:** 10:00am-11:30am at Charlotte's house in Boise.  
 Contact: [Jennifer Rice](#)

May 28<sup>th</sup>:

**D.A.D.S. Meeting:**  
 6:30pm-8:30pm at Fuddrucker's, Meridian  
 Contact: [Gus Olmos](#)

July 19-21<sup>st</sup>:

**NDSC Conference**  
 Denver Co  
[Registration](#) NOW OPEN!



## Should Your Child's IEP Include Extended Year Services (ESY)?

Some children with disabilities require special education and related services longer than the usual school year in order to receive Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). Extended School Year (ESY) services are special education and/or related services provided beyond the usual school year, at times when school is not usually in session – typically during the summer.

**ESY services are different from summer school, summer remedial classes, and summer enrichment programs. ESY services are individualized, based on the child's needs as documented in the IEP, and are free of charge to parents.**

Decisions about whether your child will receive ESY services and what services (s)he will receive will be made by your child's IEP team. You are a member of the IEP team. An IEP meeting is held to consider your child's needs for ESY services. This meeting must be conducted like any other IEP meeting with appropriate prior notice. You, the child's teacher(s), related service providers, or administrators may request an IEP team meeting to consider your child's need for ESY services.

If these services are not already part of your child's IEP, you need to consider whether they would be necessary to meet his unique needs. If so, you should consider convening an IEP meeting to revise the IEP to include these services.

**The Regression-Recoupment Myth:** You may receive incorrect information about ESY from the staff at your child's school. For example, you may be told that ESY services are not available for children in your child's disability category. School staff may tell you they only use a "regression-recoupment" formula to determine which children are eligible for ESY services. **Although these statements are legally incorrect, you will need documentation to make your case.** You need to know what the law and regulations say. You will find that Extended School Year (ESY) is not mentioned in the IDEA statute, but it is in the IDEA regulations. Read the [IDEA regulation about ESY at 34 CFR § Section 300.106](#)

Contact your [state department of education](#) (<http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/seas.htm>). Ask that they send you all information they publish about Extended School Year services. Next, visit the web site of your state department of education. Search the site for information about "Extended School Year" and "ESY."

Learn more about [Extended School Year \(ESY\) Services](#)  
<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/esy.index.htm>

Source: *The Wrightslaw Way to Special Education Law and Advocacy*  
[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com) Communicating with

## Start with Strengths! By Kathie Snow with Disability is Natural

***If human beings are perceived as potentials rather than problems, as possessing strengths instead of weaknesses, as unlimited rather than dull and unresponsive, then they thrive and grow to their capabilities. - Robert Conklin***

Quickly now! Think of three wonderful things about a person with a disability in your life! Most people--parents, teachers, service providers, therapists--can't do it. I know; I ask when meeting participants at conferences. Most can, however, reel off a person's diagnosis (one or many), along with a laundry list of the person's "problems/deficits."

Hmmm--it doesn't take a genius IQ to figure out why so many children and adults with disabilities aren't as successful as they could be. If you were known primarily by your perceived problems and your medical diagnoses, you wouldn't be very successful either. Really, this is not rocket science, is it?

For those who may still be skeptical, perform your own "research" for a couple of days. [Read more...](#)



## “Right Books” (continued from page 1)

### Step 3: Follow up with a book

Find out what interests your child, and visit the library to get more information. Check out books about butterflies or basketball players or whatever caught your child's attention. Encourage their learning with comments like, “That was cool to see the inside of a computer at the museum today. Let's learn more about that.”

You could even have your children create their own book, with photos or illustrations of your activity and their own commentary. This is great writing practice and makes a wonderful summer memory book.

Building background knowledge isn't just fun, it's also a great way to spend your summer!

For more ideas to help kids learn over the summer, visit: [www.ReadingRockets.org/calendar/summer](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/calendar/summer)

## Effective Communication with your Child's Special Educators

### The answer is not so simple:

**Phone Calls:** Managing the time between when the kids come home from school until when they go to bed requires all my skills. This is when my three children need to complete their homework, eat dinner, attend their after school activities, negotiate getting out of their chores, and finagle a few extra minutes before bedtime.

One year a teacher decided to donate some of “her time” to call me about 7 p.m. to discuss school. In the middle of our evening, the phone would ring and I would suddenly find myself in an impromptu parent-teacher meeting. Leaving my husband to manage the last of the homework assignments and the bedtime routines, I sat and spoke with the teacher.

I never felt like the conversations made much of an impact on my daughter's school day. In addition, by the time our conversation was done, I felt annoyed that I had missed the precious time with my family. My husband felt annoyed that he was left to attend to everyone's needs without any advance warning.

**Email:** In my efforts to avoid surprise phone calls, I switched my mode of communication to emailing. This proved to be more of a disaster than the surprise phone calls. Within emails there is no room for interpretation and tone. Messages read without knowledge of the intent of the sender can result in hostility.

In addition, there just isn't enough space to describe and explain the complexities of educating a child with special needs. I have learned that teachers do not like reading long emails. I now have reserved email for simple clarification of assignments and procedural messages.

**Smiley Face Chart:** As a teacher for the past 23 years I am guilty of sending daily behavior charts home. It wasn't until I started receiving them (as a parent) that my opinion of them greatly changed!

I believe that the daily behavior chart should only be used for shaping one targeted behavior that you want to develop. It should be paired with a positive behavioral support plan that is developed to support the child.

When a child has greater needs, this plan is a formal document that is signed by the parent. Positive reinforcements are developed to reward the behavior you want to shape. In addition, for a child that has an IEP, this should also be linked to a specific goal in the IEP.

When my daughter was young, she wouldn't leave her shoes on in school. I was receiving a daily smiley face chart. It had a smiley face, a straight face, and a frown face. Most every day I opened her folder to see the sad face was circled on the chart. In the context of my evening with my family, how did this help us? I had no power to influence what was going on at school. Every time I saw the sad face I felt annoyed and helpless.

**Paraprofessional:** Rather than daily written reports, we switched to having my daughter's paraprofessional speak to me after school daily. However, paraprofessionals are not in charge of educational decisions. So after talking to me, the paraprofessional had to translate my information to the teacher. We have all played the game “Telephone” as children—as we learned the end message is never the same.

**Just Talk to Me:** After nine years of trying new communication methods, I have finally decided to talk with the teacher directly. Since my daughter is in middle school, the teacher and I have arranged for me to pick up my daughter a few minutes early and while I am putting my daughter in the car, the resource



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## Social Groups Page

### Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome (D.A.D.S.) Meeting:

D.A.D.S. will be meeting at  
Fuddruckers **May 28<sup>th</sup>**  
from 6:30pm-8:00pm.

For more information about **D.A.D.S.**  
please contact [Gus Olmos](#)



### Lil' Buddies (age birth-5 years) Update:

May Gathering:

Lil' Buddies will have a play  
date on **Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**  
at **Charlotte's house**,

located at 12067  
Goldenrod Ave, in Boise,  
from **10:00am-12:00pm**.

Need more information on  
**Lil'Buddies?** Please  
contact [Jennifer Rice](#)

### Best Buds (Elementary) Update:

May Gathering:

Best Buds will be brushing  
and riding horses **Saturday,**  
**May 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am** at

Little Feather Ranch,  
located at 4807 W. Little  
Feather Lane, in Eagle.

Need more information on  
**Best Buds?** Please contact  
[Kristie Yerger](#).



### Cool Club (Jr./Sr. High)

May: There will be no  
Cool Club Gathering this  
month.

Are you interested in  
organizing outings for Cool  
Club? Contact: [Kristie Yerger](#)



### Adults in Motion (AIM)

May Gathering:

Adults in Motion will be  
meeting on **Friday,**  
**May 17<sup>th</sup> for a dinner**  
**and a movie.** We will  
meet at McDonalds at

6:00pm then going across  
to Overland Park Cinema  
for a movie. (Both are  
located near the  
intersection of S. Cole rd  
and W. Overland Road.

For more information about  
**AIM** contact: [Freddie Gallas](#)  
or [Niculina \(Nina\)](#)  
[Bistriceanu](#)

### Get to know our Social Group Leaders:

### Kristie Yerger, parent coordinator for Best Buds:

Five and a half years ago I was told that my son, Caleb, would be born with Down syndrome. I am a planner! I like to pretend that I'm not, but I am the type of person to make a list of what I need on my "list". I began to seek out any and all information I could find on Down syndrome (being ever so careful to check the copyright date as to not inadvertently read antiquated facts and prognosis). After devouring all current information I felt I was ready to step foot in a Down syndrome support group session....enter TVDSA. It did not take me long to realize that I had just met the family I never knew I had and, most importantly, that my tears of pain and sorrow would soon turn to tears of joy.

April 18, 2008. I hit the jackpot of all jackpots! Caleb came into this world with an omniscient grin....I think he has known all along that his birth would forever change my life. He has made me find things from places deep within my soul that I never would have found without him. Upon Caleb's diagnosis I thought the only thing he would be bringing with him into this world was an extra chromosome....I have never been so happy to say that I was so wrong! He has brought with him love, happiness, compassion, empathy, and so much more. His blessings are countless.

Caleb has given me so much....what could I give to him that wouldn't pale in comparison? Acceptance. What a gift that would be! Not just acceptance from his family, he has had that all along, but acceptance from anyone and everyone that I could convince to listen....I just had to share the news....Down syndrome is great!

Of course, I couldn't just go up to someone and say, "Hey, you know what? Down syndrome is nothing to be afraid of. People with Down syndrome are amazing! You should really get to know someone with an extra chromosome." Well, I guess I could, but, would they believe me? Would I have believed me before Caleb? I have found that the best way to convince people of the truth is just to show them. And what better way to show them the greatness of Down syndrome than to get a group of kids together, let's call them "Best Buds", who just happen to all have Down syndrome, and do something out in the community that they think is fun!? The "Best Buds" get to hang out with their friends, or meet a new one, have a blast and possibly even experience something new, all the while, teaching everyone around them how great Down syndrome really is!

**Down syndrome. No problem!**

## Conferences, Workshops, Webinars & TVDSA Scholarship Information

### Third Annual Sprout Film Festival

Entertaining and Memorable Films related to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Egyptian Movie Theater, Boise

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>**: 10:00am

**May 4<sup>th</sup>**: 2:00pm & 7:00pm

#### Tickets:

General: \$10.00 + Surcharge,  
Students, Seniors and People  
with Disabilities: \$8.00 plus  
Surcharge

Movies Include:

[Jacob's Turn](#), [Outside Inside](#),  
[Deedah](#), & [Wysiwyg](#)

### Home Depot Workshop for Kids with Disabilities

**June 15<sup>th</sup>, August 17<sup>th</sup> & October 19<sup>th</sup>**

from 9:00am-12:00pm  
at the Meridian Home Depot:  
1100 S. Progress Ave  
Meridian

Free workshop is geared to provide a fun, quiet, low stress, warm and welcoming environment for kids with special needs of all ages and abilities. Various methods will be provided. Come to one or come to all.

### Boise Parks & Recreation's AdVenture Program Adaptive Recreation

A wide range of recreational, social and educational programs for youth and adults with disabilities. Scholarships available.

AdVenture offers classes, camps, outdoor trips, and recreation activities designed for people with a variety of disabilities including, but not limited to: orthopedic, spinal cord, neuromuscular, hearing and visual impairments as well as intellectual disabilities.

To learn more, please visit [www.cityofboise.org/AdaptiveRecreation](http://www.cityofboise.org/AdaptiveRecreation), call 208-608-7680 (TTY 1-800-377-3529), e-mail [AdVentureProgram@cityofboise.org](mailto:AdVentureProgram@cityofboise.org) or like us on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/bprAdVentureProgram](http://www.facebook.com/bprAdVentureProgram).

### [Wrightslaw Conferences](#)

Special Education Law and Advocacy

Various dates and locations across the U.S.

### TVDSA Scholarships

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.

### 2013 NDSC Conference: "Causecation" July 19-21<sup>st</sup>

Denver, Colorado

Registration opens in March!  
[convention.ndscenter.org](http://convention.ndscenter.org)

### [When Behavior Gets in the Way:](#)

**Creating Caring Schools and Communities**  
**July 29-31<sup>st</sup>**

Manchester, NH

## Effective Communication (continued from page 3)

room teacher tells me a little about her day and assignments.

Since my daughter is non-verbal, this information is priceless! In addition, I have an immediate opportunity to ask clarifying questions. If a concern arises, I know I will be seeing the teacher after school. The key is to honor the teacher's time and while it is tempting on most days, I try not to talk to her more than 5 minutes.

**Meetings:** In addition to short, daily contact, once a month I schedule a 30-minute meeting to discuss my daughter's access to the general education curriculum. I bring samples of her work that I enjoy seeing and things I have questions about. In middle school, the resource room teacher coordinates all the support staff so I only need to talk to her. It feels organized and effective.

It has been my experience that the more needs a child has, the more need there is to effectively communicate with people at school. I have three children. Other than parent-teacher conferences they haven't heard much from me regarding the education of our sons! However, my oldest daughter has special needs and requires much more communication to effectively monitor her IEP goals and her daily happiness. I now feel free from daily phone calls and charts. I am now free to attend to the needs of my family without wondering if the phone will ring.

Source: [Friendship Circle Blog](#) April 2012

## Annual TVDSA Membership Meeting

**Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**  
at A New Leaf  
2456 N. Stokesberry in Meridian

**Topics:** Annual TVDSA Report, Annual board vote, and hear from two scholarship recipients about the PEAK Inclusion Conference.

## Idaho Gives Day, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

GIVE

Join TVDSA in our **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Idaho Gives Day** on **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**. A full day of online giving that helps us for the whole year. You, your family, and your friends can also do it. Such a simple thing and it can be done from anywhere. Just follow the link: <http://idahogives.razoo.com/story/Tvdsa>. The money goes right back to our group to help with social events, and to bring new and exciting things to our community.

For more information, contact [Malu Mulholland](#)





TREASURE VALLEY  
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1404  
Meridian, Idaho 83680  
208-954-7448

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.idahodownsyndrome.org](http://www.idahodownsyndrome.org)

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

## 2014 TVDSA Calendar Model Search

Are you Interested in having someone you know be a model for the 2014 TVDSA Calendar? The photo shoot will be in June (TBA).

We are gathering names **NOW through May 19<sup>th</sup>** of individuals of all ages, with and without Down syndrome, with the planned theme:  
"We are More Alike than Different"

Please email [Malu.Mulholland](mailto:Malu.Mulholland) names and ages



## TVDSA Easter Egg Hunt Pictures

The storytellers were present at the [3<sup>rd</sup> Annual All Ability Easter Egg Hunt](#) in March. You can view the pictures they took by clicking the link above.

The Storytellers are offering a reduced rate for purchasing pictures, if interested. A \$1 donation will go to TVDSA for each image purchased.

## TVDSA Greeting and Note Cards!

TVDSA has greeting & note cards available to purchase. The original 2013 calendar photo shoot pictures are now greeting & note cards!

You can purchase a set of 11, with one of each of the prints, or a set of 10, of a single print/month. **Cost: \$7.00** per set. Or for \$15.00 you can get a 2013 Calendar AND a set of 11 gift cards!

To [view and order](#) the greeting/note cards visit our: [website](#) or contact: [Kristie Yerger](#).



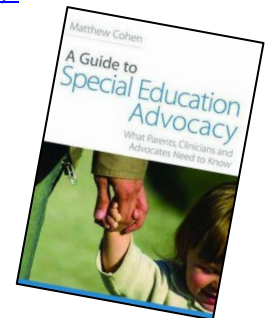
## From the TVDSA Lending Library:

### A Guide to Special Education Advocacy by: Matthew Cohen

*A Guide to Special Education Advocacy* by Matthew Cohen gives parents the foundational understanding of special education, both planning and implementation. Chapters about evaluation, IEP process, behavior management, and transition planning equip parents with the information and strategies they need to help their child get full access to the best educational experience. The author, Matthew Cohen is a leading expert in special education law.

*A Guide to Special Education Advocacy* is available in the TVDSA library. Members may reserve it by contacting the librarian at [library@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:library@idahodownsyndrome.org).

For a complete list of the books/DVDs available through TVDSA, please check out our [Lending Library](#).



*The mission of Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association is to enhance the quality of life for persons with Down syndrome by promoting inclusive environments, providing accurate information to parents, families, and the community, and by advocating respect, dignity, and appropriate supports for people with Down syndrome.*

### Board of Directors:

President: [Paul Auger](#)  
Advisor: [Lynda Wells](#)  
Treasurer & Spanish Contact: [Lucy Olmos](#)  
Community Outreach Chair: [Erin Rosenkoetter](#)  
Fundraising & Membership: [Malu Mulholland](#)

Vice President and Programs Chair: [Kristie Yerger](#)  
Secretary: [Audrey Byrum](#)  
Buddy Walk Chair: [Melody Witte](#)  
Buddy Walk Chair: [George Taylor](#)  
Self Advocate: [Seth Paetel](#)

For more information, articles, past newsletters and more, please visit our website: <http://idahodownsyndrome.org>  
Mailing: PO Box 1404 Meridian, ID 83680; Check us out on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)