**ASL For Beginners**

8 Week Course
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Maryland School for the Deaf
Columbia Campus, 8169 Old Montgomery Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043
October 25 - December 13, 2010
$35.00 per person
All ages and abilities welcome
For more information contact:
Verna Kramer at (410) 480-4505 or verna.kramer@msd.edu
All proceeds benefit the MSD-CC-PTCA

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**New Captioning Law**

Beginning October 1, 2010, a new captioning law goes into effect in Maryland. This new law requires that public places turn on the captions on their televisions when you request it.

Examples of public places include, but are not limited to, bars, restaurants, gyms, train/bus stations, hotels and sports venues.

Public places are excluded from this requirement if no television receiver of any kind is available in the public area or the only public television receiver available in the public area is not a closed-captioned receiver.

If a public place refuses to turn on the captions, you can file a complaint with the Maryland Commission on Human Relations (MCHR).

For more information about this new law, including videos about how to file a complaint, visit the Governor’s Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at www.odhh.maryland.gov

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**Infection Protection**

When it comes to avoiding viruses, pediatricians say that these are the four essentials.

- **CLEAN HANDS.** Wash them often, especially before eating or after coughing or sneezing. Tell your child to scrub with soap or use alcohol-based hand gel. Also teach your child to keep their hands away from their face so they won’t transmit germs into their eyes, nose, or mouth.

- **GOOD FOOD.** Serve a variety of fruits, veggies, whole grains, dairy products, and other nutritious foods. If your child gets less than 400 IU of vitamin D daily from their diet, ask your doctor about taking a supplement. A vitamin D deficiency could increase the risk of many illnesses, including a cold and flu.

- **SLEEP.** Well-rested children are less likely to get sick, so make a regular bedtime non-negotiable. A lack of sleep disrupts the function of white blood cells called T cells, which play an important role in helping fight off infections.

- **VACCINES.** Keeping your child up-to-date with all their regular immunizations will protect them from pneumonia, meningitis, ear infections, and whooping cough.

Reprinted from Parents Magazine, November 2009

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**Vocabulary Builders In Sign Language**

The Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) is a leader in providing access to captioned, educational media. But did you know that they also offer many resources to promote access through sign language as well? There are over 100 titles in the DCMP collection on sign language.

DCMP, in conjunction with Jacksonville State University in Alabama, produced a series of sign language vocabulary videos called: **Vocabulary Builders in Sign Language**. The videos are intended to introduce sign language that is specific to a particular class or subject matter, utilizing deaf professionals signing vocabulary related to their field of expertise. Topics include Science, Computers, English, Math, Psychology, and American History/Government.

Don’t miss this opportunity to increase your sign language skills. You can view the vocabulary builders on YouTube, iTunes U, and through the DCMP collection. Visit their website today at www.DCMP.org
# Make Time for Family

When you spend time with your children talking, playing, and relaxing, you strengthen your relationship and help them do better in school. But for many families, busy schedules get in the way of enjoying each other's company. Meet the challenge with these ideas for making time for family.

## Work it in your schedule

Find creative ways to spend time together throughout the day. Start by thinking about your family's obligations and activities, such as homework, meals, errands, classes, and chores. Then, consider these ways to build bonding time into each part of the day.

- **Play with your child when he finishes his homework.** Fill a recipe box with quick activities so you will always have an idea on hand. When your youngster's homework is done, let him pick an index card from the box, and do the activity together.

- **Keep the conversation going during meals.** Choose a letter of the day, ask everyone to bring a topic to the table that begins with that letter.

- **Replace solo activities with family ones.** Instead of signing just your youngster up for karate, look for a family class. Your parks and recreation department or public library probably offers a variety of free or low-cost family programs. Your child will enjoy being with you, and she'll see that adults can learn something new too.

- **Make a game out of clean up time, and show your child that teamwork pays off.** Have each person choose three things to put away, set a time for 5 to 10 minutes, and race to finish before it goes off.

## Make Every Moment Count

A minute here, a half hour there - try these unexpected way to fit quality time into busy days.

- **Start the day together.** Set your child's alarm to go off a few minutes early so you have time to talk over breakfast. You might ask if he had a dream he remembers. Or find out what special classes he has that day or what he's learning about in science class. Fill him in on your own plans. Making a quick connection first thing will set the tone for the day.

- **Get down on the floor and play.** You might build a house of cards or play a board game. Or surprise your child by helping make a tent out of chairs, sheets, and pillows. Crawl inside together, and share a quiet activity, such as reading.

- **Let your child know you're thinking about her by leaving notes she can find.** Write a note and tuck it into her lunch bag. Draw a funny face on a sticky note, add a greeting and stick it on the cereal box for your child to find at breakfast.

- **Share a snack.** Have hot cocoa with marshmallows, bank oatmeal raisin cookies, or set out a tray of hors d'oeuvres.

## Plan Weekly Dates

Add family time to your weekly to-do list. You'll send your youngster the message that spending time with him matters to you. Choose a time that's convenient for everyone and write a specific activity on the calendar.

- **Watch an old home movie, or make a new one.** You might videotape your family singing or dancing, visiting relatives, or doing their best jumps into a pool or lake.

- **Organize outdoor games like tag, kickball, or badminton.** Or try something new and unusual to do.

- **Go for after-dinner walks.** Carry a camera and take turns snapping pictures of the sunset, interesting clouds, or pretty rocks.

- **Choose a theme for the month and plan one related activity each week.** During "Animal Month" for instance, you could make a bird feeder, volunteer at a shelter, and visit a zoo.

- **Do home projects.** You might work together to sand and paint an old table. Or collect cardboard tubes from paper towels and wrapping paper and tape them together end-to-end to create a giant marble run.

- **But most of all find time to spend together and have fun doing whatever you decide to do.**

Reprinted from Home & School Connection; Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc., 128 N Royal Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630, 540-636-4280
Facilitated IEP Team Meetings in Maryland

Having IEP team meetings facilitated by an independent, trained “facilitator” is rapidly becoming a popular means for parents and school personnel to reach agreement in the educational decision making process for students needing or suspected of needing special education services. When the relationship between parents and school personnel become strained or better yet, before the relationship has the opportunity to fray, parents and school personnel are finding that using independent facilitators can assist the IEP team process.

An independent facilitator may help parents and school personnel avoid misunderstandings or disagreements when it is believed that discussions at the meeting may become challenging. Using a trained, independent facilitator has been found to be an effective means to keep IEP teams focused on the development of the educational program for the student while addressing some of the conflicts and disagreements that may arise from miscommunication. The independent facilitator will utilize skills that create an environment in which the IEP team members; school personnel and parents, can listen to each other and work together to develop high quality education programs for students suspected of, or identified as disabled.

Who can request an IEP meeting be facilitated? An independent facilitator may be requested by either the parent or the school, in any of the participating school districts. However, both parties must agree to participate in this voluntary process.

Who serves as an IEP meeting independent facilitator? The independent facilitator is a trained volunteer from a community mediation center, generally located in the jurisdiction where the student attends school, or in another community close to where the student attends school. The independent facilitator has completed a 50-hour training course in mediation skills, has experienced mediating a variety of disputes, and has completed a 3-day training in IEP Team Meeting Facilitation. The independent facilitator is not a member of the IEP team and does not have a relationship with the school or the parents, other than to assist in the meeting. The independent facilitator remains neutral and focuses on the process while the team makes the decisions.

How does independent facilitation differ from mediation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? Independent IEP facilitation should not be confused with mediation. The independent facilitation occurs at a regular IEP team meeting, which is generally run by the school system. There is no written agreement other than an IEP, which may be developed or revised. While independently facilitated IEP team meetings are emerging as a means to avoid conflicts and/or to resolve conflicts prior to requesting mediation or filing a due process complaint, it is not required under the IDEA. States or local school systems are not required to offer the service. Mediation is typically used when there is a significant disagreement that the parties are otherwise unable to resolve. Mediation may be used to deal with a broader range of issues in special education than in an IEP meeting. A trained impartial mediator brings the parties together to work with each other to resolve a variety of disagreements, often including those not directly related to the student’s IEP.

What does the independent facilitator do at the meeting? The independent facilitator can be expected to:
- Talk to parents and school staff in advance of the meeting.
- Assist the team with establishing an agenda
- Guide the discussion and keep the focus on the student
- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak and be heard
- Help resolve disagreements
- Use communication skills to help parents and school personnel to work together to make decisions about the program.

- Help team members develop and ask clarifying questions about issues that may have occurred in the past.
- Help keep the team on task and focused on the agenda topics.
- Remain impartial, and not take sides, place blame, impose a decision on the group, no offer an opinion on the appropriateness of a decision.

What are the benefits of an independent facilitated IEP team meeting? Parents and school personnel who have used independent facilitation at IEP team meetings report the following benefits:
- Focus remains on the student
- Parties are encouraged to fully participate.
- Positive working relationships between parents and school staff are strengthened
- Opportunities are created for creative, win-win, solutions.
- Facilitation services are free to the parties and non-confrontational.
- Effective communication and listening skills are modeled.
- Points of agreement and disagreement are clarified.
- Parents and professionals are encouraged to identify new options to address unresolved problems.
- Is part of the regular IEP meeting and, therefore, does not require a separate meeting.
- All decisions are made by the team, rather than a mediator or a hearing officer.

How is the confidentiality of the student and family maintained? The parent must provide their consent to allow the school to share confidential information about the student with the independent facilitator. This is required under the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Who pays for the independent facilitator? There is no cost, to the parent or the school, to have an independent facilitator assist in the IEP process.

Who do I contact, if my school system does not offer independently facilitated IEP team meetings? If you are interested in having your school system offer independently facilitated IEP team meetings you should contact the local school system’s Director of Special Education. The Maryland State Department of Education and Community Mediation Maryland are committed to expanding the service to all school systems that are interested in providing this service to parents of students with disabilities and school personnel.

What public agencies are offering independently facilitated meetings, and how do I contact them? You may contact Community mediation Maryland at 410-553-0206 or at 888-826-2262. The following counties offer independently facilitated meetings: Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll county, cecil County, Dorchester County, Harford County, Howard County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince George’s County.
**Kindersay Preschool Learning**

Kids can watch, listen and learn with Kindersay word shows. Kindersay is a free online video website designed to help preschool children and English as Second Language (ESL) children learn English words and signs. The  Over 500 online activities are available in a special word show format.

Visit Kindersay at http://kindersay.com

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**Homemade Face Paint**

1 teaspoon cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon cold cream
1/2 teaspoon water
Food coloring (watch your clothes, it can stain!)
Small containers

In each small container, mix cornstarch and cold cream until well blended. Add water and stir. Add food coloring one drop at a time until you get the desired color. Paint small designs on face with a small paintbrush; remove with soap and water. Store covered.

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**Upcoming Events**

**October 13, 2010**
Cochlear Implant Support Group
Understanding the IEP, 504’s and Accommodations for Children with Cochlear Implants
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Maryland School for the Deaf—Frederick Campus

**October 19, 2010**
Special Needs Family Support Group
Special Olympics and Your Child
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Maryland School for the Deaf—Frederick Campus

**November 17, 2010**
Special Needs Family Support Group
Sensory Issues and Your Child
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Maryland School for the Deaf—Frederick Campus

For information about any upcoming events contact Cheri Dowling at 443-277-8899 or partners@msd.edu

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**MSD-CC-PTCA HAUNTED HOUSE**

**Thursday, October 28, 2010**
5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Maryland School for the Deaf
8169 Old Montgomery Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Admission $5.00 per person
Children 5 and under free
Food, Crafts, Bingo, Games and More

For more information contact Cheri Dowling, CAD@msd.edu or 443-277-8899

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**Happy Fall From the Family Support and Resource Center**