**Website for Transitioning Students with Disabilities**

Governor Martin O’Malley announced the launch of www.mdtransition.org, a new website targeted at Maryland families preparing for the transition of their young adult children with disabilities from secondary school to higher education or employment opportunities.

The Maryland Transitioning youth website was developed by the Maryland Department of Disabilities working in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other agency members of the Governor’s Interagency Transition Council (IATC). The website provides information on the transition planning process, postsecondary education, employment services, health care, transportation, and additional resources available to Maryland families.

The new website provides links to various resources designed to make transition planning easier for families. For more information visit the website at www.mdtransition.org

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**Say “Yes” To Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are important. By attending, you can help your child get the support he/she needs. How?

- You’re the expert on your child. You can share valuable information, personal matters, habits. This lets teachers get to know your child and learn how to work with him/her.
- Teachers are the experts on your child’s schoolwork. They can tell you about your child’s performance on assignments, tests and in class. They can also give you ways to support your child at home.
- Conferences can help you learn about your child’s social life. Ask teachers what kind of crowd your child hangs out with and how your child interacts with peers. You’ll find out if your child needs help with social skills or peer pressure.


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**Positive Solutions For Families 3-Part Workshop**

This 3-part workshop, for families with children ages 3 – 5 years old, will promote positive and effective parenting skills in order to promote children’s social and emotional development and address the challenging behavior of children. All participants will leave with tools, books, and activities to use at home.

**Part 1 – Making Connections – Making It Happen**

**Part 2 – Why Do Children Do What They Do: Teach Me What To Do**

**Part 3 – Facing The Challenge**

Maryland School for the Deaf, Columbia Campus
8165 Old Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043

November 16, 2010, November 23, 2010, and December 1, 2010, all workshops are 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

You must register to attend, please register by November 12, 2010. Space is limited to 20 families.

For more information or to register contact Cheri Dowling at 443-277-8899 or partners@msd.edu

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**Communication Access Public Hearing**

The Department of Justice will be holding public hearings to gather consumer testimony on accessibility of web information and services for state and local government entities and public accommodations, movie captioning and video description and accessibility of next generation 911 services.

The hearing located close to Maryland will be held on:

December 16, 2010
9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
United States Access Board
1331 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004

For more information contact Linda Garrett, Civil Rights Program Specialist, at (202) 353-0423 (tty) or visit the ADA website at www.ada.gov
Get Your Child Hooked On Books—Parents Magazine, April 2010

Birth to 12 Months

Snuggling with your baby as you look at picture books teaches her to associate reading with comfort.

- **Slow down.** Parents have a tendency to read too quickly. Pause for a beat between every sentence. This helps set a comfortable pace, and it gives older children time to absorb the story, which will spark their imagination.

- **Be a narrator.** Help your child connect objects to words by naming things around the house and explaining your actions.

- **Embrace repetition.** Rereading favorites builds a baby’s confidence. Plus, your child will learn more each time you go through them.

- **Look For** durable board books, (chewing and throwing are normal at this age) and soft, waterproof ones for the bath. Few to no words. Pictures of easily recognizable objects, like balls, bottles, and other babies. Patterns and strong color contrasts, since an infant’s eyesight is still developing.

1 to 2 Years

As your child becomes mobile, he revels in discovery. Keep toddler titles around the house (even in the kitchen) so he can look at them whenever he wants and you can squeeze a little reading into the margins of your day.

- **Put her in control.** Grab a book, hold it, turn the pages, close it, and return it to the shelf. Then see whether she can do the same.

- **Show your playful side.** Hamming it up will get your child excited about the story.

- **Relate to his routine.** When your child is getting dressed, read a book about clothing. Ask, “What is Elmo going to wear?” and “Are you going to wear blue pants today too?”

- **Get into construction.** If you’re reading a Richard Scarry book, take out some blocks and recreate the fictional Busytown together. Or ask your child if she wants to build a house for Frog and Toad.

- **Make a baby book.** Use photos of your child and write simple, repetitive captions (“Baby sleeps, baby eats, baby smiles, baby grows”).

- **Look for** Images of animals or kids doing familiar activities. Repetitive phrases, questions posed to the reader. Pop-up pages for an interactive experience.

3 to 4 Years

As your child’s coordination improves, she’ll begin making marks on a page, a critical stage in her reading readiness. Drawing and pretend writing help your child grasp the complex process of reading. You can help by providing easy access to crayons, markers and other drawing materials. Ask her to make a picture to go with a story she likes, not a copy, but her interpretation.

- **Point to it.** Run your finger beneath the print on a page as you read.

- **Talk it out.** Ask questions that will evoke a thoughtful response. “Why do you think she feels angry? Explain new words and concepts, but try to keep the story flowing.
Get Your Child Hooked On Books—Parents Magazine, April 2010

3 to 4 Years

Serve it up. Prepare food that relates to the story you’re reading. Have your child make pancakes with you when you read *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*, or munch on thick slices of toast with jelly as you turn the pages of *Bread and Jam for Frances*.

Come up with a craft. The next time you take out *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, create antennae using pom-poms, a headband, and pipe cleaners. Have your child wear it every time you read the book.

Let him scribble. If your child won’t sit still and listen, see whether keeping his hands busy with a pencil and paper reduces his fidgeting.

Make the most of TV time. As your child watches *Dora the Explorer*, be sure the closed-caption feature is on.

Build a book nook. It doesn’t need to be fancy, just cozy. A corner with pillows, stuffed animals, and a book basket will do fine.

Look for simple text a child can memorize as she begins to recognize words. New characters to broaden kids’ horizons. Stories about making friends, going to school, or visiting the doctor. More complex tales.

5 to 6 Years

By now you may be reading chapter books with your child.

Have your child set the pace. Don’t worry if a book seems babyish. It’s better for your child to stay within his comfort zone. He’ll let you know when he’s ready for the next level.

Expand your definition of books. If your child prefers reading comic books to fairy tales, experts say that’s fine.

Take a field trip. Read about plants or wildlife before going to a nature center. When you visit a science museum, pick up a book about experiments you can do at home. If you take your kids to a historic site, see whether the gift shop has a children’s title that lets them learn more about it.

Give “bonus” book time. Place a lamp near your child’s bed, and on weekends let him stay up 15 minutes past his regular bedtime to read.

Act it out. Role-play the stories you’ve read. Search the dress-up box for a princess gown or a policeman’s uniform. Let your child practice for awhile, then record her performance. Play it back for the whole family.

Publish his work. Have your child take photos with a sturdy digital camera. Print them out, and then see whether he can write a story to go with them. Bind the pages between a homemade cover, and add the book to your home library.

Start a kids’ book club. Invite some of your child’s friends over for a reading party. Plan a skit or an art activity. Let them take turns reading, then talk about the characters over pizza.

Stay by his side. A first-grader can often understand books written on a fourth-grade level if Mom or Dad reads them to him. Just because your child starts reading by himself doesn’t mean you should stop doing it together.

Look for no more than five unfamiliar words per page. Recurring characters and themes, such as in series like *Amelia Bedelia* and *Arthur*. Longer chapters and more challenging story lines for reading together.
Hygiene Matters!

The Pre-teen stage is the time for kids to take control of their personal hygiene. The good habits you’ve taught so far should now be near-automatic. Nevertheless, your son may ignore the rules for a while to assert his masculinity and independence, and a child with a busy schedule may also simply skip a routine. The start of puberty raises the dilemma of how to encourage your tween to wash more thoroughly without making him or her uncomfortable or embarrassed. Some ways to help:

- **Re-state** why hygiene is important. Staying clean helps keep you healthy because you’re better protected against infection. Cleanliness also keeps tween’s looking and smelling fresh, which helps socially.

- **Have clear** expectations for daily washing routines. If everyone in the house washes their hands in the bathroom, before eating, and after playing outside, it stops being something to fuss over. Model good practices yourself.

- **To manage** puberty comfortably, suggest a daily bath or shower before it's clearly necessary, perhaps explaining that your tween's action-packed day makes it sensible.

- **Pass more** of the responsibility to your tween but pay attention to how he's doing. If he ignores a hygiene essential, discuss it, as it could indicate a self-esteem problem. If, on the other hand, he's simply trying to "act male," an incentive might re-focus him.

- **Avoid creating** an obsession with dirt and germs. Exposure to bacteria can create a useful immunity over time, and we all have “friendly” and “unfriendly” bacteria in our bodies. Cleanliness is a practical way to feel nice, prevent and contain disease, and be socially welcomed. Germ phobia could induce a fear of public spaces.


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**Turkey Day Facts**

Wild turkeys, the kind eaten at the first Thanksgiving Dinner, can fly as fast as 55 miles per hour.

Potatoes weren’t on the first Thanksgiving menu because the pilgrims considered them poisonous.

Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday of November each year thanks to a declaration by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Thanksgiving was first named a national holiday by George Washington in 1789.

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**Upcoming Events**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November 16, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Positive Solutions for Families – Part 1</td>
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<td><strong>November 17, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Special Needs Support Group</td>
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<td>Sensory Issues</td>
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<td><strong>November 18, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Internet Safety Workshop</td>
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<td><strong>November 23, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Positive Solutions for Families – Part 2</td>
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<td><strong>November 30, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Cochlear Implant Support Group</td>
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<td><strong>December 1, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Positive Solutions for Families – Part 3</td>
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For more information about any of the above workshops or to register please contact Cheri Dowling at 443-277-8899 or partners@msd.edu