



Wake County SEPTA  
Newsletter  
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SEPTA is a district-wide PTA that connects parents and educators of children receiving special education services from *preschool through high school*.

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# Does Your Child have an IEP?

## First General Membership Meeting of 2006/2007

Who: Dr Theresa Maitland, Assistant Director of UNC Learning Disabilities Student Services, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

What: The IEP at Home: Parent Coaching and the Home Environment

When: Thursday, October 26th  
6pm-7pm Community Resource Exhibits  
7pm Meeting Called to Order

Where: Nationwide Insurance Building  
4401 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh (across from Crabtree Valley Mall)

Over the past year as new members have joined, I have been surprised by how many parents and educators are unaware of some of the wonderful resources in the community to educate, enrich, and support our families and children. So for the second year, we have invited resource and service providers to come share information about their products and services before our first general meeting of the school year.

**— Non-Members Welcome! —  
Bring a Friend!**

**L** abels and Placements are an issue for many whose children or students receive special education services. Regular Ed? Pull-out or Push-in resource? Self-Contained classroom? EMD, TMD, SPMD, CC?

For many parents, it is disheartening to read or hear about how well some kids are doing when our children may not be able to “mainstream” due to behaviors or medical needs that require closer monitoring and more individualized instruction.

My youngest child, Claudia, is now 7½. She had three years in developmental preschool and started kindergarten in a CCK last year as a 6 year old. She had a great year, great teacher, couldn't have been happier. At the IEP in the spring, I was pleased with her recommended placement in the CC1 class at the same school.

This year started off well in August. She seemed happy to be back at school, al-

*(Continued on page 2)*

Everyone is gifted — but some people never open the package.

**Labels and Placements**  
(Continued from page 1)

though initially confused about not going to her old classroom. After a few weeks, though, her behavior deteriorated. We decided to have her receive some of her academic instruction in the Kindergarten classroom with her previous teacher for part of the day. Even with this intervention, her behavior issues continued.

I spoke with her CC1 teacher, who said that Claudia was the lowest functioning in the class (again, hard to hear). This made it difficult for her to be included in group instruction. I assume her behavior was a result of feeling left out (having an older and a twin brother, she has a keen sense of fairness).

We discussed possible solutions which included having another assistant in the classroom to work with her more directly or going back to the Kindergarten class. I knew the assistant solution wouldn't work because, again, she'd be singled out and it would probably require an update to her IEP which would delay the implementation of the solution. Since returning to Kindergarten fulltime, Claudia has seemed very happy in her "new" class.

Many parents reject having their child "held back," as would I for my other two children with IEPs. But I know this is the best thing for her.

A child's label or placement is somewhat irrelevant if the overall goals can best be met in the recommended setting. The crucial thing to remember is that the classroom makeup – the level of the students assigned – will affect

the level of the classroom whether you call it a CC1, a TMD or a EMD (etc). And this may change from one year to the next, so it is hard to judge during an observation whether the students will be at the same level as your child, or whether the teacher will interact with the children in the same manner. A TMD at one school may be more like an EMD at another in terms of academic challenge.

Claudia's CCK teacher made her recommendation last year expecting that some of her CCK classmates at a similar level would return to the same school but that didn't happen. If it had, there would have been a group for her to engage with in the CC1 class for group instruction. I do not fault the CC1 teacher at all; she still has a challenging class and did a great job of communicating the problems so that they could be resolved as soon as possible.

I wanted to share this story for two reasons. First, I want to affirm that placement/inclusion in a general education classroom should be the assumption, and that a more restrictive placement should be justified by the needs of the child and the goals in the IEP. Second, I wanted those parents whose children are not able to "mainstream" to realize that while inclusion is the goal, you have to do what's best for your child. In many cases, no amount of advocacy on your part will change your child. I had to relinquish the notion that I am the "I" in IEP, and to acknowledge and encourage all of Claudia's gifts and talents, not just ones that can be measured academically.

Leigh Menconi  
President, Wake SEPTA

**SEPTA DOES NOT PROVIDE DIRECT ADVOCACY SERVICES TO PARENTS. RATHER, WE SEEK TO EDUCATE AND SUPPORT BOTH PARENTS AND EDUCATORS ON THE LAWS GOVERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT AND SERVICES (IDEA).**

**THERE ARE RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY IF YOU ARE SEEKING ADVOCACY SUPPORT. VISIT OUR WEBPAGE OR CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**Thanks to Smith Breeden Associates**

for their grant to purchase copies of Richard LaVoie's video/DVD "[How Difficult Can This Be?](#)" which we have made available to members, PTAs, and school personnel.

The presentation runs 70 minutes and the DVD has an alternate Spanish-language track.

There is a 30 day limit on borrowing; if you would like to schedule it for a meeting, please make your request well in advance so that we can insure a copy is available.

**Calendar**

**January 2007**

General Meeting  
Topic: IEP Workshop

**February 2007**

Lecture Topic:  
Transitioning

**March 2007**

Liaison Meeting

**April 2007**

General Meeting  
Topic TBA

**May 2007**

Lecture/Discussion  
Transition from Early Intervention to Preschool Services

**See website for SEPTA's and other community groups' events.**