



SUMMER 2010

NEW DIRECTIONS



Special Olympics
youngathletes™

Early Childhood Direction Center

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ECDC is a regional clearinghouse that provides free information, referral, technical assistance and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with children birth to five with suspected or diagnosed delays or disabilities.

We provide ongoing community training programs for both parents and professionals.

ECDC is funded by the New York State Education Department, hosted by Women and Children's Hospital and provided in-kind support from People Inc.

If you would like to be included on our list serve to receive the latest federal, state and local updates, please send an email to vrubin@kaleidahealth.org and indicate whether you are a parent or a professional.

WHAT IS YOUNG ATHLETES?

Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age eight. Since its inception in 1968, Special Olympics has established itself as a preeminent global organization offering sports training and competition opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities ages eight and above. Over the years, families of children too young to compete looked for avenues to join the movement. Thanks to the generous support of the Mattel Children's Foundation, Lynch Family Foundation and Gang Family Foundation, Special Olympics can now welcome these future athletes and families through Young Athletes™ — a developmentally appropriate play program for children with intellectual disabilities ages two through 7.

Young Athletes introduces children with intellectual disabilities and their families to the world of Special Olympics by pursuing the following goals:

- Engage children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development;
- Welcome family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support;
- Raise awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events.

Young Athletes is a versatile program that can work in various learning situations. The program is designed for families to play with their young athletes at home in a fun atmosphere. It is also appropriate for preschools, schools and playgroups to use with small groups of young children with and without intellectual disabilities. The flexibility of Young Athletes ensures the opportunity to welcome families and their young children into the Special Olympics family.

For more information please contact: Shelby Baker, Program Director, Western Region Special Olympics New York, 716-580-3346, www.specialolympicsny.org



Websites to investigate:

- www.rightchoiceforkids.org (to find an accredited child care program and information for parents)
- www.wnyfamilymagazine.com (A local family resource newsletter)
- www.pbs.org (Public Broadcasting Service)
- www.zerotothree.org (National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families)
- <http://letsplay.buffalo.edu> (Center for Assistive Technology at UB provides families and others with ways to use assistive technology in supporting their child's play)
- www.ataccess.org/resources/wcp/edefault.html (Family Place in Cyberspace presents a list of specific ideas and strategies for adapting toys and childhood activities for children of all abilities)

Dear ECDC,

Ask ECDC

What steps do I take to ensure a smooth transition from EI (Early Intervention) to CPSE (Committee on Preschool Special Education) and still feel connected to the services that are now being provided to my child at his school as opposed to the services he received in our home? I am feeling disconnected from his service providers.

Cathy, Buffalo

Dear Cathy,

It can be hard to go from EI to CPSE. Your EI Service Coordinator has helped you through everything up until now and being without their help can make you feel overwhelmed. Hopefully your service coordinator has helped you to develop some skills to advocate for your child.

Get to know your child's service providers. Have regular conferences and communicate in between by notebooks, phone calls, or emails. Listen to your child and observe his/her behavior. If you are observing behaviors that interfere with daily activities or see new skills developing share this information with all team members. This contact will help you to feel connected and help the providers to make sure your child is receiving services that match their strengths and needs. It is important for you to remember that you are a part of the team and your input is just as important as the other members of the team.

If you develop questions or need further guidance you can always feel free to contact us at ECDC for assistance.

Is My Child Ready For Kindergarten?

What skills do teachers think are most important for children starting school? Using a pencil, knowing letters and counting to 20 are not at the top of the list.



In a survey of kindergarten teachers, the majority rated the following as most important to school readiness:

- Communicating wants, thoughts, and needs verbally
- Following directions
- Not being disruptive in class
- Being sensitive to other children's feelings

A child's social, emotional and behavioral skills are critical to their academic success.



Support Group for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Moderated by:

Kathy Ralabate Doody, MSED &
Dylan Broggio, LCSW-R

PURPOSE: Provide a welcoming environment for parents and other caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorders to meet, share experiences, ask questions and receive support.

TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 PM - Light refreshments will be served

DATES: Monthly on Wednesdays:
JUNE 9th
JULY 14th
AUGUST 11th

LOCATION: EPIC/Parent Network of WNY
1000 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14202

PARKING: FREE Parking behind the building

RSVP: We are limiting the amount of people in each group, so that each participant can have a meaningful experience. Please call to RSVP for this session or if you are interested in attending future sessions-(716) 878-7600 or e-mail: jmertz@kaleidahealth.org

COST: FREE

If you are interested in attending but have transportation or other barriers that would limit your participation, please let us know.

