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# *Parent Connection*

## SPRING 2009 – Published Quarterly



## EDUCATION

President Obama's new education agenda for our children was recently unveiled. The Obama-Biden plan will restore the promise of America's public education, and ensure that American children achieve and succeed. Some highlights of the plans include:

- Early Childhood Education
  - A Zero to Five plan
  - Expanding Head Start and Early Head Start
  - Providing affordable, high-quality child care
- K-12
  - Reforming the *No Child Left Behind Act*
  - Supporting high-quality schools and closing low-performing charter schools
  - Making math and science education a national priority
  - Addressing the dropout crisis
  - Expanding high-quality after-school opportunities
  - Supporting College Outreach programs
  - Supporting College Credit initiatives
  - Supporting English language learners
  - Recruiting teachers
  - Preparing teachers
  - Retraining teachers
  - Rewarding teachers
- Higher Education
  - Creating the American Opportunity Tax Credit
  - Simplifying the application process for financial aid
- Students with Disabilities
  - Obama and Biden will work to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities by increasing funding and effectively enforcing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and by holding schools accountable for providing students with disabilities the services and supports they need to reach their potential. Obama and Biden will also support Early Intervention Services for infants and toddlers and work to improve college opportunities for high school students with disabilities.

To read the plan in its entirety, visit [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).



## ***New & Updated Information Packets***

Maine Parent Federation has information packets available on more than 200 topics. These packets contain researched information, tips, local and national resources, and a list of lending library material available here at MPF. The following information packets have recently been updated:

### **Disability / Disorder Related Topics:**

- Central Auditory Processing
- Depression
- Down Syndrome
- Facial Differences
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- PICA

### **General Topics:**

- Estate Planning
- Local Case Resolution Committee

### **Laws, Rules, and Regulation Related Topics**

- Americans with Disabilities Act – ADA
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act - FERPA
- State Complaint, Mediation and Due Process

**.... and many more!!!!**

If you would like to receive any of our information packets, or would like information on another topic, please contact MPF by:

- Phone: **1-800-870-7746** (ask to speak with a Parent Information Specialist)
- Email: **parentconnect@mpf.org**  
(Please provide complete mailing information.)

**These materials are offered free of charge!**

## ***Kindergarten Registration & Screening***

Most public schools in Maine conduct registration and screening for Kindergarten and Pre-K in the spring. This can be an anxious time for parents, filled with concerns about their child's school readiness.

The screening process is used to determine if your child is ready for the classroom environment, and varies slightly from district to district. There are many different assessment tools used for screening. Strategies such as storytelling and conversation may be used to determine verbal and listening skills. Fine motor skills can be accessed by the use of scissors, drawing, and coloring. Physical challenges such as hopping on one foot or bouncing a ball can be used to measure larger motor skills. Other factors, like independent bathroom skills and the ability to recognize authority, are also critical for school success. As with every transition in your child's development, your input and involvement will play a vital role in your child's readiness.

These are some additional supports that parents can use for school readiness:

- Playing school at home allows for familiarity with some activities that might take place in the classroom
- Visiting the school with your child will help to reduce fear and increase your child's comfort level with his future surroundings
- Stay positive and enthusiastic when talking with your child about their upcoming school experience, and provide opportunities for them to ask lots of questions
- Attend a "*Beyond the ABC's & 123's: A Parent's Guide to Transition Into Kindergarten*" workshop offered by MPF's Maine State PIRC (Parent Information & Resource Center) Project

For more information on kindergarten registration and screening, or to schedule a workshop, contact the Maine State PIRC at 1-800-870-7746 or email [aburgess@mpf.org](mailto:aburgess@mpf.org).

## ***Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss!***

March 2, 2009 marks the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Dr. Seuss (Theodore Seuss Geisel).

Dr. Seuss published more than 60 children's books filled with rhythmic prose and colorful characters, from *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham* to *Fox in Sox* and *The Lorax*. Dr. Seuss wrote many stories using primary easy to read words and fun-filled nonsense, all written in rhyme to delight and entertain. It was his light-hearted style that would help inspire a love of reading for generations!

In celebration of Dr. Seuss and the joy of reading, many schools across the state recognize March as *Dr. Seuss Month* to promote literacy awareness. Check with your child's school and local library to see what opportunities exist for your family to participate in literacy awareness events. Find ways to join in the celebration, or create your own reading celebration at home!

Here are some suggestions for encouraging a love of reading at home:

- Model positive reading habits at home. Let your children catch you reading!
- Take turns reading -- read to your children and then let them read to you.
- Turn your favorite Dr. Seuss' book into a skit or an art project. Encourage your child to add on to the story after the book has been read.
- Encourage older children to read to younger siblings; this practice will help build fluency skills while increasing confidence with classroom public reading.
- Make books available; this will encourage *print motivation* (the interest and enjoyment of books) and *print awareness* (the basic recognition of how letters make words, words make sentences, and sentences tell stories).
- If your child participates in a Title 1A reading program at school, ask for information on strategies and fun activities you can use at home.

***Most important, celebrate reading and make reading a part of your family fun!***

## **Preparing Your Child for MEA Testing**

During the month of March all students in grades three through eight will take the Maine Educational Assessments (MEA's) to determine how well their school is meeting the Maine Learning Results standards. The MEA's are a series of standardized tests to measure students' performance in reading and mathematics (grades three to eight), and in science (grades five and eight).

For many students, taking tests can be a stressful experience. The importance placed on testing can be overwhelming and create added anxiety and pressure. A few simple strategies can help ease the tension and make the experience a more positive one for all.

Encourage your child to read all questions carefully and make certain they understand all directions before they answer the questions. Pay close attention to true and false questions, look out for tricky words like "always" and "never". Read multiple choice questions all the way through before selecting an answer to prevent selecting a wrong answer in haste, a better answer may exist further down the list. Don't leave any questions unanswered. An unanswered question is definitely wrong; an educated guess using a process of elimination stands a good chance of being correct. When it comes to reading comprehension questions, encourage your child to read through the questions before they begin reading the passage. By reading the questions and paying attention to key words like who, what, where, when, why and how, your child can pre-determine what information the test questions will be looking for and what details they should be paying attention to.

There are several supportive measures parents can do to help their child feel prepared. If you have internet access, visit the Department of Education's website at [www.maine.gov/education/MEA](http://www.maine.gov/education/MEA) to view the Maine Learning Results and samples of the tests your child will take at different grade levels. Make sure your family schedule is lightened during the weeks of testing -- having additional down time will help your child relax. Talk about the tests ahead of time to help ease tension. Let your child know that the tests are meant to show how well the school is delivering the grade level information every child should know. Plan healthy meals, quiet family time and early bedtimes to help ensure that your child arrives at school rested and feeling good.

For more information on MEA's or the Maine Learning Results, contact the Maine State PIRC Project at 1-800-870-7746 or email [aburgess@mpf.org](mailto:aburgess@mpf.org).

## ~ Upcoming Events ~

### G.E.A.R. Workshops for Parents:

#### ***Disabilities Overview and Resources***

Tuesday, February 24, 2009, 9:30–11:00 AM  
Youth & Family Services, 5 Commerce Street,  
Skowhegan

#### ***Know Your Rights When Receiving Mental Health Services***

Tuesday, March 3, 2009, 6:30–8:00 PM  
Alfond Youth Center, 126 North Street,  
Waterville

#### ***Positive Behavioral Supports: Self-Preservation and Success in Parenting Children with Behavioral Health Needs***

Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 6:00–7:30 PM  
WINGS, 900 Hammond Street, Bangor

FMI or to register for any of the above workshops,  
call Carol Tiernan at 1-800-264-9224.

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#### ***Southern Maine Autism Conference***

Saturday, March 28, 2009  
Wyndham Portland Airport Hotel, South Portland  
***Free Admission, Registration Required***  
Featuring special guest, Jason McElwain, co-author of  
*The Game of My Life*. There will be a variety of  
educational breakout sessions, and an exhibit hall  
featuring a full range of organizations and vendors.  
FMI, visit [www.maineautismconference.org](http://www.maineautismconference.org).

#### ***Bullying: Identification, Strategies, and Coping Skills***

Presented by Marjorie Withers  
April 28, 2009, 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM  
*Free workshop, lunch is provided!*  
FMI or to register, contact Brenda Clough at 207-667-  
2430, ext. 93, or email [scftcm3@yahoo.com](mailto:scftcm3@yahoo.com).

#### ***26<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Family Weekend***

June 19 – 21, 2009  
University of Maine at Machias  
FMI or to request an application, contact Lillian  
Leighton, 9 Eastbrook Road, Franklin, ME 04634.

#### ***Come for Breakfast and Join in Recognizing Oral Health Heroes***

**Representative Lisa Miller & Wendy Alpaugh  
DMD, Washington County Children's Program**  
February 26, 2009, 8:00-9:30AM, Cross Cafeteria,  
Back Room, State Office Building in Augusta.  
Door Prizes! RSVP: 622-7566, ext. 258, or  
[www.mainedentalaccess.org](http://www.mainedentalaccess.org).

## Job Openings at Maine Parent Federation

### **Regional Family Support Coordinator Openings**

MPF has two part-time Regional Family Support Coordinator positions open. One is in the **Southern Aroostook and Penobscot County area** (20-25 hrs/wk) and the other is in the **Washington and Hancock County area** (30-35 hrs/wk). Specific duties include outreach and support to parents of children with special health care needs and disabilities; outreach to child-serving agencies; matching parents with supports, resources and other parents; conducting workshops; and working with families and professionals to improve the support system available to families. Parents or family members of people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Please send letter of interest and resume to:  
Beverly Baker, Family Support Project Director,  
PO Box 2067, Augusta, ME 04338. EOE

## SCHIP Reauthorization

We are very pleased that the Senate recently passed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 by a vote of 66-32. Ten of 12 New England Senators voted for the bill!

The bill includes the ICHIA provision, which eliminates the current five-year waiting period for legally residing immigrant children. In addition, a number of amendments were defeated that would have weakened the bill.

Senator Baucus (D-MT) has expressed hope that the Senate bill can be sent to the House for a vote, rather than sending the House and Senate bills to a Conference Committee. We will keep you posted on how the bill's differences are resolved.

### **ACTION STEP**

Please call your Senator(s) and thank them for voting to reauthorize SCHIP. Let him/her know you took notice and appreciate his/her support for children's health care coverage.

Congratulations to all of you for your good work!

## ***Maine Parent Federation's GEAR UP Interviews Parents!***



From mid-December, 2008 through January, 2009 Maine Parent Federation staff surveyed parents of the 1,265 students in Maine's State GEAR UP Program. The six-year GEAR UP grant requires that parents and students be surveyed every two years to find out if the program is having the desired result of increasing the number of students from low-income families who complete some form of higher education.

**We asked, “*Do you think your child could afford to attend a public four-year college?*”**

### **High Hopes**

If parents' intentions to have their children attend higher education is an indicator, the level of optimism is encouraging: 56.6% of parents of GEAR UP students expect their child(ren) to achieve a four-year college degree or higher! An additional 33.6% expect their children to achieve “some college but less than a four-year degree.”

### **Many Fears and Doubts**

While more than 90% of these parents expect their child to complete some level of higher education, more than a third (34.3%) are not sure the money is available to pay for it. When asked, “*Do you think that your child could afford to attend a public four-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?*”, 26.8% answered “not sure,” 5.4% answered “probably not”, and 2.1% answered “definitely not.” When students answered the same question in their survey, nearly half (48.2%) did not feel sure they could find a way to afford a public four-year college education.

### **Communication Still “Needs Improvement”**

Among the parents who completed the survey, less than 50% reported that someone from their school or GEAR UP had spoken with them about college entrance requirements or the availability of financial aid to help pay for college. Although all GEAR UP high schools offer financial aid information to students and parents, many families still feel confused and under-informed about the complicated process of college access and financial aid.

### **What to Do**

Call someone if you have questions about the financial aid available to your child. Call or visit your child's guidance counselor. If your child attends a GEAR UP high school, call the GEAR UP Liaison. Call the financial aid office at the colleges your child has applied to. Call the Finance Authority of Maine, 1-800-228-3734, or call Maine Parent Federation, 1-800-870-7746, and ask for a GEAR UP staff member for help with your questions.

If you live in an area served by a GEAR UP high school, watch for workshop announcements. Visit our website for a list of GEAR UP high schools at [www.mpf.org/projects/gearup.htm](http://www.mpf.org/projects/gearup.htm). MPF GEAR UP will offer two free workshops for parents before graduation. You don't have to have a child in GEAR UP to attend. The first of the two workshops is designed for parents of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders, to help plan for the college application process. The other workshop is designed for parents of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, to help plan for the transition from high school to college. Please call MPF GEAR UP at 1-800-870-7746 with any questions.

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*News from the*  
**Family Support Regional Coordinators**

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**Region 1:** Cumberland, York, Androscoggin & Oxford Counties - **Theresa D'Andrea**  
1-800-515-2738 - tdandrea@mpf.org

**Save the Date!**

Southern Maine Parent Awareness Fall Conference  
October 17, 2009  
Featuring Rick Lavoie  
Location to be announced

**Region 2:** Waldo, Lincoln, Knox, and Sagadahoc Counties; & the Brunswick Area  
**Beth Thomas** 1-866-639-2804 - bthomas@mpf.org

- ★ **Midcoast Transition Series** meets the third Tuesday night of each month from 6-8PM at Patten Free Library in Bath. At these meetings families select the topics and a panel of experts are invited to talk about that topic at the next meeting. We will discuss Housing at the February meeting.
- ★ **Working with Children with Challenging Behaviors**, May 26<sup>th</sup>, Hutchinson Center, Belfast, ME from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, presented by Marjorie Withers, LCPC.
- ★ **Support Parent Mentorship, Voting, Advocacy and Community Involvement Trainings** are available to Midcoast parent groups, organizations, agencies, and schools by request. FMI or to register, call Beth.

**Region 3:** Kennebec, Somerset, Piscataquis & Franklin Counties

**Veronica Currier-Boucher**

1-800-870-7746 – vboucher@mpf.org

**Support Parent Training:** April 11<sup>th</sup> from 8 AM to 12 NOON in Somerset, location to be announced. Call Veronica for more information.

**Region 4:** Northern Penobscot, Northern Washington & Southern Aroostook Counties  
**Regional Coordinator Position Open, call 1-800-870-7746 for more information.**

**New Monthly Groups starting at CHCS in Houlton:**

- ◆ Autism Support Group
- ◆ Parenting Support – Wed
- ◆ Foster/Adoptive/Kinship/Grandparent Support Group

**Call for meeting dates and times.**

Coming May 13 to Aroostook County – **Strength-Based Strategies for Working with Challenging Behaviors** presented by Marjorie Withers.

**Region 5:** Southern Washington & Hancock Counties & the Bangor Area

**Regional Coordinator Position Open, call 1-800-870-7746 for more information.**

**Downeast Youth Leadership** meeting, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 - 5:00 PM at the Ellsworth Library. For more information, call Lori Joy at 207-460-3914.

**Bullying: Identification, Strategies and Coping Skills**, presented by Marjorie Withers, April 28, 2009, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM at the Ellsworth Holiday Inn.

**Student Assistance Team (SAT)** training on May 6 in Bangor. Please call 1-800-870-7746 for more information.

**Region 6:** Northern & Central Aroostook County

**Catherine Jandreau**

1-877- 848-1253 or 207-834-7908

cjandreau@mpf.org

**Trainings Coming to Aroostook County:**

**Guardianship** – Learn about the many forms of guardianship and how to choose one from an experienced mom, Judy Demerchant. Date and location to be announced.

**Reactive Attachment Disorder – Taking the Steps to Creating a Healthy Attachment** – March 13, 2009, UMFK from 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM. Professional fee \$60, **families are welcome to attend at no cost.** CEU's and contact hours are available.

**The ADD/ADHD Child: Joys and Challenges** Friday, April 10, 2009 from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM at UM Fort Kent, presented by Tracy Nute.

**Working with Children with Challenging Behaviors** Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at UM Presque Isle, presented by Marjorie Withers.

*Call Catherine for more information.*

**Other News:**

MPF is part of the Community Referral Committee for Maine's Hi-Fidelity Wrap in Knox, Waldo, and Sagadahoc Counties. If you have a child that is at risk of out-of-home placement, or is out of the home due to involvement with juvenile justice, DHHS, and/or hospitalized for mental health concerns, call Beth Thomas at 1-866-639-2804 to learn about Hi-Fidelity options. In York County, call Theresa D'Andrea at 1-800-515-2738 for more information.

**Center for Appropriate Dispute  
Resolution in Special Education  
(CADRE) will be presenting at the  
'09 Celebrating the Family Conference!**

We thought our readers would be interested in learning more about some of the speakers and topics that will be featured at the October 2009 MPF *Celebrating the Family* Conference. For the Special Education strand, we are pleased that Phil Moses, Assistant Director of CADRE, has agreed to join us. Phil will share his considerable knowledge and facilitation background on mediation and conflict resolution in special education during a day-long workshop. The workshop will encompass topics ranging from collaborative problem solving to more formal means of dispute resolution. CADRE highlights three outcomes they work towards: Improved Learning and Behavior for Students; More Collaboration Between Families and Providers; and Money Shifting from Adversarial Procedures to Educational Programming for Students.



**CADRE is the  
National Center  
on  
Dispute  
Resolution in  
Special Education**

**ABOUT CADRE:**

The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) works to increase the nation's capacity to effectively resolve special education disputes, reducing the use of expensive adversarial processes. CADRE works with state and local education and early intervention systems, parent centers, families and educators to improve programs and results for children with disabilities. CADRE, based in Eugene, Oregon, is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the US Department of Education to serve as the National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education.

CADRE's partners include: Direction Service, Inc., the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers at PACER Center, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, and Mediate.com/Resourceful Internet Solutions, Inc.

For more information about CADRE, you can visit the CADRE website at [www.directionservice.org/cadre](http://www.directionservice.org/cadre) and view a four minute and twenty-four second Flash video about CADRE.



**ABOUT THE PRESENTER:**

Philip Moses serves as CADRE's Assistant Director where he has worked since 1999. Philip was formerly Coordinator of the Program on Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the Government Law Center of Albany Law

School. Philip served as President of the New York State Dispute Resolution Association from 1995 - 1997. Formerly the Director of the Dispute Resolution Center of Onondaga County (NY), he also founded the Institute for Advanced Conflict Resolution Skills based in Syracuse. He holds a Masters in Political Science with a Certificate in Conflict Resolution from Syracuse University, along with many professional certifications in the field. Philip has chaired numerous conferences and national symposiums including CADRE's *National Symposium on IEP Facilitation* (October 2005), and *On the Road ~ IDEA '04 & More: The Fourth National Symposium on Dispute Resolution in Special Education*, (December 200) in Washington, D.C.



**Partners in  
Special Education**

Maine Parent Federation is now in its second year of the **Partners in Special Education** pilot, funded by the Maine Department of Education. MPF was excited to get this pilot off the ground in 2007! Over the years, one of the most frequent comments we have heard from families is how frustrating it can be to understand and navigate the special education system in their child's school. **Partners** works with the parents and school personnel in the pilot schools to: identify those things that promote meaningful parent involvement; identify areas that create barriers to meaningful parent involvement, and to support parents in gaining a better understanding of the special education system. This work can include: parent meetings, special events or

activities, developing school-specific special education handbooks, developing parent leaders, and supporting parents in preparing for and participating in Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meetings. A **Partners** relationship starts with an agreement between MPF and a local school system. During the 2007-08 school year, MPF partnered with two schools: Cape Elizabeth and SAD 3, and we are pleased that they have continued the partnership into its second year. This school year, we have added two additional school systems: SAD 15 and SAD 17. Each **Partners** relationship is different because it is based on what the parents and the schools decide they would like to work on. The following information provides a snapshot of what is happening in each **Partners** school, along with contact information for the MPF Parent Training and Information Specialist/Partners Liaison assigned to that school. We hope to hear from you if you are a parent of a child receiving special education services in one of the **Partners** schools.

**Cape Elizabeth's Partners in Special Education** is now in its second year. A parent group called **Cape Parents 4 Parents** meets monthly. Presently the focus is on organizing a Children's Behavioral Health Event for parents and staff. The group also wants to establish a resource center for special needs in a Cape Library and to collaborate with the Special Education Administration to create a guidebook for parents. For more information, call Elizabeth Collins at 1-800-870-7746, or email [ecollins@mpf.org](mailto:ecollins@mpf.org).

**MSAD 3, Partners in Special Education** is moving forward this year as they continue to plan a parent-to-parent Special Education Handbook. Meetings with parents have been scheduled. Last year MSAD 3 purchased books for their central library. For more information, call Donna Dewitt, Partners Liaison for MSAD 3, at 1-800-870-7746, or email [ddewitt@mpf.org](mailto:ddewitt@mpf.org).

**MSAD 15**, Gray/New Gloucester, had their first meeting of **Partners in Special Education** in January and will have their second meeting on February 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the GNG High School Library. Work will continue to set up programs and meetings for the coming months. For more information, call Jan Diecchio, Partners Liaison for MSAD 15, at 1-800-870-7746, or email [jdiecchio@mpf.org](mailto:jdiecchio@mpf.org).

**MSAD 17** (Oxford Hills School District) is the latest school to join us in the **Partners in Special Education** pilot. There will be an informational meeting on Thursday, February 26 from 6-8 p.m. in the Superintendent's Office to discuss what the **Partners** Project might look like at MSAD 17. For more information, call Robbin Pelletier at 1-800-870-7746, or email [rpelletier@mpf.org](mailto:rpelletier@mpf.org).

## ~ Spotlight Workshops ~

Do you find it difficult to find the time to leave home or work to attend a workshop? Maine Parent Federation is now hosting *Spotlight Presentations* during the day. This is an easy way to access great information on a variety of topics. Participating in a *Spotlight Workshop* is quick and easy -- and you don't have to leave your home or office! Each presentation is only one and a half hours in length (a one-hour presentation and thirty minutes at the end for questions and answers). Each workshop is from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. When we receive your registration, we will email you the **PowerPoint** slides that will be used in the presentation. We will mail you a paper copy of the slides if you don't have access to a computer. On the day of the presentation, you will call in to a conference number and listen in on the presentation, while following along with the PowerPoint on your computer or paper copy. This is a great way to attend a workshop without leaving your home or office. You don't have to worry about snow, icy roads, going out after dark or traveling long distances. **Spotlights** are an easy way to get the information you want!

The following **Spotlight** presentations are being offered this spring:

- **March 18<sup>th</sup>: Spotlight on Transition to Kindergarten**
- **April 14<sup>th</sup>: Spotlight on Transition from High School**
- **April 28<sup>th</sup>: Spotlight on Special Education**
- **May 5<sup>th</sup>: Spotlight on Advocacy to Self-Advocacy**

**Registration is required.** For more information, contact Penny at [psteeves@mpf.org](mailto:psteeves@mpf.org), or call 1-800-870-7746.

## 2009 SPRING TRANSITION SERIES

Are you a parent of a transition age youth (age 14 and up) or soon to be transition age youth receiving special education services? Does planning for your child's future as an adult confuse and overwhelm you? Does transitioning beyond high school cause you to worry? Are you feeling like you have more questions than answers?

Come join us as we gather information about how to make the transition from high school a more pleasant journey. Learn new ways to develop transition plans, from being your child's first advocate, to helping them become a good self-advocate. Chat with community agencies in a relaxing open forum, and receive resources related to helping your child transition from high school to adult life. Join us for one or all three workshops.

- Presque Isle - Career Center  
April 2 - **Transition to High School: Taking Flight**, 2:30pm - 4:30pm  
April 3 - **Advocacy to Self Advocacy: Moving On and Letting Go**, 9:00am-11:00am, **Chatting with the Experts**, 12:00-2:00pm (*attend both workshops, 9:00am-2:00pm and lunch will be provided*).
- Lewiston – St. Mary's d'Youville Pavilion  
April 7 - **Transition to High School: Taking Flight**, 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
April 14 - **Advocacy to Self Advocacy: Moving On and Letting Go**, 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
April 28 - **Chatting with the Experts**, 6:00pm – 8:00pm
- Farmington - Franklin Memorial Hospital, Chisholm Room  
April 29 - **Transition to High School: Taking Flight**, 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
May 7 - **Advocacy to Self Advocacy: Moving On and Letting Go**, 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
May 14 - **Chatting with the Experts**, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

### **Registration is required!**

Registration forms and workshop descriptions are available on our website, [www.mpf.org](http://www.mpf.org), or FMI contact Penny at 1-800-870-7746 or [psteeves@mpf.org](mailto:psteeves@mpf.org).

## SAVE THE DATE!

### MAINE PARENT FEDERATION'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GALA & CELEBRATING THE FAMILY CONFERENCE

October 2 & 3, 2009

Wyndham Portland Airport Hotel  
South Portland, ME



Keynote Address by Jack Levine,  
Founder of 4Generations Institute and  
President of Advocacy Resources

Two full days of workshops on Early Childhood, Parent Involvement, Family Support, Special Education, and more.

Friday evening dinner, awards, silent auction, and dancing with *The Tony Boffa Band*.

For more information, check our website at [www.mpf.org](http://www.mpf.org) or call 1-800-870-7746.

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### **Special Education: Understanding Your Rights and Getting Results**

This *FREE* workshop provides parents, family members, foster parents, and surrogate parents key information about special education and the rights of foster parents. Foster and surrogate parents play a unique and critical role in supporting the special education rights and needs of children. Join Maine Parent Federation, KIDS LEGAL, Maine Department of Education Special Services, and University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disabilities Studies (UCEDD), for this day-long workshop. Key areas to be covered include dispute resolution and advocacy, educational rights of foster and surrogate parents, resources and questions and answers with a Special Services Administrator. *Lunch is provided*.

- March 3, St. Mary's - Lewiston
- March 10, Unified Technology Center - Bangor
- March 17, University of Maine at Machias
- March 24, University of Maine at Presque Isle
- March 31, Casey Family Services - Portland

### **Registration is required!**

Registration forms and workshop descriptions are available on our website, [www.mpf.org](http://www.mpf.org), or FMI contact Penny at 1-800-870-7746 or [psteeves@mpf.org](mailto:psteeves@mpf.org).

*CEU's (fee applies) and GAL Continuing Education Credits are available.*

# Ed Extras

Helpful information about learning brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine

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## Creating a Home Library

Starting a home library for your child shows her how important books are. Having books of her own in a special place boosts the chances that your child will want to read more. Here are some ideas for creating your own home library.

### Finding books

- Become a treasure hunter! Browse bookstore sales, garage sales, flea markets, used book stores, and sales at your local library.
- Organize a children's book swap with friends, community groups, or your school.
- Encourage family and friends to give books as gifts for birthdays, holidays, and other celebrations.
- Don't forget quality nonfiction and children's magazines!

### Building your library

- A cardboard box or small wooden packing crate that you can decorate together can make a good bookcase, or you might clear one of the family bookshelves.
- Pick a special place for your child's books so that she knows where to look for them – in a cozy corner of your child's bedroom or close to where the rest of the family gathers and reads if your child is very social.
- Help your child arrange her books in some order – her favorite books, books about animals, or holiday books. Use whatever method will help her most easily find the book she's looking for.
- *"This book belongs to..."* bookplates give your child a sense of ownership and can add "newness" to a used book. You can make your own bookplates or download and print one of the colorful designs by children's book illustrators at [www.myhomelibrary.org/bookplates.html](http://www.myhomelibrary.org/bookplates.html).
- If you and your child make your own books together, you can add them to your home library!
- Borrow books from your local library. Go to the children's section and spend time with your child reading and selecting books to take home and put in her special place. You might even have a box or space just for library books, so that they don't get mixed up with your child's own books.

When collecting and reading books are part of your family life, you are sending your child a message that books are important, enjoyable, and full of new things to learn!

For information on selecting great children's books, visit:

**[www.ReadingRockets.org/books/aboutkids](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/books/aboutkids)**

*Article adapted from "Helping Your Child Become a Reader." U.S. Department of Education. 2005.*



# Maine Needs You!

If you've ever had a problem with your health care or health coverage and didn't know how to make it change for the better, this may be your chance.

There likely isn't a Maine person out there who hasn't had some problem with their health coverage, whether they are uninsured, don't have insurance that meets all of their health care needs, or is just paying too much of their income for their much needed health care.

But, too often when it comes to our health care, our government is hearing the loud voice of big business, insurance companies and other politicians. It's time your voice was heard! After all, you know what health care options you need most!

A new effort is underway to get Maine people from all areas of the state working together for positive changes in health care, with the voice of the public leading the way.

Join "**Maine Voices for Coverage**" to help us all get the quality affordable health care and coverage we all deserve!

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

**Call:** Consumers for Affordable Health Care at (207)-622-7083 or 1-800-838-0388

**Email:** [consumerhealth@mainecahc.org](mailto:consumerhealth@mainecahc.org)

**Visit:** [www.voicesforcoverage.org](http://www.voicesforcoverage.org)

**Act.** Because we all deserve to see our family doctor when we are sick.

**Maine Voices for Coverage** is a grant-funded, statewide effort to bring the views of every day people to policymakers to ensure that all Maine people have access to quality, affordable health care that is there when they need it. They are looking to increase participation so that it truly is the voice of Maine people.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) and a team of members from the American Cancer Society of Maine, Maine AFL-CIO, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine Council of Churches, Maine Center for Economic Policy, Maine Equal Justice, and Maine People's Resource Center are leading this next giant leap toward health care for all Maine people.



### Exciting Mental Health Treatments Available for Youth Involved with Child Welfare: \* MAINE CHILD STEPS \*

Maine has embarked on a study of mental health treatment for children. The study is taking place in three clinics. For more information, call a clinic below and ask for the Child Steps Liaison:

- Counseling Services, Inc., York - Lynne Siulinski, (207)-294-7185
- Community Counseling Center, Cumberland - Leslie Skillin-Calder, (207)-874-1030
- Kennebec Behavioral Health, Kennebec & Somerset - Dennis Dix, (207)-873-2136