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# The E.C. Voice

Volume 5, Issue #5

March 2009

## Assistive Technology for Individuals

### Guilford County Partnership for Exceptional Children



#### GRAPEVINE

#### Submissions for EC Voice

If you would like to submit information to the *EC Voice* please contact Carla Sutton:

☎ (336) 676-4403 or via email  
✉ [suttonc@bellsouth.net](mailto:suttonc@bellsouth.net)

All submissions are due by the 15th of the month before printing. The *EC Voice* is distributed during the school year.

#### Community Support Group for Parents of Children with ADHD

🕒 Tuesday, March 24; 7 - 8:30 PM  
(refreshments/social: 6:30 PM)

Topic: *Catch'em Being Good ... And Other Strategies for Parenting Children with AD/HD*

Speaker: **Arthur Anastopoulos**, PhD  
Director, ADHD Clinic, UNC-G

Please join us for a community support group for parents of children who have Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Trinity Church, Room #10  
5200 West Friendly Avenue,  
Greensboro

Contact Brooke Juneau

☎ (336) 334-5601 Ext. 217 or  
✉ [juneau@ncmail.net](mailto:juneau@ncmail.net)

#### Your EC Contacts

Erika Kuepferle – *EC Advocacy*

☎ (336) 638-2107  
✉ [ange1sx2@triad.rr.com](mailto:ange1sx2@triad.rr.com)

Tequilla Washington –  
*EC Communications*

☎ (910) 286-4528  
✉ [tequillamwashington@yahoo.com](mailto:tequillamwashington@yahoo.com)

Carla Sutton - *EC Training*

☎ (336) 676-4403  
✉ [suttonc@bellsouth.net](mailto:suttonc@bellsouth.net)

The February *EC Voice* was canceled due to unexpected volunteer issues.

👉 See reverse side for  
UPCOMING EVENTS  
and more!

Assistive technology (AT) has the potential to enhance the quality of life for students with learning disabilities (LD) by providing them with a means to compensate for their difficulties, and highlight their abilities. Because students with learning problems have individual strengths, limitations, interests, and experiences, a technology tool that is helpful in one situation or setting may be of little use under different circumstances. As a result, selecting the appropriate technology for a student with LD requires a careful analysis of the dynamic interaction between the individual, technology, task, and context.

Selecting the appropriate technology for a student with LD requires careful analysis of the interaction between (a) the individual; (b) the specific tasks or functions to be performed; (c) the technology; and (d) the contexts or settings in which the technology will be used.

#### The AT Assessment Process

Whether an AT assessment is sought from a public school or private source, it is important for parents to understand the critical elements for conducting an AT assessment. Although some universities and organizations offer training and certificates in AT assessment, no licenses or credentials are required. As is the case with any profession, some practitioners are better qualified than others. Therefore, in addition to investigating the qualifications of the person conducting the assessment (education, training, experience) the more you know about the key components of a quality assessment, the greater the likelihood the appropriate “technology match” will be found for your child.

#### The Individual Student

It is important to consider the student's strengths and weaknesses in regard to such areas as reading, writing/spelling, speaking, listening, math, memory, organization, and physical/motor ability. Examining these areas will help identify the specific areas of difficulty that need to be bypassed by using AT. Such examination will also help identify the child's areas of strength and ability which an AT product may “capitalize on” in order to work around a specific difficulty. For example, a student who struggles with reading but who has good listening skills might benefit from the use of audio books.

#### The Task to be Performed

Another key factor in determining what AT tools might benefit a student is to pinpoint the specific task(s) she struggles with. For example, when it comes to writing an essay, she may construct sentences and tackle spelling with no problem, but she has trouble organizing and outlining the essay. In this case, a graphic organizer or outlining tool might help her plan and revise the “big picture” of her essay. In other words, not all AT tools for writing target the same skills or tasks. Knowing where a student struggles (and where she does not) are critical to choosing an appropriate AT tool.

#### The Assistive Technology Tool

There are a number of factors specific to the technology itself that should be considered in the selection process. Particular attention should be given to the technology's effectiveness in accomplishing its primary compensatory purpose. For example, does a speech recognition system accurately convert the student's oral language to written text and improve the quality of the written product?

#### Contexts of Interaction

Students with learning difficulties must function in a variety of settings. Technology that is appropriate in one setting may be quite inappropriate in another. Therefore, it is important to consider the selection of technology relative to all settings where she is likely to use the tool (e.g., school, home, work, social, and recreational/leisure environments). The fact that a technology successfully compensates for a learning problem in one setting does not mean that it will be effective in another. For example, a speech recognition system may work quite effectively at home where the student can work alone. However, the use of the technology in a classroom setting, where there is considerable extraneous noise, may interfere with the technology's operation.

#### Assistive Technology: Rights under IDEA

Under IDEA, AT must be considered for children with disabilities if it is needed to receive a “free and appropriate public education.” It is the school district's responsibility to help select and acquire the technology, as well as provided training to the student in the use of the technology, and, at no cost to parents. This is done on a case-by-case basis. It is the IEP team

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# upcoming events

## Guilford County Schools Surrogate Parent Training

☎ 9:00 - 11:00 AM  
Guilford County Schools  
EC Services Training Room  
134 Franklin Blvd  
Greensboro, NC 27401  
☎ (336) 370-8329 ext.722112  
✉ antkows@gcsnc.com

## News from Family Support Network of North Carolina

For questions regarding any of these events  
or programs, contact Brooke Juneau  
☎ (336) 334-5601 Ext. 217 or email  
✉ juneau@ncmail.net

### FSNNC March Events

5 **FSNCC Mom's Group**  
7:00 PM, Panera Bread, Wendover  
Ave., Greensboro. For information on  
this group, please contact Lynn  
Hodges: ☎ (336) 856-8968 or  
✉ nickelhodges@yahoo.com

13 **Sibshops**  
5:00 - 7:00 PM, \$5.00 per child  
Don't miss FSNCC's recreation-  
based support program for brothers  
and sisters of kids with special  
needs, grades 1-6! This will be the  
last session in our 2008-'09 series  
☎ (336) 856-8968 or  
✉ support@fsncc.org

⇒ Continued top of next column...

## Assistive Technology (continued)

(including parents and students) that makes a determination as to the necessity of AT. It is also the IEP team, (or any individual member) that initiates a request for an AT assessment. The assessment may be performed by school district personnel, or an outside consultant working in conjunction with the IEP team. Parents should know that at present, there are no standard policies, procedures or practices among school districts for conducting AT assessments. This is all the more reason for parents to be informed as to the critical elements in conducting a quality AT assessment.

For further information please contact North Carolina Region Assistive Technology Resource Center and 336-275-9044 or visit their website  
☎ www.ncatp.org.

- 19 **FSNCC Dad's Group**  
7:00 PM, Natty Greene's Brew Pub  
(upstairs), downtown Greensboro.  
Contact Brooke for more info.
- 20 **GALS Group** 6:30 - 8:30 PM  
"Girls Appreciating Loving Siblings"  
Support group for sisters of children  
with special needs (grades 5 and up).  
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church,  
Greensboro. Contact Nancy:  
☎ (336) 832-6507 or  
✉ nancym@fsncc.org
- 20 **Autism Society of NC, Guilford Co.**  
6:30 PM, Third Friday each month  
Brooks Global Studies Elementary  
cafeteria. For childcare, contact  
Monique Justice: ☎ (336) 580-6548  
or ✉ dauphin@triad.rr.com
- 24 **ADD/ADHD Parent Support  
Group** 6:30 - 8:30 PM  
Topic: Parenting Strategies. Trinity  
Church, 5200 W. Friendly Ave.  
Greensboro

## Autism Society of North Carolina 2009 Annual Conference

The 2009 Autism Society of North Carolina Annual Conference is the largest annual autism gathering in our state.

Families come to learn about available programs and services. Professionals hone their skills in working with students and clients. Individuals in the autism community come together to share information and connect with one another.

### Essential Info:

This two day event includes a Friday pre-conference workshop as well as the conference, which includes evening sessions on Friday and a full day of programming on Saturday.

### Registration

There are separate registration fees for the pre-conference workshop and the conference. Current Autism Society of North Carolina members receive the best rate. Also, people who register by March 1, regardless of membership status, can take \$10 off registration for each event.



Autism Society  
of NORTH CAROLINA

## Dream Camp

### A Day Camp for Kids with Asperger's Disorder

DREAM Camp is a week long day camp designed for children with Asperger Disorder, a neurological disorder on the Autism Spectrum. Campers range from kindergarten through 9th grade.

DREAM Camp is designed to provide therapeutic and recreational summer programming for children with Asperger's Disorder. This camp will allow families to enroll their children in a camp that teaches skills targeting common challenges faced by children with Asperger's Disorder such as social skills, conflict resolution, managing emotions, anti-bullying strategies. Campers will also enjoy art activities, music and other outdoor activities.

### Camp Dates & Times:

June 22-26 / July 13-17 / August 3

Camp is now a full day. Bus service provided to camp. Drop Off at UNC-G Campus: 8:30 AM; pick up from UNC-G: 4:00 PM.

Cost: \$400/wk (\$1,000 for all 13 weeks). Prescreening begins in April; space is limited to 50 campers.

Contact Kellie Whelan ☎ (336) 256-0011 ✉ kjwhelan@uncg.edu for more information.

## Program

Our planning committee has designed an event that provides info for individuals across the autism spectrum and their families. The conference features a wide variety of topics, including:

- ◆ Early Intervention in Autism- What We Have Learned
- ◆ The State of Things- ASNC's Legislative and Policy Priorities
- ◆ Residential Options- What's Available? What's Needed? What's Possible?
- ◆ Supporting the Emerging Self-Advocate with Autism Spectrum and Related Disorders
- ◆ Fostering Deep and Focused Interests in Children with ASDs
- ◆ A Vision for Autism Research in the Future
- ◆ Biomedical Approaches to the Treatment of Developmental Disorders

Speakers include nationally recognized experts in the fields of research, early intervention, parenting, behaviors, and residential issues.

☎ www.autismsociety-nc.org