



# Parent Connect

An Anchorage School District Special Education link to families

Parent Connect is a quarterly newsletter mailed to families of Anchorage School District Special Education students. It is produced by the ASD STEP Center (Student-Parent-Educator Center), a resource center for everyone. It is also sent out via email upon request. To subscribe to this newsletter: Call 742-3872 or email STEP@asdk12.org.

**Volume 1, Issue 3  
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Statement of non-discrimination: The Anchorage School Board is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, economic status, handicap, and other human differences protected by law. No person shall be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of educational opportunities and services, academic or extracurricular, offered by the district.



Judy Thomson is the manager of the AK Family Directory. You can contact her directly at 907-742-3874 or Thomson\_Judy@asdk12.org.

**The Alaska Family Directory**  
[www.asdk12.org/AFD](http://www.asdk12.org/AFD)

**Have you ever wanted to go to one place to find out what is going on in your community?**

**Well, we have the answer for you . . .**

**The Alaska Family Directory is a website that offers:**

- ✚ **Calendars of educational opportunities and activities for parents, educators, and youth**
- ✚ **Information on disabilities**
- ✚ **AK Connect Newsletter: Distributed monthly, it includes articles on disability topics. It also features a different Alaskan school district each month. On the AFD website you can view the current issue as well as previous issues.**



**Just go to:**  
[www.asdk12.org/AFD](http://www.asdk12.org/AFD) and click on your region on the state map.



## April is Autism Awareness Month

April 2 is recognized as 'World Autism Day' as established by the United Nations in 2007

Autism Spectrum Disorder is the fastest growing disability category. The incidence of autism is increasing at epidemic proportions according to the CDC-Center for Disease Control. It is estimated that 1 child in every 110 children will be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. With such a significant increase, it is vital that we increase awareness and information about this interesting and challenging disorder.

The 'puzzle' piece is the universal symbol for autism. Its pattern represents the complexity of autism; the different shapes represent the diversity of people who are affected; and the bright colors signify hope that increased awareness and early intervention can lead to better outcomes.

In an effort to promote Autism Awareness, many activities will occur across the Alaska and the nation during April-Autism Awareness month.

For more information about autism, call or visit the Anchorage School District's **STEP Center**, a resource center for parents, teachers and students. [www.step@asdk12.org](mailto:www.step@asdk12.org) or 907-742-3872. For a complete list of Autism Awareness activities, check the State of Alaska website. [www.autism.alaska.gov](http://www.autism.alaska.gov)

To learn more about National autism awareness efforts, go to: [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

### What's happening at Stone Soup Group . . .

**"Transition: Cradle to Community"  
(Parent, youth and family conference)**

**April 26-28, 2011**

**Millennium Hotel in Anchorage**



**This inaugural conference will focus on the multiple transitions that are part of the fabric of the lives of kids with special needs: transition from infant learning to preschool; from preschool to public school; and from public school to the big wide world. Challenges around these transitions will also be an underlying thread in the discussion of behavior, Autism, FASD, communication, special education laws, and best practices.**

**For more information, contact: Stone Soup Group at 907-561-3701.**

#### **ASPIRE Trainings: Understanding the IEP Process**

<b>MARCH:</b>	Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> :	10am-12:30pm
	Thursday, 24 <sup>th</sup> :	5:30pm-8pm
<b>APRIL:</b>	Tuesday, 5 <sup>th</sup> :	5:30pm-8pm
	Thursday, 14 <sup>th</sup> :	10am-12:30pm
<b>MAY:</b>	Tuesday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	10am-12:30pm
	Thursday, 12 <sup>th</sup> :	5:30pm-8pm

You must call to reserve a spot for the ASPIRE trainings: 561-3701

#### **Special Needs Night at Bouncing Bears**

**When:** March 15th, 2011 (3rd Tuesday of every month)  
6:00P - 8:00P

**Where:** 4660 Gambell Street  
(one block South of Tudor) **Cost:** each kid \$5.00

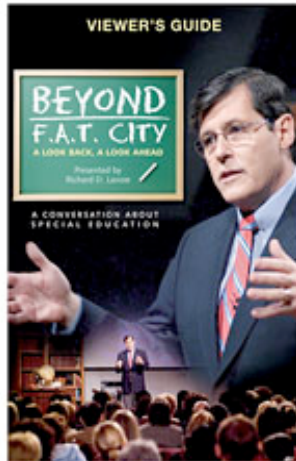
Any special needs qualify and siblings are welcomed.

**For more information call 56-BEARS / 562-3277  
or visit [www.bouncinbearsacnchorage.com](http://www.bouncinbearsacnchorage.com)**

# STEP Center Library

Phone: 742-3872 Website: [www.asdk12.org/dept/step/](http://www.asdk12.org/dept/step/)  
Address: 5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd

HOURS: Tuesday, Thursday: 8am-6pm  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 8am-4:30pm



## Learning Disabilities Featured author: Richard Lavoie Educator & Motivational Speaker

Richard Lavoie is best known for his work in the area of Learning Disabilities. He has some dynamic and entertaining videos: "How Difficult Can This Be?: The F.A.T. City Workshop" and "The Last One Picked, The First One Picked On: Social Implications of Learning Disabilities". These award-winning films have brought Rick's sensitive and compelling message to countless thousands throughout the world. After viewing the videos, former First Lady Barbara Bush stated, "You really wowed us! I only wish that every parent and teacher in the United States today could also see your program." Here are some of his books & DVDs that you can check out from the STEP Center library:

- + DVD & Book: "It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend: Helping the Child with Learning Disabilities Find Social Success" This is full of useful techniques for social success.
- + DVD: "Learning Disabilities & Social Skills: Last One Picked...First One Picked On" This examines the unique challenges children with learning disabilities face in their daily social life.
- + DVD: "The Motivation Breakthrough: 6 Secrets to Turning on the Tuned-Out Child"
- + DVD: "Understanding Learning Disabilities: How Difficult Can This Be? The F.A.T. City Workshop" Watch Richard show educators how it feels to be learning disabled, and learn ways to reach students.
- + DVD: "Beyond F.A.T. City: A Look Back, A Look Ahead" It reviews the history & philosophy of the Frustration-Anxiety-Tension F.A.T. project, the major trends & issues in the field of learning disabilities since 1987, and the challenges ahead for parents & educators

TO FIND OTHER BOOKS & MEDIA IN THE STEP CENTER LIBRARY, GO TO:

[www.asdk12.org/depts/step/](http://www.asdk12.org/depts/step/)

and click on the Big Blue Button to search the library database.



## The Special Education Advisory Council Needs You

The Anchorage School District Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is seeking applicants for appointment to support our mission. The Council consists of a cross-section of citizens and parents interested in and concerned about special education and related services in our schools. If you are interested in making a difference and joining our team, applications are available at the School District Special Education Office or the STEP Center located in the ASD Education Center, 5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

For more information call 742-4236.

### Anchorage School District Dates to Remember

End of third quarter: March 4, 2011  
Spring Break: March 7-11, 2011  
Last day of school: May 19, 2011



Standards Based Assessments for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade: March 31 (science), April 5, 6, 7 (reading, writing, math)

Combined Grade 10 SBA/High School Graduation Qualifying Exam: April 5, 6, 7, 2011 (This is the first time for sophomores. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will only take the subject area that they did not pass previously).

Alternate Assessment: Jan. 31 to April 15, 2011

For more information on scores, sample practice tests, or other assessment information go to:  
[http://www.asdk12.org/depts/assess\\_eval/](http://www.asdk12.org/depts/assess_eval/)

For tips on test taking in general go to: <http://www.testtakingtips.com>