

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS

The Regional Resource and Federal Center Program assists State educational agencies (SEAs) in building their capacity to improve services for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. The role of the six Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) is to provide advice and technical assistance to administrators and educators in SEAs, local educational agencies, and other appropriate public agencies. Information related to the activities conducted by the RRCs is included in each Annual Report.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17) state that “National technical assistance, support, and dissemination activities are necessary to ensure that parts B (for preschool- and school-age children) and C (for infants and toddlers) are fully implemented and achieve quality early intervention, educational, and transitional results for children with disabilities and their families Parents, teachers, administrators, and related services personnel need technical assistance and information in a timely, coordinated, and accessible manner in order to improve early intervention, educational, and transitional services and results at the State and local levels for children with disabilities and their families.” (§681(a)(1)(2)) With the need for technical assistance and dissemination of information clearly defined in the legislation, the Office of Special Education Programs’ 35 funded projects that make up the Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) Network have spent the majority of their time since the reauthorization focusing upon acquainting their audiences and clients with the provisions and requirements of the IDEA Amendments of 1997. The newly reauthorized law is a powerful catalyst for ensuring improved results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and for equipping the families and professionals who are associated with them with the tools and understanding necessary for meeting their unique needs.

The Regional Resource and Federal Centers (RRFC) Network, which consists of six Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) and the coordinating Federal Resource Center (FRC), has worked to: (1) plan, facilitate, and evaluate OSEP’s Implementation of IDEA Planning Meetings; (2) conduct regional sharing and State-specific planning sessions with State partnership teams to develop their State improvement plans; (3) work collaboratively to provide national and regional trainings and workshops on the changes/impacts of the IDEA Amendments of 1997 to regular educators and professionals working in an educational environment; (4) respond to information requests from State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) on a variety of IDEA topics, including transition, alternate assessment, individualized education programs (IEPs), discipline, expedited hearings, mediation, performance indicators, and reporting; and (5) develop within the RRFC network website modules, hotlinks, and searchable databases for any client to have immediate access to statutory, regulatory, and resource information to support implementation of IDEA. The FRC and RRCs regularly facilitate national conference calls with the six RRCs and other TA&D providers as well as regional calls with their States to assist OSEP in disseminating information regarding IDEA. The RRFC Network has been involved in the Improving America’s Schools (IAS) conferences and has assisted Judith E. Heumann, Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Department of Education, in presenting the IDEA Amendments of 1997 to general educators. The FRC has worked to set up meetings at the national level on topics including State Improvement Grants (SIGs) and the OSEP monitoring process, while the RRCs have worked on the same IDEA implementation topics at a regional and/or State level.

The rest of this appendix gives brief descriptions of a wide variety of the technical assistance projects that are taking place nationwide. As readers will notice, these projects heavily emphasize the goals of the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

The five national clearinghouses have devoted resources to developing and disseminating publications on the IDEA Amendments of 1997. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC-EC) has developed an eight-page synthesis of research on specific topics in special education. The first two issues of this publication, *Research Connections*, focused on School-wide Behavioral Management Systems (Fall 1997) and Statewide Assessment Programs (Spring 1998); one-page digests were also written to provide a brief overview of each topic.

The HEATH Resource Center, the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, recently updated two publications to reflect the IDEA Amendments of 1997--1998 *Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities* and *How to Choose a College: Guide for the Student with a Disability*. These offer logistical information about the transition process for students, parents, teachers, and counselors.

At the same time, the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (NCPSE), anticipating the need for greater numbers of qualified teaching professionals under the IDEA Amendments of 1997, increased the number of its products to encourage high school and undergraduate college students to pursue careers in special education and related services. NCPSE paid particular attention to over 2,200 high schools with student populations from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In its work with State directors of special education, NCPSE provided information on teacher preparation programs in each State, highlighting those programs that receive OSEP's personnel preparation grants.

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) in collaboration with the FRC and OSEP produced a training package entitled "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997." The two-binder package has a curriculum binder with nearly 500 pages of background information, resources, handouts, and training scripts on the law and an overheads binder with a series of 145 overhead transparencies. Over 600 copies of this two-binder set have been distributed to agencies and organizations involved with special education, including parent training and information centers (PTIs), State departments of special education and Federal education officials. All of the overheads and most of the handouts are available in Spanish. NICHCY has also produced a 40-page publication that examines in detail the major changes that have taken place in the law as a result of reauthorization. This publication includes a side-by-side comparison of the old IDEA with the new IDEA Amendments of 1997.

The National Clearinghouse on Children who are Deaf-Blind (DB-LINK) has purchased and organized a collection of up-to-date materials on the new IDEA and special education law. Over the last year, DB-LINK published resource lists, both print and electronic, related to the new IDEA in two issues of *Deaf-Blind Perspectives*. In collaboration with NICHCY, DB-LINK distributed the NICHCY publication, *The IDEA Amendments of 1997*, at the National Conference on Deaf-Blindness and in a select mailing to all National Technical Assistance Consortium for Children and Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind (NTAC) and State 307.11 coordinators. Further, DB-LINK staff conducted a survey of State projects as to the availability of materials related to alternate assessments.

The National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC) holds "Stakeholder's Meetings" with individual States to identify assistance needs for implementing the IDEA Amendments of 1997. Communication, transition, assistive technology, and professional development were mentioned most often in these meetings. NTAC is working to provide Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) information to the States and to develop performance indicators specific to children and youth who are deaf-blind.

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NEC*TAS) has worked with OSEP to develop a briefing paper on the topic of natural environments for infants and toddlers and their families for States and communities. Also, NEC*TAS expanded its database of model early childhood projects on its web site to enable users to access information on effective practices. NEC*TAS has convened conference calls for State Part C and Section 619 coordinators on the changes made to IDEA in the re-authorization. TA and State program staff workgroups addressed two key areas in the preschool program: the funding formula and appropriate outcome measures

The Center for Special Education Finance (CSEF) addressed the fiscal provisions of IDEA by preparing and disseminating an article entitled "A Look at the Changes in the Finance Provisions for Grants to States Under the IDEA Amendments of 1997," featured in their Winter 1997-98 newsletter. CSEF is also working with OSEP to release an in-depth analysis of the changes in the finance provisions.

The Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices (CISP) works collaboratively to build the capacity of SEAs and LEAs to serve children and youth with and without disabilities in school and community settings. CISP recently published an Issue Brief reflecting the IDEA Amendments of 1997 entitled "Providing Accurate Placement Data on Students with Disabilities in General Education Settings."

Two projects have been funded to look at diverse populations, specifically to increase professional development from historically underrepresented groups and to encourage research on minority issues in special education. The Alliance Project works to enhance the capacities of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, tribally

controlled colleges and other institutions of higher education whose enrollments include at least 25 percent of students who are members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The Center of Minority Research in Special Education (COMRISE) works to build the capacity of faculty at minority institutions of higher education to engage in research on minority issues in special education.

Among the significant stakeholders affected by the new law are parents of children with disabilities. The Parents Engaged in Education Reform (PEER) project has produced two publications for parents on the IDEA Amendments of 1997 addressing the issues of assessment and accountability--*All Kids Count: Including Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessment Programs* (March 1998), and a two-volume set (in collaboration with the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)), *Opening the Door to Education Reform, Volume I: Understanding Standards* and *Volume II: Understanding Educational Assessment and Accountability* (1997).

The Technical Assistance for Parent Programs (TAPP) project helped the 72 PTIs to increase their capacity to serve nearly 2 million families of children with disabilities in the implementation of IDEA. TAPP completed two major monographs for parents of children with disabilities--*Inherently Equal: An Inclusion Action Guide* and *Family Guide to Assistive Technology*.

The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (the Alliance) helps the PTIs and Community Parent Resource Centers develop their leadership capacity through a coordinated national system of peer-based technical assistance in order to assist parents regarding the IDEA Amendments of 1997 and their impact on improving results for children and youth with disabilities. The Alliance also provides training to parents on the new law.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) responded to the 1997 Amendments' new emphasis on assessment and accountability for students with disabilities by holding an assessment workgroup meeting (January 1998) to examine issues and develop practical application papers for the new IDEA large-scale assessment requirements. NCEO will also host two technical assistance meetings. The first is to build capacity within existing RRCs and Comprehensive Centers to respond to requests for assistance in the development of inclusive assessment and accountability systems. The second is for special and general education State assessment teams charged with planning, developing, and implementing the States' alternate assessments. NCEO established an alternate assessment database for State personnel to enter their State's alternate assessment system and to view what other States are doing. NCEO responds directly to requests by States for training on the assessment mandates of the IDEA Amendments of 1997 and develops products and networks to support those efforts.

The Networking System for Training Educational Personnel (NSTEP) assists Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) coordinators and other SEA staff to improve leadership skills necessary for developing self-sustaining, statewide, collaborative partnerships within a personnel development system that meets the diverse needs of all children. The IDEA Amendments of 1997 reiterate this priority through the State Improvement Grant program, where a majority of the funds must be used for CSPD.

The National Center to Improve Practice (NCIP) recently produced the sixth in its series of NCIP Video Profiles, entitled *Successful Science: Technology and Support for Students with Disabilities*. This video depicts elementary school students with a range of disabilities successfully participating in a standards-based science curriculum and shows how technology, media, and materials--supported by good instruction--promote their achievement. Judith Heumann introduces the video and compellingly explains why every student needs to be a successful science learner.

The Center to Link Urban Schools with Information and Support on Technology and Special Education (LINK•US) will help the Boston Public Schools and New York Community School District 15 consider the impact of and respond to the IDEA amendments relating to assistive technology and how technology can support students with disabilities to succeed in standards-based curricula and instruction.

The National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities (NTA) has disseminated information about the IDEA Amendments of 1997 in its quarterly newsletter, the *ALLIANCE*. A recently prepared *LIAISON BULLETIN*, disseminated by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), an NTA partner, details the new IDEA requirements on transition. The NTA collaborates with the National Transition Network (NTN) to provide technical assistance to States on the new provisions of the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

NTN has disseminated to State transition system change projects a side-by-side comparison of the IDEA statute and proposed regulations as well as an overview of the State program improvement grants. NTN is in the process of surveying States regarding their projected policy changes with respect to age of majority and statement of transition service needs at age 14, two new requirements of the law. Updates of *Parent Briefs*, *Policy Updates*, and a transition guide for States will occur once the regulations are finalized.

The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (NCITE) helps to create a marketplace demand for research-based tools that contribute to increased achievement by students with disabilities. NCITE has worked collaboratively with many organizations to expand the role of research-based practices in contributing to students with disabilities making progress in the general education curriculum. This

collaborative group also works to ensure that the progress is being measured and reported to educators and parents reflecting the requirements of the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

The workscope of Project FORUM is heavily concentrated on topics related to the implementation of the IDEA Amendments of 1997. FORUM staff have recently planned and held a policy forum for OSEP to obtain input from the field on the content and design of the National Evaluation of the IDEA Amendments of 1997, the study mandated by Chapter 674 of the new law. A series of quick-turnaround reports are currently being developed and disseminated. These will provide brief, targeted information in areas such as developmental delay, paraprofessionals in special education, child find in private schools, home schooling, welfare reform, linking IEPs with the general education curriculum, and functional behavioral assessment in relation to the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) has produced two sets of training materials for OSEP--one that focuses on the discipline provisions and positive behavior interventions, the other on the new IEP provisions. CECP has produced and disseminated a guide on positive behavior interventions and has conducted a study and drafted a report for OSEP and the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools that focuses on how special education and regular education can collaborate to create positive schoolwide environments that work for all students, including those with disabilities.

In accordance with the IDEA Amendments of 1997--which strengthened the linkages among IDEA-funded research, technical assistance and dissemination, local education practices, and student outcomes--the Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center (EMSTAC) seeks to meet the technical assistance needs of elementary and middle schools while developing a comprehensive national model of technical assistance. This approach to technical assistance will improve the transfer and use of research-based knowledge by LEAs and build the capacity of LEAs to effectively access and employ research-based knowledge.

With a particular focus on the challenges to schools in urban settings, the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI) devotes resources to providing LEAs with tools for moving existing theory and research about inclusion into practical, systemic, educational reform initiatives. The Institute will continue to strengthen and inform national networks of those committed to improving educational results for children and youth with disabilities in urban schools in accordance with the IDEA Amendments of 1997.

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS

The TA&D Network has a wide variety of projects. Each is working to ensure that the IDEA Amendments of 1997 are implemented through clear, accurate, timely, and coordinated technical assistance and with dissemination of information that can be used to improve results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Contact information for the projects mentioned here can be obtained through the Federal Resource Center for Special Education by calling (202) 884-8215 or by visiting the FRC's website at www.dssc.org/frc. In addition, contact information for all the regional resource centers and the FRC can be found in table B-1.

**Table B-1
Regional Resource Centers (RRC) and Federal Resource Center (FRC) Programs**

	States Served
<p><u>Region 1: H028A30002</u></p> <p>Edward Wilkens, Director Northeast RRC (NERRC) Trinity College of Vermont, McAuley Hall 208 Colchester Avenue Burlington, VT 05401-1496 Telephone: (802) 658-5036 FAX: (802) 658-7435 TTY: (802) 860-1428 E-Mail: NERRC@aol.com WEB: http://www.interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/nerrc/index.htm</p>	<p>Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont</p>
<p><u>Region 2: H028A30008</u></p> <p>Kenneth Olsen, Director Midsouth RRC (MSRRC) Human Development Institute University of Kentucky 126 Mineral Industries Building Lexington, KY 40506-0051 Telephone: (606) 257-4921 FAX: (606) 257-4353 TTY: (606) 257-2903 E-Mail: MSRRC@ihdi.ihdi.uky.edu WEB: http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/projects/MSRRC/index.html</p>	<p>Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia</p>
<p><u>Region 3: H028A30005</u></p> <p>James Wright, Director Southeast RRC (SERRC) Auburn University Montgomery School of Education P.O. Box 244023 Montgomery, AL 36124 Telephone: (334) 244-3879 FAX: (334) 244-3835 No TTY Line E-Mail: jwright@edla.aum.edu WEB: http://www.fau.edu/divdept/sarrc/</p>	<p>Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands</p>

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS

Table B-1 (cont'd)

	States Served
<p><u>Region 4: H028A30004</u></p> <p>Larry Magliocca, Director Great Lakes Area RRC (GLARRC) Center for Special Needs Populations The Ohio State University 700 Ackerman Road, Suite 440 Columbus, OH 43202 Telephone: (614) 447-0844 FAX: (614) 447-9043 TTY: (614) 447-8776 E-Mail: marshall.76@osu.edu WEB: http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarrc.htm</p>	<p>Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin</p>
<p><u>Region 5: H028A30009</u></p> <p>John Copenhaver, Director Mountain Plains RRC (MPRRC) Utah State University 1780 North Research Parkway Suite 112 Logan, UT 84341 Telephone: (435) 752-0238 FAX: (435) 753-9750 TTY: (435) 753-9750 E-Mail: cope@cc.usu.edu WEB: http://www.usu.edu/~mprrc/</p> <p>MPRRC, Drake University 2507 University Des Moines, IA 50311 Telephone: (515) 271-3936 FAX: (515) 271-4185 E-Mail: Gary_Dannenbring@drake.edu</p>	<p>Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, Bureau of Indian Affairs</p>

APPENDIX B

Table B-1 (cont'd)

	States Served
<p><u>Region 6: H028A30003</u></p> <p>Richard Zeller, Director Western RRC (WRRRC) 1268 University of Oregon Eugene, OR 97403-1268 Telephone: (541) 346-5641 FAX: (541) 346-5639 TTY: (541) 346-0367 E-Mail: richard_zeller@ccmail.uoregon.edu WEB: http://interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/wrrc.html</p>	<p>Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau</p>
<p><u>Federal Resource Center: HS93033001</u></p> <p>Carol Valdivieso, Director Federal Resource Center Academy for Educational Development 1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 900 Washington, D.C. 20009 Telephone: (202) 884-8215 FAX: (202) 884-8443 TTY: (202) 884-8200 E-Mail: frc@aed.org WEB: http://www.dssc.org/frc/</p>	