Residential Training Continues

This summer, several residential staff members participated in the summer residential training offered for Bureau staff on the Navajo Nation. The LEVEL I training has been very popular and is being offered again this fall on the Navajo Nation.

LEVEL II Residential Training will be offered to participants completing LEVEL I. We have several sections of LEVEL II training lined up, with college credit available through UNM-Gallup. You don’t have to have received college credit for LEVEL I to keep on going, you only have to have received a certificate of completion. However, the college credit option is a great choice for residential staff members who want to achieve that level of professional preparation. You can also apply this credit to a degree program at UNM-Gallup should you choose to go further in your education.

Check out the Residential Training and all of our upcoming training opportunities on our website at http://cdd.unm.edu/CSPD/

Transition Planning:
Putting the Person in the Center

It is sometimes difficult to imagine that the students we serve today—those children in our classrooms—will soon grow into young adults and take their place in the world of work, higher education, and community life. When students have special needs, which may affect their ability to take advantage of typical opportunities, transition planning must be especially effective and thoughtful.

Person-centered transition planning is an empowering approach for students and families, with an emphasis on assertiveness in directing one’s own program plan. Miner and Bates (1997) outlined this approach, along with some very clear steps in helping achieve effective person-centered transition plans. Concepts include:

♦ Circle of Support Map
♦ Community Presence Map
♦ Individual Preferences
♦ Gifts and Capacities List
♦ Desired Future Lifestyle
♦ Action Steps and Responsible Parties
♦ Necessary Changes in Service System

For more information, see Teaching Exceptional Children (Sept/Oct 1997, p. 66-69), or contact Dawn (dgiegcrich@salud.unm.edu or by phone at 505.272.1040) for a copy of this article by Miner and Bates.
What Can You Get with an Education?

Steven Aragon (Laguna Pueblo), who is a researcher at the University of Illinois, recently published results of research that examined the learning and study practices among American Indian and Alaska Native youth attending community colleges (2004). Dr. Aragon examined a variety of skills students need to do well in college. These skills, however, are developed through the elementary, middle school, and high school years.

Of primary concern with the students in the study were attitude, use of test strategies, concentration, level of anxiety, time management, and deep processing. Dr. Aragon reminds us that both formal and informal learning opportunities are ones where these skills are needed. While he provides guidance for institutions of higher learning that can support students once they get to college, his recommendations will serve American Indian students well throughout the grades. The recommendations are also ones that can be implemented in school, home, and residential dorm settings, by every adult who supports the student throughout his day. These include:

1) **Structure learning for student success.** Let the student know your priority is her/his success. We are not successful as educators if the learner is not successful as a student. Orientation programs for students entering new schools or new programs are a good way of conveying that message early on. Such orientation can prepare students with skills they will need, and knowledge that the faculty is very dedicated to crafting instruction to the student needs, not in carrying out an educational program that is proven to fail.

2) **Make instruction sessions opportunities for students to develop their learning and study strategies.** Don’t dump content on students; organize instruction and teaching style in a way that allows them time to comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material. If we are teaching more, and they are learning less, there is a need to re-evaluate our teaching strategies.

3) **Recognize that students are reflective thinkers.** Give students time to think on the concepts presented in class, to think deeply with deep processing. When classroom sessions are developed to deliver as much content as possible without attention to reflection and application, less and less will be comprehended and less will be useful to the student.

4) **Be aware of the verbal and non-verbal messages given students.** Somehow many students get the message that they cannot be successful in school. While school and residential staffs work hard to avoid this negative message, students pick it up from a variety of situations. By countering negative messages through our spoken and unspoken communication that values the learner and the learner’s potential, we can help ensure future success and belief in self.

For more on Dr. Aragon’s recommendations, see the *Journal of American Indian Education*, Vol. 43, Issue 2, 2004. This journal is available at the LINC Resource Center at the Center for Development and Disability in Albuquerque (503.272.028l or 800.827.6380). You can also access it on-line at http://jaie.asu.edu/abstracts/abs2004.htm

**Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Students Meet Marine Pen Pal**

Many of you may have seen the recent articles in the Farmington *Daily Times* and the Albuquerque *Tribune* that described the recent meeting of 15 Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle fifth graders and U.S. Marine Sgt. Cornelius Tolth. Tolth, a native of Borrego Pass, recently returned from duty in Iraq. While there, he received letters from Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle students, his pen pals. While the students offered support and encouragement to Sgt. Tolth during his tour in Iraq, he was now able to return the favor by encouraging them to work hard on their educations and answering their many questions about his life as a Marine. Sgt. Tolth expressed thanks to the students for their thoughtfulness, he still rereads their letters.

**From The World According to Mister Rogers**

“I received a letter from a parent who wrote: ‘Mr. Rogers, how do you do it? I wish I were like you. I want to be patient and quiet and even-tempered, and always speak respectfully to my children. But...I often lose my patience and even scream at my children. I want to change from an impatient person into a patient person, from an angry person into a gentle one.’

‘Just as it takes time for children to understand what real love is, it takes time for parents to understand that being always patient, quiet, even-tempered, and respectful isn’t necessarily what ‘good’ parents are... Parents help children by expressing a wide range of feelings—including appropriate anger. All children need to see that the adults in their lives can feel anger and not hurt themselves or anyone else...’

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**LINC – Resources Available at the CDD**

LINC, or the “Resource Center” at the CDD, has thousands of books, videos, journal articles, and other professional resources to lend. There is no charge for this service, and librarians can mail items out to you at your home or school. The collection is online, so you can see what is available and make your selection from your computer. We are building our Native American collection of resources and expanding Navajo language options. Please let us know if there is disability information you think we should include in this collection. Check it out at http://cdd.unm.edu/linc/ or call 1800.827.6380. If you are in Albuquerque, stop by the Center and see what is available. Our librarians are always happy to help.

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