



The Reference Shelf

Spring 2012

SES COMMUNITY

Rising to the Challenge

—by SESA staff

Driving to the store to pick up some socks or a new hat is not an option for the residents of Nunam Iqua, Alaska. There is no store in the small remote village near the most western part of the Yukon River. However, there is now a clothing bank.

Nunam Iqua’s new clothing bank was a community need that Amanda Riste recognized last fall. As SESA’s Educational Transition Support Project Coordinator, Riste routinely organizes community members in constructing, promoting, and implementing cooperative based programs for youth.

“Getting new clothes means that they have to pay the cost of coming into Anchorage and pay the cost of having things shipped. Consequently, there are families that can’t afford to do that, so there are children who are not properly attired,” Riste said.

Riste attributes the clothing bank success to a collaborative spirit among communities, agencies, and businesses. She started with phone calls and emails.

“So the question was where do we get the supplies and how do we get them out there,” Riste said.

As a social worker, Riste had experience implementing shared resource projects. She had written grants for clothing banks and food banks. She also knew from experience that once people know of a need, they generally have a desire to want to fill that need.

“The Community for Human Development - they want to donate, the Alaska Children Services – they want to donate,” she said. “The tribe was very excited about it. They are willing to establish an area for a clothing bank within their administration building.”

Riste also reached out to members of the program Natural Helpers, a village based community organization, which matches leaders in a community with students. The community program promotes community leadership and responsibility in schools and their communities. The Natural Helpers organized a space for the first shipment, community awareness and provided assistance to people coming to the clothing bank.

Within several days, Riste had accumulated 100-pounds of clothing including much needed winter gear and infant clothing.

“So I called ERA and I asked is there anyway that you guys can help address this need. Eddie, the gentleman on the phone, said ‘employees are each given 100-pounds a month - let me give you my 100-pounds this month’.”

When the clothing was packaged and taken to ERA’s freight service, other employees followed Eddie’s lead and offered a month of their 100-pound allotment of freight shipping.

“We get it out to the school. They open the boxes. The clothing was first offered to the Elders,” Riste said. “Manju Singh the counselor at Nunam Iqua Sheldon Point School sent the youth out, the elders went through and they found clothing for their grandchildren.”

Riste received donations from Goodwill Industries as well as other local businesses. She plans on approaching Wal-Mart for donations of their slightly damaged return items. SESA is also a drop of point for individuals or agencies that may want to donate.

“Generosity spurs generosity. People want to have that connection with community. Not to just be the recipient, but to be the person who’s making the donation. It’s not charity in that sense. Its reuse, recycle, reduce,” Riste said. ■



Natural Helpers and Nunam Iqua Sheldon Point School students distribute winter clothes donated by SESA to 10 Elders of Nunam Iqua.

Draft IEP Goals Critical to Helping Students Retain Jobs and Friendships

—by Heidi Sfiligoj



SESA Multiple Disability Specialist Jennifer Schroeder teaches student color identification.

A student with Down syndrome works as a grocery store bagger. One day, he hugs a woman after he finishes putting groceries into her car. The woman walks into the store and complains to the manager, who then fires the student.

Educating students about appropriate public behaviors and healthy relationships should be a priority for all students with disabilities to prevent situations like these, says Sally Fogel, an independent consultant in Newton, Mass.

“IEP teams should look at this type of education from a proactive standpoint, not a reactive standpoint,” says Fogel. “So often, teams wait to develop goals about appropriate social behavior when a student inappropriately touches another student or himself in school. But you should teach students about what’s appropriate before it gets to that point.”

Doing so will increase students’ chances of obtaining and retaining jobs and maintaining healthy relationships with others.

Follow these tips:

- Incorporate life skills instruction into sex ed classes. Beginning no later than middle school, provide instruction about how to maintain personal hygiene, develop healthy friendships, understand boundaries, and control impulses to all students with disabilities, sources say. You can incorporate this instruction into your current sex ed courses, says Fogel. “Such courses shouldn’t just be about sexuality. Students need to learn what kinds of behaviors are permissible and what behaviors could jeopardize their jobs and relationships,” she says.
- Incorporate life skills goals into IEP. Develop IEP goals in the following areas and incorporate them into the “life skills” section of an IEP:

1. Maintaining personal hygiene.

“Things like brushing teeth, combing hair, and washing hands are critical to making friends and securing jobs,” says Jennifer Schroeder, multiple disabilities specialist for the Special Education Service Agency in Anchorage, Alaska. Examples of goals in this area include: “The student will wash his hands after using the bathroom” and “The student will demonstrate hygiene and grooming appropriate for work.”

2. Developing healthy friendships.

Students with disabilities often have trouble identifying whether a peer is being a good friend or is taking advantage of them, says Schroeder. For example, a student might think another student is his friend because they talk to each other in the lunchroom. However, that same student may also take his lunch money every day. “It’s important to help students with disabilities understand what a good friendship looks like. This will help the student develop healthy friendships and stay safe,” she says. Examples of goals include: “When given eight pictures of peers, the student will be able to identify his two friends,” and “When given a list of five actions, the student will identify the two actions that are typical of a good friend.” The list may include actions such as stealing, hitting, helping, mocking, and eating lunch together. “Helping and eating lunch together are things that good friends would do,” says Schroeder.

3. Understanding boundaries.

Students must learn what types of behaviors and conversations are appropriate for the different people in their lives, says Fogel. Examples of goals in this area include: “The student will be able to identify three appropriate ways to interact with paid helpers, three appropriate ways to interact with family members, and three appropriate

ways to interact with friends,” and “The student will be able to demonstrate three appropriate ways to greet family members, three appropriate ways to greet paid helpers, three appropriate ways to greet coworkers, and three appropriate ways to greet friends.” Also discuss topics that are inappropriate for conversation. “Even if a student finds someone attractive, they need to learn that it’s inappropriate to walk up to someone and say, ‘You look hot,’” says Fogel. Such comments could put friendships and jobs at risk, she says.

4. Controlling impulses.

Helping a student understand how to control impulses will help him keep a job and stay out of trouble, says Fogel. An example of a goal in this area is: “The student will be able to describe three strategies for avoiding touching someone and three strategies for avoiding staring at someone.” An effective strategy is the 1-2-3 strategy, says Fogel. “Teach students what staring looks like and what to do if they find themselves staring. They should count to three and look away,” she says. This is a technique they can use in any setting, including the classroom, bus, and store. Also instruct students what to do if they feel the urge to touch somebody.

“The best thing to do here is to excuse themselves from the situation. Practice how to ask to be dismissed from the setting and go to the bathroom,” says Fogel.

- **Revisit goals each year.** “This type of education isn’t a one-shot deal. Kids need it every year, so the goals should remain in the IEP and be revisited annually,” says Fogel. You may adjust the goals slightly as the child grows older, says Schroeder. For example, you may initially start teaching the student about appropriate greetings and topics of conversation for family, friends, and paid helpers. When the child enters high school, however, you can expand that to coworkers, as well.
- **Discuss appropriate behaviors with staff.** At the IEP meeting, instruct staff to cut back on certain behaviors that may confuse the student, says Schroeder. For example, if you’re teaching the student to hug only family members, instruct teachers and paraprofessionals not to hug the student. That sends a conflicting message, she says. “It’s important to help staff understand why such behaviors aren’t appropriate. The student has to learn that hugs should be reserved for close friends and family members,” says Schroeder. ■

Use Video Modeling and Support Diagrams to Teach Students Social Behaviors —by Heidi Sfiligoj

After the IEP team develops goals to help a student learn appropriate social behaviors and develop healthy relationships, it can discuss strategies to teach the student, says Jennifer Schroeder, multiple disabilities specialist for the Special Education Service Agency in Anchorage, Alaska.

Consider using one or both of these strategies to teach students acceptable social behaviors:

VIDEO MODELING. This entails recording the student engaging in social interactions and allowing him to watch what he did right, says Schroeder. For example, perhaps one of the student’s goals is to learn appropriate greetings.

You may videotape him giving a friend a hug, which is an appropriate greeting for a friend. You also may videotape him shaking an employer’s hand during a job interview, which is an appropriate greeting for an employer.

“Show the student these videos and verbally reinforce what he did right,” says Schroeder.

Make sure to obtain written parental consent before videotaping a child, she says.

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT DIAGRAMS. Create a diagram with concentric circles to record the child’s family, friends, and acquaintances, says Schroeder. Write the child’s family members in the innermost circle, friends and close relatives in the second circle, acquaintances from church, work, and community activities in the third circle, and people who are paid to be in the child’s life in the fourth circle, such as the child’s teachers and service providers.

Next, identify behaviors that are appropriate for each group. For example, a kiss on the cheek may be appropriate only for those in the innermost circle. A hug may be appropriate for those in the second circle, while a handshake may be the most appropriate for those in the third and fourth circles, says Schroeder.

Last, add pictures of family members, friends, acquaintances, and teachers, she says. “Many students with disabilities are visual learners. They can look at the diagram and immediately see who it’s OK to hug (those in the innermost circle) and who it’s not OK to hug (those in the outermost circle),” says Schroeder. ■

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Using Self-Monitoring Strategies to Address Behavior and Academic Issues

—by Rachel L. Loftin, Ashley C. Gibb, and Russell Skiba

Students with behavioral and academic difficulties typically have limited awareness and understanding of their own behavior and its effects on others. Self-monitoring interventions equip students to recognize and keep track of their own behavior (Hoff & DuPaul, 1998; Rhode, Morgan, & Young, 1983). Using these strategies, students can learn to identify and increase positive, pro-social behaviors, the behaviors necessary for success in general education settings. Self-monitoring interventions are among the most flexible, useful, and effective strategies for students with academic and behavioral difficulties (Mitchum, Young, West, & Benyo, 2001). They have demonstrated efficacy for targeting a range of academic abilities (Rock, 2005), self-help skills (Pierce & Schreibman, 1994), behavioral problems (Todd, Horner, & Sugai, 1999), and social behaviors (Strain & Kohler, 1994). Self-monitoring is useful for students from preschool to adulthood and can be taught to individuals at a variety of levels of cognitive functioning. Self-monitoring interventions foster independent functioning, which allows individuals with disabilities to rely less on prompts from others (Koegel, Koegel, Harrower, & Carter, 1999).

This article provides an overview of the five steps involved in planning a self-monitoring intervention:

1. Identify the target behavior.
2. Select/design a self-monitoring system.
3. Choose reinforcers and how student will earn them.
4. Teach the student to use the system.
5. Fade the role of the adult in the intervention.

The steps will be described through use of a case study that illustrates how self-monitoring techniques can increase appropriate classroom behavior in a general education setting. In the case study, the self-monitoring intervention was implemented with “Scott” (pseudonym), an 11-year-old with an emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD). Prior to intervention, Scott required almost constant verbal reminders to remain quiet and working. He disrupted the class with frequent, off-topic comments and never raised his hand before speaking. Scott seemed to enjoy the peer attention he received for making such comments. His teacher decided to try a self-monitoring strategy to increase hand-raising and appropriate comments.

Identify Target Behavior

The initial step for developing a behavior plan, such as a self-monitoring intervention, is to identify the target behavior. It is helpful to identify a simple action to measure, such as behavior that occurs during a certain time of day or performance related to a specific subject and to define the unit in observable, measurable terms. Scott’s teacher decided to target only appropriate hand-raising, even though disruptive comments were also an issue. She defined appropriate hand-raising as any instance in which Scott raised his hand and, when called on, offered a comment or question that pertained to the topic currently under discussion. To start, she used the intervention during social studies class.

While undesired behaviors, such as talking out in class or hitting peers, can be the target of successful interventions, the plan will have a more positive tone and may be more willingly accepted by the student if positive behaviors are identified. Teaching the student to engage in the desired behavior in place of an undesirable one will provide a means for obtaining the result the student wants (in Scott’s case, attention from teacher and peers), while reducing or eliminating the undesired behavior (speaking out in class) (Marquis et al., 2000). Rather than having Scott keep track of days when he disrupted class, his teacher elected to have him monitor appropriate hand-raising. With this approach, she was able to reinforce, not punish, his behavior.

Select the Self-Monitoring System

To fit seamlessly into a classroom, home, or work setting, self-monitoring interventions may be structured in a variety of ways. The design of the self-monitoring device is largely determined by the student’s needs and setting in which the intervention will occur. Checklists and charts are common materials used to record behavior, while golfer’s wrist counters and other mechanical devices may also be used. For Scott, a simple chart was adopted. He kept the chart in his desk and made a tally mark in the corresponding box each time he successfully raised his hand and, when called on, offered an appropriate comment in class.

Choose Reinforcers and Criteria

Once the target behavior is defined and the system is selected, reinforcers and criteria for earning them are determined. Some students are very motivated by self-moni-

toring alone. They enjoy pushing the button on their wrist counter, giving themselves checks, or crossing things off to-do lists. Many students, however, require extra teacher attention or other reinforcers to be successful with a self-monitoring intervention. To ensure success when first beginning an intervention, frequent reinforcement is recommended. Offering a choice among preferred reinforcers increases the likelihood of a successful intervention (Dyer, Dunlap, & Winterling, 1990). Scott enjoyed using school computers but rarely had an opportunity to do so because of a classroom policy about losing computer privileges for disruptive behavior. Scott and his teacher decided that extra computer time with a peer would be an appropriate and motivating reinforcer for successful participation in class. Extra time with a friend also allowed Scott to receive peer attention that he tried to gain when talking out in class.

Although it was not used for Scott’s intervention, many self-monitoring interventions include self-recruited praise, or teaching the student to bring his data to a teacher or other adult to earn positive attention or other reinforcement. For example, in the classroom a student may use a system in which she gives herself a check for every five minutes she spends on-task. When she has four checks, she brings the paper to her teacher and is complimented on work well done. Self-recruited praise is especially useful for students whose disruptive behavior is used to gain attention from teachers. However, it is important to determine that a student finds praise reinforcing. Many students, particularly adolescents, may prefer not to receive overt teacher attention; using teacher attention in such a situation as a reward could actually worsen behavior.

Teach the Student to Use the System

Scott met with his teacher to discuss the target behavior and the self-monitoring system. After she defined the system, he had an opportunity to ask questions about the new arrangements. Together, teacher and student discussed potential problems with the intervention and came to an agreement about how to handle problems that might arise. When Scott’s teacher was confident that he understood the intervention, she described several examples and non-examples and asked Scott whether they would count as appropriate hand-raising. This collaboration in the planning stages helps prevent potential problems that can occur when the adult and child disagree about use of the system. Student involvement in planning may also increase student investment in the intervention.

Once a system is in place, the teacher compares the student’s information with his or her own observations of the behavior and provides feedback on the accuracy of data collection. Practice sessions can provide an opportunity

for teacher and student to gain reliability with the system. When students consistently self-monitor with great accuracy, the teacher can end reliability checks. For Scott, practice checks with the teacher occurred daily for four days. At that time, he was over 90% reliable and began to use the system independently.

Fade Prompts and Reinforcers

Gradually, reinforcers should be faded and the expectations for behavior raised. As he was successful with independently and accurately recording behavior, Scott’s teacher stopped reminding him to use his system and set higher goals for earning computer time with his friends. By the end of the school year, Scott was on the same computer plan as other students in the class, and his teacher no longer checked his planner to make sure he accurately self-monitored. When work becomes more difficult or behavioral expectations shift, it may be helpful to provide more assistance or reinforcement. Promoting the maximum level of independence at which the student can be successful is the primary goal.

Conclusions

Self-monitoring strategies are individualized plans used to increase independent functioning in academic, behavioral, self-help, and social areas. Rather than focusing on reducing a student’s undesired behavior, self-monitoring strategies develop skills that lead to an increase in appropriate behavior. When self-monitoring skills increase, corresponding reductions in undesired behaviors often occur, even without direct intervention (Dunlap, Clarke, Jackson, Wright, 1995; Koegel, Koegel, Harrower, & Carter, 1999). This collateral behavior change allows teachers and parents to address multiple behaviors with one efficient intervention.

For Scott, self-monitoring led to an increase in hand-raising and appropriate class participation and a decrease in talking out in class. As a result, his teacher spent less time disciplining him. When Scott’s class participation improved, his academic performance improved as well. This collateral gain is a clear illustration of the efficiency of the self-monitoring intervention. Increasing the use of one skill, Scott’s teacher was able to change multiple behaviors: participation, talking out, and academic performance. ■

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Applying Cognitive-Behavioral Techniques to Social Skills Instruction

—Stephen W. Smith

For any teacher, managing student behavior in the classroom can be difficult and complex, but when successful, teachers may find behavior management professionally rewarding. Often, however, managing student behavior is personally involving and professionally frustrating. Students of all ages will sometimes engage in behavior that includes disrespect for authority, hyperactivity and inattention, lack of self-control, and sometimes aggression. Behavioral excesses and deficits detract from learning opportunities and preclude positive peer relationships. Despite the best efforts, teachers and school administrators are continuously looking for behavior management programs that can be implemented school-wide for all students along with specific interventions that can help those students who need more attention.

Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions

Cognitive-behavioral interventions (CBI) can be a viable approach for teachers to remediate behavioral deficits and excesses by providing students with the tools necessary to control their own behavior. CBIs involve teaching the use of inner speech (“self-talk”) to modify underlying cognitions that affect overt behavior (Mahoney, 1974; Meichenbaum, 1977). Since theorists consider the internalization of self-statements fundamental to developing self-control, deficient or maladaptive self-statements are viewed as contributing to negative beliefs about oneself, which can contribute significantly to childhood behavior problems, including aggression. Kendall (1993) noted that cognitive-behavioral techniques for the remediation of social deficits can incorporate cognitive, behavioral, emotive, and developmental strategies, using rewards, modeling, role-plays, and self-evaluation. As such, a student’s cognition about social situations encountered throughout the school day can be examined and modified through verbal self-regulation (i.e., using self-talk to guide problem solving or some other behavior).

CBI incorporates behavior therapy (e.g., modeling, feedback, reinforcement) and cognitive mediation (e.g.,



think-alouds) to build what can be called a new “coping template.” For example, not hitting or pushing a peer when teased can be mediated by inner speech such as “That makes me mad, but first I need to calm down and think about this.” The fundamental assumption of a CBI is that overt behavior (e.g., hitting or pushing a peer when teased) is mediated by cognitive events (e.g., “I’m going to let him have it”) and that individuals can influence cognitive events to change behavior. Cognitive strategies incorporate a “how-to-think” framework for students to use when modifying behavior rather than any explicit “what-to-think” instruction from a teacher. Most important is that CBIs are student-operated systems, thus allowing students to generalize their newly learned behavior much more than teacher-operated systems that rely on external reward and punishment procedures (Harris & Pressley, 1991).

Adult or expert modeling is considered basic to the cognitive-behavioral perspective. Meichenbaum & Goodman’s (1971) seminal study compared the effects of modeling alone with the effects of modeling and self-instructional training, a type of CBI, on decreasing impulsive behavior. The results supported the superiority

of a combined approach. Thus, it is important for teachers to model the behavioral and, especially, the cognitive skills they are teaching. For example, teachers can “think out loud” as they talk about how they might handle their own anger (“What she just said makes me really angry, but I won’t say anything now. I’ll talk to her later”), evaluate the outcome (“I’m glad I didn’t say anything. It turned out to be just a misunderstanding”), and learn from experience. A teacher’s explanation of the cognitive strategies they use and their metacognitive awareness of those strategies (i.e., thinking about their thinking) serve as a powerful model for students to emulate.

Research on Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions

There is an emerging research base on CBIs. Cognitive-behavioral strategies have ameliorated social deficits, including aggression and disruption (cf. Etscheidt, 1991; Smith, Siegel, O’Connor, & Thomas, 1994). More recent studies of the characteristics of aggressive children and the effects of CBIs indicate that teaching students cognitive strategies can decrease hyperactivity/impulsivity and disruption/aggression and strengthen pro-social behavior (see Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (CPPRG), 1999; Robinson, Smith, Miller, & Brownell, 1999).

An Example of a CBI

In 1991, Susan Etscheidt wanted to know if a specific CBI could decrease the aggressive behaviors of students with EBD as compared to students who did not receive the instruction. She also wanted to determine if the addition of a positive consequence (e.g., listening to music at the end of class) would further enhance the effectiveness of the CBI.

Etscheidt’s program components were adapted from the Lochman, Nelson, and Sims (1981) Anger Coping Program, which provides students with a way to change aggressive responses into appropriate alternatives by modifying their thinking processes regarding the circumstances surrounding certain situations. The instruction also assists students in developing, evaluating, and selecting appropriate alternative responses. Etscheidt’s goals included increasing self-awareness; identifying a student’s reaction to peer influences;

providing avenues to identify problem situations; and using problem-solving techniques to identify, evaluate, and select alternative solutions for a specific social situation.

In Etscheidt’s program, students used the following sequential strategy when approaching a problem situation:

1. Stop and think before acting. Students are taught to restrain aggressive responses through the use of covert speech.
2. Identify the problem. The students are required to distinguish the specific aspects of a problematic situation that may elicit an aggressive response.
3. Develop alternative solutions. Students generate at least two alternative solutions to a problematic situation:
 - thinking about something else until able to relax; and/or
 - moving to another location in the room to avoid further provocation.
4. Evaluate the consequences of possible solutions. Students assessed the benefits of each possible solution.
5. Select and implement a solution. The students carried out the selected alternative.

Etscheidt employed three comparison groups. The first group received the CBI, the second group received the CBI and the positive consequence, and the third group (control) received neither the CBI nor the positive consequence.

The results indicated that the two groups who received the CBI demonstrated more self-control than the control group students. In fact, the students in the control group exhibited significantly more aggressive behaviors than those who received the training. Finally, Etscheidt found that the addition of a positive consequence did not significantly increase the effectiveness of the CBI. ■

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Smith, S. W. (2002). Applying Cognitive-Behavioral Techniques to Social Skills Instruction, The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC). ERIC/OSEP Digest #E630. Retrieved from <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/eric/e630.html>

Check It Out... Available at the SESA Library

TOP HITS for those who work with students with emotional disabilities

Behavior Support Strategies for Education Paraprofessionals

Will Henson, 2008

“Education paraprofessionals are often tasked with managing challenging behaviors in both general and special education settings. This book is designed to help paraprofessionals learn important concepts for working with disruptive behaviors. This book covers: how to understand the function of a behavior ; the importance of positive, proactive and collaborative methods for addressing behaviors ; details on many different types of behavior techniques with examples and sample dialogue; an in-depth discussion of professional boundry (sic) delimmias (sic) when working with students ; de-escalation and risk management skills ; an explanation of common disability categories and psychological diagnoses”--p.4 of cover.

Behavior Solutions for The Inclusive Classroom

Beth Aune, Beth Burt & Peter Gennaro. Future Horizons, 2010.

Contents: Movement issues— Avoidance and retreat behaviors— Difficulty with routine— Social-emotional issues.

Description: Each year there is a growing emphasis on the inclusion of students with special needs into the general education population. Some students may come with a diagnosis: Learning Disability, Autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, or ADHD. Others may not, leaving teachers unsure how to teach them. This book is a tool for teachers who have a student or students in their classroom whose behaviors are impeding their learning. If they see a particular behavior, they can quickly look up an in-the-moment solution, and then read more about what could be causing that behavior. A must-have for every inclusive classroom! Copies available in both Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Audio Reinforcement Reminder Tones

[sound record (CD)]. Pyramid Educational Products, 2010. 3-CDs, 1 sheet of directions.

Description: “Instructors who use Differential Reinforcement Systems will find these CDs essential. Pop a CD into your CD player, select the track according to the interval you need, and repeat the track for a continuous reminder to catch your students “being good!” CD #1 has 1, 2, 3, and 5-minute intervals. CD #2 has 7 and 10-minute intervals. CD #3 has 15-minute intervals. Each track plays a distinct tone so that you can play more than one CD at a time for students needing different intervals and recognize which interval is sounding. Each tone is activated on a randomized, variable schedule (the three-minute tone sounds on average every three minutes). These tones also are a great tool for instructors who are teaching children to monitor their own behavior.”—Publisher’s website. Copies in Anchorage and Fairbanks. ■



About the SESA Library

The SESA Library supports all of the programs and grants housed at SESA, so it includes information on special education and disabilities. The library provides information and equipment (including assistive devices) to SESA staff and the school districts SESA serves so they may assist the students on their caseload; and to anyone in the state of Alaska so they may help individuals with special needs, or have an opportunity to develop a better understanding of special needs.