



# DIRECTIONS

*Technology in Special Education*

Vol. 6 , No. 2

October 1999

## A Response to a Response to a Response....

*Editor's note: The May/June issue of DIRECTIONS reprinted an e-mail from Suzanne, a parent who was finding herself frustrated with the "system" when trying to find appropriate AAC services for her child. Our August issue contained Susan Lait's (our newest regular contributor) response to Suzanne entitled "AAC FRUSTRATIONS - A DIFFERENT APPROACH" which told of how Susan and her family finally resorted to Home Schooling to finally solve the years of frustrations they had found in various school districts.*

*This piece contains an e-mail I received recently from Mark Wood, from the University of Vermont Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, in response to Susan's article. Following Mark's e-mail (which I forwarded to Susan) is Susan's response to him, which she copied me in on (are you with me here :). Anyway, all of it, I believe is worthy of printing here to give our readers insight into the issues and concerns relating to the education of our children and the struggles, and balancing acts that will I'm afraid continue for some time.*

I feel I need to respond to the article in the August 1999 Directions by Susan Lait, AAC FRUSTRATIONS - A DIFFERENT APPROACH. I have had this Directions volume on my desk for months now and I am compelled to read her article again and again. I now find myself needing to share with you some of the reasons for this compulsion.

I am the Assistive Technology Consultant for the Vermont State I-Team. The I-Team is funded by the Vermont Department of Education and has the following mission. To Assist local teams of families, educators, and other service providers in the delivery of quality educational services to students with intensive educational needs through technical assistance, professional development, and family support. The I-Team,

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# Accessible Learning

by **Lorianne Hoenninger**  
lorianne@erols.com

Another school year has begun, the last of the millennium. To help make this year a memorable one, let's take a look at some new shareware products and on line resources, designed for parents, teachers and other professionals.

The Illinois Assistive Technology Project has created a free, online **tutorial about Assistive Technology**, downloadable from <http://pursuit.rehab.uiuc.edu/pursuit/dis-resources/assistive-tech/basic-skills/basic-skills.html>. Learn the basics at your own pace!

Want to make better use of the Internet in your classroom, but are not sure how to start? Visit Cheryl Wissick's **online toolboxes**, at <http://www.ed.sc.edu/caw/toolbox.html>. She has put together lists of web links that can be used to develop skills on such diverse topics as fast foods, grocery stores and cafeteria lunches.

At <http://www.aurbach.com>, download onto either your Windows or Macintosh computer, some sample pages from the **Writing Well**. This paper based product provides black-line master sets of writing prompts with grade level assessments. Each page has a list of vocabulary words to help students start writing, an excellent idea for students with learning disabilities.

**Math Dittos 2** are another paper based product, also for either Win-

dows or Macintosh computers. These worksheets are "Fact Controlled" for learners with special needs. Worksheets are available for addition, subtraction and multiplication. Samples can be procured from <http://www.md2.witsandbits.com>.

**StartWrite**, from <http://www.startwrite.com> is a computerized worksheet generator. Type in letters, numbers and words, then stand back as StartWrite translates them into a broken line font (print or cursive) that students can trace over. Customization features include font size, letter shading and clip art. StartWrite is currently available for the Windows platform, with the Macintosh version in the works.

The people at Little Fingers software, <http://www.little-g.com>, have been very busy this past year. Their **Classroom Series** collection of K-5 lessons, many with editable content and all available in both Windows and Macintosh formats, is up to 28 titles. Each lesson uses large, bright graphics, an uncluttered screen, and digitized directions. Teachers are encouraged to e-mail the authors with suggestions for new lessons. At \$5.00 apiece, they are a bargain!

Last but not least is **Spelling Buddy** and his companion game, the **Wheel of Four Chins**. These Windows only programs feature verbal prompts and

## DIRECTIONS

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Please see *ACCESSIBLE* on page 9



## DEC Conference 1999: *Crossing Boundaries: Visions for the 21st Century* December 9 - 12, 1999, Washington, DC

*The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children cordially invites you to attend its 15th Annual International Conference.*

**Improve your skills to make a difference in the lives of young children with special needs and their families.** The conference will highlight suggested practices, improved techniques, state-of-the-art information, and future goals related to young children from birth through eight years old.

**Network with 2000 people who share your passion for working in this field.** During sessions, at receptions, on breaks, in the hallways ... attendees and presenters from many disciplines will be sharing personal experiences on approaches that work and those that don't.

**Learn from a variety of interesting instructional formats** including the general session, concurrent conference sessions, poster sessions, small discussion groups, in-depth workshops and informal networking. You can even learn a few new tips from the exhibits without buying a thing!

**See first-hand what's new on the market and save money if you decide to buy.** The exhibits are a great place to see that new product you've heard about, find just what you've been looking for, ask about what's being developed to help you with your challenges - and to save you money with special offers.

**Plan now to attend this important professional development opportunity in the field of early intervention / early childhood special education.** Register by November 8 to receive the special pre-registration rate.

**Boost Your Ability and Your Resolve to Make a Difference!**

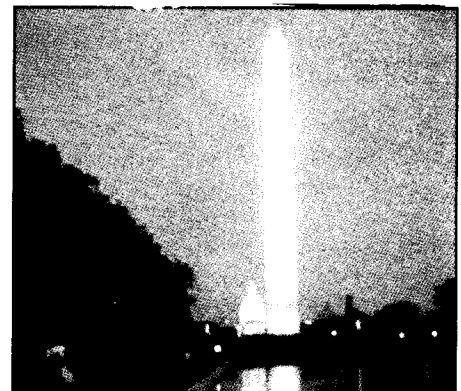
### Invited Keynote Speaker:

#### Richard W. Riley U.S. Secretary of Education

*The Washington Post* has called him one of the "most decent and honorable people in public life." And when Riley was Governor of South Carolina, he was so popular that the people amended their constitution to enable him to run for a second term. President Clinton chose Richard Riley to be the U.S. Secretary of Education in December 1992 after Riley won national recognition for his highly successful effort to improve education in South Carolina. Secretary Riley and President Clinton agree that education must be America's number one priority in the years ahead. Riley has helped win an historic ruling by the F.C.C. to give schools and libraries deep discounts for Internet access and telecommunications services and helped win major improvements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

### DEC Awards Presentations

Immediately following the Keynote on Thursday, DEC will recognize outstanding DEC members and other leaders in the field. Presentations will include the Kathleen W. McCartan Student Award, DEC Doctoral Student Award, DEC's Service to the Field Award, Merle Karnes Service to the Division Award, and the Rose C. Engel Award for Excellence in Professional Practice. Come join us to salute the achievements of your peers!



**Mark Your Calendars**  
for DEC 2000 in  
**Albuquerque, New Mexico**  
December 7-10, 2000

**Bring in the 21st Century with  
DEC!**

If you are not currently a member of CEC and DEC, we welcome your participation in this conference and invite you to become a member. Take advantage of the special member conference fees and join today!

CEC, P.O. Box 79026, Baltimore, MD 21279-0026, or call (888) 232-7733.

*Then, just send us a copy of your membership application along with your registration form to register at the special member rate!*

# Technology in Early Childhood Settings

By Johnna Timmes, Child Care Programs Specialist

Source: Tech Express, December 1998

Technology is often seen as an adult instrument. However, many early childhood environments are taking advantage of the opportunities technology provides as a way of presenting learning instruction, removing barriers to participation and increasing kids' abilities to communicate with adults and peers. Assistive Technology — in the form of mobility aids, adapted toys, computers and communication devices are changing youngsters with disabilities from passive observers to active participants in the world around them.

## Technology and Instruction

Teachers of young children and early childhood care providers use many different tools to creatively access learning for kids. Computer hardware and software, peripheral devices, switch-adapted toys and other adaptations give children the chance to gain understanding of developmental concepts through hands-on activity. Many software programs have been designed specifically for classroom use to introduce such concepts through visual, sound, and voice activated media. Concepts such as 1:1 correspondence, sequencing, color recognition and counting skill translate very easily to different forms of technology. Using technology for reinforcement and practice of new skills presented allows for repetition and the synthesis of the presented concept.

## Removing Barriers of Participation

Many children experience a low level of

classroom participation, not only due to physical or cognitive disability but also because of underdeveloped social skills. Technology gives freedom to form partnerships through computer-initiated games and interactive stories. It can increase social competence, self-esteem and inclusion. Use of computer hardware and software are not the only way to advance learning and participation. Switch-adapted equipment can also assist children in performing many early childhood activities that had been unavailable to them before. Switches can be adapted to musical instruments such as a drum or tambourine for inclusion in musical activities. Opportunities can be made for children to take part in other activities such as cooking by adding switches to equipment for mixing or measuring. Being an integral part of any activity builds skills and fosters a child's confidence and independence.

## Communication

Communication between children and adults as well as between children and their peers, can be established with technology on many occasions for learning and development of friendships. There are many types of software that are geared to enhancing language in the young child. These can be used with augmentative communication devices to increase expressive vocabulary and aid kids in processing receptive language as well. Communication is not always

achieved purely with spoken words. Choice is another way young children make known their wants, needs and feelings. Technology often takes away the limits that can be placed on kids when trying to communicate those choices.

## Action Steps for Gaining more Information on Technology in Early Childhood Classrooms

1. Contact one of your state's technology resource or parent information centers. Ask for any written or other materials discussing the merits of using technology with young children.
2. Visit an early childhood setting that currently uses technology with children.
3. Talk to parents whose children have used technology at school, in a child care facilities, or at home. Discuss easy and inexpensive adaptations and equipment versus equipment that may be more costly.
4. Research early childhood software through software vendors and technology organizations.
5. Talk to older kids! Find out what types of software they've used themselves or seen used in their classrooms. §

*RESPONSE continued from page 1*

on a day to day basis, works on many of the issues that Susan was describing so well in her article. Most notable were her feelings on inclusion, starting over each year with new staff, and school systems failure to include training of AAC use as part of the program.

As part of a team for building skills in these areas, I would like to ask people who are in Susan's situation to do what they should not have to do, that is be persistent and yet patient. Working with a child who uses AAC or who has multiple disabilities takes knowledge and skills that many special educators do not have. This area of education has changed dramatically in the last few years. Many special educators will never teach a child who uses AAC or one who has severe multiple disabilities. Due to this, many special education teachers do not have much background in this area when they start teaching. This is further complicated by the fact that it may be many years between a teachers training and the time they first work with a child with severe multiple disabilities. As a trainer of these teachers, I can tell you that most teachers are eager to expand their teaching ability and willing to work hard to learn how to educate all children. Many of the teachers who look for training are teachers who know they will have a child with severe multiple disabilities the next school year. Testing and program building take time. It is right of Susan to be persistent in the idea of the school doing what is needed for her child, this includes AAC training and

inclusion. Susan must also look at the schools efforts to build a support system. If Susan and her child were in 4 school districts, in 3 states, in 7 years, how much of a chance has any school had for building the supports that are needed?

Susan has had the chance to build the support system that her child needs in only one place, her home. Home School has worked for Susan and her child, due in part to the knowledge base she has built. I would like to take this opportunity to wish her the best in Home Schooling her child. I would however like to ask Susan or any other parent to be aware of the time it takes to build a system for a student with severe multiple disabilities. There is a large amount of knowledge that must be gained and attitudes that must be changed to make the school one who will include all children. I am in no way saying to sit back and let the school under serve your children. I am however, saying help your school build the capability of serving your child. You may also need to realize that it may not be able to happen in a week or a month. You must be persistent and yet patient and help the school build the support system your child needs.

I would like to end by sharing part of the I-Team vision with you. I would ask you to substitute the name of your state or your school district and make this your vision. "Every child in Vermont who has significant learning differences is welcome in his/her class and community, is taught well, and has accesses".

Mark Wood  
University of Vermont, Center on  
Disability and Community Inclusion  
*mawood@zoo.uvm.edu*

*And, now Susan's response to Mark:*

Dear Mark,

Thank you for the e-mail response that you sent to *DIRECTIONS* in reference to my article on Homeschooling our Assistive Technology Special Needs Child. I enjoyed your supportive response and your positive suggestions. I am in agreement with your feelings that a parent needs to provide a school district the opportunity to build a support system. Yet, I feel that parents need to remember that they are and will be the only constant in their child's life. Furthermore, that as parents they will be the individuals most concerned with outcome once that child leaves the educational system and enters the adult service system. For a parent to be persistent and patient without a clear focus on desired outcome may result in their child failing to reach desired goals.

I appreciate the vision statement that you shared when you closed your e-mail. It is unfortunate, but not every state and/or school district has such vision. Therefore, as a parent, you may reach a point where you realize that you must exchange patience for a focus on opportunity for your child. The question becomes one of at what age do you change your focus....age 10, age 16 or age 21???

*Please see RESPONSE on page 12*

# The Journey: Homeschooling Our Special Needs Child Using Assistive Technology - Part 2

By: Susan Lait <aslnc@CITCOM.NET>

This article is a follow-up to the article that appeared in Vol. 5 #12 of **DIRECTIONS**, “**The Journey: Homeschooling Our Assistive Technology Special Needs Child**”. I do hope that you were encouraged to learn about the possibilities of homeschooling your child. Based on the information that I provided, were you able to obtain information as to what statutes effect homeschoolers in your state? Did you locate your local & state support groups? Were you able to discover home school resources in local libraries & bookstores? Now that you have started your research, you may have some immediate and practical concerns. Once we, as a family, began our exploration into homeschooling, three of our major concerns were legal issues, funding issues and curriculum. We wanted to feel assured that we, as parents, were taking a course of action that was legally sound. We wanted to be aware of funding options for equipment, supports & services. We had no idea of what curriculum to use.

Once we made the decision to put our home school plan into action, we joined the **Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)**, P.O. 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134, (540)338-5600. For the yearly fee of \$100.00, HSLDA provides prepaid legal defense, a written outline of the Home School Statutes in your state, a packet of information on home school-

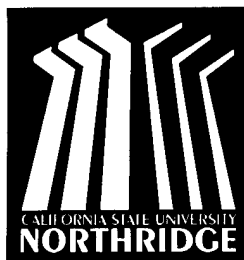
ing a Special Needs Child, and a publication called the Home School Court Report. We were able to speak to a HSLDA Special Needs Coordinator who answered questions ranging from testing to what documentation we should be keeping. HSLDA also provided referrals to local educational consultants. Through HSLDA, we have been able to order resources that provide information on a wide variety of topics including the legalities of home schooling. If we have a question related to the legal aspects of homeschooling, we pick up the telephone and call HSLDA. HSLDA continues to be a valuable resource for us. If you are considering putting a home school plan into action, may I make a personal suggestion that you contact HSLDA and request an application.

Our next major concern was funding for equipment, supports & services. As reflected in the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act 1997, the funding options that existed while our daughter was a student in the Public School System could be made available by the Local School District in the home school setting. We did have legal concerns as to the involvement of the Local School System. Therefore, we consulted the Home School Legal Defense Association. HSLDA counseled that the decision to accept services from the local school district was an indi-

vidual decision. HSLDA recommended in order to offer our home school the most protection that we receive supports & services privately... strings and conditions can follow government money.

As part of our research into funding, we contacted other parents. I would like to share with you some of their comments. One parent said, “**The school district told me that I would have to go to Due Process to get services while homeschooling. If I have to do battle over supports & services.... I may as well stay in the system!**”. Another parent said, “**I’m homeschooling to participate in the direction of my daughter’s education I don’t want any equipment or services from the local school district! We are paying for our son’s communication device and computer on monthly payment plans through the vendor**”. A third parent said, “**I’m considering Due Process to address appropriate supports & services in the public school setting. I think we will home school and focus on getting services in the home environment. In the meantime, we are taking out a loan to pay for equipment**”. Still a fourth parent shared, “**I am receiving equipment, supports & services from the school district while I home school and I’m not having any problems**”. A fifth parent warned against receiving sup-

*Please see HOME on page 10*



# CALL FOR PAPERS

CSUN's Fifteenth Annual International Conference  
**"Technology and Persons with Disabilities"**  
**March 20 - 25, 2000**

This is an invitation to participate in a major, worldwide conference which drew more than 4,000 persons from all 50 states and 33 foreign countries to Los Angeles in 1999

## Introduction

By design, "Technology and Persons with Disabilities" is a comprehensive, international conference where all technologies across all ages, disabilities, levels of education and training, employment, and independent living are addressed.

## Audience

The audience of the conference is diverse. It includes a large number of:

- ♦ Persons with disabilities and their family members
- ♦ Special education teachers
- ♦ University professors and researchers
- ♦ Occupational and physical therapists
- ♦ Alternative & Augmentative Communication clinicians
- ♦ Manufacturers, distributors, and developers
- ♦ Community agency personnel
- ♦ Governmental policy makers
- ♦ Private and public rehabilitation service providers
- ♦ Rehabilitation engineers
- ♦ Assistive Technology practitioners and suppliers

## Content

Speakers are encouraged to share new information about hardware, software, adaptive devices, access to technology, training programs, and results of research in any area of assistive technology. In brief, if you feel you have a good idea about the use of technology among persons with disabilities, please submit a paper for consideration.

## General Sessions

This is an invitation to submit a paper for consideration as a General Session. General Sessions are either 30 or 60 minutes in length. General Sessions are scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, Thursday, March 23, Friday, March 24, and Saturday, March 25. In submitting a paper for consideration, speakers agree that their paper may be scheduled at any time on any of these days at the discretion of the conference staff.

## Special Features for 2000

If giving a paper in the Internet/WWW or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) area (or both), please note on the proposal form. Otherwise, simply check "Other". Topics on the area of AAC need to be identified on the proposal form as these are blocked into the Hilton Hotel whenever possible. Topics in the Internet/WWW area need to be identified on the proposal form as these are blocked into special session rooms. Approximately 20% of all sessions at the 1999 conference dealt with Internet/WWW issues. There is also a lab with Macintosh and PC computers that are connected to the Internet for computer platform presentations -- please specify "Hands-on Computer Lab". To review the kinds of presentations that have been accepted in the past, please access the 1999 Proceedings on our Home Page: <http://www.csun.edu/cod/Papers> from the international community are warmly welcomed.

This brochure is available in  
 alternative formats

## Information in Alternative Formats

Speakers and exhibitors are responsible for providing their own handouts and promotional materials in alternative formats. Please recognize that it is difficult to predict the composition and the needs of the audience in advance. Therefore, speakers should make an announcement at the beginning of their presentation that they are willing to provide materials in alternative formats as needed and will distribute shortly after the conference. Exhibitors should also be prepared for requests for promotional materials in alternative formats.

## Equipment & Set-Up

It is expressly understood that any equipment not listed on the proposal form is the responsibility of the presenter. If more than 20 minutes set-up time is needed, contact our office before January 3, 2000.



Submit your proposal form and  
 complete paper by email:  
[ltm@csun.edu](mailto:ltm@csun.edu)

## New Leaders Selected for APH Recording Studio

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has appointed Carol Jordan Stewart to the position of Recording Studio Director and has selected Steve Mullins for the newly created post of Assistant Studio Director. Stewart replaces longtime studio head, Raymond Randles, who retired in June.

The APH Talking Book program began in 1938. That year, thirty-two Talking Books were created. Today, APH produces about 500 book titles and nine magazine titles each year for the Talking Book program administered by National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a division of the Library of Congress. APH also records several magazines under contract with their publishers, including Newsweek® and Reader's Digest®.

APH's Talking Book department has ten recording studios and employs twenty-seven narrators, eleven monitors, five proofreaders and two administrators. To create a Talking Book, a monitor works with a narrator during the recording session to assure the quality of the recording. Appropriate interpretation, correct pronunciation, technical accuracy and adherence to text are all considerations. A proofreader reviews the tape according to these criteria and necessary corrections are made before final production and distribution.

CAROL JORDAN STEWART has been a Talking Book narrator at APH for nine years. A commercial audiobook narrator as well, she has won the prestigious Golden Headset award from AudioWorld magazine. Stewart has owned her own audiobook company for four years and is very active in the national Audiobook

Publishers Association. She earned her BFA in Acting from the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago in 1984 and received her MFA in Expressive Therapies from the University of Louisville in 1994.

STEVE MULLINS has fourteen years experience in the APH studios. He was formerly head monitor. He graduated from Indiana University with a degree in English. In addition to his current production and new administrative duties, he is also heavily involved with APH's new digital project.

The American Printing House for the Blind, founded in 1858, is the oldest organization of its kind in the United States and the world's largest not-for-profit company that creates educational, workplace and life-style products and services for blind and visually impaired people. §

### **DIRECTIONS on CD**

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feedback, customizable word lists with voice recording, and enhancements for the visually impaired. The word crafting feature can be used to write stories and record them, then create customized spelling lists from the words in the story. The Wheel of the Four Chins is a funny, editable variation on the old Hangman game. Spelling Buddy and the Wheel of the Four Chins are appropriate for all ages. Download them both from <http://www.yourbud.com>.

Well, I guess that wraps it up for another month. Next month we will explore products and resources for students with hearing and visual impairments.

As always, if you have questions, do not hesitate to e-mail me at [lorianne@erols.com](mailto:lorianne@erols.com), visit my website at <http://members.xoom.com/ALTA> or write c/o: Accessible Learning Technology Alternatives, P.O. Box 597, Shirley NY, 11967. §

## Conferences & Events

**Date: November 11-13, 1999**

Rocky Mountain Collaborative Conference  
Denver, CO  
Contact: 303-864-5100, 800-255-3477, [www.uchsc.edu/catp](http://www.uchsc.edu/catp)

**Date: December 2 - 4, 1999**

RESNA: Promoting Independence and Quality of Life for Older Persons  
Buffalo, NY  
Contact: Chairman, Conference on Aging, University of Buffalo  
[wings.buffalo.edu/ot/cat/conference](http://wings.buffalo.edu/ot/cat/conference)

**Date: December 9 - 12, 1999**

15th Annual DEC International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs  
Washington, DC  
Contact: [www.dec-sped.org](http://www.dec-sped.org)

**Date: January 27 - 29, 2000**

18th Annual International Technology, Reading & Learning Difficulties Conference  
San Francisco, CA  
Contact: 888-594-1249, [info@trld.com](mailto:info@trld.com), [www.trld.com](http://www.trld.com)

**Date: March 31 - April 3, 2000**

80th Annual American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Conference & Exhibition  
Seattle, WA  
Contact: 301-652-6611, [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)

**Date: April 5 - 8, 2000**

PEPNet 2000, Innovation in Education  
Denver, CO  
Contact: 423-974-0607, [www.pepnet.org](http://www.pepnet.org)

### ***Exceptional Parent Magazine at Barnes & Noble Bookstores***

In addition to its place in the periodicals section at select Barnes & Noble bookstores, ***Exceptional Parent magazine*** will become available in the children's books department of participating Barnes & Noble bookstores across the country. Starting October 1, 1999, participating stores in Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont and Wisconsin will display ***Exceptional Parent*** in a special section with books for parents of children and adults with special needs. The 28 year old, international award-winning magazine is the oldest and most widely read and referred to publication serving the disability market today. It provides practical advice and emotional support for parents, families, caregivers, health care professionals and teachers involved in the care and development of children and adults with disabilities and special health care needs. Monthly issues of ***Exceptional Parent*** and its authoritative, comprehensive Annual Resource Guide directory of organizations, associations, products and services for people with disabilities are currently available at select Barnes & Noble bookstores across the United States. To find out how you can get a copy, call your local Barnes & Noble bookstore or Exceptional Parent's publishing office at 1-800-EPARENT or visit Exceptional Parent on the web at <http://www.eparent.com>.

*HOME continued from page 6*

ports & services from the local school district by saying, **“I tried receiving Assistive Technology Equipment and speech therapy from the school district and it was a nightmare they tried to set legal requirements for our home school program. I now get services & equipment for our daughter through state funding at our local social services agency”**. A sixth parent said, **“My daughter attends Charter School. The Charter School is a Local Education Agency separate from the Public School System. The Charter School provides equipment, supports & services through State & Federal Funding”**. Parents can be very adaptive in the methods they choose to meet the needs of their children. In the event, you decide to home school your Assistive Technology Special Needs Child, the decision as to how you achieve funding for equipment, supports & services will be one of your first and toughest decisions. The best advise that I can give you is do your research and make your decision based on your family needs.

The issue of curriculum is very interesting. The home school information books that I suggested in my first article and the ones that you are discovering in your local libraries and bookstores will outline many of the available curriculums. We discovered a great variety of choices. There has been an explosion of vendors and resources that address the needs of homeschooling families. You can

purchase prepackaged curriculums with textbooks, workbooks and teacher manuals. You can purchase less expensive curriculums that use resources in the library. There are video and online courses available. There are courses that target specific areas such as reading, math, etc. Curriculums can have a religious foundation based on your personal religious choice, or curriculums can have no religious foundation. You can also pick and choose from different curriculums and create a custom curriculum. In our case, our daughter communicates with Augmentative Communication and Assistive Technology. Therefore, we must adapt most standard educational resources to her mode of communication. With the assistance of our independent educational consultants, we choose to develop a custom curriculum. As you research curriculums, I sincerely recommend that you contact parents in your local Home School Support Groups and attend support group meetings. It is common for parents who are considering homeschooling to attend support group meetings. I am sure you will find home school parents to be wonderful resources. They are very happy to share information. We were members of our local support group for years before we made the final decision to home school our daughter.

My first two articles have covered what I call the business of homeschooling. In writing these articles, I have felt a responsibility to help you locate resources which will

assist you in making informed decisions that will meet your individual family needs. Now that I can feel comfortable that you know how to begin your research, in future articles, we can get into the fun side of homeschooling. Let me close today with an item of encouragement. Years ago, I developed a friendship with a lady who is a Special Needs Consultant. Being a newly emerging Special Needs Parent, I was faced with the initial hard realities and hard decisions of being a Special Needs Parent. I told the consultant that this whole process was too hard. I asked her if it would ever get any easier. Her answer was a very firm **“No!”** but she added, **“Yet you’re going to get very good at it!”** So I want to close by asking you to think back to where your journey as a Special Needs Parent began... to all the new skills that you have learned since you became a Special Needs Parent. Homeschooling may just be one the skills that you learn along the way to help your child reach their fullest potential. It may not be easy at first but you can get very good at it!

My best wishes to you on your continued research. If the time comes that you make a decision to home school your child, your personal research and networking will serve you well. Please, if you have any special questions or areas of interest, send them to Janet Hosmer at DIRECTIONS, (janet@dreamms.org) and she will forward them to me, or you can e-mail them directly to me at aslnc@CITCOM.NET. §

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# **JOURNAL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY**

## **Call for Manuscripts**

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The Journal of Special Education Technology (JSET) is a refereed professional journal that presents up-to-date information and opinions about issues, research, policy, and practice related to the use of technology in the field of special education. JSET is published quarterly and has as its mission:

“to provide a vehicle for the proliferation of information, research, and reports of innovative practices regarding the application of educational technology toward the development and education of exceptional children”

The Journal of Special Education Technology welcomes scholarly manuscripts within the areas of:

- Discussion of issues and trends in the use of technology in the field of Special Education
- Reports of experimental or applied research that deals with the use of technology or assistive devices for people with disabilities
- Analysis of policy developments at the state and federal levels that impact the use of technology for people with disabilities
- Description of program models that incorporate the use of technology in the education of people with disabilities, the transition of people with disabilities, or the leisure time of people with disabilities, etc.
- Description of teacher education programs that incorporate the use of technology in the education of future special educators and/or others whose focus is the provision of services to people with disabilities
- Reviews of the literature that focus on technology in special education

To submit a manuscript, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Five (5) printed copies of the manuscript following all guidelines of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (APA) (4th edition, 1994)
2. Manuscripts should be no longer than 50 pages in length
3. Preferred positions of tables and figures should be indicated in the manuscript d.) authors are encouraged to write in “person-first” language: the person precedes the disability—for example, “people with disabilities” not “the disabled”
4. A cover letter should accompany the manuscript indicating that the manuscript has not been published in whole or substantial part by another publisher and that the manuscript is not currently under review by another journal

Manuscripts are judged according to a blind review process by three members of the editorial board and final decision by the editors. The review process will take approximately three months from time of notification to the author(s) of receipt of the manuscript by JSET and to notification of acceptance or rejection for publication.

**SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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*RESPONSE continued from page 5*

We have not given up on the system. I agree that change takes time. An educational system can either embrace change through education or wait for a parent to achieve change through administrative direction (Formal Complaint Process). Many school systems wait for parents to begin the process of change through Formal Actions. We continue to be persistent and patient. Yet while we are waiting for change to occur, we have a responsibility to our child that must come first. That responsibility is what moved us towards a combination of Home School and advocacy for positive change.

It sounds like Vermont may have easier access to AT than our state. The closest Technology Access Project Center or Alliance for Assistive Technology Member is a 5 1/2 hour drive from where we live. We have been unable to locate local independent AT supports & services. We live in a rural mountain area. AT professionals in our state agree that our area of the state has been neglected when it comes to AT. As a family, we receive AT training, supports & services from a closer AT Center in a

neighboring state. I share this with you to represent that easy access to AT can be an important factor. We as parents are willing to travel great distances to other states to achieve the AT services that are needed. A school system may not be willing to make that commitment.

A professional's reality, no matter how dedicated the professional, is an abstract reality. A reality of persistence & patience to a professional is more than time to a parent and their child. To the parent and a child the reality is that the time spent waiting can be a period of isolation.....a time when a child is not welcome in his/her class and community, may not have access, and it may be a time when a child can not speak, move, or communicate. How long would you ask a child to be patient and remain in isolation without access to AT? How long would you ask parents to endure the heart-break of seeing their child in isolation? Perhaps professionals could learn the hard lesson that parents must learn. All the best intentions do not serve a child with disabilities. Al-

though good intentions are a place to start... I feel that the key is education, accountability, access and implementation.

My best wishes to you and your staff as you serve the children of Vermont. It sounds like the children & parents in Vermont are very lucky to have you as an AT Consultant. I would really enjoy hearing from you again. Since you work on the state level, perhaps you can assist us in the "how to" of developing AT supports. How is AT access set up in Vermont? Does your state AT Team travel? Are there District or Regional Centers? What does a school system do when it does not have local access?

Susan Lait  
*aslnc@CITCOM.NET*

*Editor's note: I'm sure that there are many of you out there who would like to comment. Please do so by e-mail to me (janet@dreamms.org) or to Susan or Mark at their respective e-mail addresses. §*