


## May 2010 Advocacy Newsletter

Information gathered by the Educator Vice President and the Education, Environment, Health and Wellness, Family, School and Community Engagement, Parenting and Family Life, and Special Education Chairs to assist you in your advocacy efforts.



### Education

Literacy is so very important. This month's information focuses on reading.

- **Reading is Fundamental** (children's literacy organization): [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org) There are many free resources, tips and tricks for parents, community members and teachers
  - **Free Literacy Parent Guides:** <http://www.rif.org/parents/resources/parentguide.msp>
  - Information for teachers and parents on **teaching children to read and helping those who struggle:** <http://www.readingrockets.org/>
  - **Free, Bilingual Activity Book for Preschoolers:**  
[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/writingcom/Our-Book-By-Us-FINAL.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/writingcom/Our-Book-By-Us-FINAL.pdf) Have fun reading and writing with preschool-age children with *Our Book By Us! / Nuestro Libro ¡Hecho Por Nosotros!* Created with award-winning author and illustrator Peter H. Reynolds, this book encourages children to read, write, listen, and talk.
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- **CIERA** – Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement <http://www.ciera.org/>
  - <http://www.starfall.com/> This website has a phonics focus in learning to read. Starfall.com opened in September of 2002 as a free public service to motivate children to read with phonics.
  - <http://reading.uoregon.edu> This website is designed to provide reading information, technology, and resources to teachers, administrators, and parents across the country.
  - **Harvard Family Research Project** – Storybook Corner <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/storybook-corner>
  - **Advocates Weigh Obama's Commitment to Early Ed (EdWeek – Linda Jacobson)**  
President Obama's historic remaking of the country's health-care system and the related measure overhauling student loans last month ultimately failed to include money for his proposed Early Learning Challenge Fund, which would have provided competitive grants to help states both create and improve the quality of services for at-risk children from birth to age 5.  
[http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/04/09/29obama-earlyed\\_ep.h29.html?tkn=W0OF6E5ucoZGaT6QJ2sOD1lleeQDAdr4YYBj&cmp=clp-edweek](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/04/09/29obama-earlyed_ep.h29.html?tkn=W0OF6E5ucoZGaT6QJ2sOD1lleeQDAdr4YYBj&cmp=clp-edweek)
  - **For the April Board of Regents Report**  
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/April2010/0410monthmat.html#bor>

- **Statement by Education Commissioner David Steiner on New York State's Race to the Top Application** – “While our application placed us among the finalists, the United States Education Department has announced that New York is not among the two first round winners in the Race to the Top competition” [http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/March29\\_rttt\\_statement.html](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/March29_rttt_statement.html)
- **View NY’s Race to the Top Interview with US Department of Education -** [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/state\\_edwatch/2010/04/must\\_see\\_tv\\_race\\_to\\_top\\_presentations\\_debut.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/state_edwatch/2010/04/must_see_tv_race_to_top_presentations_debut.html)
- **School Report Cards Released** <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/SchReportCards-08-09.html>



## Environment

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- **Check your home for common toxic chemicals** and chooses safer alternatives. Environmental Working Group makes it easy. <http://www.ewg.org/healthy-home-tips/checklist>
- **How is your school district managing its athletic fields?** What pesticides are being applied and how do they affect the community's health? Interested in advocating for safer turf management practices? Grassroots Environmental Education makes it easy. Take a look! <http://www.thechildsafeschool.org/tppolicy.html>
- Are you familiar with the work of biologist, cancer survivor and upstate New York resident Sandra Steingraber? Her new documentary, **Living Downstream**, explores the relationship between human rights and the environment, with emphasis on chemical contamination. Read more about her and see a movie trailer here: <http://steingraber.com/>
- **Natural gas extraction continues to be a top environmental concern** for most New Yorkers. Here's a link to some of the latest information and a trailer for the new documentary “Gasland” <http://www.enviroblog.org/2010/04/pbss-now-on-natural-gas-extraction.html>
- Want to find out **what kind of cleaners your school district is using** in its buildings? Here's a handy checklist to get the process started: <http://www.nationalhealthyschoolsday.org/InventoryCleaningProducts.pdf>



## Health and Wellness

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- **Impact of Sugared Beverage on Obesity, NY Department of Health.** Many studies have identified a strong link between obesity and the consumption of beverages containing large amounts of added sugar. [http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/obesity/sugared\\_beverages/studies](http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/obesity/sugared_beverages/studies)
- **Two Views; Is Soda Tax Good Policy?** <http://www.ajc.com/opinion/pro-con-is-a-438123.html>
- **Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Academies Reports and Meetings:** Attend open meetings and access information on Children, Youth and Families, Diseases, Environmental Health, Food and Nutrition, Public Health, Select Populations and Health Disparities. Read the r



## Parenting and Family Life

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- **Expanding the Role of Afterschool Programs in Promoting Health and Wellness:** Check out NYSAN's new policy brief on the issues related to child and youth health, the resources afterschool programs provide, and how to expand the role of afterschool programs to better promote healthy physical development. <http://www.nysan.org/content/document/detail/2967>
- **Parenting and Communication with Your Teenager**  
For those of you who are the parents of a teenager, you know how frustrating some days can be. No matter how hard it may get, it is very important that you keep the lines of communication open. By the time your child becomes a teen, you wonder where did the time go and how can I keep that bond of trust and honesty between you and your child. The following websites may help.
  - Communicating with Teens-<http://life.familyeducation.com>
  - Parent talk newsletters/teens- [www.tnpc.com/parentalk/adoles.html](http://www.tnpc.com/parentalk/adoles.html)
  - Parents Guide to Surviving the Teen Years- <http://kidshealth.org>
  - Ten Tips for Communicating with your Teenager-<http://www.essortment.com>  
<http://www.googobits.com/articles/54-how-to-communicate-with-teenagers.html>
  - <http://ezinearticles.com>
- **Test Anxiety and Test Taking**  
It's coming close to that time of year when your child will need to start preparing for State tests and end of the year tests. The following websites will help you to prepare your child and ease the stress of taking and doing well on the tests. They will help in easing the anxiety and help prepare them to be ready and comfortable in taking tests.
  - <http://school.familyeducation.com>
  - Standardized test taking-<http://www2.scholastic.com>
  - Performance Anxiety- <http://kidshealth.org>
  - [www.testtakingtips.com/anxiety/index.htm](http://www.testtakingtips.com/anxiety/index.htm)
  - <http://www.how-to-study.com>
  - Study Skills and Test Preparation- <http://www.teachervision.fen.com>



## Special Education

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- **"Helping Parents and Schools Become More Effective Partners in the Special Education Process."** NYSED announces the scheduling of a series of workshops for parents and school-related professionals regarding alternative dispute resolution. These workshops are offered by the New York State Dispute Resolution Association (NYSdra), Inc. in collaboration with local Community Dispute Resolution Centers and NYSED-supported Special Education Parent Centers. Pre-registration is requested.  
<http://www.nysdra.org/calendar/calendar.aspx?action=details&eventid=316>
- **The National Center for Learning Disabilities "Core Principles"** for the reauthorization of ESEA, have been released to guide the discussions related to students most at-risk for being identified with learning disabilities (LD) as well as those already identified and receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Our ESEA Principles reflect the priorities we believe will support more students becoming college and career ready.

<http://www.nclد.org/images/stories/OnCapitolHill/comments-letters/principles-esearauthorization-march2010.pdf>

- **New York State Disabilities Advocacy Association and Network (NYS DAAN):**The goal of this website is to create a clearinghouse of information that supports people with disabilities and their families, advocates and service providers; to help increase timely access to current, useful information on a wide range of policies and issues; and to local and regional advocacy groups and organizations, training and support; and to share positive advocacy stories and identifying evidence based practices in all sectors.

<http://www.nysdaan.org>