

Janet Reese
ACPS Parent Support Specialist
Courtney Davis, Ph. D.
Coordinator, Parent Resource Center

**Parent Resource Center Report to SEAC
February 9, 2018**

The Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Family Resource Center, also known as the Parent Resource Center or the PRC, is located in Room 134 of the Minnie Howard Campus of T.C. Williams High School, 3801 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria, VA 22302. The Parent Resource Center is open every school day from 8:30-3:30. The PRC offers the following services at no cost to anyone who lives, works or goes to school in the City of Alexandria:

- A lending library with over 500 books and DVDs on a variety of disabilities and parenting issues;
- A list of service providers in the community, such as speech therapists, math tutors and respite care providers;
- Support groups for parents;
- A workshops series for parents on various disabilities and general parenting topics;
- Individual confidential consultations to help parents understand their child's special education services and to support them with the challenges of raising a child with a disability or learning difference.

The following is a summary of Parent Resource Center activity for the months of January and early February, 2018.

I. PRC Contacts:

- A.** For PRC data recording purposes, a "contact" is communication **initiated** by a parent, staff member or community member with the PRC, either by phone, email or in-person meeting.
- B.** As of October 2016, the Department of Education has changed some of the parameters regarding what constitutes a single contact with a PRC. This could potentially lessen the total number of contacts as compared with previous years.
 - a. For example, prior to October of this year, each contact on a separate day surrounding one particular issue was counted as a separate contact.

- b. Now, the DOE wants PRCs to count all contacts surrounding one specific issue as a single contact, regardless of whether the contact is limited to one interaction between the parent and the PRC or twenty.

C. Comparison of PRC use for 2013-2014 through 2017-2018 School Years

MONTH	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
August	6 (PRC opened 8/19)	15 (PRC opened 8/15) Includes data from summer	49 (PRC opened 8/21) Includes data from summer	54 (PRC opened 8/22) Includes data from summer	70 (PRC opened 8/4) includes data from summer
September	16	78	139	91	90
October	18	108	136	119	168
November	12	124	139	149	152
December	28	63	70	87	93
January	79	189	98	172	202
February	60	102	130	152	
March	61	112	124	181	
April	79	91	125	127	
May	79	100	62	149	
June	46 (PRC closed for summer 6/23 with the end of the school year)	114 (PRC closed for summer 6/22 with the end of the school year)	69 (data is through 6/24 and the end of the school year)	66 (data is through 6/22 and the end of the school year)	
TOTALS	484	1096	1141	1347	
Percentage Change		+126.4%	+4.1%	+18.1%	

- D. There were more contacts in January than for any month since PRC staff began collecting data in August, 2013.
- E. Contact breakdown for January: parents (86), ACPS staff (58), community members (58).
- F. Top disability areas for January: ASD (19), ADHD (9) ID (5), Deaf or Hearing Impaired (3), LD (2).
- G. Top reasons for contacting PRC in January: workshops (84), community resources (51), strategies (35), IEP (21), PRC resources (16), support groups (15)

II. Family Engagement Workshop Series and Other Workshops:

A. Family Engagement Workshops

- a. ACPS staff members are welcomed and encouraged to attend workshops. Each workshop in the Family Engagement series has been built into PLMS, and staff can receive re-certification points for attending.

- b. Kari Comer, M.S, CCC-SLP, of George Washington University presented *The Development of Speech, Language and Social Skills in Young Children* on January 10. Forty-five people attended the workshop, including two ACPS speech therapists. Two parents received Spanish interpretation. Twenty-four of the attendees had children attending West End schools, sixteen from John Adams, six from Ramsay, and two from Polk. This is significant, in that parents of students at West End schools traditionally do not attend workshops with the same frequency as East End parents.
- c. The workshop was well received. All of the twenty-eight evaluations completed by attendees indicated that attendees found the workshop informative and that it provided helpful strategies. All but two of the evaluations indicated that overall, the attendees were satisfied with the presentation. In one of these cases, the attendee indicated partial satisfaction, stating in the comments section, *“maybe be more specific to the purpose of the workshop. Is this for parents with concerns about speech or communication development?”* The second evaluation provided the comments, *“the kids who is smart you shold have scholarsheep for the to get them bater education and thank you,”* but gave no reason for dissatisfaction with the workshop and had indicated already that the workshop was informative and provided helpful strategies.
- d. Comments from other attendees included: *“excellent presenter! Great to learn about so many strategies in addition to background and development. Lots of great resources were provided. Thank you!”* *“very informative and gave me ideas to use;”* *“I got more information about the development of speech, language and social skills;”* *“it felt like a lot of information given quickly. Might be nice to give broad overview of different types of language and then spend more time on strategies for parents;”* *“as much as understanding the developmental and behavioral changes of a child is crucial in the future, I would like such sessions to be diverse on different topics like in using some online resources and other resource that will help parents navigate for the rest of the child’s future. I also suggest that some case studies in each topic that is being discussed be presented so that parents can best relate to some challenges in real life. Some visual methods can also be employed for this purpose;”* *“it was good and helpful for my son’s future, and I will follow the direction that I heard in presentation;”* *“the place for the workshop was the right place. We need more workshops at same place;”* *“perhaps more centrally located. MacArthur?”* *“actually, the presentation helped me to know to*

give time for my children's language development instead of pushing them to be on the next step. This is a good workshop, so please repeat more times for deeper intake;" "this information helped me a lot. I wish I know this five years ago. This workshop should be given to teachers, administrators, school teachers and whoever work with kids;" "excellent presentation with good information about the topic and helpful to use/apply to my kids;" "would suggest using videos;" "it was very informative and helpful on how language develops in children;" "excellent resources and thank you for such well-organized event;" "very good job. Thank you;" "speak more about bilingual kids with language difficulties and sequential language;" "very informative presentation. The presenter really have knowledge and understanding of the topic. Excellent presentation. Thank you for organizing this event;" "loved that you gave specific activities to use with children;" "very helpful because I work with children and now I have some strategies and activities to work on language;" "it is very good class;" "it is excellent and learning topic;" "very informative;" "quite informative;" "very helpful. Thank you."

- e. Dr. Krystal Lewis from NIH presented *Coping Strategies for Anxious Teens* on January 24. Nineteen people attended the workshop. Several attendees verbally commented that they felt there was good information and strategies presented. A couple of attendees mentioned that the speaker spoke too quickly and that the acoustics of the room made it hard to hear.
- f. Eighteen attendees returned completed evaluation forms. Sixteen of the evaluation forms indicated that the attendees found the workshop informative, and that it provided helpful strategies. One evaluation had extensive comments but did not check the boxes to indicate whether the workshop was helpful, provided good strategies or overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the workshop. Two evaluations indicated that the attendees were not satisfied with the presentation. The accompanying comments for these three evaluations were: *"This was primarily an advertisement for NIMH's study/studies and didn't provide the discussion or strategies I was looking for. I was already familiar with 98% of what Dr. Lewis presented. Allow parents to discuss real-life examples; format more like workshop; allow small group discussion, etc."* *"Translators were too loud! I had a hard time hearing and concentrating on what the presenter was saying. In addition, one translator was walking around and talking which was double distracting!"* *"I didn't learn*

anything to help my anxious teen. A lot of her examples were about younger children. The stresses on our youth-the demands-trying to cope with the academics. I can tell she is too young to have children with a teen-nor understanding of the youth of today."

- g. Additional comments from the evaluation forms included: *"any improvements in sound? A microphone or something that would augment the sound of the speaker's voice would help audience members hear the information more clearly. Echo in the room and speed/rate of speaker's voice made it hard to hear and digest/process information. Printed handouts are helpful-maybe make the font a little bigger or bigger slides on the handouts b/c of the amount of info on it. Slow down rate of speech-1 more notch from even after the 1st request to slow down;" "excellent speaker. Great strategies offered;" "speaker talked way too fast;" "solo puedo explicar que fue super exito (I can only say it was a great success);" "excelente presentación. Aprendimos mucho como padres. (excellent presentation. We learned a lot as parents.);" "I would have liked even more strategies but this was a very good introduction."*
- h. The two-part workshop, *Understanding Social Security Benefits for Adults with Disabilities*, scheduled for January 31 and February 7, was cancelled, due to the speaker's medical leave.
- i. *Canvas for Parents and Guardians*, a daytime workshop, was held on January 29. Five people attended. Four attendees returned evaluations. Each evaluation indicated that the attendees found the workshop informative, that it provided helpful strategies, and that, overall, they were satisfied with the presentation. Specific comments included: *"It would be great to always include hands on training as much as possible. Thanks!" "really helpful for 5th grade parent to prepare to support her child next year. Remind parents to bring their passwords and their children's ID numbers. (my fault- I didn't think of it);" "next time I will try to get more. I came late."*
- j. *The Gift of Limits: Setting Behavioral Limits for Your Young Child* is scheduled for February 21.

B. Other workshops

- a. PRC staff presented *Understanding IEPs* to afterschool program staff at Casa Chirilagua on January 17. Six Casa Chirilagua staff attended. (JGR, CPD).

III. Raising Awareness of PRC/Community Outreach/Transition

1. 1/8 meeting with GM administrator about PRC resources and Spanish Language support group (CPD)
2. 1/11 meeting with JSSA (Jewish Social Service Agency) staff and TC transition specialists re employment training and opportunities through JSSA. (JGR)
3. 2/6 meeting with ACPS preschool teacher re promotion of possible ASL class for families of students with hearing impairments (JGR, CPD);
4. 2/7 meeting with Delaina McCormack of the ACPS Communications Department about expanding use of technology tools and social media to promote PRC events and awareness of the services of the PRC. (CPD)

IV. Support Groups

1. Support group for parents of young children receiving special education services Jan.9 -one parent attended.
2. Support group for parents of young children receiving special education services Feb. 6-two parents attended.
3. Support group for parents of students with moderate to severe disabilities, Jan. 10 –three parents attended.
4. The Spanish only support group at George Mason started up on January 29. One parent attended.
5. The Maury parent group met on February 8. Two parents attended.
6. The school-based support group at Ramsay will start up on February 15.
7. A new support group at John Adams will start up on February 28.

V. Library

Seventeen books and DVDs have been borrowed from the PRC library so far this school year.

VI. Facebook and Twitter

Parents are encouraged to “like” the PRC Facebook page found at *The Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Parent Resource Center*. The PRC now has 145 people “following” and 119 “likes” on Facebook and 59 Twitter followers (LearnwithThePRC).

VII. Mail Chimp

The PRC now uses Mail Chimp as a means of distributing information about PRC and community events. There are now 1299 subscribers to the list. People receiving PRC mailings through Mail Chimp have the option of unsubscribing, which accounts for the smaller number of subscribers than in January.