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News Release

Regional Parent Family Mentors Connect Families Of Children With Disabilities To Critical Resources

Colorado Department of Education and PEAK Parent Center have collaborated to create a statewide network of Regional Parent Family Mentors that connects families of children with disabilities to local, regional and statewide resources.

Discovering that a child has a disability is often overwhelming and isolating for parents. Services from CDE and PEAK's Regional Parent Family Mentors help ease this uncertainty by connecting parents, families and educators with resources on:

- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Early Childhood and Early Intervention
- Regional activities, meetings and trainings via an online calendar
- Procedural safeguards
- Mediation materials
- One-on-one parent advisement
- Transition from grade-to-grade, school-to-school and/or to adulthood
- Specific disabilities

- Annual, statewide Parent Training and Information conference for families and educators on inclusive and best-practice educational strategies—February 10-12, 2011 <http://www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp>
- Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences that offer families and professionals support, information and education <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>

A Regional Parent Family Mentor is in each of the regions defined by CDE, with the goal of targeted outreach to families in local communities. Regional Parent Family Mentors work closely with local schools and school districts to help increase family and school communication and partnerships.

Regional Parent Family Mentors help families and educators to see new possibilities for students with disabilities. Families and educators can contact Pam Christy with Peak Parent Center (contact information below) for resources and connections with the mentor in their region.

About The Exceptional Student Leadership Unit of CDE

The Exceptional Student Leadership Unit at the Colorado Department of Education supports and serves students with disabilities (ages 3 to 21) and their families through trainings and activities such as the Effective Family-School Partnership projects, registration assistance for conferences and the PEP conferences.

For information, call 303-866-6694, or visit the unit's Web site at: www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/index.asp.

About PEAK Parent Center

PEAK Parent Center serves the entire state of Colorado as the federally designated Parent Training and Information Center, providing training, information and technical assistance to equip families of children with disabilities with strategies to advocate successfully for their children. For information, call 800-284-0251, visit www.peakparent.org or send an e-mail to info@peakparent.org.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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