

Family Support & Advocacy Committee Update
December 12, 2001

Committee:

- ▶ Pam Johnson, Dana Yarbrough and Sharon Wallace (Vice Chair) had numerous telephone and email conversations about the division of workplan activities. It was decided that Pam would oversee the Publications subcommittee, Dana would oversee the Conference subcommittee and Sharon would oversee the Membership subcommittee this year.
- ▶ Goochland-Powhatan ICC signed the contract to act as the fiscal agent for the FS&A budget this year.
- ▶ Anne Lucas will present at our December meeting on the updated stipend policy and will provide some information to help us on the VICC membership issue.
- ▶ We are scheduled to have two council coordinators attend our FS&A meetings in 2002 to highlight their localities model transition practices. Our committee is especially interested in to alternatives to Part B.

Membership:

- ▶ The FS&A Committee welcomes 22 members (new and old) this year: 7 service providers and 15 parents!
- ▶ The Calling Card Agreement approved by the ITC of VA has been mailed to all members for signature. Goochland-Powhatan ICC was waiting on the contract to be signed by DMHMRSAS before they could cut a check for the purchase of calling cards. To date, the monies have not been received. If it becomes available before the December meeting, 30 (250 minute) calling cards will be purchased and distributed at that meeting as members are anxious to begin work on many of our projects.
- ▶ The Membership Subcommittee will work with the ITC of VA office in getting families appointed to the VICC.
- ▶ The FS&A Orientation Guide for new members will be updated this year to include new polices on stipends and calling cards.

Conference Committee:

- ▶ The FS&A will solely sponsor of the 14th Annual Families are Special, Too! Conference in Richmond on February 22 and 23, 2002. The theme is connecting the community dots. National speakers will kick off each days events with inspirational keynotes about connecting your child with a disability with your community and raising your children to be self-determined. Our workshop topics will reflect the theme of inclusion (including school inclusion, community inclusion, respite, etc). Contact Dana Yarbrough at (804) 222-1945 if you are interested in presenting and/or attending.
- ▶ The FS&A was not able to sponsor the respite forums do to some communication difficulties between our committee and the national presenter we had chosen to facilitate the forums. Because we are fast approaching the FAST conference, a decision was made to cancel the winter respite forum and merge it with FAST. Dana met with the respite project at VIDD and a respite tool kit has been designed. The tool kit will be given to each of the 40 councils and will contain a respite binder and 10 training packets of respite materials for families and providers.

Publications:

- ▶ Work continues on publishing the monthly *Family Matters Newsletter* currently available on the ITC of VA Web site. As always, submission of family stories and articles are encouraged.
- ▶ The “Beginning with Families” publication has been translated into Spanish. We anticipate a final copy to be ready at the December meeting.
- ▶ Shelly Walker, Family Support Coordinator with the New River Valley ICC, is coordinating the efforts to gather information from medical facilities in Virginia and neighboring states. A speciality hospital guide will be published in the summer of 2002. The guide will include information such as directions, visitor rules, accommodations, parking, typical meal rates, social worker contact information, etc. in an effort to decrease families stress when traveling to a specialty hospital for the first time.

Submitted by Dana Yarbrough