



from the **Heart**

Vermont Family Network's E-Newsletter July/August

In This Issue

[From VFN's President](#)

[Register Today for our Kickball Tournament!](#)

[Does Family Engagement Matter?](#)

[Family Engagement: 5 Ways We Can Help](#)

[New Webinar on Parents' Rights in EI](#)

[New Tool from PACER](#)

[Students Living with a Genetic Condition](#)

[What is the State Systemic Improvement Plan?](#)

[We Want Your Feedback on Our Website!](#)

From VFN's President

Happy summer! We are gearing up for the third annual VFN kickball tournament, and looking forward to another exciting day at the Essex Tree Farm, July 26th. As we prepare for that big event, Kathleen Burdo has stepped up to coordinate, as Jeff Morton, our Development and Marketing Director, is moving on to an exciting new position with the Chill Foundation, fresh from his graduation from Leadership Champlain! Allie Goldberg has joined us as a Developmental Educator (DE) in Children's Integrated Services Early Intervention (CIS-EI), and we are bidding good bye to another wonderful DE, Chelsea Gray, as she moves to Thetford and a new position with Hartford EEE. We are in the process of hiring new positions in CIS/EI to meet our new responsibilities in evaluation, and are looking forward to new faces and new energy at VFN.

Stay Connected...

[Like us on Facebook](#)

[Follow us on Twitter](#)

[Visit our website](#)

[Check us out on YouTube](#)

DONATE NOW!

[Click here](#) to make a contribution to Vermont Family Network. We

We are working with state and nonprofit partners to ensure that family leadership and children and youth with special health needs are a focus of health care reform as it advances here in Vermont. We are participating in conversations about services and resources for people with disabilities and their families across the lifespan, emphasizing "no wrong door" and family-centered approaches. We are engaged in a variety of early care, health, and education systems change efforts where we are representing family voices, as well. We are working with Agency of Education and school partners to expand upon Vermont Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBiS or VTPBiS) to support the success of all students.

We are beginning to formulate our thoughts around issues we'd like included on the Vermont Coalition on Disability

appreciate your
generosity!

Rights platform for the next legislative session. We welcome your input on concerns you have around children and youth with special needs and their families, so that we may be well-informed as we speak up for what we are hearing from families. Please contact me at Pam.McCarthy@vtfn.org and let me know what's on your mind! You can help us make a difference for children, youth, and families throughout Vermont!

From the heart,
Pam McCarthy
President/CEO

Register Today For Our Annual Kickball Tournament to Benefit Children & Families

Our annual kickball tournament is almost here and we need your help! Now in its third year, we are extremely proud to partner with the Windjammer Hospitality Group on this great event. Our tournament will take place on Saturday, July 26th at the Essex Tree Farm Recreational Facility. The tournament begins at 8:30am and goes until 4:30pm. All proceeds raised will benefit Vermont Family Network.

This year, our goal is to raise \$8,000 and have 15 teams participate. The cost to participate is \$30 per adult or \$15 for kids 15 years and younger. Teams may consist of between 15 and 26 players. If you are unable to sign up a full team, you may still register and elect to be placed on a team that we will put together for you. [To register online, click here!](#)

We are also in need of several volunteers throughout the day. To view a complete list of volunteer needs, time slots, and to sign up to help out, [click here](#). We're using VolunteerSpot, the leading online signup and reminder tool. Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. Click the link above to go to our invitation page on VolunteerSpot.
2. Enter your email address. (You will NOT need to register an account on VolunteerSpot.)
3. Sign up! Choose your spots - VolunteerSpot will send you an automated confirmation and reminders.

If you have any questions, contact Kathleen Burdo at 876-5315 x246 or email Kathleen.Burdo@vtfn.org.

We would like to thank all of our event sponsors including: FairPoint Communications, National Life of Vermont, New England Federal Credit Union, the Windjammer Hospitality Group, the Essex Tree Farm Recreational Facility, 99.9 The Buzz, WCAX-TV, TD Bank, the World Adult Kickball Association, The Vermont Lake Monsters, Moothies, Liquid Studio, and Select Design.

Does Family Engagement Matter?

Ever since a new report claiming that parent involvement is overrated was released, people have been asking the [National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education](#) for a response. We thought it was worth sharing [their thoughtful article](#) supporting and highlighting why family engagement is indeed still important.

Family Engagement: 5 Ways We Can Help!

The evidence that family engagement can make a significant difference in student achievement is beyond question. The parents on the family support staff at [Vermont Family Network](#) can help you engage with families in five ways! We can:

1. Join school events, meetings, or in-service trainings to share [resources](#), meet families and staff, and help you with your family-engagement efforts
2. Help families who have concerns about their child's education, health, or well-being with [information, connections, and support](#)
3. Help you start a Parent-Professional Partnership at your school to improve outcomes for children who need extra support
4. Facilitate free, interactive on-site [workshops](#) for families on education and health topics
5. Provide education and health information for families in free [webinars](#), which are presented "live" by subject matter experts and then archived on our website (free DVDs are available upon request).

To learn more and get the conversation started, call Janice Sabett at 1-800-800-4005 x218 or Janice.Sabett@vtn.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

New Webinar on Parents' Rights in Early Intervention

Check out our webinar on [Parents' Rights in Early](#)

[Intervention Part C!](#) This webinar provides an overview of your rights when your child is receiving Children's Integrated Early Intervention Services. Procedural Safeguards, also known as Parents' Rights, are part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004, and protect parents and their children with disabilities. These safeguards are designed to help you have a leadership role in determining services for your child. The presenter is Terry McLaughlin, Children's Integrated Services, CDD/CIS. **[Click here to view the PowerPoint.](#)** The presentation is available with all of our other 50+ archived webinars on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

New Tool from PACER

PACER parent advocates have developed a tool called **[the Parent Homework Sheet](#)**. It was developed to help parents of children with disabilities understand how the needs of the student as stated in the special education evaluation report connect with the goals and support in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). This series of short videos helps parents prepare to discuss their child's special education services with the IEP team.

Parent Homework Sheet: Why Should Parents Use It? Do you wish you could go to IEP meetings better prepared to understand and discuss your child's special education needs? Do you wish you could understand your child's Evaluation Report better? Do you think your child needs a particular service but don't know how to ask for it effectively at an IEP meeting? This **[video](#)** will explain the PACER Parent Homework Sheet and how it may be helpful to you.

Students Living with a Genetic Condition: A Guide for Parents

Parents of a child living with a genetic condition may feel apprehensive about sending their child to school. **[This guide](#)** can help parents explain their child's condition to school staff such as the child's teacher, school nurse, or physical education teacher, including how the condition may impact the child's school experience. Includes template letters.

What is the State Systemic Improvement Plan?

The Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) members include parents of young children with

disabilities, school and state agency representatives, and early intervention providers. The VICC assists the Vermont Child Development Division at the state level to develop responsive early intervention services for families and their infants and toddlers with special needs. In the next few years, the VICC, along with others, will be developing the Vermont Children's Integrated Services (CIS), Part C - Early Intervention State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), which is a multi-year plan to improve results for children with disabilities.

In previous years, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the federal level has focused on improving early intervention services by monitoring states' compliance with Part C requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which are the regulations that states must follow when delivering services. However, this has not resulted in a noticeable improvement in results for children with disabilities from birth to age three. OSEP is now requiring that states measure outcomes for children with disabilities for children birth to age three by using Results Driven Accountability (RDA). RDA is a data driven process to show that outcomes have been achieved.

The SSIP will be developed in three phases, to be completed by 2020.

- Phase I - The VICC will assist with data analysis and help identify measurable outcomes and strategies for improvement.
- Phase II - Short-term and long-term objectives to measure the performance of the SSIP will be developed.
- Phase III - The VICC will report on progress made towards meeting the identified measurable results.

The VICC would love more parent input, which is critical to the process! We would like to know your thoughts on current early intervention services for children with disabilities from birth to three years that you feel could be improved. Please send comments to:

Terry.McLaughlin@partner.vt.us.

The VICC will keep you informed through the Vermont Family Network newsletter, so stay tuned for more information.

VFN is Re-designing Our Website and We Want Your Feedback!

Vermont Family Network is in the process of re-designing our website and we want to hear from you about what works well and what you'd like to see improved! Our goal is to launch a new site sometime at the end of this summer that will be more user friendly, have an updated look, and will incorporate many more accessibility features, including translation to different languages, talk-to-speech, and alt-text. Our new site will be mobile responsive and will include more photos, multi-media, and less text but also be able to provide all of the important resources and information that you rely upon our site for! If you have feedback on our current site or suggestions as we build our new site, please email Kathleen Burdo at Kathleen.Burdo@vtfn.org.

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to communicationsdirector@vtfn.org by communicationsdirector@vtfn.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Vermont Family Network | Vermont Family Network | 600 Blair Park Road | Suite 240 | Williston | VT | 05495