

Helping Vermont Families for Over 30 Years!



News and Resources

June/July 2019



Greetings, VFN friends and family!

Summer's almost here, and we are wishing you all of the delights of the season that a Vermont summer offers! Over the next few months, we will be working on improvements to our website and putting together our Annual Report for the year ending June 30, 2019---can't wait to share these important projects with you this fall! In the meantime, we hope that you will have opportunities to savor some Vermont sunshine and a break from school and work obligations. The VFN newsletter will return in August with back to school ideas and other news you can use! As always, we'll be here at VFN to take your calls for information, training and support. We look forward to hearing from you. Until then, Happy Summer!

With a grateful heart,

Pam McCarthy
CEO/President

Vermont Leadership Series Needs You!

The Vermont Leadership Series trains Vermonters with developmental disabilities, and their family members, to be advocates for positive social change. Nearly 100 Vermonters have participated so far. Graduates get involved! For example, several Leadership graduates have joined boards, committees, or advisory work groups on a variety of important topics. Leadership participants also get a chance to connect with their classmates. One recent grad commented, "The support I get from this group has enhanced my life tremendously, and allowed me to be more available to and effective for my family." The training, which begins this fall, consists of three weekends (Saturday & Sunday with an overnight at a hotel). The application, including specific dates and locations, is coming soon. The real cost for each participant is about \$1,500, which includes

lodging, meals, speakers, and materials. We are asking each participant to pay \$100, but no one will be turned away. We look forward to hearing from you.

[Contact Joanne](#)

Tips and Tricks for Good Dental Health

Spring has sprung in Vermont and it's a great time to make sure the whole family is up to date on dental exams and cleanings. Not only is having a healthy mouth important for speaking, learning, eating, and smiling, it's also important for overall health. When it comes to dental health for people with disabilities there are some special considerations, but by establishing a "dental home" early in life (by the first birthday) and following a daily oral care routine, everybody can enjoy the benefits of a healthy mouth. [Read more...](#)

Reinforcing IEP Goals during the Summer Break

If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), it may or may not cover summer. Some kids get extended school year services built into their IEPs, but many don't. If your child isn't attending a summer learning program, you may worry about how they'll keep up while school's out. But you can [help reinforce your child's goals](#), even if they don't have school services in the summer. Call our Family Support Consultants at 1-800-800-4005 if you have questions about special education.

Special Education Evaluations During the Summer

Initial special education evaluations must be completed within 60 calendar days of when parent's written consent is received by the school district. School break, including summer vacation, cannot be used as an acceptable reason under Vermont's delay in evaluation rule unless the school can document that the student was not made available for the evaluation over the summer vacation months. Call our Family Support Consultants at 1-800-800-4005 if you have questions about special education evaluations.

Free VFN Webinars

Helpful Approaches to Navigating Sensory Sensitivities in the Community: Wednesday, June 5 from 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm. Presenters from the UVM Children's Hospital: Jennifer Eddy, Certified Child Life Specialist - Comfort Zone (Outpatient Pediatric Sedation Center) and Jennifer Dawson, Certified Child Life Specialist - Baird 5 and PICU (Inpatient) [Info and registration](#)

Remember that we save all of our 90+ webinars on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#). When you watch a webinar, please take a few minutes to fill out an [evaluation form](#), which helps us with our grant reports and to make improvements. If you would like a Certificate of Completion after watching a webinar, send an email to Info@vfn.org and tell us the name/date of the

webinar(s) that you watched.

We are sincerely grateful to all of the subject-matter experts who generously donated their time to present webinars!

News from the Puppets!

The Puppets have had a wonderful school year! More than 10,000 people were reached through 132 shows at 35 sites in 4 states with messages of empathy, kindness, inclusion and safety.

This summer you can catch the puppets at the [Do Good Festival](#) on July 13 at National Life in Montpelier and at a Lake Monsters game on July 20 at Centennial Field in Burlington.

Stay tuned for late summer announcements about free and reduced programs for the 2019-2020 school year, which will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis.

Here are a few things we have heard from students this school year:

"You should be friends with others so you can learn about different cultures."
Grade 1 Student

"Don't judge someone else; get to know them by asking questions." Grade 6 Student

"I feel sad when my parents yell at me." Grade K student

"That was a high-quality program." Grade 3 Student

"You should love each other." Grade K Student

Here's what teachers have said:

"That workshop brought tears to my eyes. This was great!" Grade 6 Teacher

"I like the humor you brought to the program." Grade 2 Teacher

"I like how the presenter taught the group how to call over and include a student who is having a problem and/or is being bullied." Grade 4 Teacher

"You were wonderful! You know how to present to your children in a positive way. Excellent way of using puppets to deliver important points about Cultural Diversity & Bullying." Grade 2 Teacher

Join Our Closed Facebook Page

Our [closed Facebook page](#) (Vermont Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs) is for parents, family members, and people in a parenting role. The current membership is 406 and growing. This group shares ideas, asks questions, and offers support. You may also want to join our [Listserv](#), which is an email sharing list.

Did you know we have 90+ webinars on [YouTube](#)?



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