

## Welcome to our new newsletter!

This newsletter was requested by our current clinicians to encourage, educate, and entertain each other. Our goal is to have a tool to share tips addressing all the roles we play: as clinicians, as women (sorry, guys), and as wives/mothers/singles. We would love feedback and contributions! If you have a friend that would like to receive this newsletter, please email Louise at [lvalente@epcss.net](mailto:lvalente@epcss.net).

*Louise Valente and Annette Crotty*  
Partners: Pacific Coast Speech Services



### SLP JOKE of the Day

Q: How many women with PMS does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One..... IT JUST DOES OK????!!!



### JOKES FOR KIDS!

One of our favorite generalization strategies is teaching the kids jokes to tell to other kids and teachers. It's good for practice, improves social skills and self-esteem, and most of all is fun! Each month we will include a joke or two in our newsletter.

Idea: Start sessions telling jokes containing target constructions or phonemes. When the student is accurate, send them back to class with instructions to tell their joke. This particular joke includes artic s ,z, v, isolated r, final consonant deletion, regular plural, and question how.

**How does a dog stop the VCR?**  
He presses the pause button.



What is a  
handy-dandy  
IEP Calculation  
Wheel?



We know you need  
one – and they are  
**free** at our **website!!!**



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We are Pacific Coast Speech Services, a private speech therapy practice specializing in working with public and nonpublic schools. We contract with a small number of excellent SLPs which we place in these settings. Our company is completely clinician driven: when we find a clinician of excellence, she tells us what type of caseload she would like and her ideal hours. We then offer various options which match his/her preferences and are close to home. A clinician only works at one site (no travel) and positions are for the remainder of the school year unless the clinician prefers a partial year. For a clinician to be placed in a position, the district administrator must agree to specific caseload limitations. If that limitation is exceeded, we have immediate and specific strategies to handle the excess students, including therapists who will provide support, additional paperwork/IEP time, etc. Our main goal is to control our clinicians' caseloads and limit their stress in a variety of ways, because we know that a great speech therapist is worth their weight in gold, and we want them to stay with our company FOREVER. Clinicians contract with us for a couple of hours a month to 40 hours a week.

We invite you to visit our website for more information on our company, comments from our current contractors, and loads of great links to resources.

[www.pacificcoastspeechservices.com](http://www.pacificcoastspeechservices.com)



## 20/20 Hindsight: Dealing with Difficult Parents

by Louise Valente, Partner, Pacific Coast Speech Services

Our tips this month were gathered during parent interviews and a clinician brainstorm session. Some tips seem elementary, however, it is easy to overlook the basic when dealing with a high caseload and a parent who comes to you with "bad press."

1. Difficult parents often become difficult because they feel their ideas do not matter. That said, start the year by contacting them (e.g. the first week of school). Be careful that you do not come across as patronizing. You are soliciting their input to be more effective, and not because you want to "keep them happy." How did the summer go? How is the new school year is shaping up? What changes have occurred in your family? Any changes in medical status or medication of our student? What are your child's current motivators and interests?
2. Remember that the beginning of the school year is difficult for any child, and that difficulty is magnified when a student is not "neurotypical." Ask the parents what they anticipate will be their child's biggest stumbling block this year. Visualize with them how support in this area can be integrated into the current IEP goals.
3. Look for the "big picture." Remember that most parents are trying their best in their current circumstances. Acknowledge their efforts, and consider reminding them of how their hard work has paid off in the past (e.g. "your work at home has made a big difference in..... I really see your perspective in...I understand your passion about..."). Look for opportunities to encourage them, just as you encourage their child.
4. Remind them (and your team) that what a student does at home is VERY different than what they can do at school. It may be helpful in team building and seeing the complete child to ask the parent to videotape the child doing some of his daily activities and participating in family life. Parents may, for example, feel threatened (because we can get the student to sit quietly and concentrate when they can't) or superior (because they can handle the child's behavior in a 1:1 environment and we can't). Note: videotaping is a great idea for some parents and not for others, so be selective. In one Asperger's case, the parent cited videotaping as the best thing she ever did to help her child's team understand the full picture and develop appropriate goals. She regretted that no one had suggested it until he was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
5. Remember that at some level the parent of a child receiving any type of special services is grieving for the "normal child" they had hoped for. Do not be surprised to run into the typical emotions of grieving (shock, denial, depression, anger, oversensitivity, helplessness, withdrawal, etc). Remember that the event of an IEP is an exhausting

ordeal for most parents, and requires them to focus on deficits in their child that they are likely still struggling to accept. (In a later newsletter, we will have a parent of a child in an SDC class discuss this process in greater depth – her insights are amazing and changed the way I manage kids and parents dramatically.)

6. Remember that the percentage of divorce in children with special education needs is high. Take care to include both parents in your discussion, and encourage them to work together as a family for this child. Be careful to ask the opinion of the silent member of the family as well as the “leader.”

Above all, remember that it is not “us” against “them,” but rather a group of people with different strengths and weaknesses who want to help a student succeed. We are not “teaching” the parents – we are working together for their child.



## COFFEE BREAK CONVERSATION!

Our question of the month is “What is the best tip you’ve got for making an IEP more effective?”

We’ve gotten some great ideas from some of our favorite special ed parents, and have also gathered some observations of our own. What’s yours? This will be our 20/20 Hindsight article for an upcoming newsletter.

Please call us at 714-731-6630 or email to [lvalente@epcss.net](mailto:lvalente@epcss.net).

Clinicians whose ideas are published will receive a Starbuck’s gift card to go out for coffee on us!

## FEATURED SLP TOOL

Making a Difference for America’s Children  
Speech-Language Pathologists in Public Schools

by **Barbara J. Moore-Brown**  
**Judy K. Montgomery**

Features:

- Specific information on current issues including admission and discharge criteria, liability issues, service delivery models, etc.
- Fantastic index of who to contact for additional information on a variety of topics.
- Lots of great charts, etc for beginning clinicians, but also has charts that you’ve always wanted as an experienced therapist.



## “DESERT ISLAND” TOOL

If I were on a desert island and had only one therapy tool...

Secret Square: An inexpensive board game (from any discount store). Basically, the game contains a set of hollow plastic squares (like small lids) with picture stickers on them. The student hides a plastic disc under one, others try to find out where the disc is hidden. The advantage of this game over standard artic card, etc is that the disc can be completely hidden rather than peeking out or raising a card just slightly, thereby giving away the answer. Can be used for artic goals, question formulation, sentence formulation, classification/definition, following directions, concept formulation, etc.



## STAY TUNED!

Next Edition will include:

- More SLP and Kid Jokes! (Only good ones)
- A Mom's View: Grieving through IEPs
- Featured Program: Stationary Studio (fabulous story writing method for elementary students)
- Interview with a Contractor: Why I Made the Leap

To find out more about opportunities through Pacific Coast Speech, or to request one of our handy dandy calculation wheels, please email or call us!

We **currently** have contracting opportunities along the 57 freeway from Orange to Diamond Bar, along the 22 freeway from Orange to Garden Grove, along the 91 freeway from Anaheim Hills to beyond the Orange County border, and along the 405 freeway from the 55 to the 405/22 junction. **We are also beginning to plan for the 2004-5 school year.**

**We're on the Web!**

**[www.pacificcoastspeechservices.com](http://www.pacificcoastspeechservices.com)**

To be removed from our email list, please send an email to [lvalente@epcss.net](mailto:lvalente@epcss.net).

