



Have you heard about the handy-dandy IEP Calculation Wheel?



We know you need one – and they are **free** at our [website!!!](http://www.pacificcoastspeech.com)



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Thanks for the Compliments!

Thank you for the compliments on our first newsletter last month – SLPs are such an appreciative group! For those of you who are new this month, **this newsletter is designed to encourage, educate, and entertain school based SLPs in Orange and North San Diego County.** Our goal is to have a tool to share tips addressing all **the roles we play:** as clinicians: as SLPs, women (sorry, guys) and wives/mothers/singles. Please send more feedback and contributions! If you have a friend that would like to receive this newsletter, please email Louise at lvalente@epcss.net.

Louise Valente and Annette Crotty
Partners: Pacific Coast Speech Services



SLP JOKE of the Day

All day long, Heather, age 6, had been waiting for nighttime so that she could put her tooth under her pillow for the tooth fairy. Finally, she was asleep and her mom quietly snuck into the room to slip her dollar under the pillow and remove the tooth. Just as she was placing the dollar under the pillow, Heather woke up and said “Mom!!! What are you doing??!!??” The mother tried desperately to come up with an excuse, so as not to ruin the magic. Before she could say a word Heather said “That money is from the tooth fairy! Put it back!!!!”



JOKES FOR KIDS!

(See our January/February newsletter on our [website](http://www.pacificcoastspeech.com) for ideas on how we use jokes in therapy)

Why did the cookie go to the hospital?
It was feeling crummy!

What's the laziest vegetable?
A couch potato!



For those of you new to this newsletter, we are Pacific Coast Speech Services, a private speech therapy practice specializing in working within **public and nonpublic schools**. We contract with a small number of excellent SLPs that 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



COFFEE BREAK CONVERSATION ON IEPS

Our coffee break question last month was "What is the best tip you've got for making an IEP more effective?" We received some great suggestions! Here are six of our favorites to think about:

1. Start the IEP with introductions of each person at the table with both your name and a description of how you help (e.g. "I am Suzy Q, the SLP. I work with children on how they pronounce words, how they understand vocabulary and directions in the classroom, and how they express themselves). Make an effort to "integrate" the team with the parents so that they are not alone on their side of the table. In our district, we try to have the person taking notes next to the parent so the parent can see what is being written.
2. Before presenting your test results, repeat your specialty area and ask the parent what they have noticed at home in this area. Dovetail your presentation to their comments. After presenting test results, ask the parent "What are your questions?" WAIT and let them think before going on.
3. Don't patronize the parents in the IEP meeting. They are not there because the IEP says they must be: they are part of the team. They have spent their life with this child. Your goal is NOT to convince them of your perspective, but to understand their perspective and plan together. We do not lay awake worrying about this child. They do. They are emotional because this is personal to them.
4. Look at the paperwork before the IEP and think about how you can adapt your presentation to the parent's education/culture/language background. One of us had a parent who did educational testing in another setting. The psychologist spent 20 minutes painstakingly explaining every test, even after the parent said "OK – I've given this test – I see how the results fall out. I understand that she is in the normal range." The parent became angry when there was not enough time to discuss her concerns before several team members had to leave.
5. For many parents, it may help to give the parent a blown up bell curve drawing to write on. Describe how a classroom contains students in each area of the curve.

Discuss which portions of the curve may need additional help. As each professional presents their results, refer to the bell curve to show the parent where their student falls in that area.

6. Remember that some parents with children with special needs may have done more research than you have into their child's specific condition, and all have had years of trial and error practice managing their disability. We have known parents who actually did a teacher in-service on how they manage such diverse issues as ADHD, cerebral palsy, etc. Don't be afraid to ask an effective parent how they do it: you may have years of experience, but if you haven't lived with a child with special needs, you can pick up some terrific information from parents! Consider having a panel discussion for one of your teacher's meetings!

Our thanks to all who participated with tips for IEPs. We hope that you enjoy your Starbucks gift certificates! **Watch for the next "Coffee Break Conversation" topic, and email us with your ideas! It's easy, and we all love those lattes!**



FEATURED SLP TOOL

Stationary Studio by Peggy Healy Stearns

Software Program available at www.fablevision.com

This program is FABULOUS for small group teaching or classroom collaboration! It is a simple concept: you or the group chose a piece of online "stationary" with motifs like dinosaurs, fairies, sharks, etc. You can then write a story or story starter on that preformatted paper and print it out. The first time I put this program in my computer with a group of first graders, they spit out a seven page story about dinosaurs as fast as I could type, and asked to stay through recess. What a thrill to see your writing published so beautifully, and with such minimal effort! Line style and size can be adjusted for kindergarten and up, and the kids can color the stationary themselves on the computer, use the pre-colored versions, or print in black and white and color with pencils later. Many of the typical stumbling blocks of a publishing program (e.g. "how do I start a new page") have been eliminated, so that students can simply turn it on, pick a picture, and type. Lots of project ideas and curriculum tie-ins are included. This program is best for kids that are learning how to write on the computer. By third grade, some kids will become frustrated by the limitations (e.g. you must use the same size font throughout the story). However, I admit that I use it regularly for signs, thank you notes, etc. because it is so easy and comes out well every time.

Stationary Studio can be ordered through the website above. The website is also WONDERFUL for exploration by kids. Fablevision is dedicated to encouraging creativity in kids, and their website reflects this vision.



WHAT'S FOR DINNER, MOM?

As busy women, we all wear many hats. Here's a great recipe when you are the family chef. It's perfect when you have late IEP's and no energy, but want some comfort food. This dish is also a great recipe to make with kids, and is easy to teach a child going off to his/her own apartment as a "survival dish." Freezes and microwaves well.

Margarita Chicken

1. On a dinner plate, combine approximately 3 tablespoons oil (I use canola), 2 tablespoons honey, and 1 – 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Stir with a fork.



2. In a zip lock bag, crush most of a large bag of tortilla chips.
3. Roll 2 pounds boneless chicken breasts or chicken fingers in the oil mixture. Put a few pieces of chicken in the zip lock bag with the tortilla chips, and shake. Place in a 9 x 13 Pyrex pan. Repeat.
4. Cook about 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Open the oven door and pour on salsa (amount to personal taste – I use about 1 cup) and mozzarella cheese (¼ - ¾ cup). Cook for another 10 minutes. Any leftover tortilla chips can be sprinkled on top. Enjoy!



WEBSITES WE LOVE!!!

This month we are featuring three websites – if you have a favorite please email us and we will link it to our webpage!

www.puzzlemaker.com: An old favorite where you can quickly create a word search, crossword, or other puzzle using your selected words

www.actden.com: A slightly less painful way to learn software applications such as Power Point from an educator's perspective. Has FREE online tutorials to Microsoft products!

www.wrightslaw.com: A website primarily dedicated to educating parents on IEP's and other federal education law. Lots of great resources and links.



OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING!



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 contracts open 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 also have a fascinating site for middle and high schoolers with emotional problems. **We are also beginning to plan for the summer session and the 2005-06 school year.**

To be removed from our email list, please send an email to lvalente@epcss.net.

