

VAAPVi Voice



Mission and Vision

The mission of *Virginia Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired* (VAAPVi) is to provide services to empower families, professionals, and the community to meet the needs of children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities. VAAPVi provides information and education through our website, newsletter, statewide listserv, presentations, networking opportunities, workshops and various other means.

Become part of our community of Families who have a child with a visual impairment

To be added to our mailing list or to join VAAPVi please visit www.vaapvi.org or call 804-938-1624

Does my child have a visual impairment?

CONNECT with other Local Families ONLINE.

Join our STATE WIDE listserv for Parents and Professionals of children with visual impairments. Go to www.yahogroups.com and search for VA-BVI and click on join group

- Visual impairment of 20/70 or worse after correction
- Pre-maturity
- Cortical Visual Impairment, Cerebral Visual Impairment
- Delayed Visual Maturation
- Monocular Vision
- Family History of Visual Impairments
- Visual Perceptual Problems
- Light sensitivity
- Impaired visual motor function resulting from strabismus or cerebral palsy
- Congenital Infections
- Hereditary Syndromes/Disorders
- Visual attending and or visual examining behaviors are less than anticipated
- Head Injury
- Loss of oxygen
- Flashers or floaters
- History of Untreated Eye Conditions

Bookshare is an online library that provides print disabled people with legal access to **over 38,000 books and 150 periodicals that are converted to Braille, large print or digital formats for text to speech audio.**

Memberships are FREE for schools and U.S. students of all ages. Schools can sign up for an account that will enable teachers and staff members to download books for their students with print disabilities. Bookshare also offers Free assistive technology software downloads and is compatible with most assistive technology software and hardware.

Many of Virginia's county schools are already members. Let your teacher's know!

Contact Information:

School and Organizational Memberships:

groupaccounts@bookshare.org

Customer Service: support@bookshare.org

General Information: info@bookshare.org

Bookshare.org Webinar June 12th @ 2pm

"Ready, Set, Read"

The webinar will walk you through the how to's of finding and getting books. For participants who are not members, the last 15 min, will cover registration process.

Topics of webinar include searching for a book, unpacking, downloading books and AT software.

Send an email to events@bookshare.org to register,

Registration Code is: web612co



FAMILY CONNECT WEBSITE

NAPVI and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) have joined forces to create a brand new web site, www.FamilyConnect.org, an online, multimedia community for parents and guardians of children with visual impairments. **FamilyConnect** gives parents, grandparents and other caretakers a place to find comprehensive resources and support 24 hours a day, with access to message boards where they can talk to other parents, compelling videos featuring real-life families, parenting articles, a mom-authored blog, and links to local resources. The site also features sections dedicated to multiple disabilities, technology, education, and every age group from infants to teens. Visitors to www.FamilyConnect.org can also create a personal profile and receive information on news and events based on their child's age, eye condition, and location.

Proposed Special Education Regulations.

The entire community has been up in arms about the proposed changes to the special education regulations. Some of the top issues have been removal of parental consent, change in the age limits for the developmental delay label, Special Education Hearing Officers, functional behavior analysis issues, and the list goes on. Something that has not been addressed in the draft, nor is looked at by the entire community are the issues regarding just the visually impaired community of students.

In May of 2008 DBVI released their comments and recommendations to the Department of Education.

“DBVI strongly recommends including the state funding for teachers of the visually impaired under the Standards of Quality, transferring the responsibility for administering state funds that support teachers of the visually impaired from DBVI to the Department of Education and establishing a maximum instructional caseload size for teachers of the visually impaired.”

Currently in Virginia’s Special Education Regulations Visually Impaired is the ONLY special education category that does not carry a maximum instructional caseload size. Therefore our teachers for the blind and visually impaired in some counties are responsible for instructing over 50 students per teacher. In fact in one county one teacher alone has over 80 students on her caseload!

By transferring the responsibility for administering state funds that support teachers for the visually impaired to the Department of Education school divisions will receive **more money** that could be spent on special education and would have to establish a maximum instructional caseload size for teachers of the visually impaired.

It is very important for the citizens of VA to express their views to state and local officials and to their elected representatives. Parents are starting to speak up regarding this issue and a handful of people have now addressed this during the public comment forums. It is starting to be noticed, we are beginning to be heard and political officials are tuning in. Have you sent in your comments?

If you would like to make a comment about any part of the proposed Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (April 2008), you can do so no later than June 30, 2008. Comments can be submitted as follows:

- On line c/o: ReviseSpedRegs@doe.virginia.gov
- By fax: 804 - 786 - 8520

If you have questions, please contact either Susan Cobb at (804) 371-3730 or Glen Slonneger at (804) 371-3113; either can be contacted by using DBVI’s toll free number: (800) 622-2155.

**New Source of Instructional Materials for
Students with Print Disabilities
Accessible Instructional Materials Center of
Virginia (AIM-VA)
George Mason University**

On May 12, 2008, the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction issued a memorandum to local school division superintendents informing them how Virginia will comply with IDEA mandates to provide eligible students with accessible materials through the new Accessible Instructional Materials Center of Virginia (AIM-VA) located at George Mason University . The AIM-VA program should make it easier for students to obtain needed materials and make it easier for schools to provide needed accommodations.

While the Superintendent's announcement is directed specifically to local school divisions, parents and others may also be interested in learning more about AIM-VA.

To view the Superintendent's memorandum, go to http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_centers/superintendents_memos/2008/05_may/inf123.html .

For more information on AIM-VA, visit <http://kihd.gmu.edu/aim> or contact Joyce Sharp at (540) 948-6938 or Jsharp1@gmu.edu.

Upcoming Events

June 22nd – Family Picnic at Maymont with VAAPVi. Please bring your lunch and meet us at Maymont for a day of relaxing and meeting other families. We will be meeting by the Barn at 12 Noon

July 12 - Strong Roots for a Healthy Future Newport News www.medicalhomeplus.org

August 13, 14, 15th - Pathways to Possibilities (VA Beach) www.vcu.edu/partnership/pathways.org

October 18 & 19th - Wide Open Doors www.woolridgeroad.org

December 3, 4 5th - 2008 Workshop on Blindness and Vision Impairment

Holiday Inn Kogar Center Midlotian, VA (detail info available this fall)

July 2009 - Families Connecting with Families (CA) www.napvi.org

Amtrack Orientation and Mobility Trip Fall of 2008, stay tuned to www.vaapvi.org



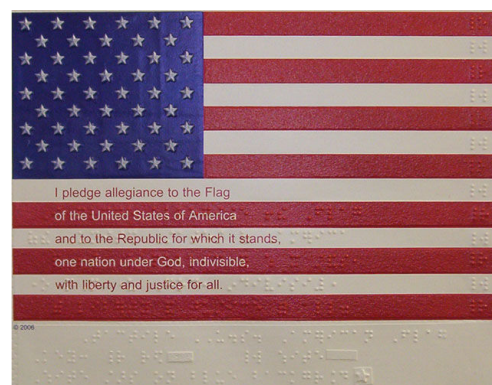
**THE
HADLEY SCHOOL
FOR THE BLIND**

FREE online courses for parents!
www.hadley-school.org

Virginia's latest changes to services for Blind Students

Virginia Board of Education has finalized the decision to end state-operated programs at the Hampton School for the Deaf and Blind. Opened since 1909 the school will be closing in June 2008 and will be relocating most of their students to the school for the deaf and blind in Staunton, VA.

Get ready for the **4th of July!**
American Braille Flags can be
ordered by visiting www.kbti.org



Flags have raised lines to identify the images; is color coded in Braille, and has the Pledge of Allegiance in Braille as well.