

**Pacific Coast Speech Services, Inc.**  
**July 2012 Newsletter**

Enjoying your summer? We hope you are relaxing with your friends and family during the kinder, gentler days of summer. In this spirit, the topic for this newsletter is quick tips and links for creating a kinder and more supportive community for all students, especially those who are differently-abled.



**Building a Kinder, Gentler, School Community**

- Begin with the big picture. Why do students communicate? The goal of any school program should be to encourage positive relationships between students, and between students and staff. Remember this perspective when choosing action plans.
- Educate teachers and administrators on social thinking issues. Look for opportunities for one-to-one training or consider a brief teacher in-service. Show them materials that you share with parents. You could also provide them with links to useful websites such as: [Strategies to Work with Autism](#); [Asperger's Kids and Branding](#); and [Bullying Strategies](#).
- Encourage teachers to strengthen social awareness in all students. Language arts teachers often choose literature addressing human relationships. How can positive relationships be tied into school wide behavior expectations? Are projects given with an eye toward learning hidden social rules, human motivations, and interactions?
- Don't neglect other critical teaching areas such as PE, music and math. How can these teachers mindfully integrate kindness and tolerance into their teaching methods? PE, in particular, is often the most challenging subject for differently-abled children and children who are less familiar with sports. Teachers need to think through team selection; rewards; consequences for bullying and criticism; and mindful encouragement, or this subject can be damaging to self-esteem. Do the students fully understand the rules of the game? Can students/parents be provided with a written explanation of how "volleyball" is played? Can the teacher link videos to the class website showing techniques for "serving" or "spiking" that are clear and easily understood? If a student is struggling with skills, can he be allowed to "check out" the ball for the weekend to practice? Even in schools where teachers are required to post material on websites, PE teachers often are reluctant to participate, when in fact it is critically important.
- Mindfully capture and reward positive behavior on an individual level. One local school had strips of paper in each class, where a student could acknowledge the kindness of a teacher or student. These strips were linked together to form chains and displayed throughout the school. Another had "Caught Ya" cards made up where students/teachers received rewards for random positive actions. These cards were submitted for drawings at the end of each month, or could be turned in for privileges. Make sure teachers are rewarded as well as students-behavior changes with acknowledgement!
- Consider random activities that stress gratitude and service. What would happen to your school culture if once a month, 10 minutes were taken for everyone to write a note of encouragement to someone at school? What would happen if honors students were encouraged to spend one tutorial period a month working with students who request 1:1 tutoring? What would happen if there was a periodic "secret shower" for a teacher who deserved to be reminded of his/her value? What if it was for a student?
- Empower student bystanders to be leaders, especially students with "high status" in the school community. The parent teacher association at one local school funded a single day seminar through [Rachel's Challenge](#). The trainer spoke to the entire school community, but he also worked with teacher-chosen students and staff to continue the kindness momentum in their school over time by establishing a club, organizing future activities and integrating the curriculum.
- Sponsor a student club with an emphasis on supporting tolerance for differently-abled students. A local chapter of [Best Buddies](#) was so successful in integrating differently-abled students that a teen with disabilities was recently elected homecoming queen by the senior class.
- [Best Buddies](#) also has an e-buddies program for individual students to become email pen pals with a differently-abled student. What a great way to improve literacy and tolerance!

Stay tuned for our next newsletter in which Lisa Chatter, a speech pathologist and member of the Bullying Prevention Task Force for Los Alamitos Unified School District, gives us tips for counseling individual students on both sides of the equation.



**Featured Website: Stop Bullying Now**

[Stop Bullying Now](#). This site contains suggestions for strategies that work, directed to different change makers such as youths, teachers, and parents. There are many practical suggestions and resources available including training videos and staff and student surveys.

**Featured Website: Spread the Word to End the Word**



[Spread the Word to End the Word](#) is a fabulous campaign begun by the Special Olympics organization to end the use of the word "retard." It is supported by numerous celebrities and organizations. Their award winning public service announcement "[Not Acceptable](#)" with Jayne Lynch from Glee is an example of a starting point for introducing the campaign. Often student leaders make their [own videos](#) to help Spread the Word.



**Featured Apps for Building Social Awareness**

For those of you hooked into iDevices, we recommend the following apps for building social awareness skills:

**It's Cool to Be Clever:** iPad only-\$.99. The e-story of Edson C. Hendricks, who invented the design for the internet. Also includes resources about bullying and supporting students with exceptionally high abilities.

**Middle School Confidential:** iPad only. A graphic novel style story designed for incoming middle schoolers, or those who are struggling with peer pressure. Clever and engaging drawings with sound effects and intriguing questions for discussion. Would work well for a social skills group discussion. Also available in book form.

**School 26HD:** iPad and iPhone. Interactive game designed for older preteens and teen girls on developing friends through empathy and intuition. Note: in our testing, this app was by far the most engaging to students. However, we would strongly recommend previewing the content, as there are references to alcohol use and realistic but negative name calling. Definitely rated PG-13 from our perspective.

**Pacific Coast Speech is Seeking Applicants for Opportunities**

We are currently accepting inquires for positions in the following areas:

- Middle and High School settings-strong needs-off the 57 and 91
- Preschool setting off the 5 and 605
- Elementary and Middle School settings off the 5 and 55
- Middle and High School settings off the 57 and the 60
- Middle and High School settings off the 5 and 91

We look forward to hearing from you and would be happy to review your resume and answer any questions you may have about contracting with [Pacific Coast Speech Services](#).

If you are a district administrator and need a clinician for short-term or full-year coverage, we stand ready to serve you. Give us a call at [714-731-6630](tel:714-731-6630).



**Jokes for Kids**

- Why did the seagull cross over the sea?**  
Because if he crossed over the bay, he'd be a bay-gul (bagel)!
- What did the ocean say to the starfish?**  
Nothing, it just waved!
- How do you catch a unique rabbit?**  
U-nique up on it!
- How do you catch a tame rabbit?**  
Tame way, you u-nique up on it!
- What do most people go to the dentist?**  
Tooth hurty!
- What do you call a door that is cute?**  
A-DOOR-able!
- Why didn't the skeleton cross the road?**  
Because he didn't have the guts.
- Where does a sheep get his hair cut?**  
At the bah-bah shop.