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Ideas for Making Bedtime a Better Time

By Becky Brozovich, Home School Coordinator

When asked which time of day creates the most difficulties for families, parents inevitably say "bedtime!" This is the time when all family members are tired. They might be wound up from the day's events and thinking about their plans for tomorrow. Also, not everyone wants to wind down at night, and some people struggle with their internal clock.

Sleep needs

Adequate sleep is important to children's learning and overall functioning. A study funded by the National Institutes of Health found that sleep-deprived children had levels of inattentiveness that were observable by their teachers and that had an impact on the children's learning abilities. Lack of sleep was also found to be related to memory problems and behavioral concerns. Several other studies have linked sleep deprivation with health issues.

While each child's sleep needs vary, the National Sleep Foundation recommends the following hours of sleep per day for these age groups:

- Ages 3-6: between 11-13 hours
- Ages 7-10: between 10-11 hours
- Ages 11-17: between 8.5-9.25 hours
- Adults: between 7-9 hours

Quiet time for parents

Bedtime is also a crucial time for parents, not only to catch up on last-minute chores but to rest and relax. Carving out an extra hour or two in the evening can go a long way toward helping parents replenish their reserves. This principle is similar to flying on an airplane. In the event of an emergency, oxygen masks drop from the plane's ceiling. The initial instinct for a parent traveling with a child might be to secure the child's mask first, but parents are asked by the flight crew to put on their own masks before attending to their children. The reason is that if we do not first care for ourselves, we might not be able to care for our children.

Establishing a bedtime routine

The need for a bedtime routine is important not just for children's learning and health (or for parents to have quiet time) but also for children's comfort and security. All children, especially those who have developmental disabilities, thrive on structure and consistency. There might be much of their world that they cannot see, hear, control or understand; but they can find comfort and a sense of security in knowing what is going to happen at a certain time.

Initially, setting up routines and schedules might seem like a large task. However, being consistent in following through will reap rewards when the routine is established. Children might (and probably will) resist new rules at first, but they will follow along when they see that the rules are going to continue.

A great place to begin in setting up a bedtime routine is by thinking about what brings your child comfort. Is it a stuffed animal? Is it music? Is it hugs, kisses and cuddling? Is it reading time? This comfort object or activity can be used to help with the transition from evening activities to bedtime and to make the time enjoyable for your child.

Before finalizing a routine, set a realistic goal. If your child is regularly going to bed at 10 p.m. and you would like him in bed and asleep at 8 p.m., you will need to implement small changes to work toward the 8 p.m. final goal. In this situation, start by setting up your routine and expecting him in bed at 9:45 p.m. After he adjusts to the routine and is successful at staying in bed and going to sleep at 9:45 p.m., move the routine back 15 minutes and set bedtime at 9:30 p.m. Repeat this process until your child is ready to go to bed at 8 p.m.

In setting up a bedtime routine, the first step is to work out the time schedule. When will you need to

(Continued on page 2)

begin the routine to have your child in bed and going to sleep at your initial goal time? For some families, this might be 45-60 minutes. Decide on a way to let your child know that bedtime is near. You could announce it every night, or give your child a picture showing his or her bed or a picture of someone sleeping, or point out the time on the clock. Then, establish a standard schedule. Tell your child, "First we put away our toys. Then we shower and brush our teeth. Then we lay out clothes for tomorrow. Then we lie in bed quietly with our snuggly animal and read. Then the lights go out at 8:00." (Social stories and picture schedules can be helpful tools for parents to use.)

Support the routine by setting the stage for a quiet bedtime throughout your home. Turn off or lower the volume of TV sets or music in other parts of the home, and keep lights around your child's room off or dimmed. Other children in the family should also have expected bedtimes and should follow their own schedules.

There is always the possibility that your child will challenge the new routine or test his or her limits. Sticking to the routine and schedule will keep such testing to a minimum. It helps if you make bedtime a positive time in which you focus on your child and share activities that he or she enjoys. Some parents use reinforcements for adherence to rules. Reinforcements could be praise, preferred objects and/or activities.

Remember to stay positive throughout the process. While bedtime can present challenges for families, it can also be a time of togetherness and comfort.

Parent Focus

June 2008

State Schools for Severely Handicapped
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Charlie Taylor,
Superintendent



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Information concerning other available resources, programs, etc., is not to be construed as an endorsement by State Schools for Severely Handicapped for any specific product, organization, or philosophy.

Parkview Holds Penny Drive to Help Veterans

By Melba Board, Building Administrator

Parkview State School recently presented a \$1,100 donation to the Wounded Warrior Project. Students, staff and parents collected money through a penny drive to support candidates for king and queen of each classroom. The room collecting the most money had its royalty crowned as Parkview's king and queen.

The effort was done in conjunction with February's theme of "Great Americans." Students learned about famous Americans in activities focused around Black History Month and Presidents Day. Parkview also decided to include America's armed forces in the celebration, as these men and women demonstrate greatness by risking their lives to defend our freedom. The school chose to donate to the Wounded Warrior Project to help those who have returned home to face challenges because of their military service, and also to demonstrate the belief that disability does not define the individual. Parkview's families were eager to support the project as they understand how severe disabilities can affect one's daily life. Everyone at Parkview is honored to give back to some truly great Americans.



Students, staff and family members at Parkview collected \$1,100 for the Wounded Warrior Project.

Prom 2008



Sandra Campbell reads an inspirational story while dressed in authentic aviation attire.



Senior Amber Byrd (second from right) poses with her mother, Cora (far right), and other relatives.

B.W. Sheperd State School

By Karen Wells, Building Administrator

This year, B.W. Sheperd had the honor of having its prom sponsored by the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE). The group was led by President Cora Byrd, proud parent of graduating senior Amber Byrd. This year's theme was "Make This a Flight to Remember."

The afternoon was filled with excitement – visiting with parents, friends and community members; dancing; eating; having pictures taken; and being entertained. The NBCFAE decorated the school gym with beautiful balloon-covered arches and decorative tables, and the group provided a delicious buffet of finger foods. Several group members

were present to help prepare and serve the food, as well as to visit and dance with students.

Attendees were honored to have Sandra Campbell, dressed in authentic aviation attire, present a special reading of Reeve Lindbergh's book "Nobody Owns the Sky: The Story of 'Brave Bessie' Coleman." Everyone enjoyed listening to this inspirational story about the first black woman to earn a license from a French flying academy. Coleman overcame many obstacles while following her childhood dream of "flying in the sky like the birds."

Thirty-seven parents and relatives came for this special event. The prom was a wonderful time for all!



Delmar Cobble

By Donna Morris, P.E. Teacher

Thirteen students from Delmar Cobble attended their first prom on April 5. Held at the Capital Ritz, the event was free through sponsorship from the Independent Living Resource Center in Jefferson City. The prom was open to students with special needs ages 15-21 from Jefferson City and the surrounding area.

Students walked through a decorated entrance into a beautiful "Enchanted Garden." Dressed in tuxedos and formal gowns, attendees had their pictures taken and enjoyed a meal together. The students then danced, laughed and had a great time with friends their own age.

Parents were appreciative for the experience. One parent said it was the most special evening her son had ever

had. Another parent said in a note that she never dreamed her child would get to go to a prom like her other children.

The Delmar Cobble staff, who donated their time to chaperone, had an equally

fulfilling experience. They were amazed as some children would not leave the dance floor all evening, and a few students in wheelchairs even got out of their chairs to dance.



Students from Delmar Cobble State School attend their first prom at the Capital Ritz.

Important Considerations When Buying a New Wheelchair

By Debbie Stover, Central Office

As you prepare to purchase or upgrade a wheelchair for your child, it is important to choose one that works well at school as well as at home. Considering your options before making such a substantial purchase will ensure that your child's wheelchair is equipped for most environments.

The ultimate consideration is choosing a wheelchair that meets the specifications prescribed by your child's doctor. Comfort and support are extremely important, but the wheelchair also needs to be able to fit and maneuver in common places. It could be frustrating if the wheelchair does not maneuver well in locations that your child needs to go to on a regular basis.

The following information should help when making an informed decision on a wheelchair that is functional at home, at school and out in the community.

- **Doorways** – The ADA requirement for doorways is a minimum clear width of 32 inches. Clear width is measured from the face of the door to the opposite stop when the door is open at least 90 degrees.
- **Bus lifts** – Standard lift platform sizes range from a minimum of 30 inches up to 34 inches in width, and a minimum of 48 inches up to 54 inches in length.
- **Bus aisles** – The aisle on the bus for wheelchairs is 30 inches.
- **Protruding equipment** – Arm rests, wheel braces/brackets, batteries or other equipment that sticks out from the frame of the wheelchair must be included in the measurement. Such protrusions could cause the wheelchair to be too wide to fit through a doorway or on the bus lift.
- **WC19-compliant wheelchair** – WC19 is a U.S. standard approved by the American National Standards Institute/ Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (ANSI/RESNA) in 2000. It is a voluntary industry standard that addresses the design and performance of wheelchairs when used as seats in motor vehicles. The standard requires that the wheelchair and securements be crash-tested at 30 mph with an appropriately sized crash-test dummy seated in the wheelchair. Information on WC19 wheelchairs and a list of WC19-approved wheelchairs can be viewed at <http://www.ercwts.pitt.edu/WC19.html>.
- **Occupant restraints** – An occupant-restraint system (or seat belt) must be attached to the wheelchair to ensure safe transportation. The shoulder belt should fit securely across the shoulder and chest, not too high that it cuts across the neck. The lap belt should fit securely across the pelvic bone, not across the waist (which could cause internal injury if an accident occurs).
- **Anchor points for wheelchair tie downs** – Wheelchairs transported on the bus are secured with tie downs attached from anchor points on the wheelchair to the bus. Tie downs must be able to be secured at the appropriate angle (45-80 degrees) to avoid movement of the wheelchair during transport. Anchor points on some styles of wheelchairs (such as the stroller variety) are too low, which prevents an appropriate angle for the tie down. Although the wheelchair might not move forward or backward, the tie downs may not prevent side-to-side movement, which could result in a wheelchair tipping over during transport.

Checklist for Purchasing a Wheelchair

Important questions to be answered before purchasing a wheelchair that is conducive for a productive school environment:

1. *What is the narrowest door, hallway or aisle the child needs to access?*
2. *Does the wheelchair fit in the classroom, restroom, cafeteria, playground, etc.?*
3. *Does the size of the chair allow the child to effectively participate in classroom and P.E. activities without hindering learning?*
4. *If your child rides the school bus, is the wheelchair WC19 compliant (crash tested) to be safely transported on the school bus?*
5. *Can the wheelchair safely fit on the bus lift?*
6. *Does the wheelchair have appropriate and easily accessible anchor points to be secured on the school bus?*
7. *Does the wheelchair have the required occupant restraints for safe transportation on the school bus?*

Summertime Means Vacation Time

By Claudia Rampley, Central Office

Enjoying family activities is important for all children, but planning a successful summer getaway can be a challenge for families that have children with special needs. Although it might take an extra amount of preparation to travel with your child, the rewards of a family vacation can be exciting as well as fulfilling.

Planning is the key to a successful family vacation. Select a destination that is willing and able to meet your child's special needs. Some vacation spots are more accessible and accommodating than others. It is always worth calling ahead to find out what is offered besides concessions. Some attractions publish special guides for visitors with special needs, which they will typically send to you. Most places are happy to accommodate visitors with disabilities, and many destinations go out of their way to offer help and support. The more you learn about where you are going in advance, the more you will be able to plan accordingly.

Travel time

- Whether you plan to drive your own car or use public transportation, try to travel when the roads are less crowded.
- Avoid mealtime travel.
- Try to travel when your child is well-rested or when he or she can sleep during the majority of the trip.

What to pack for the trip

Bring a travel pack with items you might need in case of an emergency:

- A list of your child's prescription drugs
- A letter from your child's doctor describing your child's condition and needs in case of an emergency
- Contact information for your child's doctor
- Health insurance cards
- The telephone numbers of any necessary medical supply companies

Make a list of items that cannot be left behind so you will not discover them missing once you are on your way:

- Your child's favorite toys
- Favorite blanket and/or pillow
- Essential medication and medical equipment
- Set of earplugs to buffer loud music or sound effects in some attractions
- Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
- Appropriate clothing (It might be cool in the early morning and late evening but very hot during the day. Dress your child in layers so you can add/remove clothing as needed.)

Safety tips

- Be sure your child drinks plenty of fluids.



- Apply sunscreen frequently to prevent sunburn, and do not forget to wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Do not spend all of your time outside. Go inside air-conditioned shops and performance areas whenever possible to get your child out of the sun and heat.
- If you visit a theme park, determine the locations of the first aid stations upon entering the park.
- Watch out for tripping hazards, and be alert for oblivious pedestrians.
- Allow your child time to rest. Take frequent breaks for protection from the sun and for refreshments.
- Allow extra time to get where you are going, and stop frequently to take your child out of the car (even if it is only for a few minutes).

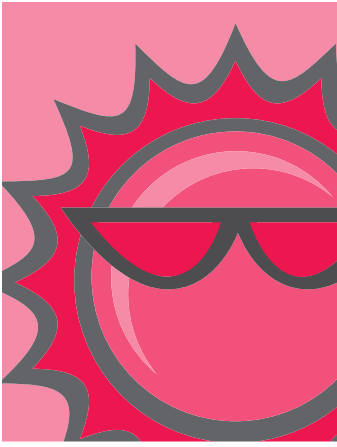
If you plan to stay overnight in a hotel, the following are some questions you might need to ask before booking your room:

- How wide is the door to the room?
- How many inches is the bed off of the floor?
- Is there a restaurant at the hotel that is accessible?
- Is there a pool or other recreational facilities that are accessible?
- How far is the handicapped parking from the entrance to the hotel?

Once you are on your way, be flexible. Unexpected things come up even on the best-planned trips. If this is your first trip with your child, plan for a slower pace than you might usually attempt. Consider taking several shorter trips until you get some experience under your belt. Many families are afraid to take trips away from home – don't let fear stop you from having a vacation.

If your first trip is not a success, do not give up. Sit down and discuss what did and did not work. Make appropriate changes for your next trip, and do not get discouraged. Traveling with a child with special needs can be an acquired skill. Go ahead, make some memories and have a wonderful summer vacation with your child.

== Have a Great Getaway! ==



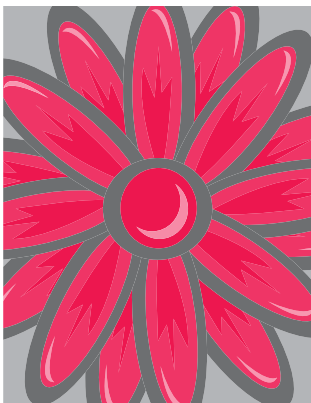
Nutrition and Fitness ... During the Summertime!

Compiled from information provided by Debbie Stover, Central Office, and Alan Duede, P.E. Teacher

It's that time of year when school ends and summer begins. Throughout the school year, SSSH adheres to a wellness policy that includes goals for nutrition, education, physical activity and other school-based activities promoting student wellness. During the summer months, you and your family are encouraged to continue practicing good nutrition habits and participating in physical activities.

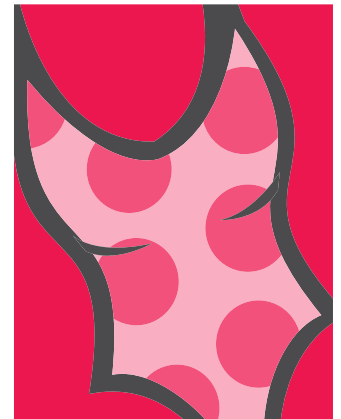
Nutrition

- Everyone has different metabolism and different levels of physical activity. One size does not fit all when it comes to choosing the right amount of food to eat from each food group.
- Make smart choices to include items from each food group (fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains, meat and beans, and oils).
- Find an appropriate balance between food and physical activity.
- Do not exceed your daily calorie need.
- Vary selections from each food group.
- Grill, bake or broil foods instead of frying them.
- Rather than serving fruit juice, offer whole or cut-up fresh fruit. Fresh fruit has more dietary fiber and lacks the added sugars found in juice.
- Choose fruit canned in 100 percent fruit juice or water instead of syrup.
- Serve low-fat yogurt dips with fruits and vegetables if your child likes dips.
- Offer your child flavored low-fat or skim milk to encourage more milk consumption.
- Offer yogurt or cheese to increase your child's daily dairy intake.
- Serve whole-grain foods.
- Introduce whole grains gradually if your child is unfamiliar with the texture, taste and color. Serve in breads, buns, pizza crusts, etc.
- Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry.
- Include fish, beans and nuts for your meat options.
- Limit fat from oils such as butter, margarine and shortening.



Physical activity/fitness

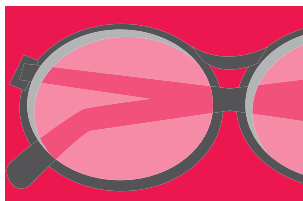
- The three elements of physical fitness are:
 - ★ Duration – how long the activity lasts
 - ★ Intensity – how vigorous the activity is
 - ★ Frequency – how often the activity is repeated
- Physical activity builds a healthy body, boosts energy, promotes a good night's sleep and increases self-esteem.
- Participate in physical activities that interest your child.
- Only do what you feel is safe for your child and what you feel comfortable to assist them with.
- Make up your own movements/actions for the exercise that your child needs.
- Dance to your favorite music.
 - ★ For children in wheelchairs or who have difficulty walking, try chair dancing.
 - ★ Include easy arm and leg movements from a sturdy chair or a wheelchair.
 - ★ Use flags, ribbons or streamers for more exciting arm movements.
 - ★ Encourage your child to freestyle dance.
- Be creative and make physical activity easy and fun.
 - ★ Take a nature walk.
 - ★ Play at a playground.
 - ★ Play a game of basketball, tee ball, kickball, tennis, etc.
 - ★ Go bowling or swimming.
 - ★ Build and then knock down sand castles.
 - ★ Walk the family pet.
 - ★ Clean the house or wash the car.
 - ★ Plant a vegetable garden.
 - ★ Pick weeds out of the backyard.
 - ★ Or, do any activity that involves movement.



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Keep your child active and moving

Create your own exercise routine to suit your child's needs and likes. Listed below are activities that move almost every part of the body; use these ideas to make your own routine for your child.



- Wink your right eye and then your left eye.
- Scrunch your face (mad), stretch your face (surprise), smile big (happy) and then frown (sad). Hold each for 10 seconds.
- Open and close your mouth 10 times.
- Dance to your favorite song.
- Open and close the fingers on your right hand 10 times. Repeat with your left hand.
- Shake/flap your hands for 10 seconds.
- Clap your hands together slowly, then quickly, then quietly and then loudly (each for 10 seconds).
- Clap hands to knees simultaneously 10 times, and then clap hands to knees alternating right to left for 10 seconds.
- Shrug your shoulders toward your ears 10 times.
- Roll your shoulders forwards and backwards 10 times each.
- Press your shoulders back, and try to hold your shoulder blades together for 10 seconds.
- Circle your arms forwards and then backwards 10 times each.
- Suck in your stomach and hold for 10 seconds, and then press out your stomach and hold for 10 seconds.
- Reach for the sky with your right hand and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with your left hand and then with both hands.
- March in place for 30 seconds, stop and then repeat.
- Kick your right leg 10 times, and then kick your left leg 10 times.
- Walk around the house.
- Walk forward 10 steps, backward 10 steps and then sideways 10 steps.
- Skip, hop and jump for 10 seconds each.
- Walk with arms stretched out like an airplane for one minute.
- Walk tall like a giraffe for 30 seconds.
- Walk heavy like an elephant for 30 seconds.
- Touch your right hand to your left elbow, and then touch your left hand to your right elbow. Repeat 10 times.
- From either a sitting or a standing position, lift your right knee 10 times, repeat with your left knee and then repeat with alternating knees.
- Alternate standing up and then sitting down 10 times slowly and safely.
- Pretend to climb a ladder.
- Pretend to swim (using your arms).
- Pretend to ride a bike (sit in a chair and pedal).
- Shake hands with someone.
- Wave to someone.
- Shake your hands, arms, legs and finally your whole body for 10 seconds each.

Planning for Next School Year

Recently, you received a mailing from your child's school that included forms you have been asked to complete and return before the start of the 2008-09 school year. During the summer, please visit your child's physician and have the medical forms signed. The school has enclosed all forms relevant to your child's needs, and you should have received all or most of the following items. If you have questions, please contact your school building administrator or school nurse.

Doctor's Physical Examination Report

It is important for the school to be kept up-to-date on your child's health so that staff can provide necessary health care (and educational instruction) without any negative side-effects.

Emergency or Illness Form

This information is vital if there is an emergency with your child while at school or during bus transportation.

Parent Authorization for Special Health Care/Healthcare Provider's Order and Approval of Special Health Care Procedure and Special Health Care Procedure

This information is necessary so that appropriate training can be provided to the staff responsible for conducting your child's special health care procedures. Since your child's health care needs can change, it is important that any changes to procedures be shared with the school so that appropriate care is given to your child as ordered by a physician.

Medication Order

Neither staff nor the school nurse will be allowed to give prescription or over-the-counter medication to your child without a medication order. This order ensures that your child will receive the appropriate medication for his or her condition as deemed necessary by your child's physician.

Immunization Request

Missouri State Law requires children attending State Schools be current in their immunizations. This form will indicate any immunizations your child needs.

Medical Statement for Students Requiring Special Meals

The federal lunch program requires that any special diet is to be ordered by your child's physician.

Bus Transportation Information

This form is important for providing bus personnel and the school with alternate addresses where your child can be dropped off if you are unable to be home to meet the bus. You can update this form at any time during the year, and you may enter several alternate addresses of family members or friends. Phone numbers should also be updated if they change.

Free Lunch Application Letter and Application

This should be completed by families that are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Crowley Ridge Teacher Named One of the "Heartland's Best"

By Ruthie Davis, Building Administrator

Betty Arnold, a teacher at Crowley Ridge State School, has been chosen as one of 12 Heartland's Best Teachers by KFVS Channel 12 News in Cape Girardeau. Arnold was nominated for the award by a student and her parent and was honored at a banquet ceremony June 7 in the University Center Ballroom on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University.

The Heartland's Best Teachers Award is for the southeast Missouri viewing area to honor teachers for their dedication to students. Winners are chosen by a panel of representatives from the major universities in the region who review the information from hundreds of nominations. All 12 teachers receive a digital camera provided by corporate sponsors.

Having been at State Schools since 1969, Arnold has been a teacher and teacher-in-charge at both Bootheel and Crowley Ridge. She has taught and loved many students during her 39-year tenure. She has always been generous in providing for each student's needs. On students' birthdays, Arnold enjoys planning parties that include cake, ice cream and gifts.

At school with her students is where she wants to be every day, Arnold says. She is a shining example of dedication for her students and her co-workers because she seldom misses a day of work. In fact, she has accumulated so much leave time that she has been generous to other employees by donating to the shared-leave pool.

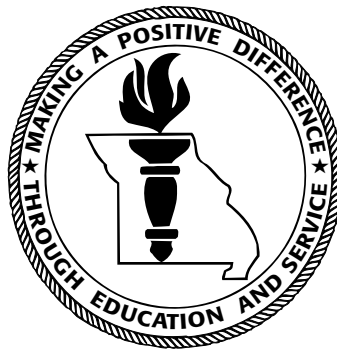


Betty Arnold was recently named one of 12 Heartland's Best Teachers.

Arnold graduated with a degree in special education from Southeast Missouri State University. She lives in Dexter with her husband, Larry, and their four dogs. When she is not at school, Arnold and her husband spend time looking for American Indian artifacts. They have a collection of pottery, arrowheads and other items gathered from years of searching. She also has a collection of penguins.

Arnold's co-workers, as well as her students and their parents, are all excited about her nomination. They believe she is very deserving of the honor of being chosen as one of the "Heartland's Best."

(To view the KFVS segment on her award, go to <http://www.kfvs12.com> and type "Betty Arnold" in the search window.)



STATE SCHOOLS FOR SEVERELY HANDICAPPED
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Web site: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools>

NOTE: If you have items of interest for Parent Focus, please call (573) 751-0706 (Missouri Relay (800) 735-2966) or forward them to Debbie Stover, State Schools for Severely Handicapped, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; e-mail: debbie.stover@dese.mo.gov.