

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
 ABOUT P.J. ET. AL., V. STATE OF CONNECTICUT
 Board of Education et al. Settlement Agreement**

Q: What is the PJ Settlement?

A: P.J., et al v. State of Connecticut, Board of Education, et al. was filed in federal court in 1991 on behalf of five school-age children with intellectual disabilities and their families. The families sued the state because the state was not ensuring that “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily,” as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In other words, special education is a service, not a place. Labels do not drive placement. If your child has a disability, he/she should be in a regular class, with supports to make it successful. Only if this is not possible can kids be moved to a more restrictive environment, such as spending some time in the resource room. The case was certified as a class action lawsuit on December 13, 1993.

Q: A class action lawsuit? Who are the class members?

A: The court defined the class as “all [Connecticut] school-age children labeled mentally retarded on or after February 20, 1991 who are not educated in regular classrooms will be class members as well as all students with the label ‘Intellectual Disability/Mental Retardation’ who are not educated in the regular classroom.”

Q: So is my child a class member?

A: If your child receives special education services, and has their primary disability label as ‘intellectual disability’

(see the first page of your child’s IEP), then he/she is a class member. Also, if your child becomes categorized under ‘intellectual disability’ during the period of the Settlement Agreement, he/she then becomes a class member. If you are not sure if your child is a member of the class, call Deb Richards at the Connecticut State Department of Education at (860) 807-2021.

Q: How long will the Settlement Agreement be in place?

A: The Federal Court can enforce the Agreement until 2007, and can entertain Plaintiffs’ motions for substantial non-compliance with the Agreement through 2010.

Q: What are the goals of the Settlement Agreement?

- A: There are 5 goals:
1. An increase in the percent of students with mental retardation/intellectual disability who are placed in regular classes, as measured by the federal definition (80% or more of the school day with non-disabled students).
 2. A reduction in the disparate identification of students with MR/ID by racial, ethnic or gender group.
 3. An increase in the mean and median percent of the school day that students with MR/ID spend with non-disabled students.
 4. An increase in the percent of students with mental retardation or intellectual disability who attend the school they would attend if not disabled (“home school”).
 5. An increase in the percent of students with MR/ID who participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities with non-disabled peers.

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CDSC Quarterly

Editor: Kathleen Reiss
 CDSC Quarterly is published four times per year by the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress, Inc. We welcome input from parents and professionals. Please help other families by sharing your experiences. Send submissions to: Newsletter Editor c/o Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress, Inc., P.O. Box 340385, Hartford, CT 06134-0385

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND DISCLAIMER

The Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress is a non profit organization which acts as a resource for families and professionals involved with a person who has Down Syndrome. Its vision is to improve the lives of persons with Down Syndrome, and to encourage the community at large to receive and embrace them. This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down Syndrome and will provide a forum for others. The Congress does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, etc. We will not espouse any particular political or religious view. Individuals or organizations referred to do not necessarily endorse this publication or its editor. The editor reserves the right to make corrections as appropriate, and in accord with established editorial practice in material submitted for publication.

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CDSC always welcomes photos of your children.
 Photos are used in our Convention Brochure,
 Annual Report, upcoming Calendars, etc.
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ALL PHOTOS CAN BE SENT TO:

Ken Cholewinski

47 Fawn Hill Rd

Killingworth, CT 06419

Sorry, photos cannot be returned.

President's Message

FEBRUARY 2004

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE CDSC DOES?

When I speak on behalf of the CDSC, I am often asked what the organization is all about, and what it does for persons with Down Syndrome and the families who love them. I usually list a number of the most common things we do, but afterward, I remember a number of important accomplishments and say to myself, "I wish I had remembered to mention that project or that event." I would like to share with you in this letter all the things the CDSC does.

The CDSC, through its local county representatives and network of families, provides emotional support to parents that have received a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, or who are welcoming a newborn with DS. CDSC members give generously of their time to support new parents through playgroups, Mom's Night Outs, social gatherings, or just a phone call to ask "how are you doing, and I am available to talk if you need me."

The CDSC is active in promoting advocacy for the rights of our children. A committee of members monitors the progress of the landmark PJ settlement, which gives our children the right to an inclusive education along side their nondisabled peers. Members sit on a number of boards and committees and attend meetings that directly impact governmental funding, legislation and programs. Through this advocacy process, our voices are heard at the State Capitol, the Department of Education, the Department of Mental Retardation, the Expert Advisory Panel monitoring the PJ settlement and at many other agencies. If you would like to know more about this process, please contact Beth Lurie at lurie@optonline.net, Patti Silva at cakes01@cox.net or Penny Inferrera at CT1Penny@aol.com.

The CDSC maintains an electronic calendar of training, seminars, social events, and legislative happenings around the State as well as in Massachusetts and New York. This calendar is distributed, free of charge, via email at least once a month. If you are not currently receiving this calendar and would like to, email Chris McAuliffe at mack1200@aol.com. I know of no other mailing locally that is as extensive as this is. The website is being enhanced to provide additional links, on line registration and dues paying.

The annual convention is held each fall, and features nationally known speakers on a variety of topics. Periodically, the CDSC sponsors educational and medical conferences throughout the year. The Special Education Resource Center (SERC) listed the CDSC convention as one of the qualifying educational seminars for Least Restrictive Environment training. The CDSC Medical Advisor, Dr. Robert Greenstein, attends national conferences and reports back on the latest research and best practices.

Members and friends get together each summer for the annual picnic. It is traditionally held at the beach and is a catered event with swimming, kids games and the beautiful Connecticut seashore as a backdrop. A new event was added in the summer of 2003, the CDSC family day at Lenny and Joe's Fishtail Restaurant in Madison. Kids ride the handpainted carousel, the whole family enjoys the food and company, while the carousel proceeds are all donated to the CDSC.

Two college scholarships are awarded each year at the convention. One is to a teacher pursuing a graduate degree in Special Education, while the other is to a young person with DS pursuing post secondary education. We distribute information kits to hospitals, Birth to Three providers, and schools. These kits include a video produced by the CDSC about "Life With Down Syndrome." Mini grants are awarded to schools and organizations. We also fundraise, as the CDSC is not supported by any governmental funding.

I am sure I forgot something. With all that the organization does, we still plan to do more to support and benefit our children. We welcome any suggestions you have to accomplish this.

—Lynn Cholewinski

for program details please visit www.spednet.org

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| <p>March 6 CDSC ADULT'S ONLY COCKTAIL PARTY in Weston hosted by the Rosiello's. For more information please call Barbara Rosiello at 203-454-7995</p> <p>March 8 CDSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
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For more information call Penny at 860-210-0048 or ct1Penny@aol.com</p> <p>March 13 CDSC PLAYGROUP IN WINDSOR. For more information please call Patti Silva at 860-529-7766 and cakes01@cox.net or Chris McAuliffe at 860-683-2535 and mack1200@aol.com.</p> <p>March 16 CDSC MOM'S NIGHT OUT at Dakota's Restaurant in Vernon. For more information, to RSVP or for directions please call Debbie Keller at 860-228-4226</p> <p>March 20 CDSC PLAYGROUP IN COLCHESTER at the Cragin Memorial Library from 11 to noon. For more info please call Karen Zbierski at 860-873-8615</p> <p>April 3 CDSC EASTER EGG HUNT IN FAIRFIELD at the Lopes
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For more info call Cindy Drost 203-272-1901</p> |
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SAVE-THE-DATE!!!

CDSC Convention 2004 "Just the Way You Are"

Saturday, November 6th, 2004, Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale

Keynote Speaker: Rick Lavoie

DON'T MISS THE BEST CDSC CONVENTION EVER!

Please mark your calendar and join us for the **19th annual CDSC Convention**. This year's keynote speaker will be Rick Lavoie. Rick is an internationally renowned educator, consultant, and speaker. His workshop topics will focus on behavior management strategies and techniques.

Our eighteen workshops are designed around the diverse needs of those in attendance, offering a bit of something for everyone. We plan to have workshops for new parents, grandparents, and teen/adolescents with Down syndrome, along with our ever-popular sessions on medical issues, therapeutic options, and inclusional topics. CEU's will be available for several of the workshops.

This year we'll have even more vendors of educational and fun books and things, and repeat our successful Silent Auction.

Come join us for a day of education, inspiration, and fun!

For more information or if you'd like to help out, please e-mail me at kencholewinski@comcast.net or call me at 203-663-2676.

"CONNECTICUT CARETAKERS CONFERENCE" SPRING 2004

The Connecticut Department of Public Health, The University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities, and The Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation are sponsoring a Connecticut Caretakers Conference to be held late April. Conference will be addressing caregiving issues across the lifespan. Further information can be found at www.uconnucedd.org.

Please contact the CDSC at 888-486-8537 or admin@ctdownsyndrome.org to have your e-mail address added to our e-mailing list. To Learn more about the CDSC visit us at www.ctdownsyndrome.org. The vision of the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress is to improve the lives of persons with Down Syndrome, and to encourage the community-at-large to receive and embrace them.

This newsletter reports items of interest relating to Down syndrome and will provide a forum for others. The Congress does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, etc.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT P.J. ET. AL., V. STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Board of Education et al. Settlement Agreement...continued from front cover.

Q: What are the current average amounts of time that kids with the label ‘intellectual disability’ are spending in the general classroom environment?

A: Here are some of the state data trends for school years 1998-1999 through 2002-2003. Note that 2002-2003 was the first school year of the Settlement Agreement:

GOAL	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03
1 % of CT K-12 students with ID/MR spending 79-100% of their time with nondisabled peers (regular class)	9.2%	9.6%	10.8%	11.1%	11.6%
2 % of CT K-12 identified as black	13.5%	13.5%	13.6%	13.8%	13.5%
2 % of CT K-12 students with ID/MR also identified as black	31.3%	30.4%	29.7%	27.5%	27.7%
2 % of CT K-12 identified as Hispanic	12.2%	12.6%	13.0%	13.7%	13.9%
2 % of CT K-12 students with ID/MR also identified as Hispanic	22.1%	21.9%	21.5%	20.8%	21.3%
3 Mean % of time CT K-12 students with ID/MR spend with nondisabled peers	30.8%	31.6%	34.3%	35.4%	37.5%
4 Home school enrollment for CT K-12 ID/MR students	No data	No data	No data	71.3%	66.6%
5 Extracurricular participation for CT K-12 ID/MR students	No data	No data	No data	20.3%	20.2%

Q: Wow, so after one year of the settlement agreement, not much changed. Now what?

A: Since the Settlement Agreement went into effect, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is providing technical assistance throughout the state to teach school districts how to include students with intellectual disabilities in their neighborhood schools. You can access much of the available material at the Special Education Resource Center (SERC) website, www.ctserc.org/initiatives/lre/.

Q: The goals require that there be “increases” and “reductions” – but what are the actual target goals? Where does the CSDE hope to be when the Settlement is over?

A: As of now, the state has set no specific goals for itself or local school districts.

Q: What else is the state doing, to help parents?

A: As part of the Settlement Agreement, the CSDE has allocated funds for training programs to teach parents of class members to effectively advocate for the education of their children. These training programs will train of parents in the development of IEPs, management and teaching activities and routines, and the development of active parent groups. This training is currently under development, so keep your eyes open! But we can’t wait for the state to make all the changes that are needed. Each family needs to take a stand and advocate for their child. We cannot tolerate segregation anymore.

Q: How do I know if my child’s district is doing anything about this?

A: During the 2002-2003 school year, eight districts were targeted as most in need of improvement (Bridgeport, Enfield, Milford, New Haven, Shelton, Waterbury, West Haven, Windham), and were required to develop action plans to address the five goals of the department. Last summer an additional 16 districts were required to submit plans (Ansonia, Bristol, Danbury, East Hartford, East Haven, Hamden, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, New Britain, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Wallingford, Windsor). By now all 161 districts should have filed plans with the CSDE Bureau of Special Education.

Q: So the state is monitoring itself? What about some external controls?

A: There is an Expert Advisory Panel to advise the state and the Court regarding the implementation of the Agreement. The four members of the EAP meet 3 times a year to review progress to date. In 2004, the EAP meets in January, May, and October. Portions of the meetings are open to the public. It’s important for families to attend the hearings, and they can be quite entertaining! For information about where and when, please contact Ginger Spiers at (203) 846-1064 or vgingers@aol.com.

Q: Where can I read the text of the Settlement Agreement?

A: The entire text can be found at the website of the Connecticut Coalition for Inclusive Education, www.includeme.com. Go to the area “Legal Basis.”

ASK THE EXPERT:

*ANNE EASON, Esq., is a local attorney representing students with disabilities on inclusion issues (www.spedlawyers.com). She is also an advocate, trainer and co president of SPED*NET New Canaan (www.spednet.org). Mother of four, her daughter Eva, who has Down syndrome, is fully and successfully included in their local middle school. Attorney Eason was the winner of the 2003 CDSC award for outstanding Individual Service Award. We asked Attorney Eason to comment on some of the real-world issues facing parents today as they advocate for their children. The following information is not intended to be legal advice, since Attorney Eason does not know the specific facts surrounding your child.*

1. The PPT process can be very intimidating, especially to those parents just starting to deal with the process. What advice would you give to parents whose children are exiting the preschool programs and entering kindergarten in public school?

Empower yourself with information about the laws, your child's disability, least restrictive environment (LRE), various therapies, and curriculum modifications. My favorite websites for understanding the laws include www.ideapractices.org, www.wrightslaw.com, www.nichcy.org, and www.reedmartin.com. You can obtain free copies of the IDEA regulations from SERC (State Education Resource Center). Their website is www.ctserc.org. Also, the State Dept of Education (SDE) has numerous free publications on special education, including the Parents Guide to Special Education in Connecticut. Many of the publications are online at www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/special. If you don't understand the regulations, call the SDE at (860) 807-2025 and speak to a representative. There are consultants who can answer your questions and explain the process in straightforward terms. Also, be sure to take advantage of the many free local and statewide seminars on disability issues. The CDSC annual conference is organized with you in mind. Also, take advantage of the USE course (Understanding Special Education). It's a 12 hour class sponsored by UConn, given free throughout CT. More info on USE can be obtained from Dr. Kathy Whitbread at (860) 679-1565. Don't wait for issues to arise and then go running for information. Network with other parents. Learn whatever you can as soon as you can so you are better prepared to advocate for your child.

2. If parents feel they need an advocate, can you suggest how they go about finding one?

You are the best advocate for your child and you must continually sharpen your skills. Having said this, NEVER NEVER go to a PPT alone. It's too difficult to be calm and objective. Even though I am a special education attorney, I always bring an advocate. You must make sure that the advocate understands inclusive education and curriculum modifications, two key issues for our kids. Also, they should not bring their own hostilities to the table. Getting good services is all about relationships, not just the IEP document. It's best to have someone who is strong but has good diplomacy skills.

When you hire an advocate, make sure their role is clear. Do you want them to run the meeting or do you want them to just sit there, take notes, and occasionally ask for clarification? Be clear about your priorities; let the advocate know what is negotiable and what cannot be compromised.

Many advocates are very costly. Check with local agencies to see if they have advocacy services for free or for a reasonable cost. You might also consider working out an arrangement with a trusted friend, agreeing to go to each other's PPTs.

If you can't find an advocate, bring any person – but ask them not to speak. Just having them there, writing notes will influence the school district to behave more respectfully and not attempt to do something illegal.

Advocates should not make decisions for parents or students without first getting an okay. Do not ask your advocate to "just take care things." Instead, work as a team. Ask that they must assist you in understanding your rights, responsibilities and the process.

3. Many parents, especially those in the smaller, rural districts, are encountering professionals who do not have the expertise or training to work effectively with their children. What steps can parents take to remedy this situation, especially in those instances where the school district refuses to acknowledge the problem?

Professor Lou Brown says, "Water professionals and they will grow." I believe that most professionals, given the chance, rise to the occasion. Educating the staff is an intense, ongoing process which you need to orchestrate. The IEP must call for staff training in LRE and other important issues central for your child to receive an appropriate education.

Make sure each staff member personally hears about training opportunities. If you get a flyer on a seminar or conference, make sure the information is personally put into each team member's hand. Don't just give the school one copy of an upcoming seminar and hope they circulate it. Make several copies and insure that each individual connected with your child gets a copy. Ask them directly if they would be interested in attending. Post flyers on a bulletin board. Also, every time you attend a conference or meeting, get extra handouts to give to the team. Request the school buy books on the issues the staff needs to understand. Or buy the books yourself, instead of the manicure certificate you were planning to get as a holiday gift. A list of publishers is available on my website www.spedlawyers.com.

Technical assistance is available through SERC. Make sure your team gets to the training offered. Approach your child's teacher and ask, "What do you need in order to better teach my child?"

4. Some school districts are still telling parents that they must conduct an IQ test on their child in order for her/him to be qualified for services under the label intellectual disability. Some districts have gone as far as threatening due process for parents who do not consent. What is the State's position on this issue, and what authoritative source can the parents quote at the PPT?

I thought this issue was settled. Your child does not need an IQ test to have the label of ID. If it isn't, please call me so I can take the case pro bono. We'll settle it once and for all! If you have any questions on what the SDE position is or what the law says, simply contact them. I usually contact Theresa DeFrancis at (860) 807-2018 or theresa.defrancis@po.state.ct.us.

5. If parents have consented to the IQ test already, and they believe it is not an accurate representation of their child, is there anything they can do to have it removed from their child's file?

I recommend that every year the parent write a FERPA request to get a copy of all of the records in their child's file. An example of a FERPA request can be found in my website, www.spednet.org. If any information is inaccurate, you can informally ask the school to remove the record. If that doesn't work, there is a more formal procedure to expunge records that your school hopefully should assist you with. The Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) states that the parent is entitled to make this request if (s)he believes that the portion of the record is false, inaccurate, misleading, or is otherwise an invasion of privacy.

6. What is the advantage of having your child labeled as having intellectual disability?

The law is clear – labels do not drive services. In reality, though, they often do. They often influence the perceptions and expectations of teachers, and influence services and placement.

In an IEP, first the student's present level of performance is discussed. Evaluation results are shared. Then strengths and needs are listed. Goals are then written for the needs that are listed, using the student's strengths for effective educational methods. So, no matter what label your child has, services will depend on strengths and needs. A label is chosen by the team by deciding what is most indicative of the student's needs. The listed disabilities on the IEP form are the disabilities that are eligible for special education services under IDEA or Connecticut statutes.

My own choice, 8 years ago, was to bring my school to mediation since I refused to choose any of the hideous labels offered. In those days, intellectual disability was not an option. I was looking at Mental Retardation. I won

the right to write my own label, unique to my daughter. The school district retained the right to report my daughter as ID (then MR) for statistic reporting purposes only.

Many people feel that if the student is labeled as having an intellectual disability, their IEP will be closely monitored due to the PJ lawsuit settlement. Sadly, at this time, disappointing progress has been made by the State Department of Education on PJ related matters. Your child is entitled to an appropriate education with or without PJ, but if your child has a label of intellectual disability, hopefully you will reap the benefits of the settlement.

7. Some districts say they believe in inclusion, but recommend pulling children out for academics, such as reading and math. Parents are being told that their children are too distracted and/or too far behind their peers, and that intensive one-on-one instruction in the resource room is a benefit. Some parents have been told that they are sacrificing academics for inclusion if they refuse. Is there ever an instance where removing a child from the classroom is appropriate?

Students should not have to earn their way into the classroom; it's the school that needs to be prepared to successfully include your child.

There are instances, but they are very rare, especially for students with Down syndrome. If a student is receiving one on one instruction in a specialized evidence-based reading program such as Wilson, that might take place in a pull-out situation. Be sure that the pull-out time is not scheduled based on administrative convenience; it must be planned carefully so there is the least disruption to the student. If your classroom has sustained silent reading, then use that time for the pull-out (research shows that is not really a good use of student time). There might also be a time in the class when many students are doing individual activities (some go to challenge, others go for special reading groups, others go to speech, others work on their own projects). That would be a good time for pull-out. Other reasons for pull-outs could be if the student has to take care of needs that call for a more intimate setting, such as changing a feeding tube or brushing. Having said this, special education is a service and not a place. The vast majority of services, if not all services, can and should occur in the classroom. Students do not have to earn their way into regular classes; the school must be prepared to educate them. For many of our kids, the academic gap grows wider every year. That does not mean that the student should increasingly spend more time away from his or her typical peers. Instead, the modifications will become more complex but not impossible.

Look carefully at related services. Does the speech pathologist really need to pull out your child to work on appropriate conversation skills, most likely sitting with other students with speech issues? Can't that instruction take place in the real world, such as the lunch room and on the playground with typical friends? Does OT or PT have to be in a separate room? Can't learning to climb steps happen when students really are going up the steps? Can't the OT facilitate good pencil grip in the classroom during writing time?

A respected colleague, Kathleen Whitbread, Ph.D, says "the door to special education only swings one way...in." It's easy to go to a resource room, but hard to break out. Start with the least restrictive environment, and find supports and services to make it work. It's the law and it's the educationally sound thing to do. Testimony of Kenneth Clarke, in his testimony during the case of Brown v. Board of Education, said "Segregation is the way in which society tells a group of human beings that they are inferior to other groups of human beings in that society."

The law (IDEA '97 regs) says, Each state must establish "procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." §300.550. Also in the law at §300.28, "The term supplementary aids and services means aids, services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children

with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with §§300.550-300.556." In other words, the student should be put in the typical classroom that he or she would have been in if they did not have a disability. Supplemental aids and services are used to make the educational program successful. Then, if it is not possible to educate the student, only then can you move down the continuum. If your child is not successful in class, don't shrug your shoulders and say, "Oh well, I guess it can't work. Let's put him in the resource room." Instead, meet with the team and together find a way to make the student successful. If you can't find a way, ask for an outside expert or consultant to help you.

8. What about retention?

I think its okay for kids with disabilities to be one or 2 years behind similar aged kids, but that must be planned in preschool or kindergarten. Many typical students start school later so they will be more mature, academically ready, or more capable on sport teams. If a student is retained beyond Kindergarten, they lose their friendships and it affects their self-esteem. I kept my own daughter behind 2 years because I assumed it would be easier to include her. I also wanted her in the same grade as her younger brother so I would have a good handle on what curriculum was without the modifications. It's worked out perfectly, I only have one set of teachers to meet, one set of books to work with, assemblies and field trips on the same day, and Eva's brother serves as a "spy."

If the school suggests retention in the third grade, use that as a warning flag that the school has failed to provide appropriate supports to insure success for your child. It is the school that has failed, not your child, and retention should not be considered.

9. What do you see as the biggest challenge for parents in our state to obtain adequate services for their children?

Most school districts are not evil, and therefore punishment is usually not the answer. Districts are just not fully prepared, experienced and educated to meet the needs on differently-abled learners in general education classrooms. The biggest challenge is educating your school and community to meet the needs of your child. The good news is that this challenge is getting easier every year.

Prior to 1920, women could not vote. Because of the woman's suffrage movement, that changed. The woman's movement continues, but the progress has been monumental. Prior to Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, black students did not go to school with white students. We had separate drinking fountains and restaurants could hang a sign that said, "No Colored People Allowed." The civil rights revolution changed life in America forever. Every day ordinary people like Rosa Parks, who would not move to the back of the bus, played an important part in the movement. The civil rights movement continues: life is not ideal for African Americans but, like the Woman's movement, the progress has been monumental.

Currently, America is in the midst of a disability revolution. Many of you reading this article are Rosa Parks. You, who refuse to allow the school to segregate your child and cast them into resource rooms. You, who refuse to sign your children up for segregated activities and special camps, and insist instead that your child becomes a part of typical community activities. The disability movement, beginning with the passage of Section 504, then IDEA, and then the Americans with Disabilities Act, is making sweeping changes across America, and life as we know it will never again go backwards. Cesar Chavez stated: Once social change begins it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read, humiliate the person who feels pride, and you cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.

There is still a lot of work to be done. Consider the evidence... recently a man with a disability was forced to crawl up the court house steps to get to his hearing, while the court employees laughed. Also, as I write, our nation's elected officials are busy writing legislation that strips away the laws guaranteeing a free appropriate public education.

*We need to be ready for the challenge.
Now...go out and do the right thing!*



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Do you wish to serve on a committee? Yes No (If "Yes", we may be contacting you.)

Please enclose check payable to the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress, Inc., PO. Box 340385, Hartford, CT 06134-0385. Credit Cards are also accepted. Membership may be either an individual, family or professional basis. A family membership entitles both parents to hold office and vote. We welcome membership from any and all interested individuals, families, businesses and organizations. Your contribution to CDSC, Inc., is tax deductible.

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