

IPVI INSIGHTS

Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities

**August
2017**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Filiberto Almendarez III

BEAUTIFUL. What a beautiful day for a beautiful group at a beautiful event. I could not asked for anything more other than celebrate with excitement in our vibrant pink T-Shirts. We looked like beautiful flowers on a bright sunny day.

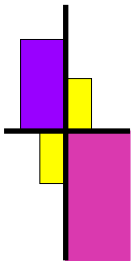
Plus, you may agree our children appeared tall. It dawned on me. We are over thirty years old. IPVI was founded in August 26,1986. No wonder our children are young adults.

In addition, I send a big Thank You to our guest speakers, the Vaglienty Family. They shared their wonderful life story including challenges and achievements that we can relate too. Thank You. Also, another Thank You to Frank Davis for his heart felt kind words and continued support. Again, Thank You.

I have to say, our children do not know failure. They accomplish new challenges each day. They are daily achievers. Could you imagine, what people could accomplish/attempt if they knew they could not fail.

Fellow parents, I Thank You for all your work and efforts on coming out and bringing your child/children. It's not easy with strollers, wheel chairs, schedule medication, numerous bags as if on vacation. And despite all, you are still there. KUDOS to YOU! I say, I know some of the strongest people in the world. But the reality is our love for our children is endless and gives us strength that we may not know. Our children do not give up, why should we. Every breath and effort is applied each day. I share, "If I had to choose between Loving You and breathing, I would use my last breath to tell you I Love You".

Love your beautiful child/children.
OH, YEAH!!!





Inside This Issue:

President’s Report	1
Family Connect — Music Therapy	2
WonderBaby.org	8
11 Things to Look for When Choosing a Special Needs Preschool	3
5 Back to School Resources for Kids with Visual Impairments and Their Families	3
5 Tips for a Stress-Free IEP Transition	3
Introducing Your Blind Child to a New Teacher	3
FRCD “Stepping Stones of Transition” Conference	4
PB: Protect Eyes During Upcoming Solar Eclipse	4
Membership Dues	5
Fall Festival Suggestions	5
PB: Eye Problems That Are Detected & Treated...	6
IPVI Board of Directors	8
Back-to-School Poem	8
IPVI Membership Dues	9
IPVI Calendar of Events	10



REPRINTED FROM
FAMILY CONNECT WEBSITE

How Music Therapy in the Expanded Core Curriculum Can Improve Your Visually Impaired Child’s Life

By *Francesca Crozier-Fitzgerald*

Michael Bertolami is a Board-Certified Music Therapist at Perkins School for the Blind and, for the last 18 years, has been observing the benefits of music as an auditory experience, a method of communication, and as a facilitator for social interaction and connection. As Perkins is a multi-program school with an early learning, elementary/middle, deaf-blind, and high school program, the music therapy department considers their role as therapists, instead of educators, to be interdisciplinary and integral to the full development of its students.

Meeting Kids Where They Are Through Music

During one of his first sessions, Michael Bertolami was introducing his group of students to a variety of musical instruments and explaining some of the ways that they were going to use music during their time together—playing together, individually, and above all, creating sounds and harmonies that they’d never heard before. One student wanted nothing to do with it. He didn’t want to play the instruments, he didn’t want to sing, and he was adamant.

GO TO: FamilyConnect.org to finish reading this article.





11 Things to Look for When Choosing a Special Needs Preschool

By Cori Redford

If you're in the market for a preschool program for your special needs child, you may be wondering what to look for, what questions to ask the teachers, and how to make your final decision. There are many things that I love about our school. Here's what I would recommend you look for in your prospective program: **READ MORE** at: **WonderBaby.org** under IEPs and Education



5 Back to School Resources for Kids with Visual Impairments and Their Families

By Hillary Kleck

Going back to school after a fun-filled summer can be exciting for your child, but it can be a lot of stress and anxiety for you! The list of questions may go on and on but there is still plenty you can do to help *this year* start off great! **READ MORE** at: **WonderBaby.org** under IEPs and Education



5 Tips for a Stress-Free IEP Transition

By Heather Brown

IEPs can be daunting, especially that first one when your child is turning three. Check out these tips to help keep yourself calm and on track! **READ MORE** at: **WonderBaby.org** under IEPs and Education



Introducing Your Blind Child to a New Teacher

By Amber Bobnar

When your child has special needs it's kind of scary to hand him off to a teacher at the beginning of a new school year. When your child is visually impaired it's maybe even a little bit scarier since blindness is such a "low incidence disability." **READ MORE** at: **WonderBaby.org** under IEPs and Education

IEPs AND EDUCATION

Tips and advice about IEPs and education for kids who are blind or visually impaired.

Click on All Topics

SAVE THE DATE!

Illinois Statewide Transition Conference



Stepping Stones of Transition

Illinois Statewide Transition Conference
Bank of Springfield Center
One Convention Center Plaza
Springfield, Illinois 62701

October 23-24, 2017

The conference, titled "Stepping Stones of Transition", invites participants to imagine the possibilities for students with disabilities in the areas of independent living, education and training, employment, community integration, health care, and self-advocacy.

Conference sessions will be organized into 4 tracks: Education, Employment, Community and Healthcare.

Space is limited so register today!

The deadline for registration is

Friday, September 15, 2017.

Family Resource Center on
Disabilities | (312)939-3513 |
info@frcd.org | www.frcd.org



Prevent Blindness Offers Free Information to Protect Eyes During Upcoming Solar Eclipse

- Non-profit Group Provides Tips on How to View Historic Solar Event Without Damaging Eyes -

Across North America on Monday, August 21, 2017, a solar eclipse will be visible to millions of people. According to the [National Aeronautics and Space Administration](#) (NASA), a solar eclipse occurs when the moon blocks any part of the sun. As part of this eclipse, some parts of the United States will experience a brief total eclipse, when the moon completely blocks the sun's face for up to 2 minutes, 40 seconds.

However, looking directly at the sun can be very harmful to the eyes. In fact, exposing eyes to the sun without proper eye protection during a solar eclipse can cause "[eclipse blindness](#)" or retinal burns, also known as solar retinopathy. This exposure to the light can cause damage or even destroy cells in the retina (the back of the eye) that transmit what you see to the brain. This damage can be temporary or permanent and occurs with no pain. It can take a few hours to a few days after viewing the solar eclipse to realize the damage that has occurred.

Prevent Blindness, the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, has established a [web page](#) and [fact sheet](#) with information about an eclipse, potential related dangers to vision, and how to protect your eyes from injury during the event.

Prevent Blindness offers the following tips on how to view the eclipse safely:

Pinhole projection: This is the safest and most inexpensive way of watching a solar eclipse. This helps you avoid looking directly at the eclipse by using a projected image. This do-it-yourself project includes making a pinhole in a cardboard paper with the sun on one side and a piece of paper to project the image on the other side. Keep in mind not to look through the pinhole at the sun.

Illinois Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments

Mylar filters: Aluminized Mylar plastic sheets are available as eclipse vision glasses or can be cut and made into a viewing box. Do not use if there are any scratches or damage to the sheet.

Other ways: Other ways to safely watch a solar eclipse are on television or at a planetarium.

In addition, Prevent Blindness warns against using the following methods:

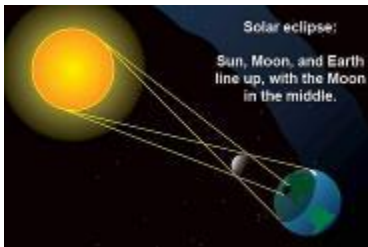
Smartphone: Watching a solar eclipse on your smartphone camera can put you at risk of accidentally looking at the sun when trying to line up your camera. It could possibly also damage your smartphone camera. Don't take the risk.

Camera viewfinder: Never look at a solar eclipse through the optical viewfinder of a camera. It can damage your eyes in the same way as looking directly at it.

Unsafe filters: Unless specifically designed for viewing a solar eclipse, no filter is safe to use with any optical device (telescopes, binoculars, sunglasses, etc.).

Prevent Blindness strongly recommends that anyone who plans on viewing the solar eclipse consult an eye care professional to determine the safest viewing option. Anyone who experiences changes in vision or worsening eye pain after viewing the eclipse should seek treatment from an eye doctor immediately.

"By wearing the proper eye protection, everyone can enjoy this amazing spectacle of nature safely," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "We want to encourage the public to take the right precautions in advance to safeguard their eyes from the sun's powerful rays."



MEMBER
DUES

Please remember to send in your membership dues of \$15.00 to:

Mary Zabelski
P.O. Box 316634

We are planning a Fall Festival at a Pumpkin farm in Autumn. We hope this outing peaks your interest. You must be a dues paying member to attend.

Thanks so much!



Fall Festival After looking at Pumpkin Farms throughout the Chicago area and suburbs, I have found a great one in Bolingbrook, Johansen Farms. They offers a wide variety of kid friendly attractions, including pumpkins galore.

They have a program specifically for our blind/VI children which is offered during the week only. Each child would have their own free chaperone if needed. Price per person would be decided by IPVI. Will let you know more next newsletter.



Back-to-school preparations are already underway for many students across the country. To help put kids on a path to success in the classroom, Prevent Blindness asks parents and caregivers to add “getting my child’s eyes checked” to the “to do” list. Detecting and treating eye problems early in children can help not only in academic performance but may save vision for later in life.

Prevent Blindness has declared August as Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month and provides free materials to parents and teachers on the importance vision and eye health for kids. Financial assistance is available in both English and Spanish. Additional details are below. Please let me know if you would like more information!

Sarah Hecker <shecker@preventblindness.org>

Eye Problems That Are Detected and Treated Early Can Help Kids in the Classroom and Beyond

Prevent Blindness Declares August as Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month to Educate Public on the Importance of Healthy Vision for Kids

CHICAGO (July 20, 2017) – As children in most parts of the country head back to school, Prevent Blindness, the nation’s oldest non-profit eye health and safety group, asks all parents and caregivers to set their child on a path to success in the classroom with a certified vision screening or eye exam.

More than one in 20 preschool-age children and one in four school-age children have a vision disorder. The National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness (NCCVEH) issued a comprehensive report, “[*Children’s Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues*](#),” detailing the link between healthy vision and the impact it may have on learning:

- Visual functioning is a strong predictor of academic performance in school-age children.
- Uncorrected refractive errors in infants and preschool-age children are associated with developmental delays, as well as with clinically identified deficits in cognitive and visual-motor functions that may in turn affect school readiness.
- Vision disorders of childhood may continue to affect health and well-being throughout the adult years.

Prevent Blindness has declared August as Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness month to inspire parents to make their child’s vision health a priority. Prevent Blindness [recommends a continuum of eye care for children](#) to include both vision screening and comprehensive eye examinations. All children, even those with no signs of trouble, should have their eyes checked at

regular intervals. Any child who experiences vision problems or shows symptoms of eye trouble should receive a comprehensive eye examination by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

Children generally do not complain about problems with their vision. These problems may range from common refractive errors, such as nearsightedness (myopia) and farsightedness (hyperopia), to serious eye conditions including:

Amblyopia or “lazy eye” – has many causes. Most often, it results from either a misalignment of a child’s eyes, such as crossed eyes, or a difference in image quality between the two eyes (one eye focusing better than the other). In both cases, one eye becomes stronger, suppressing the image of the other eye. If this condition persists, vision from the weaker eye may become useless. Amblyopia is found in about 2 percent of 6- to 72-month-old children and is the most common cause of vision loss in children.

Strabismus or “crossed eyes” – a condition where eyes are misaligned, or do not line up with each other. This problem is caused when the muscles do not work together. Between 2 and 4 percent of children under the age of 6 years have strabismus. Strabismus may eventually lead to amblyopia.

Astigmatism – an irregularity in the shape of the cornea or lens that causes blurry vision at all distances if not corrected. Between 15 and 28 percent of children ages 5 to 17 years have astigmatism, depending on the diagnostic threshold used. Children who have myopia or hyperopia are more likely to have astigmatism.

“The good news is that many vision problems in children can be treated successfully if detected early,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “Prevent Blindness provides free information on a variety of vision health topics for kids, and partners on many fantastic programs that provide free exams and glasses for those who qualify. We encourage the public to contact us for more details on ways to keep children’s eyes healthy.”

To support children’s vision programs, [OCuSOFT® Inc.](#), a privately-held eye and skin care company dedicated to innovation in eyelid hygiene and ocular health, has agreed to donate 10 percent of all online sales to Prevent Blindness during August’s Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month.

For more information on children’s eye health and safety, the NCCVEH, or [financial assistance programs](#), please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit [preventblindness.org](#).



Amblyopia or “lazy eye”



Strabismus or “crossed eyes”



Astigmatism

IPVI

P.O. Box 316634, Chicago, IL 60631

1-773-882-1331 • Email: ipvi@ipvi.org • www.ipvi.org

PRESIDENT

Filiberto Almendarez III
5323 N Delphia Ave #124
Chicago, IL 60656
(773) 693-5713
falmendareziii@yahoo.com

OPERATIONS VP

Joan Bielawski
(Temporary)

SERVICES VP

Mary Zabelski
6153 N. Nettleton Avenue
Chicago, IL 60631
(773) 882-1331
maryzabelski@hotmail.com

TREASURER

Filiberto Almendarez III
(Temporary)

SECRETARY

Joan Bielawski
421 Applegate Court
Naperville, IL 60565
(630) 357-8576
wjbielawski@yahoo.com

SPANISH TRANSLATOR

Noelia Gamino
708-655-2747

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Joan Bielawski
421 Applegate Court
Naperville, IL 60565
(630) 357-8576
wjbielawski@yahoo.com

School Poem

Author Unknown

Today I hurry off to school,
To work and learn and play
I'm in a brand new grade this year.
What a happy day!!!!





Join **IPVI** or renew your membership today!

The *Illinois Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments* is a state-wide, non-profit organization that enables parents to find information and resources for their children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.

Your IPVI membership dues or generous contributions help to support all of our ongoing efforts:

- Regular communications which include: workshops, conferences, training seminars, legislative issues, organizational announcements, products, and advice about raising a child who is visually impaired.
- Offers several \$500 college scholarships each year.
- Publishes a resource catalog which includes anything and everything to do with visual impairment.
- Conducts training and support sessions where parents share experiences and ideas.
- Holds fun outings adapted for children with visual impairments at athletic, cultural, educational, and entertainment settings.
- Represents parents of children with visual impairments at conferences, public hearings, and on committees.

What does IPVI do?

- Promotes and provides information through meetings, correspondence, publications, etc., which will help parents meet the special needs of their children with visual impairments.
- Facilitates the sharing of experiences and concerns in order to provide emotional support and relief from feelings of isolation for parents and their families.
- Creates a climate of opportunity for children who are blind in the home, school, and society.
- Fosters communication and coordination of services among federal, state, and local agencies and organizations involved with providing services to people who are visually impaired.
- Advocates on a statewide level for services to children who are visually impaired and their families.
- Keeps members informed about current proposals and actions which impact on children with visual impairments and their families.

Check one:

Parent/Guardian Membership: \$15 per year.

Child(ren)'s Names: _____

Birthdate(s) of my visually impaired child(ren): _____

My child(ren)'s eye condition: _____

I give my permission to release my name to other parents.

Group/Agency Membership \$50 per year.

Extended Family/Friend Assoc. Membership \$15/year.

Medical Specialist \$50 per year.

Scholarship Fund \$10.00

Donation: \$ _____ (tax deductible)

New Membership

Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) - _____

Email: _____

Please enclose this form along with your payment by check to:

IPVI • P.O.Box 316634 • Chicago, IL 60631

Have questions or need more information?

**Call us at
1-773-882-1331**

**Illinois Association for Parents of
Children with Visual Impairments
P. O. Box 316634
Chicago, IL 60631**

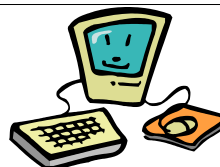
IPVI CALENDAR



Pumpkin Farm Outing – TBD

Please call
1-773-882-1331
for any questions, concerns,
or comments that IPVI can
help you with.

**Newsletter Deadline for
September 2017 is August 15**



**Check Out
www.ipvi.org**

Calendar of Events!
News and Updates!
Useful Links to Web Sites!
And more...