

UCEDD *it!*

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**University Center for
Excellence on
Developmental Disabilities**

LOW VISION AWARENESS By: Lia Pelenato

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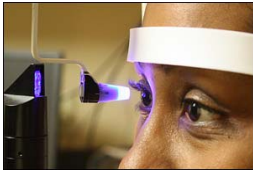
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- Strategies:**
- * Increase access to professional dental care for children and youth needing specialized care
 - * Offer continuing dental education programs focusing on children and youth
 - * Provide educational workshops on oral health care to all who support the health and development of children and youth with special health care needs.

Low vision is a term commonly used among eye care professionals to mean partial sight, or sight that isn't fully correctable with surgery, medications, contact lenses, or glasses. Low vision typically indicates that vision is reduced. People can have visual field loss associated with that as well. They can have tunnel vision; they can have significant blind spots, not just floaters in their vision. Legal blindness is a definition we use in the U.S., a vision of less than 2100 or a visual field of less than 20 degrees. The foremost common causes of low vi-

sion are age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy. However, you can also have conditions such as albinism or optic nerve damage that people can be born with. For the most part, the conditions mentioned are things that come with age and low vision is predominantly with society's older population. Low vision is treated the same way that we would treat somebody who has experienced some other loss of function. We use magnification devices, electronic de-

vices and computer-assistance devices to help people maximize their remaining vision or learn alternate ways to do things using their sense of touch or their sense of hearing. It is important to make sure that an individual with low vision has the best glasses. American Samoa has been fortunate to have various non-profit organizations such as the Lions Club to sponsor an eye clinic to provide assistance to children and adults alike. Lions Club will host another eye clinic next month in Manu'a.



February 2012 Children's Dental Health Month

By: Lia Pelenato

February is National Children's Dental Health Month and this is the time to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits help children get

a good start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. When people have physical, intellectual or emotional disabilities, they may have conditions that interfere with good oral health. They may be unable to access dental

care that meets their specialized needs without driving long distances or waiting months to see a specialist. The overarching goal for this month is to improve the oral health of children and youth with special health care needs.

AN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS-ABA? By: Ernie Seiuli

A webinar “Applied Behavior Analyst” was hosted by the Autism Training Solutions (ATS) conducted by Dr. Anne Lau. She is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst who has specialized in working with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The webinar was titled, “Applied Behavior Analyst”, and was hosted by the Autism Training Solutions (ATS). Applied Behavior Analyst (ABA) is a method of studying and managing behavior to bring about change. ABA therapists develop research-based behavior intervention plans to reduce problem behaviors in children. Students with learning disabilities and behavior problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can benefit from ABA. It is

also well noted among researchers of autism as a method that can be effective for autistic children. Ms. Lau stated that typically developing children learn without intervention because the world around them provides the right conditions to learn language, play, and social skills. Children with autism learn much, much less easily from the environment. They have the potential to learn, but it takes a very structured environment, one where conditions are optimized for acquiring the same skills that children typically learn naturally. ABA is all about how to set up the environment to enable our kids to learn. They may use positive or negative reinforcement as part of their behavior intervention plans to reduce

problem behavior. Parents are also typically involved and encouraged to use ABA at home as well as creating a consistent behavioral intervention program between home and school. According to Part C Director Ruth Te’o, currently the program does not have any confirmed ASD diagnosed cases except for a suspected case which is still pending. To finding out if ABA is appropriate for your child, contact your child’s teacher, school counselor, or school psychologists to discuss ABA and request an Individualized Education Programs or IEP team meeting to discuss your child’s behaviors and appropriate methods to address them or other available methods to help your child.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AMERICAN SAMOA (SOAS) By: Tafa Tupuola

The Special Olympic American Samoa (SOAS) were out in the community recruiting for qualified athletes to participate in the local competition. The athlete recruitment drive held on January 30-31 had SOAS Executive Committee posted outside of Samoana’s gymnasium and Laufou Shopping Center. Although the turnout

was not as we expected, we did not give up anticipation to use other recruitment strategies. The SOAS Chair, Tafa Tupuola and Vice Chair Tea Pomale went on 93 KHJ Radio, KSBS, and the local TV network to broadcast the recruitment. Although the deadline to compete on April 20 is February 29, applications are accepted

for July 20 competition. If you or someone with an intellectual disability is interested in applying as an athlete for soccer, track and field, swimming, or power lifting please contact us at 699-9155 ext. #429 or complete an application online at www.asucedd.org/specialolympics.htm.

WHO & THE WORLD BANK By: Lia Pelenato

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank launched the first World Report on Disability at the United Nations in New York City on June 2011. The report is broad in scope for its targeted audiences and intended use. The report is intended to provide governments and civil society with evidence on which rec-



ommendations for actions are based in areas of policy development, health systems, action on access and attitudes, gaps in research and capacity building. Understanding the numbers of people with disabilities and their circumstances will help national and international policy makers, researchers, professionals, service

providers and consumers to improve efforts to remove barriers and provide services. This short overview of the report provides information about its purpose, development and content, intended audiences and outcomes. Special attention is directed to the sections of the report which address tele-rehabilitation and information and communication technology.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION TRAINING By: Lia Pelenato

UCEDD Director Tafa Tupuola conducted a training entitled "Student Accommodation" on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at 12p.m inside the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) Lecture Hall. This training was prepared specifically for the Division of Student Services, however it was open to any ASCC staff who were interested in attend. The presenta-



tion focused on services and/or accommodations available to students with developmental disabilities (DD) on campus. Ms. Tupuola presented on the rights of individuals/students with a disability who are protected by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

Ms. Tupuola stressed the importance of allowing the student with a DD to seek the services as well as special treatment rather than equal

treatment. The Student Services Department was encouraged to work with students with DD and make accommodations within the scope of the disability of the requestor. Deaf student Micheal Pelenatino who is a first-time ASCC student was also present and provided an input or perspective from a deaf student seeking accommodation services on campus. UCEDD continues to work with various ASCC departments to assist students with DD.

FYI: DID YOU KNOW?



WARNING TO INSURERS: USE PLAIN LANGUAGE

New Health reforms require insurers to use plain language in describing health plan benefits and coverage. Under the rule, health insurers must provide consumers with clear, consistent and comparable summary information about their health plan benefits and coverage. The new explanations, which will be available beginning, or soon after, Sep-

tember 23, 2012 will be a critical resource for the roughly 150 million Americans with private health insurance today. Specifically, these rules will ensure consumers have access to two key documents that will help them

understand and evaluate their health insurance choices:

1. A short, easy-to-understand Summary of Benefits and Coverage or SBC;
2. A uniform glossary of terms commonly used in health insurance coverage, such as



POSSIBILITIES!

The Possibilities Series of videos focuses on the lives and accomplishments of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Each 4-7 minute video highlights one individual's journey, along with their family and friends, and shows the myriad possibilities and options that all people have



as they grow up, become independent, and pursue their life's dreams and goals. The purpose of the Possibilities Series is to present a vision of how individuals with disabilities and their families can lead the lives that they envision, without barriers and in the direction they truly wish to go. The

hope is that these films are viewed and used by anyone who wants to explore all the possibilities that their lives may hold. The first four videos in the Possibilities Series were launched during a special celebration on January 12, 2012. The event attracted over 400 people and for more information please visit:

<http://www.avalonfilms.com>.

MISSION

The **University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)** assures that individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families participate fully in activities that will design and promote self determination, independence, integration and inclusion in all facets of life in American Samoa. The UCEDD will ensure the delivery and purpose of the Developmental Disabilities act through culturally competent activities



**American Samoa
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We are on the Web!

<http://asucedd.org>

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ACRONYMNS/MEANINGS

- **ABA:** Applied Behavior Analyst
- **ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act
- **ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- **ASCC:** American Samoa Community College
- **ASD:** Autism Spectrum Disorder
- **ATS:** Autism Training Solution
- **DD:** Developmental Disabilities
- **IEP:** Individualized Education Plan
- **SBC:** Summery of Benefits and Coverage
- **SOAS:** Special Olympics American Samoa
- **UCEDD:** University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities
- **WHO:** World Heath Organization

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

We would love to hear from you if you have comments about our newsletter, or if you would like to be added to our newsletter list!

Drop us a line at ucedd@amsamoa.edu

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