



March 4, 2008

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT to PARENTS

Because you are the parent of a child who has a visual impairment, we wanted to make sure that you understand some important changes to the NH Vision/Hearing Network (NHVHN) that will go into effect on July 1, 2008. These changes are necessary due to a reduction in funding for NHVHN.

Starting in the 2008-2009 school year, NH Vision & Hearing Network will operate differently than it does now. It is very important for you, as a parent of a student who is currently registered with NHVHN, to understand the changes and how they may impact your child. A letter similar to this one that outlines the changes has been sent to the special education administrator in your district as well as the building level contact for your child.

To summarize the important changes for you, here is an explanation of what remains the same and what will be different in the program beginning in July 2008.

- NHVHN is still funded by the NH Dept. of Education to operate an Instructional Materials Center where students can borrow books or available low vision aids or equipment, and we can find other books your child may need that we do not have in our library. Your school district is responsible to purchase any needed large print or braille books or materials that we do not have available for loan.
- Evelyn Kelso, a certified Teacher of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired (TVI), is still available to help your school district identify the service and support needs of your child that are related to their vision impairment.
- However, one very big difference is that Evelyn will only be able to provide ongoing consultation with your child's school if the school district pays for that service. For the remainder of this school year, Evelyn is able to visit and offer consultation to the school regarding your child's needs at no cost. Starting in school year 2008-09, this is no longer possible. If your child's team needs to consult with Evelyn in school year 2008-2009, they will have to pay for the services.
- As of January 1, 2008, the project no longer pays for assistive technology evaluations. If your child needs an evaluation to determine the best assistive technology solutions for them to use while in school, other funds will have to pay for that evaluation.
- NHVHN will still be a statewide information source for issues related to the education of students who are blind or visually impaired, and we encourage parents to call us with questions.
- NHVHN will continue to offer training events at our office in Concord, and those trainings will remain free to parents.

Change is difficult, and these changes are certainly no exception. It is important that you understand the changes and how they may impact your child. Please feel free to call me at 226-2900 x 109 or email me at catew@atechservices.org with any questions or concerns that you have. As you plan with your child's educational team for next school year, please keep in mind these important changes. Remember that consultation services will still be available, but that there will be a fee to the school district for those services.

Cate Weir
Project Director
NH Vision & Hearing Network