

### **Special Education Law and Advocacy Workshops**

In August 2009, the Council once again hosted four workshops presented by noted attorney and author, Peter Wright. More than 600 participants including parents, guardians, educators, and attorneys participated in the Special Education Law and Advocacy Workshops in four regions of the state. Mr. Wright stressed the importance of developing effective and measurable Individualized Educational Plan (or IEP) goals and objectives, in cooperation with the student, parents or guardians, school professionals and other supporting professionals with knowledge and understanding of the child (such as therapist). The importance of understanding baseline data becomes apparent when developing a child's IEP.

Parents and guardians were cautioned not to rely on grades as an indicator of their child's performance or knowledge gained. Many factors influence grades, including grade inflation, the teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the child's effort, attendance, behavior, and attitude. Furthermore, as children grow and change, their educational needs will also change. Thus the IEP must not remain static, but reflect current and future goals as the child ages.

### **Inclusive Recreation**

The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) is an organization dedicated to enriching lives through accessible, inclusive recreation and active leisure for all will train recreation staff and administrators to help them implement inclusive recreation practices into established programs and activities that they may already offer, such as baseball, volleyball, flag football, swimming, gymnastics, track, and tennis.

The ultimate goal of the project is to enhance the quality of life for children with developmental disabilities by encouraging participation in, and access to, inclusive, barrier-free physical activities and recreation programs. This goal will be accomplished by informing parents or guardians of their child's right to recreate, by creating a network of recreation staff members trained in inclusion practices, and by providing financial support if needed to enable a child to fully participate in a sport or activity (technology, adaptive equipment, etc.).

This project will maintain and support the existing Leon County and Pasco County Programs. FDOA will continue to provide technical assistance and training to staff and administrators at each program site. FDOA will also continue to gather research on inclusive recreation to develop and report on best practices for programs throughout the state.

### **Partners in Transition Training and Technical Assistance**

The purpose of this project is to build the capacity of the current and newly recruited local Partners in Transition (PIT) leadership teams, using the Florida Strategic Plan on Transition, in collaboration with students with disabilities, families, The Florida Department of Education/BEESS, Project Connect, Transition Center, Able Trust, Vocational Rehabilitation, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Children's Medical Services, Community Colleges, local school districts, community employers, and other key stakeholders. The project staff and national experts provide technical assistance, training and supports specific to the needs of the leadership teams. Training and technical assistance include, but are not limited to, transportation, employment, housing, health care, post secondary opportunities, Discovery (comprehensive vocational assessment process) and benefits- planning. Project staff will assist leadership teams in developing an action plan in order to implement evidence based and effective transition practices.