

Behavior Management for ALL Ages!

Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, Omaha, NE
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Brian Belden, PhD Cy Nadler, PhD

Division of Developmental & Behavioral Sciences, Children's Mercy Kansas City
Department of Pediatrics, University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Medicine



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Objectives

- A foundation for behavior management
- Implementing behavioral strategies
- Early childhood problem-solving and examples



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Common Parenting Concerns

- Tantrums, irritability & poor frustration tolerance
- Poor attention
- Hyperactivity
- Inappropriate and annoying behaviors (whining, etc.)
- Noncompliance (including flop & drop)
- Toileting problems
- Feeding and mealtime problems
- Bedtime and sleep problems
- Dangerous behaviors (elopement & wandering, climbing, etc.)
- Fear, avoidance, and anxiety
- Aggressive or self-injurious behaviors
- Transition problems



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Concerns as Children Grow Up

- Need to increase independence
- Social interaction problems
- Academic problems and work avoidance
- "Mismatches" between age and developmental level
- Increases in aggressive & destructive behaviors
- What will the future be like?
- Community activities
- Changing bodies
- Vocational training
- Life transitions

- The list goes on...



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Transitions of All Kinds!

- Daily transitions (wake up, get dressed, go to school)
- Same class all day vs. moving from class to class
- Different teachers, building, expectations
- Changing bodies
- Changing social expectations with peers
- More homework
- Expectation to ask for help
- Reduced in-classroom support; increased independence expected or required
- Tolerating expected changes in daily routines (e.g., high preference to low preference activities)
- Tolerating unexpected changes in daily routines
- Self-monitoring, time management
- Self-care and adaptive skills
- Content knowledge about social norms
- Ability to tolerate larger jobs & assignments
- Coping skills, knowing how to ask
- Ability to work for longer periods with fewer check-ins, less monitoring



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You Are Not Alone!

- Top 3 problems seen by pediatricians:
 - Behavior concerns: 58%
 - Ear aches: 48%
 - Upper respiratory infection (e.g., cold/flu): 41%
- **90%** of mothers of have behavioral concerns about their young children
- Behavioral concerns are even *more* common in children with developmental differences
- As kids grow and change, so do the challenges!



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The Good News

- Behavior problems in young children can often be managed quickly!
- Fixing problems early will prevent serious problems later
- For individuals of all ages, focus on proactive, positive and teaching-focused methods will provide everyone with the best chance for success

General Myths About Children

Children...

1. Understand explanations and reasoning
2. Don't understand consequences
3. Should do things "because I said so"
4. Have "learned" something after getting it right the first time
5. Know what we expect of them
6. Understand and believe everything that they say to us

Typical Behavior in Children and Young Adults with Down Syndrome

- Do not think like adults
- Have short attention spans
- Are often impulsive
- Learn slowly and lack judgment
- Exhibit speech and language delays
- Are stronger in social responsiveness

These characteristics can cause problems.

Why do children misbehave?

- The correct behavior is outside the child's current skill set
 - No matter how much you *want* to, you can't magically learn to juggle or dunk a basketball
- The correct behavior is in the child's skill set, but it is still hard!
 - When you first learn to drive, it takes a LOT of effort and concentration!
- The correct behavior is in the child's skill set, but the child is relying on other (inappropriate) behaviors
 - Everyone knows how to drive 65 mph, but most of us rely on higher speeds sometimes...

If misbehavior is a skill deficit, can my child acquire the desired skill?



Not always

Some factors limit one's ability to do things

- Physical
- Developmental
- Emotional

Within the limitations



He might be able to develop a different skill that still meets his goal.

How do you teach the skill?

- Identify the purpose of the wrong behavior.
- Identify and correct situations or events that influence the behavior.
- Introduce or strengthen an acceptable and doable replacement behavior.
- Eliminate the payoff for the wrong behavior.

Purposes of Behavior

- To get something (positive reinforcement)
- To escape from or avoid something (negative reinforcement)

To get something (positive reinforcement) *External*

Social

Non-Social



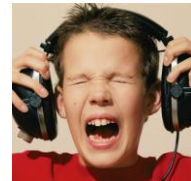
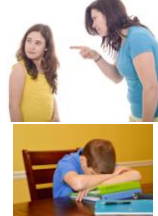
To get something (positive reinforcement) *Internal*



To escape from or avoid something (negative reinforcement) *External*

Social

Non-Social



To escape from or avoid something (negative reinforcement)

Internal



Behavior Does Not Happen in a Vacuum

Physical

- Poor sleep
- Hunger
- Illness
- Pain
- Unpleasant stimulation
- Health problems

Environmental

- Presence/absence of key people
- Changes in routine
- Indirect conflict (e.g., between parents)
- Direct conflict
- Unknown stresses

NOTE: These factors may increase the likelihood of behavior problems, but they do not necessarily help us understand the function (purpose) of the problem or help us develop a solution...

When Possible, Target Situational Factors

Physical

- Physical examination
- Consistent sleep schedule
- Sleep clinic referral
- Mealtime schedule
- Nutrition referral
- Sensory evaluation

Environmental

- Maintain routine across people and places
- Forewarn changes
- Learn to resolve conflict in a healthy way
- Manage parental stresses
- Provide connection to important absent people

What should the child be doing *instead* of the problem behavior?

- Appropriate vs. inappropriate communication strategies
- "Positive opposites"
- Skill vs. motivation deficits

Considerations for Teaching and Managing Behavior

Start with the relationship

Rules without relationship lead to rebellion.



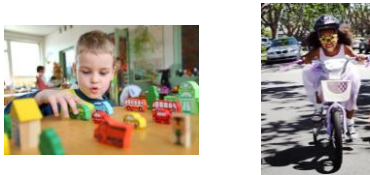
Relationships are positive when they are filled with **positive interaction**: descriptive praise, physical affection, shared activities and time, mutual regard, etc.

Be an expert on your child

- Temperament (general characteristics)
- State (current characteristics)
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Likes and dislikes

Teaching the *right* behavior (and making sure it happens at the right place and time!)

Children learn best through EXPERIENCE



[PRACTICE and FEEDBACK]

Behaviors that yield a desired outcome are more likely to be repeated.



Behaviors that fail to yield a desired outcome or that yield an undesired outcome are less likely to be repeated.



Pre-Teach *What to Do*

- “Waiting for the problem to happen” is not an effective behavior plan!



- Pre-teaching before the problem (“dress rehearsals”):
 - Allows practice when everyone is calm and the stakes are low
 - Provides repetition behaving the “right way”
 - Builds understanding of the correct behavior
 - Teaches child a new (appropriate) way to earn the reward

Making Practice Effective

- Practice and meaningful feedback builds the skill
 - More practice = more learning!
- Beyond just teaching *what* to do, teach *when* to do it!

Pre-Teach *When* to Use Skills

- Appropriateness of many behaviors depends on the context!
- Clear (pre-taught, frequently practiced) signals make feedback and consequences meaningful



Prompt What You Want

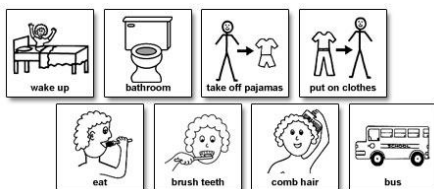
To increase the likelihood of your child doing the right thing, remind him of what he should do **BEFORE** he does the wrong thing.

When cues don't match experiences, children default to what their past experiences tell them!



Connect the cues with the experience

VISUALS



Schedule



Contingency Map



Structured Teaching

Visuals and other prompts do not magically teach the skill or motivate use of the skill.

Use practice to **CREATE** situations where:

- You can rehearse the if-then rules repeatedly
- Right behaviors are likely to occur, and when they do, they yield desired outcomes.
- Wrong behaviors are less likely to occur, and when they do, they do not yield desired outcomes.

Structured teaching is like practice to develop a skill.



While children practice many important skills, they often don't practice daily living and social skills.

What reinforces (encourages) behavior?

- **Attention**
 - Praise, positive interaction and affection (unlimited supply)
- **Activities, privileges, toys, and other tangibles**
 - Outings (park, stores, visiting family, friends/neighbors, etc.), playing games, have friends over; access to video games, TV, computer, snacks, etc.
- **Breaks**



Motivating the child is the most critical element for any teaching or behavioral intervention. ***Never assume motivation!***

Using Reinforcement to Teach

Formula for teaching

Behavior + Reinforcement = **MORE Behavior**

→ This means that unintentional "teaching" happens constantly!

Using Attention to Teach

- A steady stream of attention can actually **prevent** problem behaviors!
- Using targeted attention and labeled praise can teach and encourage good behavior
- Regular positive interaction builds **STRONG RELATIONSHIPS**
 - 5+ minutes of "special time" every day!



Using Attention to Manage Behavior

- The Attention Tank
- Adults often "save up" their attention for behavior problems and ignore ok behaviors
 - Attention + Behavior = MORE Behavior!
- Instead:
 - Pay a LOT of attention to good/ok behavior
 - Reduce attention to problem behavior




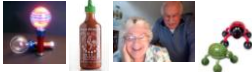
I AM WHEEL HEAR ME SQUEAK.



Tips for Using Rewards

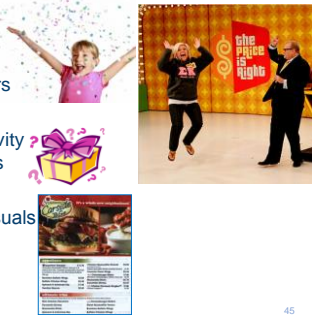
- A reward system **does not** have to mean coming up with new/expensive things to give kids
- Rewards are given **contingently** for good (and OK) behavior
- Small, immediate, frequent rewards can help get behaviors started

Some Children Are Difficult to Motivate!


- Formal preference assessments 
- Thinking outside the box 
- Boosting the effectiveness of reinforcers
 - Reduce delay
 - Change “schedule of access”
 - Increase “dose”
 - Rotate/restrict options

Packaging Helps to Sell Motivation Systems!

- Enthusiasm
- Routines and reminders
- Grab-bag or other activity associated with access
- “Menus” and other Visuals



Tokens and Point Systems

- Children must understand the connection between the intermediate symbol and the end result
- 
- Delays between the behavior and the reward can make the reward essentially worthless
 - Beware of complicated systems that target too much at once

Avoid reinforcing (encouraging) the problem behavior

- Monitor, monitor, monitor
- Expect a burst
- When the payoff is to avoid or escape
 - Reduce the unpleasantness
 - Gradually approach what is unpleasant

What About Punishment?

- Many problem behaviors are **annoying**, but not **dangerous**
 - For these, using attention and rewards for good behavior (and ignoring for annoying behavior) may be enough
- Behaviors that are potentially dangerous may require a punishment component

What is Punishment?

- By definition, it decreases the likelihood of the behavior it follows.
- Two approaches
 - Remove something desirable
 - Present something aversive

Qualities of Effective and Appropriate Discipline

- Predictable
- Immediate
- Non-harsh (does not rely on hostile interaction)
- Fast (maximizes opportunities to "try again")
- Portable
- Teaches child to self-calm and self-correct
- Balanced by LOTS of positive interaction for good behavior
- Effective enough to be used less often

Time Out

- Time out is all about CONTRAST
 - Time In has to be **FUN!**
 - Access to that **FUN** must be immediately removed for a brief amount of time **EVERY TIME** the specific problem happens
- Many brief (5-10 sec) time outs are MUCH better than a single long (5 min) time out
 - Learning occurs through practice and feedback

Preferred Use of Time Out

- Instead of nagging, lecturing, threatening, and repeated warnings...
- "Time out – Hitting" in a non-emotional tone
- During time out...
 - Provide NO attention
 - Reminders, eye contact, lectures, correction of other misbehavior, assurances, prompts, etc.
 - Ignoring is [probably] the hardest job parents have
 - Child directed to specific area (stairs, chair, room, etc.)

Time Out Changes with Age

- Infants and toddlers: Simply removing child from whatever he is doing wrong and placing him elsewhere
- Preschoolers- time-out can be anywhere away from normal action and attention
- Around age 8-9, shift to privilege losses/grounding



What if he won't stay in timeout?

- Does he have a good reason to stay?
 - Getting out sooner if he stays calm
 - Only way to regain attention and some/all of desired privilege
- Physical management is a form of attention
 - Options include:
 - Keep putting him back
 - Holding chair / restraining
 - Back-up room
 - Ignore

Other Things to Check When Time Out Isn't Working

- Is there lots of time-in?
- Is the timeout located in a place that is not entertaining?
- Is the child getting attention during the timeout?
- Is timeout longer than it needs to be?
- Are you consistently reinforcing the *right* behaviors or the *wrong* behaviors?

Rewards vs. Punishment

- Punishment communicates what *not* to do
- Attention and rewards communicate what TO do
- Never rely on punishment alone
 - **GOAL:** At least 4-5 positive interactions for every 1 discipline or corrective interaction

Noncompliance

- He won't listen to me!
 - Explain the rule about minding.
 - Increase positive attention.
 - Give a prompt to mind.
 - Give a good command.
 - Monitor the response.
 - Allow a natural or logical consequence.
 - Practice.

Using Attention to Teach Listening

- Children have to learn that instructions are different from other "noise" in their environment
- Make instructions stand out:
 - One at a time
 - Short
 - Clear
 - Gestures/examples
 - Clear FEEDBACK
- Did you know: Children (2-10 yrs old) take at least 5-10 seconds to process and respond to instructions!

Listening Practice

- Children learn through PRACTICE and FEEDBACK
- For important instructions, use practice to get children ready for the situation!
- Start practice with fun, easy-to-follow instructions
 - Gradually add harder instructions once the child is doing well

"Hey, come on, can you help me clean up?"

vs.

"Sam, look at me" (pause)

"Thanks for looking!" (+ smile)

"Pick up that block" (gesture, pause)

"Fantastic, you got it" (+ smile and touch)

"Put the block in the box" (gesture, pause)

"You're cleaning! Very cool!"

- Remember:
 - Big jobs should always be broken up into little ones for young children
 - Include breaks
 - Praise/enthusiasm matters!!

- Whining and crying
 - Consider: When does the child whine? When does he not whine?
 - Increase attention to correct interactions.
 - Ignore the whining
 - If necessary, make ignoring easier (move away from the child, come up with a good competing activity, etc.)

- Aggression in young children (pulling hair, hitting face when being held, etc.)
 - Give verbal reprimand
 - Immediately put down
 - Ignore crying
 - Pick up and teach “nice touch”

- Aggression in older children (hitting parent or peer, throwing hard object at someone, etc.)
 - Consider: What is the purpose (function) of the aggression?
 - Based on the purpose:
 - Teach and practice a more appropriate way to obtain the same thing
 - Create contingencies that ENCOURAGE the right behavior, and prevent the problem behavior from being successful

- Bedtime refusal
 - Eliminate caffeine, TV/screentime beforehand, active play beforehand
 - Consistent routine, bedtime AND wake-time (everyday)
 - Direct to bed awake, drowsy; not asleep
 - No bottle, TV, phone/computer, etc.
 - Ignore protests, crying

- Getting into things they shouldn't
 - Monitor, change the environment to reduce opportunities
 - Give verbal reprimand
 - Immediately put in time out or provide other immediate consequence
 - After discipline, review rule and practice the correct behavior
 - Praise and attend to right behavior; time out for wrong behavior

- Flop and drop (aka going boneless)
 - Increase attention to walking.
 - Increase value of walking (e.g. remind of reward when arrive at destination).
 - Reward a positive opposite (e.g. delivering a message).
 - Treat as noncompliance and put in time out.
 - Ignore, outwait.

- Throwing cup, plate, utensils during meals
 - Increase attention for right behavior
 - Immediately remove attention and anything within reach when throwing occurs
 - Return item and resume attention for right behavior
 - Teach “positive opposite” (e.g. putting cup in specified place; sign “all done” to get down)

- Running off in public
 - Put identification on child.
 - Teach staying near (e.g. close enough to touch hand, cart).
 - Teach stop/return (e.g. like game “red light/green light”).
 - Avoid game of chase.
 - Immediate time out, put in cart for running.

- Elopement from home
 - Explain rule about leaving the house.
 - Assess when elopement occurs.
 - Alarm the doors.
 - Practice and praise the correct way of exiting (e.g. ask).
 - Immediate time-out for elopement.
 - Secure doors when unable to monitor.

Take-home Points

- Children learn through experience, so start teaching early!
 - Practice and feedback teach
 - More talking is rarely the answer
- Behavior + Attention = MORE Behavior
- Positive relationships, attention & “Time In” are the key ingredients to successful teaching and behavior management
- Discipline must be predictable, non-harsh, quick, and BALANCED by lots of positive interaction and teaching

When (not if) your intervention does not go as planned...

1. Is the child motivated? Is that motivation powerful and sustained? Are you using a function-based approach?
2. Does the child understand the contingencies in your intervention? Immediate, consistent, repeated exposure may help.
3. Are there ways you can provide better signals to the child to help create contrast between the right and wrong behaviors?
4. Are you targeting the right behavior? Is there a missing skill that needs to be taught?
5. Consult with your team!

Your Child's Team

Home

Parents/caregivers
Extended family
The child!

School

Classroom teachers
Special educators
Para-educators
Counselors/Psych
Administrators
Speech/Lang, PT & OT
Coaches

Professionals

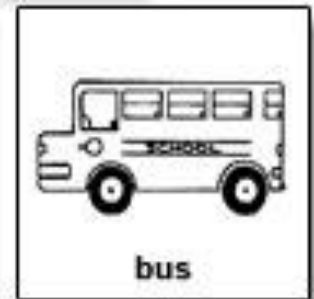
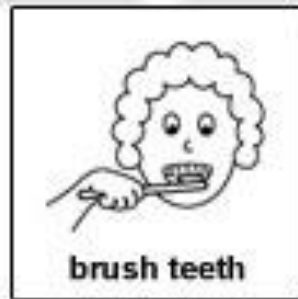
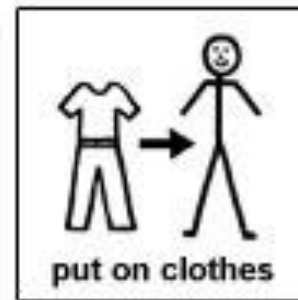
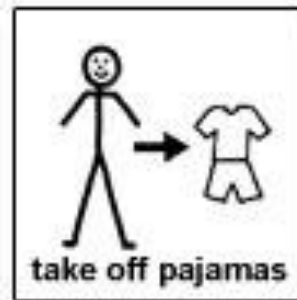
Tutors
Psychologists / counselors / behavior specialists
Vocational counselors
Pediatricians / Medical professionals
State/Federal programs, legal supports, etc.

Community

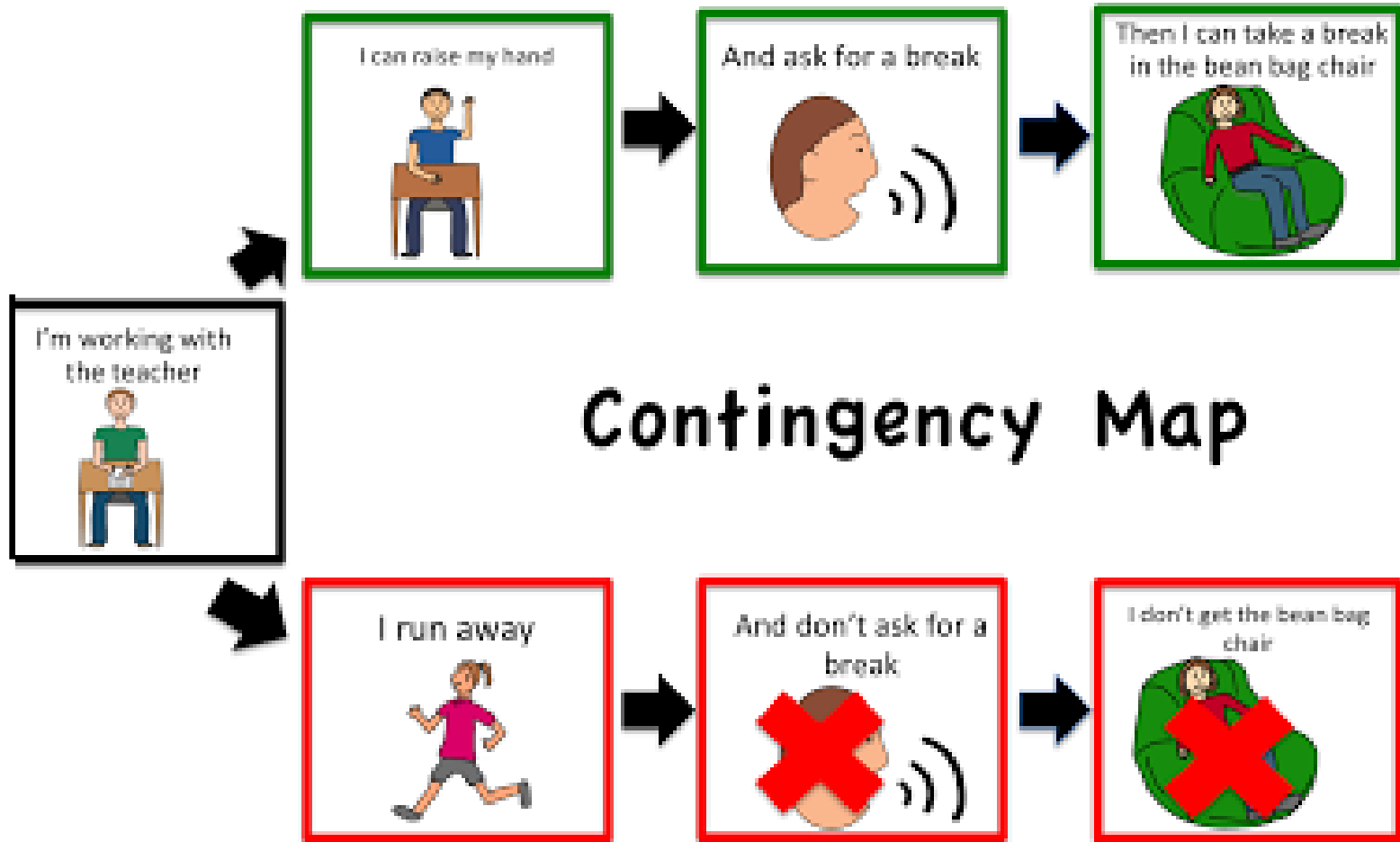
Friends, neighbors & family social supports
Clubs/groups
- Sports, art, music, science, cultural, etc.
- Volunteerism/service, religious, etc.
- Advocacy, educational, supportive, etc.

Connect the cues with the experience

VISUALS



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Selected Resources

Books

- *1-2-3 Magic* by Thomas Phelan
- *Achieving Best Behavior for Children with Developmental Disabilities* by Pamela Lewis
- *Taking Charge of ADHD* by Russell Barkley
- *A Work in Progress* by Leaf & McEachin
- *Teaching Children with Down Syndrome about their Bodies, Boundaries and Sexuality* by Terri Couwenhoven

Local, Regional and National

- National Down Syndrome Society: <http://www.ndss.org/>
- Nebraska Parent Training and Information - <http://pti-nebraska.org/>
- Nebraska DHHS: http://dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities
- DS Alliance of the Midlands: <http://www.dsamidlands.org/>
- DSAF of Nebraska: [ww.dsafnebraska.org](http://www.dsafnebraska.org)
- Munroe-Meyer Institute: <http://www.unmc.edu/mmi/>
- Special Education Advocacy: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>
- Family Center on Technology and Disability: <http://www.fctd.info/>