



TREES NETWORK June 2026 Newsletter

SAVE THE DATE!

Upcoming Special Education Conference

On **Monday, October 12, 2026**, the RMU Trees Network will host its annual Special Education Conference:

Unstoppable Potential: Elevating Every Learner. This year's event will be held virtually to encourage greater participation from special educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, and related service staff seeking professional development on key topics in special education. We hope you can join us!



Featured IEP Resources - Related Services

Each month, we will highlight one key component of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and share resources to support understanding and implementation. These monthly spotlights are designed to break the IEP into manageable parts, clarify roles and responsibilities, and provide tools that can be immediately applied in classrooms and meetings. By focusing on one detail at a time, we aim to strengthen collaboration, improve consistency, and ensure IEPs are meaningful support for students. This month's spotlight is on **Related Services**.

Related services are the support services students need in order to benefit and succeed from special education and make progress toward their IEP goals. These services are based on the individual student's need and are provided when the student requires them to access and participate in their educational program. Examples of related services include, but are not limited to, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, transportation, audiology services, orientation and mobility, behavioral supports, and assistive technology support.

The IEP team determines:

- Which related services are needed
- The frequency, duration, and location of services
- Who will provide the services
- How the services support the student's educational progress

Related services are delivered in a variety of settings, including the general education classroom, special education classroom, therapy room, or through consultation with staff and families. Collaboration among service providers with the IEP team is essential to ensure

services are integrated effectively into the student's school day and aligned with IEP goals to access learning, build independence, and participate meaningfully in school activities.

Related Service Resources

We wanted to share a few resources that families may find helpful in maintaining and strengthening skills their child(ren) have been working on throughout the school year. While we are not Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, or Physical Therapists, we know that consistency and practice over the summer can help smooth the transition. These resources by the related service professionals provide simple activities and exercises aimed to support continued growth in communication, fine motor skills, gross motor skills and sensory regulation. Feel free to explore on your own and make activities fun and meaningful for you and your child(ren).

Keeping Your Child's OT and PT on Track During Summer Vacation - [Keeping Your Child's OT and PT on Track During Summer Vacation | Family of Kidz | Family of Kidz](#)

Summer Activities to Support OT Goals at Home - [Summer Activities to Support OT Goals at Home - Connect the Dots Pediatric Therapy](#)

Summer Activities to Support Your Child's Occupational Therapy - [Summer Occupational Therapy Activities To Try At Home](#)

Top Summer Therapy Strategies for Kids in Speech and Occupational Therapy - [Top Summer Therapy Strategies for Kids in Speech and Occupational Therapy | Therapies of the Rockies](#)

Video Resources:

- ★ [Top 5 Occupational Therapy Activities to Do at Home with Your Kids | Sensory & Fine Motor Play](#)
- ★ [Top 5 Easy Indoor Sensory Activities for Kids – Quick to Set Up!](#)
- ★ [Improving your child's fine motor and gross motor skills](#)
- ★ [3 Summer Activities to Support Speech and Language Development](#)

Upcoming Events Around the Area

The RMU Trees Network is a member of the Special Needs Consortium, a group of amazing service providers in the Pittsburgh area. The consortium exists to provide a forum where all service providers can network and opportunities can be shared, promoted, and advocated for to increase awareness of resources available to the community. For a full listing of member events, visit their [website](https://www.specialneedsconsortium.org/upcoming-events) (<https://www.specialneedsconsortium.org/upcoming-events>). We hope you will find some of these highlighted events of interest to you.

Fitness 4 Focus - North Hills, 6071 Wallace Road Extension, Wexford, PA 15090

Fitness 4 Focus' mission is to provide individuals with the tools, support, and environment to improve their physical health, cognitive function, and emotional well-being. Through personalized fitness programs, they help their clients build strength, coordination, confidence

and independence, empowering them to live more fulfilling and active lives. [Home - Fitness 4 Focus](#) Mshipper@fitness4focus.com 646-279-2324

Movies Under the Stars - ~7:00PM activities with movies beginning at dusk

Free outdoor cinema experience where teens and adults can enjoy watching crowd-favorite films on the big screen beneath the night sky. Most movies in this series are rated PG-13. Closed captioning is available upon request. [Movies Under the Stars - Allegheny County, PA](#)

Dog Days of Summer - Tuesdays 6:00PM - 8:00PM throughout Allegheny County Parks

Enjoy a summer evening full of tail-wagging excitement at Dog Days of Summer! Vendors from across the region will be on-site to celebrate pups of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Guests can explore booths featuring giveaways, special promotions, and interactive demonstrations designed for dog lovers and their four-legged friends. [Dog Days of Summer - Allegheny County, PA](#)

Summer Concert Series - 7:30PM

The Allegheny County Summer Concert Series presents free concerts with local food trucks. Black Dog Winery and Hop Farm Brewing Company will be on-site at all concerts starting at 6:00 pm. Performances will take place rain or shine at open-air amphitheaters with no covered seating. [Summer Concert Series - Allegheny County, PA](#)

June 6th from 10AM-11AM - Bridge's Adaptive Field Hockey at Brookline Rec Center

Bridges Adaptive Field Hockey, a new adaptive, disability-inclusive field hockey team serving the greater Pittsburgh area. Bridges is the first adaptive field hockey team in Western PA and the Great Lakes Region. Lydia Smeltz is the founder and head coach of the team.

The mission is to:

1. Increase access to field hockey for athletes with disabilities;
2. Build relationships between disabled and non-disabled athletes in the greater Pittsburgh region; and
3. Raise community and healthcare awareness of the importance of physical activity for people with disabilities.

Individuals can participate for one date or all three. More details are included in the sign-up:

https://girlfieldhockey.playbookapi.com/programs/more_info/class_package/62507/

July 28th - July 31st - AAC Summer Camp

ICAN Talk AAC Summer Camp is a 3.5 day program of interactive, fun-filled activities designed specifically for children and adults who use alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) systems to communicate. Our program gives these individuals opportunities to communicate with other AAC users, develop their language skills, and use their AAC devices in new and exciting ways. The camp includes an AAC training seminar for parents, excursions to local attractions, and optional one-on-one consultations with clinical experts in AAC. For additional information, contact Christine at clepore@aacinstitute.org

Band Together upcoming events:

- **June 7th 2:00 - 5:00PM - BTP Band Live**
Moondog's, 378 Freeport Rd, Blawnox, PA
Register: <https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/btp-band-live-at-moondogs-june-7th/>
- **June 14th 2:00PM - Live Autism Live Open Mic**
Moondog's, 378 Freeport Rd, Blawnox, PA
Register: <https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/live-autism-friendly-open-mic-band-together-clubhouse-42/>

DON'T FORGET TO THINK OF YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY FOR EVENTS

- **Allegheny Library Association Programs & Events** (<https://aclalibraries.org/explore/library-programs-and-events/>)
- **Beaver County Library Systems** (<https://www.beaverlibraries.org/system-wide-events>)
- **Butler County Federated Library Systems** (<https://www.bcfls.org/libraries>)
- **Washington County Library Systems** (<https://www.washlibs.org/>)
- **Westmoreland County Libraries** (<https://www.wclibraries.org/>)

Resources for Parents and Educators

The Network provides resources for parents and teachers and these resources can be found at the [RMU Trees Network Website](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network) (<https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network>). Information on the Network and the previous newsletters are posted on the RMU website <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/provost/trees>. In each newsletter we provide links to resources related to the topics discussed in our parent meetings and workshops as well as other information that may be helpful to families, schools, and the community. **Below are some links to resources for Advocacy, which was our topic covered by Melissa Skiffen at our May 4th meeting.**



- **Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center-** The PEAL Center has been committed to serving families and professionals across Pennsylvania. PEAL works with families, youth and young adults with disabilities and special health care needs to help them understand their rights and advocate for themselves. PEAL's services are provided at no charge to families as they are funded by private donations and federal, state, and private grants. (<https://pealcenter.org/>)
 - **Achieva Family Trust-** Achieva Family Trust helps families provide for a loved one with special needs while maintaining the individuals' ability to access government benefits. Experienced trust administrators provide social service support and professional investment management. An accessible, one stop resource for information and education. (<https://www.achieva.info/family-trust>)
 - **American Technology Industry Association-** ATIA is an organization of professionals, families, and users of assistive technology. Their website hosts a plethora of AT resources. (<https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/>)
 - **ConsultLine- Office of Dispute Resolution-** If you have questions or concerns about special education, gifted education, Section 504, or your rights as the parent/guardian of a child with exceptional needs, the Special Education ConsultLine may be able to help. ConsultLine is a toll-free information help line for families and advocates of children with disabilities who have questions or concerns about the education of a school-aged child. (<https://odr-pa.org/parent-resources/consultline-information/>)
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[RMU Trees Website](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network) (<https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network>)
[RMU Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/) (<https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/>)

