Waiver Redesign Overview
Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division

Reason for the changes
With the rising cost of Medicaid and the Adult Developmental Disabilities (DD), Child DD and Acquired Brain Injury Waivers, the 2013 Wyoming Legislature passed Senate Enrolled Act 82 (SEA 82), Medicaid Reform in an effort to better manage costs for long term sustainability of the Medicaid system. This law requires the Wyoming Department of Health to begin implementing changes to the Medicaid state plan and the Medicaid waiver programs by January 2014.

Purpose of the new waivers
SEA 82 requires the Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division to develop two new waivers, a capped Support Waiver and a Comprehensive Waiver. These two waivers will replace the three higher cost WDH waivers (Adult DD, Child DD, and ABI Waivers) by June 30, 2015.

Using a new resource allocation model and revised services, the new Support Waiver and Comprehensive Waiver will:
- provide a wide array of services and flexibility to meet an individual’s needs and to promote and support independence;
- increase employment support and career development options; and
- focus on outcomes for people served.

The law also requires a move to a case management system that is free from conflicts of interest, which will not allow a case manager to be employed by any provider on a person’s plan or financially benefit from providing other services on one’s plan.

Finally, as the state incurs savings from the new waiver design over time, the Division will be able to begin funding people from the waiting lists onto the new waivers.

The current waivers will continue through June 30, 2015, and there will be a transition process for participants to switch to the new waivers through a phase in process after January 1, 2014.

Continued on page 2
Redesign continued...

Keeping you informed...
The legislation requires two rounds of informational meetings with the people currently served and guardians. We are excited to talk to people about the new waivers and we will hold informational public forums in mid-April to inform people about the legislation and the new waiver design, answer questions, and gather input on waiver services and preferences. In mid-summer, we will have another round of forums, to give more details about the new waiver services, budgets and the transition process. We will send out dates and times for these forums to participants, guardians, providers, and publicize the date on our website [http://health.wyo.gov/ddd/index.html] and in newspapers.

Community Forums
To inform the public about these changes, the Division and the Wyoming Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities are partnering to hold community forums around Wyoming. We want to talk with waiver participants, families and people on the wait list about the legislation, the new waiver design, answer questions, and gather input on waiver services and preferences. Providers are welcome to attend, but the discussion will be primarily for those served and those on the wait list.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casper</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>3-4:40 pm</td>
<td>UW Extension Office Casper Room 2011 Fairgrounds Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillette</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>6:30 – 8pm</td>
<td>GCM 120 Presentation Hall - Gillette College 300 West Sinclair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverton</td>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>6:30 – 8pm</td>
<td>Wind River Room 116 – Intertribal Center (ITECC) Central Wyoming College 2660 Peck Avenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evanston</td>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>6:30 – 8pm</td>
<td>Evanston High School Seminar Room 701 West Cheyenne Drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridger Valley</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>6:30 – 8pm</td>
<td>Uinta County School District #4 Board Room 129 2nd Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheyenne</td>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>6:30 – 8pm</td>
<td>Holiday Inn South Fork &amp; Shoshone Ballrooms 204 West Fox Farm Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>4–5:30 pm</td>
<td>Teton County Commissioners Chambers County Admin Building 200 South Willow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cody</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>4–5:30 pm</td>
<td>EOC Room in the basement of new courthouse addition Park County Courthouse 1002 Sheridan Avenue</td>
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This overview offers a short summary of the waiver redesign purpose and main changes. For more information visit [http://health.wyo.gov/ddd/index.html](http://health.wyo.gov/ddd/index.html) or contact the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) to have more information sent to you. BHD’s main line is 307.777.6494 or toll free at 1.800.510.0280 or email bhdmail@wyo.gov.

Thanks to the Following Donors:

PIC was recently awarded $15,000 from the Wyoming Community Foundation through the Flying V Donor Advised Fund. This grant is for ongoing outreach to empower families through individual support, workshops, and informational newsletters. A sincere thanks to WCF!

Becky Rigsby
Ron Mirr
Bank of Buffalo

TOGETHER We Make a Difference!
A team of dedicated professionals and parents is reaching families across a remote state

by Kristina Grifantini

In Wyoming, a vast state with a population of only about 550,000, the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program faces a challenge particular to rural areas: families whose children are diagnosed with hearing loss sometimes have a hard time getting the support they need.

“If we can get kids connected with the relevant early intervention services, those kids can enter kindergarten with age-appropriate skills, but the clock is ticking,” says Susan Fischer, a speech language pathologist and clinic coordinator at the Wyoming EHDI program. “The window closes very quickly.”

Through NICHQ’s national quality improvement effort, dubbed Improving Hearing Screening and Intervention Systems (IHSIS), teams learn quality improvement methods to make systematic change. The Wyoming EHDI office, Fischer, and parents from the nonprofit Hands & Voices, have been working together since last summer to streamline care and early intervention access for babies identified with hearing loss by testing different ways to provide families support.

A key part of the team’s early success has been working with parent partners, who provide unique insight into what works and what doesn’t when trying to help newly diagnosed families. Wendy Hewitt, executive director of Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices and IHSIS parent partner, says that, too often, parents run into obstacles that make it hard to get the services they need. When her child was first identified as having hearing loss, her pediatrician gave her some information which her family didn’t understand right away.

“Because of that misunderstanding my son could have fallen behind,” says Hewitt. “Now I want to help parents get the information they need and help the professionals know what information they need to give.”

Parent-to-parent support

After IHSIS parent partners expressed how difficult the early diagnosis can be for a family, the Wyoming team decided to send a parent partner along with early interventionists on a home visit.

Kim Reimann, assistant director of the Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices branch went on a family visit in January. She had a casual conversation with the mom about cochlear implants and hearing aids while the occupational therapist and the speech pathologist worked with the child. She will visit again with the same family later this month, and visit another family in the near future. So far, the family and outside speech pathologist both said the parent visit was helpful.

“I’ve seen how successful it is when parents are going through initial diagnosis to talk to another parent who can say, ‘I’ve been there, done that, now my child is in elementary school doing well,’” says Fischer. “The support that a fellow parent can provide is really invaluable. As a practitioner, I can’t provide that kind of support because I don’t have a child with a hearing loss.”

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Chats & Letters continued...

Hewitt, who also plans to participate in family visits, adds, “Meeting face-to-face has more of an impact. You have more of a relationship with parents and they’re more likely to call and ask questions.”

A letter of kinship

The IHSIS team also tested sending families of newly diagnosed children personal letters. The idea was inspired from an encounter with a teenage mother whose baby was just diagnosed with severe-to-profound hearing loss in both ears.

“This mom came in and she was so sad,” says Nancy Pajak, the Wyoming EHDI program director. “We talked with her as well as the baby’s grandmother the best we could. After the family went home, Kim decided that writing a letter to the mom might be a better way to reach out. Then Kim’s daughter who has hearing loss decided she wanted to write a letter too.”

Reimann says the main goal of the letter is to provide support to families and let them know that it’s hard at first but things will be OK. “In the beginning, I wondered how will my daughter grow up—how will she communicate; will she be able to swim or drive or do all of these other things? It’s nice to hear from someone who’s lived through it,” says Reimann. (See Reimann’s 13-year-old daughter’s letter to newly diagnosed families, on the right.)

The team plans to test the parent letter on a larger scale, sending it out to families and getting feedback on whether it helps motivate parents to take action.

With the support of NICHQ, the team will continue to test, adjust and spread changes and gather feedback to improve processes that benefit families. In February, Reimann plans to do a presentation for physicians at a local hospital. The presentation will focus on aspects of early intervention and how to help to improve outcomes for children diagnosed with hearing loss from a parent’s perspective. Fischer has started to do online video conferencing as an extra support for families and their early interventionists to ask questions. The team has also created fax-back forms so that hospitals and doctors can keep the EHDI office informed of children’s progress.

“The NICHQ quality improvement process is very doable in this fast-paced world we have,” says Pajak. “We don’t have to start by building a mountain—all we have to do is make a tiny molehill, see how it goes and build off of that.”

Source: http://www.nichq.org/resources/IHSIS-Jan2013.html

CELEBRATING PIC Outreach Parent Liaisons in supporting families, providing workshops, and attending IEPs over the years:

Betty Carmon in Powell 15 years
Janet Kinstetter in Moorcroft 10 years
Tammy Wilson in Green River 5 years
Juanita Bybee in Buffalo 4 years
Autism News

WDE partners with Texas Tech for Autism Endorsement

The WY Department of Education (WDE) is aware of the frustrations districts face in trying to obtain qualified personnel to work alongside students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Sensory Impairments.

Therefore, the WDE Deaf-Blind Project has entered into a long-term partnership with the Texas Tech University’s Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education in Visual Impairments to offer highly-qualified teachers in Wyoming an opportunity to receive an endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Sensory Impairments through distance education. The focus of this grant, called Project SASI, is to assist districts with the growing demand of providing highly qualified teachers in the areas of sensory impairments and autism.

Interested teachers email Joanne Whitson, Wyoming Deaf-Blind Project Director joanne.whitson@wyo.gov or call 307-324-5333. Applications are due July 1, 2013.

April is Autism Awareness Month: 1 in 50 Children Have Autism

A new survey of parents conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that 1 in 50 US schoolchildren have autism, as reported by ABC News on March 21, 2013, stating that since there are no blood or biologic tests for autism, the diagnosis is not an exact science. According to ABC News, last year, a government estimate based on medical and school records found that 1 in 88 US children have autism. Interviews with staff from the Center for Disease control stated these figures are not to scare families, but to promote awareness in getting to services and resources sooner.

Beyond the BAKE SALE

The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships
By Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson & Don Davies

Multiple studies show that students with parents actively involved in their education at home and school are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, graduate from high school, and go on to post-secondary education.

This book shows how to form these essential partnerships and how to make them work. Packed with tips from principals and teachers, checklists, and an invaluable resource section, Beyond the Bake Sale reveals how to build strong collaborative relationships and offers practical advice for improving interactions between parents and teachers. Written with candor, clarity, and humor, Beyond the Bake Sale is essential reading for teachers, parents on the front lines in public schools, and administrators and policy makers at all levels. Call PHP at 307-684-2277 to get your copy for $15.00.
Q & A: Common Core Standards

Q: What are educational standards?
A: Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.

Q: What is the Common Core State Standards Initiative?
A: The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that established a single set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics that states voluntarily adopt. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit bearing entry courses in two or four year college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school.

Q: Who leads the Common Core State Standards Initiative?
A: The nation’s governors and education commissioners, through their representative organizations the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) led the development of the Common Core State Standards and continue to lead the initiative. Teachers, parents, school administrators and experts from across the country together with state leaders provided input into the development of the standards.

Q: Who was involved in the Common Core State Standards Initiative?
A: States across the country collaborated with teachers, researchers, and leading experts to design and develop the Common Core State Standards. Each state independently made the decision to adopt the Common Core State Standards, beginning in 2010. The federal government was NOT involved in the development of the standards. Local teachers, principals, and superintendents lead the implementation of the Common Core.

Q: Why is the Common Core State Standards Initiative important?
A: High standards that are consistent across states provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations that are aligned to the expectations in college and careers. The standards promote equity by ensuring all students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad. Unlike previous state standards, which were unique to every state in the country, the Common Core State Standards enable collaboration between states on a range of tools and policies, including: the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials aligned to the standards; and the development and implementation of common comprehensive assessment systems to measure student performance annually that will replace existing state testing systems; and changes needed to help support educators and schools in teaching to the new standards.
What guidance do the Common Core State Standards provide to teachers?

A: The Common Core State Standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills students need in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level to ultimately be prepared to graduate college and career ready. The standards establish what students need to learn, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

How do the Common Core State Standards compare to previous state standards?

A: The Common Core State Standards were written by building on the best and highest state standards in existence in the U.S., examining the expectations of other high performing countries around the world, and careful study of the research and literature available on what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college and careers. No state in the country was asked to lower their expectations for their students in adopting the Common Core. The standards are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries. They were developed in consultation with teachers and parents from across the country so they are also realistic and practical for the classroom.

Will there be tests based on the Common Core State Standards?

A: Yes. States that adopted the Common Core State Standards are currently collaborating to develop common assessments that will be aligned to the standards and replace existing end of year state assessments. These assessments will be available in the 2014-2015 school year.


Dr. Mary Krisko awarded Excellence Award

Each year AdvancED selects one individual in each of the states accredited through AdvancED for his/her achievements in education as the recipient of the Excellence in Education Award. Individuals are selected on their contributions of generating a common vision and mission for higher expectations among students, faculty and the education community; demonstrating a record of significant and distinguished contribution to the education profession; providing a lasting positive impact on student learning; serving as a role model and mentor for students and/or future generations of educators; demonstrating significant professional contribution to AdvancED.

This year Dr. Mary Krisko of Worland received the award. She has served as the Curriculum Director for Washakie County School District No. 1 (Worland) for nine years and taught science for 20-years before that. She is also the off-campus instructor for Central Wyoming College.

Dr. Krisko was the 1998 Wyoming Teacher of the Year, the 1999 National Toshiba Laptop Learning Challenge Awardee, a 1999 NASA NEW participant and a 2000 National Presidential Awardee in Mathematics and Science.

At the state level, she served as president of Wyoming Curriculum Directors’ Association and Wyoming ASCD, facilitated the development of the Wyoming State Science Standards and PAWS Science review and was a member of the governor’s task force on Wyoming Student Assessment and Accountability. Dr. Krisko also received the Wyoming Curriculum Director of the Year award. For more information on AdvancED, go to www.advanc-ed.org.
Summer School vs Extended School Year (ESY): What you need to know...

As the end of the year approaches, many parents of students in special education and their school teams will be discussing whether or not their child is need of Extended School Year (ESY) services. As you discuss this with your team, it is important to understand what ESY is all about.

What is ESY?
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines Extended School Year (ESY) as special education and related services that:

1. Are available as necessary to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE);
2. Are provided to a child with a disability
   - Beyond the normal school year;
   - In accordance with the child’s IEP;
   - At no cost to the parents of the child; and
3. Meet the standards of the State Education Agency.

Extended school year services must be provided if a child’s IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to the child. When considering the need for ESY, the team will determine if the child needs the services to continue to move toward accomplishment of the goals and objectives listed on the IEP. The need for ESY should be considered at the annual IEP meeting for each child on an IEP.

ESY services are provided on a case-by-case basis specific to the needs of a child. The Third Circuit Court ruled that a child’s unique needs “are necessarily determined in reference to goals,” and that for some children limiting services to 180 days might prevent them from accomplishing “reasonable educational goals” developed for the child and “be wholly inappropriate to the child’s educational objectives.” This overrides the ruling of a lower court which required that it be shown that a student would regress or fail to recoup (regain) skills if not provided ESY. The Extended School Year is for more than academic subjects. The IEP team should include any area that is crucial to the child’s progress toward “self-sufficiency”. These “critical life skills” may include, but are not limited to: self-help, social skills, emotional support, mobility, communication, assistive technology, academics, and vocational skills. ESY should help the child work toward the goal of becoming a successful, productive citizen.

Extended School Year vs. Summer School
ESY are services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 to be provided beyond the traditional school year. They are available only to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria. It is not a “one size fits all” program. Instead, an ESY program is individually designed by the IEP team for each individual student.

The purpose of ESY is to assure that the child receive a free, appropriate public education according to the goals and objectives on that child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). It is not the purpose of ESY services to help children with disabilities advance in relation to their peers.

Summer school is an optional program of the school district that is open to all students for the purpose of teaching new content or enrichment, offering recreational or academic opportunities not available during the regular school year or providing an opportunity for students who have failed classes to re-take those classes. A fee may be charged for summer school. However, ESY scheduling, as to duration, amount and extent of services, must be determined by the individual needs of the child and cannot be determined by the district’s summer school and/or summer enrichment program schedule. Summer school is typically operated on a set schedule for a number of weeks (e.g. two, six or ten weeks) for all who participate.
Some IEP teams may choose to have ESY services provided in the summer school setting to take advantage of the opportunities for inclusion with children who do not have disabilities, however, school districts may not restrict ESY services only to the summer school setting.

**Determining if a Child Needs ESY Services**

All students who received services on an IEP should be considered for ESY services at least once a year. If the child’s IEP is held early in the school year, then a meeting to discuss ESY should be scheduled later in the year. The issue that decides if the child needs ESY is whether the progress made by the child during the regular school year will be significantly jeopardized if he or she does not receive continued educational programming during the summer months. The following questions can help make this determination:

- What is the degree of the child’s impairment?
- What are the child’s behavioral and/or physical problems?
- What is the child’s ability to interact with non-disabled children?
- What is the rate of the child’s progress toward his/her educational goals? Would the skill losses (called regression) be serious enough so they slow down the student’s progress toward his/her educational goals?
- What skills has the child learned this year that the team considers critical?
- What impact do weekends and holidays have on the child?
- How long does it usually take the child to regain skills he or she has lost after an extended break (called recoupment)?
- How well did the child maintain skills last summer?
- Did the child have a structured program last summer? Was it continuous? How many hours per day?
- Was the child able to maintain skills within the context of the ESY program?
- What level of structure must parents provide at home in order for the child to maintain skills, and do they have the ability to do so at home?
- In the opinion of the team, what will result if the child does not receive ESY services over the summer?
- Does the child need a continuation of vocational or life skills training in order to maintain progress in vocational and transitional areas?

Key to qualifying is the child’s regressions during any time away from school. This should all be well-documented and records should be available for the team to make an informed decision. The degree of regression must be relatively significant to qualify for ESY services. ESY does not support the learning of new skills (or advancement toward a new goal), but the retention of those already achieved.

The least restrictive environment considerations are also different with ESY. A full continuum of educational options may not be available in order for the child to be placed in an inclusive setting. Schools are not required to create a program for that sole purpose. However, the IEP team may designate that ESY services will be provided within an existing summer school program so the child will be educated with non-disabled peers. There should be no cost to the parents for ESY services.

**What About “Related Services” and ESY?**

Related services that the IEP requires must be considered for ESY. If the child receives speech therapy services and communication skills may be lost over an extended time without those services, then speech therapy should be a service provided in ESY. The same with physical and occupational therapy, transportation, mobility training for a child who is blind, vocational and life skills training, etc. For more information about ESY, call PIC or go to [www.wpic.org/publications.html](http://www.wpic.org/publications.html) to download our brochure on ESY.

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**Chatting with a 2-year old**

"Mom, shirt wet"
"Did you spill your milk?"
“uh huh, hole in mouth”
yes, yes you do
ABOUT US:

Parent Information Center (PIC):

Outreach Parent Liaisons (OPL) provide information and support to families of children with disabilities, on their rights under special education law, IDEA. PIC can attend IEPs with families to help empower them to partner with schools effectively and/or provide workshops on IDEA, IEPs, and specific disabilities such as attention disorders and autism.

For more info check out our website at www.wpic.org or call PIC at (307) 684-2277:

Terri Dawson, Director, tdawson@wpic.org (307) 217-1321
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Serves Moorcroft, Gillette, Sundance & Newcastle area
Tammy Wilson, twilson@wpic.org (307) 217-2244 Serves Green River, Rock Springs Kemmerer and Evanston

Parent Education Network (PEN):

PEN currently has no active staff or services, however, our fact sheets are available at www.wpen.net. Some titles of fact sheets available are:

PEN Notes

Progress Monitoring
Universal Design for Learning
Activity Overload
Cyberbullying

Education Extras

Title 1
Highly Qualified Teachers
School Wellness Programs

Thoughts for Tots

Teachable Moments
Bedtime Battles
Tempering Temper Tantrums

TOGETHER We Make a Difference!
Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc. (PHP), because of rising production costs, we must charge a $20/year subscription fee to professionals and other interested individuals.

*The newsletter remains free to parents of children with disabilities, however any donation is appreciated.*

Please complete and return the form below so that we may update our mailing list:

- [ ] I am a parent of a child with a disability and a Wyoming resident. Please keep me on/add me to the list.
  
  If your child has a disability, please list disability: __________________________ Child’s age __________

- [ ] I am a professional, teacher or other interested person. Enclosed is $20 for a one year subscription.
  
  My organization/school name is_____________________________ My role/ position is_____________________

- [ ] I am the parent of a child with disabilities, but do not live in Wyoming. Enclosed is $20 for 1 year subscription.
  
  Name: ________________________________________ Phone: (H) _______________ (W)__________________

  Address: ________________________________________________________________ Zip: ________________

  Street City State

  This is my:   ___ Home address ___ Work address (Please check one)

  E-mail address: ______________________________________________________________________

- [ ] I would like to subscribe to PHP’s new electronic news brief to be distributed 4-6 times/year (Please note; this e-news does not have the same content as the PIC’s n Pieces newsletter).

  Additional Donation amount________________. Thank you!

Please Send PHP a Change of Address if You Move. The Post Office Does Not Forward or Return Bulk Mail.

Mail to: Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc.
500 W. Lott St, Suite A
Buffalo, WY 82834

For more information:
Contact PHP at (307) 684-2277
or e-mail tdawson@wpic.org

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*Life*

*Isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass… It’s learning to Dance in the rain*

-Anonymous
UPCOMING EVENTS

Wyoming Leadership Conference  June 25-27, 2013 in Lander, WY
For Educators, Administrators & Other Related Service Providers
More information at http://www.taese.org

Western Regional Early Intervention Conference on Sensory Disabilities
Assessment and Strategies for Infants, Toddlers, Students and Adults with Sensory Loss
June 19-21, 2013 in Jackson, WY
More information at WY Dept Education website www.edu.wyoming.gov
or call (307) 324-5333

Parent Information Center
500 W. Lott St. STE A  Buffalo, WY  82834
(307) 684-2277
A Project of Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc.

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