RSA Mentorship Project to Begin in FSM

FSM National Government Funded Program through College of Micronesia

The Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii has been subcontracted by the College of Micronesia to run a mentorship program for RSAs in the Federated States of Micronesia. The program will be run by Kathy Ratliffe, PT, and will begin in July, 2001. It will include the formation of a team of therapists in Hawaii who will support the RSAs in FSM in a variety of ways. Beginning in September, monthly seminars will be held via televideo. These seminars will rotate between the four FSM states, and will feature presentations, discussions, and consultations around specific children chosen by the RSAs.

Each state will receive at least one site visit during the 15 month-long project. The visit will include an inservice training program on a topic related to RSA practice, and also direct consultation around children served by the RSAs.

Related Services Assistant Training in American Samoa

Twenty-Four Students Begin RSA Training

Fifty-eight American Samoans attended the first meeting of the RSA class on March 12, 2001. All of them wanted to become RSAs. Unfortunately, only 24 students could be accepted into the program due to limitations in resources. An additional eight people are participating as mentors. Students include public health nurses, special education teachers, general education teachers, emergency medical technicians, hospital employees, human services students at the college, family members of individuals with disabilities, and others with a keen interest in learning and applying the skills of an RSA.

Televideo Resources Used for Training

Peacesat has been working with American Samoa for several years to get their televideo system up and working well. They currently have one site at LBJ Hospital and one at the Department of Education, with other potential sites at the American Samoa Community College.

RSA training in American Samoa has been using this technology. The first two weeks of the semester, in March, 2001, Kathy Ratliffe traveled to American Samoa to partner with Tafa Mamea, coordinator of the American Samoa Community College University Affiliated Program, to teach daily on site. For the subsequent five weeks, in April and May, 2001, classes were held weekly from LBJ Hospital via televideo.

Although there were a few technical problems, overall the training went very well using televideo. Students enjoyed the camaraderie of this type of interaction. They got to know each other better as they helped to hold posters, adjust the microphone, and operate the mes...
Mentorship Program, continued.

This newsletter, “RSAs On The Move!” will increase production to every other month instead of quarterly, and will be sent out on e-mail as well as regular mail.

An RSA website will be established to include general information about adaptations, interventions, specific diagnoses and disabilities, travel schedules of the therapists traveling to the Pacific, seminar schedules, text of this newsletter, and links to other websites that RSAs may find helpful in their work.

The Hawaii-based team will be available to consult with RSAs by e-mail, fax, mail, or telephone.

It is hoped that the RSAs in FSM will fully utilize this mentorshop program, so that their skills and knowledge can be expanded and shared with their FSM colleagues and also their new colleagues in American Samoa.

Making a Cardboard Table

Sometimes children need extra support to write or do tabletop activities. A simple and relatively durable table can be made out of a cardboard box that will support a child’s arms so he or she can attain more functional skills.

Materials needed:

- A sturdy cardboard box
- Contact paper for decorating (optional)
- A knife for cutting cardboard (a box knife works well)
- Tape to reinforce the box and to cover sharp/rough edges

Directions:

1. Measure the child
   #1 Measure the child in a sitting position from the floor to the chest area where you want the tabletop to reach.
   #2 Measure the depth of the child’s chest (from front to back)
   #3 Measure the width of the child’s chest (from side to side)

Related Services Assistants from FSM at the Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities in March, 2001.

In Memorium. Elden Adles passed away in May, 2001. We will all miss him.

RSAs Attend Pacific Rim Conference

Six RSAs from FSM attended the Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities in March, 2001. Maxcipa Harris, Rensper Liwy, Sihter Santos, and Jolden Lebehn from Pohnpei; and Anden Nifini, and Manner Namelo from Chuuk all attended PacRim. They participated in a showing of training videotapes made by the FSM Millionium Class of 2000 to the entire Pacific Rim Conference group. All participants at PacRim met Elden, Taylor, John, and Bergus, and were able to share a little in their lives. Also present and assisting in the presentation were Jim Skouge, Kathy Ratliffe, and Mellanie Lee. These videos were shown to the entire Pacific Rim Conference gathering prior to the keynote speech on both mornings of the conference. The tapes were a way to introduce conference attendees to life in the Pacific through the eyes of a child with a disability. They sparked much discussion, and were greatly appreciated.

Continued on page 3
Making a Cardboard Table, continued.

2. Measure and cut the box.

Choose which side of the box to use for the top—usually the smoothest and strongest surface. Put the box so that this side is up.

Measure from the top down (measurement #1) so that when you cut off the bottom of the box, the finished product will be the desired height.

Choose which side of the box to cut (usually the weakest or ugliest side). Cut out most of the side leaving about 3 inches along both sides.

Cut a semicircle out of the top of the box along this side that is slightly deeper than the child’s chest (measurement #2), and slightly wider than the child’s chest (measurement #3).

Related Services Assistant Training in American Samoa, continued.

camera so that Kathy could see and participate as fully as possible.

This summer, a six-week Summer Institute will be held at American Samoa Community College with all of the RSA students participating. Classes will be held four days per week for three hours. Guest instructors will be Robyn Wong, MPH, RD, who will be teaching about nutrition for children with special health needs, and Nancy Robinson, PhD, CCC-SLP, who will be teaching about communication and feeding issues for children with special health needs. Kathy Ratliffe, PhD, PT will be teaching how to make adaptations for children to help them be more fully included in home and school activities. Students will also become CPR and First Aid certified.

In the fall, American Samoan RSA students will complete their last semester of training in the RSA program. They have been working with target children and their families since March, and will continue to work with these children, as they practice and refine their RSA skills.
Making a Cardboard Table, continued.

3. Finish the box.
Place tape (duct, strapping, or package tape) or contact paper along the cut edges of the box to smooth them out.

You can decorate the box/table with contact paper. This will make it water resistant too.

If the child has a hard time controlling objects on the table top, glue strips of cardboard or wood along the top edges of the box.

The child may need support to sit at the table, like a floor seat, or a corner chair.

Now the child can use the table!

Levitiko matches colors with colorful cups made from water bottles that were colored with markers and glitter by an RSA student in American Samoa.

Ricky lies in a U-pillow and reaches for toys on a play gym made from PVC pipe. These devices were made by RSA students in American Samoa.