



# "Matty Matters"

Matthew Siravo Epilepsy Resource Center

Helping Others with Epilepsy

[www.MattyFund.org](http://www.MattyFund.org)

August-September 2010

It's that time of year when parents and children alike are filled with feelings of excitement and anxiety at the thought of returning to school. This is true regardless of the grade level or the school setting - public, private, or home schooled. The relaxed days of summer fade into the hectic routine that accompanies school and after-school activities. Depending on their age, during the last weeks of summer there is plenty that our children can start to stress over: returning to school, starting at a new school, summer assignments yet to be completed, new teachers, new room assignments, meeting new people, lockers for the first time and of course, homework! As parents of children living with epilepsy, the start of the school year brings unique challenges and fears that impact our child's safety, progress and happiness while they are in school. Increasing epilepsy awareness in schools, regular communication with appropriate school personnel, developing comprehensive Individual Educational Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans will encourage a welcome, productive and safe environment for our children.

--Richard and Debra Siravo

**TOPIC: Back to School!**



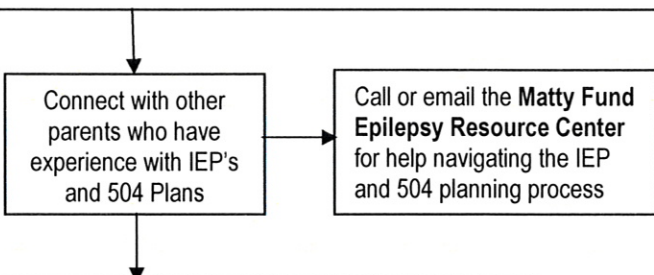
## Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP applies to disabled children enrolled in public schools who qualify, to provide the child with individualized assistance in school. If you feel your child has a disability that is impacting their progress at school you have the right to pursue an evaluation to determine if there is a qualifying disability. An IEP is required by law when a child is identified as having a disability that is recognized under the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Here is some general information:

- First, an evaluation of the child must be done by school personnel to identify a qualifying disability
- The evaluation can be initiated by either a parent or teacher, but can only be done with the parent's consent!
- The IEP must encompass all areas of the child's development
- An IEP is developed by a team which includes; teachers, administrators, therapists and parents
- The plan identifies areas of difficulty for the child as well as accommodations that will be made to assist them
- The IEP is specifically designed for each child

## 504 Plan

The **504 Behavior Plan** was established by Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The behavior plan helps to provide accommodations for students who are considered physically disabled or may have a chronic illness like epilepsy, asthma, autism or ADHD. Typically, the 504 Plan deals with medical disabilities that make it difficult for the child to fully participate in all activities.



## Raise Epilepsy Awareness in School!

The **Matty Hatty Dance-A-Thon** is a statewide epilepsy awareness program created by the Matty Fund® for elementary and preschools. The goal of Matty Hatty is to eliminate the social stigma associated with this disease and teach seizure protocols to children at an early age. The Dance-A-Thons are held in the month of February in celebration of Matthew Siravo's birthday. The program has grown to include over 30 schools in 2010.

### Does your child's school participate?

Check with your school  
See [www.MattyFund.org](http://www.MattyFund.org) for pictures and videos  
Contact The Matty Fund® for more details

"**Discovering My Epilepsy**"® is a support group for parents and families living with epilepsy. This is an ideal setting to network with other families who share similar experiences.

**When:** The second Tuesday of each month (except October)

**Time:** 6-8 PM

**Place:** Peace Dale Elementary School  
109 Kersey Rd., Peace Dale, RI 02879

Registration is recommended; contact us by phone at 789-7330 or by email at [MattyFund@cox.net](mailto:MattyFund@cox.net)

Gifts to <sup>THE</sup>Matty Fund® allow us to fund educational and family programs

To make a donation visit [www.MattyFund.org](http://www.MattyFund.org) or mail your donation to P.O. Box 5300, Wakefield, RI 02880