

President's Report for April 2009 OOTA Newsletter

Braggin' Rights

CONGRATULATIONS TO OKLAHOMANS & OOTA MEMBERS (*) PRESENTING AT AOTA 2009

BECKY WADE* is the only COTA presenting an AOTA forum, *Blueprint for the Future of Entry-Level Education in Occupational Therapy*, with a group headed by Carolyn Baum.

BETH DEGRACE presents her framework *Family Experiences and Health Following the Diagnosis of Autism*, based on her grounded theory analysis.

JESSICA TSOTSOROS * presents at the AOTA session *Tech Day: Children & Youth* (Morning Session 1).

MARY ISAACSON * presents at the AOTA session *Tech Day: Children & Youth* (Morning Session 2).

STEVE HOPPES, * TOBY HAMILTON, * CYNDY ROBINSON, & KATIE WARNE co-present

A Course in Autoethnography: Helping Students Link Education, Research, and Practice.

You can search for these sessions on the interactive conference schedule @ aota.org.

Oklahoma Legislative Updates

Senate Bill 546 licenses therapeutic recreation specialists. AOTA and OOTA worked with the Therapeutic Recreation Association of Oklahoma to protect OT's scope of practice. After adding an amendment clarifying the referral process, the bill is expected to pass through House and Senate before going to Governor Henry.

Senate Bill 971 affects OTs working in school systems. The bill's intent is to allow related service providers to take professional leave to attend professional development activities that help keep professional licenses (like AOTA and OOTA!) For text and status, see the "Legislative Information System" column on the Oklahoma Legislature Home Page @ <http://www.lsb.state.ok.us/>.

The bill has run into some opposition and you can contact your representatives (see the website) to encourage its passage. Thank those who voted "Aye" - Democrats Samson Ray Buck, Jeannie McDaniel, and Jabar Shumate and Republicans Gus Blackwell, Ann Coody, Tad Jones, Sally Kern. Encourage those who voted "Nay" to reconsider - Democrats - Edward Cannaday, Joe Dorman and Republicans David Dank, Earl Sears, Daniel Sullivan.

Talking Points for the bill

- SB971 is a piece of legislation that will allow related services providers as defined by the special education policies and procedures to take professional leave to attend professional development activities that will enable them to maintain their professional license.
- Examples of related service providers are: school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, school counselors, school nurses and others
- Many related service providers also hold professional licenses outside of their teacher certification
- Maintenance of these licenses require profession specific professional development
- Many appropriate trainings are only available during the school week and during the school year
- Related service providers do not require substitute teachers to cover their absences

- No travel or registration funds are included in this bill. Related services providers pay their own way unless a district offers to pay for their professional development
- In-house or district professional development many times does not have pertinent information for related service providers
- Some districts only allow a restricted number of attendees to attend an event even though many need the training, or there may be too many topics to share