

CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

FALL 2005

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

Information & Support
for Families of Children with Special Needs in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey counties

150 Den-Mac Dr.
Boone, NC 28607

(828) 262-6089

Toll-Free
Family Line:
(866) 812-3122

Fax:
(828) 265-5394

Email:
hayeskl@appstate.edu


www.parent2parent
highcountry.org


Our Staff:
Kaaren Hayes,
Director

Jessica Powell,
Volunteer Coordinator

FSN-HC is proudly sponsored by:

 Appalachian State University

 Children's Developmental Services Agency of the Blue Ridge

 Family Support Network of North Carolina

 High Country United Way

Supporting Your Child or Teenager During Traumatic Events

1. Be honest about the facts in a developmentally appropriate way. You don't have to tell all the details

2. Limit exposure to the media. Children under the age of 6 should not be exposed to the TV videotape coverage of disaster or attacks and the viewing time for older children should be limited. When there is exposure make sure that the news is discussed. Many children

feel that the crisis is happening over and over again when they see the same picture several times. After September 11th many of children would cry and scream every time they saw an airplane because they could not understand the difference between the one seen repeatedly on the TV and all other aircraft.

3. Reassure your child that he or she is not to blame

by saying "The world is having some difficult times now, but it isn't your fault." They are less likely to blame themselves when they are included and provided some information.

4. Provide information at a time when both you and your child or family can focus. Limit distractions. Allow questions. Answer in simple, age appropriate terms. Expect and answer

[Continued on page 2](#)

Reducing Special Needs Parent Stress

A lot of parents who have kids with special needs get a free helping of stress every day. With extra nuts -- and sprinkles.

If this is you, how do you start an anti-stress diet? Start small. Take a break.

Oh yeah, right. When are you going to find the time?

Most of us have heard we'd be more efficient if we'd take a break once in a while. But it's hard to convince your brain that

taking some time to ease your stress will really help you get more done. Mr. Brain often stubbornly sees things in the short term. If you've got 1000 orders to process and it takes about a minute to process an order, taking a five-minute break every hour means you process fewer orders in an eight hour day and fall farther behind, right?

Nope.

I read a study a while back that showed when

data-processing workers got a five-minute break every hour, they had less stress and got more work done in an eight-hour day. The benefits of the break more than made up for the time away from the computer.

Here's the really interesting part of the story: in spite of the findings, the company associated with the study did NOT start giving their data processing workers five-minute breaks each hour. Huh? The bosses

[Continued on page 4](#)

Supporting your Child... continued from page 1

reassuringly to questions that seem silly or fantastic, like "What would we do if we saw a terrorist in our yard?"

5. Reassure your child that they are safe and loved.

6. Keep normal routines and family rituals such as eating dinner together, bedtime stories, and games.

7. Spend extra time with your child.

8. Remember the importance of touch to reinforce love and safety.

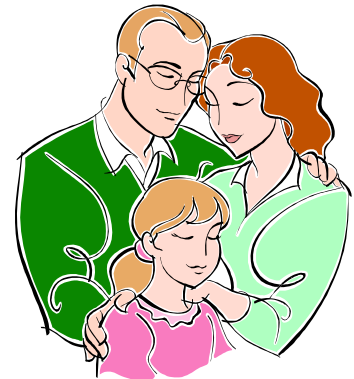
9. Review family safety procedures so children will

feel prepared next time an emergency situation occurs.

10. Use your school counselor as a resource and to share any concerns you have about your child. He or she can provide advice, talk confidentially, and recommend further information.

11. Find ways to involve your child in helping others who have been affected by trauma – writing a letter to them, sending toys to kids, selling lemonade to raise money for those affected, etc.

Praise and recognize responsible behavior and



reassure children that their feelings are normal in response to an abnormal situation.

By: Siri McDonald, BSW and
Suzi Woodard, MA, LPC
Blue Mountain Center
for the Healing Arts

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D), a nonprofit volunteer organization, is the nation's educational library serving people who cannot read standard print because of visual impairment, dyslexia or other physical disability. Their mission is to create opportunities for individual success by providing, and promoting the effective use of, accessible educational materials.

For 57 years, RFB&D has been an invaluable educational resource, enabling those with print disabilities to complete their educations, advance their careers, and gain self-esteem.

RFB&D was established in 1948 by Anne T. Macdonald to provide recorded textbooks to veterans blinded in World

War II. We were legally incorporated in 1951.

RFB&D's materials are for all people who cannot effectively read standard print because of a visual, perceptual or other physical disability.



More than 70 percent of those served by RFB&D last year were identified as having a learning disability. This member population is growing rapidly as serious learning disabilities are better diagnosed.

In 2004, more than 5,800 volunteers, working in RFB&D's 29 recording studios across the United States,

contributed 392,223 hours of their time recording 4,627 new titles. There are numerous volunteer opportunities available throughout our nationwide locations.

In 2004, RFB&D distributed 241,281 recorded textbooks to 137,025 members around the world.

With more than 104,000 titles in our CV Starr Learning Through Listening® Library, RFB&D is the number one producer in the world of audio textbooks for people who can't effectively read standard print.

Anyone with a documented print disability may utilize RFB&D's services. They offer membership options for individuals and schools.

Continued on page 3

Recording... continued from page 2

Membership costs for schools varies on number of students and number of books used. For individuals, there is a one time registration fee and an annual membership fee. They have more that 137,000 registered members throughout the United States.

More than 90 percent of those they serve are students—ranging in educational level from kindergarten through graduate school. Many members are professionals who use their recorded materials to pursue lifelong learning or advance in their

professions.

To learn more about RFB&D, contact North Carolina's Outreach Director in Wilkesboro, Susan Cogdill, at 336-984-6493. Also check out their website at www.rfd.org.

Celebrating Holland - I'm Home

The following is a follow-up to "Welcome to Holland" featured in our Summer newsletter. To view that newsletter, log on to www.parent2parenthighcountry.org "Welcome to Holland" by Emily Perl Kingsley is a wonderful, popular writing comparing being a special needs parent to a trip planned in Italy but you find yourself in Holland instead.

I have been in Holland for over a decade now. It has become home. I have had time to catch my breath, to settle and adjust, to accept something different than I'd planned.

I reflect back on those years of past when I had first landed in Holland. I remember clearly my shock, my fear, my anger - the pain and uncertainty. In those first few years, I tried to get back to Italy as planned, but Holland was where I was to stay. Today, I can say how far I have come on this unexpected journey. I have learned so much more. But, this too has been a journey of time.

I worked hard. I bought new guidebooks. I learned a new language and I slowly found my way around this new land. I have met others whose plans had changed like mine, and who could share my

experience. We supported one another and some have become very special friends.



Some of these fellow travelers had been in Holland longer than I and were seasoned guides, assisting me along the way. Many have encouraged me. Many have taught me to open my eyes to the wonder and gifts to behold in this new land. I have discovered a community of caring. Holland wasn't so bad. I think that Holland is used to wayward travelers like me and grew to become a land of hospitality, reaching out to welcome, to assist and to support newcomers like me in this new land. Over the years, I've wondered what life would have been like if I'd landed in Italy as planned.

Would life have been easier? Would it have been as rewarding? Would I have learned some of the

important lessons I hold today?

Sure, this journey has been more challenging and at times I would (and still do) stomp my feet and cry out in frustration and protest.

And, yes, Holland is slower paced than Italy and less flashy than Italy, but this too has been an unexpected gift. I have learned to slow down in ways too and look closer at things, with a new appreciation for the remarkable beauty of Holland with its' tulips, windmills and Rembrandts.

I have come to love Holland and call it Home.

I have become a world traveler and discovered that it doesn't matter where you land. What's more important is what you make of your journey and how you see and enjoy the very special, the very lovely, things that Holland, or any land, has to offer.

Yes, over a decade ago I landed in a place I hadn't planned. Yet I am thankful, for this destination has been richer than I could have imagined!

By Cathy Anthony

Q & A

What are the New Changes to the North Carolina Parents' Rights Handbook?

According to the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center's (ECAC) website, the NC Parents' Rights Handbook, published by the NC Department of Public Instruction, has some changes! NCDPI has created an addendum for the handbook which identifies those areas that have been changed to reflect the new Individuals with Disabilities Education



Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04). Remember that the Federal Regulations have not yet been finalized. We anticipate more changes to the handbook after the final regulations are released - expected late this year or early 2006.

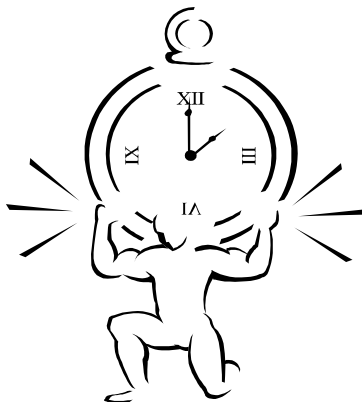
Many of the changes are of particular interest to parents and their teachers who will want to pay close attention. There are significant changes in the areas of Evaluation & Eligibility, IEP Content & Process, Due Process, and Discipline.

For more information, check out ECAC's website at www.ecac-parentcenter.org

Stress... continued from page 1

couldn't bring themselves to do it. In spite of the evidence, it just seemed counterproductive.

Maybe your brain is working from the same perspective, with a side of guilt thrown in. Have you ever kept at a task way past the point of diminishing returns because you were working on behalf of your family and it seemed like you'd be short-changing them to take even a few minutes for yourself?



Part of the problem is that

when you're overloaded and stress is building, that stress can affect your judgment. Stress can put you in a hole and make it hard to see a way to climb out. So you work and work and get more tired and frustrated and make mistakes - and sometimes get sick.

As I write this, I'm looking at a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html>) that says health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress.

So there's a reason to relax you can relate to! You can't do as good a job taking care of your kids if you're sick - so consider being your own doctor and ordering yourself to relax a bit.

By the way, here are a few of the conditions that the NIOSH study says contribute to

stress: "heavy workload, infrequent rest breaks, long work hours; conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too much responsibility, too many "hats to wear"; lack of support or help; rapid changes for which workers are unprepared."

Doesn't that sort of sound like a job description for a parent of a special needs child?

If you're feeling stretched too thin, here are some suggestions to improve your life and get more done by taking some time for yourself: (NOTE: If you feel like you can't manage your stress by yourself, I'd suggest you seek professional help. Try these recommendations if you're confident you can take some positive steps on your own.)

RELAXING TIPS

When you're starting a task,

Continued on page 5

Helping Katrina & Rita Victims

All of us are concerned for those affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Many lives have been uprooted.

Families with children with special needs have unique challenges every day. Going through this crisis, these

Stress... continued from page 4

set an alarm or kitchen timer to go off in an hour. When it goes off, take a five-minute break. Stand up, stretch, walk outside. Do something that gets your mind off the task for a few minutes. Each time you start to work again, reset that timer so you get a few minutes every hour to recharge your batteries. (My wife gave me a desk clock that chimes on the hour to remind me to take breaks.)

If you're working long days, it's also good to take a 15 minute break every few hours.

Don't neglect lunch. Taking a half-hour or an hour off for lunch can be a real energizer in the middle of a busy day. If possible, do some socializing during lunch, either in person or on the phone.

Find some favorite songs and listen to them during your breaks. A song you like can really help get your mind off work for a few minutes. Another option is to stand up and stretch, then sit in your chair, close your eyes and take five slow, deep breaths.

If at all possible, take a daily

families must be going through so many more.

If you would like to find a way to help, please check out the Family Support Network of North Carolina's website at www.fsnn.org to find a thorough list of organizations that are helping victims of

walk. A 20 to 30 minute daily walk can help reduce your stress and help you get or stay fit. I'm a lot calmer since I started walking. Ask my wife. I look forward to it so much that I make it a priority and find ways to work it into a busy day.

When you feel yourself getting stressed to the point where you keep spinning your wheels, try shifting your brain into neutral for a while. Let things wash over you. Some decisions won't wait, but if you're upset and you can postpone a decision, it's usually a good idea to calm down first. This may save you from saying something you regret or doing something you wish you could undo. When you're spinning your wheels in frustration, a little neutral time can help you find a way to get traction that you hadn't noticed because your stress gave you a blind spot.

Get out a calendar and plan some time for yourself. Going out one night a week for a few hours can help put some balance and perspective into your life. Don't you feel and work better when you have something to look forward to?

Hurricane Katrina.

One person can make a difference.



If you and your spouse can do it together, great. If not, take turns. If you're a single parent, maybe you can trade off with another single parent.

Go out with friends or see a movie by yourself - whatever you enjoy. If you can't make it every week, make it every other week. One thing is sure: you have to take the initiative and give yourself permission. Don't be apologetic. You're not goofing off. You're making an investment in a person who is crucial to your family: you.

In my experience, these pauses for relaxation can help make you more efficient, more optimistic and give you ideas you just can't get when the fatigue poisons are building up in your brain.

It may seem hard to find the time at first, but a little relaxation can make you a better mom or dad.

So you really have no choice.

Your kids deserve it.

*by Dan Coulter, Coulter Video,
November 2004
For more articles like this visit
<http://www.bridges4kids.org>.*

Upcoming Events

Challenging Behaviors & Medically Fragile Share Groups meet the second Friday of each month at the Boone Unitarian Universalist Church (381 E. King St, beside the Playhouse). Dinner provided & Child Care provided if a space is reserved in advance.



ASU's Dance Marathon Fundraiser, where students dance for 24 hours to raise money, will be held October 15 & 16. Come join us in the fun! Help us raise money for our program by joining us for the FAMILY TIME from 1pm-

2pm at Legends, located on Hardin Street across from Red Onion Restaurant. We will have a great time dancing with our kids and showing our dedicated dancers.

The Community Art School at Turchin Center for the Visual Arts (TCVA) has many fun youth art programs for varying age groups. Events are free for TCVA members and a nominal fee for non-TCVA members. Check out their upcoming Saturday workshops at www.turchincenter.org or contact Ingrid Hayes at 262-3017.

HATS OFF!



Congratulations to Western Youth Network, formally Watauga Youth Network, on celebrating 20 years of amazing service! Thank you for all you do!

Thank you to Teresa Anderson for the wonderful

workshops you have done for us and our area. We all learned so much and appreciate your time and knowledge.

Thank you to Roberta Yates for all of your wonderful support to Watauga County Foster Families.

Thank you to all our wonderful supporters! From donations, volunteer time, and always willing to give a helping hand, we couldn't do it without you!



Please support our projects so that we can continue to serve our parents and the community. Detach this form and send donations to the address below and help continue this much needed program. All donations are tax-deductible.

Name _____

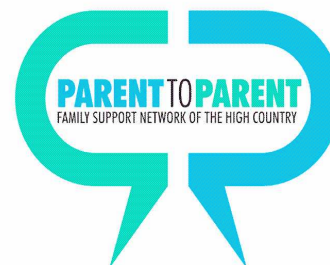
Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____ Amount \$ _____

Name of Honoree(s) _____

Thank you for your valuable contribution.



FSN-HC
150 Den Mac Dr.
Boone, NC 28607