



# Connections

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

Late Summer  
2009

## FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

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Boone, NC 28607  
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highcountry.org

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**An Affiliate of  
Family Support Network-  
North Carolina**

### With Support From

Appalachian State University  
Children's Developmental Services  
Agency—Blue Ridge  
High County United Way  
Friends of Family Support  
Network—High County  
Avery Partnership for Children  
Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for  
Children

## Statements of Support

By Betsy Galchutt, Intern

As you all may know, times are currently tough for Parent to Parent FSN-HC. Due to a lack of adequate funds, it is now especially important to share with our community the many ways in which families and ASU students have both supported and benefitted from the many services and resources that we have to offer.

We have recently been collecting feedback from the many people who are currently involved or have been involved in the past with Parent to Parent FSN-HC, all whom have shared kind words and enthusiasm for our services: employees, interns, volunteers, students, support families, teachers, service providers, and of course, the many parents and families who come to us seeking support and understanding. We want to thank you all for bearing your hearts and for continuing to provide us with a clear and strong voice.

### From Parents and Families...

"I am a parent of a special needs child. When I found out about Parent to Parent Family Support Network of the High Country, I felt like I had found a lifeline. Just knowing there was place to meet with others helped me make it through some very rough months... When you feel like you are so alone, almost secluded because your family is different, it truly is a blessing to have a feeling of acceptance." -A.P.

"It means a lot just to know that we are not alone in our struggles. As parents of a child who has mental and emotional challenges, any help and support we can get helps us greatly in our daily survival." -R. and S. C.

"I have the support of the people, the wonderful people, in the Parent to Parent [support] group to share my fears, frustration, joys, and need for understanding and support." -L.W.

"I was so excited to find out about [the support groups]. It has not only helped me with [my son], but it has helped me get my voice back. Parents here need this group. This is so good for the children." -C.

"Parent to Parent has helped give us resources and information for our family and child. Talking to other parents gives me more confidence in handling my child and situations we have found ourselves in. Not everyone has "perfect" kids! It's comforting and empowering to know that." -M.D.

"When parents of children with mental illness are looking for answers, there are no better experts on how to deal with those situations than other parents who are in the same boat... If it wasn't for Parent to Parent, we would never have heard about our son's doctor, who has been a wonderful resource." -J.D.

### To Donate:

Mail a check made out to  
Parent to Parent FSN-HC  
2359 Hwy 105  
Boone, NC 28607

OR

Visit our website  
<http://parent2parent.appstate.edu>  
Click on **Donate** in the Navigation bar  
on the right hand side panel

### From Teachers, Professors and Students...

“The stories of family members are critical for my students to hear as they grow in their acceptance and understanding of families. By asking questions and interacting with family members, students learn to be respectful of family differences and develop communication skills. Most importantly, students come to understand the challenges of raising children, especially children with challenges.” -Dr. Connie Green, Appalachian State University Professor of Language, Reading and Exceptionalities

“The strength-based approach in working with agencies and school personnel allows for accepting families for the strengths they have rather than focusing on a deficit approach to treatment... [Kaaren Hayes’s] insight and ability to have our students hear the stories of parents who have children with disabilities, and [the] sharing of knowledge on how to work with such parents are extremely important to their educational experience.” -Dr. Jim Deni, Appalachian State University Professor of Psychology

“Thanks for all your support during my first year at App. It was very helpful to me in getting “stuff” done that I need for tenure—and also very important to me in feeling like I had some connections and friends in a new area. So, thanks so much for your willingness to work with me.” -Dr. Sharon Richter, Appalachian State University Professor of Language, Reading and Exceptionalities

“It was through Kaaren’s charismatic and gentle nature that she demonstrated in a real way how families receive, grieve, work with discovering their child has special needs. By using heartfelt examples and situations, we as professionals were able to identify with families, creating stronger bonds and more meaningful interactions with children and families.” -Ms. Moriah Stegall, Lead Teacher, Lucy Brock CDLP

“[Kaaren] mentioned that it is too easy to get tucked away in our jobs or in school and forget about the surrounding community and all of the available resources in our area. This piece of advice is certainly something I will plan on taking with me into my future career—I will make a conscious effort to not only focus on the work that I do, but maintain an awareness of the services provided by other agencies and organizations that may be also be useful.” -Family Life Education Student

### From Employees, Interns and Graduate Assistants...

“Parent to Parent FSN-HC was invaluable to my experiences at ASU both professionally, academically and personally. I was blessed to be among the few who were lucky enough to work with Kaaren and the program. I believe that I learned to be more compassionate as a person. During the years after my internship, I found that I’ve never been as fulfilled on a personal level in my work as I was when I worked for Parent to Parent FSN-HC. Her passion for her work inspired me to become a member of Big Brother Big Sisters and instilled in me a passion to help others. The program provides an invaluable service and I hope that people will realize how very lucky they are to have such a service in their area. The amount of support, information and guidance families receive from Kaaren and the group can not be repaid.” -Nathan Brown

“The most important thing about Parent to Parent FSN-HC is Kaaren Hayes. It’s having the privilege of working with her and what we learn from her—she’s the most incredible resource... She provides a clear understanding of folks with disabilities, that we can overcome barriers, that barriers don’t have to be so set in stone that we can’t overcome them. I think that the more and more people develop disabilities, the more we need to learn to understand them. And if we can look at the world differently because we do understand the impact that disabilities have... that’s creating a better understanding of the world definitely.” -Trish Lanier

“I began working with Parent to Parent with little to no knowledge of special needs children or the workings of a non-profit agency. Patiently Ms. Hayes gave me the space to learn more about the different types of special needs children as well as the abilities these children and their families possess. She is truly dedicated to the program and an inspiration to the many students that have been involved with Parent to Parent as well as an inspiration to the community at large.” -Jennifer Spivey

“I am currently studying to become a school psychologist. Many of the families that I come in contact with through my work as a school psychologist will be able to benefit from the services offered by Parent to Parent... I think that Parent to Parent FSN-HC is an organization that is greatly needed by the community because of the invaluable services that it offers to parents who have children with disabilities.” -Letisha Greene

## Natural Cleaning Products



Do you always rely on chemical mixtures for your cleaning purposes? Cleaning with natural products can be safe, efficient and more environmentally friendly. Three common cooking ingredients can easily be substituted for a more economical and natural way of sprucing up the household.

First, start by mixing 1 part vinegar with 1 part water and place in a new spray bottle. This solution cleans like an all purpose cleaner for most surfaces in your home. The vinegar solution is good for using on appliances, counter-tops, fixtures, and floors because it will eat away soap scum and hard water stains. **DO NOT USE VINEGAR ON MARBLE TILE OR GROUT!** Undiluted vinegar is acidic and can eat away at tile. Use straight vinegar in toilet bowls to eliminate the ring. Vinegar can be used as a natural fabric softener if you have extra sensitive skin. Add 1/2 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle instead of fabric softener. Vinegar tends to break down laundry detergent more effectively. Homemade glass cleaner can be made of 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1 cup water and 1 cup rubbing alcohol.

Another natural substance to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits is lemon juice. Lemon juice can also be used to shine brass and copper. Mix the juice with baking soda or vinegar to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section to scrub dishes, surface and stains. Mix 1 cup olive oil and 1/2 cup lemon juice to use as a furniture polish for your hardwood furniture. To freshen the garbage disposal, run lemon or orange peels through it.

Baking soda or sodium bicarbonate has been a long used product for baking and removing refrigerator odors, but it can do so much more. Baking soda neutralizes acids and bases, so it actually eliminates odors rather than just covering them up. It acts as a mild abrasive cleaner to remove stains from sinks, counter tops and yet is mild enough for fine china. For tea, juice or coffee stained cups or countertops, sprinkle with baking soda and wipe with a damp cloth. With the addition of baking soda to dishwasher, dirt and grime will dissolve and hands will be softer. To eliminate streaks and spots from hard water, add to the dishwasher. Clean stainless steel or porcelain sinks with a paste of dishwashing liquid and a generous amount of baking soda. As a deodorizer, sprinkle in garbage can, diaper pail, or on a carpet the night vacuuming. Keep in an open box in refrigerator, freezer and pantry.

## Other Natural Cleaning Recipes

### Oven Cleaner

3 parts baking soda  
1 part water  
Nylon scrubber  
Elbow Grease

*Combine baking soda and water and use like a paste with the scrubber and your elbow grease. For really stuck-on spills, instead of three parts baking soda, mix half baking soda and half salt (increases abrasiveness). Keep baking soda off the heating element as they should not be cleaned.*

### Brick and Stone Cleaner

Mix:  
1 cup of white vinegar  
1 part olive oil  
1 gallon of water

### Hardwood Floor Polish/Shine

Mix:  
1 part vinegar  
1 part olive oil or vegetable oil

*Apply to the floor, then rub it well.*

### Scouring Powder (Dish Cleaning):

Sprinkle baking soda directly on sponge or rag and wipe dishes

### Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Scouring powder (see above)  
Sprinkle in baking soda and brush as you would a scouring powder, or if the toilet is stained try mixing:  
1/2 cup baking soda  
1/2 cup vinegar  
(beware, it bubbles!)

*(From the NC Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center)*



## Fun Family Activities

### Sand Paintings

Here's what you'll need to create an unusual and original painting: dry sand, dry tempera paint, a "shaker," paper, and paste.



First, have the child mix sand and dry tempera, and pour the mixture into a "shaker." Do this for each color you want to use. (So, you might have three "shakers" with one each of red, yellow and brown, for example.)

The "shaker" can be a salt-shaker with holes that have been made bigger by forcing a nail through each hole (carefully). A coffee can with holes punched into the plastic can work.

Next, have the child put paste on the paper. Then, sifting the sand mixture onto the paste can create a picture of one or many colors.

An advanced step is to draw a picture with crayons, then cover the picture with paste, then sand. A heavier grade of paper works best. Permit enough time for the picture to "set" before moving it.

### Pop Art

Spread a large sheet of craft paper on the ground. Measure one tablespoon or baking soda into the center of a square of toilet paper, fold it into a bundle, and tuck it into one corner of a sandwich-size zip-top bag. Help your child mix one-third cup of white vinegar with one tablespoon of tempera paint; pour into the opposite corner of the bag. Seal quickly, leaving a little air in the bag, and shake slightly to mix. Set it on the paper, then stand back. The will quickly puff up like a pillow, then pop, leaving an inkblot-style masterpiece.

### Homemade Bubbles



1/2 cup of dishwashing liquid  
(Dawn or Joy)  
2 cups of water  
2 teaspoons of sugar

Refill bubble container or place in a shallow pan.

### Recipe Corner: Fruity Kabobs (FamilyFun.com)

#### Ingredients:

1 large red apple, cut into 8 wedges  
6 marshmallows  
1 small jar of creamy peanut butter  
1 large banana, cut into 1-inch slices



To make a kabob, push a skewer through the ingredients, starting with a piece of apple, then a marshmallow, then a banana, and so forth. Spread a dollop of peanut butter on top of the marshmallow. Then, skewer a piece of banana and another marshmallow (with more PB) and finish with a piece of apple. Repeat with a second skewer. Makes 2.

### In Defense of Video Games

By GreatSchools Staff

Chances are your child is already engaged with games like Mario Cart or Tomb Raider - if not in your living room then at a friend's house. Learn how to make video games work for you.

In his February address to a joint session of Congress, President Barack Obama advised parents to help their kids in school and "put away the video games." But despite what the president says, gaming doesn't have to interfere with learning. In fact, some video games teach valuable skills, helping kids form hypotheses and make decisions wisely and quickly. The key to avoiding overstimulation and computer addiction is finding age-appropriate, educational video games and setting limits on the amount of time spent playing them.

Just as you might replace white bread with a whole-wheat variety, you can help your child by choosing a "healthier" video game with instructional value. Interactive games are natural teachers. They immerse kids in collaborative environments, allowing for rapid decision-making and instant feedback. "If a game lacks the sensation of play, then it isn't achieving its true potential," writes Gail Matthews-DeNatale, associate director of academic technology at Simmons College in Boston, in her 2008 study, "Learning From Video Games: Designing Digital Curriculums." "Play is observable throughout the animal kingdom; it is the fundamental way we learn." Studies of the brain have proven that repeated exposure to video games reinforces the ability to create mental maps, formulate hypotheses and focus on several things at once. Playing an educational game should be an exercise in "constructing the proper hierarchy of tasks and moving through the tasks in the correct sequence," writes Steven Johnson in his 2005 book, *Everything Bad Is Good for You*. "It's about finding order and meaning in the world, and making decisions that help create that order."

## Love and Logic: Giving Control Without Giving It Away

We often hear how wise it is to give our children a certain amount of freedom and control over their lives. However, children who have more control than they know how to handle often act out in unbelievable ways to show us that they need limits. It's almost as if they are saying, "How bad do I have to act before you will control me?" This confuses parent and child alike. The child, having become addicted to power, demands more power while at the same time asking for parent control.

Children who start out with too much power force us to tighten the limits, and that makes them angry. Who wouldn't be mad? When control is taken away, children feel that they are being robbed of something that is rightfully theirs.

Dr. Sylvia B. Rimm, psychologist, educator, and author, explains that we all compare the amount of control we have in a relationship to the control we *used* to have, not to how much we think we *should* have.

Dr. Rimm says loving parents use what she calls the "V" of love. The sides of the "V" stand for firm limits within which the child may make decisions and live with the consequences. The bottom point of the "V" represents birth, while the open top of the "V" represents the time when the child will leave home. Toddlers decide about such things as chocolate or white milk. Ten-year-olds are deciding how to spend their allowances and the 17-year-olds make decisions about almost all aspects of their lives. Unfortunately, the "V" is turned upside down in families where the child is treated almost like a miniature adult right from birth. These youngsters become tyrants. We've all seen them hold their parents hostage to temper tantrums and pouting.

Children need the opportunity to make choices but these choices should be within firm limits appropriate for their age. This is easier said than done. However, it helps to keep the "V" in mind, always leaving bigger decisions for the next year. Make sure there is more control available to the child this year than last.

Teachers are good resources regarding age-appropriate decisions for children. And remember, some of the greatest experts on parenting may be in your carpool or community. However, it is wiser to get advice from parents who have well-adjusted children than those whose youngsters are driving them crazy.

### Area Support Groups

#### Alleghany County Parent Support Group

Date: First & Third Thursday of each month.

Time: 6:00pm

Location: The Family Resource Center, Sparta

Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 or [bouchardnj@appstate.edu](mailto:bouchardnj@appstate.edu) to RSVP. For childcare call 336-372-6583

#### Ashe County Parent Support Group

Date: Last Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Midway Baptist Church Fellowship Hall  
Mt. Jefferson Rd., West Jefferson

Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 or [bouchardnj@appstate.edu](mailto:bouchardnj@appstate.edu)  
Meal provided with RSVP.

#### Mitchell County Parent Support Group

Date: First Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

Contact: Teresa Emory at 828 682-4772 or [emorytd@appstate.edu](mailto:emorytd@appstate.edu)  
RSVP for childcare!

#### Watauga County Parent Support Group

Date: Second Friday of each month

Time: 6:00—8:00pm

Location: The White House at 381 E. King St.  
(beside the Playhouse)

Contact: Kaaren Hayes at 828-262-6089 or 1-866-812-3122 or [hayeskl@appstate.edu](mailto:hayeskl@appstate.edu)  
RSVP for childcare and supper!

#### Wilkes County Parent Support Group

Date: Last Thursday of each month

Time: 6:15pm

Location: "Our House" 203 E. Main St. Wilkesboro

Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 or [bouchardnj@appstate.edu](mailto:bouchardnj@appstate.edu)  
Desert & drinks will be served!

#### Yancey County Parent Support Group

Call Teresa Emory at 866-448-5781 or [emorytd@appstate.edu](mailto:emorytd@appstate.edu) for dates & times.

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Boone, NC 28607



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Please support our program so that we can continue to serve families and the community. Any help you can give will be very appreciated. Please detach this form and send any donations to the address below. Donations are tax deductible.

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