



Enriching the Parent

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

September 2008

Family Support Network - High Country
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WITH SUPPORT FROM

Appalachian State University

Children's Development Services
Agency-Blue Ridge

Family Support Network of North
Carolina

High Country United Way

Avery & Mitchell-Yancey
Partnerships for Children -
Smart Start

Friends of Parent-to-Parent



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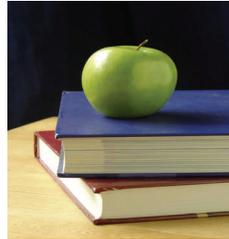
Check them out!

Happy Fall from Parent to Parent FSN-HC



Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences can be an emotional time for both parties. It's not unusual for either parents or teachers to forget they are really on the same team - the child's team!



When both parties put forth their best communication and listening skills, these emotional battles can be replaced by the opportunity to share ideas that are in the student's best interest.

Conferences that are Guaranteed to Fail

When teachers and parents come to a meeting with a set notion of the child's problem and how to deal with it the result is often a contest of words. Both parent and teacher waste a lot of time trying to persuade the other to understand and adopt their point of view.

The following are proven techniques that can end any progress during a conference:

Non-negotiable demands - A parent who demands, "I want Rachel transferred to a different reading group by Monday!", has effectively put an end to communication.

Threats - A teacher who threatens, "If Danny disrupts my class one more time, I'll send him to the principal's office every day for the rest of the month!", has not learned the art of either negotiation or communication.

Accusations - The statement, "If you would give Johnny more personal attention at home, his reading skills would be up to speed," is guaranteed to put a parent on the defensive.

Words that Work Wonders

Parents and teachers alike must remember the reason for meeting is to share ideas that will help the child overcome his or her school problems. People who get the best results during these conferences remember the magic words of good communication.

Describe the problem - When we use the word "describe" we open lines of communication by eliminating any judgmental statements. A wise parent says, "I'd like to describe how I see the problems Susie has been having in your class." A smart teacher says, "I'd like to describe how Lee acts around his classmates during recess."

Ask for the other person's thoughts - "I'd like to get your thoughts on that," are also magic words. They show we are more interested in learning all we can about the child's problem rather than trying to persuade the other party to see our side. The words also imply that we respect the other person's opinions.

Listen to the other person - Effective communication takes place only when people are convinced the other person is truly listening to them. Neither parent nor teacher should interrupt the other. Both need to be confident that their perceptions are being heard.

Develop several solutions - Coming up with more than one alternative to a problem - together - eliminates the temptation of trying to convince the other person to see the problem your way. It shows sincerity and openness about helping the child.

For more information on classes: (828) 262-6089 or (866) 812-3122

Parent to Parent FSN-HC Presents: Pearls of Love and Logic Special Thoughts on Raising Kids © Love and Logic Press, Inc. www.loveandlogic.com or 1-800-338-4065

Parent to Parent Presents: Effective Communication Skills

Resolve school differences with effective communication skills

By Carolyn Anderson

Disagreements and conflict within special education are normal and inevitable- there will be conflicting perspectives, positions, and views of the child.

Most parents want what is “best” for their children while the school is required to provide “appropriate services.” In addition, each person is a complex human being, and each school is part of a complex government agency. Effective communication can help bridge these gaps for the benefit of the child with a disability.

Parents are a child’s best and longest lasting advocates. Parents with good communication skills can be even more effective advocates for their children.

Parents and school staff do not need to be friends, but it pays to build an effective working relationship. Unless a family moves or someone changes his or her job, parents and educators may be working with many of the same people for a number of years.

Parental approaches, attitudes, and responses are choices. For example, if there is a situation where parents could “take offense”, they can choose to not be offended. While people can’t control all situations of life, they can control how they respond to those situations.

Communication is like a mobile---when one part moves, then the whole mobile must move. Likewise, when parents’ approaches, attitudes, or responses change, the result may be a different and better outcome for their child.

Parents sometimes feel that are too shy, passive, aggressive, busy, anxious, uniformed, overly emotional, unorganized, intimidated, overwhelmed, distrustful, angry, protective, etc. Each person has a right to their feelings. But parents don’t have to let their feelings control their behavior. They should ask these questions:

- “Will my feelings, thoughts opinions, and the way I express them help my child receive what he or she needs?”
- Am I being effective?
- Does this serve my cause or hurt it?

- If I put my child first and in the center of what I do, will I still want to behave like this?”

First, gather information. Parents should learn all they can about special education and their child’s disability. The more parent know, the more they can communicate as an equal partner.

Recipe Corner

Easy Breakfast Burrito



Scramble a pan of eggs using PAM cooking spray. Add a handful of shredded cheddar cheese to the top to melt. Also add chopped cooked ham or diced up sandwich ham. Bell peppers, onions or mushrooms can also be added. After everything is cooked and the cheese is melted, add spoonfuls of eggs to a large flour tortilla. Roll up the tortilla and wrap it plastic wrap (use only microwave safe wrap!). Then place the burritos on a baking sheet and place into freezer. Leave them long enough to cool them all the way and begin freezing. Once frozen I place all of the burritos in a freezer safe zip lock bag and freeze. Just take the burritos out of the freezer bag and pop into the microwave for around tow minutes. These are great on-the-go breakfasts. Just be careful... they can be very hot!

Group Opportunities for Information & Support

Area Workshops

Adaptations for Students Who Face Severe Physical and Multiple Challenges:

From "Light Tech" to "High Tech"

When: October 9 & 10, 2008

Presented by: Linda Burkhart

Where: **First:** United Methodist Church
200 North King Street
Morganton, NC 28655



Area Support Groups

Are you feeling a little stressed because you are a parent or guardian of a child or family member with disabilities, significant health concerns, in need of resources, or just need another adult to talk to that knows what you are going through? Come join one of our local groups, meet new families and make some new friends!

Alleghany County Parent Support Group

Date: First and third Thursday of each month

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: The Family Resource Center, Sparta

Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 to RSVP. For child care call 372-6583

Ashe County Parent Support Group

Date: Last Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 to RSVP.

Watauga County Parent Support Groups

Challenging Behaviors and Medically Fragile

Date: Second Friday of each month

Time: 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Location: Boone Unitarian Universalist Church (381 E. King St, beside the Playhouse)

Contact: Kaaren Hayes at 828-262-6089 or 1-866-812-3122 or e-mail hayeskl@appstate.edu. RSVP for childcare and supper!

Wilkes County Parent Support Group

Date: The last Thursday of each month

Time: 6:15 p.m.

Location: "Our House" 203 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro

Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Dessert and drinks will be served!

The Autism Spectrum IEP

Who: The Autism Society of North Carolina

What: This workshop covers basics on the IEP process in relation to school age children on the autism spectrum. How to prepare for the IEP, be a team player as well as advocate for your child are covered.

Where: Boone, NC University Hall (above Staples off of Blowing Rock Road). Institute for Health and Human Services Multipurpose Room, First Floor

When: September 27, 2008 from 9:00AM to 12:00pm

Contact: Register by contacting Jean Alvarez 1-800-708-3337 ext 110 or jalvarez@autismsociety-nc.org

Guest Speaker: Jean Alvarez, Parent Trainer for the Autism Society of North Carolina

Get Involved!

Be the voice for a child.

Volunteer for the Guardian Ad Litem Program:

1- 800 982-4041

Or

www.ncgal.org



A New local program for grandparents raising grandchildren and other relative caregivers.

Relatives as Parents Meetings

Sponsored by:

High Country Area Agency on Ageing

Meetings held at:

High Country Council of Governments Building
719A Greenway Rd.

For more information contact: Brenda Reece at 828-265-5434 or emailbreece@regiond.org



Information and Location for
ALL Support groups enclosed!
See page 3

Parent to Parent FSN-HC
2359 Highway 105
Boone, NC 28607



If you would like:

*To talk with another parent who understands
Information about a specific disability or health condition*

To be a Supporting Family

Or

To make a tax deductible donation please contact:



FSN-HC

828-262-6089 or Toll-free family line: 866-812-3122

Or hayeskl@appstate.edu