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www.aboutspecialkids.org



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ASK E-Newsletter / October 2010



The Power of Support

Contact Us

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2010 ASK Trainings

Roadmap to Special Education: Laws and Process

Oct. 20th - New Albany
Oct. 25th - Indianapolis
Nov. 4th - Columbus
Nov. 12th - Merrillville

Public Health Insurance: What You Don't Know Can Cost You

The challenges of **parenthood** are intensified by the experience of having a child with special needs. Research has demonstrated the importance of support for families of children with special needs, specifically; social support is recognized as an effective buffer against the stress and isolation faced by this population. There emerges a strong argument in favor of support from similar others. Parent to parent programs provide emotional and informational support to parents of children who have special needs.

About Special Kids has two levels of support offered to families. **Parent Liaisons** are staff members of ASK, who are parents that work directly with families in understanding and navigating community resources and systems that serve their child with special needs. Each family that contacts ASK is assigned to a **Parent Liaison** for support and services.

When a parent wants more one-on-one emotional support or wants to talk with a parent that has a child with a similar disability, than a **Parent Mentor** match can be made available through a Parent Liaison. To provide this **Parent Mentor** support, trained and experienced volunteer parents are matched in relationships with parents who may be new to the "world of disability". Because the veteran parent has the shared experience of a disability in the family, and has negotiated many of the systems and resources, they are often able to provide a unique form of support that only another parent who has "been there" can. (Santelli, Turnbull, Lerner, & Marquis 1993)

Oct. 15th - Merrillville
Nov. 15th - Indianapolis
Nov. 19th - New Albany

My Child Has Special Needs: Now What?

Nov. 8th - Indianapolis

Additional trainings are added to our calendar as they are scheduled. To register for a training, visit our website at

www.aboutspecialkids.org

Interim Executive Director

Rebecca Kirby role at ASK has changed to part-time Interim Executive Director. She will serve in this role until ASK's new leader is identified. This continuity of leadership will help the organization maintain the integrity of its programs and services during this transition period.

New ASK Training

Finding out that your child has special needs can be overwhelming. Some common reactions can be "What do I do now? Where do I start?"

ASK's new training "My Child Has Special Needs: Now What?" provides families with a brief overview of how to:

- Find support for your child and family,
- Find information and services,
- Find coverage to pay for services, and
- Will help you start thinking about the future

This training is geared to help parents map out the next steps for their child and family.

Looking to Help?

ASK is currently looking for a volunteer who can come into the central office for

"Why would I want a Parent Mentor?"

- To be able to talk to other parents who have "been there"
- To be matched with someone who fully appreciates a "new parents" feelings/questions/needs
- To have unique insight provided that cannot always be found through others.
- To talk with a parent who comes from a perspective of already having weathered the times you now find yourself in
- To address the issue of "isolation" in spite of others trying to reach out

"When would I want a Parent Mentor?"

- During stressful times
- Early on with a new diagnosis or the birth of a baby with a special need
- During times of transition for your child with special needs, to talk with someone that has already walked through that time

What a Parent Mentor is NOT:

- NOT a source of medical advice or a substitute for medical care
- NOT a source of promoting one provider
- NOT a source to better understand systems or community resources (this is a trained Parent Liaison's role)

What could I expect from a Parent Mentor?

- Sensitive listening and emotional support
- Mutual problem solving
- Invitations to group and social activities for families
- Support group suggestions
- Hints for day to day survival skills

If you are looking for a Parent Mentor, contact your Parent Liaison and ask for a match.

Bullying: A Rising Problem

There have been several reports about bullying lately. Here are some tips from www.bullyinginfo.org on what parents and caregivers can do to help their child.

What Should I Do If I Think My Child is Being Bullied?

First, focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying.

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying. What the child may "hear" is that you are going to ignore it. If the child

a few hours once a week to help with general clerical items such as copying and putting together information and training packets.

If you are interested, please call ASK and ask to speak to Cindy.

NEW Teen Sibshops **(Ages 14-17)**

Fun activities for the brothers and sisters of children with special needs.

Meet new friends, watch a movie, eat food and have a good time. Come join us for some fun, laughter, Food and Comradery.

When: October 23, 2010
12 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Where: Easter Seals Crossroads
4740 Kingsway Drive, Indianapolis

Cost: \$5.00 (includes meal)

Registration is required and space is limited. For more information or to register, please contact Christina Rogers at 317-948-0061.

Visit our website Newsbox for upcoming Sibshops for all ages in your area.

Kids Healthcast **A Pediatric Podcast** **for Parents**

Each month, the IU School of Medicine, Department of General and Community Pediatrics presents a podcast.

This is a monthly health education project developed by pediatrics resident Jason Misurac and Dr. Deanna Reinoso for parents & caregivers to provide:

- health news and information on a variety of topics,
- helpful tips,

were able to simply ignore it, he or she likely would not have told you about it. Often, trying to ignore bullying allows it to become more serious.

- Don't blame the child who is being bullied. Don't assume that your child did something to provoke the bullying. Don't say, "What did you do to aggravate the other child?"
- Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying. Ask him or her to describe who was involved and how and where each bullying episode happened. Learn as much as you can about the bullying tactics used, and when and where the bullying happened. Can your child name others who may have witnessed the bullying?
- Empathize with your child. Tell him/her that bullying is wrong, not his/her fault, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it. Ask your child what he or she thinks can be done to help. Assure him or her that you will think about what needs to be done and you will let him or her know what you are going to do.
- Do not encourage physical retaliation ("Just hit them back") as a solution. Hitting another student is not likely to end the problem, and it could get your child suspended or expelled or escalate the situation.
- Check your emotions. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, parents are wise to step back and consider the next steps carefully.

Contact your child's teacher or principal.

- Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying might not stop without the help of adults. Call or set up an appointment to talk with your child's teacher. He or she will probably be in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and his or her peers at school. Keep your emotions in check. Give factual information about your child's experience of being bullied including who, what, when, where, and how.
- Ask the teacher to talk with other adults who interact with your child at school (such as the music teacher, physical education teacher, or bus driver) to see whether they have observed students bullying your child. Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school to find a solution to stop the bullying, for the sake of your child as well as other students. Schools can develop policies to create a caring environment and employ evidence-based strategies to prevent bullying.
- If you are not comfortable talking with your child's teacher, or if you are not satisfied with the conversation, make an appointment to meet with your child's guidance counselor or principal to discuss your concerns.
- Do not contact the parents of the student(s) who bullied your child. This is usually a parent's first response, but sometimes it makes matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the child or children who did the bullying.
- Commit to making the bullying stop. Talk regularly with your child and with school staff to see whether the

- medical trivia,
- links to resources and,
- an "Ask the Expert" segment.

For more information, go to www.kidshealthcast.org

ASK Office Holiday Schedule

The ASK office will be closed on the following dates in observance of holidays.

November 25, 2010
November 25, 2010

December 24, 2010
December 27, 2010
December 28, 2010
December 29, 2010
December 30, 2010
December 31, 2010

bullying has stopped. If the bullying persists, contact school authorities again.

Help your child become more resistant to bullying.

- Help to develop talents or positive attributes of your child. Suggest and facilitate music, athletics, and art activities. Doing so may help your child be more confident among his or her peers.
- Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class. Your child's teacher may be able to suggest students with whom your child can make friends, spend time, or collaborate on work. Help your child meet new friends outside of the school environment. A new environment can provide a "fresh start" for a child who has been bullied repeatedly.
- Teach your child safety strategies. Teach him or her how to seek help from an adult when feeling threatened by a bully. Talk about whom he or she should go to for help and role-play what he or she should say. Assure your child that reporting bullying is not the same as tattling.
- Ask yourself if your child is being bullied because of a learning difficulty or a lack of social skills. If your child is hyperactive, impulsive, or overly talkative, the child who bullies may be reacting out of annoyance. This doesn't make the bullying right, but it may help to explain why your child is being bullied. If your child easily irritates people, seek help from a counselor so that your child can better learn the informal social rules of his or her peer group.
- Make sure your child has a safe and loving home environment where he or she can take shelter, physically and emotionally. Always maintain open lines of communication with your child.

For more information and resources, visit www.bullyinginfo.org

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