



# SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

## NEWSLETTER

FALL 2013

Events

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Support for Families of Children with Disabilities is a nonprofit, support, resource and networking organization for families of children with special needs and the professionals who work with them. All services are free of charge including resources, phone-line, drop-in center, support groups, workshops & family gatherings.



**Family Access Day - Impressionists on the Water** at the Legion of Honor on July 20 was our first collaboration with the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, and it was a great success! Thanks to all the museum and SFCD volunteers, families enjoyed a private tour of the beautiful exhibit and made amazing boats out of recycled bottles. For more photos of the event, go to our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/supportforfamiliesf](http://www.facebook.com/supportforfamiliesf). For a listing of Fall Special Events, check out the Calendar of Events on page 8.



**Please Join Us!**  
A Fundraising Gala to benefit Support for Families  
**Friday, October 4, 2013; 6 - 10 PM**  
San Francisco Design Center Galleria  
101 Henry Adams Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

Cocktails, Wine, Hors d'oeuvres; Live and Silent Auctions; Dinner, Music, Entertainment

2013 Service Award Presentation to: **San Francisco Recreation and Park Department**

*This annual event raises funds that are critical to the continuation of our programs and services.*

Here are some ways you can participate:

- Become an event **Sponsor** with a donation of \$500 or more.
- Purchase individual **dinner tickets** at \$125 each and reserve your place at the event.
- Donate an item for the **auction**.
- **Order raffle tickets** for a chance to win an iPad mini, Dr. Dre headphones, or \$200 Amazon Gift Card.
- **Sell raffle tickets**: the seller of the winning iPad mini ticket will also win an iPad mini!!
- **Volunteer** to help before, during or after the event.

Visit [www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org) for more information, or contact Jan Watson, Development Director: [jwatson@supportforfamilies.org](mailto:jwatson@supportforfamilies.org); 415-282-7494 ext 104

## From Authoritarian to Restorative Schools

Lyn Harrison

*Restorative methods seek to address problems by working with youth rather than doing things to them or for them. While individual teachers use such methods, a restorative school requires a consistent whole school approach. This article describes core principles for building restorative schools being implemented by Marist Youth Care in Sydney, Australia.*

Many an educationalist ponders on the rapid changes in schools and the journey from the traditional school in which an authoritarian regime ruled through control and fear. We celebrated the departure of the cane and welcomed the era of self-esteem. More and more, schools began to be seen as the centers for social change that could provide all the social support that our youth were increasingly lacking.

We live in an age of constant change, ever increasing stressors, and a disintegration of support structures. Our innate human “fight or flight” response is no longer adequate to deal with modern day stress. Our children are growing up faster and with more pressures. Many are alienated through victimization or negative peer culture. There is a breakdown in social structures with more single-parent families and young people in care. Within our school system, there is pressure to juggle the academic with the pastoral in order to manage greater levels of accountability, more depressed and disruptive students, and new challenges around multicultural issues (Weare, 2000).

It is with great frustration that schools are now declaring, “How much more can we be expected to do?” “How do we find the balance between discipline and support?” “What sort of school culture can best respond to the needs of our youth?”

While faced with ever increasing challenges to meet the sociological needs of our youth, Restorative Practices give us new hope. This whole school approach builds on the important notion of connectedness in a school community. Connectedness, in terms of building positive relationships, is one of the most protective factors we can offer our youth (Catholic Education Office, 2002).

Restorative Justice is a philosophy and a set of practices that embraces the right blend between a high degree of discipline encompassing clear expectations, limits and consequences, and a high degree of support and nurturance. Steinberg (2001) suggests that this blend tends to correlate with the best psychological and behavioral outcomes for children. This “authoritative” approach is seen as far more effective than the authoritarian (YMCA of the USA, 2003). Simply put, in a Restorative school one works with people, rather than doing things to them or for them.

Restorative Justice programs in schools aim to develop:

- Communities that value the building of quality relationships coupled with clear expectations and limits.
- Restorative skills in the way we interact with young people—using teachable moments to enhance learning.
- Restorative processes that resolve conflict and repair damaged relationships.
- Communities that are forward looking, optimistic, and inclusive.

### The Work of Marist Youth Care

Marist Youth Care is a not-for-profit welfare agency, based in Sydney, Australia, whose mission is to assist marginalized youth.

For the last four years Marist Youth Care has been developing Restorative Justice Programs for schools across Australia, with the focus being a whole school approach. In many schools, one will see daily interactions between teachers and students that reflect Restorative Practices, but these will not have the lasting impetus unless the whole school approach is consistent. A Restorative School can articulate the underlying principles and beliefs. There is a commitment to collaborative problem solving, involving students, teachers, and parents. While there is consistency in values, there is flexibility in commitment to meet individual needs. This is a school that has transparent processes to resolve conflict, is forward looking, optimistic, and committed to inclusiveness.

This whole school approach is based on a set of underlying principles.

#### **1. Focus on the relationship and how people are affected.**

In the traditional school, the focus is on rules and rule breaking with punishment as the primary intervention. In a Restorative School, the focus is on relationships and

how people are affected. Most students with behavioral difficulties have an underdeveloped sense of others. There is little appreciation that at the receiving end of their misbehavior is another human being. A key focus in this work is to develop in students greater empathy for others or what is referred to as “relational thinking.”

### **2. Restore damaged relationships.**

Wherever there are relationships, there is an inevitability of conflict which creates hurt. In our schools, we need to make sure that we have good “healing processes” to restore the relationships. This applies to all relationships, at all levels in the school. In a Restorative School, the teacher cannot “hand over” a discipline problem for middle management to “deal with it.” When a referral is made, the classroom teacher continues to be involved. Serious breaches of discipline in the classroom often result in a breakdown of the relationship between the student and the classroom teacher. The teacher needs to continue to be involved in any intervention so that the relationship can be resolved. Unresolved relationships will inevitably affect the student’s ability to learn in that class and may also impact the teacher’s ability to teach.

### **3. Talk about the behavior without blaming.**

The common responses from students when teachers scold or lecture them are either to shut down or react aggressively and argue back. In either of these two classic responses, the student is distracted from any sense of other. In a Restorative conversation, the teacher is absolutely clear about the inappropriateness of the behavior and the effect that this behavior has on others, but this conversation is respectful and engaging.

### **4. See mistakes and misbehavior as an opportunity for learning.**

How often do we see students in patterns of misbehavior and punishment? The student who turns up every week for detention, having lost sight of which teacher or which incident precipitated the detention has been given no opportunity to learn from his or her misbehavior. Restorative practices promote understanding, reflection, and a sense of others. Consequences are sought that bring about the most learning. Teachers are unanimous in their belief that schools are centers of learning, but this learning should not be just academic learning. We need to embrace the evidence that “social and emotional learning and academic achievement can go hand in hand, and that the same key factors underlie both happy and effective schools” (Weare, 2000).

### **5. Accept that sometimes we can-not get to the ultimate truth.**

**Mental Health**

Often fault is unclear and people can agree to accept the ambiguous situation. Too often in schools, there is an inordinate amount of energy spent on hunting out the absolute truth, only to find that we are often left with different perceptions and different versions of the truth. This is not to say that we do not make attempts to find out what happened. But when we are left with ambiguity, it is best to accept this and focus on who was affected. It is in this understanding that the potential for learning lies. Does it really matter if the student swore at the teacher or in the presence of the teacher? The student needs to understand that the teacher was offended and hence learn the inappropriateness of swearing.

### **6. Be future focused and talk about how to make things right.**

In Restorative Practices, we move from talking about the “problem” that happened in the past to how we problem-solve into the future. We need to let go of the past and forgive and acknowledge the important fact that change takes place in the future. Students often cycle through change with periods of improvement and then inevitable setbacks. We need to plan for the management of setbacks, while placing our focus on the improvements that are made.

Strategies progress from the informal, when the teacher uses “the language of choice” to de-escalate potentially negative behavior, through to the Restorative Meeting, the most formal intervention. This occurs when conflict or behavior is of such severity that all key stakeholders are brought together to heighten understanding, repair damaged relationships, and make a plan for a positive way forward. The goal of the continuum of strategies is to move all interventions down toward the least formal end.

**Excerpt from Lyn Harrison’s 2007 article, “From Authoritarian to Restorative Schools.” *Reclaiming Children and Youth: The Journal of Strength-Based Interventions* 16:2 (2007): 17-19.** Read the rest of the article online: [http://reclaimingjournal.com/sites/default/files/journal-article-pdfs/16\\_2\\_Harrison.pdf](http://reclaimingjournal.com/sites/default/files/journal-article-pdfs/16_2_Harrison.pdf).

*Used with permission from Reclaiming Youth International, a division of the Starr Global Learning Network. For subscription information and related information, visit [www.reclaiming.com](http://www.reclaiming.com).*

## Support for Families Launches iPad Lending Program

By Jimi Gilroy, iPad/Assistive Communication Project Coordinator



When I think about the fundamental desires that a parent has for his or her child, three basic themes come to mind: to be independent, to be safe, and to be happy. When I apply these to

the outcomes for children with disabilities, it creates a startling gap between, on one side, our understanding of how we can use technology and the different ways that brains process information, and on the other, how to use that understanding to improve the lives of children with disabilities. Our goal with this project is to start to bridge that gap between what children need to thrive and what resources we have available to make that a reality.

In my experience as an early intervention specialist, play and social interaction can be the most powerful ways to build on a child's strengths. My hope with this project is that the increased ability to communicate will create more opportunities for children to play and interact with others that will allow them to be more independent, to be safer, and to be happier.

In the next few months, the ability for families to access Assistive Technology such as iPads will be bolstered by the new iPad Lending Program at Support for Families. 24 iPads will be available to lend to families and workshops in Spanish and English will show parents how their children can use the devices for communication. The hope is that parents will connect with the technology and find support to get resources like grants, insurance, or other funding to maintain their consistent use of the device as a "talker" or assistive communication device. This is so important because, as Jennifer MacDonald-Peltier from the **Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT)** states, "Once you give someone a voice, you should not take it away."

A few resources for iPad lending already exist: CforAT maintains an iPad lending program of 12 devices, the **Independent Living Resource Center of San Francisco** has 8 devices, and there are 14 technology lending libraries throughout California through the **Assistive Technology Exchange** that can provide families with many tools to

### Education

incorporate technology as part of a child's system of communication. The challenge often becomes how to reach families who either do not know how the technology can benefit them or how to ask for it as part of the IEP process. With that in mind, by next year we will also offer a Parent Provider Workshop which will include service providers and stress the role of collaboration which is one of the crucial components to the program. We also hope to collaborate with the San Francisco Unified School District, as well as the other centers and lending libraries, which make use of this technology.

Our parent workshops will start in September in both English and Spanish on a monthly basis. Topics covered in the workshop will include: how to use an iPad, IDEA regulations, apps for assistive communication, incorporation of the "talkers" in conjunction with speech therapy and occupational therapy, and resources in the community for accessing this technology on a long-term basis. Cases for the devices are also important – we chose Gripcases because they are light and shock-absorbent. (*We're thankful to Gripcase USA for donating 5 to our project!*)

Features like guided access will show parents how to set limits and boundaries around using the device as a "talker" as opposed to an entertainment device, which are both valid uses of the technology but the distinct roles need to be made clear to children as well as parents in order for the device to be used effectively. We'll also talk about how many children can benefit from these devices, including children who have some verbal ability and children who have mobility and accessibility needs.

Most importantly, the devices do not stand alone as a communication system. The most important part of the process is that the families, support staff, school staff, and other members of the community find ways to play, socialize, and communicate with the child. iPads are also not the solution for every child. Often a combination of high tech and low tech solutions is going to be the most sustainable option. But to not give children with special needs the opportunity to explore this technology and find their own voice would be the greatest failure.

**For more information and to find out the date of the next iPad workshop, call the Warmline: 415-920-5040.**

*Jimi Gilroy is the Assistive Communication Coordinator at SFCD. He is also an Early Interventionist for ABC Special Start in San Francisco and a presenter for San Francisco SafeStart. He speaks Spanish and Mandarin and he has a background in Sociolinguistics and child development.*



## SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A support and resource organization providing services for families of children with disabilities

### Our Services

#### CALL US:

(415) 920-5040

#### EMAIL US:

info@supportforfamilies.org

#### VISIT US:

1663 Mission Street  
7th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

#### GO TO OUR WEBSITE:

[www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)  
to get the latest information  
on workshops, events and  
new resources.



[facebook.com/  
supportforfamiliesf](https://facebook.com/supportforfamiliesf)

#### Phone Line/Drop-in Center

Get individualized information, referrals, and answers to all your questions from Support for Families staff, who are parents themselves. Staff will follow up to make sure you get the answers you need. Staff speak English, Spanish, and Cantonese. Caregiving for children available 4:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

#### Resource Library

Access more than 3,500 books, videotapes, DVDs and a toy lending collection for families and professionals. Visit the library catalog online at: [www.supportforfamilies.org/library.html](http://www.supportforfamilies.org/library.html). On-site computer access and hands-on assistance is also available.

#### Support Groups

Come to a support group to find solutions to challenges, learn advocacy skills, and explore resources. Support groups provide a network for families to gain strength by sharing experiences with peers.

#### Volunteer Parent Mentors

Find a match with a trained volunteer Parent Mentor based on a shared issue, condition and or situation.

#### Educational Workshops and Clinics

Learn about resources, rights, and responsibilities in monthly parent/professional workshops and weekly small-

group clinics. Care giving for children and interpretation services are available with advance reservation for clinics and workshops.

#### Case Management

Get peer support from parents or a professional consultation from mental health clinicians who can help families and professionals access mental health and other services for children.

#### Family Gatherings

Socialize and network in a fun relaxed atmosphere at our events, such as our annual ice-skating party, Halloween party, and Movie Nights.

#### Newsletter

Read the quarterly newsletter in English, Spanish, or Chinese to find articles of interest to families and professionals.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of Support for Families is to ensure that families of children with any kind of disability or special health care need have the knowledge and support to make informed choices that enhance their children's development and well being. Through fostering partnership among families, professionals and the community, our children can flourish.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### How You Can Help

All services and events, even childcare, are always free of charge to encourage participation by all families. With the demand for services greater than ever, your donations help make this possible. A gift to Support

for Families means that families of children with special needs will be better prepared to help their children—and that more children with disabilities will live their lives with dignity and opportunity.

Send a check to the address below or give online at [www.supportforfamilies.org/help.html](http://www.supportforfamilies.org/help.html). Every gift can help make a difference in the life of a child with special needs.

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## Support Groups

**All support groups are free of charge.** Childcare is provided unless otherwise indicated and must be reserved in advance. If you are interested in participating in any of these groups, call (415) 920-5040 or e-mail us at support-groups@supportforfamilies.org for more information.

**Asperger's Group:** For families who have children with Asperger's Syndrome. Meets: Quarterly on Thursdays, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m.

**Autism Group:** Meets 4th Tuesday evening of the month, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Cantonese SFCD Group:** For Chinese-speaking families of children with special needs. Meets: every 2nd Saturday of the month, 1:00p.m. - 3:00p.m.

**Children with Cerebral Palsy Peer Group:** A group for children with Cerebral Palsy. Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month, 5:30p.m. - 6:30p.m.

**Parents of Children with Cerebral Palsy Group:** A group for parents/caregivers who have children with Cerebral Palsy (concurrent with Children's Group). Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month, 5:30p.m. - 6:30p.m.

**Chinatown Child Development Center:** For Chinese-speaking families of children with special needs. Meets: Every 3rd Monday of the month, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Down Syndrome Support Group:** For parents and caregivers of children with Down Syndrome. Meets the 2nd Tuesday evening of the month, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Foster Parent Support Group:** For foster parents of children with

special needs. Please contact the Warmline if interested and/or to find out dates of next session.

**Living with Loss: Loss, Hope and Healing:** A group for parents and caretakers of medically fragile children and children facing life threatening illness. Contact our warmline for more information.

**Mission Head Start Group:** For Spanish-speaking families of children birth to five with special needs. Meets 2nd Wednesday of the month, Sept - May, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**Parent Toddler Playgroup:** A group for parents/caretakers and their children ages 18-42 months with disabilities or special health care needs. Please contact the Warmline if interested and/or to find out dates of next session.

**Parents of Transition Age Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities:** Join us for information, resources and support for the issues we and our youth face as they reach adulthood. Meets 1st Tuesday of the month, 6:00 p.m - 8:00 p.m.

**Prader-Willi Group:** For families of children with Prader-Willi Syndrome. Meets quarterly on Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (Next date 9/21)

**Spanish Parent Support Group:** A group for Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities, special

health care needs, and behavioral challenges. 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10:00am - 12:00pm.

**Tuesday Night Group:** A group for parents who have children with a disability or special health care needs. Meets two Tuesdays per month, 6:45 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Please contact the Support for Families Warmline at (415) 920-5040 or supportgroups@supportforfamilies.org for information about support groups being offered or if you are interested in a group on a specific issue. We have staff who speak English, Spanish, and Cantonese.**





## Clinics and Parent-Professional Workshops (PPWs)

Workshops and Clinics are **FREE** and held at **Support for Families (SFCD)**, 1663 Mission St, 7th Floor (between Duboce St and South Van Ness Ave). Workshops and clinics begin promptly.

**\*Reservations are required.\*** To attend, reserve childcare and/or interpretation services, you must call at least one week in advance: 415-920-5040.

### **WORKSHOPS**

#### **Top 10 Tips for Fostering Social Success**

*Friday, September 13; 10:00am - 12:00pm*

We will discuss how to use behavioral strategies to foster successful social interactions. Parents will learn how to identify skills to target with their child based on developmental stages of play, select an appropriate environment and peers, and provide reinforcement for social interactions to encourage independence. *Presenter: Kelly Flavin, BCBA, Gateway Learning Group*

#### **iPads/Apps Can Help Individuals with Special Needs**

*Saturday, September 14; 8:30am - 12:30pm*

This workshop is all about how iPads and apps can create a dynamic and cost-effective learning, leisure, communication, and social skills toolkit for individuals with special needs. Shannon will also discuss fundraising, accessories, and how she and her autistic son make the most of their apps. *Presenter: Shannon Des Roches Rosa, Autism Parenting and iPad Advocate, Thinking Person's Guide to Autism*

#### **Making Inclusion Work: Supporting the Family-Teacher-School Partnership**

*Saturday, October 12; 8:30am - 12:30pm*

The presenters will explore specific, creative ways for teachers, administrators and families to understand each other's perspectives, and combine them to offer support to all children. They will show how differing views of children can work as an asset, rather than an obstacle to partnership and effective planning. *Presenter: Todd Wanerman, head teacher and administrator, The Little School*

#### **Beyond Learning How to Read: Strategies to Encourage Literacy in Students with ADHD and Dyslexia**

*Friday, October 18; 10:00am-12:00pm*

We will discuss critical steps in developing literacy, including interventions for learning to read and understand what is read, and how to foster a love of reading and learning. *Presenter: Beth Powell, Director, The Reading Clinic*

#### **Using Sign Language with All Children**

*Wednesday, October 23; 10:00am - 12:00pm*

This workshop will show that American Sign Language (ASL) and signing is beneficial and fun for every child. We will discuss the benefits of signing for children who can hear as well as for those who have hearing challenges. Some basic ASL will be taught as well as tools for teaching your child. *Presenter: Teri Voorhes, Advanced Signing Time Instructor*

#### **Special Needs Planning Considerations**

*Tuesday, October 29; 10:00am - 12:00pm*

Future planning when a loved one has special needs can be difficult. Consider the following questions: What public benefits might your child need? How can a Special Needs Trust be tailored to your child's situation? When might a Conservatorship be appropriate? We'll answer all these questions and more in "plain English"! *Presenter: Estate planning attorney Ellen Cookman, Lakin Spears LLP*

#### **Advocating for a Bully Free World**

*Saturday, November 9; 8:30am - 12:30pm*

We will discuss the Federal and State laws that protect individuals with disabilities against bullying, hate crimes, and harassment based on disability. You can play a critical part in creating a bully-free world through advocacy. *Presenter: Suge Lee, CAP Attorney, Disability Rights California*

#### **iPads and Disability**

*Friday, November 15; 10:00am - 12:00pm*

*Presenter: Jenny Kronos, MA, BCBA, Touch Autism LLC*

### **CLINICS**

*For dates/times of clinics, see Calendar of Events on p. 8.*

#### **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Clinics**

*Presented by SFCD.* Learn about Special Education law, the IEP process, what to do when things aren't working, and how to become a more active/effective team member.

#### **Transition to Adult Services Clinic**

*Presented by SFCD.* Learn about special education transition services for children over 16 and how to participate in the development of your child's transition plan.



# Calendar of Events

## September 2013

Sept 2	SFCD CLOSED	Holiday
Sept 5	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Cantonese
Sept 12	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - English
Sept 13	10:00am - 12:00pm	PPW: Top 10 Tips for Fostering Social Success
Sept 14	8:30am - 12:30pm	PPW: Yes, iPads and Apps Really Can Help Individuals with Special Needs
Sept 17	5:30pm - 8:30pm	Parent Mentor Program (PMP) Special Education Series - English
Sept 18	10:00am - 1:00pm	PMP Special Education Series - Spanish
Sept 19	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Spanish
Sept 26	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Transition to Adult Services
Sept 26	6:30pm - 8:30pm	SFUSD Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

## October 2013

Oct 3	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Cantonese
Oct 4	6:00pm - 10:00pm	wine+design: SFCD's Annual Fundraiser
Oct 10	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - English
Oct 12	8:30am - 12:30pm	PPW: Making Inclusion Work
Oct 15	5:30pm - 8:30pm	PMP Special Ed Series - English
Oct 16	10:00am - 1:00pm	PMP Special Ed Series - Spanish
Oct 17	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Spanish
Oct 18	10:00am - 12:00pm	PPW: Beyond Learning How to Read

Oct 23	10:00am - 12:00pm	PPW: Using Sign Language with All Children and an Introduction to Signing
Oct 24	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Transition to Adult Services
Oct 24	6:30pm - 8:30pm	CAC Meeting
Oct 26	5:30pm - 8:00pm	Halloween Party - Aquarium of the Bay
Oct 29	10:00am - 12:00pm	PPW: Special Needs Planning

## November 2013

Nov 7	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Cantonese
Nov 9	8:30am - 12:30pm	PPW: Advocating for Bully-Free World
Nov 14	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - English
Nov 15	10:00am - 12:00pm	PPW: iPads and Disability
Nov 19	5:30pm - 8:30pm	PMP Special Ed Series - English
Nov 20	10:00am - 1:00pm	PMP Special Ed Series - Spanish
Nov 21	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Spanish
Nov 28	CANCELLED	Transition to Adult Services
Nov 28-29	SFCD CLOSED	Holiday

## December 2013

Dec 5	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Cantonese
Dec 7	8:30am - 4:30pm	PMP Parent 2 Parent Training
Dec 12	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - English
Dec 19	4:00pm - 6:00pm	IEP Clinic - Spanish
Dec 21	6:00pm - 8:00pm	Holiday Ice Skating Party
Dec 25	SFCD CLOSED	Holiday
Dec 26	CANCELLED	Transition to Adult Services

For more information on any of these events, please call us at (415) 920-5040 or visit us at [www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org).

## HALLOWEEN PARTY AT AQUARIUM OF THE BAY AT PIER 39!



for children with disabilities  
and their families and friends



**Saturday, October 26, 2013**

5:30—8:00 pm

Come dressed in your favorite costume and enjoy arts & crafts, a movie showing and more! Event is free; donations welcome.

**Space is limited! Register by calling 415-920-5040**

**Public Transportation:** Take the "F" Fisherman's Wharf to Pier 39.



## HOLIDAY ICE-SKATING PARTY For children with disabilities and their families

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2013

6:00pm-8:00 pm

**Yerba Buena Ice Skating Center**

750 Folsom Street (between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Streets  
on the rooftop of the Moscone Center)

Come enjoy an evening of ice skating, refreshments, and fun with your family and friends! Event is free, which includes entrance, skates, and treats for each child; donations welcome.

**Space is limited; event filled up in 3 days last year!**  
Call 415-920-5040 beginning Nov 1 to reserve space.

For more information about these family events go to: [www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)

## SFCD PMP – A Testimonial

By Joan E. Selby, Parent Mentor Program Coordinator

*The Parent Mentor Program (PMP) provides families with an additional resource in helping them find support. It is supported by parent volunteers trained to help other parents around similar experiences. How wonderful is our PMP? Let us share one Parent Mentor's testimonial...*

The Parent Mentor Program (PMP) at Support for Families of Children with Disabilities (SFCD) is literally my lifeline of support. I can't imagine navigating the complicated and stressful world of disabilities without it.

Fortunately I was connected with a couple of parent mentors shortly after my child was diagnosed, a time when I felt depressed, overwhelmed and confused. My dear mentors were there for me emotionally, in ways that my closest family and friends weren't able to be. After helping me cope, my mentors empowered me by providing me with extremely useful and specific information. They gave me the support and courage to start the process to get services for my child. Over the years, the PMP has connected me with other amazing mentors when unique challenges arose and specific guidance was needed.

One of the aspects that makes the PMP so successful is that incoming parents are matched with other parents who have shared experiences. Most of the agencies and service providers that we deal with are not forthcoming about providing critical information. I have learned that parents helping parents is the most effective way of learning what we need to advocate for our children.

I was so inspired by my mentors that I decided to participate in the Parent Mentor Training program, a supportive environment in which to learn and ask questions about the intricacies of special education law. I now mentor other parents and in doing so, I am able to share my experiences and successes so they can advocate for their children and get them the services that they need.

In turn this makes me feel wonderful knowing that my experiences and knowledge may help other families.



Rachel, her son, and her husband Jeff

The PMP is one of the most cherished services that SFCD offers. Whenever I meet a parent who is new to the world of disabilities, the first thing I do is tell them about SFCD and suggest that they get a mentor through the PMP.

—Rachel Goldstein

### Become a Parent Mentor!

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Mentor, please contact us. We are currently registering parents for the next eight-month Special Education training series starting this September and ending in May 2014. The PMP Special Education training series covers various areas, including evaluations and assessments, the IEP Process, and Related Services to help Parent Mentors get a perspective of the Special Education system.

For information or to register, please contact:

- **Joan E. Selby** (English): 415-282-7494 x113  
jselby@supportforfamilies.org, OR
- **JoAnna Van Brusselen** (Spanish): 415-282-7494 x141  
jvanbrusselen@supportforfamilies.org

*Note: Registration through Joan (English) or JoAnna (Spanish) is required.*

**PMP**

## Volunteers needed for upcoming Special Events in 2013!

### Fundraising Gala: Friday, October 4, 2013

Volunteers needed for the following shifts:

- **11:30am – 3pm, 1pm-5pm:** Help load up supplies at the SFCD offices/ unload and set up event at The Galleria at the San Francisco Design Center
- **5pm-10pm:** Guest check in, Greeters, Raffle sales, assist with live auction purchases, bid sheet processing, and guest check out (Note: Must be 21 or over to volunteer during this shift)
- **9:30pm-11:30pm:** Clean-up, load vans

### Family Events:

- **Halloween Party**, Aquarium of the Bay – Saturday, October 26
- **Holiday Ice Skating**, Yerba Buena Ice Rink – Saturday, December 21

*For more information about volunteering with Support for Families, please contact Teri Lynes, Volunteer Manager: tlynes@supportforfamilies.org or 415-282-7494 ext. 121*

## Why inclusion?

*San Francisco Inclusion Networks, a program of Support for Families, is assisting numerous early childhood programs throughout the city to build their capacity to include young children with disabilities. Through monthly workshops for providers and families as well as coaching, consultation and technical assistance at Preschool for All programs, preschool program staff are sharpening their skills in creating welcoming, inclusive, and high quality learning environments for our youngest citizens. Contact 415-282-7494 x122 to find out more about the free services and trainings.*

*Teachers and families often ask how the practice of inclusion came about. This article describes its legal basis, and also provides an overview of the benefits that result when children with disabilities are active participants in school and community life.*

**Inclusion** is the principle that supports the education of children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers rather than separately. Ever since *Brown v. Board of Education* held that separate was not equal, inclusion has been part of this requirement to provide equal educational opportunities. Both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Sec. 504) require schools and agencies to provide equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Another primary source for the inclusion requirement is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. IDEA not only supports equal educational opportunities, it specifically requires schools to support inclusion of children with disabilities through the least restrictive and natural environment mandates. For preschool and school age children (ages 3-21), IDEA requires that children with disabilities be educated in the “least restrictive environment” (§1412(a)(5) and §1413(a)(1)). For infants and toddlers (ages 0-3) with disabilities, IDEA promotes the use of “natural environments” for early intervention services (§1432(4)(G)).

### American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Children with disabilities are entitled to equal access to all early childhood (Head Start and preschool programs) and child care facilities (center-based and family child care).
- Programs cannot create eligibility standards that discriminate against or screen out children with disabilities.
- Programs must make reasonable accommodations on an individual basis to allow everyone to participate in the services and opportunities offered.

### Why does federal law support inclusion in schools and services?

While inclusion is justified as part of equal educational opportunities, in enacting IDEA (and in each subsequent revision of the law) Congress has also recognized the benefits of inclusion. Section §1400(5) of IDEA states: “Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by...ensuring

their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible.”

### Inclusion

In addition to the academic benefits of inclusion, courts have long recognized that there are non-educational benefits to inclusion that are important to the quality of life of children with disabilities—such as the opportunity to make friends and increase acceptance among their peers (*Daniel R.R. v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 1989; *Sacramento City Sch. Dist. v. Rachel H.*, 1994). Federal law thus recognizes and supports inclusion because of the developmental, educational, and social benefits that inclusion provides to children with disabilities.

### How does federal law define inclusion and what does it involve?

Inclusion is not specifically defined in the law, but is supported through the equal opportunity, least restrictive and natural environment mandates. Together these requirements support inclusion in three areas: placement of the child with children who do not have disabilities, access to the standard educational or developmental curriculum, and participation in typical non-academic activities.

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) have developed a joint position statement on early childhood inclusion. (For more information on that definition and specifics on access, participation and supports for inclusion, visit <http://community.fpg.unc.edu>.)

### Policy differences for different age groups— early intervention (ages 0-3) vs. special education (ages 3- 21)

These general principles of intervention underlying inclusion apply to children of all ages (0-21 years): a placement in regular classrooms and settings, access to the general development or educational curriculum, and participation in typical activities. The specific requirements for services in a natural environment (ages 0-3) and education in the least restrictive environment (ages 3-21) differ in two important ways. First, for children 0-3 years of age, natural environments include homes and other community locations where children without disabilities participate (§1432(4)(G)). Even though the home is an arguably separate environment, it is considered an inclusive environment for an infant or toddler because most children without disabilities at this age are cared for in the home. In other words, the home is inclusive for infants and toddlers because it is a typical setting for infants and toddlers who don't have disabilities. For children age 3-21, the home is not considered an inclusive environment. Second, for children 3-21 years of age, the least restrictive environment includes a continuum of placements (§ 1412(a)(5)) from fully inclusive (the general education classroom) to fully separate (special school) with a lot of different options in between, such as the use of a part-time

# Thank you!

Support for Families gratefully acknowledges gifts from the following individuals, groups and businesses received May 1, 2013 through July 31, 2013. We apologize for any omissions or misspellings; please contact us so we can correct our records. *Wine+Design 2013 sponsors and donors will be listed in our Winter 2013-2014 issue.*

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## Development

resource room. Natural environments do not have a spectrum of inclusion—they either are natural environments or they are not. The home is considered just as much of a natural environment as a child care setting that children without disabilities attend. When trying to decide between natural environments (i.e., the home or inclusive child care setting), either of which would qualify as "full inclusion" for an infant or toddler, the natural environment that is likely to provide the most benefit to the child should be selected (§1435(16)(B)).

*Excerpt from CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge. (2012). Policy advisory: The law on inclusive education (Rev. ed.). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author. This document was developed with Matthew Stowe, J.D., Beach Center on Disability, University of Kansas. Updates based on changes to Part C Regulations made by Anna Stagg, M.Ed., with input from Lynda Pletcher, M.Ed. (February 2012). Updated by Pam Winton March 2013.*



### Patxi's Pizza Fundraiser

Tuesday, September 10; 11am - 10pm  
511 Hayes St. (at Octavia), SF, CA 94102

Support for Families is partnering with Patxi's Pizza and **10% of ALL sales - ALL day long\*** will come back to us!

On 9/10, tell your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to dine with us or order Patxi's for a lunch meeting, party or seminar. Organize a happy hour or dinner with friends or family!

\*Dine-in or Dine-out, delivery, catering, wine/beer, even gift cards for gifts or to use at a later date— all sales are included!

Questions? Contact Mary Rhoades, Development Manager, 415.282.7974 x132; [mrhoades@supportforfamilies.org](mailto:mrhoades@supportforfamilies.org)



**SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES  
OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**  
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- Phone Line & Drop-In Center
- Information & Resources
- Resource Library
- Support Groups
- Parent Mentor Program
- Educational Workshops
- Family Gatherings
- Short-term Counseling
- Community Outreach
- Website: [www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)

This NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in English, Spanish & Chinese. If you have a question or comment, email us: [info@supportforfamilies.org](mailto:info@supportforfamilies.org)

### Support for Families

1663 Mission Street, 7th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
T: 415.282.7494  
F: 415.282.1226

### Family Resource Center Warmline, Information, and Referral

1663 Mission Street, 7th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
T: 415.920.5040

*Support for Families strives to present families and professionals with a wide range of views and options in its materials and trainings.*

*The materials and trainings are not necessarily comprehensive, are not meant to be exhaustive, nor are they an endorsement of the author and/or presenter.*

*If you would like to offer feedback or if you know of additional resources, speakers and/or materials that may be helpful, please contact us at [info@supportforfamilies.org](mailto:info@supportforfamilies.org).*

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