

A Community Advisory Council Testimonial (CAC): To a General Education Teacher

Dear Mrs. Yin,

Thank you, Mrs. Yin, for your outstanding dedication to inclusive practices. It is important I acknowledge how appreciative I am of your commitment to inclusive practices for Marcella, my beautiful granddaughter. Little did I know when I was the principal of West Portal School – one of the first schools to implement inclusive practices – I would have a grandchild who would be an “inclusion student.”

Our school became one of the original San Francisco Unified School District schools for inclusive education. We honored that hope and nurtured an inclusion model for our students, earning national recognition for inclusive practices.

Mrs. Yin, you deserve national recognition for your inclusive practices for children with disabilities. You include Marcella in a very positive manner, unifying the special education and general education systems:

- After you observed Marcella in the classroom at the beginning of the year, you recognized her physical needs and readjusted the classroom space to accommodate her walker and her needs to ambulate throughout the learning environment.
- You do a preview of field trips - talking to her and her family about the physical environments and difficulties she may encounter and discuss strategies to resolve those difficulties.
- If there is a ramp for Marcella, you use it for all of the children. If the terrain is too adverse, you find another way for the class to travel, ensuring Marcella is not excluded.
- You promote communication for families so everyone is aware of upcoming programs and activities. (Your classroom blog with delightful pictures tells the story of your inclusive classroom.) You welcome families into the classroom – and encourage volunteering and visitation. You consistently communicate through e-mail – building trust and promoting inclusion by informing Marcella’s family of activities so they can help prepare her for school experiences.
- You work closely with the classroom paraprofessional to accommodate instruction to meet Marcella’s special needs. You also work with her special support teachers in an effort to learn more about how she learns and what strategies you can use to support her learning.
- You listen – to Marcella – and her family.
- You take ownership of Marcella’s school classroom program – not passing her off to support staff as a “special education” student.
- You don’t allow bullying or “put-downs” and promote kindness and caring as an integral part of your classroom.

I observe so many good teaching strategies when I visit Room 106 – speaking at a pace that benefits young children – providing adequate wait time – varying activities so students need not sit too long – building on children’s strengths and recognizing different abilities – and being well-planned so instructional time is maximized.

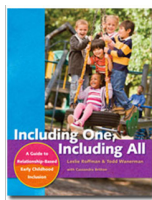
Thank you, Mrs. Yin, for being a teacher who goes beyond these excellent teaching strategies to build an inclusive community where all children are valued equally.

Yours truly,
Jeanne Villafuerte

Jeanne Villafuerte is a Grandmother and 1st Vice Chair of the CAC SPED.

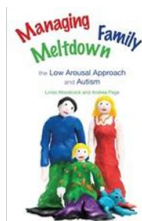
Reviews from the Joan Cassel Memorial Library,

By, Elaine Butler, Librarian



Including One, Including All,
by Leslie Roffman
& Todd Wanerman,
with Cassandra Britton

The authors are teachers at The Little School in San Francisco. The book targets preschool teachers and advocates methods of including all children in the school. They show how to determine strengths and challenges and build relationships with the children and families through their Engage-Reflect-Plan cycle. Includes a comprehensive Contents page, three Appendices and References.



Managing Family Meltdown, the Low Arousal Approach and Autism,
by Linda Woodcock
and Andrea Page

Children with Autism have some challenging behaviors. This book written in the UK offers a low arousal approach to these behaviors. The book also discusses how a parent’s own behavior influences the child. There is also a section on the pros and cons of medication. Includes: Contents, International Resources, Bibliography and References.

Support for Families maintains the Joan Cassel Memorial Library which is a lending library for families and professionals, comprised of multi-lingual books, reference materials and media related to children with disabilities and special health care needs. The library is open during regular business hours. Please visit us at our new location.

Visit our library online at: <http://www.supportforfamilies.org/library.html>





Annual Report - Highlights of Programs and Services in 2010

Information

The Phone Line and Drop-In Services at Support for Families offer families and professionals information, resources, referrals and guidance. Community Resource Parents provide information in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin. The Joan Cassel Memorial Library lends books and media materials for families and professionals, and includes a toy lending collection. The library catalogue is now online. Resource Packets in three languages on specific topics such as Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Behavior and Autism provide another source of information. The SFCD website www.supportforfamilies.org provides information on events at Support for Families and in the Bay Area, and links to resources from around the nation. Computers are available for families to use and if desired, they can receive help from staff in accessing online resources. Several listserves keep families and professionals up to date. The quarterly Newsletter features articles relating to children and youth with disabilities. Spanish and Chinese editions are published and distributed to families throughout San Francisco.

Education

Education activities include parent-professional workshops, small group clinics, trainings, parent panels, and conferences. Topics for workshops and trainings during the year included Early Intervention, Behavior, Inclusion, Sensory Integration, Family Centered Care, the Individual Education Program (IEP), and many more. Weekly small group clinics on the IEP and transition issues offered more individualized help for families. Free on-site childcare made it easier for families to attend. Clinics were presented in English, Spanish, and Cantonese; simultaneous translation was available for workshops and trainings. An annual Information and Resource Conference was held in March and offered a full day of educational activities. The Conference provided families and professionals with a wealth of information and opportunities to network with one another.

Family-to-Family Support

Support Groups offer peer support, information, and resources to parents, caretakers and siblings of children with disabilities. Continuing support groups in 2010 included those for Spanish speakers, Cantonese speakers, families with mental health issues, families of young children, families dealing with specific disabilities, and more.

Volunteer Parent Mentors are parents of children with disabilities who complete extensive training. Mentors are matched with other parents to offer support and resources on an individualized basis. Mental Health Services in 2010 included short-term counseling, referral, and case management available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

Family Recreational and Social Events provide relaxing, fun opportunities for families to get together and enjoy themselves. More than 1,100 parents, children and volunteers attended free family events during 2010, including Family Fun Day, the Halloween Party, and a Holiday Ice Skating Party. Also this year marked the 2nd annual Access to Adventure, a health and recreation fair for kids with special health care needs or disabilities.

City- and Statewide Partnerships

In 2010, Support for Families remained actively involved in several local and statewide projects to improve services and systems, often taking a leadership role. These included Family Voices of California, the Family Resource Centers Network of California, the High Risk Infant Interagency Council, The Special Needs Inclusion Project, and others.

Impact of Support for Families

- Community Resource Parents (CRPs) provided individualized support to 735 families (unduplicated count).
- CRPs made 3,495 phone and in person contacts with families and 1,825 contacts with professionals.
- There were 2,443 newsletter subscribers, including 490 who receive the newsletter electronically – in English, Spanish and Chinese.
- 2070 caregivers and professionals attended 265 workshops, trainings and clinics, including the Parent Mentor trainings.
- More than 400 families and professionals attended the 2010 Information and Resource Conference which featured 22 workshops and 60 exhibitors.
- There were 108 matches through the Parent Mentor program with 120 active English and Spanish-speaking Mentors.
- 997 volunteers provided 3,457 hours of service.
- There were 296,041 visitors to the SFCD website.

For a complete Annual Report call 415-282-7494 or download from the Support for Families website at www.supportforfamilies.org

Thank you!

Donations received October 19, 2010 through December 31, 2010

Support for Families gratefully acknowledges gifts from the following individuals, groups and businesses. We apologize for any omissions or misspellings. Please contact us so we can correct our records.

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accomplished!*
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for their amazing efforts
and contributions to
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- Support Groups
- Parent Mentor Program
- Educational Workshops
- Family Gatherings
- Short-term Counseling
- Community Outreach
- Website:

www.supportforfamilies.org

This NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in English, Spanish & Chinese. If you have a question or comment, send it to info@supportforfamilies.org

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