



SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010

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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.

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, September 24, 2010



Join us for an evening of Italian food and Italian music to raise money for Support for Families.

Where: Italian Athletic Club, 1630 Stockton Street, San Francisco

When: September 24, 2010. 7 to 10 pm

Honoring:

Camilla Bixler, AASCEND
Audrey Vernick, Camp Bennett
AAA

And don't miss our special online auction starting October 8, 2010.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Linda at 415-282-7494 or ltung@supportforfamilies.org and check out the website at www.supportforfamilies.org/fundraiser.

THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER SENT BY POSTAL MAIL ! A Special Note from the Executive Director Juno Duenas

Dear Families and Friends:

SFCD is going green! Please help us. If you have been receiving a "paper" newsletter in the mail **THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER SENT BY POSTAL MAIL**. To receive SFCD's quarterly newsletter via email (or if you prefer to continue to receive the newsletter by mail), contact Support for Families at (415) 920-5040 or email info@supportforfamilies.org and let us know your email and/or postal address. Your privacy is always assured; Support for Families does not share its mailing lists with anyone!

The printed newsletter will continue to be mailed to families who receive it in Spanish or Chinese, or who live within areas of San Francisco for which we have special funding. To ensure that there is no interruption in your free newsletter subscription, please contact us as soon as possible and confirm your email or mailing address. Thank you for your understanding.

A Tribute to Polly Arango



Family Voices of California joins with our friends and colleagues at Family Voices and across the nation in mourning the passing of Family Voices founding Executive Director, Polly Arango. Polly inspired a nationwide network of disability advocates and was the reason many parents of children with disabilities mobilized. Polly was a co-founder of Family Voices, the national nonprofit that has inspired and incubated State Affiliates across the nation. Polly also founded Parents Reaching Out, an Albuquerque-based nonprofit that helped educate and advocate for New Mexico parents of disabled children.

“She thought that the most vulnerable needed a voice,” Polly’s daughter Francesca Wilson said. “She thought families who have children with dis-

abilities are just pushed aside, and a lot of times they don’t speak up for themselves.”

When it was discovered that her adopted son, Nicolas, had a severe developmental disability, Polly shifted her emphasis to securing a full education and access to health care for children with chronic health conditions, and to organizing other families. “She said the way she and my brother were treated by the medical and educational community drove her to take action,” Wilson said of her mother.

Polly’s courageous legacy included: acted as a plaintiff in the Jackson case, a huge class action suit filed in 1987, that led to the deinstitutionalization of people with developmental disabilities in New Mexico; worked with New Mexico legislators to create major changes in programs for children with developmental disabilities (creation of the Medically Fragile Children’s Program, New Mexico High Risk Insurance Pool, expanding coverage for children in Medicaid Waiver Programs); served on committees, institutes, boards and always advocated for a significant role for parents

in designing and delivering services for children, and for reasonableness and transparency in government; authored many articles and book chapters; and spoke frequently at meetings around the country.

Polly, on behalf of all the children and youth with special health care needs and their families in California who have benefitted from your spirit, your heart and your work, thank you. Polly’s own words will continue to inspire us to keep moving and working:

“Let us remember as each of us makes decisions that will affect children—whether we are parents, educators, health professionals, or government officials— it is our duty to consider if that decision either affirms or denies a child’s most basic human rights.” –Polly Arango

Sources: Juan Carlos Rodriguez, “Polly Arango: Everyone Deserves Better,” Albuquerque Journal, NM, June 28, 2010 and Polly’s obituary: (<http://obits.abqjournal.com/obits/show/207083>).

Tara Robinson is the Manager for Family Voices of CA. To sign up for the statewide listserv or free monthly webinar trainings, please visit the website at www.familyvoicesofca.org.

Meet SFCD Board Member Eileen Boussina

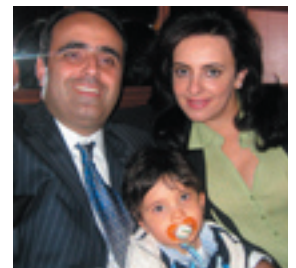
When my husband and I brought Michael home from the hospital, I thought that his significant challenges would make my life forever sad. It has not! I am happy in ways that I would never have imagined before. My heart, and my husband’s, has grown bigger and Michael has taught us to see how accepting, loving and capable we really are as parents.

Michael’s birth began a unique training in patience for me. Having a child with delays in development is no walk in the park. I gave up working as an attorney to devote my time to helping him reach his goals. Goals are painstakingly met. However, when a milestone is reached, the elation that everyone feels is a high like no other.

In order to help Michael reach his potential, we had to navigate the world of disability and find all the relevant resources that were available. Through the help of SFCD, we were able to learn about and obtain all therapies available and how to advocate for Michael’s educational needs. I have never met a more competent and professional group of people or such amazing parents as I have through SFCD. For this I will be forever grateful.

Having support is crucial at all child development stages. I hope you will visit SFCD and come back often, as we are always adding new information, activities and resources. It is truly an honor and a privilege to be involved

with this great organization. The support I have received is comforting and invaluable.



Eileen Boussina lives in San Francisco with her husband, Nersi, & her son, Michael. She frequently attends the SFCD Tuesday Parent Group and recently completed the intensive 8-month Parent Mentor Training series on Special Education. She is honored and privileged to be involved with SFCD and couldn’t imagine getting by without it.

Kidpower Safety Tips: Facing Bullying with Confidence

By Kidpower Executive Director/Co-Founder Irene van der Zande

Thank you to Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International for permission to use this article from their exceptional "People Safety" curriculum. Kidpower has long been a nonprofit leader in empowering people of all ages and abilities to learn personal safety skills and building self-confidence. For more information, visit www.kidpower.org or call 1-800-467-6697 ext #1

Here are some skills to help children and teens deal with bullying.

1. Walking with awareness, calm, and confidence.

People of any age are less likely to be bothered if they seem aware, calm, and confident. Practice holding your body tall but not tense, looking around with a relaxed face as if the world around you is interesting, and walking confidently.

2. Feeling one way and acting another.

It's normal to feel scared or angry when people are bullying, but showing fear, anger, or aggression makes bullying problems bigger. Help kids imagine that they are feeling mad, sad, or scared while they practice moving with awareness and confidence so those feelings do not show.

3. Leaving in a powerful, positive way.

The best self-defense tactic is called "target denial," which means "don't be there." Help children practice using their awareness to notice possible problems early and then calmly, confidently move out of reach before the problems grow.

4. Setting a boundary.

Teach children to put their hands up in front of them and say in a clear, calm, firm voice, "Stop!" Coach children to hold their bodies tall, look directly at the problem with a calm face, and use a clear voice that is not whiney or aggressive.

5. Filtering hurtful words.

Mean words are like trash. If we take them in our bodies, we can feel bad. Help kids imagine catching mean words so they don't go inside. We can throw the mean words away. The idea of a screen around their hearts and minds often helps older kids let in the words that help them grow, learn, and have fun while keeping out the words that break them down.

6. Speaking up for inclusion.

Shunning is a serious form of bullying. Exclusion should be clearly against school and youth group rules. Kids can practice persisting in asking to join a game. They can also practice taking quick, confident action when they notice another being left out.

7. Getting help - and persisting.

Children are still learning social skills. Without calm, consistent adult guidance, they will hurt each other. Teach kids to get help from adults if they are unable to stop a problem. Because adults so often say, "Solve it yourself," coach kids to practice saying, calmly and confidently, "I tried to solve it myself. The problem is getting worse. Please help."

8. Using physical self-defense as a last resort.

Children need to know when they have the right to hurt someone to stop that person from hurting them. At Kidpower, we teach that physical skills are a last resort - when you are about to be harmed and you cannot leave or get help. Talk with your kids about when it is and is not okay to hit or to kick another kid. If you give kids permission to use physical bully skills, be sure to teach them age-appropriate skills that are unlikely to cause serious injury, such as a single soccer kick to the shin.

Sue Kuyper is our Mental Health Social Worker and can be reached at 415-920-5040 X132 or via email at skuyper@supportforfamilies.org. She speaks Spanish and English. Please call if you would like more information about our counseling, case management and support group services.

Special Needs Back to School Checklist

As summer draws to an end the days get shorter and the nights get longer. For many of us this is a sure sign that a new school year is just around the bend. This is a busy time of year for parents and we don't mean to pile on any more work. Instead, the following list is simply a series of suggestions that may make the lives of parents a bit easier in the long run. Parents of children with special needs can benefit from being proactive and from developing a positive working relationship with the teacher and classroom staff. This will also help ease the stressors of transitions on the student.

Get Organized: Consider getting a 3-ring binder or accordion file and begin to sort all of your paperwork. You can include IEP's (Individualized Education Program) from previous years, the current IEP, triennial reviews (every 3 years), assessments, progress reports, and report cards as well as any information from private doctors, therapists and counselors that are pertinent to your child's education and safety. Support for Families offers a workshop on this very topic.

Talk to Your Child: Have several positive conversations about the upcoming school year with your child. What are they looking forward to? What are their concerns? Take time to prepare them for changes in their daily routine. Parents can also read stories about the first day of school to their child. This will help ease the transition into a new school year. Discuss with your student what modification, supports and services he/she may be receiving and who to go to if there is an issue. Over time this will help your child develop their self advocacy skills.

Review Your Child's Current IEP: An IEP is a written legal document which outlines the student's present levels of performance (PLP's), as well as the intervention strategies and related services that will be provided by the district. Make sure that you become familiar with the accommodations, supports and services that are outlined in the IEP. This will help you better understand your child's services and prepare you to participate in your child's special education program.

Prepare Student Fact Sheet: The student fact sheet is a very important tool. It is a brief introduction about your child. It is best if kept to a page long and it should include a picture, brief history, areas of difficulty, the student's areas of interest and any relevant information that may have arisen during the summer.

Request a Meeting: As soon as possible make an appointment to meet with your child's new teacher. In this meeting you can discuss your child's abili-

ties, motivations and unique needs. During this meeting you can also develop a system for communicating with the teacher. You can also organize dates when you will follow up with the teacher about your child's progress in school. Another use for setting up meetings is to be proactive about your child's IEP. If you feel that something isn't working or that the IEP needs updating request an IEP meeting to address your concerns. You have the right to request this meeting at anytime during the school year.



Transportation: Introduce yourself and your child to your child's bus driver. On the bus is usually where the student starts their day and it can set the mood for the rest of the day. If your child has unique ways of communicating it can make all the difference if the bus driver understands this.

Get Involved: Become an active parent. Parental involvement comes in many shapes and sizes. Some examples are: Parents joining PTA (Parent Teacher Ass.) or CAC (Community Advisory Committee) and volunteering during and after school. If possible parents should try to attend their child's open house. At the open house you can become more familiar with the teacher, principal, classroom rules and expectations, and the curriculum. Most importantly you can use the opportunity to continue building your relationship with the teacher and other parents.

Think Long Term: Think about your child's educational goals and post-school future in advance. Too many times parents wait until their child turns 16 before they start developing a plan for their child's post school future. By then valuable time has passed. What are your goals for your child? What are your child's goals for themselves? Are they on a Diploma track or Certificate track? Come learn the difference and how to prepare for transition at our Transition Clinic and/or Transition Support Group.

Call Support for Families for assistance. Here at Support for Families we have a "warmline" where you can call in and have a Community Resource Parent review your IEP. The warmline is staffed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30am – 4:30pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30-8:30pm. Support for Families also offers a number of clinics, workshops and trainings that can help you as you navigate the special education system.

Joe R. Goyos is SFCD's Educational Manager and can be reached at jgoyos@supportforfamilies.org or at 415-920-5040 X118 if you would like more information about our educational programs, workshops and clinics.



SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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

Our Services

HOW YOU CAN USE US

CALL US AT:
(415) 920-5040

EMAIL US AT:
info@supportforfamilies.org

VISIT US AT:
1663 Mission Street
7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

GO TO OUR WEB SITE AT:
www.supportforfamilies.org
to get the latest information
on workshops, events and
new resources.

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 Cantonese, English, Spanish. Care giving for children available 4:30 to 8:30 pm 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: 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 culture, language, or disability issue.

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 available with advance reservation for clinics and workshops.

Family Links to Mental Health

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 quarterly events, such as our annual ice-skating party and Halloween party.

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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Laurie Strawn

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Juno Duenas

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 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 for more information.

Autism Group: Monthly support group for families of children with Autism. *Meets: 1st Wednesday of the month. Facilitated by Jackie Fox.* NO CHILD CARE PROVIDED.

Evening Autism Group: Meets 1st Tuesday evening of the month, 6:30-8:30pm. *Facilitated by Priya Mathur.*

Asperger's Group: For families who have children with Asperger's Syndrome. *Meets: 3rd Thursday of the month. Facilitated by Karen Haney-Owens*

Chinese-Speaking Groups

Chinatown Child Development Center: For Chinese-speaking families of children with special needs. *Meets: Every 3rd Monday of the month. Facilitated by Lisa Yee.*

SFCD Group: For Chinese-speaking families of children with special needs. *Meets: every 1st Saturday of the month. Facilitated by Mee Kit Yip-Li.*

Down Syndrome Support Group: For parents and caregivers of children with down. *Meets the 2nd Tuesday evening of the month. Facilitated by Judy Silva and Wes Horner.*

Foster Parent Group: A group for foster parents caring for children with special needs to exchange resources, support and information. *1st Thursday of the month, 6:00-7:30pm.*

Living with Loss: Loss, Hope and Healing: A group for parents and caretakers of medically fragile

children and children facing life threatening illness. *Facilitated by Nancy Iverson, MD.*

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 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Facilitated by Linda Tung.*

Prader-Willi Group: For families of children with Prader-Willi Syndrome. Sibling group also provided. *Facilitated by Sue Kuyper and Christina Lewis.*

Mission Head Start Group: For Spanish-speaking families of children birth to five with special needs. *Facilitated by Christine Reina.*

Tuesday Night Group: A group for parents who have children aged 3 and above with a disability or special health care needs. *Meets one Tuesday per month. Facilitated by Nina Boyle.*

NEW GROUPS FOR FALL 2010:

Behavior Discussion Group: A workshop series and discussion group for families concerned about their child's behavior. *Beginning first October 2010, 2nd Thursday of the month 6-7:30. Facilitated by Sue Kuyper*

Parents of Young Children Group: A group for parents who have children aged 0-3 with a disability or special health care needs. *Meets one Tuesday per month. Facilitated by Nina Boyle.*

Spanish-Speaking Children on Autism Spectrum: For Spanish-speaking families of children on the autism spectrum. *Time and date to be announced.*

Ongoing Clinics

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) CLINICS

4:00-6:00 PM

Presented by Support for Families

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

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) CLINICS

Presented by Katy Lusson, Ph.D., J.D., Disability Rights California

An overview of Social Security with a focus on SSI disability benefits. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the presenter to ask their individual questions.

TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES CLINIC

Presented by Support for Families

Learn about special education transition services for children age 16 and over, and how to effectively participate in the development of your child's transition plan.

All our clinics are free of charge and, unless otherwise indicated, provide childcare with advance notice. For dates and times of clinics, see Calendar of Events. Call 415-920-5040 for more information

Spanish-Speaking Group: For all Spanish-speaking families of children with special needs. *Facilitated by Sue Kuyper. 4th Thursday of the month 4-5:30pm.*

Please Contact Sue Kuyper, Social Worker, at 415-920-5040 X132 for information about other support groups being offered or if you are interested in a group on a specific issue. Sue speaks Spanish and English.



Saturday Parent-Professional Workshops

Workshops are held at Support for Families of Children with Disabilities' new home at **1663 Mission Street, 7th Floor (between Duboce Street and South Van Ness Avenue)**

Registration: 8:30 am * Program: 9:00 am-12:30 pm * *Please note that Workshop presentations begin promptly at 9:00 am.* * **Reservations are required.** * Sign up early—space fills up fast! To attend a workshop, reserve child care, and/or interpretation services, you must call at least two weeks in advance: **415-920-5040**.

Sept. 11, 2010 8:30a to 12:30p

An introductory seminar on the Relationship Development Intervention® (RDI) Program

Maisie Soetantyo, RDI (R) Program Certified Consultant from the CATCh Clinic (Comprehensive Autism Treatment for Children)

Do you have a child who struggles with friendships? Does your child have interest in friends but does not have the ability to join peer interactions? Does your child have behavioral challenges? Are you worried about your child's ability to communicate?

In this workshop participants will gain insights on relationship tools and practical strategies to implement at home. Participants will leave with an understanding of the power of RDI in creating reciprocal communication and interactions with your child. Parents will gain some practical knowledge and ideas to enhance the quality of life for your whole family.

Oct. 9, 2010 from 8:30a-12:30p

Strategies to Improve Your Child's Sleep

Melissa Willa, M.A., BCBA, Executive Director, Gateway Learning Group, Inc.

This workshop will provide parents and professionals with the tools needed to improve children's sleep schedules. The workshop is appropriate for caregivers of children of all ages. Behavior Analyst Melissa Willa will describe a variety of tactics used to promote good sleep habits. Participants will leave the workshop with an outlined plan of action for their child.

Nov. 13, 2010 from 8:30a-12:30p

Identification & Assessment Rights: Referral to RTI—Mysteries Revealed

Joseph J. Feldman, Executive Director, Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE)

This workshop provides an overview of state and federal special education referral and assessment rights with a special emphasis on referral procedures, the Student Study Team (SST) process, the response to intervention (RTI) guidelines for students with learning disabilities, and eligibility options for students with ADD/ADHD.

Dec. 11, 2010 from 8:30a-12:30p

Taking Advantage of Daily Routines to Teach Speech and Language

Shannon Kong, MS, CCC, Speech Language Pathologist

This lecture is designed for parents with **children ages 1-5** who have **speech or language delays/disorders**. This workshop will teach you how to take advantage of your **everyday routines** to help your child speak more clearly, learn more vocabulary, put more words together, and understand directions and questions better. You are your child's life teacher and every moment is a learning opportunity whether it is during meal time, bath time, or dressing. You will leave with a better understanding of how to teach your child better speech and language skills all day every day.

Developing Minds Video Series

Please note: Pre-registration is required! Free child care and interpretation are available for families who preregister. To reserve child care, request interpretation, or attend the workshop, please call: (415) 920-5040.



Please join us for this FREE video series co-sponsored by the San Francisco Unified School District and Support for Families of Children with Disabilities. The Developing Minds video series is a success-oriented approach to understanding and demystifying a student's learning profile that focuses on reinforcing strengths and developing strategies that work for children, adolescents, parents and teachers.

Location: Support for Families of Children with Disabilities 1663 Mission Street, 7th Floor, San Francisco. All screenings will take place at 9:30 am to 11:00 am.

September 20	<i>Getting Organized-Having Good Work Habits</i>
September 27	<i>Understanding Ideas</i>
October 4	<i>Getting Thoughts on Paper</i>
October 18	<i>Mastering the Challenge of Reading</i>
October 25	<i>Thinking with Numbers</i>
November 8	<i>Developing Control Over Attention</i>
November 15	<i>Learning to Relate to Others</i>

Note: The video and supporting web materials are in English.



Calendar of Events

September 2010

September 2	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Cantonese</i>)
September 9	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>English</i>)
September 11	8:30a-12:30pm	<i>An Introduction to Relationship Development Intervention® Program - RDI</i> (PPW)
September 16	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Spanish</i>)
September 20	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos
September 21	5:30-8:30 pm	PMP Training (<i>English</i>)
September 22	9:30a -12:30 pm	PMP Training (<i>Spanish</i>)
September 23	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (<i>English</i>)
September 27	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos

October 2010

October 4	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos
October 7	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Cantonese</i>)
October 9	8:30a-12:30 pm	<i>Strategies to Improve Your Child's Sleep</i> (PPW)
October 14	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>English</i>)
October 18	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos
October 19	5:30-8:30 pm	PMP Training (<i>English</i>)
October 20	9:30a -12:30 pm	PMP Training (<i>Spanish</i>)
October 21	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Spanish</i>)
October 25	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos
October 28	4:00-6:00 pm	SSI Clinic (<i>English</i>)
October 28	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (<i>English</i>)

November 2010

November 4	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Cantonese</i>)
November 8	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos
November 11	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>English</i>)
November 13	8:30a-12:30 pm	<i>Identification & Assessment Rights: Referral to RTI</i> (PPW)
November 15	9:30-11:30 am	Developing Minds Videos
November 16	5:30-8:30 pm	PMP Training (<i>English</i>)
November 17	9:30 -12:30 pm	PMP Training(<i>Spanish</i>)
November 18	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>English</i>)
November 18	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (<i>English</i>)

December 2010

December 1	9:00a-1:00pm	Parent to Parent 1 (<i>Spanish</i>)
December 2	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Cantonese</i>)
December 4	8:30a-4:30pm	Parent to Parent (<i>English</i>)
December 8	9:00a-1:00pm	Parent to Parent 2 (<i>Spanish</i>)
December 9	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>English</i>)
December 11	8:30a-12:30pm	<i>Taking Advantage of Daily Routines to Teach Speech and Language</i> (PPW)
December 16	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (<i>Spanish</i>)
December 16	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (<i>English</i>)

Improving Transitions Project Council (ITOP)

continues to meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month. If you are interested in information regarding ITOP, please e-mail info@supportforfamilies.org - Improving Transition Outcomes Project



Upcoming Special Events

HALLOWEEN PARTY 2010

For Children with Disabilities, Their Family & Friends

Sunday, October 24, 2010

1:30-3:30 p.m.

Upper Noe Recreation Center

299 Day Street in Noe Valley

between Church & Sanchez, 30th & Day Streets

The event is free. There is a \$5 suggested donation per person.
Public Transportation: Take the J Church Streetcar
or the 24 or 26 Bus

Games, Music, Arts & Crafts, Face Painting

Reserve space by calling 415-920-5040.



HOLIDAY ICE-SKATING PARTY for Families of Children with Disabilities

Saturday, December 18, 2010

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Yerba Buena Ice Skating Center

750 Folsom Street
(Between 3rd & 4th Streets
on the rooftop of the Moscone Center)

The event is free.

There is a \$10 suggested donation per person.
(Includes entrance, skates, dessert and a holiday gift for each child).

Call 415-920-5040 beginning on Nov. 1st to reserve space for children with disabilities and their families.



Making a Difference by Participating in Autism Research Studies

Parents of children with autism can be overwhelmed by the day to day challenges that our children bring. Most of us want to do everything we can to help our children learn and grow. Helping with homework, teaching skills at home, driving to and from countless programs, therapies and doctor appointments can fill our days and drive us to exhaustion.

One of the things that I have done is to get involved in autism research. There is a lot of autism research going on these days, from very narrow, specific studies about a particular medication or intervention, to new, groundbreaking studies, like the Early Autism Risk Longitudinal Investigation (EARLI) that is looking at the possible environmental and genetic links to autism and the risk factors for having another child with autism. Over the years my family and I have participated in a number of studies. Some of these studies were interview- or survey-based, some required doctor visits and biological samples or scans. Some paid cash, and some sent a gift card in the mail after participation. Regardless of the compensation, it always made me feel like I was making a contribution to the greater understanding of the causes or treatments or statistics in the autism world and that I was making a difference.

The reality is that in some ways, parents end up being experts, in a way that researchers can't be. We are experts on our own child. By participating in a study or being a member of an advisory board, we bring our expertise to the research process. There's

no doubt that with the numbers we're seeing and so many unanswered questions, that these kinds of multi-layered studies will give insight and understanding and hopefully some direction on how to proceed. I would love to know that we can start the work of preventing autism, but we don't yet know what's causing it.

Recently, I have been serving on a few advisory boards for autism studies, including Kaiser Permanente's Autism Research Program (where the EARLI Study is being conducted). I contribute a parent's perspective to the world of research and act as an ambassador encouraging other families to participate. There are lots of different ways to participate. We all want a better understanding of the causes and treatments and interventions that will help our kids overcome the challenges they face. Being a part of autism research is a great way to do just that.

If you are interested in participating, here are a few links that can give you more specific information and point you in the right direction. Check with your local autism clinic, university or hospital as well.

www.autismresearch.kaiser.org
<http://www.earlistudy.org>

Joanna Jaeger is a parent advocate, mother of two children, one with autism, both with type-1 diabetes. She serves on the board of directors of Parents Helping Parents as well as several community advisory boards

Kaiser Permanente's Autism Research Program studies the risks and causes of autism. For more information and to learn about the EARLI study that is looking for mothers who have a child with autism spectrum disorder and who are pregnant, visit www.autismresearch.kaiser.org, or call (866) 279-0733.

The Importance of Your Child's Educational File

It is every parents right to examine their child educational file. If your child is eligible for special educational services of any kind, the school must respond to your request within 10 days. Why should you request the records? You pretty much know what is in there, right? The answer is "maybe" to "wrong!"

The unfortunate truth is that there can be many documents in there that have never been shared with parents. There can be referrals, notes, observations, test protocols, staff to staff memos you have never seen. These documents can be very telling.

There was a famous case called "Amanda J" from the 9th Circuit Court. Amanda's family moved from

Clark County, Nevada to Woodland, California. Amanda had been receiving special education services and her educational records were transferred to California. It turned out that Amanda had a severe case of autism but the Clark County school district had neglected to inform Amanda's parents of their findings. Without a proper diagnosis, a proper Individual Educational Plan (IEP) could not be developed. The parents filed due process against Clark County, Nevada. The [decision read](#).*

"The first time Amanda's parents saw the reports indicating possible autism was in April 1996 during in IEP review in Woodland California...The IEP team could

(continued on next page)

*www.wrightslaw.com/law/caselaw/2001/9th.amandaj.clarkco.nevada.htm

Volunteering for Support for Families - We Need Your Help!

Looking to have fun and help us out at the same time? We are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help us at our events or in our offices. Just a few hours of your time can make a difference. This fall and winter we have some great volunteer opportunities:

- **Volunteer helping out at our Parent Professional Workshops the first Saturday of each month (set-up, registration or help in childcare) now being held in our offices!**
- **Prep Day for the Halloween Party-- Come and help us prepare the games, activities and decorations.**
- **Run an activity or craft project, or register guests-- Halloween Party on 10/24**
- **Prep Day/Wrapping Party for the Holiday Ice Skating Party—Help pick up toys or desserts and help us wrap gifts for the children.**
- **Help us at Guest Registration or help at another volunteer station at the Holiday Ice Skating Party on 12/18.**

Ongoing Office Opportunities

Do you have office expertise and 4 hours of on-going free time per week? We welcome new office volunteers who have good phone and administrative skills to keep the general operations at SFCD running smoothly.

For all of these opportunities, please email our Care Services, Special Event and Volunteer Manager, **Kathleen (Kat) Schlier**, kschlier@supportforfamilies.org or call 415-282-7494 X 119 for more information. Thanks for considering volunteering for SFCD!

Special Thanks to John Gomez!

Once again we would like to thank our volunteer, John Gomez, for helping us with the myriad of construction and handyman projects we had for him after the move into our new digs this summer.

John helped us install the beautiful new cabinetry in our new childcare space, hang the racks and display panels in our Library and Entry way, and tend to countless other detailed projects that helped us get our staff feeling comfortable in their new surroundings.

As usual, he did all this work for us FOR FREE- including purchasing the needed hardware. We just want to say -- THANK YOU John, for your help with the construction projects in our offices!

If you know of a carpenter who would like to donate their time at Support for Families, we welcome their help! We still have some handyman projects to take care of -- hanging bulletin boards, fixing desks and other small projects. Please contact the Volunteer Manager Kathleen Schlier at kschlier@supportforfamilies.org or call 415-282-7494 X 119. We would really appreciate it!

Your Children's Educational Files (continued)

not create an IEP that addressed Amanda's special needs as an autistic child without knowing that Amanda was autistic...Even worse, Amanda's parents were not informed of the possibility that their daughter suffered from autism... despite the fact that the district's records contained test results indicating as much."

Unfortunately, this type of incident is more common than most of us would believe. It happened to me. The **morning of the day** I was going to due process, my attorney produced a referral for my son for occupational therapy when he was in kindergarten which indicated there were many symptoms of autistic behavior. But no one had said anything. My son was now in 6th grade!!

The diagnosis of autism came from an independent neuropsychologist who evaluated him very carefully, looked over his report cards, teacher comments. She noted behaviors had escalated as he got older as social functioning with peers became complex. The due process

case was based on diagnosis disagreement, SFUSD claimed emotional disturbance; the neuropsychologist, parents and two psychiatrists claimed autism. Eventually autism prevailed.

ALWAYS ask, in writing, to look at ALL your child's educational records every two years or so. Even if everything seems to be going well, it is a good idea to get copies. In case there are disputes, having written confirmation of meetings and assessments can protect your child.

Robin Hansen

The CAC for Special Education is an advisory committee to the Board of Education, made up of parents and professionals, whose purpose is to advocate for quality special education. The CAC welcomes all to meetings on the 4th Thursday of every month, 7pm at SFCD. Contact the CAC at cac_specialed@hotmail.com or visit their website at www.sfcacsped.org.

Thank You!

Donations received April 21, 2010 through July 15, 2010.

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www.supportforfamilies.org

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info@supportforfamilies.org

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