PARENT MENTOR

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024

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SERVING ANTWERP & WAYNE TRACE LOCAL SCHOOLS

PARENT MENTOR NEWSLETTER

PAULDING COUNTY CHILD/FAMILY (FREE) RESOURCE FAIR

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US!

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

451 McDonald Pike County Office Building, Paulding, Ohio

(please park & enter at Entrance #4, located on the north side of the building)

Hosted by Paulding County Board of Developmental Disabilities

WHY ATTEND?

⇒ **Learn what resources Paulding County offers for children birth through 18 years old, and their families!**

⇒ **Network with other organizations in the community!**

For more information, please contact:

Denise Kinder at:

dkinder@pauldingdd.com

POSITIVE QUOTES FOR PARENTS

Your children need your presence more than your presents. - Jesse Jackson

All kids need is a little help, a little hope, and someone who believes in them. - Bestoflife.com

When you put faith, hope, and love together, you can raise positive kids in a negative world. - Zig Ziglar

If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the nice things you have to say about them to others. - Him Ginott

Inside this issue:

APRIL

Rain has such fun in April, it patters through the trees;
Talking to all the leaf buds and robins that it sees;
It splashes through the puddles and skips along the walks;
Goes coasting down the grass blades and dandelion stalks;
It dips in all the flowers and when the clouds blow by;
It paints with flower colors a rainbow in the sky. -Author Unknown

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM/PLAN (IEP)?

***For children leaving Help Me Grow (HMG)/Early Intervention (EI) and transitioning into Preschool*:**

A written statement for your child that is developed, reviewed, and revised according to federal and state regulations.

The roadmap that describes how the school will provide your child with a free appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE is special education and related services provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and at no cost to the parent.

Is to be developed and implemented/put into practice by your child's 3rd birthday, if your child is eligible for Preschool Special Education.

If the school district agrees, services may begin for a child younger than 3 years of age if the child turns 3 by December 1st of the school year.

WHO WILL BE PART OF YOUR FIRST IEP MEETING?

You, the parent, your HMG/EI Service Coordinator (if you would like for them to be invited), a person from the school district who knows about special education and has the authority to commit resources, a person who can explain the results of your child's evaluation and use the results to help plan an appropriate instructional program, teachers - regular preschool education and special education.

Also, others with knowledge about your child who are invited by you and/or the school district, such as: speech/occupational/physical therapists, friend, grandparents, or another parent who has been through the IEP process.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE IEP MEETING? THE FOLLOWING WILL BE DISCUSSED AND RECORDED ON THE IEP FORM:

A statement from you about your child's future (similar to the vision statement on the IFSP), your child's current levels of strengths and needs, goals and objectives that are designed to meet your child's needs, a description of how your child's progress will be measured and how it will be reported, special education services and supports that will be provided - such as therapies, projected dates to begin services, how often services will happen, where they will take place, and how long they will last.

WHEN WILL THE IEP BEGIN?

The Evaluation and IEP must be completed within 90 days from the time you give written consent. You do not have to sign and thereby accept the IEP until you are satisfied with the plan. Not signing the IEP can delay your child's services.

HOW OFTEN WILL THE IEP BE REVIEWED?

Your child's IEP must be reviewed at least once a year to determine if your child is achieving his/her annual goals. IEP reviews can occur more often if a team member (including you) feels a need.

Source: helpmegrow.gov/parents

The IEP is the cornerstone of a child's special education program.

The IEP should reflect your child's strengths, needs and progress as they move through school.

You're an important member of your child's IEP team and bring valuable insights and concerns to the table.

BRAIN BREAKS - DID YOU KNOW?

Short brain breaks help children reduce stress and frustration and increase attention and productivity.

The key is to take time before fatigue, distraction or lack of focus set in. For grade-schoolers, that's typically after 10 - 15 min. of work, followed by a 3 - 5 min. break. Middle - high schoolers can work 20 - 30 min. before a break.

Some examples of brain breaks that include physical activities are: stretching breaks, wall or regular push-ups, yoga ball activities, sit-ups, or taking a short walk.

Brain break can also include relaxing, quiet activities such as doodling, or sensory diet that might include motor activities such as chewing on a crunchy snack, or doing tactile activities like using silly putty or fidgets.

Source: understood.org

TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS **Twice Exceptional (2e) students are identified as having an exceptional gifted ability as well as accompanying learning or developmental challenges. The 2e child may also display behaviors characteristics of ADHD, autism, or other disabilities. However, these students may be able to mask or hide their learning deficits by using their talents to compensate.**

Some of these disabilities may include but are not limited to:

Specific Learning Disabilities * Speech & Language Disorders
Autism Spectrum * Emotional/Behavioral Disorders
Physical Disabilities * ADHD

Twice-exceptional students can also display very focused academic and social behaviors such as intense focus on one topic or action. These students can be highly creative, imaginative, curious, and exhibit strong problem-solving abilities. The 2e student often struggles and becomes frustrated with idle class time since they require active and challenging ongoing tasks. This off-task time may lead to behaviors often characteristic of ADHD such as fidgeting and interrupting others. The focus should be on what they can do, not what they can't.

The 2e students who receive appropriate support have an increased chance to reach their full potential, both academically and emotionally, while building higher self-esteem and confidence.

Source: by Kevin Stuckey, M.Ed., CCC-SLP at handyhandouts.com

5 TIPS FOR BEDTIME AND BETTER SLEEP

If your child struggles to fall asleep or stay asleep (or both), use these strategies to help!

1. More sensory input + sensory diet: First make sure you're meeting your child's sensory needs throughout the day. Next, create a bedtime sensory diet that includes calming strategies such as:

   Dim lights and calm music, massage or a bath, slow animal walks and heavy work, a weighted blanket or compression sheet.

2. Create a calm bedroom space: Make sure the bedroom is calm, dark, and free of distractions:

   Black-out curtains, toys put away - out of sight, out of mind!, red night light, bedding that is comfortable.

3. Take a look at nutrition:
   Is your child getting enough food and water during the day?
   What types of food are they eating that might be affecting sleep (such as sugar)?
   Are certain medications affecting sleep quality?

4. Try a bedtime pass:
   Create a bedtime pass that your child can use to get out of bed.
   Set them up for success at first, then work to decrease the number of passes they have each night.

5. Stick to the script:
   Avoid drawing out bedtime.
   Keep it short and sweet, but stay consistent no matter what!

Source: Harkla On Air Youtube Freebie

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE

5 Ways to help keep your child's online experiences positive and safe!

1. Set clear ground rules: Have honest conversations with your children about who they communicate with and how, and who can see what they post online. Explain that anything that goes online - pictures, videos, comments, anything they share with others and what others post & share with and about them - leaves behind a trail of information about them. Work with your child to establish rules on how, when and where to use devices. *Think before you post - think before your share, taking it down is nearly impossible.*

2. Use technology to protect them: Check that your child's device is always updated and running the latest software, and the privacy settings are on and configured to minimize data collection so that people don't see any information you don't want them to see. Help your child learn to keep personal information private. If your privacy settings are not secure, anyone can see your information.

3. Spend time with them online: Create opportunities for your child to have safe and positive online interactions with friends, family and you. Connecting with others can be an excellent opportunity for you to model kindness and empathy in virtual interactions. Spend time with your child to identify age-appropriate apps, games and other online entertainment. Be alert for apps that may have harmful content or pose privacy risks.

4. Model healthy online habits: Promote positive online behavior by practicing it yourself. Be mindful of the example you set and what you share online about your child, including their photos and videos. Encourage your child to be kind online and to support friends and family by sending positive messages or emojis.

5. Let them have fun and express themselves: Spending time online can be a great opportunity for your children to be creative, learn, use their voices to share their views and support causes that are important to them. Remember to balance online activities with an active lifestyle and offline recreation for a healthy balance in all aspects of life.

Source: unicef.org

STAYING HEALTHY & POSITIVE - Tips for Parents & Caregivers

Even during challenging times, take steps to be your best for yourself and your kids!

TAKE time each day to do something for yourself, such as exercise, stretching, talking to friends, and reading.

IF you're feeling overwhelmed, give yourself a timeout, even if it's just stepping into another room for a few minutes of peace and quiet.

KEEP your sense of humor when things don't go as planned. No one is a perfect parent - or a perfect child.

ACCEPT that children sometimes make mistakes, are inconsistent, and act thoughtlessly - this is part of being a child.

COUNT to 10 before you react when you get angry.

EASE tension with a smile or joke, or by changing the subject.

LISTEN to your child and show you value your conversations. Good communication can prevent conflict.

SCHEDULE in family and fun and fitness.

LEARN how children mature so your expectations for your child's behavior are realistic.

MAKE household chores part of your children's day so less busy work falls on you.

Source: positivepromotions.com

Ohio's Parent Mentor Project

As a Parent Mentor for Paulding County, I am just a phone call away if you need help with your child's special education services, if you need information, or if you have questions.

Cathy Ruiz, Parent Mentor
Office: 451 McDonald Pike,
Paulding, OH 45879
Phone: 419-399-4711
or 419-203-7364
Email: cruiz@wbesc.org

Western Buckeye, ESC
Office: 835 N. Williams Street
Paulding, OH 45879
Phone: 419-399-4711

THE PARENT MENTOR PROGRAM

WHAT IS A PARENT MENTOR?

The Parent Mentor is a parent of a child with a disability, and provides a support network to parents of children with disabilities and to the school districts who serve them. The Parent Mentor can provide information and resources to families and school districts including education laws, district programs and services, community resources, and special-need related resources, free of charge.

WHAT ARE THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE PARENT MENTOR?

* **Guide families through the special education process, including rights and responsibilities**
* **Listen and provide supports to families and educators on an individual basis**
* **Attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and other school meetings at a parent or school's request**
* **Organize and conduct informational sessions or workshops based on the needs of families and school personnel**
* **Build collaborative partnership between families, schools, and committees to benefit students with disabilities**

PARENT MENTOR - BRIDGING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME & SCHOOL

April is made of such wonderful things
Sunbeams and tulips and butterfly wings. -Author Unknown

CAMP INVENTION

WHERE BRIGHT IDEAS COME TO LIFE!

WHAT IS CAMP INVENTION?
CAMP INVENTION brings science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to life for children in grades K-6 with hands-on activities focused on developing creative, inventive thinking, and problem-solving skills.

CAMP INVENTION is a one-week summer program that inspires students and develops their passion for learning and innovation. It builds confidence as campers collaborate in fun, hands-on STEM challenges led by qualified local educators to help their creativity shine.

Secure your spot today!

Register at: invent.org/mylocalcamp

Grades: K - 6th

Location: Paulding County Opportunity Center,
900 Fairground Drive, Paulding, OH 45879

Date: June 24 - 27, 2024

Time & Cost: 8am - 4 pm / $270 (before discount)

Use code SUM25 to save $25. Code expires on 3/27/24.

(Scholarship funds are available to children with financial need).

Please reach out to Camp Director:
Ashley Shepherd, ashepherd@wbesc.org, for the scholarship application.
Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

(FREE) EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM

DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Thanks to a grant from the Paulding County Area Foundation, the United Way of Paulding County is able to offer the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program to any child who resides in Paulding Co.—from birth up to 5 yrs. old. Each child will receive a new age-appropriate book mailed monthly to their home to encourage early literacy. To register visit: imaginationlibrary.com

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF READING TO YOUR CHILD?

We all know that reading to our children is important. But did you know that toddlers and preschoolers who are read to every day have many advantages and benefits? Not only does reading enhance a child's vocabulary, and to help them understand how to read and write, but reading aloud to children also helps them to understand different topics about the world and everyday life. The importance of reading cannot be emphasized enough in young children and needs to be a priority.

***Benefits that highlight the importance of reading with young children*:**

- **Reading to young children sets them up for success**
- **Reading develops language skills**
- **Exposure to reading exercises your child's brain**
- **Reading enhances a child's concentration**
- **A range of books teaches children about different topics**

- **Reading together encourages a thirst for knowledge**
- **Reading develops a child's imagination and creativity**
- **Reading books with children helps to develop empathy**
- **Books are a form of entertainment**
- **Reading together helps to create a bond**

Source: Bilingual Kidspot