

Williams County Parent Resource Center August/September 2014



Organizing for School Success

We are vital in providing tools to ensure our children's success.

Being organized at home, is important. Here are some tips on how to make sure you are ready for the rush of the morning routine, homework, after school snacks, and that essential bedtime routine.

- ◇ **Post your child's routine for morning and evening.** Simply write/type what needs to be done and put it where they can see it. If your children can't read yet, use pictures. This gives them independence and teaches them responsibility for their actions. It also helps them follow the routine at school.
- ◇ **Separate lunch foods.** Spend some time on the weekends getting foods together in one place in the fridge and cupboard that the kids can use for lunches and snacks.
- ◇ **Save the morning stress of "I**

don't have anything to wear!"

Have your kids pick out their clothing the night before, or even all their outfits on Sunday for the next week.

- ◇ **Create a "Study Box".** Stock it with pencils, pens, crayons for the little ones, and paper. Keeping it all in one box, they can grab their box and get their homework done without spending 20 minutes looking for a pencil.
- ◇ **Designate a "For Mom/Dad" basket.** Sometimes, we can't stop what we are doing to read the notes home. So have a place your children can put them as they unload their back-packs. This basket is just for papers you need to review and/or sign.
- ◇ **Designate a "School" box.** This is for the papers and work your children bring home. You can go through it and pull out the items you want to scrapbook or display and then recycle the rest.

Quick Parenting Tip:

Say more positive things to your family than negative ones.

"Your children need your presence more than your presents."

~Jesse Jackson

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Williams County Parent
Resource Center

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Communicating and Working With Your Child's Teachers

Have you ever been blindsided by a bad report card, or a phone call to report continued bad behavior? Sitting there, you think to yourself, "I didn't even know they were struggling! Why am I just learning about this now?"

I know I have and here is what I learned:

98% of teachers have a real desire to teach and guide our children

100% of teachers have more than one student (class sizes range from 15-25 students). As much as I would like a personal teacher for my child, that is just not possible.

100% of teachers cannot do it alone. They depend on us as parents to help our children learn, grow, and become responsible. I MUST DO MY PART.

So what is our part as parents?

1. Talk with your child's teacher and find out what works best for them to communicate with you. We are just one and can easily adjust. It is not fair to tell the teacher that, "a phone call is what is best for me." Can you imagine a teacher with 25 students having to make 25 phone calls each night to touch base with parents? Be willing to offer suggestions. Some teachers do a travel notebook, they can jot a line or two about your child's behavior each day. Each night, you look at it and can write back. Some teachers do a weekly behavior chart that goes home on Friday and a phone call is reserved for particularly hard days. As you talk with the teacher, **make one thing clear:** you want to hear good things too! Don't focus just on the negative.

2. Check your child's back-pack/folder/assignment book each night. If you have more than one child in school, this can feel overwhelming (I know, I have 8 kids in school right now) but I have seen what happens when I neglect this. Young children need your help to remind them to do homework or share teacher's notes. The older your children get, the less you have to physically check, you can just ask. When you trust them to tell you, it strengthens their relationship with you. Don't doubt it unless they have done something that requires them to earn our trust back. Plus it is always good to do a "surprise" check of their homework so they know that you really care and are interested in them and their progress.

3. Take responsibility for working with your children on their homework. Check over their assignments, praise them when they are trying, and remind them to put it back into their back-pack so it gets back to school. I know this can be a daunting task for more than one child, I really do know!! But I also know that if I am unwilling to dedicate that time to my children, they suffer both academically and socially as they are teased by other kids for not turning in homework or have to stay in from recess and finish. We all sit at the table and work together to get it done.

4. Volunteer to help out. Make time to go to the school for special projects or parties. If you are a working mom/dad, going to the school during the day might not be possible but you can still help. Offer to correct assignments, cut out projects, or put together handouts. The teacher will love your help and it sets a great example for the kids that we appreciate our teachers.

5. Support your teacher and stay calm if a problem does arise. The way you talk about your child's teacher, in front of them, will affect how your child acts in class. Let your child know that you want to hear both sides before you pass judgment and that you and the teacher want what is best for your child. Work with the teacher to resolve the situation before going to school administrators. Sometimes, it is just a miscommunication and your example on how to handle it is what your child is watching.



Understanding Your Child's IEP

Having a child with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) can be a confusing and frustrating as you try to work through it all and get your child the best education possible.

When my adopted daughter was diagnosed with autism in 1st grade, I felt lost. I was lucky to have a special education teacher who deeply cared about my child and helped me through the process.

If your child is on an IEP or you feel he or she needs an IEP, address it now! Don't wait for the school year to be half over before you ask for help. Being proactive will help keep your child from falling behind.

Here are some basics:

The steps of the IEP process include:

1. Referral for a Special Education Evaluation
2. The Evaluation
3. Determining Eligibility
4. Writing the Individual Education Program
5. The IEP Meetings

For parents with Hearing Impaired Children, Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children how are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without bias around communication modes or methodology. They are a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and education outcomes for their children. Their outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration, and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf and Hard of Hearing children to reach their highest potential.

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Don't get discouraged if you look at your child's IEP for the first time and feel like you are reading a foreign language. There are so many resources to help you understand it and the process. I found the online resource provided by the state very helpful. It is our responsibility, as parents, to understand the process and know what we need to do so we can be an advocate for our children.

The goal is a collaborative relationship with the school. You know your child better than they do, so share with the school what you know. If they suggest something you feel will not work, tell them why so you can find a better solution.

Remember they are trying to meet the needs of your child, help them do that.

Resources for Parents

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction—
Parent Guide to Special Education available online at www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced1/family/pguide07.pdf

Pathfinder Parent Center

Dedicated to helping you understand the IEP and working with the schools.

1600 2nd Ave SW, Minot, ND 701-837-7500
www.pathfinder-nd.org

www.understandingspecialeducation.com



Upcoming Parent Workshop Opportunities

PRC Lending Library

The lending library has books, CDs, and DVDs available for checkout. There is information on all parenting topics including discipline, setting limits, ages and states, separation and divorce, routines and transitions, temperaments, and Love and Logic materials.

Topic Bags

We also offer topic bags that are available to parents, teachers, counselors, child care providers and other professionals. The bright red bags contain materials for adults and kids. There is one topic per bag. Topics are: Autism Spectrum ADD/ADHD, Anger in Children, Divorce, Long Distance Parenting, Parenting Solutions –Youth/ Adolescence, Sex Education and Body Safety, Sleep Issues (infant-Teen), and Toilet Training.

Pre-registration required for all workshops!!!

Registration and more information at:

www.ag.ndsu.edu/pen

or call 701-713-0663

**BullySpeak Presents Josh Dreaan, Parent Presentation
September 11th at 7:00 PM**

Williston High School (Free—Registration not required)

Come learn how you can help your child with bullies.

Babysitting Certification Workshop (1 session)

Twens and teens will learn how to be a responsible babysitter. Topics covered will be Safety, First Aid and CPR, Child Development, Nutrition, Entertaining Children and the Business of Babysitting. For children 10 years and older. Parent can attend workshop with teen at no charge.

(cost \$35.00 to cover workbook and certification)

Saturday—September 13

8:30 AM—4:30 PM (bring a sack lunch)

Building Strong Families (6 sessions in 6 weeks)

This program helps families find their strengths, build on those strengths, learn skills to create stronger families, improve relationships, and increase communication.

Tuesdays 6:30 PM—8:30 PM

October 7—November 11

How Much Is Enough? (6 sessions in 3 weeks)

The impact of childhood overindulgence can be staggering. In this workshop you will learn three common ways parents overindulge. Learn how to implement firm structures and rules to steer your children towards a healthier sense of responsibility.

Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30—8:30 PM

October 27, 29, November 3, 5, 10, and 12th

Common Sense Parenting of Toddlers/Preschoolers (7 Sessions in 7 Weeks)

A practical approach to parenting with sessions on child development, reasonable expectations, nurturing, consequences, effective praise, social skills, preventive teaching, time-out, corrective teaching, staying calm and more.

Wednesdays 6:30—8:30 PM

January 14—February 25th



**North
Dakota
Nurturing
Parenting
PROGRAMS**

Nurturing Parenting is a whole family approach class taught by Barb Olson.

Classes begin Tuesday Aug 26th

Free dinner and childcare provided for this class.

Call 701-770-0730 for details



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