



# E-Connections

Email newsletter of the Association for Special Children and Families

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## HIGHLANDS PARENT CENTER

- Offers emotional support
- Educates parents
- Disseminates high quality information
- Enhances parent-professional partnerships
- Creates an inclusive community
- Develops parent leaders

**WANTED**  
**Volunteer tutors**  
**for our Saturday**  
**Boost Program.**  
**Call Teri at**  
**973-728-8744**

## SPECIAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

### MUSIC THERAPY

6 CLASSES-  
 Wednesdays  
 Session 1:  
 Feb 24-March 31  
 at Hillcrest, WM  
 Session 2:  
 April 14-May 19  
 Two age Groups,  
 5:30 pm, 6:30 pm



### Discovery

**Saturday**  
 (10-11 AM)  
 March 20:  
 Seashells: Flowers that  
 Don't Fade  
 May 15: Living Fossils  
 Hillcrest, WM  
 To register for Music, Basketball or Discovery Saturday, call  
 Angela at 973-728-8744



### BASKETBALL

10 weeks  
 Mondays  
 March 15-  
 May 24  
 Two age groups,  
 6 pm, 7 pm  
 Maple Road School, WM



### All Star Special Softball Team

Sunday after-  
 noons, 1-2:30  
 April 18, 25, May 2, 16,  
 23, June 6 (Rain date)



To register for Softball call WM  
 Community Services  
 973-728-2860

## MONTHLY PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

**Behavioral Support**  
**Tues, 7 pm, March 30**  
 Parenting children with  
 behavioral issues

**General Support**  
**Wed, 7 pm, March 17**  
 Parenting and advocacy for  
 children with any disability

**Dad's Only Group**  
**Thurs, 7 pm, March 25**  
 Share a pizza and ideas with  
 other dads

**Bloomingdale Support**  
**Thurs, 7 pm, April 1**  
**Bloomingdale Rec Dept**  
 Open to any parent in the  
 area.

**Sussex County Group**  
**Tues, 10 am, March 16**  
 All welcome, Vernon Library  
 Call ASCF to register  
 973-728-8744

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Office:  
 Hillcrest Community Center,  
 1810 Macopin Rd (Room 25)  
 West Milford, NJ 07480

**Are you ready for your IEP meeting?**

## WORKSHOPS: PLEASE REGISTER

### TOPIC:

#### Early Intervention

**Date: Tues. March 9, 7 PM**

Hillcrest Center, WM

An overview of the early intervention system for infants, toddlers and their families and development of Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)

### TOPIC:

#### Resources For Families

**Date: Wed. March 10, 7 PM**

Hillcrest Center, WM

Learn about resources available for families of children with special needs, including government, educational, community service providers and disability organizations.

### TOPIC:

#### Basic Rights in Special Education

**Date: Tues. March 16, 10 am**

Hillcrest Center, WM

An introduction to your rights and responsibilities as parents of children with special needs. A great review in preparing for your IEP meeting.

Are you ready for your IEP Meeting?

## JUST FOR PARENTS: YOUR CHILD'S IEP

### IF YOUR CHILD QUALIFIES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

If an evaluation shows that your child needs special education, the next step is to plan an Individualized Education Program (IEP). To do this, the school district will set up a meeting with you.

The meeting is usually called an IEP team meeting. Some states may use a different name.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the evaluation results and develop a special education program to help your child learn. School staff will schedule the meeting, and they will let you know when and where it will be held. The meeting time may be changed if you cannot attend at the time it is scheduled. This is an important meeting for you and for your child. It is a time to share what you know about your child's strengths and needs. You know your child in different ways than anyone else.



*You are part of the team*

### THE IEP TEAM

#### The IEP Team

A number of people will be invited to the IEP meeting. This group is called the IEP team. The school district will let you know who they expect to attend. The following people are members of the IEP team:

- you, the parents
- your child's regular education teachers if your child is, or may be, in regular education
- your child's special education teachers or special education provider's
- a person from the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise special education
- someone who understands what the evaluation means and can talk about the instruction your child may need
- others that you or the school invite because they know your child or have expertise. You may bring anyone of your choice, such as a friend, advocate, or service provider.

### GETTING READY

The IEP meeting is where your child's special education program will be created. There are several things you can do to get ready for the meeting:

- \*write down what you think your child is good at
- \*write down what you think he or she needs
- \*talk to your child about what is happening at school
- \*ask for a copy of the evaluation so that you can read it before the meeting
- \*make notes on what you would like to say at the meeting.

### THE IEP MEETING

You are a very important member of the IEP team. The team will meet to talk about your child's strengths and needs. You may talk about the evaluation results, too. This discussion will help everyone to understand your child better. The evaluation will help team members decide what services are needed.

Your team will develop goals for your child. The goals are based on what the evaluation says is needed. These goals are written into the IEP. They describe what your child should learn in one year. The team will also write

down the kinds of special education services your child needs.

The IEP team will also consider whether your child needs related services. These are the kinds of services that support special education instruction. They include such things as transportation, physical therapy, and school social work services. One person will take charge of writing the IEP program, based on the team discussion.

## DECIDING WHERE SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED

A very important decision that is usually made by the IEP team is where services will be provided. The IEP may be carried out in different settings, depending on what your child needs. The law says that services should be provided in the regular classroom and school whenever possible. Sometimes a child's needs cannot be met in the regular classroom or school. If this happens, then services must be provided as close to home as possible. In some cases the placement decision is made by a small group of people that is not the entire IEP team. If so, you will be part of the group that decides where services will be provided.

When the IEP is completed, you will be given a copy. You should read it carefully. You will want to be sure it

is what you have agreed to. If you do not understand part of the IEP, ask to have it explained.

You have a right to agree or disagree with the IEP. If it is your child's first IEP, the school district cannot provide services without your written permission. If you do not agree and it is not your child's first IEP, you must disagree in writing. Ask for a meeting to talk about your concerns. Ask your team members for a written copy of your rights.

Once you agree in writing to the IEP, special education will begin as soon as possible. You will receive regular progress reports from the school. These reports will explain the progress your child is making in meeting the IEP goals. If you have questions

at any time, you may call the IEP manager. This person's name and telephone number are on the IEP. The IEP manager can set up meetings when they are needed. He or she may be able to answer special education questions. Or, the IEP manager can direct you to the right person to answer questions or explain parts of the IEP that you do not understand.

As a parent, you are an expert on your child. It is good to know what your child's day is like in school. It is important to know what your child is learning. When you know these things, you can focus on your child's progress.

*Source: National Alliance Action Information sheet, NJ Code Administrative Code expands some of these rights.*

Are you ready for your IEP Meeting?

## GOOD NIGHT SLEEP TIGHT: PRESCHOOLERS AND SLEEP

Parents of young kids know how precious sleep can be. It's important to remember that a lack of sleep can impact your preschooler's behavior and ability to have a good day at preschool. Grumpiness, low energy, and extremes in behavior could all be signs that your child needs more sleep.

While experts agree about the value of sleep, they also recognize that not all kids need the exact same amount. In general though, one to three year olds need between 12-14 hours of sleep per day. Most kids this age take one long nap and go to bed between 7 and 9 p.m. Kids ages three to six years old typically need between 10-12 hours of sleep per day.

To help your child understand the difference between a body at rest and a body at play, try this simple experiment:

- When your child is calm and resting, help him count his pulse during a one-minute interval.
- Write down the number of beats counted.

- Then have your child get up and do an active movement for several minutes. Try jumping jacks, running, or hopping up and down.
- Once again, help your child count his pulse during a one-minute interval.
- Compare the rate of your child's pulse when resting to when active.

At the end of the day, help your child make observations about what happens when she gets tired. When it draws close to bedtime, ask your child how she feels. What are the signs her body gives that tell her that it is time to rest? (yawning, drooping eyelids, or a "heavy" head).

Take that sleepy-time opportunity to cuddle up with some good books for story time. Reading stories before bedtime makes a good transition between active play and rest time and should be a part of the bedtime routine. Those special, quiet moments with books will become special memories for you and your child

Reading Rockets 2010



**DONATIONS OF OFFICE SUPPLIES AND SERVICES NEEDED**

**ASCF, like many other organizations, is stretching our dollars. We need basic office supplies, especially file folders, pocket folders, loose leaf binders, and copy paper. Also photocopying of parent information. Please give Angela a call if you can help with these. Thank you.**  
**973-728-8744**

## RESOURCES FOR HOMESCHOOLERS

An estimated 1.5 million students are homeschooled in the United States according to the National Household Education Surveys Program. For 4 percent of these parents (or guardians) who choose this method, it is because a child has special needs.

Parents have shared that it is very difficult to get accessible books and reading tools for children with disabilities. This can be particularly true for homeschoolers who do not have everyday access to special education teachers and public school resources.

*Bookshare can help.* Bookshare's online library, available 24 hours a day, has over 68,000 digital books and tools that make reading possible for students who previously found it difficult or impossible to read traditional print.

Bookshare's books are downloaded to computers and accessed with software or devices that allow students to listen to books, hear and see words at the same time (multi-modal), and use advanced study tools.

*Homeschoolers can qualify!*

Bookshare memberships are available for free to all U.S. students with qualified print disabilities such as blindness, low-vision, physical disabilities and severe learning disabilities.

They can join with an individual membership that gives them the ability to download, read, and study with the vast majority of Bookshare books and free reading software.

Contact [www.Bookshare.org](http://www.Bookshare.org) for more details



## TIPS FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS ON READING

Being a toddler is all about ACTION. Encourage continued language development and interest in books and reading by keeping things lively and engaging. Everyday experiences are full of opportunities to engage in conversation and develop language skills. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child

◆ **Don't expect your toddler to sit still for a book**

Toddlers need to MOVE, so don't worry if they act out stories or just skip, romp or tumble as you read to them. They may be moving, but they are listening.

◆ **Recite rhymes, sing songs and make mistakes**

Pause to let your toddler finish a phrase or chant a refrain. Once your toddler is familiar with the rhyme or pattern, make mistakes on purpose and get caught.

◆ **Choose engaging books**

Books featuring animals or machines invite movement and making sounds. Books with flaps or different textures to touch keep hands busy. Books with detailed illustrations or recurring items hidden in the pictures are great for exploring and discussing.

◆ **Keep reading short, simple and often**

Toddlers frequently have shorter attention spans than babies. Look for text that is short and simple. Read a little bit, several times a day.

◆ **Encourage play that involves naming, describing, and communicating**

Set up a zoo with all the stuffed animals. Stage a race with the toy cars. Put your toddler in charge and ask lots of questions.

◆ **Every day is an adventure when you're a toddler**

Choose books about everyday experiences and feelings. Your child will identify with the characters as they dress, eat, visit, nap and play.

◆ **Ask questions**

Take time to listen to your toddler's answers. Toddlers have strong opinions and interesting ideas about the world. Encourage your toddler to tell you what he or she thinks. You'll build language skills and learn what makes your toddler tick at the same time.



*How you can launch a child into a bright future through reading.*

◆ **Play to their favorites**

Read favorite stories again and again. Seek out books about things your toddler especially likes—trains, animals, the moon. These books may extend a toddler's attention span and build enthusiasm for reading.

◆ **Not having fun?**

Try a different story or a different time during the day. Reading with a very young child is primarily about building positive experiences with books, not finishing every book you start.

*From Reading Rockets. Visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)*

## INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PUBLICATION

"Impact: Feature Issue on Early Childhood Education and Children with Disabilities" is a free publication that addresses how early childhood education for young children with and without disabilities. This edition includes an article on KidSmart, a national early childhood technology program of IBM and Pacer designed to help children with and without disabilities learn in inclusive environments.

Other articles include reflections from parents, practical strategies from researchers and practitioners, notes from innovative inclusive early childhood programs from around the country and a range of resources for families and professionals.

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Available free at:  
<http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/221> or  
 by calling 612-624-4512 or emailing  
[icipub@umn.edu](mailto:icipub@umn.edu)



*Information from LDA  
 Newsbriefs Jan/Feb 2010  
 edition*

**Are you ready for your IEP Meeting?**