

APPENDIX C

COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES

How to use this section:

Parents and family members are hands down the winner of the Number One Resource award. They know their child better than anyone else and can provide you with a wealth of valuable information. They are a walking resource manual. This section offers suggestions on how to use parents as a resource and how to find out needed information. Sample care plans are included in this section, which can be filled out collaboratively with parents. It also provides a list compiled from WGTE Public Broadcasting in Toledo regarding what parents want other parents to know about their child. This can be very helpful if other parents begin to ask questions of you when the parents of the child with a disability are not present. Also, a list of key components that parents look at when choosing quality child care is listed as a guide for your center.

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BENEFITS OF INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Having a child with a special need and his/her family attend a child care setting is very beneficial for all who are involved. Listed below is a sampling of the many benefits for typical children and their families, children with special needs and their families, and professionals who work in the setting. Under each list is space for you as the child care provider to reflect on other benefits of having children with special needs in your care.

Benefits for the typical child and his/her family:

- Create opportunities to develop new friendships
- Learn acceptance of all people and appreciation of diversity
- Develop greater awareness of the strengths and abilities of people with special needs
- Given opportunities to be a positive role model to others
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Benefits for the child with special needs and his/her family:

- Learn “real life” skills in their natural environments
- Learn appropriate behaviors from peer role models
- Interact in a wider variety of social interactions
- Develop better attitude about self/child
- Quality child care that relieves stress of families coping with economic and/or social factors
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Benefits for the early childhood professionals:

- Create new and more resources for self as care provider or educator
- Develop large support system with other professionals in the field
- Learn awareness and appreciation for all children with wide range of abilities
- Create close link with families
- Compliance with the ADA law
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COMMENTS FROM PARENTS

These comments are from parents of children with special needs regarding what they want other parents, children, and child care providers to know about their child, and regarding obstacles they have been faced with concerning child care. The comments of parents of children with special needs were recorded from an interview for a project called “We’re All the Same Inside” by WGTE Public Broadcasting, made possible by a special grant award by PBS Ready to Learn.

When your child interacts with others, what do you believe to be some of their strengths/weaknesses?

- Kids are engaging, caretaking and friendly
- Good social interactions, demonstrative (can be weakness also), sensitive to others
- Can be abrupt at times which can be off-putting, not proficient with self-control, wants to be like others and is frustrated when not able to do things as others do them

When a child asks why your child is different, what kind of response would you want to hear from the parent?

- Have the adult ask for information rather than stare
- Give as much information as people want/can handle
- Sometimes provide correct information, other times ignore the situation

What are some things you actually hear parents telling children about kids with special needs?

- Mostly hear them telling children not to stare or ask questions, which keeps them uninformed

What do you want typical children and child care providers to know about your child?

- Providers need to sometimes act as the interpreter for the child with special needs so that typical children can understand them
- Acknowledge that the child is a human being, and that he/she is more like typical children but has some limitations

What obstacles do you face when trying to find care for your child?

- Many excuses are given for not taking child into care
- Not qualified to care for child
- Diapering becomes an issue
- Room is not adaptive to situation (or providers choose not to adapt)

How can you address obstacles to daycare?

- Make sure staff is supportive
- Follow through with discipline as you would with typical kids
- Hear parents out before making decisions about providing care

- Communicate expectations with one another
- Find out what providers want to know about your child
- Keep communication open and on-going

How might a typically developing child approach a child with special needs in a play situation?

- Have the typical child model appropriate behaviors
- Let the kids do the leading instead of adults controlling the situation
- Educate typical kids on the special needs of others

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

It is important and beneficial to both parents and child care providers to communicate to one another on a daily basis. The purpose of communication may be to share good news about their child, share concerns, or give information on what may have occurred the night before at home or during the day at the child care. Schedules are increasingly getting busier and it may be difficult to find the time to talk with one another in person. The following are a list of suggestions for effective communication between parents and providers:

- Start a communication notebook – the notebook may be blank pages where any type of information is written, or the pages may be already typed out with certain information asked
- Email questions and concerns if email is available to both the parent and provider
- If it is observed that some parents do not always respond to communication attempts, then create a system that encourages the parent to be a partner in the communication process if they desire daily communication from the child care

For example, Suzette Cason, a head teacher at Toledo Day Nursery, uses a system that requires parents to fill out a short communication paper in the morning when they drop their child off. The parent fills out how the child slept the night before, if they are on any medications that day, and any other concerns there may be regarding their child. The communication paper is placed in a basket, and those parents who have filled out a paper then receive a return communication response indicating how the child's day was, what the child ate for lunch/snacks, and how nap time was. This system cuts back on wasted time of filling out communication sheets that never get read, and encourages a partnership between parent and provider.

- For parents of children with severe special needs who are unable to tell their parents how their day was and what they did, it is important to communicate this information with them regardless of if there is a response sent back everyday. A simple form is included in this section for communicating with parents of children with special needs. However, all parents may find this useful if their child has difficulty remembering the day's events!

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Toledo Day Care Task Force compiled a list of questions from parents based on what parents want to know about a child care provider before enrolling their child. Other sources, such as informal surveys and journal articles, stated similar responses from parents. Listed below are the most common questions asked of child care providers.

General

- How many children per adult attend the child care at any given time?
- What are the hours of operation (including days when the child care is closed or special hours for holidays)?
- Is transportation available to and from the child's school?
- Is the child care setting accessible for children who have physical impairments and require adaptive equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.) and for children who have visual impairments and need a predictable set-up?
- Is staff trained in first aid?
- Is the staff trained in CPR?
- Is the staff experienced in dispensing medications?
- Is toileting assistance provided?
- Is toilet training provided?
- What are the policies regarding medications?
- What are the policies regarding emergency situations?
- What are the policies regarding illness of child?
- What are the policies regarding illness of adult?
- What are the policies/times regarding nap time (is it required for all children under a certain age)?
- What is the daily schedule or routine for the children?
- Are there wide varieties of activities planned throughout the day?
- Do all the children attend field trips?

Special Needs

- Is the staff experienced in working with children with special needs?
- Is the staff experienced in Sign language?
- Is the staff experienced in tube feeding?
- Is the staff experienced in giving aerosol treatments?
- Is the staff experienced in lifting persons from wheelchairs?
- Is the staff experienced in positioning persons in adaptive equipment, on floor, etc.?
- Are there other children with special needs enrolled in the child care setting?

Behavior

- What is the behavior plan or policy?
- Are there individual behavior plans?
- What are the rules that all children in the same age-range are to follow?
- Is there a behavior system used in the child care setting (reward system, tokens, etc.)?
- What are examples of rewards used?
- Does the child care provider collaborate with the parents and other professionals to set up a behavior plan?

Meals

- Are meals provided?
- Are snacks provided?
- Are special diets considered when planning meals and snacks?
- When are meal times and snack times?

**FORMS FOR PARENTS/CHILD/PROVIDER LOCATED IN
SEPARATE FOLDER**

**[Appendix C – Collaboration with Parents and Families –
Forms for Parents, Child, Provider]**

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND PROVIDERS

The following local resources are not only beneficial to parents and families of children who have special needs, but can also be beneficial to child care providers. These organizations offer information and referral services and/or disability awareness training.

The Ability Center

5605 Monroe Street

Sylvania, OH 43560

(419) 885-5733

website: www.abilitycenter.org

ARC of Lucas County

5605 Monroe Street

Sylvania, OH 43560

(419) 882-0941

Northwest Ohio Center for Families and Children

2200 Jefferson Ave. 6th floor

St. Mary's East Wing

Toledo, OH 43624

(419) 251-1823

email: collaborativenet@aol.com

Early Childhood Program

730 Spring St.

Toledo, OH 43608

Toledo, OH 43607

(419) 419-729-3293

Easter Seals

5577 Airport Highway, Suite 203

Toledo, OH 43615

(419) 68-9080

Erie-Ottawa Educational Service Center

310 Main St.

Genoa, OH 43430

(419) 855-3589

The Family Information Network

One Stranahan Square, Suite 540

Toledo, OH 43604

(419) 242-9587

Family Service of Northwest Ohio

One Stranahan Square, Suite 414
Toledo, OH 43604
(419) 321-6455
email: fsno@aol.com

First Call For Help

United Way 211
One Stranahan Square
Toledo, OH 43604
(419) 246-4636

Frederick Douglas Community Association

1001 Indiana Ave.
Toledo, OH 43607
(419) 244-6722

Friendly Center, Inc.

1324 North Superior St.
Toledo, OH 43604
(419) 243-1289

Great Lakes Area Regional Center for Deaf-Blind Education (GLARCD BE)

4807 Evanswood Dr., Suite 300
Columbus, OH 43229
(800) 229-0844

Lucas Educational Service Center

415 Emerald Ave., 2nd floor
Toledo, OH 43602
(419) 245-4150

Lucas County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

2001 Collingwood Blvd.
Toledo, OH 43620
(419) 248-3585
email: info@lucasmrdd.com

Connecting Point, Inc.

1212 Cherry Street
Toledo, OH 43608
(419) 243-6326

North Toledo Community House

3201 Stickney Avenue
P.O. Box 80056
Toledo, OH 43608
(419) 729-4654

Northwest Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center (SERRC)

10142 Dowling Rd.
Bowling Green, OH 43402
(419) 833-6771
(800) 346-8495

Ohio Dept. of Health, NW District Office

Government Center, 13th floor
Toledo, OH 43604
(419) 245-2840

United Health Services

241 N. Superior St, 2nd Floor
Toledo, Oh 43604
(419) 242-9587

WGTE Public Broadcasting in Toledo

1270 S. Detroit
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 380-4600

YW Child Care Connections

1018 Jefferson Ave.
Toledo, OH 43624
(419) 255-5519
(800) 632-3052