



Family Support Council

Hi, I'm Chuck Raymond, Chairperson of your Family Support Council. Our primary purposes for being a council are:

1. To provide a forum for families to make their concerns, needs and preferences known to the policy makers, service providers, and the community.
2. To bring together a group of family members who are recognized as parent leaders, are empowered by state law, and who are able and willing to speak for other families.
3. To enhance, expand, and support the role that families play in making decisions about the design and implementation of services and supports in New Hampshire.

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We are in a mode of ever changing policies and programs and we need to have input from our Strafford County families so that we may address these important issues. We need your help in being council members; we also need your expertise to assist us. The Council meets once a month from September through June, normally on the third Monday of each month. If you feel you can be and would want to be of assistance to your community and serve on the Council, or just have questions, please contact me at 743-3909, or Deirdre Watson at 749-4015. Our next meeting is June 19th. Please come along and get involved.

Teen Social Group

In March, a new initiative from the Family Support Council's Recreation Committee began. We have formed a social group just for teenagers! The Family Support recreation survey completed 18 months ago indicated that this age group was lacking in activities and support in the community We hope, in some way, to respond to that need. Our first meeting was alot of fun for 12 teens and their families. We met in the youth fellowship room at Emmanuel Church in Rochester for pizza and air hockey, foozeball, pool, and video games accompanied by a sound system! Thanks to the support of all the parents and some siblings, the evening was great!

The next teen social group will be on Friday, May 26, at 6:30 at the Rochester Community Center and Basketball will be the name of the game! Marc and Cathie Lacasse have taken over for the evening and recruited some pretty talented basketball players to help out. Hope to see all you teenagers there!

Any questions? Call Betsy Carroll, Recreation/Leisure Coordinator, at 749-4015.

Playground Accessibility

The National Center on Accessibility offers technical assistance to recreation providers. The following are some questions and answers based on the most current information available in order to provide optimum access for children with disabilities.



Q: Does every element or piece of equipment on the playground need to be accessible?

A: A playground that is accessible and allows for integration is a playground that when viewed in its entirety provides like opportunities for children of varying abilities. This does not mean that each and every feature of play has to be usable by every individual. For instance, for a playground which offers play experiences such as swinging, sliding, and climbing, the same, or similar experiences should be provided for all. A playground should not just be accessible for children. It should be accessible for adults with disabilities as well. At times, there may be teachers, parents, or even grandparents at the play area that may have disabilities and need to access different elements of the play area should children using the equipment need support, supervision, or first aid.

Q: What part of the Americans with Disabilities Act addresses playgrounds?

A: Under Title II of the ADA, it is specified that all state and local government services, programs and activities must be made accessible. Play areas for public use, such as in a park, are considered programs under the ADA and required to be accessible. Moreover, under the ADA after January 26, 1992, all new construction must be built accessible. Please remember the intent of the law is that no person, solely on the basis of a disability, can be denied participation in, or be denied the benefits of programs, services, or activities. Privately held businesses providing public accommodations with playgrounds are covered by Title III of the ADA. Playgrounds that you find at fast food restaurants, day care centers, and those indoor playgrounds that you pay admission to use are required under Title III to provide programs and activities that are accessible.

Q: I have never seen a child that uses a wheelchair using our playground. How can I justify doing major changes for just a few children?

A: You may not see children with disabilities using existing playgrounds. However, the reason is most likely not because of lack of desire, but probably due to barriers preventing them from using the playground. Most people without disabilities can remember countless hours spent playing on playgrounds. This is an opportunity for fun and social interaction that is denied to many children with disabilities. These children have the right to play as much as any other children.

...no person, solely on the basis of a disability, can be denied participation in, or be denied the benefits of programs, services, or activities.

Gadget of the Month: Intellipics

from the Technology Lending Center



Come to the TLC here at our Crosby Road office and we will help you use Intellipics to scan your child's favorite book onto the computer so that each mouse click will go to the next page and read the story out loud with moving pictures and sound effects. Perfect for children who have trouble turning pages or who have difficulty using a mouse. Call Laurie McIntosh, our knowledgeable technology volunteer, at 742-2448 to set up an appointment or call the office at 749-4015 and ask for Betsy, (who is not so knowledgeable but is willing to help!)

Family Routines

Children develop best in an environment of order and consistency. They are happier when they know what to expect. To a young child, a predictable world is a safe world. By setting up regular, reliable times and procedures for daily events, parents and teachers provide a dependable environment. Routines also help avoid the power struggles that so often occur between adults and children.

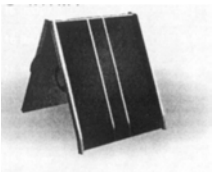
You'll find that life with your child goes more smoothly if you set up and consistently carry out regular routines such as bedtime, wake-up time, mealtimes, chore times, play times, and for older children--homework times. It might help to have a list of the sequence of the daily events posted where your child can refer to it as necessary (for example, Bedtime—put on pajamas, brush teeth, read story). Use simple drawings on the schedule (magazine pictures work great!) to facilitate young children's understanding. Kids love to help make such a poster! Of course, some changes in schedules and routines are unavoidable. And while children *prefer* routine and benefit from it, they are usually resilient enough when a familiar routine has to be disturbed.

“Routines also help avoid the power struggles that so often occur between adults and children..”

There are two basic points to remember:

Be consistent: Children are the most content when the same thing happens pretty much the same time every day; and
Explain deviations from the routine: If you have to change your plans, let your child know ahead of time, if possible, and explain the situation and the change you are making.

If you have questions about your child's development, do not hesitate to call the Infant & Toddler Program at 749-4015.



Portable Wheelchair Ramps Available

DSSC has three portable folding ramps available for short-term loan to families. These high quality skid resistant ramps are designed for approximately 1 –2 steps and fold to about 50” x 18”.x 6” If you are interested in borrowing one, contact Pete at 749-4015

Benefits Planning for Adults

A training on Benefits Planning for Adults is available June 6, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the NH Fish and Game Building in Concord. Presented by Joanne Malloy, topics will include: how employment impacts benefits; Medicaid benefits; Social Security, SSI and APTD; and record keeping. This training is sponsored by the NH Family Support Partnerships Project. For more information or to register, call Ceil Conner at 1 800 852-3345 Ext. 8942

Partners In Health News

The Partners In Health Program participated in the 4th Annual Human Race Walk on Saturday, May 6, 2000. There were 16 walkers that made up the Partners In Health team. Special Thanks to all who walked and helped us raise over \$200.00.



New Parent Group

Parents of children who have cerebral palsy gathered for the first time on Saturday, May 20, from 3-5 PM. If your child has C.P. or has had a stroke, please come to the next meeting and meet other parents. A potluck supper is planned on Thursday June 22 at 6:00 pm. Wayne and Alison Goss have graciously offered to host this group at their home in Dover. Please call Betsy at 749-4015 to RSVP.

Disability Legislative and Policy Update

As this legislative session comes to an end, several pieces of legislation that will affect the lives of individuals who have disabilities have reached a conclusion.

HB 1607 - establishing a study committee to consider legislation reducing to zero the number of individuals with mental retardation or developmental disabilities in the state who are not receiving or have not received Medicaid services. This bill passed the House in February and passed the Senate in April. An amendment was made in the Senate that will include individuals who have brain injuries and are on the waiting list for services in the study. Since the bill changed after the House passed it, it was necessary to send the bill with the amendment back to the House for their approval of the change. House Health, Human Services & Elderly Affairs committee approved the change and the bill will be on the House floor toward the end of May. It is anticipated that the House floor will also approve of the amendment and the bill will be passed onto the Governor for her signing. The study committee will be comprised of four members from the House Health, Human Services & Elderly Affairs committee and three members from the Senate Public Institutions, Health & Human Services committee. The committee will meet over the summer and fall and must report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation on or before November 1, 2000.

HCR 24 - relative to integration of people with disabilities. This bill passed the House in February and passed the Senate in April. Congratulations to the self-advocates who worked very hard and very successfully on this bill. It will be signed by the Governor in June.

SB 324 - relative to personal care services and providers. This bill will allow agencies other than Home Health/VNA agencies to employ individuals to be care providers for children with special health care needs. Area agencies for developmental services are expected to be able to employ personal care providers that are identified by families of children with special health care needs. Families will be able to identify members of their community (for example, school district personnel, members of their church congregation, neighbors) **and** family members other than the child's legally responsible guardian to be the care provider for a child who does not need extensive medical intervention but needs trained, mature care givers. The child will need to have Medicaid and an order from their physician requiring services. The family-identified care giver will receive training from the area agency or home health agency and would become an employee of said agency. The care giver will be trained further and supervised by the family. The bill is also seen as a great benefit to the elderly in our communities. Under this bill, elderly individuals, who, in the absence of adequate in-home support would need to move to a nursing home, will be able to engage community members to provide the care they need to continue living in their homes. This bill passed the Senate in March and passed House Health, Human Services & Elderly Affairs committee in April and House Finance committee in May. An amendment requiring financial reporting was made to the bill by House Finance. Because of the change, the bill will be sent back to the House to seek agreement to the amendment. Since the bill passed Senate Public Institutions, Health & Human Services committee, House Health, Human Services & Elderly Affairs committee, and House Finance committee with **NO** opposition, it is expected to pass to the Governor for her signature in June. Congratulations to the family members and advocates who worked with dedication and conviction on this bill.

SB 377 - relative to peer support programs within the Department of Health & Human Services. The purpose of this bill was to recognize the effectiveness of mutual peer supports to the capacity of individuals with disabilities to participate fully in the workforce, in their families, and in the life of their community. The bill will require the Commissioner of the Dept. of Health & Human Services to establish peer support programs with the Division of Developmental Services and the Division of Behavioral Health. This bill passed the Senate, the House, and, was signed by the Governor on 4/27/00, taking effect 1/1/2001.

The state continues to struggle with a budget deficit, created by the Supreme Court ruling on "Claremont", requiring the state to contribute funds for public education. The legislature (House & Senate) were not able to identify state sources for the entire funding and, therefore, funds may have to be identified through budget adjustments in areas such as Health & Human Services. There is a concern that any budget adjustments to Health & Human Services will result in reduced services to the disabled, the elderly, and people depending on public assistance. More information about possible budget cuts can be found by staying tuned in to your media (television, newspaper, radio) and watching for communication from your local area agency.

Respite Provider Information!

This is just a quick note to families who are in need of respite. If you need a break, and are not quite sure how to get one, here are some ideas. Anyone can be a respite provider, as long as you, the family, are comfortable with the person. Ask neighbors, family members (preferably those who are not living in the same house), ask at your local churches, whether or not you belong, or at the schools. Sometimes aides are available to do some respite after school hours. Look out for those who connect with your son or daughter, and ask if they might be interested in spending some time with him/her for a little extra money. A lot of families that I have talked with are concerned that people would be too overwhelmed, and therefore do not ask. You Will Never Know Unless You Ask! It is worth asking. You may be surprised and find a provider that is perfect for your family. The respite program at DSSC, Inc. does help find providers, but we could not possibly be as successful finding the right match as the families themselves. Most of our providers are students at UNH, and no matter how good the match, these placements are temporary. Somebody connected with your family is more likely to remain connected for a longer period of time. Families are welcome to send in their providers for a criminal record check, if there is a concern. FYI: Any provider that comes through DSSC, Inc., or that is on payroll, must have a criminal record check. Placing ads in the local papers has also worked for some people. Please call and ask if there are any questions about respite providers, or about funds for respite care that we might be able to help with.



Respite News

Congratulations go out to Linda and Paul Davis of Barrington who won the raffle for the overnight in Portsmouth from the last newsletter!!

The Respite Program received \$200 from the Division to help families who are going to the Family Support Conference with respite costs. The Knights of Columbus donated these funds. This was a welcomed gift! With this we were able to provide four families with \$50 each to help cover expenses.

We have been working on the fiscal year 2001 budget, and I have been meeting with families to come up with new plans for the new year, which begins on July 1, 2000. If anyone has any concerns or questions about the respite program, please call. Please note: now that the Family Support Conference is over, we will be working on camperships and summer recreation scholarships. If anyone has any questions regarding this, please call as soon as possible. If not, look out for upcoming announcements on these! Ellen can be reached at the office at extension 222.

Supporting Older Parents

The Family Support Council, Family Support Team and Case Managers at Developmental Services are working together to better support older parents in Strafford County who are caregivers for their adult son or daughter with disabilities. We will be hosting a number of workshops and events over the coming year and are also available to meet individually with families as they plan for the future. Parent mentors are also available to share their experiences and offer help if needed. If you would like more information on a particular topic such as estate planning or guardianship or would like to talk to another parent please contact Betsy or Deirdre or 749-4015.

Family Support Picnic : July 30

Save the Date: The Family Support Council and Staff will be hosting a picnic on Sunday July 30th. Raindate will be Sunday August 6th. We are still pulling together the details and we will let you know what they are in a separate mailing this summer



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It's about the mission!

Summer Recreation



The Family Support Office has received scholarship requests for summer activities far beyond what was expected based on last year's requests. We are reviewing all requests and everyone who applied should hear back from us in the next few weeks. Because the requests we received this year far exceeded our Family Support funding allocation, families may not receive the full amount that they requested.

We still have summer camp and Strafford County Recreation guides available if you are still searching for summer activities. It is also a good idea to check out your local Recreation Department for ideas.

Recreation Departments

Dover	743-6058	Rochester	332-4120
Somersworth	692-5621	Durham	868-5150
Farmington	755-2405	Milton	652-4510

If you need assistance please call Deirdre Watson or Betsy Carroll at 749-4015