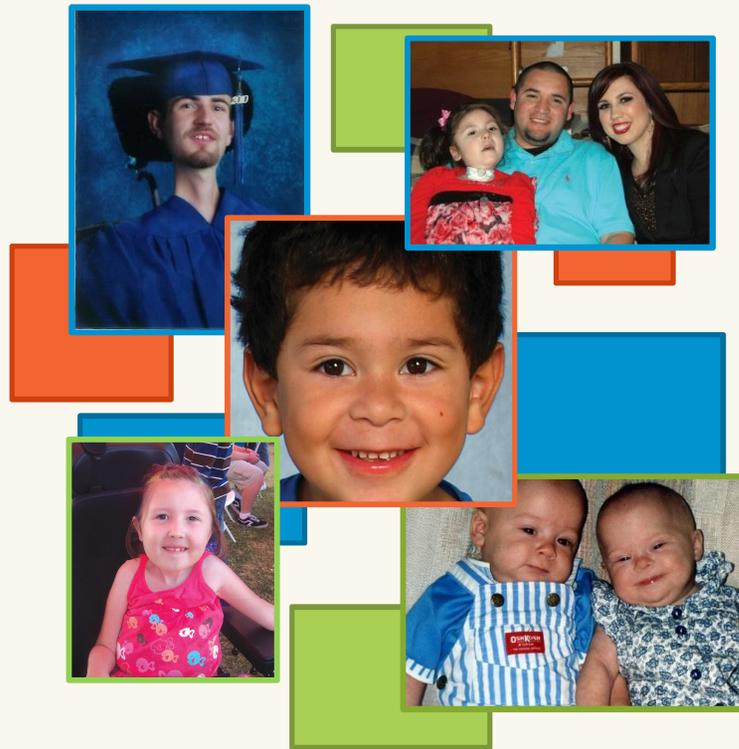




# Raising Special Kids

Families Helping Families



Parent Professional Collaboration

# Mission Statement



- “ To improve the lives of children with disabilities and special health needs by providing parents with information, training and support.
- “ We do this so parents can become effective advocates and encourage their children to successfully navigate through today’s world.

# Supports and Services



# Parent Training and Information Center for Special Education

Arizona's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) provides special education training and assistance to families of children with disabilities from birth through high school.

Every state has at least one center funded through the U.S. Department of Education under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

# What Can Families Expect From Us?

- “ Confidentiality
- “ Connection to community resources
- “ Opportunities for training on a variety of topics in parenting
- “ Connection to other parents who are informed, experienced, and ready to assist in problem-solving
- “ We work hard to make sure all services are available free of charge for families
- “ Spanish or English support

# Learning Objectives

Participants will learn:

- “ Improve ability to advocate/ self advocate
- “ family participation in education
- “ about the role of parents in special education
- “ about the role of school staff in special education
- “ strategies to foster positive interactions between parents, school staff and students

# Definition of Collaboration

## Collaboration:

A commitment to work together to address a problem and achieve a goal that could not be accomplished by the organizations working individually.

(Mattessich et al., 2004)



# Parents of Children with Special Needs

- “ Continually adjust to new realities for their child’s health or abilities
- “ Various cultures look at disabilities differently
- “ Have interactions with many different professionals and specialists in order to get needed services
- “ Have to learn how different systems operate
- “ Continual need for information/ services



# Where Does Collaboration Happen?

- “ In your home
- “ In your extended family
- “ In your neighborhood
- “ In your school
- “ In your job
- “ In your doctor's office
- “ In extracurricular activities



# Navigating Systems

- “ Transition plan components of IEP
- “ Power of attorney for health care or education
- “ Guardianship- age of majority
- “ Graduation and credits
- “ Post secondary education
- “ Vocation and living arrangements
- “ Social security



Parents can feel overwhelmed again

# Why is Collaboration Needed?

- “ IDEA mandates joint decision-making in special education by a team of school staff and parents
- “ Children often have multiple needs that require a variety of school staff to be involved (teachers, O.T., P.T., Speech Therapy, Behavioral specialists, nurse, AT, transportation)
- “ Parents know their child **best** and have valuable information and insights to share with the team



# Why is Collaboration Needed?

- “ Parents' rights and responsibilities in special education require participation in a team setting
- “ When parents are part of a decision-making team, they are more likely to support the goals
- “ Children develop skills and confidence when there is consistency between home and school



# Why is Collaboration Needed?

## Example Stories

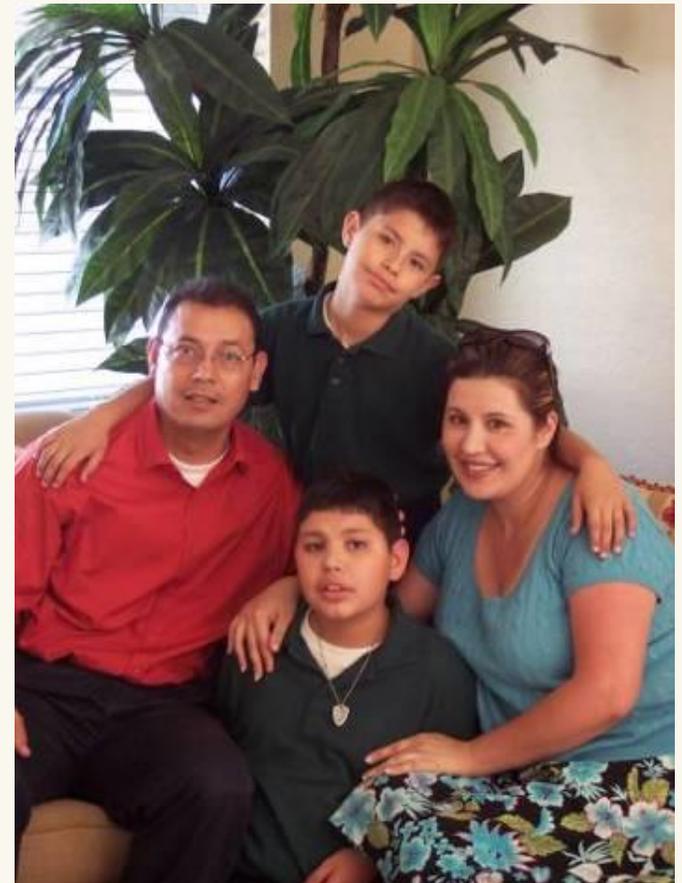
- “ Bianca and %classes+(child that does not use words to communicate)
- “ Show and Tell prior to 1st day of school
- “ Camera at %Meet the teacher Night+
- “ Self assessment questionnaire completed by parent AND child- compare
- “ Cover letter of ~~u~~who am I and what works best for me on IEP to give to each teacher
- “ Social Story %book+to read with child
- “ Discuss preferred method of communication



# Respect, Trust and Openness As Experts on Their Children

## Parents know:

- “ How their child is likely to respond in different situations
- “ Their child’s:
  - Strengths & needs
  - Likes and dislikes
- “ What has worked
- “ What has not worked



# Respect, Trust and Openness With Education and Experience

## Professionals know:

- “ Community services or programs available
- “ How to access services
- “ How the child's health, growth & development, education, educational goals, etc., might be affected by the challenges they face
- “ What has helped other children like theirs



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# Results of Collaboration

- “ Shared Ownership
- “ Sharing Responsibility
- “ Shared Success



Improving the quality of life and the health of children with special health needs and their families requires the collective knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise of all family members and professionals

Family Professional Collaboration for Children with Special Health Needs and Their Families (1993)

# What can teachers and staff do to foster a collaborative relationship?

- “ Send emails with praise and encouragement to parents about child
- “ Ask for strategies or help if behaviors are impeding progress in class
- “ Tell parents about all available resources when they have questions or concerns
- “ Listen Actively
- “ Use wisdom/patience



# What would hinder this process?

- “ Parents' Acceptance of disability
- “ Possible age of child
- “ Fear and lack of trust
- “ No established relationship
- “ Parent brings *baggage* of prior school experiences



# What else would hinder this process?

## When issues occur at IEP/ MET meetings

- “ Completed IEP handed across table for parents to sign without reading
- “ Rushed meetings
- “ General education teachers unaware of their role in teaching/understanding the child
- “ No IEP draft issued in advance of meeting
- “ Staff not staying for parent portion of IEP meeting
- “ No one taking notes
- “ Focus on child's deficits versus strengths

# Parents' Perspective

## Common reactions of parents:

- “ Denial
- “ Anger
- “ Fear
- “ Guilt
- “ Confusion
- “ Powerlessness
- “ Disappointment
- “ Rejection

*\*\*Not all parents go through these reactions or experience them sequentially. They might occur repeatedly at turning points such as initial identification, school entry age, adolescence, leaving school and when parents grow older. (McGill Smith 1997)*

# Meetings

Let parents know:

- “ WHEN the meeting will be
- “ WHERE the meeting will be
- “ WHO will be attending
- “ WHAT will be discussed
- “ WHY the meeting has been called
- “ HOW LONG the meeting will be

OFFER to answer questions or meet with them separately before larger meetings



# Relaying Sensitive Information

- “ Use the student's name
- “ Use people-first+language
- “ Balance between realism and hope
- “ Take enough time and give examples of how interventions can help the child develop
- “ Have specific, documented information
- “ Offer resources for family support such as Raising Special Kids
- “ Arrange a follow-up meeting if needed



# Being Prepared: Record Keeping

- “ Maintain communication with the school (i.e. logs)
- “ Keep contacts in easy to retrieve location and format (i.e. phone #s, e-mail, addresses, staff directories/lists, etc.)
- “ Keep permanent records in a safe location (birth certificate, medical records, social security card, verification of disability)



# Parents as Advocates

- “ Inform parents of involvement with issues in school/community and how it effects their child
- “ District advisory boards or school-based management committees (i.e. SEPAC)
- “ PTA/PTO
- “ Representation at Board Meetings
- “ Leadership training (i.e. Partners in Policy-Making)



# Forms of Family Involvement

- “ Parent Advisory Committees
- “ PTA/PTO or parent support groups
- “ Scheduled meetings with school staff
- “ Parent-teacher conferences/meet your teacher nights
- “ School-sponsored events targeted to parents
- “ Fund-raising events
- “ Athletic events
- “ Student performances
- “ Potluck dinners



# Forms of Family Involvement

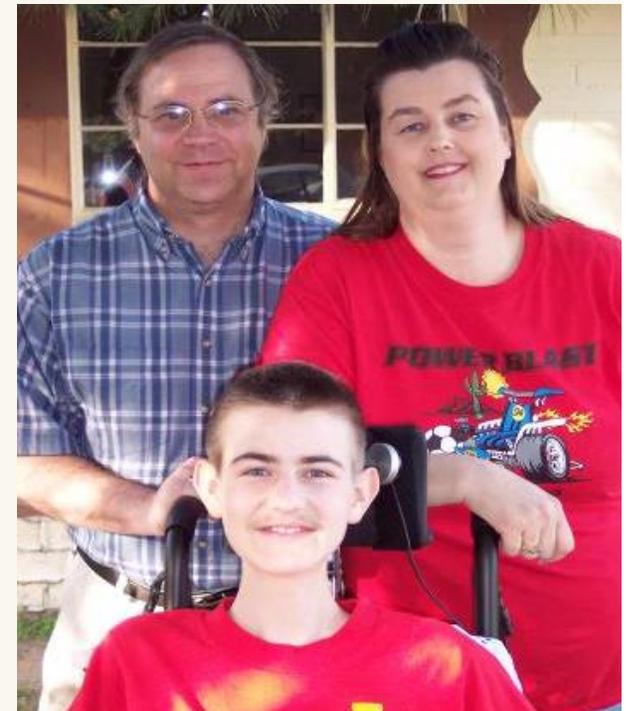
Newsletters	Parent volunteers
Phone trees	Resource centers/ parent corners
Surveys	Lending libraries
Home visits	Help with homework
Teacher-parent communication (logs, e-mail, phone calls)	Parent-school hotline or answering machine
Field trips	Websites



# RECAP

## for parent/professional collaboration:

- “ Meet parents ~~at~~ where they are+
- “ Actively LISTEN to the needs parents express
- “ Recognizing parents as first teachers
- “ Recognizing parents as experts on their child
- “ Respecting families' values and culture
- “ Use a variety of communication avenues
- “ Commend parents for their efforts
- “ Offer resources to help parents understand the process and paperwork (e.g. refer them to RSK)



# Special Education Services

- “ Raising Special Kids is Arizona’s Parent and Training Information Center.
- “ Consultation on IEPs, 504 Plans and Transition Issues
- “ In-service training for teachers and students in special education programs



# How to refer a family to Raising Special Kids

- “ Obtain consent from the family to be referred
- “ Contact Raising Special Kids (phone, e-mail, fax, or letter) and send copy of referral form signed by family with their information
- “ Raising Special Kids staff contacts the family member within 48 hours with appropriate support, training, and information
- “ If a Parent to Parent connection is desired, staff arranges the match and follows up with both parties after the connection
- “ Referral forms are available on our website [www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org) or by calling our office 602-242-4366 or 800-237-3007

# How to refer a family to Raising Special Kids

- “ Raising Special Kids  
(800) 237-3007 or 602-242-4366  
[www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)
- “ NICHCY (National Information Center for  
children & Youth with Disabilities) [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)
- “ PACER CENTER [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)
- “ Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for parent  
centers [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

# How to refer a family to Raising Special Kids

- “ Arizona Center for Disability Law  
[www.acdl.com](http://www.acdl.com) (self-advocacy guides)
- “ Families and Advocates Partnership for  
Education [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)
- “ CADRE (Consortium for Appropriate Dispute  
Resolution in Special Education)  
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/>
- “ National Center on Secondary Education and  
Transition [www.ncset.org](http://www.ncset.org)

# Thank You!

Thank you for completing the evaluation

[www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)

602-242-4306

Raising Special Kids is **Going Green!**

Please return materials for recycling if you  
will not need them 😊

# MAKE A GIFT TODAY

## Help Raising Special Kids serve thousands more Arizona families

- “ Donations to Raising Special Kids qualify for state tax credits.
- “ New rules allow all taxpayers, NOT JUST those who itemize on their Arizona tax return, to claim a personal tax credit up to \$400 per couple (\$200 as an individual).
- “ **This is not just another deduction—it’s a tax credit that reduces the amount you owe the state... dollar for dollar.**
- “ Your donation to Raising Special Kids may also be deductible on your federal tax return- even though you get it all back as a state tax credit.
- “ To learn more, log on to [www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)



*Make a gift today and it won't cost you a dime.*