



The Kids Newsletter

...for parents by parents.

A Parents Story Lending Library Parent Book Review

Married with Special-Needs Children
By Marshak & Prezart

Married with Special-Needs Children is a book that takes a look at how raising a special needs child stresses a marriage. The book offers practical communication tools for couples, including advice on staying connected, the importance of alone time and couple time, ways to discuss difficult subjects, fair and equitable childcare responsibilities, finding community resources and support outside the family, and strategies for coping with stress.

You will read about some real struggles that many couples face that you will most likely be able to relate to your own relationship. Some of these issues include, communication breakdown, lack of romance and intimacy, conflict over parenting styles and roles, differing expectations of a child, and also issues arising in second marriages and blended families.

Chapter Three of the book is entitled Practical Solutions to Practical Problems. It is well titled and gives some solid advice and suggestions for solving some common challenges. Three major challenges addressed in this section seem to universally affect parents. Financial issues, time constraints, and mental and physical fatigue are just three of the six topics discussed in this chapter.

Here are some examples of the strategies to consider for each challenge:

1. Financial issues
 - Increase awareness and gather information about insurance, social security, community supports and educational systems regulations
 - Speak to other parents who are going through similar situations
 - Be assertive, knowledgeable and persistent
2. Time constraints
 - Ask for help
 - Take advantage of carpools or when friends offer to pick up something at the store for you
 - Use respite care or babysitters
 - Maintain a routine
 - Take advantage of modern technology/shop online for food and clothes
3. Mental and Physical Fatigue
 - If you have children that are not disabled, teach them to do things for themselves.
 - Make sleep a priority (over the sink full of dirty dishes)

Read the strategies for dealing with teachers and strangers to change the way you respond to how they react to your child, so that your reaction doesn't become a mental drain.

This is definitely a book worth reading. The book is written so that you can easily read only sections of the book that most pertain to your challenges or stresses at this time. The book is well written and offers practical advice that you can put to use right away.

If you are interested in borrowing this book from the Riverside Family & Individual Support Lending Library, please give us a call at 781-246-2003.



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Special points of interest:

- ☺ A Parents Book Review
- ☺ FREE activities
- ☺ Build your advocacy skills
- ☺ Go green website
- ☺ Free/ low-cost activities
- ☺ Workshops & events

Inside this issue:

A Parents Story	1
Kid Friendly Activities	2
Legislative Updates	2
Kids Activities	3
Useful Website	3
Upcoming Events & Workshops	3
Feedback forum	4

Riverside Community Care

THE HELP YOU NEED CLOSE TO HOME

Kid Friendly Activities... that are FREE



Make your own Colored Clay (with stuff from around the kitchen):

- 4 Cups Flour
- 2 Cups Salt
- 2 Teaspoons Food Coloring
- 4 Cups Hot Water
- 4 Tablespoons Cooking Oil
- 4 Tablespoons Cream of Tartar

Mix flour, salt, and water (to which you've added the food coloring) in a large pan and heat over medium heat, adding the four tablespoons of cooking oil and cream of tartar. (The cream of tartar stops the clay from cracking). Stir constantly until the clay feels like mashed potatoes. Take the pan off the stove and let the clay cook to the point where your kids can knead it until it's smooth. Store in an airtight container.

Make your own Noise Maker (just in time for New Year's Eve):

Take two paper plates and decorate them with markers, crayons, streamers or anything else that's fairly light in weight. Put one paper plate on the table, right side up. Place the other plate on top, right side down. Begin taping or stapling the edges together, leaving a small opening in the top to fill with dried beans, uncooked rice, or popcorn kernels. Finish stapling or taping and make some noise!

Legislative Updates

16th Annual Family Leadership Series

The Family Leadership Series focuses on supporting families and individuals to live in their communities as naturally and typically as desired. This year the series will be held in Woburn.

The Series being planned for families in Northeast Massachusetts is **designed to provide individuals with disabilities and family members with state-of-the-art information and leadership building skills to effectively impact state and local organizations** (schools, human service agencies, government and community organizations).

The Family Leadership Series is organized into three, two-day workshops and the following dates are scheduled for the upcoming series: February 6 & 7, March 6 & 7 and April 3 & 4 2009. Session I of the Series will focus on initiative and leadership. Family members will be given information on leadership, its relevance to the life of families and the implications of using leadership to effect positive change in one's life. Session II of the Series will focus on creating a vision for the future of our children and family members. The focus will also be on the advocacy and communication necessary to ensure that vision. The focus of Session III of the Series will be policymaking at the local, state and federal level. Family members will receive information on how to develop networks with professionals and families and how to use legislative change to procure resources. Families will also learn a variety of strategies to decrease stress and increase satisfaction.

Food and overnight lodging for each family will be paid for by the Department of Mental Retardation. There will be NO COST to you to attend this series!!

We expect that, upon completion of the Series, families will continue to advocate for and work to create change for their families and will be willing to help other families in their areas to do the same. The Series organizers plan to provide whatever support families need as they continue to do this. We also plan ways to reconnect the Series participants, from time to time.

For more information or to request an application, please contact Susan Nadworny, Regional Coordinator, at 978-665-5179 or snadw@aol.com



Kids Activities

Save the date... our second annual **Snowflake Celebration Family Dance** will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2009, from 6 to 9 PM at the Most Blessed Sacrament Parish on Main Street in Wakefield. We will have a DJ, a big screen video, dance contests, games, music videos & prizes. Pizza, snacks, and drinks will be served. All family members and respite providers are welcome to attend, but registration is required. A \$10 donation per family at the door is requested. See the enclosed flyer for registration information and directions.



Disney On Ice Mickey & Minnie's Magical Journey DISCOUNT Ticket offer! Join Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse on a journey into the magical worlds of Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *The Lion King*, *Peter Pan*, and *Lilo & Stitch*. From Ariel's enchanting undersea kingdom to Never Land with Peter Pan and his sassy fairy friend Tinker Bell, you'll be captivated by the music, beauty and laughter in a journey so magical, you'll never want to go home. See the enclosed flyer for more details on how to request tickets.

Cost: Tickets are just \$7.00 each (balcony seats)

Show Date & Time: Saturday, 12/27/08 at 11:00 AM

Location: TD Banknorth Garden (formerly the Fleet Center)

....or you can check out www.mass-vacation.com and search for low cost activities in your own community.

Useful Websites

www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org - Millions of phone books hit American doorsteps unsolicited every year, to the tune of 19 million trees. If you don't want yours, join the 10,000+ already saying "no thanks" at the new www.yellowpagesgoesgreen.org.

Upcoming Workshops & Events

Melmark New England, located at 461 River Road in Andover, is offering a **training series for parents** titled *Supporting Your Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. This series includes a variety of topics, is run by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and is free of charge. It runs twice-monthly on Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:30 am. For more details go to www.melmarkne.org or to register call 978-654-4356

Be a part of something great! Riverside is offering a **Family Support Parent Advisory Committee**. The group typically meets on Friday mornings every other month from 9:30 to 11:30 AM. The next meeting is on February 13th at 9:30 am. The committee meets at our Wakefield office.

Riverside is **Going Green** and adding a section in the newsletter for parents to list items they have and no longer need and would like to donate or swap out with another parent. Let us know what you have and we will list it here. Email or call Riverside at 781-246-2003 ext. 221 with details of an item to donate or to request an item that's listed.



We currently have:

- Boy infant clothes, Zero to Nine months, various seasons.
- New girls sneakers, size 1 1/2, light blue and white
- Variety of lightly used books
- Leap Frog Leap Pads (2) with various interactive books & cartridges Grade K-2nd

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Riverside Community Care

THE HELP YOU NEED CLOSE TO HOME

Riverside Family & Individual Support
338 Main Street, Suite 301
Wakefield, MA 01880

We're on the web...
www.riversidefamilysupport.org

We'd like your input!

This newsletter is geared at being by parents for parents with disabled children. Each Issue will have an article with a family's story, useful websites, free or inexpensive resources, legislative news, and any information that may be helpful to a family raising a disabled child. Our goal is to increase awareness and reach out to families by supplying them with useful information.

We welcome your stories and ideas!

If you would like to contribute feedback, please email, fax or mail your thoughts to:

Email: treilly@riversidecc.org

Please put *Newsletter* in the topic of the email.

Fax: 781-245-2454

Address: listed above.



**Check out
the discount
Disney ticket event
inside...**