

Family Faculty

Mountain-side 5346
Nancy Panarese
Josanne Pearsall
Linda Waddell

New Brunswick 7576
Kerry Ellmer
Pat O'Hanlon
Carrie Snyder
Lori Velasco

Hamilton 2816
Sharon Clarken
Megan Fennelly

Stevens Rd 3757
Deidre Genovese
Michele Tomaino

Lakehurst Rd 3961
Jessica Krill

To reach us, please call 888-children and use the Extension listed

Family to Family

A Newsletter to families from families

Am I Doing All I Can? What I Learned from my Son...A Meaningful Lesson By Pat O'Hanlon

If you're like me, every once in awhile you may think "Am I doing all that I can for my child?". I've never stopped questioning and my son is now an adult. When he was little I use to take him to doctor visits monthly, and OT, PT, and Speech every week. I would wonder if I was missing a specialist or therapy that would make a huge difference and change the course of his life. When my son was ten years old something happened. It was at a heritage day presentation at his school. He was dressed in lederhosen that his Grandma O'Hanlon, who was Swiss, told him were very fashionable in Switzerland back in the day. He was so excited about the presentation, participating with his classmates and wearing his lederhosen. There he was on the stage a big smile from ear to ear and fully taking

part, doing his best and having fun. His power wheelchair and physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities did not hamper his happiness or mine. It occurred to me at that very moment, through my joyful tears that I was very proud of him and loved him very much. That realization changed the way I thought about if I was doing all I could. I began to focus on what was important to him in his life and in partnership with our therapist designed therapy goals based on that rather than on his condition. What began to happen is he would either reach the goal which resulted in him mastering a new skill or we would change the goal to something he could achieve that would enable him to function at his best. As a result, he spent less time in therapy while mastering new skills that he

could use at home, at school and with friends. I'm thankful that he made it through his younger years with all the demands I put on him every-day getting to therapy and appointments. I'm even more thankful that we were able to learn that therapy isn't something to do every week for the rest of your life but rather an important health care tool to maximize function. I now know when I wonder if I'm doing all I can to support my son that all I need to do is look to him for the answer.



Hand in Hand by Nancy Panarese

I am a grandmother who is raising a special needs child. When I started at Children's Specialized Hospital 13 years ago, they took my hand and never let it go. At Children's Specialized the therapists, doctors and don't forget the registrars and entire staff are here to help and partner with you. Your team at Children's Specialized is there for you and any questions you might have about your child's care. A way they can assist you is

by giving suggestions on activities for your child and family. They also will help you find things in your community or the hospital offers that might interest you and your child. School has started and you should feel free to ask your therapist or doctor for ways to make this time a little less stressful for you and your child. Your team walks beside you as a partner, because you are the most important part of the team. You also

We are here to help you!

can reach out to our Resource Boards; they are located in all our sites. These boards are either in our main lobbies or on a wall near our waiting areas. Enjoy this new season and know that Children's Specialized is always there for you and your child.

Parent Tips

- Make fall yard work fun. Have kids come up with different ways to pick up leaves or pine cones (i.e., squatting, bending, leaning, stretching, or balancing on one foot). Sing, dance, and explore. Provide kids with rakes and other tools that are kid-sized for comfort and safety.
- Take steps to stop the spread of germs and ask your health care provider if you and the kids should get a flu vaccination in the fall. Also, be sure to keep the kids home when they're sick. Remind family members to wash hands frequently to the length of a little tune and to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- It's easy to tell your family what to do. But, it's even better to show them what to do and how to do it. Start the fall off with healthy habits. Eat healthy, be active, get check-ups, get appropriate vaccinations (including flu), be smoke-free, manage stress, wear seat belts, wash hands, wear helmets, and more.



Children's Specialized Hospital

Healthy and Happy

By Jessica Krill

As school starts, the stressors begin again. The days of summer freedom are behind us and we are ready to conquer the new year. There is homework to be completed, IEP's to be reviewed, activities, therapies, schedules and for many of us work. How can we manage of all this and still be happy and healthy? One very important concept for parents is to recognize that we can only do so much. Keeping a routine is helpful, stay-

ing organized with calendars and preparation.

Here are some tips on preparation;

- Pick out the kids clothes and prepare lunches the night before
- Prior to food shopping, plan your meals for the week so you know what you need to buy
- Write down your schedule for the week in a calendar (make sure the calendar is big enough)



Plan and Prepare to reduce Stress

- Allow yourself 10 minutes a day to breathe and reflect on the positive things in your life.

Stress is negative. Obviously, we can't escape stress but we can try to find the positive too. Gradually, the goal is to have more positive than negative enter into our lives. Your mind is a powerful tool, use it wisely.

Did You Know?

By Sharon Clarken

Were you aware that the State of New Jersey has an Independent Health Cares Appeal Program? This program is supported by the Department of Banking and Insurance and they are prepared to answer any questions or inquiries you may have involving all lines of insurance (auto, health, home, life, long-term care, etc) related problems. It also provides consumers with the opportunity to file a formal complaint, if necessary. These complaints can be submitted to their office in writing and must

"New Jersey has an Independent Health Cares Appeal Program"

include the company's name/agent's name, the policy/certificate number and any other documentation that will substantiate your position. Also needed is a brief description of the problems that you have encountered.

For more information, please visit their Web site at

<http://www.state.nj.us/dobi/consumer.htm>

Or they can be contacted via phone at [609] 292-7272 or the consumer hotline at [800] 446-7467.

Representatives are available to assist and answer your questions.

Family Fun

By Kerry Ellmer

Summer has come to an end. Our children are back to school and to all the after school activities that make our lives so hectic. Before all this starts try designating one night a week to game/ movie night. At our house game/ movie night was

on a rotating basis. On your night you choose what we had for

dinner and what we did after. For example my son would pick spaghetti and meatballs a pirate movie and we would all have to dress like pirates. Each child loved having their special night and everyone had fun. So this fall designate a family fun night. Dress like a pirate and have some fun.



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