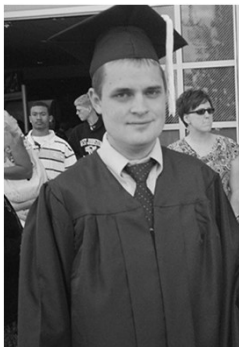


Making The Parent/Professional Relationship Work

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Why I'm Here





What Will Be Covered Today

- History of parent/professional collaboration in NC and TEACCH Parent Support
- Stressors that parents and professionals bring to a relationship that can impact collaboration
- Best qualities of professionals and parents
- Strategies for building relationships and preventing problems
- Strategies for improving relationships when problems happen

Parent/Professional Collaboration in North Carolina

- 1966- Child Research Project started at UNC
- 1970- Autism Society of NC started by parents
- 1971- Legislative Breakfast
- 1972- N. C. General Assembly passed legislation starting Division TEACCH and supporting the Autism Society of NC
- 1972- First autism classrooms in public schools

TEACCH Parent Support

- Help parents understand autism
- Help parents learn best ways to work with their individual child
- Value parents as members of treatment team
- Provide support from early years to adulthood
- Parent to parent support
 - Parent Mentor Program
 - Support groups for parents

What the Parent Brings to the Relationship

- Changes after the diagnosis
 - Day to day life
 - Dreams
 - Priorities
 - Relationships
 - The way we think of ourselves and our child
- New role as an advocate

Balancing Complicated Emotions

- Fear
- Sadness
- Inadequacy
- Guilt
- Protectiveness
- Desperation
- Isolation
- Anger
- Confusion
- Hopefulness

What the Parent Brings to the Relationship

- Past history with professionals
 - Negative experiences- misdiagnosis, rejection of concerns, rejection of child
- Physical impact of parenting
 - Sleep deprivation and physical exhaustion
 - No time to relax, always on alert
 - Cumulative effect of stress

What the Professional Brings to the Relationship

- Past history with parents
 - Negative experiences- Non-responsive parents, overly demanding parents
- System demands- documentation, testing, data collection, reports
- Limitations on the system-increased numbers, funding issues, lack of resources
- Burnout- emotional, physical
- Home demands

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The Best Professionals...

- Listened.
- Saw my child, not just the diagnosis.
- Were willing to think “outside the box”.
- Believed in me, as well as my child.
- Were honest.
- Connected me with resources.

The Best Parents...

- Listened.
- Gave me good information about their child.
- Appreciated what I did to help their child.
- Were responsive and helpful when needed.
- Followed through with strategies and recommendations.
- Understood the limitations on the system.

**Professionals:
Prevent Problems by...**

- Getting to know the family
 - Try to understand the family's world
 - Ask about family's experience with "system"
 - Put family behavior in context
- Connecting the family with resources
- Respecting the knowledge the parents have about their child
 - Learning More About Your Child document

I am looking forward to working with your son! Knowing more about him will make our work together more successful. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. Thank you for sharing your knowledge about your son!

1. What does your child love? What are their favorite activities?
2. What are your child's strengths? What do they do well?
3. What are their challenges? What is difficult for him?
4. Does your child have any fears I should be aware of?
5. Are there certain strategies you use at home to motivate your child or to get them involved in an activity? Please describe.
6. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your child?

**Professionals:
Prevent Problems by...**

- Developing a foundation of trust
 - Show that you care about the individual you are helping
 - Point out what the parents are doing well
 - Keep family information confidential
 - Be honest
 - LISTEN

Strategies for Professionals

- Include parent panel/perspective in trainings
- Encourage parent involvement- help make tasks for classroom, help on field trips
- Connect parents to each other
 - Organize parent meetings, develop informal mentoring, provide social opportunities for parents
- Develop a communication log- simple and easy to use, include positive info too

Daily Report

Name: _____
Date: _____



Today I did a great job on:

I may need some help with: _____

Other comments: _____

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 Friday Folder 

Date: _____
Teacher comments: _____

Parent comments: _____

Date: _____
Teacher comments: _____

Parent comments: _____

Date: _____
Teacher comments: _____

Parent comments: _____

Date: _____
Teacher comments: _____

Parent comments: _____

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**Parents:
Prevent Problems by...**

- Being a team player
 - Understand the professional's role and responsibilities
 - Educate others about your child
 - Communicate clearly and respectfully
 - Respect the professional's knowledge
 - Support the program and professional
 - Be involved- volunteer when needed

**Parents:
Prevent Problems by...**

- Developing a foundation of trust
 - Show that you appreciate their efforts to help your child; point out what has helped
 - Ask questions when frustrated
 - Make suggestions, not demands
 - Use "I" statements, not "You" statements
 - Share your fears

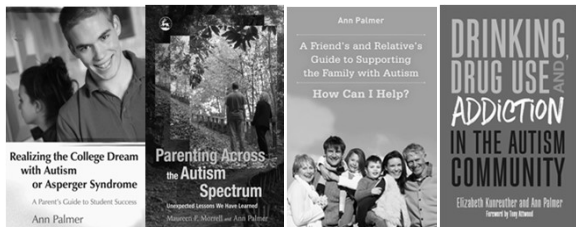
Strategies for Parents

- Be open to sharing information about your child
- Make a list of things you want to say before a meeting and take it with you
- Write letters, make calls to say thank you when things are going well
- Inform teachers immediately of any new circumstances at home
- Include professionals in parent support group opportunities

When There are Problems...

- Communicate your concerns as soon as possible
- Acknowledge everyone's point of view
- Find something you can agree on
- Respect each person as a member of the "team"
- Refuse to react
- Keep the focus on the individual with ASD
- Remember, everyone wants the same thing





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