



Parent Mentor News

Parent Mentor Office

Board of Education Building
Third Floor
9370 Olde Eight Road
Northfield Center, OH 44067

Parent Mentor
Kitty Boylan

Phone & Voice Mail
330-908-6219
Days, Evenings and Weekends

Email
Parent.mentors@
nordoniaschools.org

Director of Pupil Services
Margo Gibson-Costello, Ph.D.
330-468-4600
Email: Margo.Costello@
nordoniaschools.org

Parent Mentor Resource Library

Call the Parent Mentor office for a book and video list or find it on the Nordonia School District website. There is also a collection of books in each building.

There are many books for children, teens, on parenting, special education and specific disabilities including LD and ADHD

Reach Us On The Web

on
The Nordonia Hills School District web site at:

www.nordoniaschools.org
Click on Pupil Services on the left.
On the right side under Pupil Services click on Parent Mentor.

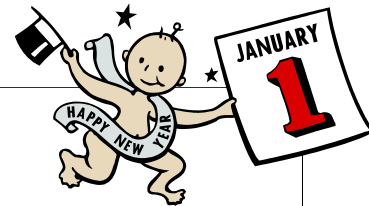
There you will find current listings and updates on upcoming events in the area, the parent mentor newsletter and complete resource library list.



We hope you enjoy this newsletter, but if you would like your name removed from this mailing list, please call and leave your name and address on our voice mail at
330 -908-6219.

Winter 2008

Happy New Year!



Upcoming Events

Strategies to Promote Success for All Students

by Differentiating Instruction for the Classroom

January 23, 2008 ~ 6:30 - 8:30 PM ~ Nordonia High School IMC

Donna Levine, Educational Consultant will talk about differentiating of classrooms to benefit all students.

Please call the Parent Mentor office to register.

"Disability is Natural" ~ February 2, 2008

9:30 am-4:00 pm, Holiday Inn Rockside Rd. Independence, OH

Sponsored by the Upside of Downs

Kathy Snow, nationally known speaker on disability and the author of Disability is Natural: Revolutionary Common Sense for Raising Successful Children with Disabilities, will also be speaking about inclusion in the classroom. Deadline for registration is January 18th. For more information or to register contact Gina Mitchner at 216-622-0755 or gmitchner@cmr-cleveland.org

Summer Camp Fair - Nordonia Middle School

Saturday, Feb. 9 2008 ~ 10 am—3 pm, Nordonia Middle School

Day Camps, Sleep Away, Sport Camps, Special Needs, Academic, Faith Based. **FOOD!** Adventure Camps, Nature Camps, **PRIZES!**

Sponsored by the Nordonia Middle School PTSA - www.summertimefair.com

The 7th Annual Special Education Law Forum

Special Education Services and The Cuyahoga County Bar Association

Present **A Program for Parents and Professionals** February 26, 2008

Topics to include Emerging Issues In Special Education

Contact Information: 27900 Euclid Avenue, Suite 210 Cleveland, Ohio 44132
216-289-IDEA (4332) www.idealaw.org

20th Annual Dyslexia Symposium ~ March 7, 2008

Find the Missing Piece - Solving the Puzzle of Scientifically Based Instruction
Featuring Louisa Cook Moats, Ed.D. at the InterContinental Hotel, Cleveland.

For more information visit www.dyslexia-nohio.org or call NOBIDA at 216-556-0883 ext. 1

Calling All Books ... I'm trying to track down books from the parent mentor resource library. If you have books that you are no longer using, please return by dropping them off at the Central Office or you can send them to school with your child in a bag or envelope marked Parent Mentor Office - Central Office. If you would like to keep them a bit longer, please call and leave a message. Thanks!



Program Helping Families Find Mental Health Services

The mental health needs of children and teens are often both complex and perplexing, sometimes leaving parents wondering where to turn.

To help families find the services they need, Akron Children's Hospital, in collaboration with several area agencies, has opened the Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) earlier this year. The center was made possible through a \$1.2 million, three-year grant from The Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation, an organization based in Hudson that provides financial support for mental health initiatives.

"Mental health problems are becoming a major concern for children and their families in the United States," said Patricia Seifert, Ph.D. director of PIRC. "Nearly one in five children and adolescents struggle with mental health problems, such as attention deficit disorder, depression and post traumatic stress disorder, and the need is growing".

"A big part of the problem for these kids is finding and accessing the appropriate services." said Seifert. "While there are a number of excellent agencies in our area providing services, parents may not know where to begin."

To access mental health services for your child or teen, call 330-543-PIRC (7472) or toll-free at 1-866-443-PIRC, 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday.

NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness www.namiohio.org

NAMI Ohio was created in 1982 by a small group of family members to provide mutual support, education, and advocacy for individuals and families affected by serious brain disorders. NAMI now includes family members, mental health consumers, providers, community mental health boards, mental health organizations and other supporters

Local Chapter - Mel Reedy, President
330-258-0811 Or

Email - namiofsummit@adelphia.net

The Family to Family 12 week (free) course will begin on January 10, 2008 - to meet from 6:30 - 8:30 at the First Congregational Church of Hudson.
Call Joan Sauer to register at 330-655-5372.

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

Rory McLean - President

216-556-4937

www.asgc.org

6:30-8:30 pm, first Tuesday of every month at the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center on 8001 Brecksville Rd. in Brecksville OH

The goal of this Chapter is to help you; parents, caregivers, individuals with autism, and professionals, grow in understanding so that you may comfortably and confidently work together toward brighter futures. We cannot take your place. You have an important role to play in ensuring the best possible outcomes for individuals with autism. Our efforts are aimed at helping you to make the best decisions possible. We function as a catalyst for change by providing you with support and the very latest information, so that your insight and talents are able to be used to their fullest potential.

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

The National family-run organization dedicated exclusively to helping children with mental health needs and their families.

www.ffcmh.org

Summit County Chapter - Laura Wissler

405 Tallmadge Road

Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221

330-923-0688

800-991-1311

llwissler@hotmail.com

Books for Children on Mental Illness

Iris the Dragon Inc. is an educational publishing company that offers a series of illustrated children's books and educational resources that deal with the topic of children's mental health.

Believed to be the first of its kind in its approach to educating caregivers and children about mental illness, Iris the Dragon Inc. has been successful with its products in beginning a dialogue with children about what often can be a difficult topic. Visit www.Iristhedragon.com

"The Storm in My Brain"

FREE Booklet for Kids with Mood Disorders - Can be ordered from the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance on the website - www.dbsalliance.org. They have many other pamphlets and publications.

Tax Benefits for Parents of Children with Disabilities - Year 2006

By Michael A. O'Connor, Esq. from wrightslaw.com

If you have a child with a severe disability - a learning disability (SLD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), AD/HD, or other physical, mental or emotional impairment - you may qualify for valuable tax benefits. Because tax laws are complex, and many tax preparers often do not have occasion to use these unique tax benefits, families are at risk of losing refunds worth many thousands of dollars.

It's likely that 15-30 percent of families with a disabled child have one or more unclaimed tax benefits.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) "Publications" represent the most accessible form of guidance to the tax rules for the general public. To obtain publications go to www.irs.gov/formspubs

The IRS provides free booklets that can be ordered by calling the IRS at 1-800-829-3676

Tip: Relative caretakers, such as grandparents or aunts, and non-relative caretakers, such as foster parents, also may qualify for tax benefits

Tax Benefits: Deductions vs. Credits

Deductions It's important to distinguish between two different categories of tax benefits. One category is a "deduction from taxable income" or simply "a deduction." The value of a deduction is based on the marginal tax rate of the taxpayer. If a person has a tax deduction "worth \$1,000," the actual value of the deduction will be determined by the taxpayer's tax rate. So a taxpayer in the lowest tax rate bracket, 10 percent, will have taxable income reduced by \$1,000, and save \$100 (10 percent of \$1,000). However, a taxpayer in a higher bracket, for example, 28 percent, will have taxable income reduced by \$1,000, and save \$280 (28 percent of 1,000).

Tax Credits The second tax benefit is a tax credit, which is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability. An individual with a tax credit worth \$1,000 will have his tax bill reduced by \$1,000. This means that the actual amount of taxes is reduced by the amount of the tax credit. However, because tax laws and procedures are very complicated, other factors can influence the ultimate value to the taxpayer.

For additional information on common missed tax benefits visit: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/tax.2006.benefits.oconnor.htm>

Tax Counseling and Tax Preparation Assistance

[Certified Public Accountants \(CPAs\)](#) represent one source of tax advisors, although not all CPAs have expertise in this area. <http://www.aicpa.org/states/stmap.htm>

[Enrolled Agents](#) are individuals licensed by the IRS to represent taxpayers, and this group generally has a high degree of expertise. <http://www.naea.org/MemberPortal/StateAffiliates/Listing/>

Typically, charges for a tax return with multiple deductions and credits will cost \$150-300. Several national companies provide tax preparation and tax counseling services. Many operate only during the tax filing season but a small number in larger urban areas are open year round. Fees charged by these companies are slightly lower than the fees typically charged by CPAs and Enrolled Agents.

Some parents may not be able to afford fees charged by professional tax preparers, who generally seek payment in advance. An option for lower income clients is the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. However, because of broad range in skills and expertise of volunteers, caution is recommended. Some large cities have one or more VITA programs that offer professional level services. A university accounting department or the local legal services program may be able to help you identify a high quality VITA program.

*If you would like a copy of this entire article from Wrightslaw.com,
Call the parent mentor office at 330-908-6219 or visit the Wrightslaw website.*

Goal Setting for Children with Learning Disabilities: Your Role is Important

By: Dale S. Brown (2008)

In January, many people set their goals. The holiday season is over. It's back to school, back to work, and back to family routines. Teachers plan next year's classes while parents think about their family and what they want for each member. In many jobs and small businesses, workers and managers set annual goals. Children should also be encouraged to set goals for learning, personal growth, and their future. When children learn to set goals and reach them, they can visualize their future, make good choices, and make their dreams come true.

Unfortunately, many children with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder find goal setting challenging. They often have Executive Function Disorder — a miswiring of the brain which makes it hard for them to plan ahead, to start and stop what they wish to do, and to monitor their behavior. Some children get distracted from any goal they set. To make matters more complicated, the school system and society sets goals for them — such as getting good grades and performing well on standardized tests — that challenge them in their area of disability. When they do not receive proper accommodation, they get discouraged and lose confidence. Here are some ways to help your children, students, clients, and people with learning disabilities set their own goals and reach them.

- ask them about their dreams and desires
- encourage them to set self-directed goals related to their dreams. Their dreams will provide the fuel they need to overcome obstacles
- link their schoolwork, particularly the tasks they dislike, to the goals they choose
- help them figure out how to work around their disabilities
- teach and model the perseverance they will need to handle the invisible challenge of their disability
- praise their work process as well as the product
- when they succeed, ask "How did you do it?"

You can read the entire article at:
www.ldonline.org/article/21026

Autism Speaks Hosts "Rock 'Til It Stops" Benefit Concert at The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum to Support Local and National Initiatives
Legendary Musician Stephen Stills and Cleveland's Own Michael Stanley Headline April 12 Event

Autism Speaks will host a special one-night-only benefit concert, featuring performances by Stephen Stills and Michael Stanley, at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, Ohio, on Saturday, April 12 from 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. "Rock 'Til It Stops" will be an evening of food, music and fun as the Cleveland community joins together to raise awareness about autism and funds to support Autism Speaks' local and national research, education and outreach initiatives. April is national Autism Awareness Month.

Last April, Autism Speaks sold out its inaugural Cleveland concert event, which raised \$250,000 for Autism Speaks. In addition to the special musical performances by Stills — a two-time Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee -- and Cleveland's own Stanley, this year's "Rock 'til It Stops" event will include tours of the Museum's exhibits, as well as delicious food and drinks. The evening will honor Cleveland-area leaders in the fight against autism: Norma Lerner, benefactor of The Lerner School for Autism at The Cleveland Clinic; Susie Ratner, co-founder of The Monarch School for Autism; Eileen McShea, Autism Speaks supporter and co-host of "Good Company" on WKYC-TV; and Kristen and Stephen Stills, activists and national supporters of Autism Speaks.

Ticket prices start at \$150 and sponsorship opportunities are available. To purchase tickets, contact Leslie McCammon at (323) 549-0500, ext. 748 or lmccammon@autismspeaks.org. For sponsorship information or to join the organizing committee, contact Shari Goldberg at (440) 449-9922 or sharigoldberg22@aol.com.

For more information about the event, visit: <http://>

"Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to."

--**Bill Vaughn**,
columnist and author



Mediation Services Available For Free!

By Steve Polovick, Mediation Coordinator, Office for Exceptional Children

What is Mediation?

Sometimes parents and the school district disagree about the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities. Mediation is a process that may help both parents and the school resolve disagreements using an impartial third person, called a mediator, who has been trained in effective mediation techniques.

Mediation is a voluntary process, and both parties must agree to participate. The mediator helps the parties communicate with each other and facilitates discussion of their concerns in an effort to reach a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute.

Benefits of Mediation

Although mediation can be an emotionally difficult process, there are many benefits to pursuing this option:

- *All parties find greater satisfaction because both the parents and the school work together and agree on a solution rather than having an outside individual determine the outcome.*
- *Disputes are resolved quicker through mediation than with other traditional legal procedures.*
- *Mediation is a less costly alternative to other judicial approaches.*
- *Data suggests that written agreements reached through mutual resolution frequently result in higher rates of compliance.*

Cost of Mediation

Mediation is a free service provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

How to Request Mediation

Either the district or the parents can request mediation by contacting the Office for Exceptional Children at:

Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children Procedural Safeguards.

25 South Front Street, Mail Stop 202, Columbus, OH 43215-4183.

Phone: 614-466-2650 TDD: 614-752-1619 Toll Free: 1-877-644-9338

Mediation also is available when a request for due process hearing or a formal complaint has been filed at ODE (or another jurisdiction).

The Selected Mediator will contact both parties to set up the date, time and location of the mediation session, being particularly responsive to any special needs that may exist with regard to schedules and disabilities.

For More Information

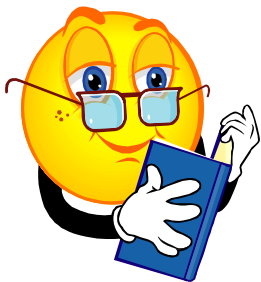
For More Information on mediation procedures for special education, see www.ode.state.oh.us and search for mediation.

Schwablearning.org moving to www.GreatSchools.net

It is our pleasure to announce that SchwabLearning.org will continue to be available to our users through GreatSchools.net, a San Francisco-based nonprofit dedicated to helping parents make *informed choices*, become *actively involved* in their kids' education, and *advocate* for high-quality teaching and learning. The teams at Schwab Learning and GreatSchools are working together to make sure this transition is as smooth as possible for you

SchwabLearning.org will officially transition to GreatSchools.net in mid-January 2008. Access to "www.SchwabLearning.org" will remain the same until the core content has been transitioned to the GreatSchools website, sometime in 2008. Watch for announcements on SchwabLearning.org's homepage and in our newsletter.

9370 Olde Eight Road
Northfield, Oh 44067



There is now a collection of books from the Parent Resource Library
in each school building.

Check in the office at the building your child attends or
call the parent mentor office if you don't see
a book that you're interested in.

The complete library list is on the parent mentor page under pupil services
on the Nordoniaschools.org website.

www.nordoniaschools.org