

THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL ISSUE

VOLUME 1; ISSUE 6

Collaborators: BBB Autism, ASO York Region

August 24, 2001

Mainstreaming in Classrooms

(The following is meant for children to read. Given the subject matter, it could be a useful tool to present to your ASD child's teacher, so that she can pass it out to all the NT kids in the class)

The world is made up of many different kinds of people. There are people with different skin colors, different religions, different hairstyles, different accents, and different learning abilities (just to name a few!). Yet, despite all their differences, people somehow manage to work together successfully. That's what makes the world go 'round!

Learning to get along with all different kinds of people is one of the keys to being successful in life. School helps you do this. Mainstreaming and inclusion in classrooms allows you to work with and get to know all different types of kids. Read our article to understand how learning with others helps everyone.

What Is Mainstreaming?

Mainstreaming is an educational method that says a classroom should include many different kinds of learners. The term "mainstreaming" was first used in the 1970s and describes the education of students with disabilities with those who do not have disabilities. In a mainstreamed classroom, all kids, including gifted kids and children with disabilities, learn together in the same classroom. Mainstreaming is now more commonly known as inclusion, and many school systems today are using inclusion in their districts. Is your school mainstreamed?

To finish the article, click [here](#).

First Meetings with schools.....
by BBB Autism Member Becca Lynn

This is what I do when first meeting with a new school.... I've modified it over time with each new school that I've dealt with but this is the basic starting point that has the greatest success for us....

1. One very short outline (approximately one page) on each child covering the most important Past and Present Issues/goals/Concerns. On this I list in point form (as much as possible) those areas of greatest importance. The reason I do this is because hitting the school with a huge quantity of information can cause what is most important to become lost in the information.... Point form is great because they can put it on the top of the file, pull it out, check it and move down the list quickly.....

In my experience it is best to give more detailed information after I have gotten to know the school and the teachers involved with my children. There are two reasons for this:

1. after I've built a positive relationship with the teacher/school official they are far more likely to carefully read the information that I send.....

and

2. it gives me time to understand their personality, their teaching style, past knowledge dealing with special needs children, and their relationship with my child..... all important elements in determining what information the teacher needs access to and what directions to start encouraging the teacher to move in. It is my rock solid belief that IPP plans need to be individualized to suit not just the child but the individual teacher's style who is teaching my child that year. In my experience this has led to the greatest degree of success for my children.....

3. Plus it is extremely important to discover what knowledge they already possess. One because no one likes it when you assume they as professionals do not have certain knowledge.... and two because if they do have knowledge it usually works best if you lead them towards what you want and let them think it is their own idea. They want to feel proud for being educational professionals and being able to come up with helpful ideas.... Everybody is like that actually I believe - part of regular human nature.

The most important point that I try to keep solidly in mind is it is not important to be right.... what's important is to get my child's needs met. Sometimes that takes more time and a great deal of energy put into relationship building..... but the results are better in the long-run.....

Becca Lynn

" Back to School, 2001"

As September approaches, parents are switching their focus from summer programming to thoughts of the coming school year---- " *The Happiest Time of the Year*" according to the Business Depot commercial!!!!!! But for parents of exceptional students, this school year often raises doubts and anxiety about programming and services; about suspensions and expulsions; about funding and cutbacks; about attitudes and frustrations.....

Here are some reflections to help you get "back to school" in a positive, constructive and pro-active manner:

To read the rest of Lindsay Moir's article, click [here](#).

Dedicated teachers help youth come out of shell

By ELLA JOHNSON, Courier & Press staff writer
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Thousands of local students will be heading back to school in less than one month. I know because my son, who will be in the first grade, has already started to prepare.

I wrote about him in this column last year explaining how he cried when he had to leave Fairlawn Elementary School on what he thought was to be his first day. (Kindergartners didn't have to report the first three days.)

I'm proud to report Kyle, who has autistic tendencies, excelled in school beyond my, and his teachers, wildest dreams.

To read the rest of this article, click [here](#).

How to Prepare For School **From your Parenting Special Needs Guide**

Prepare for a New School Year

Time Required: 6 hours

Here's How:

1. Provide a current list of medical needs.
 2. Provide a current list of medications, along with the medications in their original bottles.
 3. Visit the classroom and meet the teacher ahead of time.
 4. Arrange to have any medical equipment delivered to the school in advance.
 5. If your child requires an associate, meet with the associate in advance.
 6. Contact the school in regard to your child's bus or transportation needs.
 7. Provide the school with information in regard to feeding issues.
 8. Provide the school with a list of your child's likes and dislikes.
 9. Provide the school with any information that is relevant to providing your child comfort.
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Helpful Back-to-School Hints from REAL Parents

Submitted by BBB Autism members Khris, Becca, Liz, Gabrielle, Diana and 'Snowmat'

For Your Child

A has a home ABA program, and we have been able to get permission to go into the school this summer. We just live down the street from the school. So every day, the therapists are walking Alex down to school, spending time in his classroom etc. He will still have to adjust to all the people in September, but we feel this is an excellent start for him.

He uses a picture activity schedule book, for his walk (to the school), so he is independently able to see what he has to do next. Hang up backpack etc.

I have prepared his new teacher by giving her as much information as I could. She has been to the daycare to see A there, so she knows what to expect. She has been invited to come to our home and see his home program but we have not heard from her yet. but I expect she will come. She seems to be a great teacher!

We also have a unique opportunity to send our instructor therapist to school with A for the first few weeks to help his transition. She will be there to help teach the aide and teacher how to cope and teach A.

I use simple repetitive language to get J. ready for the bus. I use phrases like "Where's the bus" and "Here's the bus".

When difficult transitions are looming, we try to use photos and/or PECS.

J. will be eating lunch away from home for the first time in September. I will be presenting his lunch here, in school lunch style...in a lunch box, with Baggies etc.

J. wears a harness on the bus for his safety and that of others. It actually seems to provide him with deep pressure, which keeps him calm. He also loves when the bus driver plays the radio so he can sing along!

We homeschool our son and are already doing most of what we will be doing come September (minus a few curriculum books and hopefully a weekly class).

Taking your child to the school during the summer months. Getting them used to the building and encouraging play on the playground. This helps your child feel more comfortable.

Play school at home during the summer months so that he/she gets used to the idea of some of the routines.

Find the walk route (if you are walking) and get your child used to walking the route during the summer months.

Find out if your child has any specific fears and address those. For example there can be a fear of going to the bathroom and how that is supposed to happen. Autistic Spectrum Children need to know exactly.

Can you and your child meet their new teacher the week before school starts? This often makes children feel far more comfortable. And the teacher too - so he/she can understand exactly who the special needs child is that is coming into their class.

Buses - Will your child be riding a bus? Has he/she done this before? Take the time to take a lot of bus rides on the city bus if possible. This will help prepare your child.

Try to create a school obsession. Talk about school a lot and the good experiences that you had there (yes I know some of us had bad experiences - and a lot). If you have a drawer try to encourage drawings of the school, playground, teachers, new school classmates and buses. Anything to do with the school.

Introduce your child to their new teacher ahead of time

Plan a "drive-by" and playground visit to the new school.

My boys are going to be in 2nd and 4th grade. We do meet the teacher and I always give a little "talk" with the teacher about the sensory issues. Public school has always been tough - long day, lots of sensory stuff. I tell them to let the boys sit on the outsides of the group, the back in line, they don't like field trips, to sit them away from windows and vents and things like this. Our biggest thing at the moment is lunchtime. Our boys were on the GFCE diet last year for awhile until we switched to using Peptizyde for the dairy/gluten foods. Peptizyde is a digestive enzyme and is therefore classified as a food, BUT the school nurse wants a doctor's note (won't take my permission). They are not supposed to take ANYTHING unless the nurse gives it to them and she wants a note. The boys take their lunch a few days a week and I put the enzymes in their lunchbox, but at our school the hot lunch kids sit separately from the cold lunch kids. My kids want to sit with their friends sometimes. So I now (after haggling with our dr) can get a note saying they need these, however to go to the nurse's office they have to get out of the lunch line (you have to sit in the same order as you are in the lunch line). An odd thing to be dealing with at the moment. It would be a lot more hassle to require the school to provide a GFCE lunch everyday and I am going to point that out and ask them to come up with some suggestions.

The other issue would be the bus. I had them cope with the bus for a couple of years now and this year I am

going to drive them when possible (we only live a mile away so it isn't a big deal). The stress of the bus ride seems to cause much more problems than me driving them, even though they ride for only 20 minutes each way. So those are our plans at the moment.

For The School, Teachers, Aides, etc.

Informational Packets - outlining your child's strengths and weakness, particular idiosyncrasies, and strategies that he/she responds to. One for each person involved with your child.

Preliminary meeting with school officials as a 'get to know each other' meeting. This is a time for making friends rather than driving home points. Making friends first provides a foundation upon which it becomes easier to get your child's needs met. Its really good if you can target one person to bond with who can act as a spokesperson for your child.

Don't expect the new school to be like your old or even have the same challenges. Find out what the challenges are that this particular school faces and find out what motivates each of the people working with your child. Why they went into the profession, what challenges they have faced and what has caused them the most disillusionment. Understanding others is the first step upon which hubby and I base a relationship that enables others to want to achieve the most for our special needs children.

Second meeting should be set within two to three weeks. Problems can be immediately nipped in the bud. This is when you start dealing with specifics and details of situations. But it's important to keep nurturing the friendship aspect of the parent/school relationship. This is always your most important tool.

Give your child time to grieve the old school while pointing out positive aspects of the new. It may take awhile for your child to grieve the old school but this doesn't have to mean that he/she will not begin to accept and even embrace the new school if you work hard to bring about a positive attitude and atmosphere.

Introduction Letter to the Teacher

Kids with learning disabilities and/or ADHD are often anxious about starting a new school year. Ease your child's fears by sending a letter to your child's teacher before school starts. This will give you the opportunity to describe your child's strengths and interests and set up a meeting to discuss any problem areas.

Use this two-page worksheet to figure out what you want to put in your letter. If you don't have the teacher's home address, just mail it to your child's school or ask the school department to forward it on. Read the rest of the article [here](#).

LINKS GALORE!

Law and Education
International School Website Registry

GENERAL SCHOOL ARTICLES

(Written for Kids)

Going Back to School

Homework Help

What to Do When You Don't Like School

School Stuff 101 (crafts & games & more)

The Real Deal on Repeating a Grade

Why It's Good to Have Friends

Defining Diversity, Prejudice, and Tolerance

(Written for Parents)

Back to School

Letters to School

Comhnadh Consulting: Special Needs Consultants

Meeting the Needs of Challenged Teens; The High School Years

Special Education Resources (condensed into a table)

Back to School Stress

Tips for Teaching People with High Functioning Autism

School Daze

NICHCY Basics for Parents

Preparing for the New School Year - Vaccination Choices

Autism/PDD Back to School (About.com)

Understanding School Violence

Top 10 Packable Lunches Kids Love

Brown Bag Lunches

Fast Week-Night Dinners for Busy People

IEP: Individualized Education Program

(note: We will devote an entire issue to IEPs in the very near future)

Every child who is classified as learning-disabled must receive an IEP (individualized education program). The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) developed a fact sheet on frequently asked questions about an IEP:

Q: What is an individualized education program (IEP)?

A: An individualized education program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet your child's special needs. The program should include statements of your child's strengths as well as weaknesses and should describe the instructional program developed specifically for your child. The IEP has two purposes: 1) to establish the learning goals for your child; and 2) to state the services that the school district is required to provide. The law requires that every child receiving special-education services have an IEP, and states that their parents have the right to receive their own copy of this document. It is important that you keep a copy of your child's IEP in order to check on your child's progress and treatment.

Q: Who develops my child's IEP?

A: According to the law, the participants present at the IEP meeting should include the following:

- Your child's teacher (s). (If your child has more than one teacher, your state may specify in the law which teacher should participate).
- A representative of the public agency other than your child's teacher.
- You, the parent -- one or both.
- Your child, when appropriate.
- Other individuals that might make the discussion more helpful, at your discretion or at the discretion of the child's school.

Q: What is included in an IEP?

A: According to the law, an IEP must include the following statements regarding your child:

- His present level of educational performance, which could include comments on academic achievement, social adaptation, prejob and job skills, sensory and motor skills, self-help skills, speech and language skills, a transition plan (for those students age 14 1/2 or older) based on the

documented evaluations.

- Specific special education and related services to be provided and who will provide them.
- Projected dates for the initiation and duration of special services.
- Percentage of the school day in which your child will participate in regular education programs.
- Short-term instructional objectives (individual steps that make up the goals).
- Annual goals.
- Appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures to be used to measure your child's progress toward these goals on at least an annual basis.

Q: Is it the school's responsibility to ensure that my child reaches all the goals in his IEP?

A: No. The IEP is a guideline or individualized instruction, not a contract. The school is responsible only for providing the instructional services described in an IEP.

Q: What occurs during an IEP meeting?

A: The IEP meeting is scheduled for the purpose of developing a student's IEP. It is usually held at the child's school. The meeting takes place after the specialists have tested your child and recorded the test results. Your child's assessment results are usually explained at the IEP meeting. The specialists will explain what they did, why they administered the tests they did, the results of your child's tests, and what your child's scores mean when compared to other children of the same age and in the same grade. When possible, ask for the test results prior to the IEP meeting so that you will be familiar with them at the time of the discussion.

During the IEP meeting, you will be asked to share with the school the special things that you know about your child, including how your child behaves and gets along with others outside of school.

You will be asked to present an overview of your child's school experiences and personal life.

Everyone involved will then have a better idea of your child's needs.

If, on the basis of the information discussed in the meeting and the results of the assessment, it is decided that your child is in need of special education or related services, an IEP must be developed. As a parent, you should understand why the school proposes the intervention it does. Before you sign the IEP, ask questions until you are sure that you understand what is being stated. You may request a review or revision of the IEP at any time.

If you cannot attend the IEP meeting, school personnel are required to maintain records showing how they tried to find a time and place convenient for you. If neither parent can attend the meeting,

the school must inform you by telephone or by mail of the meeting's outcome.

Federal law provides for the changing needs and growth of children. At least once a year, whether you request it or not, a meeting must be scheduled with you to review your child's progress and to develop your child's next IEP. A full reevaluation must occur every three years. A reevaluation may occur more often if you or your child's teachers request it; however, it cannot be scheduled more than once a year.

Q: What should I do before an IEP meeting?

A. You can prepare for your child's IEP meeting by looking realistically at your child's strengths and weaknesses, visiting your child's class, and talking to your child about his feelings about school. It is a good idea to write down your ideas regarding what you think your child will be able to accomplish during the school year. Also, make notes about what you want to contribute during the meeting.

Q: What should I do during the IEP meeting?

A. As a parent, you are a crucial member of your child's IEP team. Listen carefully to the results of the tests, and make sure you understand what the tests are meant to measure and how the performance of your child compares to other children of the same age. Share with the team members any special information about your child, how she feels about school and how she gets along with family members. If you hear something about your child that surprises you or is different from the way you perceive your child, bring this to the attention of the other team members. In addition to sharing your feelings about your child's educational needs, consult with the other members of the team to make sure the best possible program for your child is designed.

~ KEYS TO PARENTING A CHILD WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY, by Barry E. McNamara, ED.D., Francine J. McNamara, M.S.W., C.S.W., Barron's, 1995.

A SPOONFUL OF HUMOR

Case study consent form

Dear Parent:

We want to do a case study evaluation on your child because he/she is having BIG trouble at school. He/She can't (check all that apply):

Read

Write

Do Math

Go potty alone

Play without biting____ staff____ students

All of the above.

We want to find out why your child is such a mess. We suspect that it may be your

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

To subscribe, e-mail bbbautism@deaknet.com please provide your name and location.

To Unsubscribe, e-mail bbbautism@deaknet.com please write 'unsubscribe' in subject line.

If you think you know someone who might enjoy or benefit from these newsletters, kindly forward us their email address at bbbautism@deaknet.com

Past Issues

(to request, email liz@deaknet.com and indicate which volume/issue(s) you prefer

Volume 1; Issue 1 WELCOME ISSUE!

Volume 1; Issue 2 SUMMER CRISIS ISSUE

Volume 1; Issue 3 SPOUSAL CONCERNS ISSUE

Volume 1; Issue 4 SENSORY INTEGRATION

Volume 1; Issue 5 CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

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A notice to our readers...

The founders of this newsletter and the BBB Autism support club are not physicians.

This newsletter references books and other web sites that may be of interest to the reader. The founders make no presentation or warranty with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained on any of these web sites or in the books, and specifically disclaim any liability for any information contained on, or omissions from, these books or web sites. Reference to these web sites or books herein shall not be construed to be an endorsement of these web sites or books or of the information contained thereon, by the founders.

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COMING SOON:

Our newsletter suggestion box is getting full, and I am asking for your favorite links, plus stories and articles you have written yourself on the following topics:

- 1. Home programs: this includes anything you have on ABA/IBI, OT, SLP, floortime, Miller method, Options, gfcf diet, sensory diet, swim therapy, music therapy...anything you can think of. Hints for hiring (and firing) employees...anything of that nature.**
 - 2. Apraxia**
 - 3. Central Auditory Problems**
 - 4. Acceptance/Denial**
 - 5. IEP**
 - 6. Dietary Interventions**
-

UPCOMING CHATS:

PLEASE NOTE: TRANSCRIPTS FROM PAST CHATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

liz@deaknet.com (request Apraxia and/or Enzymes and Autism)

AUTISM AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Wed Aug 29 2:00pm est

Thurs Aug 30 2:00 pm est

Back to school

Tues Aug 28 2:00pm est

Convert to your time zone here.

COMING SOON: "How to Set Up a Home IBI Program", "Autism and Essential Fatty Acids",

"Vaccines and Autism", "Sensory Integration Dysfunction", "Autism and Dietary Interventions"

Regular chats take place Mon-Fri at 2pm and 9:00 est pm daily. If no one is in the chat room when you get there...give it a chance. You never know who might drop in!

For chat instructions, please email the chat(s) you wish to attend to liz@deaknet.com

Attention: *Single Parents of ASD children:*

An upcoming series of chats and Newsletter themes will be discussing this issue. We would greatly appreciate any input (i.e. links, articles, book reviews and/or personal stories you may have. Anonymity is assured! Please forward submissions to:

elkowen@deaknet.com or statuesque_f@yahoo.com

Your help is appreciated!