

Strengthening Families ↔ Building Communities



Annual Conference of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

March 1, 2008

Sheraton Hotel

Eatontown, NJ

SCHEDULE OF CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

8:45 10:00 AM

“Environmental Justice: Toxic Schools and Your Child’s Health & School Performance”

Roy Jones, South Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance

Environmental exposures and toxins in homes and schools are known contributors to learning disabilities, developmental disorders and the academic performance of children. Learn what you can do to address the environmental health of your family, to clean up toxic schools and promote safe solutions to the contamination of our communities.

“Growing Pains: The Transition Survival Guide”

Patricia Paraskevacos, SPAN

Alice Hunnicutt, SPAN

Malia Corde, SPAN

Carolyn Hayer, SPAN

Myriam Alizo, SPAN

Transition is an individualized process, and emotions can run high. Families share stories about their personal journey during different stages of their child’s transition to adulthood. Learn helpful tips that can make your child’s transition a more meaningful process. Participants will receive a CD of resources for Transition to Adulthood.

“Inclusion in After School/ Out of School Programs”

Denise Bouyer, SPAN

After school and out of school programs offer a time for children to mix and mingle and make new friends. Learn strategies you can use to support your child with special needs and/or disabilities to achieve meaningful benefit in these programs

“Making a Difference: Preparing for Public Advocacy”

Peg Kinsell, SPAN

Educated, engaged parents make a difference in policies and practices that affect children’s lives. Gain the information and tools you need to be an effective grassroots policy advocate. Get helpful hints on working with others to prepare a public policy “action plan”.

“Navigating the Healthcare System for Children with Special Needs”

Valerie Powers-Smith, Hinkle & Fingles

Lauren Agoratus, SPAN

Participants will get an overview of health plans for children with special needs, healthcare terminology, and how to select providers. Learn strategies for partnering with providers by participating in decision-making, dispute resolution, and advocating for children with special healthcare needs.

“Parent Burn Out: How to keep the Flame Going”

Kathy Roe, Parents Anonymous

Raising kids is tiring work! Parenting is a 24-hour job with no pay raises or time-off for good behavior. It’s no wonder that moms and dads get “burned-out.” This exciting workshop explores the symptoms of burn-out and offers effective stress management techniques for parents.

“Rights of Immigrant & English Language Learners” (Spanish)

Rose Kardashian, Club de Padres

Immigrant children have the right to access a quality education, and their families have the right to participate in their education. This workshop summarizes the rights of immigrant children and their families, including language access rights, under federal and state laws.

“When Science Meets Bad Behavior: Research Based Methods, Win Every Time”

Terence Blackwell, Verbal Behavioral Institute

Based on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), participants will learn to: analyze how behavior is maintained by the function it provides the learner, decode and identify the behavior by the function that it provides to the learner, apply tools based on research based methods to identify and increase undesired behavior and increase adaptive behavior.

1:15- 2:30 PM

“Ask the Advocate: You’ve Got Questions-We’ve Got Answers”

*Carolyn Hayer, SPAN,
Erin Seigh, SPAN
Margaret Hefferle, SPAN*

This is an opportunity for participants to ask questions about the special education process. It’s everything you wanted to know about special education, but did not know who to ask or where to find the answers.

“Community Resources to Strengthen Families”

*Donny Bellamy, Parents Anonymous,
Malia Corde, SPAN
Madeline Lozowski, Family Support Organization of H/S/W*

Parent support comes in many shapes and sizes. This panel will provide an overview of what family support is and the various types of support that are available to families. They will each discuss the supports and services that their individual programs offer.

“Parents’ Role in Job Development & Placement”

Alice Hunnicutt, SPAN, Debbie Charette, COSAC

Graduation is an exciting time for students. Yet, it can cause apprehension for parents. Come and learn strategies parents can use to be effective partners as the transition team works towards job development and placement for their child.

“Ask the Advocate: You’ve Got Questions-We’ve Got the Answers” (Spanish)

*Rose Kardashian, Club de Padres
Andrea Gomez, Club de Padres*

This is an opportunity for participants to ask questions about the special education process. It’s everything you wanted to know about special education, but did not know who to ask or where to find the answers.

“How to Advocate Effectively Under the State Code” (Spanish)

Myriam Alizo, SPAN

Legislative changes have created more challenges and obstacles to effective parent participation in the IEP process. This workshop provides tools and strategies to enable parents to be active and informed members of IEP team.

“Implementing LRE Practices to Impact Academic Achievement”

*Nancy Prescott, Director
Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center*

By working together, collaborations between parents and the department of education in Connecticut are resulting in improved inclusion practices and programs for students. Participants will learn about the “3 Ps” – Presence, Participation, and Progress and how using the state’s Annual Performance Report, you can make a difference.

“No Child Left Behind & Parent Involvement”

*Diana Autin, SPAN,
Mercedes Rosa, SPAN*

No Child Left Behind and the NJ Bilingual Education Code require districts and schools to develop and implement parent engagement plans. Learn the requirements for and components of district and school parent engagement plans, share best practices, and find out ways to advocate for improving parent engagement in your district.

“Social-Emotional & Character Learning- Framework for Success”

Kathleen Smith, Montclair Public Schools Health & Wellness Partnership, Maureen Papke, Rutgers University

Rutgers University’s Developing Safe and Civil Schools Program supports academic success. Social and emotional learning is the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations effectively.

2:45- 4:00 PM

“Empowering Fathers, Strengthening Families, Building Strong Communities”

*Donny Bellamy, Parents Anonymous,
Charles Dixon, Young Fathers Program at UMDNJ,
Victor Marrero, Single Fathers of Camden,
Hamin Ali Mulsim, NJ Statewide Family Council*

Come and hear fathers share their experiences as leaders of groups/programs that specifically address the needs of fathers in their roles as parents and caregivers. Learn about the various types of information, resources and support that they offer through their programs.

“Strengthening Families to Prevent Child Abuse: NJ’s Statewide Prevention Plan”

Darrell Armstrong, Director, NJ Department for Children and Families, Division for Prevention and Community Partnerships

New Jersey has embarked upon developing a plan for action in preventing the abuse and neglect. Hear what it’s all about and how you can be a part of making life better for children and families in our state.

“Advanced Advocacy Strategies”

Renay Zamloot, Independent Education Advocate

This workshop will provide parents with tools and strategies that they can use to communicate effectively with school district personnel throughout the IEP process.

“Caught in the Cross Hairs: Youth in the Juvenile Justice System”

Peg Kinsell, SPAN

Individuals in NJ’s juvenile justice system are overwhelmingly of color and disproportionately have disabilities and special needs. This workshop provides an overview of the challenges facing youth in New Jersey’s juvenile justice system as well as their rights and effective advocacy strategies. Participants will be connected with opportunities to advocate on behalf of youth in juvenile justice and during their transition back into the community.

“Making the Sensory Connection” LLC (Spanish with English Translation)

Sonia Zayas, Sensory Kids

Sensory Integration (SI) is the neurological process of organizing information we get from our bodies and from the world around us for use in daily life, providing crucial foundation for later learning and behavior. For some children, SI does not develop as it should, resulting in problems in learning, development, or behavior.

“Parent Leadership: Parents as Decision Makers”

*Dianne Malley, SPAN
Debra Jennings, SPAN*

Learn strategies for effective parent involvement in the decision making process from parent leaders who have been successful in effecting change in their schools and districts. Come and share your questions and experiences on Abbott School Leadership Councils, school/district committees, special education groups and other organizations.

Bullying: What Parents Can Do

Carolyn Hayer, SPAN

Find out how to identify the various types of bullying and what steps you can take to prevent and address them.