

October 2011

SEPTA of Oldham County

Special Education Parent Teacher Association for Oldham County Schools

www.septaofoldhamcounty.org

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October meeting of SEPTA

Fall Family Mixer

Tuesday, October 11, 2011
12:30—2:00 and 7:00—8:30*
*(same program repeated)

Location: Oldham County Annex
1900 Button Lane in LaGrange

Join us for a relaxed family social event. Although our scheduled special education law speaker had to cancel unexpectedly, we will still meet. We'll have refreshments and a

chance to talk to other parents. With the holidays approaching we will use this meeting time to share strategies for navigating this hectic time of year with a special needs child. We will also give away a great door prize, the Wrightslaw Book: *Special Education Law*.

Note: The SEPTA General Business Meeting will be postponed until our regular November meeting.



Learn more about IDEA at disabilities.gov

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Oldham County "Hope Huddles" Parent Training Group presents:

Behavior Modifications for School, Educational Issues, and Transitioning into Adulthood

with Charese Taylor, a therapist at Seven Counties

→ **All families are welcome!** ←

Wednesday, October 5, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

James Beaumont Community Center, 307 West Jefferson, LaGrange, KY

Free child care (all ages) | Free Dinner | Free Door Prizes

Please call Kathy Alsup, 502.472.6257, for more information. Reservations for your free dinner and child care during these trainings may be made up to four days prior to the meeting.

SEPTA of OLDHAM COUNTY
Bringing Together
SPECIAL FAMILIES
Our SCHOOLS
And The Community



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Adaptive equipment and therapy solutions
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Check this page frequently to find and share news
and support in between monthly SEPTA meetings
and newsletters

Exceptional Equitation at Spruce Point Farm

Exceptional Equitation was established in 1978 to meet the therapeutic, recreational and vocational needs of persons with disabilities, through horses and farm activities, such as interaction with animals (horses, donkeys, alpacas, chickens, dogs and cats).

The farm is located on 15 acres near LaGrange, Kentucky, with two small ponds, and wood surrounding the property. The charge is \$15 for the first visit and \$5 per visit for the remainder of the calendar year. Visits are by appointment only. Participants may stay for 1—3 hours and may bring their lunch/snack. Only one individual and one companion are allowed to visit per reservation. However, other individuals and their companions may be visiting at the same time (up to 3).

A visit can include groups of 10 or less and their caregivers, for a fee of \$25 per visit for a group. Release forms must be completed for all participants and staff.

To make a reservation call 222-8762. Release forms will be mailed or faxed to you and must be returned with the \$15/\$25 fee five days before the visit; 24-hour notice is needed to reschedule or the fee will be forfeited.

Spruce Point Farm | 2107 Massie School Rd., LaGrange, KY 40031 | 222.8762 | exceptionalequi@aol.com



“Never doubt that a small group
of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world; indeed,
it’s the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

*The information and articles
published in this newsletter are not
necessarily endorsed by or express
the opinion of SEPTA of Oldham
County. Readers are urged to
consider, analyze and research
information before using it.
For more information, contact a
SEPTA Board member or visit
www.septaofoldhamcounty.org.*

NEW STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION

In an effort to assure that *all* students graduate from high school, ready for college and career, Kentucky has adopted new educational standards. It is important for parents to understand these changes so they can help their child succeed in their studies.

To begin, an academic standard defines what students must learn during their K-12 years so they will graduate from high school with the skills they need to be successful in college or career. Until recently, each state had its own process for developing and implementing standards. As a result, what students



COMMON CORE
STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE
PREPARING AMERICA'S STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

were expected to learn varied widely from one area to another. It became obvious that common standards were needed because students across the country, even in high-performing states, were graduating from high school unprepared for college and career. Therefore, to develop clear and consistent standards, the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) was launched.

The CCSSI is a state-led effort to establish a single set of clear educational standards for English language arts and math that states can share and voluntarily adopt. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), the coordinators of the initiative, convened a group of leading experts to develop the new K-12 standards.

The new common core state standards are:

- ⇒ Clear and understandable so educators, students and parents know what is expected at each grade level
- ⇒ Consistent across the state and country so students have appropriate benchmarks regardless of where they live
- ⇒ Built on strengths of current state standards and informed by standards in other top performing countries so everyone has high expectations
- ⇒ More relevant to the real world so that students receive the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college or career
- ⇒ Fewer in number but more rigorous so that students develop a deeper level of understanding

To print the new standards, go to www.education.ky.gov/KDE and look under "curriculum." In next month's newsletter we will discuss testing around the new standards and resources you can use to help your child succeed. If you have questions or concerns about the new standards contact Donna Allen, donna.allen@insightbb.com, or visit the Kentucky Department of Education online at education.ky.gov.

www.CoreStandards.org

FREE IEP TRAINING

Thursday, October 13, 2011

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The Council on Development Disabilities
1151 South Fourth Street, Louisville, KY 40203

Do you have questions about your child's IEP (Individual Educational Plan)? If so, come to this intensive training and get your questions answered.

**To register or learn more about this opportunity
contact Pamela McDaniel, 584-1239**

Seating is limited | Childcare available

Offered by



THE
COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Down Syndrome Awareness Month

October is Down syndrome awareness month and jammed packed with fun family events that celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of individuals who 'happen to have' Down syndrome. Down syndrome (DS) is the most common chromosomal abnormality occurring at conception and in one of every 700-800 live births. While all children have their own unique personalities, experiences and circumstances that affect their school success, children with DS present with unique learning styles and developmental issues that impact their education. As a parent and professional who works with children with DS, I have learned to work both with and around some of these issues and challenges.

An important feature of children with DS is they typically have better developed visual versus auditory memories. Retention of information presented verbally is soon forgotten or not retained at all. Visual supports and strategies alongside verbal information is essential. Use of computers, books, sign language, gestures, pictures, manipulatives, and the written word to enhance learning and speech development are recommended. Repetition and ample time for responses are needed due to issues with slower processing speed and reaction time.

Hearing (80%) and vision (70%) issues are pervasive in the Down syndrome population and should always be considered during instruction and testing procedures. In addition, many children with DS experience sleep apnea (90%) and hypothyroidism (33%) making them appear either hyperactive and distractible or lethargic and unresponsive, which can impact classroom participation and behavior. Due to low muscle tone, many children are sensory and movement seeking, also making them appear hyperactive or they can be overly sensitive to auditory, visual or tactile input. Once these issues can be determined, in most cases, the learning environment and routine can be modified to address these concerns.

Handwriting delays for children with DS are a common occurrence and can be addressed via multimodal techniques, including adaptive seating for postural support, pencil grips, wide and raised-lined paper, finger/wrist/shoulder strengthening activities, and promotion of motor planning skills. Handwriting does not need to preclude children from participating in activities like spelling and composition. Use of keyboards, stamps, letter tiles and scribes can be great supports.

Many children with DS experience difficulties with arithmetic. To complete a simple subtraction problem, one is required to manipulate abstract concepts, holding some information constant while completing operations on the rest. For children with affected memory skills, processing speed and attention issues, this can be problematic. Varied techniques and approaches are often utilized as children demonstrate success with different programs (e.g. Numicon, Touch Point).

Despite these learning differences and challenges, children with DS can be incredibly successful in the classroom environment. Their interest in and concern for people can provide motivation for classroom activities and make them ideal candidates for peer modeling and tutoring. There is a wealth of research and literature about how children with DS learn and recommended teaching strategies. Parents and teachers can access resources from their school or the SEPTA repository at the Oldham County Public Library (main branch). Information, support and advocacy services are available from Down Syndrome of Louisville (DSL). DSL also provides a monthly school-age enrichment program for kindergarten through fifth grade students to enhance children's social and social communication skills. For more information, contact Dr. Jennifer Kimes, Director of Early Education and School-age Programming at Down Syndrome of Louisville, 495-5088.

A Few Feet and a World Apart

I will feel better if I get this off my chest, even though I know the people who will read this are not the people to whom it is addressed.

You and I stand just a few feet, and a world apart.

You are the old lady in the restaurant who gave me a stern look, then elbowed her friends, so they could also stare at my daughter. You shook your heads in open disapproval. In your world, children aren't born 3 and a half months early, and they don't have life threatening strokes, therefore they have absolutely no excuse to be using a bottle at 4 years old. In my world, the fact that my daughter can take anything by mouth is both a miracle, and the result of years of painstaking effort.

You are the irritable man at the Science Center who gave my children a blatant look of disgust when they had trouble staying in their seat during your presentation. In your world, parents are expected to control their children in public, and children have no excuse to behave that way. In my world, my children have ADHD and autism, which makes sitting still very difficult for them, even when they are on medication and are really trying to behave.

You are the lady in the mall who rolled her eyes at me because my daughter was making too much noise. In your world, parents should teach their children to use their "inside voice." In my world, the fact that my daughter can make any vocalizations at all is really amazing. Her left vocal cord is paralyzed from nerve damaged caused by a chest surgery which was done when she weighed less than 2 pounds. In my world, not all children are capable of understanding the concept of an "inside voice."

You are the neighbor who notices with dismay that my yard doesn't look quite as manicured as it once did. In your world, there is time and energy to put in to things like that. In my world, I am too exhausted to care much about the yard anymore. I have bigger concerns that consume my days and nights, important things like trying to teach my 4 year old how to communicate her basic needs.

You are the fair weather friends I once had, the ones who simply evaporated while I struggled for months to cope with having a critically ill child. In your world, friends are only worth having if they are always fun to be around, and aren't likely to need anything from you. In my world, friends don't need to be asked. They can see you need help, and are quick to offer it.

You are the checkout lady in the grocery store who said to me, "I am SO glad that isn't my kid," not realizing that it was my own son you were commenting to me about. He was having a meltdown, and my husband was taking him out of the store, while I checked out as quickly as I possibly could. In your world, children with special needs are a curse. You pity them, rather than value them as people. With your eyes, you see only their deficits. In my world, special needs children are a blessing beyond measure. They teach us invaluable lessons in gratitude, patience, faith, and the value of life. With my eyes, I can see the miracles you sadly fail to see.

You are all the people who smugly pass judgment on us. I know most of you do so without knowing all the facts. I realize you measure our behaviors by the only rules that you know, the rules that govern your world. You can not know how deeply your thoughtless responses cut. On most days, I extend to you a courtesy you fail to give us. I silently pardon, and excuse your behavior. Because you do not live in my world, I know you can not begin to fathom how hard my children work to try to meet the expectations of your world, and that they are doing the best they can despite their challenges.

I both forgive, and sometimes envy you for your ignorance.

...and so ends the rant....with my apologies.

by Kristina Smith Blizzard
Parent of a child with special needs