



Parent Connection



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What is a Parent Mentor?

A parent mentor is a parent of a special needs child who works to support the relationship between the family of a child with a disability and the school. Parent mentors provide information and support to families about educational issues, provides social opportunities for students, attends IEP meetings (if requested) organizes workshops and trainings and builds relationships between family, student, school and community. All parent mentor services are free of charge.

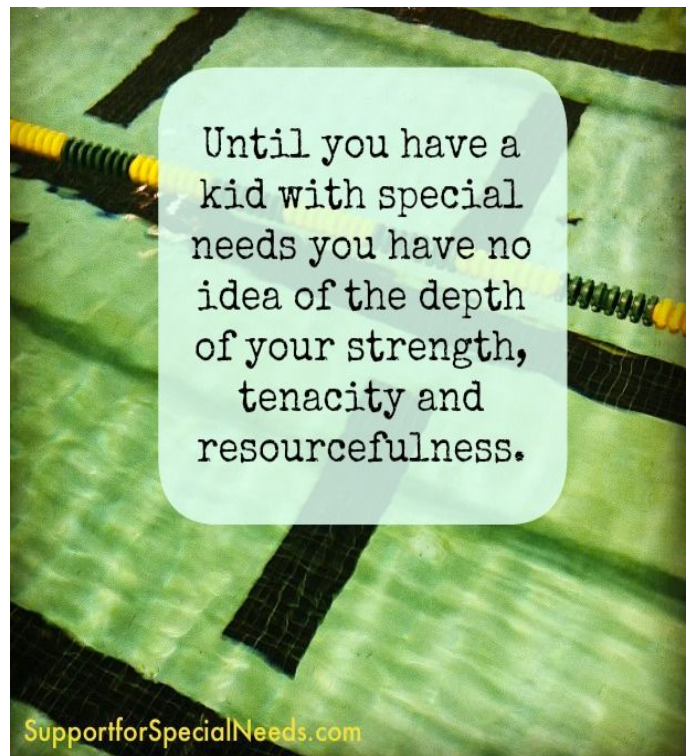
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- 10 diffusing phrases to use at an IEP meeting
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Lending Library

Did you know the Lending Library has weighted vests and blankets? Therapeutic weighted blankets and vests benefit special needs children and adults with autism, sensory processing disorder, ADHD, hyperactivity and more. These products provide gentle pressure that hug the body to produce a calming and relaxing effect. If you would like to try a vest or blanket, contact Nancy Davis at 419-586-6628 or nancy.davis@mercercountyesc.org.

To see all the items available in the Lending Library visit the Mercer County ESC website, www.mercercountyesc.org or visit the Mercer County Educational Service Center. You may borrow the items for two weeks. For more expensive items, you may be required to show a driver's license.



Until you have a kid with special needs you have no idea of the depth of your strength, tenacity and resourcefulness.

Upcoming Events



The parent mentor program of Mercer County would like to invite you to several events throughout the year. Some of these events are designed to provide information and support to parents and some are to promote socialization and information sharing between families. Some events are free of charge while other events require a fee. When a fee is involved, the Parent Mentor Program will pay for the special needs person's cost for the event. The student may not be left without supervision. Please plan to stay, participate, watch and socialize with other parents during the activity. Please RSVP one week in advance to beth.guggenbiller@mercercountyesc.org or 419-586-6628 ext. 250.

Fall Events

Date	Time	Event	Audience	Location
Monday October 7th	6:00-7:00 PM	What is an SSA?	Parents/ Guardians	Mercer County Educational Service Center
Sunday October 13th	6:00-8:00	Dr. Peg Dawson Executive Functioning	Parents/ Guardians	To Be Determined *More Information to Come
Saturday November 9th	10:00-11:30 AM	Cooking Camp	Families	Bella's Italian Grille

*Look for more information on these events, dates and times are subject to change.

School to Adult Life Transitions (S.A.L.T.)

The S.A.L.T. program was developed for parents, families and anyone working with youth (ages 14-22) with disabilities. Our goal is to connect you with information, resources, services and agencies that will be helpful as the young adult in your life moves through their "transition" years. .

SALT-Teens Students are also encouraged to attend their own series, which takes place at the same time as the parents' series. Students will participate in activities that will help them prepare for the transition from school to adult life as well as enjoy social time with their peers.

All sessions are held at St. John Lutheran Church (Purple Door Church) 1100 N. Main St. Celina OH

S.A.L.T. sessions are FREE and ALL are welcome



Date	Time	Topic
Tuesday, September 17, 2019	6:00-8:00 PM	TRANSITION FAIR Learn About the Many Resources in Mercer County for Youth with Disabilities
Tuesday, October 15, 2019	6:00-7:30 PM	DISABILITY BENEFITS How will Employment Impact Social Security Benefits?
Tuesday, November 19, 2019	6:00-7:30 PM	ADVOCACY - PASSING THE TORCH Learn How to Move From Advocating FOR your child To Promoting Their Self-Advocacy

Questions? Contact Karen Leugers, Transition/SALT Coordinator 567-890-0264
 Trainings are brought to you by the Mercer County Board of Developmental Disabilities and
 Mercer County Educational Service Center Parent Mentor Grant

10 Defusing Phrases to Use at an IEP Meeting

Taken from Understood.Org. By Amanda Morin

Emotions can run high at IEP meetings. But it's important to focus on the end goal: helping your child. Here are 10 stay-calm phrases you can use to redirect conversation and defuse tense situations.

1. **"I may be misunderstanding."** IEP meetings can get heated when there is disagreement about how to interpret laws or test results. You can defuse that by taking a step back and giving the school a chance to explain its position. If you're certain you're correct, don't worry-you'll get a chance to say so. **Sample response:** "I may be misunderstanding. Can you show me a detailed interpretation of that law? Here's the information I have on hand that speaks to this issue."
2. **"I can show you."** If someone tries to shut down conversation by telling you she's not sure where your information is coming from, that's easy enough to defuse. Simply show her. **Sample response:** "I can show you where I've highlighted that information in the report and progress notes. Can we make each team member a copy?"
3. **"How can we work together to make this happen?"** It can be frustrating to hear someone at your child's school tell you it doesn't provide a certain service or doesn't have the staff to implement it. Make the conversation about collaboration. **Sample response:** "How can we work together to meet my child's unique needs?"
4. **"May I see a copy of the written policy?"** Someone from the school might say, "this is how we've always done something." But that doesn't necessarily mean it's a policy. Defuse any arguments about it by asking to see the policy. **Sample Response:** "I understand this is how you do things. May I see a copy of the written policy that outlines this procedure?"
5. **"Let's ask him to join us."** Federal law says that the IEP team needs to include someone who is able to make decisions about staff and funding. But in practice you may hear, "I'm not in a position to make that decision." Instead of getting upset, get practical. **Sample response:** "Is it Mr. Smith who has that authority? Let's call him and ask him to join us."
6. **"I understand."** It may surprise you how this simple phrase can defuse tense situations. Keep in mind it doesn't mean the same thing as "I agree." It just means you're hearing what's being said. **Sample response:** "I understand you have only 15 minutes left for this meeting. While we're all here, why don't we set up another time to continue this conversation."
7. **"I've notice...."** Parents are equal members of the IEP team. If you feel like your concerns aren't being heard, take a breath and then calmly speak up. **Sample response:** "I've noticed that at the end of the day, Olivia isn't able to focus on her homework without getting frustrated. I'd like to talk about how to make that easier for her."
8. **"How does that look in the classroom?"** Conversations about accommodations, behavior plans or instructional strategies can easily turn to talk about theories or ideas. You can redirect by asking about how things will actually work. **Sample responses:** "I like the idea of checking in every 15 minutes to see if Olivia is on task. How will that happen in the classroom? Will the teacher be able to manage that?"
9. **"What alternatives do you suggest?"** When you hear, "We don't agree with that recommendation," you may feel the need to push to defend your position. Instead, keep the dialogue going. **Sample response:** "OK, you don't think that will work for Olivia. What alternatives do you suggest to address the identified need?"
10. **"Let's talk about what's working."** Sometimes it can feel like an IEP meeting is a long conversation about what's going wrong. It doesn't have to be. In fact, focusing on what's going well can help you discover ways to address other issues. **Sample response:** "Let's talk about what's working. Maybe some of those strengths and strategies can help us find ways to address the trouble spots."



What is an SSA? How can they help my family? Who is my child's SSA?

Service and Support Administration Unit

We are professionals who:

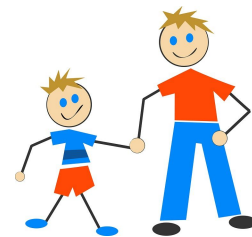
- Make long term commitments to individuals and families
- Support hopes, dreams, vision and self-determination
- Listen and help you decide what you want for your life
- Refer, link, and connect people with services and support that meet their needs and desires
- Help plan and coordinate supports and services
- Build valuable partnerships with individuals, families, and communities

We can help you through:

- Education: Provide you with information and experiences
- Planning: work through present and future options
- Referrals: link with community resources
- Evaluation: what is working and what is not
- Advocacy: get support for your wants and needs

We want to be your Partner in:

- Putting you in control
- Achieving your dreams and goals
- Connecting you with supportive services
- Planning for your future



Our mission is to work with individuals and their families to discover, pursue and achieve what is important to them

Join us in October for more information and to meet your child's SSA!

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