



Middletown City Schools

Parent Mentor Program



Linda McDowell, Parent Mentor

Office Location: Amanda School

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2010

Reasons to call the Parent Mentor:

I'm afraid to ask questions at the IEP or MFE meeting.

My child is not doing well at school and I don't know what to do.

I have a school problem but do not know whom to call.

I just need someone to talk with that understands.

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Free Transition Resources

- Kindergarten— Helping Your Child Make the Move
- Get Ready for Kindergarten
- Helping Your Child Move On To Middle School
- Making The Most of Middle School
- What's Up with Middle School
- How To Get The Most out of High School
- On Starting High School
- Looking Forward to MHS

Call the Parent Mentor office for your free copy.



From The Parent Mentor Desk

It is hard to believe that the 2009/10 school year will soon be over!

In this newsletter you will find some information about summer activities. I'm sure for parents who have children moving to other buildings within the district, you are already worrying about what this means. In this newsletter you will find some information to help you with the transition process whether it is to kindergarten, middle school or the high school.

For those of you who are not familiar with me or the services I can offer let me explain. I serve as a bridge between families who have children with special needs and the school district. I can address concerns or problems that arise and provide information on educating and parenting a child with a disability. I will be working part time hours during the summer months so if you need me, just leave a message on my voicemail and I will call you back.

If you are one of those parents worrying about next year, it is important to know that the buildings are always open a couple of weeks before school starts. If needed, you can stop in with your child to visit the building before his/her first day (just stop in the office first). If you would like for me to arrange a building visit before school is out or during the summer (early August) just give me a call. I will also be updating the web page during the summer months so check for the latest information there.

I am looking forward to a little rest and relaxation and wish you the same! As always, if you need me don't hesitate to call.

Linda



Call 420-4620

Email lmcdowell@middletowncityschools.com

www.middletownparentmentor.com



Did You Know?

Therapeutic Recreation for the Disabled has a newsletter that lists different activities throughout Butler County. To receive a copy please write Therapeutic Recreation for the Disabled at 2051 Timberman Rd., Hamilton, Ohio 45013 or check the Parent Mentor web page.

Fun and Fit is a directory of great resources for people with developmental disabilities to find recreation, leisure and fitness programs in the Greater Cincinnati area. To access the directory go to www.cincinnatichildrens.org/funandfit



What's Happening In and Around Middletown?

State Support Team 13 and Hamilton County Regional Education Services, 1301 Bonnell St., Cincinnati 45214 offers the following training:

Especially for Families: IEP Goals and Services That Work will be held on *Tuesday May 4 from 9:30 -2:30 p.m. OR 5:30 -8:30 p.m.* This workshop will provide examples of behavior and academic IEP goals and services. Whether the problem is related to sensory issues, grade-level skills, social needs, or organizational skills, effective IEP goals and services can make the difference between success and failure. A light meal with is provided for lunch and at 5:15 before the evening session. A \$10 Kroger gift card, to help with family expenses, will be offered to parents and family members (one card per household). Seating is limited. Please register by calling Terri at 674-4278 or email terri.densford@hcesc.org by deadline of April 27th.

The School to Adult Transition Series meetings are held on various Wednesdays at Janet Clemmons Center, located at 282 N. Fair Avenue in Hamilton, 6 -7:30. All parents are welcome but children must be eligible for MRDD services. Register with Patty at 738-5332 or email patty039@aol.com. The last dates for this school year include May 12 and 26.

Patient/Family Care Notebook Classes – 2010
Looking for a way to keep track of phone numbers, medications, & therapies? Want to improve communication you're your providers in the hospital and community? Want to have your records all in one place? Sign up for a **FREE Care Notebook** class sponsored by Children's Hospital! Families can register for one of the following options:

- Get Ready for Summer Camp with a Care Notebook! Date: Tuesday, May 4, 2010, Time: 10:00am – Noon, Location: DDBP, (Our new building) 3430 Burnet Ave., 5th Floor, Room 5-201
- Get A Jump on Organizing School Records with a Care Notebook! Date: Tuesday, October 5, 2010, Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm, Location: Cincinnati Children's Hospital Liberty Township, Room A2.

To register for a class or for more information about the Patient/Family Care Notebook, please contact Amy Clawson at 513-636-4723 or amy.clawson@cchmc.org

The 2010 Summer Institute, "Whole Body, Whole Life", sponsored by the Regional Autism Advisory Council (RAAC) will be held on August 2 – 5. It will be held at the Xavier University Cintas Center (1624 Herald Ave., Cincinnati, OH, 45207), from 8 -4. Cost is \$85 a day or \$255 for all 4 days.

Tuesday, August 3 the topic is Family Issues, Partnerships, and Life Transitions. The Keynote is "Special Children, Challenged Parents: Building Links That Endure" with additional breakouts in the afternoon. For a brochure (lists all speakers and breakout sessions) and registration form contact the Parent Mentor office or Kay Brown at (513) 636-7616. Family discounts are available.

CHADD of Cincinnati meets on 4th Tuesday of the month beginning at 7 pm at the First Baptist Church of Mason at 735 Reading Rd (Rt. 42) in Mason.

- May 25- Family Dynamics: The ADHD Child or Adolescent with Siblings and Parents

Fishing Has No Boundaries, the 15th Annual Fishing Event at Cowan Lake will be held on Saturday, May 22 from 8 -4 pm and Sunday, May 23 from 8:30 -1 p.m. Information and registration forms can be found at www.fhnbcinti.com. You may also call Bill at 513-671-3343 or Lou at 513-777-4854 for more information and a registration packet. All participants will receive a hat and tee shirt to take home. Rods, reels, tackle and bait will be available or you can bring your own. All food, snacks, and soft drinks are included in the fee of \$10 and you **MUST PRE REGISTER**.



Free Reading Materials

Reading Tutors provides books and hands on activities for students K -6 based on their needs. The books and activities are divided into the following sections: phonics and phonological awareness (sounding letters to make words), fluency (how fast you are able to read) or comprehension (understanding what you are reading). Each lesson is 30 minutes long and comes with very easy, clear directions. There are even charts and graphs to help you track the progress your child is making. You can request the materials by calling the Parent Mentor office.



Transition and Back to School Checklist

Right Now

- During the summer months make it a point to drive by the school often and remind them that this will be their new school. Take time to play on the playground (elementary buildings).
- Talk with your child about the new school. Find out what concerns he/she may have and answer any questions they may have. Let them know it is okay to be nervous.
- Plan to attend any open houses, visits, etc. Talk with current teachers about any concerns you may have. Ask that a representative from the new school be invited to the IEP or transition meeting to discuss concerns. If no meetings are scheduled and you have concerns request one!

Before School Starts in August

- Plan to visit new school (if needed) so your child becomes familiar with the building. Locate the important areas (cafeteria, restrooms, nurses office, bus drop off, drinking fountain, etc.).
- If more support (written schedule, daily communication, etc.) is needed and no prior arrangements have been made with new school, contact the Parent Mentor office to assist you.
- If your student needs medication throughout the day, please fill out district medication form and have your doctor sign. Take medication to the new school in a marked bottle. If your child has additional medical concerns (seizures, etc.) make sure you talk with the nurse before school starts so everyone is aware.
- Check bus schedule, time and pick/drop off point (available online at www.middletowncityschools.com) or call bus garage at 420-4568.
- Plan a day together to buy school supplies and other back to school items. Talk about the new and exciting changes that will take place.
- If your child has been through transitions before (elementary, middle school), remind your child of their past positive experiences. Share some stories about those experiences.

After school starts:

- Talk to your child about how things are going. Ask about what is going well and what is difficult for them. This can give you a clue of what to stay on top of (difficult areas). Problem solve together if appropriate.
- Get a copy of your child's schedule (your child will have a copy for middle/high school) so you can identify classes and teachers.
- Know your child's special education teacher, case manager (high school) and other service providers (speech therapist, etc.) and how to get in contact with them.
- Plan to check in (note, email or phone call) with special education teacher or case manager a couple of weeks after school starts. Make sure they have a copy of your child's IEP and all teachers have been notified of the IEP (MHS uses IEP at a glance which gives teachers a summary of supports that are needed for the classroom).
- Check in on progress book (middle/high school) to see how your child is doing academically (secure a password if needed).

Summer Tips and Activities



Children don't have to be in a classroom to be learning! In fact, some of the most important lessons in life are learned outside of school. That's one of the positives about summer and time off from school—it's a great opportunity to gather plenty of life experiences. Learning doesn't have to be formal to be rewarding—even the simplest summer activity can be a "learning moment. Here are some ideas.

Structure Your Days and Weeks. Schools are highly structured places and to change to summer with no rules or structure can be very stressful for a lot of children. Take the time to decide what your family's general daily routine will be with set bedtimes, TV times, outdoor times, mealtimes, quiet times, whatever works for you. If set routines are not your style, I urge you to give them a try. Maintaining structure and routines during the summer can make a big difference in your child's behavior and your sanity!

Help Your Child Build Friendships. Having just one good friend helps him/her feel more confident and connected. Let her/him have a friend over several times a week if possible. Offer to pick up the friend, help her plan something to do with the friend - bicycle riding, skating, movie, malling, eating out, cooking in, whatever they like. Playing organized sports is also another way to work on friendships and social skills.

Solve Problems. Every child needs to logically think through problems (such as puzzles) on a regular basis. The critical thinking skills that your child uses to think through a problem should not be put on the back burner for three months. If you keep this area of your child's brain in tip top shape over the summer, he/she will not only be able to handle math class better, but should also be able to make better decisions in all areas of his/her life.

Involve Your Child in Real World Learning. It helps your child see why learning is important and gives them a chance to practice skills in a new setting. It also lets them know that they are important and loved. Examples include:

- Cooking is a fun way to develop reading readiness skills. Preparing food together helps develop a sense of the sequence of things in a concrete way. Talk about the steps, ingredients, and measurements in the recipe.
- Everyday chores give your child the chance to practice listening and following directions. The ability to listen actively and follow directions the first time they are given is very important in the later elementary grades.
- T.V. time can be used as an active learning time. Watch programs together that invite discussion. Talk about things you are seeing and hearing. Have your child predict what will happen next. Even game shows can keep their brain active and help teach skills (i.e. Wheel of Fortune teaches alphabet).

Allow Them Opportunities to Practice Independence. Independence is a skill that is worked on throughout the school years and is very important for success at school and later in the workplace. Independence builds in little ways and children as young as 3 years old can already be working on this skill!

- Assign chores and completion time (setting table, cleaning room, washing dishes, taking out trash, sorting laundry, etc.). Use reminders in the beginning until child learns job and routine. Gradually let the child assume setting completion time for chores.
- Let your child practice setting his/her alarm and getting ready for the day. Now is the time to practice so they will be ready when school starts!
- Consider volunteer opportunities such as helping in the neighborhood (mowing lawn, trash collection for elderly, etc), local church activities, etc. For teenagers they might be able to volunteer on their own. For younger children, parents may need to help out in the beginning.

Spend Time Reading Together Everyday. Reading to your child encourages language development. Your child will learn how a book works, where the beginning is, how the story goes from page to page until the end and that pictures can be clues about the story. If your child is already reading, make sure you have plenty of reading materials available that he or she will find interesting. If you don't already have a library card, plan to get one. Plan to take advantage of the summer reading programs and activities at Middletown Public Library.