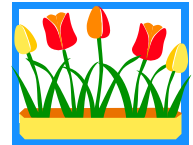


Spring 2011



Middletown City Schools

Parent Mentor Program



Linda McDowell, Parent Mentor

Office Location: Amanda School, 1300 Oxford State Rd.
513-420-4620 or lmcdowell@middletowncityschools.com
Web site: www.middletownparentmentor.com

Reasons To Call The Parent Mentor

I'm afraid to ask questions when I attend meetings.

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

I have a school problem and don't know whom to call.

I just need someone to talk to that understands.

From The Parent Mentor Desk

It is hard to believe that the 2010/11 school year will soon be over! Plans are already beginning for next school year and changes await many of our families.



Because of financial concerns some of our elementary students will be moving to new elementary buildings as Highview School is repurposed as a 6th grade building. As part of the normal transition times students will be moving from preschool to kindergarten, elementary to 6th grade or middle school and middle to high school. Transition times can be stressful for families. Page three of the newsletters gives some tips for making the change a little easier for everyone. Also please know that I am available to help coordinate and answer any questions or concerns you may have about the changes. I will be available part time during the summer so please feel free to call.

For those who are not familiar with the Parent Mentor, I serve as a bridge between families who have children with special needs and the school district. I am able to work with families from the time their child enters preschool until they graduate high school. As a result, I get to know families personally and watch their child's growth over time. I can address problems that arise and provide information on educating and parenting a child with a disability. Some of that information is from my own personal experience, because I have 2 children (now young adults!) who received special education services in the Middletown School District. So as they say...I walk the talk everyday!

Spring is also the time that parents ask me about extended school year services and what they need to do to get services for their child. Page four answers some of the questions parents may have and also talks about eligibility requirements under the Individuals Disability Education Act (IDEA).

As the school year winds to a close, I wish for all a fun and relaxing summer. Take advantage of the opportunities to continue learning with your son or daughter. Read books, visits some museums or attend events that are of interest to your child. Most of all, take time to enjoy each other!

Linda

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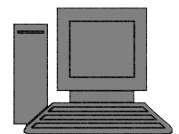
Pg. 4 - Extended School Year



Call: 420-4620

Email: lmcdowell@middletowncityschools.com

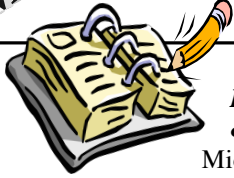
www.middletownparentmentor.com



Tip For Next Year: The first day of school is August 17, 2011. Bus schedules for the new school year will be posted on the district web site before school starts at www.middletowncityschools.com

Mark Your Calendar

What's Happening In and Around Middletown?



Family Information Nights for Middle & High School Families will be held at Middletown High School Media Center (library) from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 5. This will be the final meeting for the 2010/11 school year but future meetings will be planned for next year. The May 5th topic will be “Looking Forward To Next Year”. From 5:30 -6 p.m., eighth grade families will hear about the changes from middle to high school. They will also be given a quick tour of the building. From 6:00-7:00 all middle and high school families will hear about changes for next year such as courses that have been added and new transition activities and assessments. Find out what will be a good fit for your son or daughter.

As you know, planning for the future takes time and that is why every year counts. Think about where your teenager is right now on that course and what work still remains to get them ready for work, college and life. You will have the opportunity to discuss transition planning for your individual child. Please feel free to bring your child's IEP so we can review the transition plan.

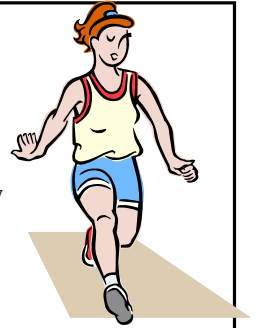
Family Information Night is sponsored by the Parent Mentor Office and the special education department of MHS. For more information or to request a folder of information that will be handed out that night please call Linda at 420-4620.

School to Adult Transition Series is an information series for special needs students and their parents sponsored by Butler County Developmental Disabilities Board. It is held at Janet Clemmons Center, 282 Fair Ave in Hamilton from 6 -7:30 pm on specific Wednesday evenings. Students must register for the student session and be eligible for DD services. All parents of students with special needs are welcome to attend. To register or for more information call Patty at 513-678-9195.

- **April 20** --Creative Residential Options--Parent Discussions/ What Do Parent's Want?
- **May 4**-- Job and Family Services
- **May 18** --End of the year "celebration" party

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 1920 Fairgrove Ave., Suite E, Hamilton, Oh 45011. Information is also posted on their web site at <http://therapeuticrec.bravehost.com>

Special Olympics Day will be held at Middletown High School track and field on May 13, 2011 from 9:30 to noon. This is an exciting day for our children throughout the district! This is one day when our kids take center stage and really get to shine and have fun. Plan to attend and cheer your child on and spend some time meeting and talking with other families.



The Autism Society of Greater Cincinnati is excited to introduce our NEW educational **Survivor Series!** There are two fundamental activities to surviving life with ASD: support from others and an opportunity to share your daily struggles, uncertainties and triumphs. Experienced parents and professionals from our community will facilitate each informative discussion following a brief lecture. Training's will be held at Vineyard Community Church (11340 Century Circle East, Cincinnati, 45246) from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Dates include:

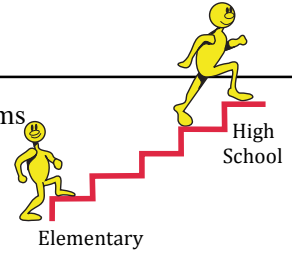
- **Thursday, April 28** --Surviving Families
- **Thursday, May 26** --Surviving Summer Vacation
- **Thursday, June 23**—Surviving Toilet Training
- **Thursday, July 28**—Surviving Puberty

The Community Outreach Program with Cincinnati Children's present "**Special Education Law and Advocacy**" by **Peter Wright, ESQ**, Co-founder of Wrightslaw.com. The training will be held at the Tangeman University Center (University of Cincinnati, 2766 UC Main Street) on Saturday, May 7 from 8 -4:30 pm. Cost is \$40 for families and \$70 for professionals and include 3 books, Special Education Law, From Emotions to Advocacy, and All About IEP's. Online registration is available at www.regonline.com/special_education_law For more information, please contact Children's at 513-803-0513.

The Middletown Public Library will have their summertime kick-off program on Saturday June 4th. Bill Crawford the scientist will be the guest speaker. Other programs are scheduled for Saturdays at 2:00 pm on June 11, 18 and 25th and July 2, 9 and 23. Activities include Princess party, crafts, bingo, Harry Potter program, and more. Programs are also scheduled on Thursday June 16 and July 7. All programs are free and registration is not required. Children can also sign up for the summer reading program on June 4th to log their reading time and receive rewards and incentives.

Please call the Parent Mentor Office (420-4620) for additional information on any of the above trainings or check the web site: www.middletownparentmentor.com
Web site is updated monthly so please check often for the latest trainings and events

Making Change Easy!



As students get older, change is a natural occurrence. Moving to new buildings and classrooms is all part of growing up. By building our child's confidence in their ability to handle new things (changes), we teach a life skill they will use for the rest of their life. Below are some tips to help make change easier for your son or daughter.

Right now

- Begin work on making your child a part of the new school. Attend a play or sporting event at MHS, purchase a uniform shirt at Vail or make it a point to drive by the new school. For younger students, check out the playground if possible.
- Talk with your child about the new school. Find out what concerns they may have and answer any question they may have. Let them know it is okay to be nervous.
- Plan to attend any open houses, visits, etc. Talk with their current teacher to see if they have any concerns. If needed, schedule a transition meeting to address the concerns.
- Review your child's IEP and make sure you understand what special education services they are receiving now and why. This way you know what services they should be receiving at the new building.
- Share success stories about other transition times that have taken place from preschool to kindergarten or elementary to middle school. Even though change is new and may be scary it can all work out great!
- Remember transition is not only a change for the child, but for the family as well. As parents, we may be comfortable with the building our student is now attending because we know the teachers, principal, etc. Remind yourself that in time, you will be comfortable at the new building as well.
- Make it a priority to meet other families who will be attending the new building. For young students, play dates can be arranged with other students who are making the move or already at the new building.

During the Summer and Before School Starts in August

- Plan to visit, if needed, so your child becomes familiar with the building. School buildings are usually open one week before school starts (just call ahead). On your visit, locate the important areas (cafeteria, restrooms, nurses office, bus drop off, drinking fountain, etc.)
- If your student needs medication throughout the day, please fill out district medication form and have your doctor sign. Take medication to the 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.
- 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.
- Continue to provide a listening ear to your son or daughters concerns.
- If more support is needed and no prior arrangements have been made please call the Parent Mentor office to assist you.

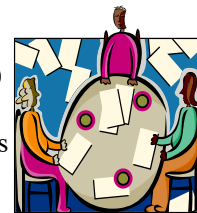
After School Starts

- Get a copy of your child's schedule so you can identify teachers and classes. Be sure and know your child's special education teacher or case manager and how to contact them if needed.
- Talk with your child about how things are going. Problem solve together if needed.
- If available, check in progress book to see how your child is doing academically. If not, be sure and attend fall conferences to make sure everything is going okay.

What Parents Need to Know About Extended School Year

This is usually the time when parents have questions about extended school year (ESY) and if it is possible for their son or daughter to receive it. Some people think extended school year is just “summer school” but it is much more than that. Extended school year (ESY) is special education services and/or related services that are usually provided during the summer months. Here are some questions parents may have and answers supplied by Ohio Legal Rights.

Who decides if my child is eligible for ESY? Your child’s IEP (Individualized Education Program) team makes the decision based on specific information or criteria. Each year as an IEP is created there is a checkbox that must be checked saying extending school year has been considered. Parents may also request that their child be considered for ESY and an IEP meeting can be scheduled.



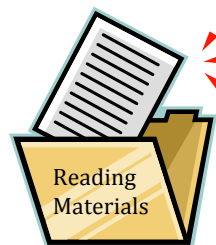
What information is needed for my child to be eligible for ESY? There is not one piece of information that is used for deciding ESY but many pieces. Some of the criteria used are:

- Regression and recoupment standard. Regression/recoupment looks at whether your child will lose skills due to a break in school (e.g., summer and spring break), and how long it takes for your child to regain the skills when school starts again. As we know, a lot of children lose skills over the summer. However, if your child loses skills during breaks and summer, and does not regain those skills in a reasonable time, your child may be eligible for ESY.
- The nature and severity of your child’s disability and “emerging skills” and “breakthrough opportunities”. An example of this could be if your child is just learning to put words together and without services would stop.
- FAPE (free appropriate public education) and reasonable yearly progress. One way to show that a child is receiving FAPE is to show that the child is making reasonable educational progress. A way to measure reasonable progress is to look at whether your child is meeting the goals and objectives on the IEP. If your child needs additional instruction beyond a regular school year to make reasonable yearly progress, your child may be eligible for ESY services.
- Behavioral considerations. Students who have major behavior concerns may need ESY to prevent the loss of behavior control when they return to school.

What happens if the IEP team decides my child is eligible for Extended School Year (ESY)? The IEP team must determine what services and supports will be provided. Your child’s unique needs should drive the discussion. If your child has not made progress on specific goals in the IEP, the ESY services should address those goals. If your child loses certain skills during breaks in school and does not regain them within a reasonable time, the ESY should address those lost skills. Once everyone decides what the services should be, they should be written on the IEP including specific goals to be achieved.

What are some of the ways that ESY services can be provided? Below are some examples of ESY services, however, remember services must be based on your child’s individual needs.

- Support services such as tutoring for math, reading, etc.
- Home instruction or support and materials
- Individual or small group instruction
- Large group instruction
- Behavior modification services
- Private summer programs
- Transition services



If my child received ESY this year, will he receive it automatically next year? No, ESY is determined every year. ESY is one of the items on the general factor’s page (section 10) of the IEP that must be considered.