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Family and Children's Services

Children's Developmental Services

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Visit www.facsrr.ca and click on developmental newsletter

MOVING UP A GRADE CAN BE A DAUNTING EXPERIENCE TO SOMEONE WITH AUTISM

Vacation has been great! The weather has been beautiful. The kids have had fun. There have been no school meetings and no homework struggles. Now it's time to prepare for the new school year and you are overwhelmed with your task list. There is stationery to purchase, pencils to sharpen, new school bags to buy and you need to rearrange your entire schedule.

People with autism are feeling overwhelmed too. We know how much you have on your plate so we've prepared some time saving strategies for you to help your child transition to the next grade.

Step 1

Find out the name of your child's new teacher. Speak to your child about the new teacher often. If you can meet the teacher before school begins, that's great. If that's not possible, request a phone call from the teacher before the school year begins. If she is unavailable, see if you can get a photo that you can show to your child. If that's out the question, try and get information such as her hair and eye color. The more information your child has about his new teacher, the easier the transition will be.



Step 2

Write a social story. Here are a few suggestions to add to your story:

Vacation is so much fun. I really enjoy going to _____

School begins on _____

I am going to _____ grade.

My teacher knows all about me and can't wait to meet me. Her name is _____

I might know some friends in my class but I will also make new friends.

I can't wait for _____ (library, gym, reading... whatever your child enjoys)

It's good to go to school because I get to learn and play with my friends.

Step 3

Pair school with something good. Think of little things he likes. Let your child know that on the first day back at school he will get a _____ (example: action figure, book or something he likes).

The first day that homework begins, he will get a _____

Create a calendar or mark these days on your existing calendar and remind your child about these exciting rewards.

Step 4

Let your child know that his thoughts are perfectly normal. It's completely OK to feel excited/concerned/fearful or whatever it is that your child is feeling. If your child is unable to express emotions, simply tell him that whatever he thinks and feels is perfect, that you love him and will always be there to help.

ORGANIZING YOUR CHILD'S SPECIAL EDUCATION FILE

Submitted by Brenda Witherspoon

The special education system generates mountains of paper. You need a simple, foolproof document management system. When you organize your child's file, you will have all the information about your child in one place. When you take your organized file to the next school meeting, you will understand the power of getting organized.



Document Management System

Think about the last school meeting. Did the IEP team members have a complete copy of your child's file? Did you? How can the IEP team make decisions about your child's special education program if they do not have complete, accurate information about your child? Schools keep records in different places. Information and reports can be misplaced. When you organize your child's file, you will have all the information about your child in one place.

Gather Information About Your Child

Make a Master Provider List

Make a list of all individuals and agencies that may have information or records about your child. Your list should include the names and titles of all professionals who have provided medical or mental health services, including doctors, therapists. Include their addresses, telephone and fax numbers and email addresses. You may want to develop your list by category e.g. medical, educational, psychological evaluations.

Request Your Child's Records

Send a letter to all individuals and agencies on your list and request a copy of your child's records. Explain that your request relates to a school issue and the need to secure an appropriate education for your child. Write a letter to the school and request a complete copy of your child's entire file. You want copies of all evaluations, records, correspondence and other documents the school has about your child. Expect to pay a photocopying fee. Make copies of all letters.



Organizing the Master File

You will organize and file all information about your child in three-ring binders. Gather all documents that relate to your child. Bring all paper in boxes, file folders and bags together in one place. Begin by organizing the documents by year.

1: Date All Documents

With a pencil, lightly write the date of each document in the lower right corner of the first page (Example: 07/21/08). Date everything. Many parents say that when they organize documents, they begin to read and are sidetracked. Force yourself to stick with this job until you finish. Do not stop to read the documents. Just date and organize! Work samples provide useful information about your child's skills. Include a few samples of your child's schoolwork.

Step 2: File All Documents in a Three-ring Binder

Hole punch, then file dated documents in a large three-ring binder. When you hole-punch, be careful that you do not destroy important signatures or dates. When documents are formatted horizontally, hole-punch on the top edge. File all documents in chronological order, oldest document on top and newest document at the end. The last document is the most recent piece of information.



Step 3: Read the Master File for the "Big Picture"

Read your child's Master File from beginning to end. When you read the information chronologically you will see the big picture. As mentioned earlier, mountains of paper is generated by the special education system. Few people will read or review this information again.

Create Your Document List

You have dated the documents and filed them in chronological order. Now you need to create your Master Document List. By doing this, you can compress your child's history into a few pages and locate any document in seconds.

To create your Master Document List, make a table with four columns. Label the columns: Date, Author, Type and Significance.

Date	Author	Type	Significance
7/16/01	Cannon	Psychological Evaluation	School evaluation WISC-111 IQ above avg

Enter document by date, author, and type. You can leave the "Significance" column blank for now. As you become more familiar with the evaluations and test scores you will recognize the important information in the documents. Attach sticky notes to all pages in your Master File that have test scores i.e. Wechsler Intelligence and Woodcock Johnson. When you create your Master Document List, you can find a specific document quickly and easily – a good thing at meetings.

Butterfly Thoughts

Unity

I dreamed I stood in a studio and
watched two sculptors here.
The clay they used was a young child's
mind,
and they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher.
The tools he used were books and
music and art.
One was a parent with a guiding
hand, and a gentle, loving heart.
Day after day the teacher toiled,
with touch that was deft and sure.
While the parent labored by his side
and polished and smoothed it over.
And when at last their task was done,
they stood proud of what they had
wrought.
For things they had molded into the
child could neither be sold or bought.
And each agreed he would have failed
if he had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the
school, and behind the teacher, the
home.



Author
Unknown

Are you aware that Family and Children's services offer a variety of voluntary services within the Rainy River District? These services include:

Children's Mental Health Services – Assisting children, adolescence and their families who may be experiencing emotional, social, and/or psychological problems in their school, family, and/or community life. Services are provided free of charge, for a wide range of difficulties from mild adjustment reactions to severe psychiatric problems in children ranging in age from birth up to 18 years.

Infant & Child Development – Servicing children 0 – 6 years of age who are at risk for a delay, or children with a diagnosed physical, developmental or sensory disability. Some of the services provided include early intervention programs, developmental screening and assessments, assistance with transition to school for special needs children, and parenting programs on a group or individual basis.

Community Integration – servicing children with a physical or developmental disability 6 years – 18 years and up to 21 years as long as they are in school. The primary focus of this program is to facilitate integration into the community. Some of the services provided include developmental assessments, advocacy in relation to other agencies, linkages to health, financial, and educational resources in the community.

Family Relief – a program that provides families a respite period from the responsibility of the daily care of an individual with a physical and/or developmental disability. The three options to services include In-home respite – provided in the family home, Out-of-home respite – provided in the approved worker's home, and community participation – The individual is accompanied by their Family Relief Worker into the community to participate in community events or activities.

For more information about the above voluntary services please contact Family and Children's Services
For Fort Frances call (807) 274-7787 or 1-800-465-7764 (Toll Free), for Atikokan call (807) 597-2700, and for Rainy River call (807) 483-1357.

To make a referral for service, please call Integrated Services Northwest, The Integrated Services for Northern Children Program for Single Point of access. For Fort Frances, Rainy River and area call 274-9797, for Atikokan area call 807-597-4528

Do you have something to Share?
Please phone Debra Bruyere
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