

Disability Awareness

As a parent of a child with a disability, it is very important that you be as informed as possible. The field of special education, with its laws, resources, materials, educational options, etc., can be so vast and complicated that at times it can seem very overwhelming. While there are numerous resources available, it can seem like a full time job to keep current with the latest and most important information as it relates to your child. The following Parent Teacher Conference Handout is a good starting place for disability awareness. Explore these sites to gain a good foundation of what is available.

Information on Specific Disabilities

- NICHCY offers disability fact sheets on the following disabilities, at: www.nichcy.org/disabinf.asp
AD/HD, Autism/PDD, Cerebral Palsy, Deafness / Hearing Impairments, Down Syndrome, Emotional Disorders, Epilepsy, Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), Severe/Multiple Disabilities, Speech/Language Impairments, Spina Bifida, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Visual Impairments.
- How does your state define these disabilities?
http://www.nasdse.org/publications/disability_categories.pdf
Find out your state's policies in Project FORUM's report, Disability Categories: State Terminology, Definitions & Eligibility Criteria (2004) , available at the link above.
- Information in Spanish?
Yes! We have it. Visit our disability information page in Spanish, located at: www.nichcy.org/pubs/spanish/spandis.asp. Also visit our two new Spanish language resource pages that'll connect you to Spanish materials about (1) specific disabilities and (2) disability topics. These pages are available in both English and Spanish.
- Looking for information on a rare disorder? Contact:
 - the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD), at 1.800.999.6673, and: www.rarediseases.org
 - the Office of Rare Disorders at the National Institutes of Health, at: <http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/> The Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center, which is a part of the Office of Rare Disorders and which answers questions from the general public, including patients and their families, health care professionals and biomedical researchers. Call toll-free at: 1.888.205.2311 (Voice), 1.888.205.3223 (TTY).
 - DiseaseInfoSearch, for information on specific genetic conditions, at: http://geneticalliance.org/ws_display.asp?filter=diseases

Disability Organizations

Try the government's resource list.

DisabilityInfo.gov is the comprehensive Federal Web site of disability-related government resources. You can find out about government disability programs and benefits, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the 2002 Red Book on Work Incentives and Employment Supports, Career One-Stops, Employment, Education, Housing, Transportation, Health, Income Support, Technology, Community Life, and Civil Rights. www.disabilityinfo.gov

Disability Awareness

- **What do parents experience?**
www.nichcy.org/newsdig.asp
NICHCY offers a 16-page publication called Parenting a Child with Special Needs. A Spanish version, called Cómo Criar un Niño con Necesidades Especiales, is also available. The publication is written primarily for parents new to the disability experience and shines a light upon emotional reactions that parents may experience and the lessons others have learned. You don't have to be a parent of a child with disabilities, though, to find this document illuminating. If you're working with parents, this publication opens a window into what it means to have a child with a disability.
- Need others to be more aware of what it means to have a disability?
www.nichcy.org/pubs/bibliog/bib13txt.htm
Classrooms, day care centers, scout troops, clubs...any place children come together. NICHCY's Disability Awareness can connect you with curriculum, books, children's books, videos, and posters or other merchandise developed specifically to foster disability awareness.

Parent Groups

- **Wondering what kind of parent groups are out there?**
www.nichcy.org/parents.asp#pa10
We offer a quick read on the subject: Accessing Parent Groups and its Spanish version Acceso a los Grupos de Padres.
- Sometimes only another parent can help.
To talk with another parent whose child has the same disability as yours, let Parent to Parent connect you. Find them at: www.p2pusa.org. (Wondering what Parent to Parent is? Read our Parent to Parent Support and find out what this program has to offer. In Spanish, this publication is called Apoyo Padre a Padre. Both can be accessed from: www.nichcy.org/basicpar.asp#bp2)
- Looking for a nearby parent group on your child's disability?
There are lots of parent groups organized around specific disabilities. If you're looking for one in your neck of the woods, either call us or take a look under "Disability-Specific Organizations" in our State Resource Sheets, at: www.nichcy.org/states.htm

- The special expertise of your state's PTI is at your fingertips.
Give your state's PTI (that stands for Parent Training and Information Center) a call when you want to find out about education rights in your state, learn how to advocate for your child, find local resources, or get expert advice on parenting a child with a disability. Find your state's PTI by looking at our State Resource Sheets or by checking out the PTI listings on the central PTI site at the Alliance, at: www.taalliance.org/Centers/PTIs.htm.
And read all about what PTIs do for parents and children in our publication Parent Training and Information Centers, at: www.nichey.org/pubs/basicpar/bp3txt.htm
- For adoptive parents, there's...
 - o the Child Welfare Information Gateway, at: www.childwelfare.gov/
 - o the National Adoption Center, at: www.adopt.org
 - o the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption, at: www.nrcadoption.org/