



# SPECIAL NEWS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS



Issue 5

Fall, 2003

## FALL IS UPON US



It is hard to believe fall is here and the school buses are traveling the roads once again. Be sure to take extra care to watch for children while driving. This month we will be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of Child Development Watch and the Birth to Three Early Intervention System. Please plan to join our celebration on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m., at Delaware Technical & Community College. We would love to have pictures of your child and/or stories that we could display on our Memory Board at the celebration. You can bring them with you or send them to Kellie or Sandy. Also, please consider joining our group of parent-to-parent volunteers. These are parents who volunteer time to provide support to other families of children with special needs. More details can be found on page 3 of this issue. Please feel free to call Kellie at 302-995-8617 or Sandy at 302-422-1335 with your ideas and suggestions. Or, you can reach us by e-mail at [kellie.mckeefer@state.de.us](mailto:kellie.mckeefer@state.de.us) or [sandy.ward@state.de.us](mailto:sandy.ward@state.de.us). We look forward to hearing from you.

**Kellie & Sandy**  
Family Support Specialists



### MAILING LIST



Please help us keep our mailing list updated. If you are currently receiving mailings from us and would like to discontinue them, please call Kellie at (302) 995-8617 or Sandy at (302) 422-1335 or (800) 752-9393. If you would like to receive our mailings (especially the newsletter) via e-mail, please call Kellie or Sandy with your e-mail address.

## PLEASE JOIN US!



October 28, 2003

3:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Delaware Technical & Community College (Dover)  
Conference Center - Rooms 400A & B

The Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) invites you to the 10-year anniversary celebration for Delaware's Child Development Watch (CDW) and the Birth to Three Early Intervention System.

We will be honoring families, past and present ICC members, CDW staff and early intervention providers. **Please plan to join us and bring a story and/or picture to share on our Memory Board.**

If you have any questions, please call the Birth to Three Office at (302) 255-9132.



Check Out These  
New Websites



- [www.small-fry.com](http://www.small-fry.com)  
Small Fry Productions offers a complete line of award-winning educational children's videos that teach everything from colors and numbers to French, Spanish and ten other languages!
- <http://stitchesfromtheheart.com>  
**Stitches From the Heart** specializes in custom apparel for ostomy (colostomy), Down's syndrome, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, and other special needs.



Department of Health and Social Services, Child Development Watch



## PARENTS NEEDED AS PARENT-TO-PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Many parents of children with special needs would like to talk to or meet other parents facing similar challenges. Attending evening support group meetings isn't always possible or maybe just not comfortable. We would like to link parents together who are interested in meeting other families of children with special needs (via telephone, e-mail, in-person). If you are interested, please complete the Parent-To-Parent Volunteer Form included with this issue and return it to Sandy Ward at 18 North Walnut Street, Milford, DE 19963 or Kellie McKeefery at 2055 Limestone Road, Suite 201, Wilmington, DE 19808. You can also express your interest by calling Kellie or Sandy or through your family service coordinator.

## FINANCIAL HELP AVAILABLE FOR NEW RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

When a household welcomes a child for the first time, there can be lots of expenses. Help is available through the Kinship Care fund, which provides \$500 per child to assist eligible children transitioning to relative caregivers. Relative caregivers are non-parental relatives, such as grandparents or aunts and uncles, who take on the responsibility of caring for a relative child.

For more information on the eligibility criteria or to apply for the program, contact the Division of State Service Centers at (302) 255-9675. You can also call the Delaware HelpLine at 800-464-HELP and ask for Kinship Care in the Division of State Service Centers.

# PARENT TIPS

## PETS & YOUNG CHILDREN

Deciding on whether to get a pet? Already have a pet? Loving and caring for a pet enriches the lives of many children. Consider safety as well as benefits when deciding if it's time for a pet in your family.

### How can I keep my child safe and healthy around pets?

**Choose pets wisely.** If you don't already have a pet, take care to choose from breeds and species that are likely to be good with your child. Have the pet checked for diseases by a veterinarian before bringing it home. Consider any family allergy problems before you get a pet. (You may need to discuss your child's allergies with his pediatrician.)

**Always supervise interactions.** Teach your child not to go near any animal unless you say she may do so. Never leave a young child alone with an animal. Even a gentle pet can harm an infant. Toddlers often hit, poke, or grab animals, which can provoke an attack or harm a small pet. Teach your child to play gently with pets. Be sure your child stays away from pets when they are eating, caring for their own babies, or sleeping.

**Encourage good hygiene.** Be sure your child stays away from animal food bowls or litter boxes. Have him wash his hands after playing with a pet. Treat any animal bite or scratch immediately. Check with your child's pediatrician if any bite or scratch breaks the skin.

### How can my child benefit from growing up with pets?

**Self-esteem and social skills.** Having positive feelings for and experiences with pets can help children feel good about themselves. Loving a pet can also help children learn to love and trust others.

**Physical activity.** All pets need exercise. Playing safely and appropriately with pets is a fun way to help make physical activity a part of your child's lifestyle.

**Responsibility and respect.** Learning to take good care of pets can teach children to express concern, empathy, and responsibility for other living things. Parents can use pet care to model and teach respect for all living things. Over the pet's life cycle, parents have opportunities to teach lessons about birth, illness, and death.

**Parent involvement.** Parents and children can share time together as they play with and care for their pets.

### How can my child help with pet care?

A young child can help with pet care in a few small ways but can't be responsible for all of a pet's care. He may be able to feed the dog if you pre-measure the food and water, for example. He can walk with you and the dog, but he certainly can't walk the dog alone. Give your child safe, small tasks, and be sure to supervise him as he does them.

Source: Illinois Early Learning Project, University of Illinois

# PARENTS CORNER



## WHERE ARE THE PARENTS?



By: Sue Stuyvesant (10/15/96)

Hey everyone,

For those of you who don't know me...I am Mom to Michelle, 9 years old, microcephalic, athetoid/spastic CP, cortical visual impairment, seizure disorder - and CUTE! OK, now for the reason I'm writing this.

To make a long story short, earlier this week a question was asked by some nit wit official as to why there weren't more parents (of special needs kids) involved in the local PTA and other issues that have come up that directly involve our kids. His question, which was passed on to me was "Where are the Parents?" I went home that night, started thinking and boy was I *mad* - and banged this "little" essay out the next day on my lunch break. My friends thought I should share it all with you, and I apologize for the length, but I wanted you to have it all. By the way, I took copies of this to the school board meeting that night, gave it to a couple of influential people and it WILL get around...

### **Where are the parents?**

They are on the phone to doctors and hospitals and fighting with insurance companies, wading through the red tape in order that their child's medical needs can be properly addressed. They are buried under a mountain of paperwork and medical bills, trying to make sense of a system that seems designed to confuse and intimidate all but the very savvy.

### **Where are the parents?**

They are at home, diapering their 15 year old son, or trying to lift their 100 lb. daughter onto the toilet. They are spending an hour at each meal to feed a child who cannot chew, or laboriously and carefully feeding their child through a g-tube. They are administering medications, changing catheters and switching oxygen tanks.

### **Where are the parents?**

They are sitting, bleary eyed and exhausted, in hospital emergency rooms, waiting for test results to come back and wondering: is this the time when my child doesn't pull through? They are sitting patiently, in hospital rooms as their child recovers from yet another surgery to lengthen hamstrings or straighten backs or repair a faulty internal organ. They are waiting in long lines in county clinics because no insurance company will touch their child.

### **Where are the parents?**

They are sleeping in shifts because their child won't sleep more than 2 or 3 hours a night, and must constantly be watched, lest he do himself, or another member of the family, harm. They are sitting at home with their child because family and friends are either too intimidated or too unwilling to help with child care and the state agencies that are designed to help are suffering cut backs of their own.

### **Where are the parents?**

They are trying to spend time with their nondisabled children, as they try to make up for the extra time and effort that is critical to keeping their disabled child alive. They are struggling to keep a marriage together, because adversity does not always bring you closer. They are working 2 and sometimes 3 jobs in order to keep up with the extra expenses. And sometimes they are a single parent struggling to do it all by themselves.

### **Where are the parents?**

They are trying to survive in a society that pays lip service to helping those in need, as long as it doesn't cost them anything. They are trying to patch their broken dreams together so that they might have some sort of normal life for their children and their families.

### **They are busy, trying to survive.**

Permission to duplicate or distribute this document is granted with the provision that the document remains intact. [Http://www.mindspring/whereare.txt](http://www.mindspring/whereare.txt)

# WE NEED YOUR IDEAS AND OPINIONS

Please help us plan trainings and newsletter topics by responding to this brief survey. Place an X by the topics that most interest you.

- \_\_\_ Helping children learn to communicate
- \_\_\_ Managing child behavior in a positive way
- \_\_\_ Skills for coping with stress
- \_\_\_ Food and nutrition
- \_\_\_ Working with providers in your child's life
- \_\_\_ How children grow and develop
- \_\_\_ Sensory integration
- \_\_\_ Basic sign language
- \_\_\_ Transition
- \_\_\_ Support groups for parents

Other topics of interest are:

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Please mail, fax, phone or e-mail your response to:

**Sandy Ward, Child Development Watch**  
18 North Walnut Street  
Milford, DE 19963  
302-422-1335 (phone) 302-422-1336 (fax)  
[Sandy.Ward@state.de.us](mailto:Sandy.Ward@state.de.us)

**Kellie McKeefery, Child Development Watch**  
2055 Limestone Road, Suite 201  
Wilmington, DE 19808  
302-995-8617 (phone) 302-995-8363 (fax)  
[Kellie.McKeefery@state.de.us](mailto:Kellie.McKeefery@state.de.us)



## PERINATAL ASSOCIATION OF DELAWARE RESOURCE MOTHERS

Do you know someone who is pregnant and needs help getting early prenatal care and other social services? Tell her about the Resource Mothers Project. Resource Mothers are mentors. They do everything they can to help pregnant mothers get the health care they need. Their goal: healthy mothers and healthy babies. After babies are born, Resource Mothers help moms get good medical care and immunizations for Baby. If you know of someone who could use this program, tell them about Resource Mothers. They can be reached through the Perinatal Association of Delaware, Main Office: 984-BABY or Kent/Sussex Office: 424-1043. You can also read more on their website: <http://www.healthybabies.org/mothers.html>.



I love to read!  
Check out these  
great books!

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Out of Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction* by Carol Stock Kranowitz. This book is a written guide to sensory integration dysfunction and a drug-free approach that offers new hope for parents..



# PARENT-TO-PARENT VOLUNTEER FORM

Providing Support and Information to Families of Children with Special Needs

This service is for families who live in Delaware. Please complete this form if you are interested in either receiving peer support or providing peer support to others. If you have any questions, please call the Family Support Specialist at your local Child Development Watch office (Kent & Sussex - Sandy Ward 302-422-1335; New Castle - Kellie McKeefery 302-995-8617).

Name:

Are you interested in?

(Check All That Apply)

- Receiving Peer Support
- Providing Peer Support
- Having your name, number and/or e-mail address placed on a volunteer list for families
- Attending parent support group meetings
- Attending an informational session about being a Parent-To-Parent Volunteer

What times are you available?

(e.g., daytime, evenings, Wed. mornings)

What county are you from?

New Castle

Kent

Sussex

Address:

Telephone Number:

E-Mail Address:

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

What is your relationship to the child with special needs?

Mother

Father

Other. Please explain:

Please describe your child's special needs (disability, disorder, condition, etc.).

(Please be specific.)



