



# SPECIAL NEWS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Issue 2

Winter, 2003



## HAPPY WINTER

We hope our winter issue finds you warm and safe from the cold weather. We're busy preparing for the start of our Sibshops in January (see details below). We're also planning some great Family Forums for parents and professionals. Don't forget that Sandy Ward, Family Support Specialist at Child Development Watch in Milford, is always available to provide a little extra support for families, research information, and find resources. Sandy can be found in the Family Resource Room at Child Development Watch or you can call her at 422-1335. You can also contact Sandy through e-mail at [sward@state.de.us](mailto:sward@state.de.us).



## SIBSHOPS ARE HERE!

It's not too late. Even if you missed our first Sibshop session, it's not too late to register. We continue to welcome new children. Just to refresh your memory, Sibshops are support groups for the siblings of children with special needs. The University of Delaware and the Birth To Three Early Intervention System are offering Sibshops at the Easter Seals Rehabilitation Center in Dover beginning on Saturday, January 25th and continuing for five additional months (Feb. 22, March 15, April 12, May 10 and June 7). These groups will be for siblings ages 4-6 and 7-10 and will meet one Saturday each month for three hours. Please call Sandy Ward for more details. We are really excited about this project and hope you will be able to join us.

## UPCOMING TRAINING & SEMINARS

- Saturday, Feb. 1: *Relationships: The Vital Link to Early Literacy and Language*, Call Carole Henry at The Family & Workplace Connection, (302) 479-1677.
- Saturday, April 26: *A Commitment to Quality for Infants and Toddlers: Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers*. Call Carole Henry at The Family & Workplace Connection, (302) 479-1677.
- Friday, May 2: *Dads Can Do It Conference*. Check out their website for more information at [www.dadscandoit.org](http://www.dadscandoit.org).

## PLAYGROUPS FOR CHILDREN

Parents and children from birth to age three are invited to play together, listen to a story, learn new songs and finger plays and network with other families. FREE. No registration required. Call Anna Scovell, Parents as Teachers, at (302) 856-5909 for more information.



## INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is encouraging influenza vaccinations, whenever possible, for healthy children aged six months to 23 months because children in this age group are at substantially increased risk for influenza-related hospitalizations.



## MAILING LIST



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

(over)



Delaware Health and Social Services, Child Development Watch



## PARENT'S CORNER

"There is a team here from Christiana and as soon as they stabilize your son, you can see him before he is transferred." These were the first words I heard after my emergency c-section. This was the beginning of many conversations that you do not want to have as a parent.

Zachary was born on March 2, 1998, at Milford Memorial. He was transferred to Christiana where he would spend his first 22 days. Immediately we were given a new way of life, new friends and a new vocabulary. We became experts in PT, OT, RT, ST, GI, Ortho, Neuro, you name it, and we earned our degree quickly.

Having a child that is physically and/or mentally challenged is difficult. It is not the life I would have chosen, but it is one I would not trade. Zach is a very happy and bright boy. He is a miracle. A lady once approached Zach and made the mistake of saying, "He is so beautiful, it's such a shame, well, some children are blessed and some are not!" I know that she will never repeat those words again!

I could go down the list of all the challenges that Zach faces and will continue to face. It is what I call the doctor's negative list, but as his parents we focus on his strengths. He is very bright, beautiful, happy and determined. He has the love and support of his family. Sure there are the days that I get down and question why, but all he has to do is smile at me and I remember that we are one blessed family.

*Connie Luciani*

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Would you like to have contact with other families of children with special needs? Would you like to gain insight into a specific concern or question from parents facing similar challenges? If you answered yes to either of these questions, call Sandy at 422-1335 or send an e-mail to Sandy at [sward@state.de.us](mailto:sward@state.de.us) and she'll help to set something up.

Also, if you have an experience you'd like to share or a question you'd like to ask of other families, please send it to Sandy for possible inclusion in the next issue of *Special News for Special Needs*.

## CALLING ALL FATHERS

The Dads and Disabilities Conference Committee, in conjunction with the Center for Disabilities Studies of the College of Human Services, Education, and Public Policy of the University of Delaware announces their **Dads Can Do It!** conference

**Date and Time:** Friday, May 2, 2003  
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Place:** Clayton Hall, University of Delaware

**Contact:** Ed Broadbelt (302) 831-5445

The objective of this conference is to provide a forum for fathers of children with disabilities to support one another. Awareness will be raised about the importance of fathers in the development of children with disabilities. Program administrators and direct service personnel will be provided with strategies for involving fathers in their services.



## NEW MEETING LOCATION

The Down Syndrome Association of Delaware, Southern Chapter, will now be meeting monthly at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on Rt. 14 in Harrington. For a list of meeting dates, please call Jennifer Pink at 424-3896.

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## CHECKLIST FOR TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Write down all of the things your child has done in the last week that have made you laugh and smile.
- Make a list of the things you feel guilty about. Talk over that list with another person. Cross off the ones you are not responsible for. Cross off the ones you can't change. Make a plan of action for dealing with the rest.
- Look back at the storms you have weathered since your child was born. Congratulate yourself on your strength and resilience. What helped you get through? Was there something in particular that can help you through future crisis?
- Find two new people to babysit your child. Write down their names and phone numbers.
- Talk to your significant other or partner about how you are feeling.
- Today...make a date with each of your other children to do something special.
- Write down a response you can give to strangers when you don't feel like explaining, but don't want to be rude. Having a response ready will make the situation easier.
- Be prepared. Make a list of questions now to take to your next doctor's appointment, therapy session, meeting with a teacher, etc.
- List the ways you are a good parent to your child.
- List the things you do for your child that he can do for himself. Decide to let him.
- Plan two things you'll do for yourself this week. Write them on the calendar now.
- Find someone to talk to...your partner, friend, counselor, clergy, support group.

Suggestions from *After the Tears*/Robin Simon/Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.