

Family and Sibling Supports Roundtable Notes

Group 1

Agencies Involved: Aspire, Best Buddies, Center of Independence Through Conductive Education, Belle Center, the Chicago Lighthouse, Shore Community Services, & Envision.

Challenges: One agency pointed out that they interact with their population through school settings and do not provide residential support; therefore, a lack of support from parent(s) who's primarily loyalty is to their child's residential provider. Several agencies stressed that parents are overwhelmed, have trouble finding resources, English is the 2nd language for many parents, and lack of transportation/childcare. All of the agencies expressed the challenge of getting siblings more involved.

Ideas to Overcome These Challenges: Plan more family outings, have a great resource list onsite, collaborate with other agencies, start a parent group (parents don't have to be involved in the organization, can be from the community), and develop a parent mentor program, develop a sibling support network website, and get the families to volunteer in the program.

Describe What is Exciting You About the Topic and What You Are Doing: Once an agency gets a parent(s) involved the consensus is that the staff member likes to see the parents be appreciative and view their child in a different way. The parent now views the situation as the "glass half full" rather than "half empty." Another agency pointed out that it was wonderful seeing families who have a child with a developmental disability connect with each other.

Group 2

Agencies Involved: Have Dreams, Autism Program/Tap Program, Chicago Children's Museum and LaRabida Children's Hospital.

Best Practices: Several agencies offer advocacy services and have developed a social skills groups, parent education training and social skill transitioning groups. One agency also has a Hispanic Team to within their clinic to work with this population.

Challenges: Parents voice the need of more services and parent support groups, but do not attend any of the meetings.

Ideas to Overcome These Challenges: Plan a family volunteer day where it directly helps the child w/developmental disability and the indirect outcome is parents networking.

Notes: The accessibility kit is on the Tap website. The Chicago Children's Museum has an accessibility kit on their website for visitors.