

Making the Parent/Professional Relationship Work

Program Description

Based on her personal experiences as a parent of a 38-year-old son with autism and as a professional for over 20 years of working with families, the presenter will discuss the stressors that parents of children with disabilities, and the professionals who serve them, may be dealing with and bringing with them into a new relationship. The presenter will emphasize the importance of understanding the perspective of each party in a parent/professional relationship.

She will discuss the best qualities we would like to see in both parents and professionals and strategies for developing and maintaining a good working relationship between professionals and parents. How to prevent problems from occurring in the relationship will be discussed including getting to know the family and developing a foundation of trust. The presenter will then describe strategies to improve the parent/professional relationship when problems arise.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the stressors that families of individuals with developmental disabilities may face after receiving a diagnosis.
2. Describe the stressors that professionals who serve families with developmental disabilities may face and how these can impact the parent/professional relationship.
3. Examine the best qualities of both parents and professionals in a relationship.
4. Demonstrate strategies to develop and maintain a good working relationship between parents and professionals and prevent problems from happening.
5. Discuss strategies to improve the parent/professional relationship when there are problems.

Target Audience

Human Service Professionals, school personnel, parents or caregivers, and anyone interested in this topic.

Contact Hours

1.5 - 3.0 hours

Program Agenda

Changes in the lives of parents of newly diagnosed individuals with developmental disabilities

Emotions that new parents may be juggling following a diagnosis

Other stressors parents may bring with them into a new relationship with a professional

Stressors that professionals typically are dealing with

Characteristics of the best professionals

Characteristics of the best parents

Prevent problems from happening by getting to know the family

Prevent problems from happening by developing a foundation of trust
Strategies to improve the parent/professional relationship when problems occur

Faculty

Ann Palmer is a parent of a 38-year-old son with autism, an author and presenter, and a professional having worked with families for close to 30 years. She was the Parent Support Coordinator at the UNC TEACCH Program and the Director of Advocacy and Chapters at the Autism Society of North Carolina. Ann is recently retired from being a faculty member at the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities (CIDD) at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. She is the author of four books published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Her book, *Realizing the College Dream with Autism or Asperger Syndrome: A Parent's Guide to Student Success* was written about her son's college experience. *Parenting Across the Autism Spectrum: Unexpected Lessons We Have Learned*, was co-authored with Maureen Morrell and was the Autism Society of America's Literary Work of the Year. She is also the author of *A Friend's and Relative's Guide to Supporting the Family with Autism: How Can I Help?* and co-author of her newest book, *Drinking, Drug Use and Addiction in the Autism Community*.