



JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP SPECIAL NEEDS AND ADVOCACY PARENTS

JT SNAP is a local group of parents dedicated to improving the educational environment for all students in Jefferson Township, NJ. Parents of special needs children and the general population are invited to attend meetings to help promote positive support and effective change within the district. We welcome parents of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, anyone who suspects their child has a disability, and the general population.

OUR MISSION

- To adapt an open form of communication as a means of breaking the existing barriers between special education and the general education populations;
- To work with the parents, teachers, child study team members, and administrators to develop effective educational plans for all students that promote individual needs and growth regardless of a student's abilities;
- To empower parents so they may become active advocates for their child.

JT SNAP CONTACT INFORMATION

WEBSITE: WWW.JTSNAP.COM

EMAIL: JTSNAP1@HOTMAIL.COM

Newsletter Committee: jtsnapnewsletter@yahoo.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JT SNAP MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2008 – 7:30 PM
JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

TOPIC: JT SNAP GENERAL MEETING – OPEN FORUM

PLEASE COME PREPARED WITH YOUR THOUGHTS AND/OR CONCERNS REGARDING CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IN THE DISTRICT.

VISIT WWW.JTSNAP.COM - CLICK 'CALENDAR OF EVENTS' FOR MORE INFORMATION

CHALLENGER BASKETBALL

COMING TO JEFFERSON THIS WINTER!

THE CHALLENGER SPORTS PROGRAM IS EXPANDING TO INCLUDE BASKETBALL THIS WINTER. THE CHALLENGER SPORTS PROGRAMS ARE SET UP FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES. THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED IN 2007 WITH BASEBALL IN THE SPRING AND THEN SOCCER IN THE FALL. FOR THE WINTER MONTHS IN 2008/2009, WE ARE GOING TO BE USING A JEFFERSON SCHOOL GYMNASIUM FOR BASKETBALL. WE MAY DO OTHER ACTIVITIES AS WELL, SUCH AS KICK BALL OR AN OBSTACLE COURSE, BUT BASKETBALL WILL BE THE MAIN SPORT.

WE WELCOME ALL CHILDREN WITH ANY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY, AND CHILDREN FROM NEIGHBORING TOWNS ARE WELCOME AS WELL. ALSO, WE CAN ALWAYS USE SOME 'BUDDIES' TO OFFER SOME HELPING HANDS TO THE KIDS. BUDDIES CAN BE SCHOOL AGE KIDS OR ADULTS. WE ARE FINALIZING THE DAY AND TIME EACH WEEK, SO PLEASE LOOK FOR FURTHER DETAILS VIA BACKPACK OR ON WWW.JTSNAP.COM. ADDITIONALLY, IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT TOM DeVRIES AT 201-513-0483 OR TOMDV@OPTONLINE.NET.

LET'S PLAY SOME HOOPS!

SPOTLIGHT ON...

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federal regulations, New Jersey Administrative Code Title Chapter 6A, Chapter 14, Special Education, Section 4.2 states that students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), each district board of education shall ensure that: to the maximum extent appropriate, a student with a disability is educated with children who are not disabled. This principle is referred to as inclusive education, or inclusion. The philosophy of inclusion is aimed at all children learning together at their own pace within a nurturing learning environment.

Inclusive education is students with and without disabilities participating and learning together in the same class. When these children are educated together, positive academic and social outcomes are achieved for all children. All students benefit when teachers use inclusive teaching practices to link students to the general education curriculum while addressing individual needs. These inclusive teaching practices include collaborative teaming, differentiated instruction, class wide adaptations, grouping, ongoing assessments, and positive behavioral supports.

Collaborative teaching usually implies a two-teacher model co-teaching. Examples of collaborative teaching are: a special education teacher and a regular education teacher teaching together for a significant portion of the day; in class resource support – these teachers teaching together for only part of the day; or consultation model - when the special education teacher provides periodic support in and out of the classroom to the general education teacher.

In addition to collaborative teaching, teacher aides or paraprofessionals have an extremely important role in inclusion. They support academics, communication, and social progress of the student with disabilities while fostering the child's independence.

Positive behavioral supports (PBS) determine and establish behavioral expectations for students. PBS can be for the individual student, class wide, or school wide. They encourage appropriate student behavior and facilitate smooth transitions for the student through recognition and reinforcement.

Parents have been and continue to be the driving force for inclusive education. The best outcomes occur when parents of children with disabilities and professionals work together. Effective partnerships happen when there is collaboration, communication, and most of all trust between parents and professionals. Successful inclusive education occurs when there is ongoing advocacy, planning, support, and commitment.

The 8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week will be celebrated December 1-5, 2008: "Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children". This yearly event highlights the accomplishments of families, schools, and communities that have dedicated time, labor, and resources to promoting inclusive education.

Sources:

www.njcie.net - New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education

www.wrightslaw.com - Special Education Law and Advocacy

www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities - Inclusive Communities

www.inclusiveschools.org/week - Inclusive Schools Week

Feeney, Christensen, Moravcik, "Who am I in the Lives of Children"

Please see reverse for Inclusion Resources

INCLUSION RESOURCES

www.tash.org - Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for people with disabilities

www.inclusion.com - Inclusion Network

www.powerof2.org - Collaboration

www.closingthegap.com - Changing lives with assistive technology

www.fape.org - Families and Advocates Partnership for Education

www.do2learn.com - Materials supporting special needs

www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm - Benefits of Inclusion

www.nyipi.org/PIE - Parents for Inclusive Education

www.thechp.syr.edu/include.htm - Inclusion/Inclusive Education

www.spannj.org/njiccp - New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project

Bauer, Shea "Inclusion 101 How to Teach All Learners"

Shell, Janney "Collaborative Teaming Teachers Guide to Inclusive Practices"

Doyle, "The Paraprofessional's Guide to the Inclusive Classroom"

Tilton, "The Teachers Toolbox for Differentiating Instruction"

PARENTS Q & A (BY PARENTS, FOR PARENTS)

Q. What have been your child's experiences when participating with typically developing peers in extra curricular activities? What barriers, if any, have you faced and how have you helped to overcome them?

A. Most children have had positive experiences when participating with their typically developing peers. Children do not like to feel "special". They want to feel part of their peer group. This is a very important tool for acceptance within their age group. Parents have found that educating the coaches, staff, teachers and other team members has provided a great deal of comfort and ease both to the special needs child and his family.

The other key is perseverance. Do not give up! Regardless of the disability, children have the ability to try their best. Allow them to rise to the challenge with positive reinforcement. Make sure the child has the opportunity to interact with other team players, and that he is not isolated.

Everyone is unique! We need to learn to accept people for who they are, and not judge them. It is up to each and every one of us to make sure we instill the power of personal confidence and success to our children and ourselves. Children do learn by example. Together, we can enable these children to succeed in life!

Q. What are the schools doing to help prepare your middle school or high school student to enter the real world, if college education is not appropriate?

A. It is important to teach these students life skills, so they will hopefully be able to live as independently as possible. Life skills include, cooking, shopping, cleaning, banking and all activities of daily living. These classes begin in the 6th grade and are followed through until the student finishes high school. There is also a work/study program, where the students go out and pick up litter on the highway, paint trucks, sort scrap metal, etc.

Important to note here is that although the student is older, he still needs much parental support to assist him in making the right decision for his life. Education is very important for the parents. Familiarize yourselves with programs that are available to adults with special needs. What are the groups' requirements/does your child meet those requirements? How do you go about making an appointment on your child's behalf?

There are programs available through the DDD (Department of Developmental Disabilities). It is important to establish what the child's needs are first, and then start with notifying the child study team. Continue to research on your child's behalf. The important goal is to have the young adult live as independently as possible, and continue to get the support he or she needs.

Parents - have a question? Please submit it to:

jtsnapnewsletter@yahoo.com

FROM THE DESK OF TINA E. STEINBERG DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members:

During this school year, the District continues to facilitate inclusion for students with disabilities, as the least restrictive environment (LRE) means including children to the maximum extent appropriate in general education classes with non-disabled peers. The continuum of alternative placements is considered for each student with a disability for special education and related services.

With the development of District programs and expansion of services, fewer children have been placed in out-of-district schools and some students have returned to District, as we are able to educate most children with disabilities in District programs with appropriate supplementary aids and services.

Parents/guardians, as members of the IEP team, are encouraged to participate with the teachers, Child Study Team, specialists, and older students in the determination of LRE, during the annual IEP meeting. The IEP team considers the full continuum of placements starting with consideration of placement in the general education class with supplementary aids and services. Supplementary aids and services may include curricular or instructional modifications and strategies, assistive technology devices and services, paraprofessional support, related services and integrated therapies, peer supports, consultative services for academic and behavioral support, and in-class resource programs. If a student requires a different setting than general education, alternative placements are considered in replacement resource centers or self-contained class programs.

As we move forward in the school year, let's continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders on behalf of the students to facilitate positive outcomes.

Tina E. Steinberg
Director of Special Services

FROM THE DESK OF EILEEN DAGGETT SUPERVISOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

It's a magical moment when you capture the wonder in a classroom and create enthusiasm for learning. A child's wonder is at the heart of his education. True learning must involve engaging questions and discussion. But learning also takes place as a result of experiences and a desire for knowledge. In order to connect these learning experiences and promote an awareness and appreciation for individual differences and cultural diversity, the Jefferson Township School District acknowledges our diverse student population and a quality education to all children.

If wonder is the essence of education, then problem solving and reflective thinking is the process. Throughout the academic year, Jefferson students participate in a variety of activities that serve to foster an inclusive environment. Curriculum and instruction support elements of character education, tolerance, diversity, culture, and acceptance. By implementing academic standards and problem based learning, students are challenged with high expectations, a responsibility for academic success, while celebrating differences throughout the curriculum.

The professional strengths and accomplishments of a school faculty at large, work to complement the learning needs of the entire student population. As the supervisor of special education, I focus on the presentation of congruent instruction through collaboration, the development of effective and interactive educational experiences, along with flexible groupings, authentic and meaningful learning experiences, and developmentally appropriate curricula accessible to all students.

Continual professional development activities include opportunities for collaboration and the development of congruent research based instructional strategies that support student achievement. Involvement of collaborative teams working together on curriculum councils and instructional committees allow opportunities to develop comprehensive techniques and strategies that enhance instruction for diverse learners.