



Family Support: Drawing on Natural Resources

September, 2001

Throughout life, there are times when it becomes precariously unbalanced. During those times, we need to look outside ourselves to go on. Do you have the support you need on a day to day basis? Consider your answers and fill in the blanks to the following questions:

- _____ 1. If my child is sick and I need to go to work, who will I call to help me out?
- _____ 2. Where do I get information about specific medical specialities?
- _____ 3. Who can I talk to when I think about my child, and wonder what life may be like down the road?
- _____ 4. How do I connect with others who may have encountered a similar situation?
- _____ 5. If my car breaks down on the way to a doctor's appointment with my child, who will I call?
- _____ 6. What resources are available when I am worried, or have a really bad day?
- _____ 7. How long has it been since I've had a break or gotten away without my children?
- _____ 8. When was the last time I enjoyed an individual hobby or interest?
- _____ 9. How often do I spend time alone with my children without disabilities?
- _____ 10. Where do I get advice about planning for the future for my child with disabilities?
- _____ 11. Do I build in time to have fun?
- _____ 12. Who can help support or assist my child's acceptance in the community?
- _____ 13. Who helps me work through medical bills, government applications and the mountains of paperwork?
- _____ 14. At the time of a family crisis, who will provide us with "hugs and hotdishes"?
- _____ 15. What am I doing now to build the supports to get me through a crisis?
- _____ 16. Is my family "thriving" or "only surviving?"

It is the stamina and resourcefulness of each family that will provide the strength and continuity necessary for the long haul. Every single paid professional who enters the life of a family with a child with a disability will only be involved with that family on a short-term basis. Communities and families need to work together and plan ahead for those times of need proves to be a good approach to "keepin' the home fires burning."

- As a family and as a community, are we doing everything possible to invest formal and informal resources to support families?
- As an individual family, have we identified what supports we need to stay healthy and grow?

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- Are communities connected? Do resources build on each other, rather than compete and duplicate efforts?
- Are extended family networks evident?
- How active are neighborhoods and communities of faith?
- At a time when you are able, how can you be a support to others and offer something back to your community?

