



The Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Deb Jendro: Editor

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Parent Support

Do you ever feel like you are alone on your journey in raising a child with a mental health need? How about joining a support group where parents and caregivers gather and give each other strength, encouragement and validation of feelings! Friends are waiting for you!

In Bismarck, meetings are held at 7pm in the fourth Thursday of the month at: The Pride Inc. Building 1200 Missouri Ave. Call Becky: 258-1628 or Carlotta : 222-3310 For more information.

In Fargo, meetings are held at 7pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at: 1104 2nd Ave S, second floor, suite 333. Call Deb: 235-9923 for more information

School: A Place to Learn and Grow

Editor's Note

On behalf of the North Dakota Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, we would like to thank the educators in our communities for all they do to help foster a safe and welcoming school environment for all children and especially those with disabilities.

We all know how important school is to children. School is a place where kids learn about themselves and the world they are growing into. It is a place to meet new people and develop new friendships. It is a place where they learn from their peers and older children, adults and teachers. In school children have the freedom to make the most of their talents and abilities. The children of our schools and home schools develop confidence and a capacity to meet new challenges through encouragement and achievement. What goes on in school can and will have a significant influence on the growth of a child. Their intellectual development, social awareness and self-esteem are all affected in one way or another.

Through school culture based on trust, integrity, and democracy, through school policies on behavior, bullying and conflict resolution, and classroom management, the potential is there to build a community of people in which everyone, young and old alike can feel safe, respected and encouraged to be the best that they can be. Children will be offered the tools necessary to become loving, caring, productive members of our society.

Let us all come together as a community and join our educators and schools in acknowledging the strengths in each and every one of our children. We must be the providers of positive feedback, validating behaviors or accomplishments that are valued by others. Praise a child who shows compassion for a peer, who willfully attends to the needs of another, who shows respect to himself or others, who exhibits self control when angry, or even just smiles when they walk by. Center on positive behaviors, lend an ear, offer a kind word, shake a hand, and encourage them to rise to their given potential. Children need to know they are important and can make a difference. Be the encourager. Look for opportunities for positive recognition. Let us treat each and every child as though they were being groomed to be the future president of the United States! Make a difference in the life of a child!

Take heed the words of the late great Eleanor Roosevelt:

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college she attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Collaborating for Human Rights." Classroom to Community

Fall Human Rights Conference:

October 10-11 2008

At NDSU, Fargo ND

For further Information, contact: Mitch Marr at ndhrc.org

FEET (Family and Educator Enhancement Team) of Fargo Public Schools will hold a "Parent Meet and Greet" October 27th from 4p—7pm in the Fargo South Commons area. Parents of children in early Special Ed. through 8th grade who have children in special education or are anticipating the need are invited to come and meet school personnel, and community organizations and agencies that may be of assistance to them while helping their child through the education process. Refreshments will be served. Child care Provided!

The 2008 DPI/VR Transition Conference- Discover the Magic Through Teamwork October 28-30th will be held at the Grand International Inn, Minot North Dakota. For more information contact: For more information contact: LouAnn Nider 701-328-8916; lnider@nd.gov or Gerry Teevens 701-328-2277; gteevens@nd.gov

The Medicaid Buy In Program or Children with Disabilities Program Press Release which provides more details at: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/news/2008/02-21-medicaid-buy-in-children-w-disabilities.pdf> In addition, the Children with Medically Fragile Needs Waiver that was approved. Application can be found at <http://www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00394.pdf>

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Individualized Education Programs

Kids with delayed skills or other disabilities might be eligible for special services that provide individualized education programs in public schools, free of charge to families. Understanding how to access these services can help parents be effective advocates for their kids. The passage of the updated version of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) made parents of kids with special needs even more crucial members of their child's education team. Parents can now work with educators to develop a plan — the individualized education program (IEP) — to help kids succeed in school. The IEP describes the goals the team sets for a child during the school year, as well as any special support needed to help achieve them.

Who Needs An IEP?

A child who has difficulty learning and functioning and has been identified as a special needs student is the perfect candidate for an IEP. Kids struggling in school may qualify for support services, allowing them to be taught in a special way, for reasons such as:

- learning disabilities
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (
- emotional disorders
- mental retardation
- autism
- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- speech or language impairment
- Developmental delay



In most cases, the services and goals outlined in an IEP can be provided in a standard school environment. This can be done in the regular classroom (for example, a reading teacher helping a small group of children who need extra assistance while the other kids in the class work on reading with the regular teacher) or in a special resource room in the regular school. The resource room can serve a group of kids with similar needs who are brought together for help. However, kids who need intense intervention may be taught in a special school environment. These classes have fewer students per teacher, allowing for more individualized attention. In addition, the teacher usually has specific training in helping kids with special educational needs. The children spend most of their day in a special classroom and join the regular classes for nonacademic activities (like music and gym) or in academic activities in which they don't need extra help.

Because the goal of IDEA is to ensure that each child is educated in the least restrictive environment possible, effort is made to help kids stay in a regular classroom. However, when needs are best met in a special class, then kids might be placed in one.

To learn about "The Referral and Evaluation Process", "Developing an IEP", and Your Legal Rights visit: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/learning/iep.html>

National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, Oct. 5 - 11 2008

Please join The National Education Association (NEA)--Great Public Schools for Every Child--in its [National Bullying Awareness Campaign](#). It is NEA's goal, with its National Bullying Awareness Campaign, to reduce, and eventually eradicate, bullying in America's public schools.

Your Three-Step Plan to Stopping Bullying

Discovering that your child is being bullied can be devastating. You may feel bewildered, scared, sad, guilty, angry, or helpless. You may even feel like a target yourself.

While it is important to recognize and acknowledge all those emotions, remember that feelings alone will not change the situation. The most effective thing you can do is focus on the issue and develop a plan.

Here are tools, strategies, and tips that can help you develop successful short-term and longer-term plans for protecting your child from bullying.

1. First, make sure that the issue is bullying and not routine childhood conflict.

It's bullying if the action is hurtful, intentional, and repetitive, and there is a power imbalance between the children. Sometimes, children are afraid or embarrassed to talk about bullying. If you suspect your child may be a target of bullying, you may want to try these approaches to find out for sure.

Ask and listen:

- Did someone hurt you on purpose?
- Is the other person bigger than you or scary to you?
- Did the child know you were being hurt?

Watch for signs, such as:

- Suddenly wanting to be driven to school instead of taking the bus
- Unexplained stomachaches or headaches
- Changes in sleep routines or temperament

2. If your child is being bullied, you can take action at home to help your child learn how to respond more effectively.

Teach direct and indirect techniques for dealing with bullies. You may want to encourage your child to:

- Avoid situations where bullying occurs
- Hang out with classmates, friends, peers, or siblings
- Tell the child who is bullying to stop
- Do something the bully does not expect or want: yell, blow a whistle, laugh

Encourage group involvement. Children who interact with peers are less likely to be bullied.

You may want to help your child:

- Join an after-school program or activity
- Develop a hobby that allows interaction with others

3. If your child is being bullied at school, you can work with teachers and administrators to create a safe environment.

Talk with teachers and administrators.

- Notify them of the situation in writing.

Schools are obligated to respond to bullying.

- Discuss ways the school can help, such as by developing a bullying awareness program.

Be part of your child's school.

- Join the PTA and raise awareness of bullying as an issue.
- Offer to speak to the school board and be the "bullying expert."
- If your child has disabilities, you can build bullying prevention goals into your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Life in the Real World

A sad but true story

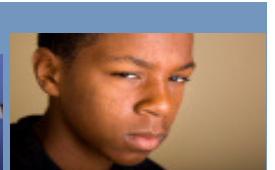
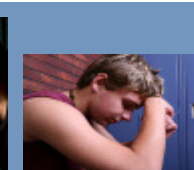
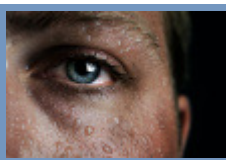


He was just 14 years old, in the midst of his school career. He should have been enjoying himself, visiting with his friends in the halls, laughing with his buddies at lunch, walking home from school and just hanging out, but many of his peers would see to it that those things just did not happen. The taunting and teasing was incessant and too much for him to take. He had dealt with it for a several years now. Never feeling safe in school. Always wondering what was waiting for him around the next corner. Others, pushing him into lockers, or down the stairs. The name-calling and unjustifiable remarks pounding, pounding, pounding in his ears as he rushed to the safety of his next class. He listened to the advice given him by his preceptors, to look the other way, turn the other cheek, ignore them and they will stop. Do not let them get to you! But it was too much! So, on one very frustrating and painful day, he went into the school bathroom and downed a bottle of extra strength Tylenol in an attempt to end it all.

The Tylenol did not take his life, but the ramifications of the bullying altered his life in many ways. He slipped into a deep depression. He developed a phobia against school and anything to do with school. He could not even get himself to go through the school doors. By the time he turned 16, his sophomore year in high school, he dropped out...never to return again. He spent the next two years of his life in out patient treatment...that is when he could get there. He spent the day light hours sleeping and the night hours wandering around the house. Occasional he would go out in the evening for a bit, but only with a chosen few. He felt ill most of the time, and would even retreat from family holidays and events. His family was in constant worry over him. They did not like to leave him alone because no one knew where his thoughts would take him. Finally at the age of 18, he got his G.E.D. Finally a positive in his life. He passed the tests with honors and received special recognition at the graduation ceremony. He attempted college but it did not work. The trauma of bullying had such a negative effect on him and the stress of being around people would wear him down and soon he would find himself back in a deep depression. The social isolation began again.

That was not his only suicide attempt. On a frustrating day he opened the cupboard in front of his mother and downed a bottle of pills. She tried desperately to get him help, but he ran away from the car in the hospital parking lot. His mother found him walking on her way back home and encouraged him to come with her. He did and through the grace of God the pills he took would not take his life.

As an adult, the nightmare of his mistreatment and the indignity of being violated by his peers still comes back to haunt him. There are faces he does not want to see, and voices he does not want to hear and memories he does not want to recall and in his mind, he asks himself these questions..."Why do others have to be so full of hate?" "Where do others get the need for a power and control that is so furious it affects the life of another forever?" "Why did they have to ruin my life?" And no one knows what to tell him. No one. Not one person. No one, no one at all.



Education...Transition...Legislation

From the desk of the Executive Director: Carlotta McCleary

Fall is upon us and many of us are getting back into the swing of things. Summer vacations are but a distant memory. So is true with the ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. We have been receiving a lot of calls from families needing support with school meetings. So in a way we get to start school again as well. You will see a lot of information in the newsletter is devoted to the start of school. Remember we are just a phone call away if you would like any additional information or support. Our staff can support you by attending a meeting with you.

In addition to school we are also gearing up for the legislative session which starts in January. There is great news for transition age youth. Long Term Care Interim Committee has approved forwarding a bill to the legislature. Currently this bill has two different plans for assisting transition age youth. The first section of the bill deals with the need for systemic coordination and collaboration at all levels the youth and family team level, Local/regional level, and the state level. They will utilize the wraparound process to meet the needs of youth and their families. NDFFCMH testified that we would like to see more coordination and collaboration between the various system providers to ensure a seamless transition for youth transitioning to adulthood. NDFFCMH would like to see the Wraparound process used to meet the need for coordination and collaboration between the various system providers. North Dakota has had success in using Wraparound as a method to better coordinate service delivery for children, youth and their families in child welfare as well as Partnerships.

Wraparound is a planning **process** that follows a series of steps to help youth and their families realize their hopes and dreams. It is a planning process that brings people together from the youth and family's life. The youth and family team consist of individuals agreed upon by the youth and family and committed to them through informal, formal and community support and service relationships. A facilitator assists the youth and family team to coordinate the supports that are necessary to meet the unique needs of the youth and family

NDFFCMH would also like to see coordination and collaboration at the state and local levels. In addition to youth and family teams that focus their attention on individual youth and family's needs there is a need for local/regional and state teams to coordinate the systemic issues that impact youth and their families. Youth and their families must have a voice in policy that impacts them at all levels of the process.

NDFFCMH would like to see the following core elements moved forward for youth in transition.

- Identification of transition-aged youth who need services throughout all systems

- Individualized Assessments to determine the needs and the appropriate services to assist, this may include natural or formal supports

- Develop a curriculum for the youth that provides training/mentoring to teach and implement self-advocacy; to include: their primary healthcare, educational planning (higher education), vocational planning, legislation that impacts their lives, and continuation of their informal supports etc

- Access to independent living skills, not just youth in foster care

- Develop a curriculum for families that provide training/mentoring to teach and implement self-advocacy; understanding the services for their youth to include: primary healthcare, educational planning (higher education), vocational planning, legislation that impacts their lives, HIPPA etc

- Coordination of services; use existing case managers to assist with the needs of transition-aged youth and assess the need for specific Transition coordinators, again not just for the foster care youth

Develop additional services and workforce to implement a statewide independent living skills program to address; vocational skills (job shadowing, job coaching), transition from education to employment, transition from secondary education to higher education, etc

There are some great things happening in North Dakota for youth in transition. We must build upon what is currently working and the resources we currently have. Through the youth and family teams, local/regional and state teams we must also identify the gaps and develop new support where it is needed and the resources to support youth in transition.

The second section of the bill will pilot a center in an urban community that youth will be able to drop in to receive transition services that are needed by the youth. This center would house the various agencies that provide transition services for youth. Everything that the youth would need would be at that location. Currently, Fraser Ltd. and Youth Works along with others in the Fargo community have been working on a plan for such a center. They would like to have state funding along with private funding to finance the center.

Youth and families need to have a voice in policies that impact them. Let your voice be heard. Become active in your local Legislative Working Committees, testify at legislative hearings, contact your local representatives and senator, and on federal issues contact your congressional delegation. Contact the NDFFCMH for more information on how you can help move policies forward.

Annual Meeting Region V FFCMH

will hold its annual board meeting on Tuesday October 21st. Chris Poyzer, LSW with Level I Advanced Certification in Collaborative Problem Solving on Caring for the Explosive Child ,will join us with information he obtained from the Center for Collaborative Problem Solving at Harvard Medical School this past summer.

Dr. Todd Twogood,

**Saturday, October 18th
Fargodome 2pm-4pm
Presentation on Early Childhood Brain Development . Focusing on nutrition, a healthy environment and the impact the formative years (age 0—6) has on a child's future.
Training is **free** of charge
To register, contact
Shawna Croaker at
232-2452 or
rvcmhc@sendcaa.org**

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