



The Family Center is a section of the Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Division of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). CSHCS is part of MDCH's Bureau of Family, Maternal and Child Health.

CSHCS primarily provides medical specialty care to children with a qualifying diagnosis. The Family Center serves families of all children with special needs. The Family Support Network of Michigan (FSN) is the Family Center's parent-to-parent support arm.

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CSHCS Family Phone Line
1-800-359-3722
8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday- Friday

Events and resources are compiled by the Family Center from a variety of sources. A listing does not stand for endorsement.

A Word from Mary

Another successful *Relatively Speaking* conference has come and gone. The families that attended gave overwhelmingly positive evaluations. Over 90% of families stated that they “gained new information about issues and concerns for siblings of children with special needs”. They also indicated that the adult workshops were “great, a lot of fun and very informative”. Other comments were, “My sib children have smiled more this weekend than I have saw in the past few months combined”, and “We greatly appreciate what we have learned here”.

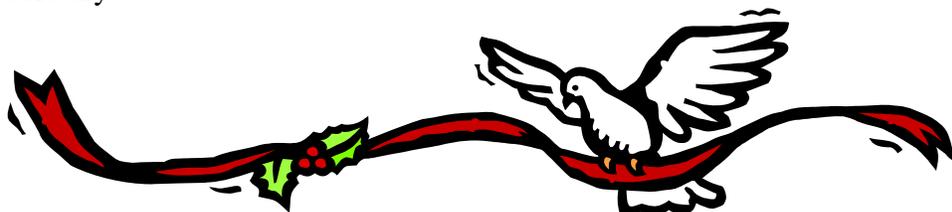
The evaluations that were handed in by the siblings gave heartwarming statements such as, “I liked that I could meet other people with special needs and knowing how it is”, “How we got to talk about how we feel”, “That there are a lot of people other than me with sibs that have disabilities/special needs”, “I learned that I’m not the only one who goes through what I do”. One sib stated “That other kids my age are in the same situation. I am not alone”. For the question, What will you remember about this weekend? Some responses were, “Meeting other people’s sibs”, “Meeting all different siblings with different disabilities”, “To be grateful of my brother”, “Being together”, “Swimming”, “Everything”. To the question, Would you come back and join us in the future, if you had the opportunity?, “Yes, but I will be in college”, “Yes, of course! It’s super fun to get a chance to be “normal”. Many others (24) said yes. We only had one no. The last question was Is there something you would like to talk about with the other kids? Most responses were no, however one sib said “I think we covered mostly everything”. “She is 7, she has a incurable disease, she had a feeding tube for 5 years, she’s learning to eat Normal, her disease effects her Central Nervous System. Basically she can’t convert food into energy, and I love her”. The last four words say it all.

Recognizing the issues and concerns of siblings is as vital as recognizing the issues and concerns of the child with special needs. I hope that this gives you an idea about why the *Relatively Speaking* conference is so valuable.

Mary J. Marin

SEASONS GREETINGS

The staff of the Family Center would like to take this opportunity to wish your family a safe, healthy and happy holiday season. As the year winds down, it’s important to remember that no matter what the future brings, family is the most important part of our lives. Friends, medical professionals and others may come and go in and out of our daily lives, but family is the constant. Happy Holidays from Mary Marin, Executive Director of the Family Center, Lisa Cook-Gordon, Transition Consultant, Lisa Huckleberry, Training Consultant, Valerie Smith, Office Manager, Randy Krause, Family Support Network Coordinator, Dianna Rigato, Program Specialist, Deborah Schaller, Administrative Assistant and Leah Waters, Secretary.





Holiday Survival Guide for Families with Special Needs

We all could use a little help during the holidays! This is one of the reasons AbilityPath.org created a Holiday Survival Guide for Families with Special Needs to provide parents helpful tips and resources during this busy and stressful time of year. It will help you navigate the change in schedules, find a sensory safe Santa, and how to explain to the grandparents why your child may not eat grandma's stuffing.

http://www.abilitypath.org/tools-resources/links--resources/abilitypath_holidaysurvivalguideforparentswithspecialneeds_2010.pdf

Resources

Assistive Technology (AT) Xchange

www.atxchange.org

CSHCS Courses

http://www.training.mihealth.org/course_detail.htm#CSHCS

Family Center

www.bridges4kids.org/f2f
1-800-359-3722

Wrightslaw

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Autism Resource Network of Northwest Michigan

<http://www.autismresourcenetwork.org/>

Syndromes Without A Name-USA

<http://www.undiagnosed-usa.org/>
1-269-692-2090-or-1-888-880-SWAN(7926)

SNApps4Kids

<http://www.snapps4kids.com/>

bridges 4 kids

www.bridges4kids.org

iPhone, iPad and iPod touch

Apps for (Special) Education

<http://www.bridges4kids.org/iPhone%20and%20iPa d%20Apps%20for%20Special%20Education.pdf>

2011 Holiday Safety

Advance planning and a proactive approach to safety are essential to keeping family, friends, and guests safe during all of their holiday activities. In this toolkit, you will find a collection of new and updated safety materials to help you Make Safety a Tradition of the holiday season.

Included safety tip sheets cover all aspects of holiday safety, from cooking, decorating, and entertaining to post-holiday clean-up. You will also find a Holiday Entertaining Safety Checklist, information about the latest advances in home safety technology, and easy safety reminders for the whole family.

To download your free copy of the toolkit, please visit the website at: <http://www.esfi.org/index.cfm/cdid/12178/pid/10272>

Looking for something fun to do for the holiday season?

The Pure Michigan website has a listing of holiday happenings across the state of Michigan. Visit the website below to see all the fun things Michigan has to offer this holiday season!

<http://www.michigan.org/Things-to-Do/Events/Holiday/Default.aspx?city=G42&dt=11/01/2011&dte=12/31/2011&tm=1#list>

Cable and Internet provider Comcast is launching a new program to offer discounted internet service and computers to low-income families. The program, called Internet Essentials, will "provide low-cost access to the Internet and affordable computers as well as digital literacy training to families with children who are eligible to receive free lunches under the National School Lunch Program," according to the company's blog.

Internet service provided through Internet Essentials features download speeds of up to 1.5 Mbps and upload speeds of up to 384 Kbps. The plan costs \$9.95 per month (plus tax) and is available to qualifying families. For more information visit: <http://www.internetessentials.com/faq/index.html>