



The Family Connector

Information and Resources for Families of Young Children with Disabilities in Connecticut

Spring 2016

Welcome to the third edition of *The Family Connector*. Family Connections is a statewide program that provides support, information and resources to parents who have infants or toddlers involved in Connecticut's Birth to Three System. Our quarterly newsletter is one way we hope to address any questions you have about raising a young child with a disability. Do you have a question that you'd like answered in our next newsletter? Let us know! Our goal is to provide you with a helpful and informative newsletter, so if you have feedback or suggestions, contact us today.

Communicating with Your Birth to Three Provider

Sally Huck - Parent



My husband and I have a four year-old daughter who received services through Birth to Three. She is now attending a special needs preschool program in our school district. Open and direct communication between my husband, myself and the teachers and therapists working with our daughter is very

important to us. I try to organize my thoughts prior to an appointment or meeting with providers. During our time with Birth to Three, I would ask the therapist when she first arrived if we could take five minutes at the end of the session to discuss issues.

Parents and providers together form the team that develops the appropriate program for a child, and we have always strived to both give and receive suggestions and feedback about what's working, or not working, for our daughter. I envision my husband, myself, and the providers that work with our daughter as co-captains of her developmental plan, so we have to be in constant communication. Feel comfortable asking providers questions if you don't understand why they are recommending a strategy, and be sure to tell them if it's not working for you at home. I did not know how to help my daughter when she first starting receiving services, but I learned early on that my parent intuition is often right. Providers need to know about how a child behaves, plays, and learns when they are not around, and need to understand your parenting style.

Originally published in *Birth Through 5 News*, Winter 2005, Vol. 7, No. 2

A Note About Communicating With Your Parent Mentor

"Your personal story also taught me to never stop fighting to get the best education for my kids and that I'm not alone with children with disabilities. I appreciate you putting me on the right path."

- Daphne Pamphile, Parent Mentee

About Family Connections

"Since 2014, Family Connections has provided parents of young children with the utmost care and regard for their needs, lending a helping hand and a safe space to talk and to be listened with empathy. Our program has been successful at reiterating to parents that they are not alone in their journey with their child. As a result, parent mentees report a greater sense of confidence in describing their child's needs and increased knowledge about locating resources for their child.

- Adriana Fontaine, Family Connections Coordinator

Fostering Language Development

By: Jen Lussier

Is your child a late talker?

Here are some ideas to encourage communication:

Narrate your life. Wherever you are, whatever you and your child are doing, be the narrator! “Mommy and Joey are going for a walk. Let’s take our dog, Sam. First, we need to get his leash. Then put on his leash...” You get the idea.

Play dumb. Often, we know exactly what our children want. We may automatically anticipate their needs and refill their cup as it empties, missing an opportunity to ask, “What do you want?” Let that cup get empty so they can ask for “more” or “juice” or “please.” Pour a tiny amount of juice and let them finish it. If they do not know how to ask, you can teach them to sign or say “more.” By pouring only a small amount, you can reinforce this communication several times in a row.

Label, Label, Label! Grocery shopping? Label items as you go. The produce section is full of colorful fruits and vegetables that your child can touch and hold as you label them together. On subsequent trips, you can hold up a familiar fruit, “This is a _____.”

Have some fun putting these into practice with your little one!

Communication Tips for Parents

When you disagree with part of your child’s plan or particular strategies being used, voice your concerns; start the conversation by recapping what you think is working, and then state the facts about what the problem is.

If a provider encourages you to keep trying the same plan, **ask for other ways to accomplish the goal** or agree to try again with the understanding that we will evaluate the outcome in a certain amount of time.

Ask the provider to brainstorm with his or her colleagues for ideas, talk to your parent mentor or contact other parents for advice and share the suggestions with the provider at the next appointment.

Share your child’s successes with the providers since they have certainly helped your child reach his/hers developmental milestones! **Talking with providers in these ways** helps to build a parent provider partnership that ultimately benefits our children.



Innovative Apps for Speech and Language Development

Articulate It!

Articulate It! is designed to help SLPs work towards improving the speech of children with speech delays. It contains over a thousand images in all sounds of the English language. Voice recording and data collection are included.

iName it

iName it was designed by and for speech-language pathologists to assist individuals with word finding difficulty secondary to aphasia. Additionally, it can benefit individuals with apraxia that are assisted by visual and sentence completion cues.

My PlayHome

My PlayHome, by Shimon Young, not specifically designed for speech and language is the original doll house app. It is very interactive and children can explore and use everything in the house. The characters eat, sleep, shower, brush their teeth, open the closets and watch TV.

Pictello

Pictello is a simple way to create talking photo albums and talking books. Each page in a Pictello story can contain a picture, up to five lines of text, a recorded sounds or text-to-speech using high quality voices.