

Oklahoma Parents Center

Winter 2010



Mission Statement

Oklahoma Parents Center is dedicated to the inclusion and **equality of children** and adults with disabilities. Our mission is to train, inform, educate, and **support parents**, families, professionals and consumers in **building partnerships** that **meet the needs** of children and youth with the full range of disabilities ages birth through twenty-six.

Sensitive Santa

Considering approximately three to six children out of every 1,000 have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it can be difficult for families of children with autism to enjoy some of the holiday celebrations and traditions most people take for granted, including simple things like sitting on Santa's lap in a busy shopping mall. That is why families with children with special needs are invited to **Tulsa Promenade Mall** on **Sunday, December 5, 2010** from **9AM-11AM** this season to celebrate "Sensitive Santa" an event that caters to children with autism and allows them to enjoy one of the holiday's joyous memories – sitting on Santa's lap.

For the event, the Santa area will become **"sensory friendly,"** meaning the lights and music will be turned down, staff will be instructed to avoid loud, distracting movements, and the mall will be closed to shoppers. Tulsa Promenade Mall in partnership with Worldwide Photography will also provide each family that attends with a **free 4 x 6 photo keepsake** to commemorate the holiday season. "We

wanted to create an event that celebrates the spirit of the holiday season and brings a small, but memorable part of the holiday season to families with autism," said Susan Frederick, Marketing Director, Tulsa Promenade Mall. "'Sensitive Santa' will allow these children to experience the same enjoyment with Santa, but in a much calmer, less intimidating environment."



Please Note: This is a special event for ALL children with special needs!!!

First come, first serve basis though!!!

Parenting and Stress

Adapted from: Consultation And Education Department of the Alamance-Caswell Area Mental Health

Here are some simple, common sense things you can do to help you cope with and relieve the stress of parenting in today's world. Some require changes in how you think, some require changes in what you do. The challenge is making these tips a part of your day-to-day life — to help you take care of yourself and your children.



Stress Relief TIPS for Parents

1. Pick your battles

- ☞ Stand your ground on matters of safety and issues reflecting your values/beliefs (using car seats, not hitting) and be flexible on other issues (which shirt your child wears).

2. Teach your child responsibility

- ☞ Give limited choices you can live with (“you can wear the red or blue shirt”).
- ☞ Delegate chores — once you've shown how to do the chore, let the child do it. You can make adjustments or point out mistakes, but **don't re-do the task**.

3. Teach your children to solve their own problems

- ☞ If your child is the complainer (“Johnny is making faces at me”) help him/her to think of solutions instead of handling the problem. (Except when the child is being harmed).
- ☞ If you are the complainer (Johnny, get up now or you'll be late for school”) then you need to set limits and handle the problem.

4. Stop trying to be a SUPER-PARENT

- ☞ Write everyone's activities on a calendar and look at it every day.
- ☞ Make lists, prioritize and group your errands and chores.
- ☞ Carpool with other parents.
- ☞ Limit your children's activities to a number you can manage: Learn to say “no”.
- ☞ Keep phone calls to a reasonable limit (for you and your children).
- ☞ Plan ahead — if you put things off to the last minute, your child will too!

5. Take care of yourself

- ☞ Put the children to bed early or get up early to have some quiet time.
- ☞ Live healthy: eat a well-balanced diet, exercise, get regular checkups.
- ☞ Learn relaxation techniques: meditation, prayer, visualization, breathing exercises.
- ☞ Accept offers from those you trust to baby-sit and take an occasional break.
- ☞ Take up a hobby or handwork (knitting, woodworking) to help relieve stress.

6. Do things you and your children enjoy



- ☞ Keep your sense of humor — laugh everyday (like your children do!).
- ☞ Make a weekly date with your partner (remember what a date is?).
- ☞ Take time to give individual attention to each child each day (read a story at bedtime, play ball, sit and watch TV and talk about the show, let your child help make dinner, give a piggyback, talk in the car, make a craft together).

Being a parent brings one challenge after another! Learn to deal with stress in positive ways and address the real issues or problems that create stress.

TSA: Pat-Downs A Must For Some With Disabilities

Reprinted with permission from Disability Scoop, The Premier Source for Developmental Disability News
On the Web at www.disabilityscoop.com

In an open letter to members of the disability community, a top Transportation Security Administration official says that some people with disabilities will be required to undergo "alternate screening techniques including pat-downs."

The letter sent Monday was designed to clarify airport screening techniques ahead of the Thanksgiving travel rush. It comes as more airports shift their screening procedures from metal detectors to full-body scanners. Those who opt out of the machines or who trigger alarms are subject to intense pat-downs, which have been sharply criticized by some passengers who claim that they are too invasive.

However, TSA officials say some people with disabilities are ineligible for the body scanners and therefore must automatically undergo secondary screening measures. This includes individuals who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices and cannot stand, travelers with service animals, people who rely on a cane or walker and those unable to lift their arms to shoulder level for several seconds.

Similarly, travelers who are accompanying or assisting a person who cannot pass through the machines will also be subject to alternative screening measures, wrote Kimberly Walton, the TSA's special counselor in the letter.

"There is nothing punitive about our measures; it just makes good security sense," Walton wrote. Nonetheless, she acknowledged, "the pat-down you receive will be more thorough than what you may have received previously."



Flying with Children with Disabilities

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security—Transportation Security Administration, www.tsa.gov

Parents or guardians of children with disabilities should...

- ◆ Inform the Security Officer if the child has any special needs or medical devices.
- ◆ Inform the Security Officer if you think the child may become upset during the screening process as a result of their disability.
- ◆ Offer suggestions on how to best accomplish the screening to minimize any confusion or outburst for the child.
- ◆ Ask the Security Officer for assistance during the process by helping you put your and the child's carry-on items on the X-ray belt.
- ◆ Know that at no time during the screening process will you be separated from your child.
- ◆ Know that if a private screening is required, you should escort and remain with your child during the private screening process.
- ◆ Tell the Security Officer what are your child's abilities are. For example: can the child stand slightly away from equipment to be handwanded, walk through the metal detector, or needs to be carried through the metal detector by the parent/guardian.
- ◆ Know that at no time should the Security Officer remove your child from his/her mobility aid (wheelchair or scooter). You are responsible for removing your child from his/her equipment at your discretion to accomplish screening.
- ◆ Know that if your child is unable to walk or stand, the Security Officer will conduct a pat-down search of your child while he/she remains in their mobility aid, as well as a visual and physical inspection of their equipment.

Ten Ways to Help Your Child Get Organized:

Developing good organizational skills is a key ingredient for success in school and in life. Although some people are by nature more organized than others, anyone can put routines and systems in place to help a child “get it together.”

Here are some strategies that you can use to help your child get – and keep – her life under control.

- Adapted from “Tips for Developing Organizational Skills in Children” by the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities

1. Use checklists.

Help your child get into the habit of keeping a “to-do” list. Use checklists to post assignments, household chores, and reminders about what materials to bring to class. Your child should keep a small pad or notebook dedicated to listing homework assignments. Crossing completed items off the list will give him a sense of accomplishment.

2. Organize homework assignments.

Before beginning a homework session, encourage your child to number assignments in the order in which they should be done. She should start with one that’s not too long or difficult, but avoid saving the longest or hardest assignments for last.

3. Designate a study space.

Your child should study in the same place every night. This doesn’t have to be a bedroom, but it should be a quiet place with few distractions. All school supplies and materials should be nearby. If your young child wants to study with you nearby, too, you’ll be better able to monitor his progress and encourage good study habits.

4. Set a designated study time.

Your child should know that a certain time every day is reserved for studying and doing homework. The best time is usually not right after school – most children benefit from time to unwind first. Include your child in making this decision. Even if she doesn’t have homework, the reserved time should be used to review the day’s lessons, read for pleasure, or work on an upcoming project.

5. Prepare for the day ahead.

Before your child goes to bed, he should pack schoolwork and books in a book bag. The next day’s clothes should be laid out with shoes, socks, and accessories. This will cut down on morning confusion and allow your child to prepare quickly for the day ahead.

6. Conduct a weekly cleanup.

Encourage your child to sort through book bags and notebooks on a weekly basis. Old tests and papers should be organized and kept in a separate file at home.

7. Create a household schedule.

Try to establish and stick to a regular dinner time and a regular bedtime. This will help your child fall into a pattern at home. Children with a regular bedtime go to school well rested. Try to limit television-watching and computer play to specific periods of time during the day.

8. Keep a master calendar.

Keep a large, wall-sized calendar for the household, listing the family’s commitments, schedules for extracurricular activities, days off from school, and major events at home and at school. Note dates when your child has big exams or due dates for projects. This will help family members keep track of each other’s activities and avoid scheduling conflicts.

9. Keep organized notebooks.

Help your child keep track of papers by organizing them in a binder or notebook. This will help him review the material for each day’s classes and to organize the material later to prepare for tests and quizzes. Use dividers to separate class notes, or color-code notebooks. Separate “to do” and “done” folders help organize worksheets, notices, and items to be signed by parents, as well as provide a central place to store completed assignments.

10. Provide needed support while your child is learning to become more organized.

Help your child develop organizational skills by photocopying checklists and schedules and taping them to the refrigerator. Gently remind her about filling in calendar dates and keeping papers and materials organized.

Most important, set a good example!

Support the Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc.

Your donation will help provide positive futures for children!

The Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc. (OPC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit agency organized to assist Oklahoma's families including low-income, minority, and those with children with disabilities produce children who become productive well-educated citizens. Our center provides training, information, and support to families throughout the state of Oklahoma.

Are you interested in helping the OPC provide services to Oklahoma's families?

We have a variety of ways for you to get involved:

- sponsorships,
- donations, and
- volunteer time.

Sponsor:

To sponsor a training or workshop in your area, please contact our agency at 877-553-4332.

Donate:

To make a tax-deductible financial contribution, please send a check to:

Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc.
P.O. Box 512
Holdenville, OK 74848

Volunteer:

Our Community Partner Program and our Count Me IN Puppets Program allow you to help your community in a multitude of ways by volunteering. For more information about how you may assist the Oklahoma Parents Center, please contact our agency at 877-553-4332.



Hot Chocolate Cones

A winter favorite, hot cocoa with all the trimmings (mini marshmallows, chocolate chips, and a cherry-red gumdrop) is even sweeter when packaged as a cone. This makes a great gift for babysitters, teachers, and neighbors. Be sure to add a tag letting your recipients know the cone contains enough for four servings.

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup cocoa mix
- 2 (6- by 12-inch) cone-shaped cellophane bags (available at party stores)
- 2 clear rubber bands (we used ponytail holders)
- Scissors
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup mini marshmallows
- 1 large red gumdrop
- Ribbon and/or Gift tag (optional)

Instructions:

1. Pour the cocoa mix into one of the bags. Close the bag with a clear rubber band, then trim the end of the bag 1 inch above the band.
2. Place the cocoa-filled bag into the second bag and flatten its top so the end doesn't stick up.
3. Layer the chocolate chips and the marshmallows, then top with the gumdrop. Secure the bag with the other rubber band. Optional: Add ribbon and a gift tag.

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Happy Holidays!!!

from the Oklahoma Parents Center
Board of Directors and Staff

Dec. 2 nd	Positive Behavior Workshop* <u>Fairview</u> *6:30 p.m.
Dec. 2 nd	CNHS*Basic Rights Workshop* <u>Durant</u> *6:00 p.m.
Dec. 2 & 3	State Superintendent's Conference* <u>OKC</u> *All Day
Dec. 6 th	CNHS*Basic Rights Workshop* <u>Antlers</u> *5:00 p.m.
Dec. 7 th	Section 504 Workshop* <u>Wilburton</u> *6:00 p.m.
Dec. 7 th	OPC Booth at the Expo* <u>Broken Arrow</u> *All Day
Dec. 9 th	IDEA Overview Workshop* <u>Wilburton</u> *6:00 p.m.
Dec. 10 th	Bully Prevention Workshop* <u>OKC</u> *7:00 p.m.
Dec. 14 th	CNHS*Basic Rights Workshop* <u>Idabel</u> *5:00 p.m.
Dec. 16 th	Transition to Adulthood Workshop* <u>Fairview</u> *6:30 p.m.
Jan. 4 th	CNHS*Basic Rights Workshop* <u>Wright City</u> *6:00 p.m.
Jan. 6 th	CNHS*Basic Rights Workshop* <u>Bennington</u> *6:00 p.m.
Jan. 13 th	Autism Support Group* <u>Vinita</u> *6:00 p.m.
Jan. 20 th	Journey to Adulthood Workshop* <u>Okmulgee</u> *6:00 p.m.
Jan 25 th	Basic Rights and 504 Workshop* <u>Tahlequah</u> *3:30 p.m.
Feb. 1 st	Basic Rights Workshop* <u>Poteau</u> *6:00 p.m.
Feb. 17 th	Journey to Adulthood Workshop Part 2* <u>Okmulgee</u> *6:00 p.m.
Feb. 24 th	Bully Prevention Workshop* <u>Tahlequah</u> *3:30 p.m.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc. is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policies of the funding agencies and endorsement should not be assumed.