



R.A.V.E.N RESPITE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

R.A.V.E.N. Respite
A project of Alaska Attachment and Bonding Associates (AABA)
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10 Ways To Be Your Child's Advocate

Did you know that you are the most important person in your child's life? Of course you did. But did you also know that parents of children with learning disabilities can also be their child's most effective advocate.

What exactly is an advocate? An advocate is someone who speaks up for someone else, or who acts on behalf of another person. As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else, and you are in the best position to speak for him and act on his behalf. Here are **10 ways** you can do that:

1. Realize from the beginning that advocating for your child takes a lot of time. Advocating involves a great deal of research, meeting time, and communication. That's a given. But the end result will be a successful, responsible, happy young adult who will be able to survive the pitfalls of the real world.
2. Be informed. The more you know about what is going on with your child, the more comfortable you will be

in helping others understand him.

Here are some ways you can become informed: a. Read all you can about learning disabilities (especially your child's learning disability). b. Attend conferences. That's a great way to learn and make contact with other people faced with similar issues. c. Ask questions - seek answers. d. Join a support group if there is one available. You can learn a lot from a support group.

3. Become familiar with the rules and regulations that apply to your child's special education program. You request copies of the regulations from your local school district office (the special education office, if your district has one) or from your state Department of Education. If you have difficulty understanding these rules and regulations, don't be afraid to ask the special education director or your child's special education teacher to explain them to you.
4. Work together closely with the professionals who work with your child. This should be done in a positive, cohesive way in

order for the child to gain the maximum benefit. Get to know these people - talk with them on a regular basis. Volunteer in the classroom. Don't be afraid to ask for a meeting with the teacher(s) if you see something going on at home that can be helped at school, or vice versa.

5. Keep track of the paperwork that is given to you at the team meetings. This is valuable information that should be kept in an organized place so that you can refer to it easily. If you aren't sure how to do this, talk with the special education director or special education

teacher. They have a system to keep the records organized in the office. Perhaps they would share that with you.

6. Don't be afraid to communicate with the professionals. Be prepared when you go to the team meetings, and don't be afraid to calmly and

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Current Services Offered



Building one branch at a time!!



Library—Books to Loan

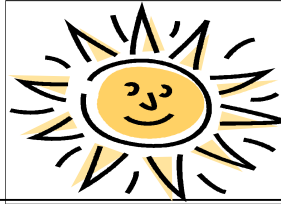
Call: 376-0506

On- site Parent Advocate with ATTACH

Mom2Mom

A fun way to share and support another mom while making crafts!

**Join in the FUN !!
Call: 376-0506**



**Parent Support Phone Line:
907-373-6937**

Online parent support and chat group. To sign up visit:

[www.health.groups.yahoo.com/Raven Respite](http://www.health.groups.yahoo.com/Raven_Respite)

Resource Information

Alaska Attachment & Bonding Associates (AABA) - Support and Advocacy. Call:

907-376-0366

10 Ways To Be Your Child's Advocate

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*"Your donation to R.A.V.E.N. Respite Project is totally **TAX Deductible**"*

and assertively state your views. Take notes into the meeting with you so you won't forget the questions you want to ask or the points you want to make. Remember, the professionals need insight from you as much as you need insight from them. The more communication you have, the more powerful the educational team to help your child.

7. Don't be afraid to

ask questions. The field of special education is as complex as your child's needs. Asking questions doesn't mean that you are stupid. It just means that you are interested in your child's education and well-being and want to be an informed parent. You will most likely hear the professionals asking lots of questions as well!!!

8. Keep the lines of communication open with your child. Talk with him about his life both in and outside school. Allow him to express his frustrations, his successes, his disappointments, his hopes, his likes and his dislikes. The better you know your child and what is going on with him, the better you can help other people to work with him.

9. Know your child's strengths and weaknesses and share them with the professionals. Children with learning disabilities, although they have weaker areas, have many strong areas, too. By highlighting these areas, it makes it easier for the professionals to use them as tools to strengthen the weaker skills. It helps them see the child in a more positive light; it helps them relate to the child; and it helps your child's self-esteem to know that the teachers' see good things in him.

10. Help your child learn to advocate for himself as early as possible. As time goes on, and your child has heard you advocate for him, he will be able to understand how to advocate for himself. If he's heard you say positive things, not only does it in-

crease his self-esteem but it gives him the confidence to speak up for what he needs. Teach him how to communicate how he learns best, what he needs to help him get the most from his classes, and how he feels when confronted with certain issues, such as testing and peer pressure. Give him the power to make his life a success.

You can help your child be able to be a successful, happy, responsible student, well on his way to being the same kind of adult. Advocate for him.

For more information on advocating for your child, please take a few minutes to read through the following website:

www.theparentaladvocate.com

Announcements

Recommended Reading

"Give them Roots and let them Fly" by, The Attachment Center at Evergreen. Foreword by Dr. Foster Cline

"Attachment, Trauma, and Healing" by, Terry M. Levy & Michael Orlans

"Don't Touch my Heart" by, Mansfield/Waldmann

Mom2Mom

We will meet once a week on Wed. from 10-12. Please call for directions and times as these locations are confidential.

Please email Melissa@ravenrespite.org.

Or call: 376-0506

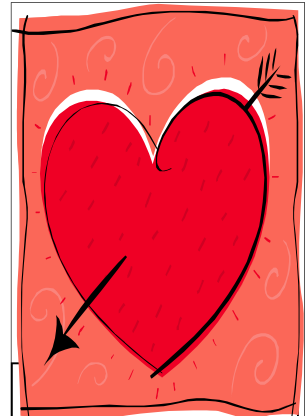
Parent meeting is

scheduled for February 28th at 3:00, in the Wasilla Senior Center. Mark your calendars, as this is a very important meeting!

Please RSVP to:

Melissa@ravenrespite.org.

Or call: 376-0506



R.A.V.E.N. Respite Project wishes you a Happy Valentine Day!

Resources and Links

For help on parenting:

Alaska Parent Line:

1-800-643-5437

North American Council on Adoptable Children:

www.nacac.org/

Alaska Family & Youth Network: www.ayfn.org

Alaska Family Resource Center: www.acrf.org

Help with disabilities and

FASD contact:

www.stonesoupgroup.org

State Legislators:

www.house.gov/donyoung/opinion_form.htm

www.murkowski.senate.gov/contact.html

www.stevens.senate.gov/contact_form.htm

Alaska Children's Trust:

www.alaskachildrenstrust.org

Professional Counselor:

www.tattac.com

Email: bsj@laguna.com.mx

For Workshops contact AABA:

www.akattachment.org

For current updates on attachment issues:

www.attach.org/



"Community and Volunteers making a difference to R.A.V.E.N Respite Project"

2007 ATTACH Conference

R.A.V.E.N. Respite is developing a 90 minute presentation of it's project, the history, challenges faced in designing a respite program for families and ways to overcome these challenges. We will submit our presentation to the **ATTACH** Board for approval. If approved,

R.A.V.E.N. will make this presentation at the 2007 conference in Providence, Rhode Island. Bernie Janzen, MS, LPC and ATTACH Board Member, has agreed to be a co-presenter.

Eleanor Oakley, MS CEO, of AABA has given her support of the project by providing

\$1500.00 for airfare/lodging. This will be a great opportunity for R.A.V.E.N. to share and help others, while at the same time to learn what other communities have done to provide respite. If possible, we hope you can join us! To Register:

[ATTACH](#) Conference htm



To grow a strong organization WE NEED your help!



R.A.V.E.N. RESPITE
 A PROJECT OF ALASKA
 ATTACHMENT AND
 BONDING ASSOCIATES

***Finding Solutions
 Providing Hope***

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R.A.V.E.N. Respite Project



Educating parents to become advocates for themselves and their children.

MANDT Training	Thank You	IEP Tips
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Before leaving her year in service as a Ameri-Corps VISTA, Jan King secured a grant for the next R.A.V.E.N. Respite developer to attend the MANDT Training. This is training all respite providers will need. The grant also covers the cost for 2 respite providers to attend CPR/First Aid, and Attach 101 & 102. Melissa Jessup , Project Developer will be leaving for Brewer Maine on February 10th, for the MANDT Training. For more information on what this training is, please visit :
www.mandtsystem.com

R.A.V.E.N. Respite Project would like to thank the following for their donations and support in 2006:

AABA
 Eleanor Oakley, MS,CEO
 Bernie Janzen, MS, LPC
 Coach's Crew, LLC
 Slavko Bobek
 Joy Jessup
 Roxana Sawyer
 Mat-Su Health Foundation
 Eastern Star

A special thank you to all parents and volunteers who help make a difference to this project. We couldn't do it without you!!

- Things to do Before your next IEP:
1. Read last year's IEP.
 2. Update your Notes.
 3. Do your homework!
 4. Come prepared to "grow" your team.
 5. Make your list.
 6. Prioritize!
 7. Decide who's coming with you.
 8. What about taping the meeting?
 9. Determine your child's participation.
 10. Review your rights!
- www.theparentaladvocate.com



Become part of a vital organization **HELPING** families in our community!.