

Program Features

Parent Connections offers parenting education and support in a manner which best meets the needs and learning styles of parents with cognitive impairments.

A meal is provided along with child care. A psychologist facilitates the group discussion.

When: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month

Time: 4 pm - 6 pm

Where: The ARC office

Cost: Free to Ottawa County residents.

Assistance with transportation is available.



Parent Connections

The mission of the ARC is to assure that persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities are valued and that they and their families can participate fully in and contribute to the life of their community.



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*A parenting education
program for parents with
intellectual disabilities*

What is Parent Connections?

It is a support group and parent education class for mothers and fathers who experience a cognitive impairment. It follows the philosophy of Supported Parenting.

What is Supported Parenting?

The Supported Parenting model involves working long term to build on families' strengths in order to promote competence and sustain independence.

How is that accomplished?

Support must be based on respect for the parents and the emotional bond between the parents and their children.

Parents should be regarded as a resource, not as a problem.

Parents must be engaged as active partners in service planning and involved as equals in making decisions affecting their family.

Parents should be enabled to feel in control and to experience being competent.

Intervention should focus on building a family's strengths rather than on attending to its weaknesses.

Why is this program necessary?

Studies done by the Arc of the United States have found that over half of the parents in the United States with cognitive limitations will at some time experience permanent or temporary removal of their children from the home.

Supported Parenting strives to protect the children from abuse or neglect, not to seek out of home placement. The most ethical course is to devote resources to providing support to the natural parents, to increase their capabilities and promote confidence.

What are the challenges?

Parents lack the resources and knowledge to properly care for their kids.

Persons with a cognitive impairment have deficits in abstract thinking and judgment.

Many problems faced derive from poverty, rather than from deficits in parenting skills.

Existing community parenting programs are short term rather than long term.

Parent Connections Objectives:

- Increase confidence and competence of parents*
- Strengthen bonds between parents and children*
- Create a means for parents to expand their social network*
- Reduce Child Protective Services referrals to zero*

Outcomes that have been observed in the program:

- Parents are thinking through their responses to their children's behaviors.*
- Parents are reacting more calmly to their children's inappropriate behavior.*
- Parents are not giving in to their children's demands as often as they used to.*
- Parents are more encouraging to their children.*

