



# PARC NEWSLETTER

FOR ADOPTIVE AND GUARDIANSHIP FAMILIES

Region 6

Volume 25

Fall 2018

Get Outside! Fall is a great time be outdoors in Michigan and your whole family will benefit. Kids with high energy need time and space for running, climbing, riding bikes and scooters, hiking, swimming and playing ball. It's especially important as they start school and spend so much time sitting at desks. Take them to the park to use the jungle gym or the basketball court. Let them play with other kids, using their imaginations and developing social skills along with their muscles. Or play a game as a family, like tennis, badminton, horseshoes or golf.

Go to the beach. Yes, the beach in the fall. I live a few miles from a lake and many times during September we go there after school, in the evening or on the weekend for a picnic and swimming. The water is still warm and so is the air. The exercise and sensory experience of water, sand and sunshine is soothing after a day of school or work. Have a barbeque. Invite friends or family and extend those summertime barbeques into October. Go hiking. Michigan has lots of state and county parks with great trails to hike. Notice trees, leaves, rocks, birds, squirrels, deer, ponds and marshes along the way. Enjoy the quiet and the good exercise.

Go bike riding. Many towns now have great biking paths and trails. Pack a picnic and enjoy a long, evening ride. Go fishing. We are never too far from a lake, pond or river in Michigan. Kids love to catch fish, even when they aren't keepers. It's a great way to have some downtime. Many kids grow up with sweet memories of the quality time together that fishing can create.

Go to the zoo. The crowds are thinner in the fall, but the animals are still out and more active than in the

heat of the summer. Go to a football game. Try a high school game if you're a novice football fan. At the very least you'll all get some exercise climbing the bleachers.

Build a fire. Sitting around a back yard fire, roasting marshmallows as the air turns chilly and chatting about the day is treat for the whole family. We even do this on school nights!

Walk the dog, or push the stroller as you take a walk. Say hi to your neighbors as you take a walk around the neighborhood. Let your kiddo ride a scooter or wear roller skates. Collect leaves and pine cones. Go to an apple orchard or pumpkin patch. It's best when you actually pick your own. Pitch a tent. A campout in the back yard is perfect for fall, when the nights cool down a bit. Or go to a campground. Have a rule. We have a "play outside for an hour before asking for screen time afterschool" rule. That applies to mom and dad too!

No matter what age or stage of life, time spent outside is good for body and soul, and there's no better time or place to be outside than the Fall in Michigan.



# Start the school year Strong by Jane Argiero PARC worker

## 7 Ways for Parents of Special Needs Children to Start the New School Year Strong

While many parents are anxious for the new school year to begin, parents of special needs students are sometimes filled with dread. We are obsessing over what could go wrong. Will this teacher click with my child? Will the IEP be followed? Will there be behavior problems, suspensions or failure? We can have more anxiety about school than our child. Here are seven suggestions to be proactive in creating a successful school year and a good working relationships with our child's teachers.

1. Make an IEP Cheat Sheet for your child's teacher. It's very difficult for a teacher to remember what's in each child's IEP. Unfortunately it's common for a teacher not to receive their students' IEPs until a few days or weeks after school starts. Some classrooms have a dozen or more children with IEPs. You can help your child's teach follow the IEP by making a short, to the point cheat sheet of what the IEP contains. Example:

Johnny is to have one to one assistance with all work requiring reading.

Johnny is permitted to use his break cards to take a break at any time during the day.

Reading and math require modification.

Other subjects do not.

Johnny is permitted to use a calculator.

2. Provide the teacher with a short description of your child's strengths and needs, and suggestions for helping your child succeed. Example:

Johnny is very talkative and does well with oral presentations and group discussions. He reads two years below grade level. If you put a reading assignment in front of him that he can't do, he is likely to act out. You can avoid that by giving him a different assignment, such a drawing, until the para-pro is ready to read the work out loud to him.

Johnny is very social and wants to have friends but he has a tendency to come on too strong when interacting with peers. He needs reminders to respect the personal space of others. For those reminders it's important to pull him aside or whisper in his ear, because when he feels embarrassed in front of his peers he may respond defiantly.

3. Ask the teacher for a copy of the classroom rules and expectations and go over them with your child several times before the first day of school. If your child has a behavior plan in his IEP, be sure that the teacher is familiar with it and review it with your child before school starts.
4. Establish a system of communication with the school. Before school starts, determine how communication will be handled. It could be daily or weekly, but most parents of children with special needs feel that frequency is important. Discuss with the teacher(s) whether email, notes or phone calls are best for everyone, and what the expectations will be for type and frequency of communication.
5. Establish a positive relationship with the teacher before the stress of the school year starts. Bring a classroom gift when you visit. Have a positive, friendly attitude when you talk. Ask the teacher if you could be of help in getting the classroom ready or volunteering during the first week of school. Send notes thanking the teacher for her effort and dedication the first couple of weeks. Be approachable. Having several positive interactions with the teacher before a problem comes up will help each of you to be more comfortable approaching a more difficult subject when it becomes necessary.
6. Do your part to alleviate anxiety and smooth the transition for your child. Visit the school several times before school starts. Tour the school more than once. Let your child play on the playground. Help your child to get enough sleep, wear comfortable clothing and pack food that she likes at lunch.
7. Be patient and supportive of both your child and the teacher as they get to know each other and get into a routine.

No matter what last year was like, try to be optimistic that you and your child's team can work together this year to support your child. Having a positive attitude will rub off on your child and even the teacher. It's hard to be the parent of a child with special needs, but have faith in yourself as your child's advocate, and start the new school year fully engaged and committed to support the teacher as well as your child.

## Save the Dates!



**10<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Family  
Seminar**

**GO TEAM!**

Developing A Winning Family  
**November 3, 2018**

Working together to make an  
*unconditional commitment*  
to preserve, support and educate  
foster, adoptive and kinship families.

**Lakeview Middle School  
300 S. 28th Street  
Battle Creek, MI**

November is  
National Adoption  
Month!

This is typically  
honored on the Tuesday  
before Thanksgiving  
which is  
November 20<sup>th</sup> this  
year. Take the  
opportunity to make this  
a special day and  
**Celebrate Your Family!**



# Region 6 Meetings, Support groups and Trainings

## **PARC Family Connections Meeting – Flint**

Meets the first Thursday of the month 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Location: South Baptist Church G-4091 Van Slyke Road, Flint, MI 48507 (in back of the church)

Adoptive and guardian families are invited to receive support and build connections with other who share a similar story.

Dinner and child care provided with RSVP (Pizza provided, bring a dish to pass if you are able.) Note: Child care is for children 5 and up.

Contact: [Lugina Srygley@judsoncenter.org](mailto:Lugina_Srygley@judsoncenter.org) or at 810-938-3770 with questions and/or to RSVP

## **Adoptive, Guardian, Kinship and Foster Families- Lapeer**

Meets the second Monday of the month from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: St. Paul Lutheran Church 90 Millville Rd. Lapeer, MI 48446 (meets on the lower level)

Come and connect with families who share a similar experience.

Contact: [Somervickery@judsoncenter.org](mailto:Somervickery@judsoncenter.org) , 810-732-8510.



**Online Calendar:**

[www.parc-judson.org/calendar](http://www.parc-judson.org/calendar)



## Contact Us

Please feel welcome to contact the PARC office in your region, visit our website for information, or connect with us via social media!

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Website: [www.parc-judson.org](http://www.parc-judson.org)  
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