

GRANDPARENTING THE
CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

TAKING CARE OF YOU

EARLY SIGNS OF CONCERN

- Does not regard the face of others
- Lack of eye contact
- Language delay
- Hypersensitive to noise
- Hypersensitive to touch

ROLE ADJUSTMENT

- Care-giving--can be overwhelming
- Economical and medical support
- Education and academic assistance
- Spiritual leadership
- Recreational activities

FEELINGS OF GRANDPARENTS

- Stress
- Depression
- Ambiguity concerning their roles

COPING SUGGESTIONS FOR GRANDPARENTS

- Prioritize
- Don't try to do it all
- Take one challenge at a time
- Take time for yourself
- Seek help
- Let yourself off the hook
- Focus on the positive

SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS

- Visit with a certified financial advisor
- Consider setting up a trust for the child

TAKING CARE OF THE
PARENTS OF A CHILD WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS

THE PARENTS ARE FEELING

- Grief
- Loss
- Fear of the future
- Overwhelmed
- Angry
- Question themselves

LISTEN WHEN PARENTS NEED TO TALK

- Be sensitive to non-verbal messages
- Support the decisions they are making
- Do not give unsolicited advice
- Give a lot of time to listening
- Try to get them to focus on their feelings
- Do not give platitudes or false encouragement

HELPING WITH EDUCATION

- Research programs available in the community.
Give information to the parents without comment.
- Show that you are interested in the child's programs and therapies.
- When needed, attend appointments with a parent; two sets of ears are needed!
- Grandparent must be a strong advocate for this grandchild. This child cannot fight for himself, so we have to do it for him.
- Help with making learning aids for the child.
- Read, read, read to the child. Ask questions of what was read (if child is verbal).

HELPING YOUR GRANDCHILD

- Show your grandchild as often as possible that you love him for the special child he is.
- Stay as involved in his life as you can; it will help you become comfortable with the disability.
- Be your grandchild's best cheerleader!
- Provide activities that all the family can enjoy: picnics, swimming, movies, baking.
- Help your grandchild become independent and self-reliant.

PLAYING WITH YOUR GRANDCHILD

- Become creative and find new ways to engage your grandchild.
- Enter the child's world (read about "floortime" and adapt).
- Teach your grandchild about taking turns (build with blocks, and each time you add a block, then say to the child "Now it's your turn").
- Play games and incorporate pointing ("I SPY").
- Have treasure hunts.
- Make a scrapbook, with your grandchild's help, about an activity he has experienced.
- Bake cookies

YOUR TYPICAL GRANDCHILD NEEDS YOU

- Make one-on-one time with your typical grandchildren.
- Discuss the child with special needs. The typical child may feel more comfortable sharing with you.
- Have books to read together.
- Focus on the abilities of the typical child.
- Be a good listener.
- Allow a full range of emotions, without judging.
- Do NOT compare siblings, even in a positive manner.

FEELINGS EXPERIENCED BY SIBLINGS

- Guilt
- Anger
- Embarrassment
- Over-protectiveness
- Concern about the future

REACTIONS TO DIAGNOSIS

- Shock
- Sadness
- Anger
- Questions
- Ache for our grandchild and for the parents