



Children's Mental Health Advocacy, Training and Support Services

Preparing for Summer Break

As the school year draws to a close, you and your family probably view summer break as a well-deserved reprieve. If your child has learning and/or attention problems, it's important to recognize that the shift from school year to summer break (however welcome) represents a transition phase and may pose special challenges for your child.

Regardless of the summer plans you've made, you may want to ease into summer in a way that addresses your needs as well as your child's. Here are some tips to consider:

Tips to Help Parents:

1. **Review the summer plans you've made to date.** Where there are gaps, brainstorm ways to address them, such as parents rotating days off work to stay home with younger kids on unscheduled days.
2. **Post the family's summer schedule.** Mark activities (day camp, vacations, your teenager's work schedule, etc.) on a "family size" calendar posted in a central location. Be sure to note blocks of unscheduled time as well; that way, you can anticipate free time to use as you wish – even if it's just to enjoy a break in the action.
3. **Be prepared to be spontaneous.** Keep a running list of places and people to visit when time permits and the mood strikes. Summer — free from homework and tutors — is a good time to stop by the science museum, bike trail, or concert-in-the-park you can't seem to get to during the school year.
4. **If you and/or your child thrive on routine, build as much of it in to your summer schedule as possible.** Even so, your routine may change every week or so; find ways to prepare for this transition. This may be as simple as mentally rehearsing the new routine (including daily wake-up time and preparation) with your child before the week begins. Remember: Transitions can be hard for parents, too!
5. **Ask other people** (spouse, family members, and neighbors) **for help** shuttling kids to activities and supervising them on their "days off." Trade carpooling and kid-watching duties with other parents in your neighborhood.
6. **Don't succumb to summer stress!** There is bound to be some bedlam and boredom in any household during the summer. When stress strikes, try to shrug it off and find humor in the situation.

Tips to Help Kids with Learning and/or Attention Problems:

1. **Revamp — but don't eliminate — your child's daily routine.** A daily routine gives most kids with learning or attention problems a sense of structure and security. While certain tasks (like doing homework) can be dropped during the summer, new ones (like packing for daily swim lessons) may be added. For fun, you might loosen up on certain chores during the summer, like designating every Friday as "Don't make the bed" day!
2. **Prepare your child for her scheduled activities.** If possible, visit the locations where she'll be during day camp or day care in advance. Have your child talk to counselors, caregivers, as well as other kids who have enjoyed those same situations and settings.
3. **Have your child contribute to the family calendar.** Together, you can determine key dates (e.g., community pool opens for recreation swim, July Fourth barbeque) and have your child mark these on the calendar.
4. **Involve your child when preparing for family trips and activities.** Depending on her age, she can help you map out driving routes or make a list of the clothing and recreational gear the family will need.
5. **Encourage summertime learning.** Summer outings may present opportunities for your child to learn about history, geography, and nature. Look for "teachable moments" and encourage her to listen, read, take photographs, collect postcards, and keep a journal of her adventures. This type of learning can boost the self-esteem of a child who struggles in school.



Our Mission

Mid-Iowa Family Therapy Clinic, Inc., strives to ensure positive outcomes for families, utilizing the unique resources of the family and their community.

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To contact Mid-Iowa
Family Therapy Clinic,
Inc.

☺ Visit our website at:
www.midiowafamilytherapy.org

☺ Call our toll free number:
1-800-649-5423

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Family Guide to Systems of Care for Children with Mental Health Needs

The following is a guide for families to help navigate the “*system*” with their child. Last quarter we explored finding services and the initial intake. This quarter we will cover how to partner with your service providers.

Partnering With Service Providers

You are the customer and the client. Tell your *service planning team* and service providers what services and supports you need. Be clear about your family’s *strengths*, your needs, and what you think will help your child and family the most.

What you need to know

You and your *system of care service planning team* will work together to write a *service plan* specifically designed for your child and family, including:

- Goals to achieve;
- Services and supports provided as close to home as possible;
- Services and supports that match your family’s lifestyle and culture; and
- Regular progress reports and an ongoing communication plan for the service providing team.

A *service coordinator* or *case manager* can help organize services so they are easy for you to use, and can help provide your family with guidance and support. In some *systems of care*, you can be your family’s *service coordinator*.

All providers may not agree or recommend the same services and supports for you and your family. You can disagree with a provider, get a second opinion, or reject a service provider’s advice.

Providers and services that are considerate and respectful of your family’s language, spiritual beliefs, and cultural values must be accessible to you.

What to ask

- How will the services and supports in the plan help my child and family?
- What are the service provider’s qualifications? Does he or she have special training and a track record of working with children and families like mine?
- Can I call service providers at any time of the day or night if there is a crisis?
- How do I change services or providers if things aren’t working out as planned?

What you can expect

- You have the opportunity to speak up, be listened to with respect, and not be judged.
- Most service providers will talk to you and your child in a clear, courteous, respectful, and sensitive manner in the language you use at home. Ask for an interpreter if you need one—do not let your children translate for you.
- Service providers who work with your child may have a different view of your child and family from yours. Carefully consider the evidence for what they are saying before reacting. Most service providers are just as eager to see progress as you are.
- Insist that service providers meet when and where your child and family feel comfortable.
- Service providers may ask for your feedback and suggestions. Be honest when you reply.
- Most service providers will help you advocate for the services and supports that will help your child and family achieve goals that you set.
- You may be asked to sign something that says you agree to the *service plan* and are accepting the services offered. You can refuse to sign if you do not agree with the plan. Ask for a copy of the *service plan* if it is not given to you.

What you can do

Pick your *service planning team* members carefully, and be an active participant on the team. Choose people who:

- Respect and trust you;
- Know your child and family and have been supportive;
- Have a track record of success managing the kinds of problems you are facing; and
- Know about services in the community.

Share the future you envision for your child and explain how others can help achieve it.

Let service providers know your child’s and family’s *strengths*, needs, wants, and expectations, and tell them about your family’s preferences and priorities. You could talk with someone you trust before the meeting so you are confident about what you say.

Write down short- and long-term goals for your child and family, and watch for progress toward these goals.

Tell your *service coordinator* or *case manager* as soon as you realize that some part of the plan isn’t working as you expected. Get your *service planning team* together again to make changes.

Rights and Responsibilities

In a *system of care*, your child and family have specific rights and responsibilities. Other families, as well as advocates and providers, can tell you about these and can help you understand how and when to use them. Become a strong advocate for your child and family. Exercise your rights.

Be clear about your family’s strengths, your needs, and what you think will help your child and family the most.

Family Guide to Systems of Care for Children with Mental Health Needs, Cont.

What you need to know

- Discrimination in the provision of services on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, or disability is illegal.
- If your child is being evaluated for special education, you have special rights and responsibilities. Ask the school to tell you about them and get a copy of them in writing.
- You can choose service providers who respect and value your language, culture, and spiritual beliefs.
- Services and supports need to be provided in your community, so your child and family can be involved with others from your neighborhood.
- You can refuse any service offered to you without being penalized. Get help from family advocates if you are penalized for making a legitimate complaint or refusing services that you believe could harm your child or family.
- Responsible providers will notify you before they change or stop providing any service. Ask for a written notice and explanation of the change if you are not given one.

What to ask

- How do I review and get copies of my child's and family's records?
- How is my child's and family's privacy protected, and who has access to confidential records?
- How do I get help exercising my rights—especially if I want to file a complaint?

Expect to be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect.

What you can expect

- Schools and agencies will give you a guide that explains all of your rights. The guide should be in the language you understand best, or a professional or advocate who speaks your language can interpret and explain it to you.
- You will be told details of what confidential information will be disclosed to others and under what circumstances. Make sure you review information before giving permission for anything to be released to another school, provider, or agency.
- You can exercise any and all of your rights without punishment in any form. If you experience otherwise, seek help from an organized advocacy group or family-run organization.
- Expect to be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect.

What you can do

- Get to know and understand your rights and all the terms or conditions that apply to the services your child and family are using.
- Read everything carefully. Be sure that you understand and really do agree with anything that you are given before you sign it.
- Remember that although you may be under a great deal of stress, you are your child's best advocate. Clearly, you should listen to the advice of others on your *service planning team* who know something about your child's needs. Ultimately, you must decide what help is needed, where you want to go for it, and when and how often you need to have a service.
- Take control of the flow of information about your child and family. Carefully consider what reports go to which person, agency, school, and so forth. Think about this before you sign permission for information to be collected or given out.
- Resolve disputes promptly. If you disagree with a decision, speak first to the person most immediately involved. If that doesn't solve the problem, speak to your *service coordinator* or the provider's supervisor before you file a complaint.
- Request help from advocates who know the rules, understand the *system of care*, and have experience with the providers who are working with you and your family.

This information was obtained through SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center. To gain more information on Child and Adolescent Mental Health you can visit their website at: www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov

Announcing a new website promoting Early Childhood resources to parents, families and caregivers.

www.parents.earlychildhoodiowa.org

This website provides information in the following categories: parenting, health and safety, child development, child care, preschool, healthy teeth, healthy eating and physical activity, community resources, 211 information and referral, learning to read and write, pregnancy, financial help and help me now.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

PARENT ADVOCACY TRAINING

Mid-Iowa Family Therapy Clinic, Inc. is providing Parent Advocacy Trainings for parents of children with mental health issues and those working with these children and their families. The focus of this training will be to prepare parents to advocate effectively in a variety of situations related to their child's mental illness. The trainings will be provided free of charge. Trainings will be held in **Ames** on April 21st and in **Mt. Pleasant** on May 26th.

For more information contact: Heather Pickart by phone: 319-390-5500 or 1-800-649-5423 or by email: heatherpickart@mifc.com

“The Explosive Child” Conference
Presented by Dr. Ross Greene
June 12, 2006
Sheraton Hotel of West Des Moines, Iowa

Based on his New Book
Treating Explosive Kids
The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach

What This Conference Will Address:

- * Children Do Well if They Can
- * Your Explanation Guides Your Intervention
- * Limits of Conventional Reward and Punishment Approaches
- * Pathways to Explosive/Noncompliant Behavior
- * Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS): Overview of General Model
- * Collaborative Problem Solving: Overview of Plan B
- * Skills Training Using Plan B
- * Implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving in Systems
- * CPS in Therapeutic/Restrictive Settings

For more information contact:

Iowa Federation of Families For Children's Mental Health
Phone 319-462-2187 or 1-888-400-6302
Email Help@iffcmh.org

2nd Annual Children’s Mental Health Conference
Responding vs. Reacting to Your Kids: Key Principles and
Techniques for Effective Parenting

Presented by **Charlie Applestein, MSW**
June 30, 2006
Des Moines Botanical Center

This Conference Will Address:

- Managing number one, first (i.e. coping strategies that help parents stay calm under pressure)
- Understanding the relationship between lack of support and punitive actions, and what to do when support is insufficient
- The importance of understanding developmental stages
- Appreciating the uniqueness of every child from a variety of perspectives
- Tips to prevent problem behavior in the home
- Building self-esteem in children and youth
- Techniques to control tone and affect
- Communication principles and strategies
- How, why, and when to issue consequences
- When and how to use incentives to motivate behavior
- Helping children and youth to self-manage their behavior

****This training is provided free of charge to all participants!!**

For more information contact: Heather Pickart
by phone: 319-390-5500 or 1-800-649-5423 or
by email: heatherpickart@mifc.com

Mid-Iowa Family Therapy Clinic, Inc. offers advocacy, training, and support services to families of children with mental illness.

Services include:

State-wide informational system. This system includes:

Toll-free telephone number: 1-800-649-5423 is staffed 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Calls received after business hours will be routed to a voice mail system. Messages will be retrieved by 9am Monday morning. An emergency pager is available in the case of an emergency.

Website: www.midiowafamilytherapy.org includes information about Children’s Mental Health needs from state and national resources. It also provides information on how to access resources and services. The website also provides information to providers on how to recruit, support, and promote the active participation of parents in the mental health care of children.

Parent Advocacy: It is Mid-Iowa Family Therapy’s belief that parent to parent affiliation is a key in promoting family empowerment and advocacy. Mid-Iowa Family Therapy trains family members who have a child with mental health issues to act as parent advocates for other families having a child with similar needs.

Parent Advisory Council: Another key feature in promoting advocacy is through a Parent Advisory Council. The major tasks of the Council will be to identify areas for improvement relating to advocacy, support, and training for children and their families having mental health concerns.

Case advocacy/support services: will be provided to families requesting assistance. Case advocacy/support services may be delivered via telephone conferencing, attendance at decision-making forums, requesting information through the website or by calling the toll free number, etc.

Training and Consultation: Mid-Iowa Family Therapy will provide requested in-service training and/or consultation to schools, Area Education Agencies, other educational staff, parent groups, community mental health centers, and other mental health professionals throughout the state.