

NATHHAN / CHASK

**CHASK - Christian Homes And Special Kids
NATHHAN - National Challenged Homeschoolers**

Fall / Winter -06 /07

Volume 14 No. 2



Christopher Weaver, age 9

“Mommy, Can I Worship Jesus Too?”

Homeschooling Using Assistive Technology

Preschool Resources for the Moderately Disabled

Children and Chores...

Articles, letters, and reviews printed in the NATHHAN NEWS are not to be taken as legal or medical advice. Please seek the services of a qualified source.

Also please note: What you read and the resources you find through NATHHAN may not line up with your Christian convictions. Some of the resources we share with you may not be necessarily from a home-schooling perspective. We simply point you, with your shovel, and hope you will dig! Please pick and choose carefully.



Goal and Purpose of NATHHAN

To encourage homeschooling families with special needs children in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. To find Christian homes for children with special needs.

NEW ADDRESS!

NATHHAN / CHASK

National Challenged Homeschoolers
Christian Homes And Special Kids

P.O. Box 310

Moyie Springs, ID
83845

(208) 267- 6246

NATHANEWS@aol.com

www.NATHHAN.org

www.chask.org

Front Cover

Christopher Weaver, at 9 years old. Read about his life today at age 24! In this picture he wears a shirt with the logo "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14. Chris was born with Down syndrome and a slew of other abnormalities, but his parents love him dearly exactly the way that he is. Read more on page 11.

Letter From the Editor:

We had a beautiful Indian summer after a few hard cold frosts. Even though frost was thick in the morning, by afternoon, you'd never guess by the gorgeous sunshine and clear skies. Yet....that nip was in the air that encouraged us to hurry and get our firewood room filled to the brim, plant our Fall garlic, and winterize our vehicles.

Our garden was a great success this year. A few mishaps occurred, but due to innocent error. At our local farmer's market, we purchased some lovely looking cabbage plants this spring. We planted them and weeded faithfully. We talked about the coleslaw we were going to make, the sauerkraut and apple cabbage salad with sunflower seeds. Long about middle of summer, we noticed that our cabbage plants were sprouting little heads along the bottom of the stem and the plant kept growing taller and taller. To our dismay, we realized that we had been tricked! It wasn't cabbage at all, but brusselsprouts! Not our family favorite.

Our corn was planted late, but due to the Indian summer, we had corn after all. Thankfully we put the garden to rest after planting the garlic, as we are all usually a little burned out on the garden thing by September.

We purchased a little collie puppy this year. She is really cute and at 6 months now, she is beginning obedience training and doing fantastic. We also got a German Shepherd for taking walks in the woods. Grandpa and Grandma purchased a farm about 1 / 2 mile away through the underbrush and a couple of fields. Now we can go visit Grandpa's and feel relatively safe from crafty cows, and 2 legged creatures that might be curious too. Thankfully she already heels nicely and was at least started in obedience training. The only draw back is that she is kennel shy. She is bonding with us, Sherry in particular, and is making good progress.

Jacob, 23, is very busy with his computer consulting business and helping here in the office.

Josh, 21 years old, poured cement all summer and fall with a man in our church. He really likes the hard work and got REALLY strong this summer.

Jordan, our 18 year old son with Down syndrome, was our faithful, one-man, clean up crew. He really made a difference in getting the job done to completion. Milking the goats is still his favorite job.

Sheela, 17, is still in Virginia at Faith Mission Home. We miss her very much but are thankful for this opportunity for her.

Zack, 15, works for a man putting up metal carports. Another man from our church owns Protector Exteriors. This company makes and sells the carports and Zack helps the contractor install them.

Lynny, 14 with cerebral palsy and autism, is now doing all of her self-care (except for braiding her hair). She can even get her own breakfast and lunch. Yeah!

Zeph, is 13. He loves math and is good at it. He is now Sherry's oldest helper at home, because all the other guys are gone to work all day. He actually likes this, as he gets to drive the truck around the place and be the older "in charge" guy.

Sheraya, 11, is in 6th grade. She is my helper-in-the-house. She does a terrific job at watching ShaHannah. Her favorite pastimes are sewing with mommy, reading, making greeting cards, and decorating. (Anything).

Mercy Grace is 9 and in 3rd grade. She is our happy servant-at-heart. Truly living up to her name, she is full of mercy. She loves to set tables for special meals, make cards along with her sister, and play with her glass dolls.

Jayben is 5 and a replica of his Daddy in personality. This has its draw backs and its wonderful aspects. Opinionated, kind-hearted, ready to be in-charge, expert at motivating others, smart in math, and rough-n-tumble. That is our Jayben. That is our Daddy, too.

ShaHannah is 2. Our baby is now very verbal and sweetly able to wend her way onto my lap at any hour of the day. She loves her mommy's attention and would have kept on nursing if it hadn't run out due to a miscarriage

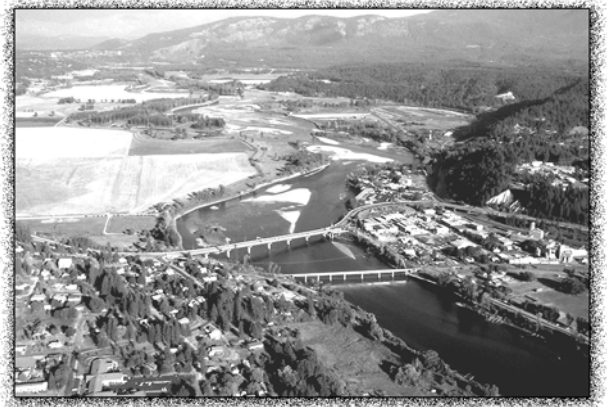
and heavy hemorrhage that mommy had in late August.

We are almost finished with our 2nd office building. Setting up our main office closer to the house will enable us to meet the simultaneous needs of the family and the office. Especially for Sherry.

We grew out of our mobile office . We have kept the NATHHAN Library and NATHHAN Family Directory head quarters there.

We now have living quarters for 2 volunteer persons to help out with the office and main house work load. This is a new NATHHAN program and we feel that this might be a terrific way to get to know some of you, too. So if you are a woman, over age 18, looking for a couple months of volunteer type ministry, we welcome you to send in an application. Call us or e-mail to get the password to see our NATHHAN Help site.

North Idaho Adventure



Bonner's Ferry, Idaho

Now Available!

Unique volunteer opportunity for young women, 18 years or over, with a heart for the disabled and pre-born with special needs. Help us minister to families dealing with disability. These are supportive roles for NATHHAN and CHASK.

There are 2 volunteer openings for the months of Term 1: January, February and March 2007, and Term 2: April, May and June 2007, then Term 3: July, Aug, September 2007 and Term 4: October, November, December 2007.

Warmly welcoming you, Kootenai Valley Mennonite church, in support of NATHHAN /

CHASK, wants to include you in their regular sponsored youth activities, chorus, home Bible study nights and gym for volleyball. Enjoy the Northern Idaho winter setting. If you like snow, this is it! Opportunities for fun evenings by the crackling fire, sledding, ice skating, skiing and snow boarding are abundant.

We are paying \$200.00 per week and provide warm, cozy, housing, all utilities and food (lunch and dinner provided in main house Mon-Thurs if desired). Also the use of a sturdy, winter-worthy vehicle and a cell phone will enable the volunteers to have some freedom to and from church and activities. The NATHHAN /CHASK office is only 4 minutes to church!

Living quarters: private rooms with bathroom, shared kitchen in our single wide mobile home office just 300 feet from the main house. This building also houses the NATHHAN Lending Library and Family Directory areas of NATHHAN.

Job # 1

Household help for the Bushnells: Main house and office maintenance (both offices), teaching household skills, making menus, shopping, and overseeing self-help for Lynny. This position would best be described as general support for Sherry, where ever she needs help the most, for that day. This person needs to have a heart for helping in the home.

Job # 2

Office assistant: Processing orders, answering phones, data base work, web page updates, curriculum production and assembly. This job includes some typing and computer work, so computer keyboard skills are necessary. We are looking for someone who has a good phone voice with compassion and understanding, along with the ability to take good notes and find answers.



We may also be able to help with air flight to Spokane, WA and will provide pick up from the airport. (It is a 2 1/2 hour drive from Spokane International Airport to Bonner's Ferry, ID.)

For more information or questions, or if you know of anyone interested in these positions, please have them call the NATHHAN / CHASK office at 208-267-6246 or e-mail chaskinfo@aol.com

Our family is thankful for the mercy of God in our daily lives. The moments we have to share together are sweet and we really look forward to weekends. His grace is

sufficient for all of us and it is a wonder to us how it all gets done! Sherry is scheduled to the hilt and it's a good thing she likes that way of operating.

CHASK has been continuing to locate birth parents with babies needing a Christian home. There are so many special stories to tell. Each one of these stories has a tragic side to it, and a very happy ending side, too. Some of the babies do not make it past a few hours or days. Yet into the arms of Jesus they fly, nestled in the arms of a loving mommy seeing them home. There are plenty of tears and sorrow for the earthly life that is gone. Yet there remains a positive assurance that God's timing is perfect. His will is being accomplished in our lives and the life of the babies He calls home.

Other special needs babies are growing like little precious bean spouts! They are flourishing under the constant loving care of a family. It really thrills us to see pictures of the children CHASK has had a hand in bringing home to a family.

We had the wonderful opportunity to

visit with the Appel family in Washington state. Chris and Lori's little Elijah was born with Down syndrome and a heart defect. His birth announcement is on the first page of Letters From Families in this issue (page 43).

Holding him brought back so many memories for Sherry. His little body felt so much like our little Tally's (now in heaven). She also had Down syndrome and a heart defect. Tender sweet her memory... She would have been 19 years old this year. It is amazing that just holding Elijah would flood our hearts with longing for Tally after so many years.

As far as the NATHHAN /CHASK office goes, we are in the process of growing pains once again. In addition to moving the main part of our office operations, publications and order processing department into the bigger office space, we are defining our office jobs and tasks a little better. This is to help those who will be sharing our work load, making training easier and less hassle for our volunteers.

We need funding for:

- * A good sturdy car with snow tires for office and volunteer use. (Ladies and break-downs don't mix too well in the snow and ice.)

- * We'd like some help getting the rooms ready for the NATHHAN /CHASK volunteers. If you are interested in seeing the list of items we need, please contact us and we will mail you one right away, or go to www.nathhan.com. Click on volunteer introductions on NATHHAN's main page.

The NATHHAN NEWS is printed and the CHASK brochures are printed, thanks to all of you. Now we need to redo the NATHHAN homeschooling brochure and the Straight Talk brochure. We will print about 5,000 of each.

For our annual Christmas fund-raising letter this year, we are asking for help with our new integrated computer system for the office.

This will enable our volunteers to be more productive and for NATHHAN and CHASK to handle a LOT of inquires at once on our web site. We want to be able to handle over 500 inquires a day if we ever need to. We don't want a single family that needs help to fall through the cracks. This is going to take some setting up.

We are ever grateful for how the Lord uses all of you to meet **every** need and project that NATHHAN / CHASK has presented. The Lord knows how much we treasure and rely on your consistent sharing of finances to keep us working at encouraging homeschoolers (especially now all of those we worked so hard to convince to keep their babies and are now needing support).

Thanks to you, we are finding birth parents **and** helping Christians who have adopted children and are facing disruption. There are families right now, in difficult

situations, needing to re-home children they had hoped to love and care for. None of this is ever easy for a family. Your compassion is fantastic. You, NATHHAN and CHASK families, speak volumes to the world about the love of Christ by putting your love (His Love) into action.

It is because of you that this magazine gives birth parents who are facing disability for the first time courage to raise their child with joy. They can see that you are doing a good job nurturing your special needs child (along with challenges, of course) and that the Lord is blessing the outcome.

If you have a suggestion for the next magazine, we want to hear it. How can the NATHHAN NEWS best meet your needs? Each NEWS is on the web, so anyone can access it for encouragement after the print copy is out.

May the Lord bless your home as you strive daily to make each day a productive one for Christ. Love in Christ,

The Bushnell Family



Jayben Bushnell

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History and Information About NATHHAN

NATHHAN began with a telephone call from one mother of a child with Down syndrome to another mother homeschooling her son with Down syndrome in the early spring of 1990. Acting on the Lord's prompting to begin a network of parents helping one another, Diane Macbeth in PA wrote Kathy Salars in Texas on March 17th, 1990, thus announcing the birth of NATHHAN.

In the fall of 1992, with NATHHAN's exponential growth from 2 to over 600 families, it became impossible for these moms to keep up. Tom and Sherry Bushnell offered their assistance and NATHHAN's main office was moved to Olalla, WA. The NATHHAN/CHASK office now operates in Moyie Springs, Idaho.

A board meets periodically to make decisions. Its officers are Jim and Jerri Unruh in Bonner's Ferry, ID; Ralph and Debbie Pool, Cheney, WA; John and Diane Ryckman, Creston, BC; Andy and Linda Dillon, Camano Island, WA; and Tom and Sherry Bushnell. Financial Advisory: Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Moyie Springs, ID; William Byler and Dayton Skrivseth, Bonners Ferry, ID; James and Dana McKenzie, Battleground, WA.

In the Fall of 2002, as an outgrowth of NATHHAN, CHASK was born. CHASK, Christian Homes And Special Kids, matches special kids with families for free, no agency fees or referral costs.

NATHHAN / CHASK's web page and magazine strive to equip and encourage parents with special needs children, assisting them in finding the will of God for their lives.

NATHHAN 's Ministry

National Challenged Homeschoolers

NATHHAN NEWS - This magazine, printed twice a year, includes resources, articles from parents and professionals, and lots of letters from families, plus much more.

NATHHAN WEB PAGE www.nathhan.org

Updated quarterly. A full service web page with all the features of the print style NATHHAN NEWS plus a discussion board and on-line applications for the lending library and family directory. A password is needed to access the NATHHAN membership portion. Hundreds of articles from the last 14 years of NATHHAN are included.

FAMILY DIRECTORY - Although some of us will never meet this side of heaven, we can still encourage and share a bit of our lives with each other. The directory is on-line, password protected, updated once a year and is available to members willing to be in the directory.

LENDING LIBRARY - The library is operated through the mail for NATHHAN members. Members donate postage to and from library when they use it. The NATHHAN Lending Library Catalog can be reviewed on the web site www.nathhan.org
Book donations are gladly accepted.

**All this for only \$25.00 / year.
Unbelievable!**

CHASK's Ministry

Christian Homes And Special Kids

Parents can raise their disabled child with joy and competence. Christ is the answer to making it through any crisis.

Our goal is to *match* every special needs child that God brings to us who needs a home, before-born or already born, with a Christian family. No agency fees.

**www.chask.org
chaskinfo@aol.com**

Gift Memberships

Gift memberships are available for folks facing financial difficulty. A NATHHAN/ CHASK gift membership entitles the family to NATHHAN/ CHASK's internet services. NATHHAN/CHASK's gift program is funded solely by other homes sharing out of their concern and abundance, giving so other Christian brothers and sisters can receive the encouragement they need. We want you to get the support you need. If your home cannot afford the \$25.00, don't hesitate to send us what you can afford and request a gift membership.

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If phonics doesn't click, try **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit**

Designed to assist you in teaching sight reading skills, **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit** consists of a book called **My Farm Animal Book**, a double set of flashcards, and an instruction booklet on how to teach sight reading.



My Farm Animal Book Features

- ⇒ 10 well known farm animals.
- ⇒ Large (8 ½" by 11"), uncluttered pages.
- ⇒ One simple animal photograph per page with large, easy to read print.
- ⇒ Total reading vocabulary of 57 words. 4 new words per page.
- ⇒ Repetition and review of words incorporated into text.

Farm Animal Words Reading Kit has been developed by Diane Ryckman, and has been thoroughly tested on her son Andrew, who just happens to have Down syndrome.

For more information visit www.kootenay.com/~ryckman/DownHomeLearning.html

E-mail: ryckman@kootenay.com

Phone: (250) 428-7798

John and Diane Ryckman
1453 Evans Rd. RR7
Creston, B.C.
V0B-1G7

\$25.00 Canadian or equivalent US funds



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**HOME SCHOOL
LEGAL DEFENSE
ASSOCIATION**
Advocates for Family & Freedom

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Special Needs Support Groups

Deaf Ministries List

Earl and Shirley Wilbers
221 W. Gay St.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
E-mail: EEARL2@aol.com
Website: Deaf Ministries List
<http://members.aol.com/deaflist/web.html>

Especially Yours - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs. All are welcome.
Call Patricia Rendoff.
(303) 937-3428 or atprdiggie@juno.com

Shepherd Boy - Strategies for Autism

4241 Faye Drive
Olive Branch, MS 38654
www.shepherdboy.org
Hands-on, practical ideas for working with individuals with autism and related disabilities.

HOPES - Homeschooling Our Precious Exceptional Students. We meet on the first Thursday night of each month. For more information contact Jim and Mary Rees, Traveler's Rest, SC Phone: (864) 834-0264

Bethel Baptist Academy

P.O. Box 10035
Fullerton, CA 92838
Norm and Sharon Wallace (714) 527-5807 or Matthew and Julia Hoch (714) 990-0199. We help Moms write their IEPs through our workshops. Our resource specialist is Marian Soderholm. She can be found at (562) 425-7886 or e-mail at mercedchristian@yahoo.com

AVCS Books

Sharon Hensley, MA
6291 Vegas Drive
San Jose, CA 9512
408-997-0290
www.almadenvalleychristianschool.com

H.A.N.D.S. ON!

Support group for special needs homeschoolers in PA
Newsletter: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa/
Online forum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson/>

S.N.A.C.K.S. of Delaware

(Special Needs and Christian Kids)
Helping families and churches to minister to their special needs children. Serving the greater Delaware Valley and Tri-State region.
Contact: Tita Wyatt
Email: tewjr@flash.net

Christian Cottage School

(303) 688-6626 Sedalia, Colorado
Mike and Terry Spray founded CCS for diagnostic testing and prescribing curriculum.

Special Children Special Blessings

Jim and Debbie Mills
8266 Leucadia Ave. San Diego, CA 92114
(619) 469-5822

Specially Gifted c/o the Pegrams

7217 South Drive Richmond, VA 23225-1622
(804) 323-1786
StrengthuntoStrength@juno.com A support group for families homeschooling special needs children. Part of a Christian family-based ministry operated by Dave and Deb Pegram. Also operate a private Christian "umbrella" school that provides transcripts, IEP's, testing and evaluative services.

PRAISE

Parents Reaching Academically in Special Education
A homeschool support group for parents homeschooling special needs children.
947 Park SW Grand Rapids, MI 49504
(616) 451-3620
Contact Shannon Bloemendaal Email: sbloemen@aol.com

Parents Instructing Challenged Children (PICC)

Allen and Barb Mulvey
700 W Liberty St.
Rome, NY 13440 315-339-5524
picc@twcny.rr.com
PICC has a lending library and publishes an annual directory of families homeschooling special needs children.

O.U.C.H. Ohio's Uniquely Challenged Homeschoolers

(formerly C.H.O.S.E.N. Christian Homeschool Special Educational Needs)
Renee Silvaroli—Support Group Coordinator & Workshop Speaker. Meets at Silvaroli's home.
Phone: (440) 944-4782
Email: RCHOSEN@visn.net
Please RSVP.
"Ohio Special Needs Resource Packet" available (at cost of \$10.00 plus \$2.50 postage/handling); State Newsletter \$5.00 (5 issues); workshops and special needs consultation available (\$1.00 for sample newsletter).

Braille Sharing Library/ Lydia Schuck

1981 Eden Rd.
Mason, MI 48854 (517) 676-4621
laschuck@juno.com
We have a list of braille to share. Braille can be sent to me. Please label what is in the box and contact me by phone or e-mail before it is sent.

Down Home Learning

Does your child have Down Syndrome? Need someone to talk to? Have some ideas to share? Contact: Diane Ryckman
1453 Evans Rd. RR 7
Creston, B.C. V0B 1G7 CANADA (250)-428-7798
Email: ryckman@kootenay.com

Special Needs Support Groups (continued)

Rock of Refuge

Resources & support for families coping with Special Needs. Offers caring encouragement for parents/caregivers of those with special needs. Meets 1st Monday each month 7pm-8:30, just north of Tampa, Florida.

Victorious Life Church
6224 Old Pasco Rd.
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544
813-973-2230 church office

Contact : Sheri Nelson 813-996-3366 home
E-Mail: RockofRefuge@aol.com

Carrying To Term Resources

American Association of Pro Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists. www.aaplog.org

AAPLOG National Office Contact Info:
Phone: (616) 546-2639.
Email: info@aaplog.org

Be Not Afraid

www.Benotafraid.net

An online outreach to parents who have received a difficult prenatal diagnosis. The family stories, articles, and links within this site are presented as a resource for those who may have been asked to choose between terminating a pregnancy or continuing on despite the diagnosis.

The benotafraid.net families have faced the same decision and chosen not to terminate.

Waiting With Love site

<http://www.erichad.com/wwl/>

The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation

“Safe Haven for Newborns”

www.asafehavenfornewborns.com
1-877-767-BABY (2229)

Post Abortion Resources

Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats
1-877-HOPE-4-ME (1-877-467-3463)
www.RachelsVineyard.org

Healing Hearts Ministries
(on-line counseling)
www.HealingHearts.org
1-888-792-8282

Ramah International
www.RamahInternational.org

Save One, www.SaveOne.org
1-866-329-3571

Christopher Weaver Front Cover Story



Christopher Weaver, age 24

Wonderfully Made By Maria Weaver

My husband and I sat shocked in silence as the young doctor tersely related the bleak outcome for the child we were expecting. He showed us black and white photos of people with Down Syndrome in state institutions. He announced that our baby would be a vegetable, unable to walk or talk, that he would ruin my

Continued next page

husband's Air Force career, and destroy the quality of life for us and our other children. Then he smiled and related his plan to help us. Since it was too late for a legal abortion in Texas, the medical staff had made arrangements to fly me to a military hospital in another state where our problem could be resolved.

Then it was the young doctor's turn to be shocked. My husband informed him in no uncertain terms that we were keeping our baby and now wanted information from him on how to best help this helpless child. The young doctor glumly mentioned a school in our city called Brighton School.

We contacted Brighton School, a school started by parents of children with Down Syndrome. We visited the school and spoke to the dedicated, enthusiastic staff. What an incredible blessing. Most of the parents were involved on a daily basis with the teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and other medical consultants. There was even a prayer leader, a Mom who led other parents in a weekly prayer for the children, the staff and the school. We started a Parent/Teacher/Friend Organization, and invited experts and specialists to speak at our meetings and educate us on the best ways to train our children. Our non-handicapped children served as babysitters during our night meetings and were very involved in the hands-on training of their vulnerable siblings. Our lives were all changed for the better.

Every time we were re-assigned to a new military base, we sought out the best schools for our sweet baby Christopher, and continued to teach him and train him, and to increase our knowledge. We began to use home-schooling materials to enhance his education wherever we were. Christopher, in turn, surpassed our expectations and surprised us with his godly love. He learned to walk and to talk, to read and to reach out to others.

On June 1, 2004, Christopher graduated from Reagan High School in San Antonio, Texas. He was accepted into the Young Adult program at the ARC, the Association for Retarded Citizens. Christopher attends the program daily, involved in community-based outings, life learning skills, arts and crafts, social events like talent shows and dances, and sometimes in work-related activities in which he earns a small paycheck.

Our family suffered a heartbreak last year, 9/21/05, when husband and Dad, Jim, was fatally injured in an aircraft accident. But God had already placed us in a wonderful extended family, a caring neighborhood, and loving church. We were, and still are, greatly supported and uplifted in their love and care.

Today, Christopher and his mom live in San Antonio with two saintly old dogs, Lady Sam and Daisy. They attend St. Thomas Episcopal Church and work out several times a week at a nearby fitness club. They take small trips to nearby cities for recreational and educational purposes. Christopher also sings with a choir of disabled adults called the San Antonio Songsters and participates in social activities, with his friends informally and with a group called FADS, Fun for Adults with Down Syndrome. He also attends a bi-monthly class of Bible stories and craft-related activities appropriately called, "Jesus Cares"!

Christopher indeed has been
 "...fearfully and wonderfully made..."
 (Psalm 139:14)
 and we praise God for His
 marvelous works.



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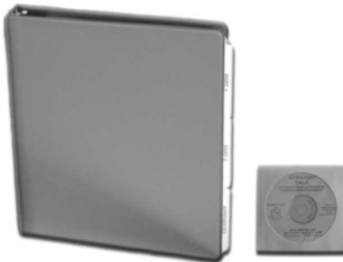
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CHASK—Christian Homes And Special Kids

CHASK's Goal: Giving birth parents hope in the midst of emotional turmoil. Respecting every baby that is living, inside or outside the womb.

We believe that the Lord has a special relationship with every human being. This includes babies not yet born. Jeremiah 1:5 says "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you."

How should we then look at the murder of special needs children before they are born? The taking of life for the sake of convenience or fear is one of the biggest shames in America today. How can we on one hand insist on wheel chair ramps, large print, special equipment for the hearing impaired, and then wink our eyes at pregnancy interruption, or counsel a birth mom facing life with a special needs child to "get rid of the pregnancy" and try again?

I think Satan would like to woo us into slumber land. "It doesn't matter." "Why bother with getting into someone else's affairs?" "You are busy enough." "You might get them upset talking about it."

When parents are given the news that their baby has a genetic or medical condition, often they are strongly encouraged to terminate the pregnancy, or have an "early birth".

Yet, when given the hope of life for their precious baby, many parents lift thankful eyes. You can see a glimmer of optimism. Before this spark is completely smashed by Satan, speak up! Reassure them if they cannot raise their baby with special needs, that there are parents just waiting to adopt. Reassure them there are Christian families that have already walked down this

path and are wanting to share this load with them, should they decide to keep their baby. Death does not have to rule.

Some genetic or medical conditions are almost always fatal at birth or shortly after. Some are not always so, such as Down syndrome or spina bifida. Just consider the emotional upheaval a birth family must go through with



Welcome Elijah Appel !

the knowledge that they have killed their baby with special needs for their personal, emotional or physical comfort. Granted, going through the birth of a child who will probably die is always horrifically sad. Yet those who have chosen to let the Lord determine when life on earth ends testify that they would never do it another way. They say that even the short time they had to hold and love their baby was worth the emotional, physical and monetary expense. "Our baby's life, so quickly dissolving into the arms of Jesus, meant more to us than almost any other thing we have experienced," shared one daddy and mommy who

watched their little one fade after only a little while here on earth.

“Just knowing that I was letting the Lord have His way with my baby’s life meant so much in the healing process.”

“Yes, Jesus could have chosen to heal my baby. He did not. Now I have a special baby in heaven just waiting for me.”

Not only is this special baby waiting for her mama, but with a clear conscience this mama is just waiting for the day she will tenderly hold her baby, too!

How would you like to face the idea of “terminating” your baby’s life and facing them on the other side? Many parents choose not to think about the other side (heaven) just for this very reason. Their baby will be there wanting to know “Why, Mama?”

As you can see, abortion is not just a thing someone does to eliminate hardship or sorrow in their lives. It means that the very road to heaven may be blocked or much harder to traverse. Overcoming the thoughts of a done abortion and what it really means to a new Christian (or someone on the edge between heaven and hell), can be very overwhelming. How very sad. Abortion is so much more than just a choice. It is as if Satan trickily tries to steal the Heavenly hope of millions of women, by convincing them that a pregnancy is just a medical condition to be treated or “fixed” instead of what it really is... life created by God.

Book Review

Here is a helpful review by Janet Bender, of Bonner’s Ferry, Idaho. It is a special book you might want to have on hand as an insight in ministering to birth parents considering abortion. It is called:

You Are Not Alone - The Voices Of Abortion

By Peggy Kirk, M.A.

My name is Janet. I have read “You Are Not Alone” by Peggy Kirk. This is a well written book that I recommend to women or young girls who are considering having an abortion. Peggy has recorded testimonies of many women and girls

who have had abortions. There are many things the doctors do not tell you. Yes, it does hurt! Yes, you will more than likely go through post-abortion trauma! No, it is not just a blob of tissue! Yes, your risk of getting breast cancer is sharply increased after having an abortion! Yes, nearly 10% of women that have an abortion will need a blood transfusion!

“You Are Not Alone” shares stories of girls who had a choice... their boyfriend/husband or their baby. Most chose to abort their baby. In doing so they often developed

an intense dislike for their boyfriend/husband. In some of the testimonies the marriages ended in a divorce or were very badly shaken. Nearly every girl ended up not only with the loss of her precious baby and the consequences of having an abortion, but also with heartbreak, for seldom in these testimonies did their boyfriends stay with them.

Yours can be a success story. Yes, you may have made one mistake in getting pregnant, but you don’t need to make two choices that will so totally affect

your life. You may not be able to raise your little one, but there are so many homes that long for a little one and are waiting anxiously to open their home to your baby.

In this book you will find names and numbers of many people and organizations who are waiting for special girls like you to come and share your load with them. This need not be a hated time in your life. There are also names and numbers of organizations that are there just for those who have already had an abortion and are going through post-abortion trauma. They are there and waiting for you!

In closing there are a few things that I would strongly encourage you to find out if you are truly considering an abortion.

#1. Ask your doctor to let you see your ultrasound. LOOK and see for yourself if it is “just



Welcome Joseph Ingalls

a blob of tissue”. I was visiting my friend out of state when her sister miscarried. The baby was only 6-8 weeks, I believe. I was so amazed when I saw the baby. It was so tiny it could have easily fit on my thumbnail, but it was very obviously a baby. You could see its shape, the curve of its head and tiny bottom. It was so amazing! **Personally LOOK** at your ultrasound!

#2. Find out **BEFORE** you make your appointment **WHAT** they are going to do to you and to your baby. The methods they use are gruesome and can be harmful, even fatal to you as the mother. Through a mess up in an abortion it is very possible that you will never again be able to have children, even when you want to later in life. Complications which may occur later on in life (which the abortion “doctors” will not tell you about) include breast cancer, cervical cancer, difficulty in intercourse, menstrual problems,

post-abortion trauma, and an increase in miscarriages and premature births.

Two things that are important for you to remember if you are considering having an abortion... #1. Just because it was a “breeze” for your friend does not mean it will be that way for you. #2. The doctors who perform abortions are not doing so because they love and care for you, it is their profession, their way to make money.

Remember above all else, **God loves you**. There are Christian homes and organizations that want to help you even if your family or boyfriend/husband does not. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** Taken from the back cover:

Are you are considering an abortion? This book is for you. Do you need insight on what it is like for women and girls who have had abortions? Read about their lives and decisions. (continued on p.18)

Please join us in ministering to birth parents.

NATHHAN /CHASK P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845
www.chask.org

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail _____

I am interested in sharing with birth parents in crisis. **Please send me** _____ **CHASK brochures.**

They can contact me via e-mail telephone letter

Disabilities I can share about with birth parents:

I am interested in adopting a child with special needs. We are interested in getting more information about how CHASK’s matching service works. Please refer to www.chask.org for more information also.

We’d love to help. Included is our donation of \$ _____
I want to help share Christ with birth parents in crisis and support CHASK’s unique ministry to the unborn with special needs.

NATHHAN /CHASK is a 501 c 3 not-for-profit ministry. All donations are tax deductible and are used to directly assist in saving the lives of babies with special needs and ministering to parents with special needs children. Credit cards accepted. Please make your checks out to NATHHAN / CHASK . (208) 267-6246

The women who share their stories are very brave. As you read about their lives you will laugh, cry, even get angry. Most of all, in reading these stories you will be able to decide what is right for you. An abortion is a big step with life-long consequences.

In the author's experience as a marriage and family counselor, the loss of a baby in an abortion causes post-abortion trauma in nearly every case. Abortion causes a permanent loss. It is because of that loss that serious problems begin to affect the lives of women who have had abortions.

There are alternatives to abortion. Thousands of loving couples who can't give birth themselves are praying daily for a woman to care enough to share her blessing of birth with them.

Others have been where you are at this moment. You are not alone!

Please help us locate birth parents needing to hear about CHASK.

Call us right away. We will send you CHASK Adverse Prenatal Diagnosis brochures. They are placed in crisis pregnancy care centers, OBGYN offices and hospitals. Social workers, adoption plan coordinators, doctors, nurses and even abortion clinics are using these brochures to help birth parents feeling unsure about abortion! They are free of charge.

208-267-6246



How does CHASK work?

- Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (page 19 or www.chask.org)

- A birth mom in crisis contacts us. Are there any NATHHAN families willing to take her pre-born baby or child with special needs?

- We contact adoptive families, getting permission to send the birth mom their information.

- We send the birth mom 3 families to choose from, including their Dear Birth-Mom letters. After choice is made....

- Potential adoptive family and birth mom handle details such as communication, transportation, lawyer fees.

- Some financial help for adoptive costs may be available by private gifts from NATHHAN families.

Adoptive family should:

- Look into having a homestudy.

- Adoptive family should locate an adoption lawyer and be aware of their state's laws. (In some states, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, the adoption should be handled through an adoption lawyer. We can help you find a pro-life lawyer.)

- Adoptive family should be willing to pray and receive God's will for the birth mom's, baby's, and their lives, no matter what the decision reached by the birth mom.

"Dear birth mom" letters are VERY important. Your personal experience about why you chose life, instead of abortion, for your special needs baby can be instrumental in saving the life of *this* baby.

Please send us a letter as a ministry to encourage moms to choose life, even if you do not plan to adopt.

CHASK Application

Christian Homes And Special Kids

1. Last Name _____ 2. First Names _____

3. Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

4. Phone (_____) _____ 5. E-mail _____

7. Number of children in your family living in your home. _____

8. Describe your family. (Use a separate sheet if you need to. Pictures are nice). _____

9. What age of child are you considering? _____

10. Are you open to adopting a child of mixed race or color? _____

11. What disabilities would you feel comfortable with at this time? (For a more complete list to consider, see CHASK application on the internet www.chask.org)

12. Name of Church _____

13. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ: (You may want to use a separate sheet of paper.)

14. Name and phone of pastorName _____ Phone # (_____) _____

15. Please give us a 2nd reference ..Name _____ Phone # (_____) _____

16. What are your reasons for adopting? (Use your sheet of paper.)

17. Dear Birth Mom Letter. (Please carefully write a letter sharing your heart about adoption, special needs, and your vision for your family. For a sample letter see www.chask.org under "Waiting Families".) We also need 1 family picture that we can scan into the computer with your entry.

CHASK/NATHHAN
P.O. Box 39 Porthill, ID 83853
(208) 267-6246
www.chask.org

Homeschooling Using Assistive Technology

By Kerry Jones

When we began homeschooling our oldest son, who has Tourette's Syndrome, we were amazed at how well he took to it. He was an auditory learner, and all the curriculums we tried seemed designed with him in mind. What was all the fuss, we wondered, about homeschooling kids with special needs? This was a piece of cake. And then came our second son.

He was given many labels throughout his preschool years: *Language Delayed, Auditory Processing Disorder, Receptive Language Disorder, Possible ADD, Possible Asperger's Syndrome, Sensory Integration Disorder*. But none of the labels told us how to homeschool him, so we had to figure that out on our own. One thing we discovered right away was that the curriculum that had worked so well for our older son was completely wrong for our younger son. He was a visual learner, and a somewhat kinesthetic learner. He had incredible strengths in memory and spatial concepts.

We found that very few pre-designed homeschool curricula were designed with the "out-of-the-box" learner in mind. Those children in the growing categories of "right-brained," "ADD or ADHD," "dyslexic," "learning disabled," or even "gifted with special needs," were left behind when it came to effective curriculum.

Fortunately, some forward thinking individuals and companies in the technology field have understood the learning differences of these children and created assistive software and programs that actually work with these students. Because of these tools, homeschooling families have viable options for helping their special learners at home.

For dyslexic students and other struggling writers, word prediction software such as Don



Johnston's Co-Writer, (www.donjohnston.com) is incredibly helpful. Used with any word processor, it can help predict with incredible accuracy what a student wants to say, and helps them find exactly the word they are looking for, even if they only know how to spell it phonetically (by sound). And phonetic spell checkers come in portable versions as well, for writing away from the computer. The Children's Talking Dictionary and Spell Checker from Franklin includes a phonetic spell-checker, speaking dictionary, and handwriting guides in both print and cursive for guiding correct penmanship.

Those of you who are homeschooling visual learners already know that these kids remember what they see. And educational videos are probably already filling up your media cabinets. But unfortunately, you can't possibly purchase a video for every subject your child is studying - - or can you? Discovery Education's United Streaming, (www.atomiclearning.com) is a video-on-demand service covering what seems an endless number of academic subjects. No matter what we are studying, United Streaming seems to have a video for it. Another visual based site I can't recommend highly enough is BrainPOP (www.brainpop.com). Its animated videos span five subject areas and appeal to a wide age range.

Gifted, spatial, and right-brained learners can all benefit from mind mapping. Mind maps, also called graphic organizers, are a visual way of organizing information and making sense of it. The difficult, sequential process of creating paragraphs, reports, and essays is made accessible to the child who sees things in pictures. And with wonderful software programs like Inspiration (www.inspiration.com) for middle to upper grades, and Kidspiration (www.enablemart.com) for elementary age, no writing assignment is out of reach. Students who normally have no outlet for their higher level thinking are right at home building connections with words and pictures and creating advanced reports and projects with the click of a mouse.

For parents who are struggling to find an overall curriculum for their special needs learners, I hope you will check out Time4Learning (www.time4learning.com). With interactive multimedia lessons, text-to-speech capabilities, and on-board writing tools, this is one of the most engaging and accessible computer-based curriculums I've ever come across. It is also one of the most affordable. Time4Learning covers the main four subject areas (math, language arts, science, and social studies), and is incredibly comprehensive in its scope, and in its record-keeping. This curriculum may be the next best thing to having a special-ed teacher move in with you!

Assistive technology can be costly, so it is important to really understand your child's learning style and their strengths and weaknesses before you invest money in something you aren't sure will enhance their learning. Don't be afraid to take advantage of free trial periods on software and technology products. You need to be sure that your child and the product will be a good match. And when you see your child suddenly "getting" that concept that has eluded him, or writing that difficult paragraph that seemed an impossibility before, you will know that your initial purchase has been a worthwhile investment for their educational success.

+++++

Center on Disabilities

...Changing the world for persons with disabilities.

Phone 818-677-2578

E-mail— ctrdis@csun.edu

Web site www.csun.edu/codtraining

Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program

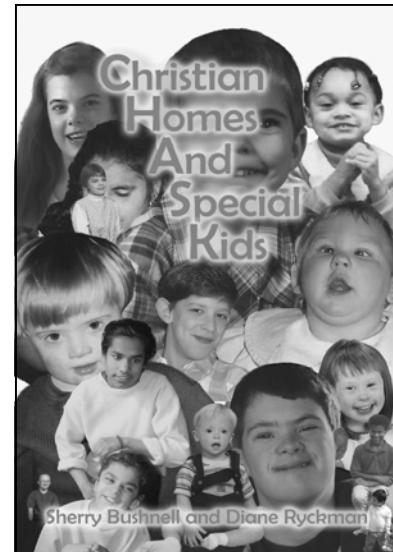
- + Do you want to improve your skills, knowledge, and networking in all areas of AT?
- +Are you looking for comprehensive and systematic training at AT?
- +Are you looking for a network of people and resources that can be of help?

If you answered YES, then please contact us.

A book written by NATHHAN families

Christian Homes And Special Kids

CHASK



Warmly penned, practical resource written by homeschooling parents.

Here are moms and dads, just like you, living Christian lives and raising their special needs child for the Lord!

CHASK is packed full of tips, stories and advice from families that have been there. We know you will love reading it again and again.

Over 270 pages, 6" by 9"
Compiled and edited by
Sherry Bushnell
and Diane Ryckman

Chapter 1 - You Can Do It!

Chapter 2 - How To Begin

Chapter 3 - Pre-School Years

Chapter 4 - Elementary Years

Chapter 5 - Teens/ Adult Vocational Training

Chapter 6 - Therapy / Adaptive Technology

Chapter 7 - Character Development

Chapter 8 - Individual Education Plans

Chapter 9 - What's it Like Raising A Child With...?

Chapter 10 - The Ministry Of CHASK

PLUS a large topical subject and resource index.

See order form on page 39

Meet our Volunteers!



Hi! My name is Bethany Headings and I am 18 years old. Our family was in mission work in Puerto Rico for nine years before we moved to Arlington, Washington two years ago. I'm still adjusting to the rainy, gray winters here after living in the sunny tropics.

I attend New Hope Mennonite Church in Marysville, Washington.

I love hanging out with friends, reading, shopping, traveling, designing and sewing clothes, Starbucks, baking, and being in the middle of lots of activity. The past year and a half my job has involved working with special needs children and God has really given me a love for them.

Editor's Note: Bethany volunteered to help us for the month of September 2006. We really appreciated Bethany's hard working, jump-in-and-get-it-all done attitude. Thank you Bethany! We miss you and pray that the Lord blesses you and your family as you continue to serve Him.



Hi Y'all! My name is Michelle Mast. I am 18 years old and am from Mountain View, AR. I'm a member of Richwoods Mennonite Church and live in the Ozarks so I love the hills and mountains! I love children and enjoy hangin' out with my friends, bein' outside, reading, sewing, scrapbooking, singing and lots of other stuff that would take too much space to write about!

I've always wanted to do Volunteer Service work somewhere and I'm so glad God led me here to NATHHAN.

My youngest brother, Leslie (11 years old) is mentally handicapped so I've had lots of experience with him, but every one of God's special children are different and need our love and understanding.

Editor's note: Michelle is volunteering for the months of October, November and December 2006. We appreciate her steady, thoroughness and helpful heart!

“Mommy, Can I Worship Jesus too?”

Families with special needs children in church

Some of the ideas in this article have been taken from a special book called: That All May Worship, An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities. It is put out by the National Organization on Disability, (www.nod.org). Their slogan is “It’s ability, not disability that counts!” How true.

Many of our children have disabilities which are visible. Others have disabilities which are not so easily noticeable. Some disabilities are physical or sensory, others are simply mental or psychological. The majority of disabilities that NATHHAN families deal with are permanent. We like to tell folks who inquire about our children’s special needs that, “Jordan is normal for Jordan!”

Just as every family has at least one person who requires extra patience, support and understanding, so also in every church fellowship there are people, children or adults, who need extra considerations. My guess is that already a good seat up front is saved each week for Mrs. Smith, who cannot hear very well. Mr. James, who has cataracts, has special considerations. Matthew, who was in a serious logging accident many years ago and is in a wheel chair, also has a spot saved for him. Perhaps your church family is extra tender and supportive of the Banks family with twins, one of whom has Down syndrome. Life has its many ups and downs, and the love and support given through the body of

Christ, is true Christianity. If you are not in a supportive body of believers, consider hunting until you find one!

O.K. As a family facing special considerations, here is an interesting suggestion to make yourself feel terrifically involved as a family in the church and to secure your child’s place in the congregation.

Suggestion: Sitting Still

Break each part of the service into individual sessions. Music, prayer time, Bible reading, preaching, closing prayer, visiting time, etc... Give child same toy, snack, or book for that part, each Sunday. This focuses on the immediate instead of the longer hour.

Sit next to a door. Get up for a walk if child (or adult) seems agitated or antsy.

Look around for *other* members who have discomforts, disabilities, or handicaps that may have been overlooked. (They may be hiding their problems by infrequent church attendance, or be quietly enduring discomfort.)

Why look for others? This is the secret of leading our special needs children in worship. For worship is not something we

put on Sunday morning, have a great sing together, and then take off as we leave the door. Worship is how we live our lives, as examples, serving the body of Christ. Dedicating our daily lives through taking care of others in our own unique capacity is true worship of Jesus Christ. This is our reasonable service of worship.

There are others around us who are needing our encouragement. Be assured that they are just waiting for your family to minister Jesus’ love to them. Without your open eyes, their needs probably will not be met.

With that said, how can we make our church more disability friendly? How can we

help others in the church, who do not know how to meet the needs of the disabled, learn to do this?

Let's start with some very basic suggestions, and move forward.

Although we have all probably had experience dealing with special needs and are comfortable with having someone with us who is disabled, believe it or not, many people simply don't know how to act. Thankfully, people

throughout the country are becoming more and more aware that living in America with disability does not mean hiding away or being pushed aside.

Granted, there is the crowd that goes overboard and insists that huge expense and trouble must be made for

the disabled. We feel that this is not helpful for the situation of the family with special needs, but fosters a self-centered attitude.

For instance, a family comes into a church setting with a larger child in a wheel chair. Their first Sunday, someone must help them up the flight of steps into the chapel. They appreciate how they are treated and they willingly let others help, thanking them profusely. This family comes again and again, until they are knitted in heart and lives with the rest. This family, broken as they are, continues to be a valuable part of the congregation. They love to be involved in every meeting or service they can be. Every Sunday, this wheel chair and a 200 pound,

adult-sized child is lifted into and out of the chapel. No one complains, and everyone waits for them to arrive to help them. After a few months, the church takes a vote and unanimously decides to add a wheel chair ramp to the back door to enable this family to feel even more loved.

The opposite could have also been true. Suppose this same family arrived and inwardly complained about the absence of a ramp. They were friendly enough and liked the service, but

made a couple of comments, leaving others feeling that they were a little disgruntled because there were not appropriate wheel chair accommodations. This same congregation had a hard time accepting this family and did not go out of their way to assist them. Consequently, the seeking-a-church family wandered to the next town, looking for a ramp instead of willing hearts. In addition, sadly, this particular "disability inexperienced" body of believers felt intimidated and got a sour taste in their mouths for helping those with special needs.

Obviously each congregation will need to decide even those subtle changes that make a positive difference. A new

wheelchair ramp is simply not enough. The hearts of those looking to receive considerations must already be looking to serve and be a part. AND those who are looking to make the considerations for the disabled must be willing to share from their resources without a grudge.

Do we, as a family, take the absence of special considerations personal? Are we others-focused, or self-focused? Are we willing to share the work load of our needs (some are quite extraordinary) for the incredible privilege of being a part of a body of Christ in our community? Can we "make do" for the sake of others who may not understand or comprehend our needs because they have not experienced them?

Suggestion:

Disturbing noises

Sit in the very back of the auditorium. Or better still, in the foyer in chairs or a bench. People will get used to the noise if it is softer at first and be less disturbed. Keep positive and try not to stress. Sitting in the same spot each Sunday, the same walks, snacks, quiet toys, and interesting quiet activities will calm and reassure our noisy ones. Some days we just might need to request a tape of the service!

Some families are uncomfortable with the very idea of special needs. (The “it’s O.K. for you, but not me” attitude is very common.) Are we personally offended when our knowledge and experience with disability is questioned or put down?

I remember in church many years ago, sitting with a lady I did not know who was talking with us about our daughter, Sheela, 3 years old, who was born without eyes. Sheela had bandages over her

eyes to hold in the conformers that were creating a lower eye lid, so we could eventually put in acrylic eyes. The lady said to me, “Are you sure she is totally blind???” Surely there must be some sight...Look... I can even see her peaking at me through those bandages!”

Holding back a snicker, I assured her that there was nothing anyone could do to help her see and that she was permanently blind.

This lady could not handle this concept of “never”. She actually became offended that I would not accept the idea that Sheela might see some day.

Yikes! Restraining my arguments for medical impossibility, I smiled and changed the subject. I chose to overlook and move on.

How about inappropriate people-first language? This may be another issue that a family needs to work through. If older Mrs. Handell walks up to mother of older disabled child and calls her child a cripple, retarded, wheelchair bound, or handicapped, mother has some immediate choices. She can inwardly groan and then forget about it. She can verbally correct Mrs.

Handell right on the spot. She can look for another opportunity to speak appropriate words regarding her child to Mrs. Handell next week.

Most people are people-first language illiterate. Not purposefully, but because they have not had the exposure to disability, they just need to learn. “Politically correct” language is often painted in a bad light. As a result people with good intentions may decide that trying to word everything “just right” is not worth the effort. Have a heart. Just share with them in an appropriate conversation how you view your child and then let it go. Most likely they have no intention of hurting you. Overlook it!

Look for ways that you can possibly integrate your special needs child into the church by keeping a sharp eye out for ways to minister. Sometimes this will be you and your child working together (in the Sunday school setting, washing dishes at share-a-dish meals, cleaning the church house, etc.). Just having your child, with their limitations, working and serving others will

greatly motivate the non-disabled to also serve. (It pricks their conscience! Hopefully a pastor is sensitive and will actively recruit you and your child to help.)

Once you have located another family or persons who need extra considerations, think about approaching your church body about setting up a committee or meeting anticipating the needs of those with disability and improving the atmosphere and conveniences. Here are some tiny, yet very much appreciated things:

During prayer time, remembering the feelings for those with limited mobility, allow options. Say, “Standing or seated”, “Kneeling or seated” instead of “Everyone please kneel”.

Here are some ways that ushers can extend a special way of welcome to the disabled.

Suggestion: Avoiding loud, over enthusiastic participation

Practice at home. Singing together at home, helping our eager singers learn to modulate their voice with others, can be fun!

This goes for sitting still, too. We use Bible time at home for training the positive aspects of participating in a service with others. Bible time at home should not be “battle time”.

Ask about preferred location for seating. Seat a new person (especially one with disability) near or with someone who is helpful or willing to be congenial. Too often a family with a special needs child is seated in isolation, possibly because no one knows how to help.

Consider transportation: for many families or the disabled, just getting to church is a major barrier. Is someone blind, in a wheel chair, or because of mental impairment cannot drive? Just getting a ride Sunday morning may be a problem.

Do you have a wheel chair lift in your van already? Consider it a ministry to find others in your community that would love to attend, if they could get a lift.

Prearranged parking for those who have a hard time walking is a special consideration that speaks volumes of love. Also try to make sure that there is space in the parking slot for the lift to operate properly.

Here are some other great ways to help our friends learn to love and appreciate our children with disability.

When you and someone in the church body are conversing and they want to ask a question about your child, directly ask your child, if they can answer. This reassures the person wishing to welcome you and your child that disability is just a nuisance and not a reason to not personally welcome your child. One or two people shaking your child's hand or gently welcoming them makes your child really feel a part. If you are talking to someone who is hard to understand, don't pretend to understand speech or the ideas of the person if they are un-

clear. Request politely that the person clarify. Continue speaking to the person, rather than asking a companion to answer for them.

If you see another family needing help, offer assistance, but do not impose. Allow a person to retain as much control as possible. Doing things for him or herself may be very important, even if it takes longer. This includes the line through the

...serving counter at a shared meal, walking up to communion, bathroom trips, or even coming in the door. Ask them the best way to help. Personal experience makes the disabled person or parent the expert.

Work to control personal reactions of discomfort when someone behaves in an unexpected way or looks somewhat different. Try to see the person as Jesus sees them and overlook self-stimulatory behaviors such as rocking, burping, groaning or self-talking noises. Of course these things are socially unacceptable, but making this special someone feel accepted and a part might just do away

with a lot of it. Some disabled people have interesting ways of saying, "I'm uncomfortable or uneasy here, will you accept me?"

Here are some time tested ways to improve personal interactions with those who are disabled.

If a person has trouble with reality, be simple and truthful. Don't use social innuendos or slang words.

Are they fearful? You stay calm and show them there is nothing to fear by your welcoming smile and gracious tone.

If they are insecure, be accepting of them as a person and their hesitant tries at communication or interaction.

If they have trouble concentrating, be brief. Keep the time to sit still in smaller segments. Get them up to use the bathroom, or take them for a walk around outside or to the car and back. Then come sit back down.

Helping our children to pray:

Teaching our children to vocalize their heart to the Lord is easier if we model this behavior many times ourselves every day.

Model folding hands, kneeling, and prayer in the same tone, words and format everyday. Keep it short. Encourage vocalization, even if the words do not make sense. God understands their heart. Use sign language for I love Jesus. Help me to obey, etc...

Are they over stimulated or disruptive? Take the time to seat them appropriately. Ask someone to move if you need to. Stimulating speakers and loud noises can be startling. Choose a seat away from the speakers and close to a door, so that exiting quickly is possible.

Above all, stay positive, don't argue with them if they display unclear concepts in conversation. Don't expect rational discussion. Enjoy them on their level.

People with developmental disabilities, especially intellectual ones, have often been treated as less than fully human. Today we are just beginning to understand that those with delays have so much to offer a welcoming congregation. Just for starters, they may exhibit qualities "that abide" such as faith, hope and love. They often have a simple, meaningful relationship with God that should be an example to all of us.

It is not fair to assume that a child will "get nothing" from attending services. Faith is not measured by how fast it develops, or the wisdom that can be spoken. Nor are we aware of the depth of what any one of us gains from worship. (After all, how many of us have "wandering thoughts" in worship?)

Our experience has been that God's love and His Word penetrate the heart, regardless of age, understanding and ability.

Are you wondering where your special needs child is with the Lord? I know that He loves them very much. Did He create them to be two years old? Then I believe He meets them, just like we do, at two years old. Are they capable of blessing Him? Absolutely. He

created them to be a blessing and to honor and praise Him just as they are. They are already a jewel He is polishing, perfecting, setting aside for His purpose, just like you and I.

Regardless of whether others understand the disability of your child in totality, or if they even have a clue what it is like to live with disability day after day, most Christians are honored to be a part of the lives of special needs children. Opening up to them and allowing them to see us on our good days and in our bad moments will help them to have a glimpse of how we feel and the needs we have.

Worshiping Jesus in our daily lives by sharing with others around us is all part of what God expects from us. We should not hide from the body of Christ. Actually our pain is their gain (and ours, too) as we learn to stretch and minister to the disabled among us.

Teaching our children to interact with others in the church setting:

Children need to sit beside us if we cannot trust them not to run around, out of control. Don't assume others are watching out for them, unless previously agreed.

Model greeting others for them. Ask someone enthusiastic or accepting of the situation to take the time each week to greet your child in the same way. This helps our children practice with predictability.

No running—No shouting—No whining We can make our children welcome by training at home consistently and using opportunities in public to practice socially acceptable behavior.

A Mother's Prayer

O God, help me now. My soul is weighed down with this burden. My heart aches for my child. Sometimes I wish I could wrap him in my arms and flee away from the taunts and accusing jeers of thoughtless classmates, away from the pressures of evaluations and examinations. Envelop us both in your healing arms, dear God, and bind our wounds.

Carry us by faith beyond the pain of these days. Be our refuge.

Amen.

Anne Sheppard.

Andrea's Story

Written by Tanya Scarpitto

Like every young couple we all wish for that perfect new born. We ask God for a happy, healthy baby and hope that God will somehow grant us our deepest wishes.

On February 16, 1990 I was induced, and endured a difficult delivery. I can recall my obstetrician calling for help from the anesthesiologist and help from her nursing staff. Our desire was to endure a natural childbirth, no matter how long labor took, with no medical interference. As 9:30 pm came, so did the entire medical staff from the first floor. The obstetrician decided that I was in labor too long and decided to move the labor along a little faster. She used a suction cup extraction method on our baby. This method was rather painful as the obstetrician tugged and pulled.

Our baby was delivered on February 16, 1990 at 9:45 pm. She was ever so beautiful and had a wonderful cry.

As time grew in getting to know our baby, we noticed that there were some rather interesting anomalies that she acquired. We were concerned if these anomalies were genetic or acquired during the time of labor and delivery.

One of the many anomalies we noticed was her head was very swollen. Given that she was born with suction cup extraction, she had a pointy skull which remained swollen for years. We suspected that this method of labor and delivery was questionable, as after the birth I had hurt for the entire full year.

We took Andrea to a neurologist, who did some testing and determined that Andrea would suffer from severe headaches. Her headaches kept us up all night, at various times feeding was very difficult.

I always prayed, Please God help us, please take this pain away from my daughter.

Going back to the pediatrician many times, we were given some relief through pain medication for her.

Time was the factor given to Andrea as her skull began to heal, to help her headaches lessen.

Another anomaly that Andrea had was she was born with clubfeet. We were not sure what to do for her feet, so we brought her back to the pediatricians. They referred us to orthopedic specialists.

The specialists took x-rays of her spine and feet. The orthopedic doctor ordered her to be casted for nine months to correct both inturned feet.

During Andrea's school years, she was tested at a local district for special needs concerns. We were told that Andrea would never talk or walk or progress pass the fifth grade. We were told that

she needed therapy to help her along. The therapy that they recommended was physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

As Andrea grew older, we began to question why it was that she took so long to walk and talk. The neurologists answered a few of our concerns, but we had more questions and were wondering if her developmental issues could somehow be in relationship to a genetic disorder. We took Andrea to a local geneticist. The geneticists performed what is called a FISH test on Andrea, and took some family history information.

It was not more than a month after the test was administered that we were told Andrea had VCFS/DiGeorge Syndrome. *(continued on p. 31)*



Andrea

News-2-You®

A weekly online newspaper for beginning readers
and individuals with special needs

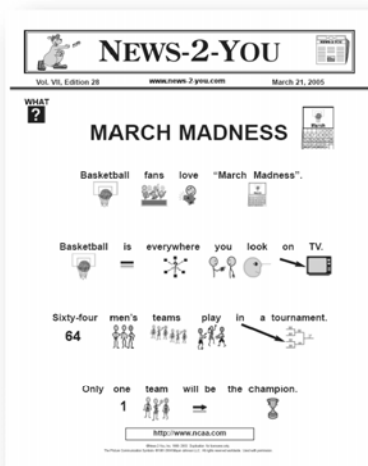


News-2-You brings current events to your students for them to “talk” about. Expand vocabulary and increase learning and communication skills through this reader-friendly paper.

Download a new edition each week from the Internet. The newspaper is **READY-TO-USE** and is an excellent source of news and news-related activities for your students.

You can also upgrade your base subscription with the purchase of the **Joey’s Locker** add-on activities and/or the **Spanish Language edition**.

News-2-You uses today’s headlines to turn students into readers! Check out this exciting teaching tool and see for yourself.



What we have learned about Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome is that it is a genetic disorder - a disorder as common as Down Syndrome, but not widely recognized. To describe Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome one must look at the word Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome. In Latin the word "velum" means the palate, "cardiac" means the heart, and "facial" means the face. Not all of these identifying features are found in each child who is born with VCFS. The more common features are cleft, heart defects, characteristic facial appearance, minor learning problems, and speech and feeding problems. For more information look on www.vcfsef.org, the website for the Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome Educational Foundation.

Looking at all the labels that the doctors and therapists gave her and their expectations of Andrea, and seeing how well she is doing, we are blessed.

When Andrea was in the fifth grade, we decided to pull her out to home school her. By this time, after Andrea had been officially diagnosed with VCFS/DiGeorge Syndrome, we felt that the staff at the educational level did not want to help our daughter. It was the one-on-one experience that our daughter required and demanded with the diagnosis we received.

With an exhaustive amount of prayer and sheer exhaustion to get her needs met at the brick and mortar level, we decided that home schooling was the next best thing for Andrea. Home schooling was a Godsend.

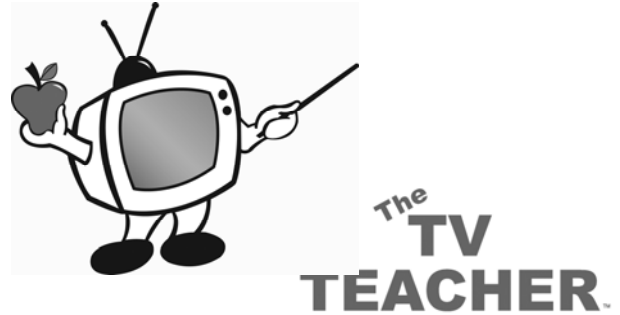
I have found I can give her the one-on-one without having to struggle to fight to get her needs met.

Every day we start out with prayer and Bible reading. I have seen tremendous growth with all subjects. She has grown into a beautiful young woman.

Andrea is now a freshman in home school and is involved as an acolyte in her church. She loves going to youth group every Sunday evening, and participates on mission trips.

Here at our home we truly do believe in miracles. Our daughter who was never expected to move past the fifth grade, but overcame all the negativity, truly is a miracle.

Our expectations for Andrea are that she continues to remain happy and healthy. We hope that she continues to love life.



P.O. Box 71926
Marietta, GA 30007
770-313-3019

A new handwriting approach is finally here—a fun and educational DVD called *Alphabet Beats*.

Created by the mother of an autistic child and an occupational therapist, this product combines writing demonstrations with catchy rhythmic chants that parallel the actual writing strokes. This unique multi-sensory approach is not only motivating children to write, but also helping them to motor plan correctly-- making the video a huge hit for special needs children all over the country.

In this video, each letter is a separate chapter that showcases the very entertaining "Miss Marnie" who demonstrates how to write, both on the chalkboard and on lined paper. The video keeps the child entertained and focused by also incorporating 8-10 vocabulary words and concepts per letter, through skits or pictures introducing animals, colors, opposites, shapes, body parts, creative play, sensory issues, etc. For over 2 hours of total video production time (not to be watched in its entirety at one sitting), \$35.00 is a great price.

Ages: 2 ½ - 7.

Visit their website at www.thetvteacher.com where you can also see a small video demonstration, or call them at 770-313-3019.

Wendy Pierce shares about her life...

My name is Wendy. I am 32 years old. I have 2 young sons and 2 older brothers. My dad is a Baptist minister and Bible professor. My mom is a pre-school teacher.

When I read the article in the Spring/Summer 2006 NATHHAN NEWS by Stacey Snider, who has a learning disability, a lot of it sounded exactly like me. Especially when I was growing up.

Since I was really little, I struggled with developmental delays, a learning disability, hyperactivity, emotional behavior problems, obsessive compulsive behavior, social anxiety and poor social skills. I struggled a lot at home, at school, and out in public. Whenever we went to a new church or met new people, my dad would always tell them about my disability in case I said or did something that was embarrassing.

My oldest brother, who is now married with 2 little girls, wasn't very understanding. My other brother always treated me like a normal brother would.

At school or other places, kids would tease me a lot and didn't want to be my friend. Sometimes they would try to make me mad so I would react and they could get me in trouble. Adults just thought I was being bad and needed more discipline or punishment.

I had a few friends that I would play with on an individual basis, but was not good in large group settings. Sometimes I would say or do things that hurt other people and not even realize that I did.

In kindergarten through high school, I struggled to understand or do the work. In



my teens I was diagnosed with mild depression and dyslexia. I also did a lot of repeating things and had an obsessive compulsive disorder. I would do or say the same thing over again and repeat questions. Things had to be done a certain way, in a certain order. (When I was 30, I was diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome.)

Back when I was a child, a lot of people would say I was crazy or "not quite right". No one knew what was wrong with me.

Now I am happy to share with others about what it is like to have my type of disability. I want them to be more aware of what it feels like and to encourage them to find ways to work with children who are similar. Please help them reach their full potential.

I did eventually marry at age 23, although dating was a real challenge. I met someone who was willing to deal with my obsessions. At age 25 I had my first son and then a year later, I had my second son. They both have developmental delays of about 12—18 months. The youngest also has behavior problems like mine.

Like Stacey Snider wrote, I also know how it feels to be different, not normal, not smart enough. I still get discouraged about it, because I wish I was normal and that my children were normal, too. But at the same time, I know that God made each one of us the way we are for a reason. He still has a plan for our lives. No matter what struggles we face, all we have to do is to focus on the good things God has given us. We need to ask God to guide us and to give us wisdom where we lack. Because even if we don't think that we are important or good enough, God views us as important to Him, and that is what really matters.

Christian Families Home Schooling a Child with Down Syndrome - Later Preschool Resources

—This article is actually a pamphlet prepared by Diane Brown
120 Lullwater Road
Greenville, SC 29607

(Editor's note: Diane's son Joshua passed away at age 12 several years ago. She continues to enjoy sharing information with families and welcomes your response.)

Note: Any prices given on resources are approximate.

Preschool level material suggested would be for Down syndrome children about ages 4-6+

Before choosing resources, know where your child is in his skill development. Then you will know what skills he needs to work on next and be better able to choose the resources you need.

Sample Skill list for this age group:

Identify and name colors
Identify and name body parts
Match alphabet letters
Count to 10
Matching pictures
Identifying one that is different
Size and positional concepts
Sorting by color and shape
Complete simple puzzles

Later Preschool

As your child grows, the gap will widen between his development and that of normally developing children. As you think about what your child needs at this level, consider the following:

1. At the chronological age of four, a child with

Down syndrome will probably need to work on skills that are more appropriate for those of a child of age 3. Some skills may still be at the 2- year level.

2. At the chronological age of five, your child may be on several different developmental levels. Speech especially may still be in the 2-year-old range.

3. Children with Down syndrome do not learn as many things incidentally as their normally developing peers. They will need to have more direct teaching, and this means a bit of planning on your part.



Naomi Kurlowitz, age 2.5

How do you teach a child who is on so many different levels?

Instead of being overwhelmed (which can easily happen at this point) here is a suggestion that will give you a place to start. Most developmental skill lists are divided into several major areas such as the following:

General readiness skills
Speech and Language skills
Gross Motor skills
Fine Motor skills
Self-Help Skills
Reading readiness skills
Math readiness skills
Social skills

Sit down and write these areas on a sheet of paper. Check your skill checklist (using a list such as the Brigance Inventory) to

see where your child is developmentally and then write down one obtainable goal for each area. (Later you can add more skills to each area if desired.) Jot down some activities by which that goal will be obtained. Ask others teaching preschoolers for ideas of activities that will give practice of the skills. Check on some preschool resources. Then write Sunday-Saturday on another sheet of paper. Divide each day into hourly time blocks. Block off times that cannot be used, such as meal times and certain subjects for the other children. Next, write in the activities that you want to teach your special child. Your plan does not need to be detailed.

(Note: You may never actually follow this timed schedule, but if you do not plan then nothing will get done.) Many teaching times will come during such times as chore time to give practice sorting toys, and meal times to work on the words "please" and "thank you." Because children with Downs do not learn very fast, the same plans may suit you for several weeks before you need to change them. The following resources may help you in reaching your goals at this stage.



Joni Bressler, age 2

RESOURCES

Brigance Inventory of Early Development-Revised

(Birth-Age 7)

This diagnostic manual remains a good check list for this level. Available through:

Curriculum Associates

PO Box 2001

North Billerica, MA 01862-0901

1-800-225-0248

Preschool Workbook Set \$8.00

If your child's fine motor abilities are ready for workbooks and he likes workbooks, this set is a possibility. This 4-book set was designed for children of normal development ages 3-4 (perhaps better used with Down syndrome children 4-6). These workbooks were developed by an Amish family. They are simple black and white pages. It is advised not to work on the books from front to back of each cover, but find pages that would hold interest for your child and also be on his

skill level. Change directions if needed to adapt to your child's needs. If things to be colored are too much, you also can color with your child. This way you are modeling how coloring is done. With any workbook that cannot be copied, you can place the pages in a clear vinyl envelope purchased from a office supply store. This will create a wipe off activity that can be practiced again and again using a water-based pen such as a Visa pen or wipe-off crayons. Available through:

Timberdoodle Co.

1510 E Spencer Lk Rd

Shelton, WA 98584

(360) 426-0672

Preschool Workbook Set

About \$15.00 for the set (Timberdoodle also carries this set of workbooks). Rod and Staff is a Mennonite publication. The preschool workbooks are black and white and designed for normally developing children 4-5

(perhaps better used with Down syndrome children ages 5-7). See above for adapting workbook pages.

There are five workbooks in the series including,

Counting With Numbers: Numbers 1-10. Look at the number formation to be sure this is the way you want your child to be taught. Once taught one way, it will be nearly impossible to re-teach another way of writing the numbers.

Do It Carefully: Shapes, letter sounds, and a few words are introduced. Manuscript letter formation is taught. Look at the letter formation to be sure this is the way you want your child to be taught.

Everywhere We Go: Colors, shapes, consonant sounds, and numbers 1-10.

Finding the Answers: This book develops thinking skills through hearing

rhymes, identifying sequence, understanding sentence meaning, making comparisons and associations. This book may have some advanced skills that may be difficult for some children with Down syndrome such as the rhyming. Available through:

Rod & Staff

PO Box 3, Hwy. 172
Crockett, Kentucky 41413-0003
(800) 643-1244

Chartlets @ \$1.75 each.

They are cardstock and can be cut into cards for matching activities. A few are named here.

- Colors chartlet
- Upper and Lowercase Letters chartlet
- Mittens for Matching chartlet

These are printed by:

Carson-Dellosa

Instructional Materials

See your local teacher-supply store.

Frank Schaffer

Instructional Materials

Two preschool catalogues from Frank Schaffer are Fearon and Totline. Totline has a series, My First Coloring Book Series. This series has all black backgrounds. There are no lines to cross. The pictures are simple and appropriate for special needs children with fine motor difficulties.

See your local teacher-supply store or call 1-800-421-5565 for a catalogue.

School Zone

PO Box 777
Grand Haven, MI 49417
(www.schoolzone.com)

This company has many preschool activities.

ABEKA

1-877-223-5226
(www.abeka.com)

While I do not know of anyone using their reading curriculum for a child with Down syndrome, there are two workbooks that have some value because of their simplicity:

Learning Numbers with Button Bear (Numbers 1-10), Numbers and Skills with Button Bear (Numbers 1-15). Books above are designed for 2-3 year olds but may be appropriate for a 3 or 5-year-old child with Down syndrome beginning numbers.



Georgia Hyler— 2005

Thresholds for Threes: Activity Packet

Bob Jones University Press
1-800-845-5731
(www.bjup.com)

This packet is full of a variety of activities. It includes fun activities for colors, letters, numbers, fine motor activities such as lacing, and seasonal and holiday activities.

"School" is Every Day Living

I hope that this will give you a starting place and help you plan as you raise the special gift that God has given to you.

Phonics Plain & Simple

.....Needing *something* to put down on your child's IEP as a curriculum for teaching your disabled child?

Plain & Simple Part A and B was designed by a homeschooling family with severely disabled children.

Using it successfully with their own children with Down syndrome, autism and learning delays, they have made it available for other homeschooling families whose children may not be able to read, write, speak or even point.

These work sheets are black and white, simple in design. Child does not need to be able to write, but does need to be able to affirm a "yes" or "no" answer to questions regarding pictures and sounds.

Part A - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down, etc., abc's, early phonics (the vowels).

\$20.00 Postage is included in the price.

No tabs, or binder, it is 147 pages.

Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words.

\$30.00 Postage included in price.

No tabs, or binder, it is 204 pages.

—This is not a complete phonics program, but created for children with delays that need to move V..E..R..Y slowly. Some of our special children CAN learn to read via the phonics method. This is an excellent (and cheap) way to practice. Find out if phonics is possible for your child.

— A great program for children needing lots of repetition. No hand printing required. Photo copying encouraged for your own use!

See order form pg. 39
More info at www.nathhan.org

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potential...



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Let us show you how learning on the computer can be easy and fun for your child. Call today for a free catalog or visit us online at www.marblesoft.com.

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NATional cHallenged Homeschoolers
P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845
(208) 267-6246



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LENDING LIBRARY PRIVILEGES 15% HSLDA group discount on their yearly dues

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL.....\$25.00 a year _____

CHASK Book—Christian Homes And Special Kids _____
\$17.00. Price includes shipping.

Yes, I want to help save the life of babies with special needs, that are not yet born. I am including a CHASK donation. (Tax deductible)_____

TOTAL _____

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ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-Mail _____

CHALLENGE? _____

NATHHAN Resource Room



Christian Homes And Special Kids - Warmly penned, written for parents by parents, with a goal in mind...to raise children with disabilities, who love the Lord. This is a great book to share with new moms, or parents who are facing giving birth to a child with special needs. It is realistic, encouraging and full of a feeling of "Welcome to the world of disability, it's not so bad!"
By Sherry Bushnell and Diane Ryckman.....\$17.00



God's Special Child - This is the story of a family, working with their son who had Prader Willie syndrome. They candidly share their success and failures. The results are an encouraging book that shows God's faithfulness and the wisdom of following His ways.
By Donna Adee..... \$10.00



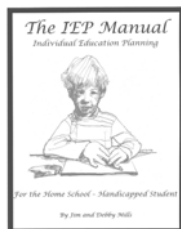
Phonics Plain & Simple Part A - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down etc.. abc's, early phonics and the vowels.

No speech or handwriting required, although activities do require pointing or "x's". Comes shrink wrapped in plastic and drilled for three ring binder. See ad on page 36. Printed on one side only for ease of copying. No tabs or binder included. **147 pages.....\$20.00**



Phonics Plain & Simple Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words

No speech or handwriting required, although activities do require pointing or "x's". Comes shrink wrapped in plastic and drilled for three ring binder. Printed on one side only for ease of copying. No tabs or binder included. See ad on page 36. **204 pages.....\$30.00**



Individual Education Planning Manual For the Homeschool Handicapped Student - IEPs are now easy! Create your child's professional looking IEP specific to the special needs of your student.
By Deborah Mary Kathleen Mills.....\$67.00

NATHHAN Resource Room Order Form

Quantity	Item	Price	Total
	CHASK Book	\$17.00	
	God's Special Child	\$10.00	
	Phonics Plain & Simple Part A	\$20.00	
	Phonics Plain & Simple Part B	\$30.00	
	1st Straight Talk (See page 9)	\$45.00	
	1st Straight Talk with DVD	\$55.00	
	2nd Straight Talk (See page 10)	\$45.00	
	I.E.P. Planner By Debbie Mills	\$67.00	
	Please renew my NATHHAN membership with this order	\$25.00	
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(208) 267-6246

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You can place your ad in the NATHHAN NEWS for just \$5.00 for 20 words and .25 for each extra word.

Please e-mail your ad to nathanews@aol.com and send a check. Ads must be received by the deadline date below, to be printed in upcoming issues. Please phone first, as we fill up very fast.

We hope you understand... we reserve the right to refuse ads we feel are inappropriate. (Please, no multi-level style products or companies.)

\$500/ full page, \$250 / half page, \$125/quarter.

Deadline dates: Sept 15th, January 15th
Please call to verify ad space and arrangements.

Phonics Plain & Simple

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And Cheaper!

Part A - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down, etc., abc's, early phonics (the vowels). \$20.00 Postage is included in the price. (No tabs, or binder, it is 147 pages)

Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words. \$30.00 Postage included in price. (No tabs, or binder, it is 204 pages)

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See order form pg. 39
More info at www.nathhan.org

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God Bless All His Children

Letters From Families



**And whoso shall receive one such child
in my name receiveth me.
Matthew 18:5**

The Appel family is very blessed to announce the arrival of Elijah Lucas Appel
Born July 12th at 9:15 AM
Weighing 8 lbs
20 1/2" long

Elijah came into the world in a room full of doctors and was put in the arms of mom. He was a little blue, but pinked up in a short time. He was examined and the decision was to transfer him to Children's Hospital for observation. His heart condition was not as severe as they thought but is still a major defect (Asymmetrical AV Canal) that will need to be repaired when he gets bigger and stronger. His heart is working well enough to keep him oxygenated and he is not on oxygen. He is tube feeding because he is not nursing or bottle feeding enough to sustain himself.

We spent 9 days in the hospital mostly because of the feeding and blood sugar issues. We are so happy to be home now and everything

is going really well. Elijah is a very sleepy little guy but when he is awake he is alert and looking around at his surroundings. We all think he is just the cutest little guy and we all take turns holding him. He does not lack attention or stimulation in our house. Even little Mary thinks she should get a turn holding her baby brother.

We would like to thank all of you who prayed for Elijah. God has heard and answered prayer. He is Jehovah-Jireh "The Lord will provide". He has graciously provided for Elijah and our family and we are so very grateful.

Feeling blessed,
The Appel Family
Chris, Lori, Hannah, Alex, Casey, Abby, Mary
Kate and Elijah

.....

Homeschooling...Am I a Qualified Special Ed Teacher?

todops@aol.com

I have homeschooled for 14 years. Our youngest child (5 1/2) has Down Syndrome. We have allowed her to have early intervention, low key and no problems. Preschool we opted out when she was 3 and allowed her to attend an inclusive preschool class at age 5. We had planned to have her go to a gen. ed K class, which begins tomorrow and just do not have a peace about it. She is sick often, missing class and she is quite animated and talkative at home and church, etc. with us and quiet and shy in class.

We are going to keep her home. We don't think we will have any trouble declining the class placement, but we'll see. We are HSLDA members.

My question is, why am I (the mom) feeling so inadequate in this job. I often see that I know more than the others working with her. I just have this feeling that I am going to miss something I guess?? Its almost like beginning to homeschool

for the first time with all of the newness and unknown. (My second oldest child has struggled in reading, etc. and I have seen God help him/us in so many ways.) Anyway, do you have any tips for this mom who is feeling like a wimp? Are there any special tips as I officially begin to homeschool her?

.....

Second family needing answers about feelings of doubt regarding homeschooling a child with special needs...

grunionman@juno.com

Tom and Sherry--- first, thank you for being there---you folks get dearer to me each time I read the newsletter---the Lord has used you to encourage me so much---thank you.

I just had a conversation with someone who has a child with a disability--this family has always had their child in the public school system, but homeschools the others. In the course of the conversation, she advised me to strongly consider putting my son in the school system---the reasons she said seemed good--some of it was to learn how to behave with other children around--(classroom etiquette--to be quiet, for example, while someone else is talking)---well, to try to make it short, the conversation was a bit intense for a while, and I gave my usual answer, that we always keep that option open-

that I have even visited the school where he would attend and have not been impressed. I liked the head teacher a lot, but as the visit progressed I could see that it was not the most appropriate place for my child to be.

My questions are---am I going to do my child a disservice by not ever putting him in school? Would he be in such a more structured environment that it would actually be better for him to be there? Am I unwise in never trying it out?

She suggested that if I try it out, give the trial a half a school year, not just 2-3 weeks as that wouldn't be long enough.

When I told her that one of my prayers at times, is that if the Lord wants us to do this, then would he please make it obvious---and her answer to me was to consider what she was saying to be an answer to that prayer---she has been thru all the thoughts I have, she said, of not really wanting to do it, but now that she has, she is glad she did, because she could never have taught all the kids at home, and her child has learned things that she said she used to think, "if I just had 10 hours alone with this child each day, I could teach him".

Please pray for me---to know I am doing what the Lord wants me to do for my child---for all my children. Pray also that if it is the best place for him, to be at home, that I might be more confident in my and my husband's decision, and I can articulate that confidence as I am questioned as to why we have chosen this for our child. I can be flustered and not sound so confident as these conversations develop.

Editor's Answer:

I have often thought that there definitely would be a school or teacher that could do a better job teaching my special needs children than I can. Perhaps if I had 10 hours a day to devote to my child with special needs, they could master a whole lot more. However, all the time in the world would not make my disabled child non-disabled.

Has God called you to teach to the heart of your child? Are they going to learn to be more self-controlled and to think of others before self in the public school setting? Will they learn about Jesus and His love for them there? In special needs children, more is caught than taught. He needs to see Christ's love in action and that action is God-ordained to be you.

If all we want to see is superior academics and the ability to be "cool" and accepted by the crowd, then public school is a great place to accomplish those goals. Believe me, as a parent who is approaching the other side (my special needs children are 18, 17 and 13), I am thankful that we majored on loving others, obedience, self help skills and being a blessing to others in our ability to work.

*Love,
Sherry Bushnell
- NATHHAN /CHASK*

A Day at Public School...

Editor's note: We included this as an eye opener for parents who have never placed their child with special needs in public special ed. Smile.

Whew! We made it through week two of school. It wasn't easy. The special ed teachers on two elementary campuses are still reeling over the fact that they have to care for children with G-tubes. I spent time the past two weeks going over and over tube feeding, demonstrating, taking more formula, and basically holding their hands.

Last week on Thursday we got a call from a panicked nurse yelling that we needed to come pick up Martin right away so that I could put his G button back in. The G button or Mickey button is a small port that looks like the part you blow up a beach ball with. It is inserted through the abdominal wall, and held in place with a balloon on the inside which is inflated by squirting a little sterile water into it.

Martin was hysterical at school. He sat on the floor in the bathroom screaming with 6 adults surrounding him wringing their hands and looking scared. I reassured them, and had to carry my little "round mound of love" out of the school. About half way down the hall I had to set him down because I was tired. He clung to me screaming. I told him that if he wanted to go with daddy in the car he would have to hop up and walk out. I turned and started for the door. The other adults said he won't go. I told them to be quiet and not to look at Martin. They walked with me toward the door. After I walked about 6 feet, Martin screamed NO MOM, MOM NO, GO!" He hopped up and ran behind me to the car. At home we turned on his favorite Blues clues tape. He sat in Daddy's lap and within 5 minutes I had the tube back in and Martin was totally calm. After that we took him out for lunch, then on to get his vaccinations. They gave him a certificate for an ice cream cone. We stopped at DQ for the ice cream.

All in all Martin considered it a wonderful day. He liked being home with mommy and daddy so the next day the little faker threw himself on the floor holding his tummy and screaming until they called us to pick him up. I was at a

meeting at social security. David brought him over to SS to me. Martin walked in holding his hand over his stomach looking like a little round Napoleon. The widows peak really adds to the look. David wondered aloud if Napoleon was actually a high functioning Down syndrome child (after all Martin's campaigns to raid my kitchen in the wee hours of the morning would rival any military invasion).

When Martin spotted me, he put on an ear-to-ear grin, flung his arms out wide and ran toward me as fast as his chubby little legs would take him. He gave me a bear hug and tipped his head up to look at me. I told him that he didn't look sick to me. I asked if his tummy hurt, "NO" he replied, "NO Hurt." So I asked, "So why did you cry at school and tell them that your tummy hurt?" He hung his head for a second and then beamed me his best "kissing up" smile, "Miss you Mom Dad!!! AWWWW " At this point he stopped talking to kiss me profusely on both cheeks, then he beamed me another smile, batted his long black eyelashes at me and asked, "GO EAT?"



Any suggestions for dealing with regression in adoptive sons?

ddlong@aol.com

My husband and I adopted three boys ages 6, 4 and 4 through a state adoption in June. We have had the boys for almost a year. I keep dealing with the regression in behaviors. I guess I just need someone to tell me that it will get better. Or if that has not been your experience a word of encouragement to keep on in the path God has lead me.



Anybody else get so discouraged by their adopted children's behaviors that they're ready to lock themselves in their own rooms for good and just pray?

Please respond to this letter by e-mailing a note to nathanews@aol.com addressed to: "Help for mother adopted 2 1/2 year old"

We adopted our girl at 2 1/2 and have had many, many successes with her, but some things just haven't changed or are getting worse. She's 4 now and her behavior is just about destroying any vestige of peace we've ever had in our house.

She requires constant, continuous, assiduous supervision to keep her from destroying possessions, hurting the dog and cats, and injuring herself. She spends nights confined to a crib now, meals confined to a high chair and we're in the process of putting latches on every interior door to help hinder her search and destroy missions. She can't talk, but swears volubly at us throughout the day (it's like the symbols used to express swearing in cartoons...we can't make out any words but she gets her opinions across.) She hits and kicks me and is defiant nearly 100% of the time. She also has medical issues that require daily, intrusive, care. She swears through all of that too, and cries as if I'm killing her when I'm trying to keep her alive.

Our homeschool for her older sister is in tatters although every day I'm trying and trying. Now we're doing most of the homeschooling after the 4 year old is in bed - keeping the 6 year old up late and letting her sleep late just to have some time to teach and be together without having to restrain the little one. At night I stay up late just so I can stand by her crib and pray. The mental health worker, OT, PT, SLP, family physician...nobody has any answers for us although we do hear a lot of what we call "psychobabble" (we know our daughter was severely neglected and abused before God brought her home to us...but we have found that often the advice we receive is basically to give her a license to control the household and this, we've learned, we must not do). She'd been doing so

well and boom....over the last five months she has fallen apart completely.

Nobody has any answers I know, but are there other parents out there who have survived this kind of assault by their children and come out the other side? Any encouragement out there? Any suggestions as to how to keep the household going during these kinds of behaviors? I feel like a jailer not a mother. I pray and pray and it gives me the courage to at least get up in the morning, but any peace I accrue so quickly crumbles as her time outs increase and our plans for the day dissolve.



Family sharing thoughts on blending into a church family when you have a child with disabilities...

Please respond to this letter by e-mailing a note to : nathanews@aol.com addressed to "Finding a church family"

Our family has been looking for a church for almost 2 yrs. When we first moved to this area 3 yrs ago we attended a nice church for about 5 months, and we basically left because of our son. Our little boy is diagnosed as MMR, apraxia of speech, dyspraxia, with sensory issues. I went to the Sunday School/ Childrens Church workers and explained my sons disabilities, I had to explain to about 20 people because they have a lot of rotation. They did not seem happy about having him in class, he was constantly in trouble, every time after church he was in trouble, they rarely explained what he was in trouble for, usually they

would say "he just can't get used to us" .

Well finally we just quit Sunday school and kept him in church with us, but he was upset because he wanted to go with the other kids. Well anyway we ended up leaving the church and mostly had Bible studies/ devotions at home.

This past year we started church hunting again. Now our son is 5 and he sits just fine through a regular church service. We allow him to have something quiet to fidget with. However we visited a church last Sunday that seems great and we are going back tomorrow and praying for God's will in staying there. It is a very small church, about 30 people . My husband and I would like to be able to attend Sunday School, which we have not done since we left our old church.

Sorry, I am going to get to my point here! I wonder if all the problems in our old church were partly my fault, did I not explain things well enough or handle it correctly? We really want our son to have a positive experience with church, not for it to be a place were he feels unwanted and is constantly in trouble.

I do not at this point even know how to approach the Sunday school teachers to explain or what to do . I am not good at this. I tried to enroll my son in Kindermusik last year, went to the teacher and explained about his disabilities, etc. and she reacted SO negatively. I flat out asked her if she would accept him in

her class and she said "well I HAVE to accept him". Needless to say I did not enroll him.

So what do you say? I don't even know how to bring it up, I tried to explain to a librarian about apraxia so he could go to story time and she thinks he is deaf because he uses sign language. I am sorry, I know I am rambling on. My little guy wants to go to Sunday school, asks to go, he wants to play soccer and t-ball, wants to be and do everything, and I don't know what to even say to the Sunday school teacher so he can go.



Biblical Child Training for Special Needs Children

Please respond to this letter by e-mailing a note to nathanews@aol.com addressed to "Biblical Child Training"

I believe that Biblical discipline in all its aspects (teaching, admonishing, physical correction) is more vital with children with neurological/behavioral challenges, not less. I see many parents who believe that because a child doesn't know he or she is doing wrong, physical correction should not be used, or only as a last resort. I believe this is the wrong approach. Physical correction works best when it is consistently used as the first response to the behavior you want to stop. Training has to be applied consistently for it to be effective, and if the correction comes only after a verbal "no" and/or lecture is used several times, then it is meaningless.

We begin physical correction at about five months of age, with a flick of the fingertip on the hand when the child reaches for something, along with a firm "No." This sets the stage for a child's understanding of what "no" means.

If parents bathe their discipline in prayer, love, and Biblical wisdom, they are helping their children, not hurting them.

When I said that physical correction should be used, I don't mean that I would spank a child for an activity like head-banging, self-

stimulation, verbal tics, etc. I believe that would be like punishing a child for the color of his eyes, or for bedwetting. I have dealt with these behaviors with my own children, and never felt the need to punish for them.

Many things that children (all children, but especially those with disabilities) do are not wrong, they are just irritating for the parents or perhaps embarrassing in public. Parents need to be loving and accepting of these unique aspects of their children's makeup, even while they may want to help them overcome these behaviors if possible.

That said, I'm convinced that a child who should not be punished for head banging should still be punished if he kicks the baby. I've seen too many parents who will not punish a child's wrongdoing because of a disability.



Self Stim issues...How Can I Help My Child Stop?

Please respond to this letter by e-mailing a note to nathanews@aol.com addressed to: "Self stim issues, how to stop"

My daughter has self stim issues. I have heard conflicting advice on how to "deal" with these issues. When I first read an article about self stim, I tried to learn more about it. The only web sites that talked about it were web sites on Autism and the I-can-do and NACD. This terrified me. I thought my child had both Ds and Autism. I cried for two weeks. I-Can Do and NACD claim we MUST stop this activity. I tried and I can't stop it. I posted questions about self stim and no one responded. I have allowed this issue to cause a lot of anxiety and stress for me, because I feel guilt when my daughter stims and that is nearly all the time. Can you tell me a little bit about self stim?

I tried to read a bit about it. From what I have read, the children never truly give up their self stim. They may replace it with another more acceptable stim, (and sometimes a less acceptable stim) or they simply learn to stim

when no one is looking.

I also talked to a woman who works with children with sensory issues. She told me that this is part of who my daughter is. She told me to stop worrying about it. Do you agree?



Another Perspective on Self-Stim

My nine year old son has several stims, and some sensory issues also. I can only give you a mother's perspective - I am not an expert by any means. When he was smaller, he had what was to me an unacceptable self-stim, which I broke him of by telling him, over and over and over, "Take your hand out of your pants." I said this very calmly no matter how often I had to repeat it. He did finally stop that, and simply did more of other stims (finger-sucking, ear-rubbing).

When he exhibits a behavior which is really unacceptable (like booger-eating), I persistently tell him not to do it, and he will turn to something that is more acceptable. Once or twice I did punish him - not because of the stim, but because I saw him deliberately sneaking to do it behind my back. I told him this was a form of lying, and I punished it only because in my judgment he had tried to deceive me. For the most part, I looked at it as helping him to stop a bad habit, not punishing for something. Stimming did not disappear, but eventually those two unacceptable behaviors did. I'm talking over the course of a couple years of consistent reminders.

As he has gotten older, his stimming has gotten less frequent. Mostly bedtime or when bored. I don't believe it is reasonable to expect a child to stop all stimming. That would be so stressful! I try to teach him to be able to function around other people, which means that I discourage stimming in public. Actually, though, he avoids it himself, because as he has gotten older it has become embarrassing. So he does very little stimming when others are around. He can only keep that up for so long, though, then he explodes in a stimming, spinning frenzy when finally in a private (safe) place. If he begins stimming in a public place, I try to discover what

has stressed him out and try to remove him or help him calm down. I think school would be incredibly stressful for him, and am glad to be able to homeschool.

I would say, accept that stimming is something that meets a genuine need. And don't feel guilty. Your child is a wonderful human being created by God, different from anyone else on earth. Love her just the way she is. I believe our first responsibility is to teach them right from wrong. Stimming is not wrong, just different. Of course, the world (medical experts included) has its own perspective, and values success above morality. Encourage her to be kind toward others, enjoy her company, trust your own judgment as a mom as to what really meets her needs, and don't worry so much.



Editor's Perspective on Self Stim

We too have found that as our children got older, the self stim behavior gradually diminished. Although not altogether.

Lynny, our daughter who is 13, can keep herself under control when she wants to. However, laughter stimming is still her one indulgence. We generally overlook it if she is in an appropriate situation and not disturbing anyone. Of main importance to us is that she stops when we ask her to and uses good judgment when to "giggle—stim" . On the bright side, we were on a trip for a weekend and left her in the capable care of a couple in our home. Their one comment about Lynny... "Boy, she sure is a happy child!"

Lynny has over the years, rocked, played in her spit, and gone from one stim behavior to the other. Some we totally had no patience for, as they were disturbing to us and others (in church). Others we ignored. As she got older and starting developing, some stim movements were suggestive (she was totally unaware that they were, of course,) but for her safety we did not allow those to continue.



Touchy Issues...

Please respond to this letter by e-mailing a note to nathanews@aol.com addressed to "Touchy Issues"

I have a 5 year old son with apraxia/dyspraxia and sensory issues. He is our only child. Having him around other children is a major issue, as he simply will not keep his hands to himself. He is always grabbing, hugging, hitting, pushing, pulling, just touching everyone in any way he can. At home he is always sitting on me or his Dad. We don't mind this, but when he has been in group settings (like library story time) he wants to sit on or lean on other kids. It is getting to the point where I do not want to take him to the playground or to group functions because it is a constant battle, and I always have to deal with these angry moms because he touched/pushed/kissed/slapped their child. Anyone with some experience or advice please help. He loves people and I don't want to deny him the chance to make friends. Thanks.

.....

When Socialization IS an Issue. Help for Children who have Sensory Issues

There is a speaker who gives such a talk. Her name is Melinda Boring. Check out her website www.HeadsUpNow.com. She sells lots of great helps for home schoolers dealing with the mystery of sensory integration dysfunction. She also likes to give one to one help via email and even makes a few rounds on the home school convention circuit.

With that long commercial out of the way....

1. Pray specifically asking the Lord to help bring victory in this area. If you need help with a daily scripture based prayer guide, check out www.childrenofdestiny.org
2. For special kids, social skills have to be taught, not caught. And it is hard to teach it. But you can do it. Depending on the verbal abil-

ity of the child, you can use Social Stories to help. You can role play to practice. And you may even need to help with some fancy gadget. For example a child who needs to touch and be touched for a true need of their sensory diet may benefit from the weighted vest.

Check with your child's OT for ideas. Always ask the OT and ST for help in this matter. These are the things that don't easily show up on those sensory profiles, but have to come from parents telling them "This bothers us and little Johnny can't function in public because of this lack of social ability." It may be some simple little thing to do before and after the playground time.

3. They have to practice the skills. Find one of your friends who is willing to work with you. Sometimes others in our churches have NO idea what we go through as parents of kids with "SI" problems. But when they find out that we feel isolated, they want to help. Invite them over to play at your house before trying to go out to the playgrounds and parks with strangers.

Our kids need the practice. But -- it has to be a mom that you know well enough to be able to be open about it. Let that other mom know that you will step in to stop injury and that you will remove your child (discipline) if needed. Many moms are willing to let everyone have second chances. It's hard to ask for that specific help -- but you can do it. Work with your existing friends to help set the socially acceptable boundaries. I've even been on the other end of that --- I am the adult who is willing to play with the autistic child, but not let them touch me even though I really don't mind it from a 5 year old. I know that if the pattern of touching continues, it will be a problem when they are older.

So they need practice with children and adults. And it is ok to say "you can hug and snuggle Mommy, but not Mrs. Smith."

4. Use a consistent "cue" phrase (for example hands to your side) and help them learn what that means.
5. Keep the instructions simple (one step direc-

tions) during the training process.

Expect a higher level of behavior and teach them to get there. It will take longer, and the changes do NOT happen overnight. But they do happen with lots of help.

Been there, still there, but making a lot of progress!!!

.....

I need help and advice with my precious 5 year old son.

He came to me at 5 weeks old. I adopted him as a single parent and also have a 7 year old son and a 1 year old daughter. Micah has microcephaly, deaf in one ear, and very low vision. Developmentally, he's 3-4 years old. Although Micah can be so sweet and loving and funny, he also has daily temper tantrums. When told not to do something he will quickly do it. He is very bossy to adults and often hits me and calls me names. Or he will bang his whole body against me. He cannot sit through a meal and feed himself. The only way to get through a church service is to let him have a blankie and pacifier, as he CANNOT keep his mouth quiet. Micah never goes to sleep without a pacifier and it has ruined his teeth. I cannot take him shopping anymore. I had been homeschooling my children but have very recently put both of the boys in school because I must have a break. Micah adores his older brother and is very mean and jealous of his baby sister. The other two children are fine, Praise God! I am in the process of having Micah evaluated for medication. Any advice would be greatly appreciated. Please understand that Micah is loved and cherished. Believe it or not, we are very bonded. You are also welcome to e-mail me directly if you wish at denverhouse@earthlink.net.

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I am looking for answers that seem to be hard to find.

I adopted my five-year-old from Russia when she was 11 months old. There are so many

NATHHAN Web page

What does www.nathhan.org have for you?

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Discussion board. Live time. Get your questions answered by moms who are competent and experienced. A variety of subjects and responses makes just reading the discussions of others VERY interesting.

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positive things about her...she is bright, loving, athletically gifted... but I am beginning to realize that what I use to describe as my “strong-willed,” “hyper” child maybe a child with some problems. She was doing very well in her little Montessori school. She was the “best behaved” child according to her teachers. But when she came home she was absolutely defiant towards me. Something was not connecting. Cause and effect did not seem to register. I could go on and on about the behavior difficulties at home...the stress and struggle of just getting through basic tasks like getting ready for bed and then for school the next morning were almost insurmountable. So I decided to home school. Now my husband is beginning to understand that something is not right.

I don't know for sure yet if we have a child that fits somewhere on the spectrum of an FAE child. But it is growing more and more apparent that something is not adding up. I read that Montessori is the best environment for FAE Kids. But I don't know if home schooling was ever considered in that article? Does anyone with an FAE child know anything about a comparison of Montessori to home schooling for FAE kids? I am trying to find the best answers for my child. Any comments or suggestions would be appreciated. Sincerely, Jenna
cbovermann@houston.rr.com

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Sensory Resources

www.SensoryResources.com

At Sensory Resources we specialize in sensory issues and are dedicated to maintaining high-quality products. We offer books on ADHD, OT, auditory processing, Asperger syndrome, early sensory skills, the out-of-sync-child, sensory integration, and many more topics.

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www.standingdani.com

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The Standing Dani® Wheelstand is an excellent means for achieving the proven benefits of dynamic weight bearing through the lower extremities. Strengthening of the bones, joint development, stretching of the ankle, knee, hip flexors and abdominal muscles are realized when using a wheelstand. Stretching the lower extremities and strengthening the upper body is the accepted regimen for preparing a child for gait training. The Standing Dani® Wheelstand does both while the child is rolling about, playing. Functions such as respiration and digestion are also enhanced while upright. Incidences of constipation and bladder infection are reduced when standing is a part of the daily regimen.

1-866-742-0581

I'm writing to see if there might be another Christian homeschooling family, who has an FAS child that could be a mentor/ friend to us.

Dear Nathhan News,

We adopted our daughter in 1997 at age two. We also have three sons (biological) all older than our daughter. We are committed to this child, but as we step into puberty, I'm feeling increasingly lost. I won't go into details at this time, but if you've adopted a child with FAS and know of some resources or have advice, we'd sure welcome it. I don't want her to be treated as a "specimen" or to be put on drugs or to be put in some program where she'll be taught who-knows-what, but we do need some help. Thanks for your time, Cheryl gardnin_gal@yahoo.com

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PLEASE HELP! I read a comment in one of the Pearl's No Greater Joy books where they referred to your site, that masturbation is a real problem with many disabled kids.

I am writing to you even though my daughter is not disabled, because I have never heard this mentioned elsewhere.

Could you please give me some guidance on how to handle a recent discovery of her masturbating? She is 23 months (almost 2) and I am so dismayed. She has not been touching herself, but rather grinds and flexes muscles until she has obviously derived some pleasure from it.

While I can distract her and engage her in some other activity, the fact that she has now derived pleasure is cause for concern. I feel she has already aroused and awakened love before it so desires as stated in Song of Solomon. It seems it is beyond simply distracting her such as is done when toddlers merely explore and fondle themselves. How do I get to her heart in the matter when she is so young for me to explain it, and what scripture supports that masturbation is wrong. Oh, I know there are several people quote, but none specifically mention masturbation.

This was a real problem for me as a child and into adulthood. What do I do to stop this before it becomes an equally addictive pattern and cause of self-loathing in her life (not to mention

the displeasure of God) PLEASE PLEASE HELP! Thank you,

A sister in Christ.

Please respond to this letter by e-mailing a note to nathanews@aol.com addressed to "Please, Please help"

.....

Suggestions?

I was enlightened by your article. I have a child who was pushed away by his biological mother the first 2 years or so. Now a step mom is raising him. I get no feeling at all this family is Christian.

This boy will not allow me to teach my class--refuses to work, sings, makes animal noises, chatters to himself. When I have to remove him, he won't go unless I call the office. He spent 2.5 months last year in a psychiatric unit of a hospital. He is on a lot of anti-psychotic medication.

Do you have any suggestions (or good resources) on dealing with this in a public school classroom?

Thank you so much ~Linda missj218@cox.net

"You made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Job 22:21

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My 11-year-old son has just been labeled learning disabled by a specialist.

We've home schooled him thus far. His reading is on a 2nd grade level. My concern is whether or not I should take him to a pediatric neurologist, ophthalmologist, etc. He is active but I wouldn't say he has ADD.

Can you recommend any reading programs that I might try with him? I really don't know where to begin. Thanks, Dayel Giammarino The8Gs@aol.com

A group of ladies from our sister church told me about you all. Our son, Isaiah, is 3 years old and will be 4 in October. He was born premature, has a trach and paralyzed vocal cords. We think that he can hear pretty well, but can't speak, so we've been learning and teaching him Sign language. He has the opportunity to go to a nearby public school that has a special needs pre-school program in 2 weeks, but my husband and I, along with my friend who is a speech pathologist, don't feel like the school will be able to teach him according to his needs (ex. teaching sign language, getting/keeping his attention, etc). We're seeking the Lord's guidance and wisdom on what direction to go in for Isaiah. If we can't find a school nearby that will be able to teach Sign Language, along with his other needs, I may homeschool him, but I would need a curriculum and help on how and where to start.

Do you know of specific resources to help us? Please let me know if you can help.
Yours In Christ,
Caryn Adinig
sean_caryn@earthlink.net
(Stay at home mom of a 3 and 1 year old)

.....

Dear Friends,

I have a 7th grade Autistic son who I just started home-schooling. I would greatly appreciate any advice or suggestions in selecting his curriculum, etc. I don't really know anything, except that he wasn't getting what he needed in public school.
Thank you.

Karen McConathy
karenmcconathy@hotmail.com

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Tomatis Method of Therapy / Dealing With Therapists and Choices

Dear Nathhan/Chask Friends-

I value your advice and am in need of some objective thoughts on a dilemma I have concerning one of my son's therapists. I will try my best to make it concise.

Charles is 6-years-old now, will be 7 in Oct. I have him in a unique therapy program which you may have heard of--it is called Tomatis. I heard about this therapy at a special needs conference. I believe it is helping him, slowly, but that is not my problem.

First I need to tell you how this therapy is performed. The Tomatis method utilizes a set of headphones which completely covers the ears, and the child swings for a great portion of the time, and then does some other activities as well---for a total of 2 hours each day. There are 3 "loops" of therapies, the first loop being 15 days and the following loops being 8 consecutive days, with a month break in between the "loops".

So it is an intensive intervention as you can see, and the children respond well usually, after they get the routine down. My Charles loves to swing--it was the headphones that were the initial problem. The very first day Charles did not understand, nor did he like the headphones--he does not generally like folks "messing with" his ears. The initial response of the therapist was that Charles has the "mommy bug---BAD" (translation:major dependence on Mom).

In the conversation that day, while the assistants were dealing with my crying, resistant child, the therapist and I talked and he discovered that I homeschool all of my 4 children, and we discussed our ed. philosophies. He has a special needs child himself.

(This therapy helps to re-train the vestibular area of the ear, to help with balance, with communication, with sensory issues---it really seems to work. It was developed by a Dr. Tomatis in France--he was an ENT---there is a website-I think it is **www.Tomatis.net**---also

there is a lady who wrote a book about her daughter having been helped by this therapy-- her website is www.AwakeningAshley.com---the book is entitled the same-Awakening Ashley.)

I will try to bring you up to "today"--Charles is in his 3rd and final loop. Today was day 3 of this 8-day loop. In five days we will be done with the initial program, but it is often advised to continue this every couple of months, depending on the needs of the child. My child will most likely be advised to come back for follow-up b/c his cerebral palsy is moderate to severe.

---Anyway, Charles has gone in to the therapies these past 3 days very upset. And I am blaming it on things other than his being so attached to me, but the therapist is continuing to blame it on my being there always with him/for him. He asked me today to describe any times that Charles is regularly without me---well, I did have to hesitate because it has never, with any of my children, been a goal of mine to be sure they have time with another person, without me present. There are times it does happen, as a natural course of our lifestyle--however, it is infrequent, it is with an extended family member or church-family member, and it is not during therapy times, because until this therapy it was looked on as an asset that I was there (to be clear on this---Tomatis is truly a no-parent involved-type of therapy, as the child is totally immersed in the process--so all the parents either sit in the waiting room or run errands---and I am fine with that-I have never begged to be in there or anything like that, I understand the nature of this therapy, and cheerfully say, as I help him thru the doorway, "Have fun swinging, Charles").

----I do want to say, if Charles is well rested, if his life is going "normal", he seems to have very little problem with going in for his therapy there--and today, for instance, he calmed down quickly, they reported, and came out happy.

So to try to get to my questions---I am trying to decide whether or not to continue this, when they offer me the follow-up visits---my problem is the person, not the therapy--and there are only 6-8 Tomatis centers in the U.S.

I told the therapist today, when he began with, "Charles has cried every day this loop..." that I do not believe it is because he has a problem leaving

me---this week we have had extenuating circumstances-my husband was out of town from Monday to Friday, and Charles' little brother had an accident.

The therapist was responsive to my ideas about Charles' emotional state, but then he encouraged me to check into getting a CAP worker for Charles because, he said, "poor Charles and poor mom" never get a break from each other. (CAP is community alternatives program, a service provided so that someone can be a helper to a child like this and they can work on "community" involvement one-on-one without the parent having to be there.)

At this point, I suppose you are thinking--"this is a no-brainer, drop the guy"---but the therapy is really good for him!--I can see progress in communication for sure, and I am anxious to see other progress in other areas.

Just give me some pointers on how you might go about this.

THANKS,

Cynthia Broaddrick
grunionman@juno.com

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I am a home-schooling mother with a Spina Bifida child(9yrs old).

She is delayed in reading and is having trouble with the concept of counting. I started out teaching the A Beka curriculum but found she needed a much slower pace for learning. Where can I go for a guideline as to appropriate goals to set for her? Is there a list of goals that would be specific for her that I could choose from? How do I tailor her tests so that they focus on her level- do I have to develop them myself?

Your help is appreciated.

Erica Goats
rag3erg3@sbcglobal.net

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I am trying to determine a course for home schooling my 5 year old son with special needs. I am really struggling with the amount of in-

formation and products available. Do you have anything that might provide insight into how to go about home schooling a child with special needs? (non-verbal, triplegic but bright). I am worried about purchasing products that are not realistic for where my son is or how he processes information. (I do not feel that he is at the K level yet so have fears about just starting at that level.)

Any help or information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance.
Dawn Caldwell
dcaldwell011@comcast.net

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Hi, do you have any information about educational needs of kids with OCD or anxiety? Do you know if there are any special "styles" of teaching or curriculum that would help things go smoother?

Thanks, Shirley

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We would like to find other parents who have children with DOWN SYNDROME, for support and encouragement.

Please, we will love to meet parents with this same situation. Thanks
marcuswilliam253@yahoo.com

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I have a son who is a delayed learner, and I am wondering if he may have dyslexia. I am very hesitant to get his pediatrician involved since they wanted him to be under a therapist to improve his skills. I have worked and worked with him and he has improved dramatically. However, I am wondering if there


is some way for him to be evaluated outside of his pediatrician. If I knew what his problem was, I feel I could help him myself. Do you have any suggestions or advice for me? He is just turning 7 and can read, but it takes so much effort for him, and I spend far more time helping and explaining things to him than I have to my other children. Thanks so much for your interest!
Carrie Grubbs carrie@lifechangingseminars.com

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I am a disabled, unemployed, Christian, homeschooling Mom to a 10 year old boy with ADHD/ODD/Asperger's syndrome. His negative behaviors made people at my old church very uncomfortable and often caused them to treat my son badly. We don't attend church anymore.

What can you suggest, at no cost, to help my son understand and accept Jesus Christ despite the way some Christians view and treat him?

Thanks,
Rose Edward
redward@twcny.rr.com



Cogno's Corner

If you and an elephant were floating in space and you pushed on the elephant, which of you would move away from the starting point faster?

a) you
b) the elephant
c) both at the same speed
d) the duck

answer in lower right

See the answer explained at
www.yourpublication.com/cogno

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Resource Review

The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills

The **ABLBS** is an assessment, curriculum guide, and skills tracking system for children with language delays. The ABLBS contains a task analysis of the many skills necessary to communicate successfully and to learn from everyday experiences. It is comprised of two separate documents: The ABLBS Protocol that is used to record scores for each child, and The ABLBS Scoring Instructions and IEP Development Guide (The ABLBS Guide).

BASIC LEARNER SKILLS ASSESSMENT

- A. Cooperation and Reinforcer Effectiveness
- B. Visual Performance
- C. Receptive Language
- D. Imitation
- E. Vocal Imitation
- F. Requests
- G. Labeling
- H. Intraverbals
- I. Spontaneous Vocalizations
- J. Syntax and Grammar
- K. Play and Leisure
- L. Social Interaction
- M. Group Instruction

- N. Follow Classroom Routines
- P. Generalized Responding

ACADEMIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT

- Q. Reading Skills
- R. Math Skills
- S. Writing Skills
- T. Spelling

SELF-HELP SKILLS ASSESSMENT

- U. Dressing Skills
- V. Eating Skills
- W. Grooming
- X. Toileting Skills

MOTOR SKILLS ASSESSMENT

- Y. Gross Motor Skills
- Z. Fine Motor Skills

APPENDICES:

The current book, *The ABLBS Protocol*, provides both parents and professionals with criterion-referenced information regarding a child's current skills, and provides a curriculum that can serve as a basis for the selection of educational objectives. The ABLBS Protocol also includes a set of grids that comprise a skills tracking system that makes it possible to observe and document a child's progress in the acquisition of critical skills.

Too Wise To Be Mistaken Too Good To Be Unkind

Written By Cathy Steere - A family dealing with autism, professionals, homeschooling and successfully using Biblical child training

—An excellent book recommended by many NATHHAN families. This book has literally changed the lives of many families dealing with autism or special needs children with extra challenging behavior.

Grace and Truth Books
3406 Summit Boulevard
Sand Springs, OK 74063
(918) - 245-1500

NATHHAN Resource Review continued...

The ABLLS Protocol is not intended to be used without The ABLLS Guide. Instructions regarding the use of The ABLLS Protocol (scoring and completing the skills tracking grids for an individual student) are provided in The ABLLS Guide.

The ABLLS Guide serves two purposes. First, it provides instructions for scoring and completing the skills tracking grids for an individual student. Second, it provides strategies to assist parents, educators, and other professionals to use the information obtained from the completed assessment protocol to develop an effective IEP for a child.

The ABLLS Protocol and The ABLLS Guide are two books in a series of publications from Behavior Analysts, Inc., that can help parents and educators with the process of identifying specific skills that should be the focus of intervention for a child with language delays.

The Assessment of Basic Learning and Language Skills is published by Behavior Analysts, Inc. www.behavioranalysts.com and looks like it's available here as well as through Amazon and a number of special needs bookstores.

Pictures to Teach a Thousand Words

Stages® Learning Materials' real photographic picture cards are ideal for teaching basic language skills to children and adults with learning delays.

Stages® product line features up-to-date, real pictures that capture and hold the students attention. The products include: The Language Builder Noun and Occupation sets, The Lang-O-Learn® Series and now, Real Life Learning Posters.

The **Language Builder: Picture Noun Cards** include 350 cards divided into nine categories of animals, foods, vehicles, clothing, furniture, toys, shapes, colors and everyday objects. The set includes similar and identical images designed to teach basic matching skills, as well as individual images which are perfect for teaching receptive and expressive language, sorting, adjectives, functions, storytelling and more. Some images are on plain white backgrounds to reduce confusion, while others appear in their natural settings to promote generalization.

The **Language Builder: Occupation Cards** feature 115 cards depicting both men and women in the most common occupations. Meeting the NAEYC (National Association of Education for Young Children) standards for gender and ethnicity within education, these cards are great for labeling, role-playing, storytelling and other imaginative play.

The **Lang-O-Learn® Series** includes the most popular cards from our large Noun Set, broken down by category into five smaller sets. You can get a 50 card food set, a 50 card everyday objects set, a 30 card animal set, a 20 card vehicle set and a 20 card clothing set. As an added feature, the Lang-O-Learn® cards are also labeled on the reverse side in 17 common languages. This set is great for ESL and foreign language learners, as well as basic language and speech practice in English.

Stages® most recent addition, the **Real Life Learning Posters**, consist of four sets: 10 farm animals, 10 wild animals, 14 fruits & vegetables and six community helpers. Enlarged to 14" X 19" and printed on heavy cardstock, the posters are great for small group discussions and decorating the walls of classrooms, doctors' offices, nutritionists' offices and therapists' offices. The posters also provide a great transition for students going from one-on-one learning to a classroom setting.

Stages® Learning Materials is committed to offering you the best photo teaching tools possible. For more information on any of Stages® products, call us toll free at: **888-501-8880** or look for our products in educational stores and catalogs.

Stages® Learning Materials provides quality teaching tools for every stage of development.

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Chores and Children with Special Needs: Practical Ideas for Teaching our Children to Help in the Home

Written and compiled by Diane Ryckman and her Host of Advisors (Moms) Working in the Field with Children Who are Disabled!

Diane Ryckman lives in West Creston, BC with her family. She is homeschooling her children, including her son Andrew, who has Down syndrome. Both she and her husband, John, have served on the NATHHAN board for over 5 years. Diane also has written numerous articles for NATHHAN and currently is helping with editing each NATHHAN NEWS.



found is, like with most parenting this is more caught than taught. Yes, the basic skills must be taught, but the love for helping is caught...A good work ethic among my other children has really helped Isannah become a big helper.” (Ginee)

“We are actually big on chores here so Heidi (almost 10) has been seeing it done for years.” (Maureen)

“Janette (age 10) actually enjoys doing most chores, as she loves to imitate me in whatever I’m doing.” (Becky)

“I do have my Mary Anne (age 9) do several chores. This seems to give a great feeling of accomplishment and she is usually quite proud of her work. She also feels just like everyone else and desires to help.” (Lyn)

It is important that we as parents teach our children to do chores. Our kids need to learn that they are responsible to help in the running of the household – that they are part of a team called “family” who work together to get things done as we take care of one another.

There are many things we can do to make learning chores easier for our children with special needs. When Sherry asked me to write this article, I went to my favorite source for practical ideas – fellow moms like you and me! Each mom quoted below is homeschooling a child with Down syndrome. Here are some principles for teaching chores that I’ve gleaned from their wisdom and experience.

1. Provide positive role models. Children learn by example and attitude, both yours and those of their brothers and sisters:

“Isannah is 4 years old. She has been helping with certain chores for about a year now. What I have

2. Establish a routine. When a child knows what is expected of him, and when, things tend to get done with greater cooperation and success.

“We have posted a simple list to help Andrew remember what he needs to do at bedtime. Andrew loves to read it to his younger sister as they work down the list and get ready for bed.” (Diane)

“We use a lot of music cues in our home: a clean-up song when it’s time to put away toys; help your teacher song when it’s time to put school things away (we homeschool); a dinner and a bedtime song. It makes the chores fun and the kids seem to move in rhythm to the music. Some of the songs are more upbeat, while the bedtime and quiet time songs are slower and sung quietly.” (Carol)

3. Pair your child with a helper – either a parent or a brother or sister. As you teach your child a new chore, begin by giving your child responsibility for only a small part of the chore, then increase your child’s responsibility as he is able. One way of doing this is called backward chaining.

Backward chaining is a technique used for teaching skills that are a chain of separate steps always performed in the same order. Initially you do most of the steps, but teach the child to do the last one. When the child is ready, you teach the next to last step, so he is able to do more of the skill. Continue teaching the skill working backwards through the chain of steps, gradually transferring more and more responsibility to the child. By doing it this way, the most familiar part of the skill is at the end, so that if any difficulty occurs, the child can move on from it right into success. (Amy)

4. Use visual cues to help your child remember parts of the chore such as pictures, lists, stickers, etc. These help to increase your child’s independence in fulfilling their responsibilities.

“I guess the biggest difference between teaching Debbie and the others about chores is that she needs more visual aids to help her do a job properly...” (Anne Marie)

“I do find that repetition and visual cues are very important to Isannah’s success.” (Ginee)

5. Make adaptations. Provide tools that are easy for your child to handle, or adapt them by cutting them down to size. Place what your child needs where it is easily accessible.

6. Have realistic expectations. Don’t expect perfection, but patiently teach and teach and teach again. Make sure your child is capable of what you expect him to do, and don’t discourage him by giving him too much at once. Work him into his responsibilities gradually.

“In general, Heidi is very happy to do chores and will try anything. But as with any kid doing chores, we have to be willing to accept that

the job may not be done as we would do it. Just encourage, praise and demonstrate. I really have seen that Heidi enjoys being helpful and getting into cleaning or whatever we are doing. As in all, we just teach and explain and each time it gets better.” (Maureen)

7. Reward their efforts. Let your children know how much you appreciate their help. Your praise is so important to them!

“Our boys aren’t always real cooperative when it comes to doing chores so we’ve tried many different kinds of rewards for variety. Right now they each have a graph on the refrigerator with one inch squares. There are 3 for each day of the week. After completing a chore they pick a sticker to put on the chart. When the chart is full they get a prize. It makes chores more fun and them more agreeable.” (Linda)

“Janette will vacuum, and come find me, bring me back to the room she’s vacuumed and say Ta-da!” (Becky)

“Both kids truly enjoy being helpful. Like Becky, we have lots of “Ta-Da’s” and praise.” (Carol)

“I guess I will second everything everyone else said, especially the “ta-das” (Janet)

For more ideas on teaching chores, the book Steps to Independence: Teaching Everyday Skills to Children with Special Needs comes highly recommended as a how-to reference for parents.

“This is an EXCELLENT book! It goes into great detail on how to teach skills.” (Amy) From the website: “...this lively book gives parents of children from age 3 through young adulthood proven strategies for teaching children the life skills they’ll need to live as independently as possible.” For more information see

www.brookespublishing.com.

Practical Chores

So, what kind of practical chores can we teach

our children with mild to moderate special needs? Here are some of the things these moms of children with Down syndrome are working on with their children. I hope they inspire and encourage you as much as they have me!!

Setting the table:

“Isannah (age 4) helps by setting the dishes around the table. One of the older children will take the plates to the table and she will set them at each person’s place.” (Ginee)

“I have drawn a plate, silverware, glass, and napkin under the fork with black permanent marker on a colored vinyl place mat. We have a place mat for each member of our family with their name on the top-center; each person has a different color. It makes setting the table easier for someone just learning how to do it. They also learn how to read each family member’s name as they put the place mat in the right spot.” (Linda)

“Mary Anne (age 9) helps set the table every night. I set the plates and she just sets the napkins and utensils.” (Lyn)

“Andrew (age 10) enjoys setting the table. We keep our dishes in a cupboard under the counter so that each of our children are able to get at them. As our older kids are often away, Andrew has to ask me how many places to set, then counts out the number of cups, plates, utensils, etc. and sets them around the table.” (Diane)

Clearing the table:

“Everyone takes their dishes to the kitchen sink or counter after meals (including mom and dad).” (Carol)

Doing dishes:

“Mary Anne (age 9) has also helped put rinsed dishes on a large towel to dry.” (Lyn)

“Patrick (age 11) will put away the silverware from the dishwasher. He is too short even standing on a stool to put away the dishes. He has washed the cups and smaller plates...much to my surprise, very well and no playing in the water. He also washes the counters as he hates to see messes.” (Janet)

Preparing food:

“Debbie (age 12) can use the microwave to make snacks or other simple things. We use a chart to let her know how long each item goes in, again with a picture of the item and then the sequence of buttons to push.” (Anne Marie)

“Andrew (age 10) loves to make his own porridge for breakfast. I marked the measuring cups he needs to use with a “w” for water (3/4 cup) and an “o” for oatmeal (1/3 cup). Since he’s been helping me turn on the microwave oven for years (a practical tool for teaching number recognition!), he only needs to remember how long to cook the porridge (11/2 minutes). We keep the oatmeal down where he can get at it easily.” (Diane)

“I have been taking Patrick (age 11) into the kitchen daily. He cuts food, stirs, pours, mixes, puts items in the microwave and sets the timer, and we are learning to measure. He can make simple items – jello, pudding, soup, juice, instant mashed potatoes – with verbal prompting and the ingredients pre-measured.” (Janet)

Doing laundry:

“My daughter Debbie (age 12) is learning to do laundry and we have used a mark or stickers to help her know where to set the dial. We just put a mark or sticker on the dial itself, and another at the spot on the outside rim of the dial where she needs to stop turning. This has helped her to become independent.

We also labeled drawers on her dresser in the beginning when we were teaching her to put away her own laundry. 3x5 cards with the picture and word helped her to know where everything went.” (Anne Marie)

Heidi (almost 10) helps to put away kitchen towels. “(sister) Renee puts them all in a basket and Heidi brings them to the kitchen and puts them away. She is quite meticulous about refolding almost everything, so patience is in order on my

part.” (Maureen)

“Isannah (age 4) is supposed to fold all the wash cloths. We gave lots of examples and help her when she gets stuck on folding. She also helps with folding her laundry and putting it away.” (Ginee)

“Janette (age 10) does need occasional help with folding large towels, but does pretty well with small things, hanging clothes, and matching socks. (Matching socks was her first “chore” at age 3 or 4 – we made it into a matching game to teach colors and like/not like.)” (Becky)

“Patrick (age 11) folds clothes and matches socks, though not towels or sheets as they are too big. We are just learning to hold them and do them together with mom.” (Janet)

Feeding pets:

“William (age 4) helps feed the dog each morning. My husband or I put the food in the bowl. William calls the dog and puts his bowl down. William is also responsible to make sure the dog has water. He lets us know when the water is low. We refill the water bowl (about ½ way) then William puts it down on the floor for the dog. He helps let the dog in and out during the day.” (Carol)

Isannah (age 4) is supposed to help with feeding the dog. We worked on getting things in a certain space by pouring things from spoons into smaller containers, like cheerios in a bowl, or beans in a cup. (Ginee)

Vacuuming/sweeping:

“William and Ashley (age 4) take turns vacuuming the bare floors and the family room. We have a small vacuum they can handle.” (Carol)

“Heidi (almost 10) likes to sweep the floor and can do pretty well, but has a bit of trouble with the dustpan.” (Maureen)

Yard work:

“Patrick (age 11) helps daddy with the yard work...holding trash bags open, watering plants, raking (we cut down a rake), sweeping (cut down). Last spring he helped primer a fence, and helped his brother nail some wood together.” (Janet)

Dusting:

“We’re working on dusting. Both kids (age 4) have small ostrich feather dusters. We have lots of fun with that.” (Carol)

Tidying up:

“Both William and Ashley (age 4) are responsible to tidy up their rooms each morning and straighten up their beds. We keep bedding to a minimum. Each child has a laundry basket in their closet for dirty clothes.” (Carol)

“We are working on the chore of cleaning up the living room before Daddy gets home. So far the best way we have found is to have an older child help in the effort. They will get the box for foam letters and then instruct Isannah (age 4) to get all of them. We do not go on to the next toy until that one is totally put away. Moving from one completed task to the next is very helpful for Isannah. She has a hard time multi-tasking and following multiple instructions.” (Ginee)

“As a general rule for everyone in the house, we ask that things get put back where they belong after being used.” (Carol)

Reaping the Benefits

Teaching our children to do chores can take a lot of time and patience, more so when our children have special needs to overcome. Sometimes we will be tempted to say, “I’ll just do it myself.” However, if we don’t give in to that temptation, but rather persevere in encouraging their efforts despite things not being done quite up to our standards, in time we will reap the benefits – and so will they! As Galatians 6:9 reminds us “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

A note from Diane: The wonderful group of ladies who helped to write this article are part of an informal e-mail support group called DownHome-Learning. Anyone homeschooling a child with Down syndrome is welcome to join us. Just contact me (Diane) at ryckman@kootenay.com, and you’ll be added to the list.

Grandpa and Grandma's Corner

(Editor's note: Grandpa and Grandma are Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Sherry Bushnell's parents. They have graciously chosen to spend their golden years serving the Lord and their family through NATHHAN / CHASK.)



Dennis and Linda Lamphere
denlin@integrity.com

Grandpa recalls a time, 60 years ago, when he was 8 years old. Read about how the Lord got His attention and helped him learn to listen to the Lord's "small voice".

We are of the age where reminiscing is a favorite pastime!

The neighbor kids had a new, big, brown horse. My brother and I were invited over to ride this horse. I knew I could do it, even though my experience was limited to the reading of the "Lone Ranger" on his big white horse in the comic books. The neighbor boys convinced me to be first to ride (first mistake). I looked at this huge horse. His eyes were red, he was breathing hard and there was foam coming out of his nostrils. He was hot and sweaty. They got me up on his

back (second mistake). I remember hearing a small quiet voice say, "Don't do this Dennis".

However by this time it was too late. What would the guys think of me? (third mistake) Bolstered by my fear of looking like a chicken, I told myself, "I can do this".

Well, the short version of the rest of the story is that when they let go of the horse in the corral, he started bucking. The ride lasted less than 30 seconds. I landed face down in 10 inches of sloppy mud and manure. All of my proud "I can do anything" spirit was also lying in the mud. I wasn't laughing with my "friends". The joke was on me. It took years to get over this experience.

If only I had listened to the "still small voice" of the Lord warning me (or even my mother's warning)! I could have been spared a number of unnecessary tough experiences. Through the years I have had quite a few experiences of being "knocked off my high horse". These instances were almost always

because I was too hard-headed and self-willed to listen to the Lord's small voice.

Have you ever been knocked off your horse? Even as the Lord knocked the apostle Paul off his horse to get his attention, we too can experience those life changing experiences. I am sure we each have our own stories. The important thing is that we learn to listen before we fall on our face.

I have long since forgiven my friends of the wild horse incident. And after 60 years, I am beginning to recognize how God uses even bad experiences and hardships to humble, change and mold us for His good purposes. I am learning to bend my knee to HIS will, rather than run headlong into my own plan.

The Bible verse "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" I Peter 5: 6-7 is very encouraging to us.

I think I would rather be on my knees than face down in the mud!! How about you?

What life experiences do you use to teach the hearts of your grandchildren? We would love to hear of your experiences.

Currently in America, hundreds of families are homeschooling children whose special needs range from attention deficit disorder to severe multiple handicaps. Parents often find that when they bring these children home to be educated, they come out of the "deep freeze" that has kept them from making significant progress in traditional settings.

For learning disabled children who function best with "real-life problems" rather than artificial worksheet tasks, homeschooling may be ideal. For medically sensitive children, learning at home provides the opportunity for careful monitoring. For attention deficit children who function best with uniquely structured time and fewer distractions, homeschooling usually proves to be the answer.

After hundreds of hours of research, writing and thoughtful graphic design, HSLDA is proud to announce the latest addition to the Home School Legal Defense Association website: Homeschooling a Struggling Learner.

HSLDA Special Needs Coordinator Betty Statnick, and Dianne Craft in the Communications Department and the HSLDA Web Department, have partnered to produce this innovative approach to helping families homeschooling students who learn differently.

Frankly, we all struggle with learning in one way or another, but most of us have learned how to compensate. In the case of struggling students who actually learn differently from the majority of children, the goal is to discover how they learn best, and then to motivate them as they learn.



The decision to homeschool a child with special learning needs is a weighty one. Parents may meet pressure from the school district, or even the state, to enroll their child in the "system." Many encounter criticism from well-meaning family and friends, and most must deal with their own fears of inadequacy. Nevertheless, in record numbers, parents of

special needs children are choosing to home educate, and most are finding that the rewards far outweigh the costs.

Here is help. The heart of HSLDA's new online resource is a series of tools that allow parents to do some analysis on their own. They begin by trying to help parents understand the learning process, so they in turn can understand why their children may not be responding to conventional teaching methods. Then, based on the latest brain research, we explain what experts call "the four learning gates" and offer checklists to help diagnose why a child's particular "learning gate" isn't functioning correctly.

Equally important, they are compiling tried-and-true resources, from techniques parents can implement on their own to programs, books, videos, and organizations offering insight into correcting and compensating for learning



difficulties.

Their hope is that the new web pages will be a great aid to many homeschoolers—and minimize the amount of time and money they spend in search of information.

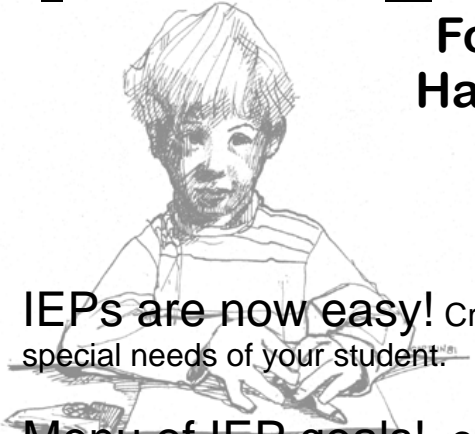
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