

NATHHAN / CHASK

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

Spring / Summer -2006

Volume 14 No. 1



CHASK Adoption Family Hero— The Hildebrands
The Story of Lynn—By Cathy Hildebrand

What It Is Like to Have a Learning Disability

By Stacey Snider

Getting Started With Special Needs Homeschooling

By Diane Ryckman

Understanding and Working With “Math Problems”

By Sharon Hensley

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

Little Lynn is the daughter of a family from China, immigrated to the USA not so long ago. A child born with disability is a complete tragedy to the Chinese. Learn how a CHASK family, the Hildebrands, ministered to this Chinese family and helped win the hearts of Lynn's mommy and daddy back to their little girl.

Warm spring days have made our outside camping fun while we remodel. The mornings are the coolest, but a crackling fire along with a bowl of breakfast is enough to wake us up.

We cook in the bus, eat in the shop and sleep in the house. Totally gutting the kitchen and living room, plus adding onto the kitchen so it fits our table, has been a lot of work. We hope to be in our completed living area by the end of May.

The NATHHAN /CHASK office has been busier than ever before for this time of year. Thankfully we have Joy, Shanna, Jessica, and Sherry's mom working most of the week.

Many of you may have received a letter describing our office upgrade. We are moving toward this goal quite well, and are programming our server and integrating the rest of the equipment as we have time. The program we are purchasing will enable us to enter information just one time (instead of several times) and will allow you better functions, such as creating your own password to get into the NATHHAN web site, and allowing you to correct your CHASK bio or directory entry.

Our children are getting older and expanding their horizons. Jacob is working at Meadowcreek Computers, installing high speed internet systems, and doing data base programming. He is also helping out in the NATHHAN office upgrading our new system.

Josh is working full time pouring concrete for a great family in our church.

Liza is living with a family that has younger special needs children in Washington. She is enjoying it immensely and plans to stay there to help out with their large family.

Sheela, 17, is working/living in Free Union, Virginia at Faith Mission. She is getting some independent living training, working on her Braille, and enjoying the different volunteer projects she gets to do. We are very excited for this safe opportunity for her to stretch her wings a little. We miss her very much and call her almost every week to see how she is

doing. She always said she was not homesick...until she had a sore throat and tummy ache one day...then she was "home sick".

Jordan is 18 and has developed lots of strong muscles helping out with this remodel job. He is our chief lumber packer and trash hauler. He is very diligent and sticks with a job until it is done.

Lynny, 13, is learning to be independent in many areas. Not having Sheela around to care for her needs has forced Lynny to make her own way around the house. She now bathes herself, does most of her self-care and is very happy with her new independence. We are happily waiting for her new motorized wheel chair so she can be outside independently (and get to the restroom on time!).

Zack, 14, and Zeph, 12, have been the major workers for this first part of the remodel (the tearing out). Gutting out the interior sounded easy, until we realized that the house was built the old fashioned way...LOTS of layers of wood and LOTS of nails. Anyway, they have hung in there and worked with Dad on framing and plumbing. They are looking forward to watching the subcontractors do their different jobs, too.

Sheraya, 10, and Mercy, 8, are helping mom watch ShaHannah and put in raspberries, strawberries, onions, and garlic. We are also weeding out the present flower beds, and making terraced vegetable areas on our hillside going up to the barn. It is great soil, but very rocky. We purchased some 12 foot long little green houses at the farmer's market to cover the ground and hurry up the lettuce, spinach and beets.

Jayben is 4 and absolutely LOVES this being outside all the time business. He plays all day and sleeps hard all night. He rides his bike and helps mom with gardening. He keeps "hounding" to sleep outside with Daphne our dog, but it is still freezing nights!

ShaHannah, 20 months, is our challenge. We do not dare leave her unattended for a moment, as she delights in investigating every new change in the building project. She likes to sit right in the middle of whatever anyone is trying to do and has no regard for falling debris or hammers. She is talking so much now. Water is "wadi", all big animals are "moooo's" and she loves to feed the baby goats their bottles.

"Camping" makes life interesting. Our laundry is outside, and the kitchen in several different places, which makes it interesting to get everything together to cook a meal. It is not so bad, because we are not sleeping on the ground, but in our own beds. We closed off the bedrooms and hallway with heavy plastic, plugged up the heater vents that went to the now open to the outside. Lighting a fire at night in the furnace warms up the house just fine and makes sleeping cozy.

Tom is working part time for Truss Tech, designing trusses. He feels challenged and happy to be given the opportunity to use the math he loves to do.

Sherry is very thankful for the office help. Moving closer to people who can help out has made the NATHHAN / CHASK office manageable, along with keeping up with the family needs too.

The Lord has been teaching us the importance of putting Him first in all things... including our personal devotions and the decisions we make.

A very special lesson He is teaching us these last 6 months is what it means to be truly broken or submitted to Jesus and His will for our lives. It is so easy for pride and self-pity to get in the way of our spiritual walk. Disguised very subtly, it can surprise us by popping up in the very place where we thought we were doing so well!

We encourage you to open your hearts to include meaningful personal devotions. Make the time to hear His voice speaking through the scriptures. Sometimes we are stressed, disappointed, or even going through a very painful time. It seems hard to hear His voice. Whatever He allows into your life, take courage. Even the pain that can engulf us at times is used for our good, if we allow Him to show us.

May the Lord lovingly surround you with family and friends this summer and give you a heart to hear His voice.

Love,

**Tom, Sherry, Jake, Josh, Jordan,
Sheela, Zack, Zeph, Lynny, Sheraya,
Mercy, Jayben and ShaHannah
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, 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, B.C., Tom and Sherry Bushnell and Andy and Linda Dillon, Camano Island, WA; Financial Advisory; Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Moyie Springs, ID, William Byler and Dayton Skrivseth, Bonners Ferry, ID; James and Dana McKenzie in 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

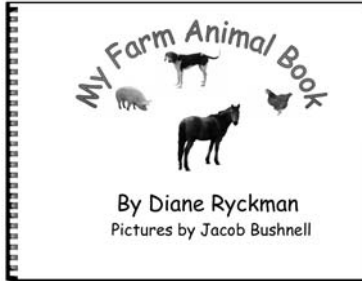
Gift memberships are available for folks facing financial difficulty. A NATHHAN/ CHASK gift membership entitles the family to NATHHAN/ CHASK's internet services. NATHHAN/CHASK's gift program is funded solely by other homes sharing out of their concern and abundance, giving so other Christian brothers 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

\$18.50 US / \$23.00 Canadian



*She has the freedom to follow
her own path for learning.*

We're making sure she keeps it.

Her family's membership in Home School Legal Defense Association provides personal legal counsel—and the confidence of legal representation should their rights be challenged.

That's a lot of protection for just 27 cents a day.

Call 866-338-8603 (toll-free) or visit www.hslda.org.

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

**Want to homeschool tomorrow?
You need HSLDA today.**

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

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

Preschool At Home?

Are you homeschooling or unschooling your preschool age child? Looking for preschool ideas? Do you want to connect with other preschool homeschool parents?

We have lots of great ideas, links and more! Need ideas for pre-K and K math, language arts, crafts for little ones, field trips, Charlotte Mason, unschooling, special needs, great books for preschoolers, educational toys, feel free to ask!

Our members share tips for organizing, links to wonderful websites, and more!

Just getting started with your toddler? Join us and get support from other moms!

Do you have a home daycare? Join us and let's share our great ideas for teaching little ones!

Wondering what to do all day home alone with young children? Join us! http://groups.yahoo.com/group/preschool_homeschool/

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

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 faced the same decision and chose not to terminate.

Waiting with Love site

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

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

Safe Haven Ministries (on-line counseling)

www.SafeHavenMinistries.com

Ramah International

www.RamahInternational.org

Save One, www.SaveOne.org

1-866-329-3571



1st Straight Talk

A Parents Guide for Correcting

Childhood Mispronunciations

Written by
Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology

- Charts explain normal sound development
- The *Consonant Cookbook*, suggestions to help with each consonant's correct sound.
- Test forms and score sheets
- Word training lists

An excellent resource for parents wishing to implement a quality speech therapy program without spending lots of money or going to the public school. We've used it successfully for over 10 years.

—Tom Bushnell



\$45.00

Free Shipping!

1st Straight Talk's DVD

Watch Marisa demonstrate the sound "r" using the manual.

30 min. video supplements the manual.

Video is \$20.00 separate from the manual.

Combination Straight Talk 1 + DVD = **\$55.00**

Order online at www.nathhan.org or use the order form on page 32!

2nd Straight Talk

A Parent's Guide to



Language Development A Christian Perspective

Written by
Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology
and Tom and Sherry Bushnell, Directors of NATHHAN

- Exercises in Learning to Listen
- Nuts and Bolts of Language Training
- Increasing Auditory and Visual Comprehension
- Language Development Activities for the Christian Home
- Tests to Determine Exactly Where Your Child Needs Help
- Suggestions for Working with Children Ranging from Non-verbal to More Advanced in Language.



\$45.00

112 page manual, free shipping!

*An excellent resource for parents helping their
children overcome language delays.*

Order online at www.nathhan.org or use the order form on page 32!

CHASK—Christian Homes And Special Kids



Beautiful Charity Rose

We wanted to give you a brief update of our experience with our new baby girl, Charity Rose. After you called us two weeks ago today to ask if we would be interested in pursuing the adoption of the little girl born that day with Down's Syndrome, we needed to have our lawyer get in touch immediately. We began the process of letting the hospital, social workers and anyone else who cared to listen, know that we were indeed interested in the sweet little girl waiting for a family to take her home. We were able to see our baby the next morning and because of breathing problems and possible heart conditions we were only allowed a few minutes of holding and cuddling. After a few days she was transferred to the children's hospital in San Francisco. They ran many tests and finally concluded that our little Charity Rose was healthy and ready to go home. Because of her poor muscle tone she has a little trouble getting the suck, swallow, breathe system down when she is eating, so we had to learn special techniques for getting her to remember to breathe. Charity is also benefiting from the fact that her 8 month old

brother is nursing and there is milk to spare. She nurses well and takes the bottle well in order to supplement her feedings. Our three oldest children are completely taken with Charity and are so grateful to the Lord for specifically answering their prayer for a baby sister. We are all thankful her birth mom gave her the gift of life and we are beginning a tentative relationship with her. She was reluctant to have any contact with us, but has since changed her mind and we are hopeful that we will continue to minister to her as the Lord allows. Thank you CHASK for all that you do. We are blessed beyond words.

The Goulding Family

Will, Elizabeth, Tucker, Chloe, Ellie, Harrison and Charity



Sweet Samantha DeWitt

We've named our baby Samantha Lauren, and we call her Sami. Besides Down Syndrome, she has an atrialventricular canal and ventricular septal defect in her heart, which will be repaired when she is 10lbs. She was also born with a duodenal

atresia, which was a blockage in her belly, but that has already been successfully repaired! Once she has recovered from her heart surgery, then she will undergo surgery for her cleft lip and palate. The doctors say once she is off of her IV, then she can come home. We visit for as long and often as we can, since she is still in the NICU about 5 hours away (depending on traffic). We hold her and rock her for hours while we are there, and she looks around and follows our voices, squeezes our fingers, and when she smiles...our hearts just melt! She loves to listen to her musical mobile on her crib and the way she wiggles and kicks her legs and stretches, one of her nurses says, "She is going to be a ballerina someday!"

When I look down at this precious gift that God has given us, I am so overwhelmed with joy words just cannot express.

God Bless, The DeWitt's Jamey, Annette, Bethany, Seth, Samantha and "Sami"

These are just 3 of the babies that are now at home. We just love to share about how families are positively affected by choosing to keep their babies with special needs or adopt a baby that would otherwise have been aborted or let die in a hospital, for lack of loving arms.

Many times we are "out-of-the-loop" knowing if babies come home or not. We dearly love to hear updates and how things are going. Sometimes we have sad days when a mom chooses to terminate her pregnancy instead of let her baby live. We rejoice with moms who choose life. We are hard at work looking for pre-born ba-

bies with an adverse prenatal diagnosis and for parents who are sorrowing.

Some moms are so happy to hear that there is another option for their little one besides termination. Most medical professionals do not like to abort, but are bound by medical policy to offer the option of death for these babies.

There are so many wonderful support organizations just for families who are choosing to carry to term. (See page 9 for a listing).

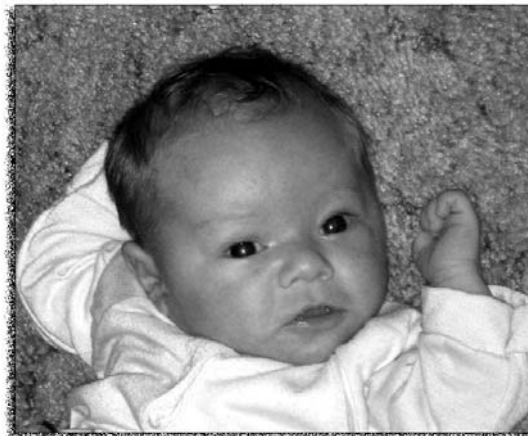
Some moms have a hard time thinking of letting another mommy raise their baby.

The world's idea of what is best is so convoluted. Frequently we speak with moms who do not want to terminate their pregnancy, yet cannot face the idea of adoption either. I think the medical community has confused the public with so much bio babble. "Quality of life", "piece of tissue", or "probable fetal demise". These terms are frightening to expectant moms and dads. Many of them do not know any Christian families with special needs children. Little do they know that special needs means special blessings!

The following is a selection from an article titled The New Eugenics, by George Neumayr Published 7/13/2005. This article appeared in the June issue of The American Spec-

tator.

The right to abort a disabled child, in other words, is approaching the status of a



God has blessed us!

William "Alexander" Gray
Born October 13, 2005
4 pounds 15 ounces - 16 inches long

The whole family is thrilled especially his big brother Bryson and his big sisters Brenda & Niki

Baby William was born with Gastroschisis (intestines out of the abdominal wall.) He also has Duchenne MD. His family reports that he is doing well.

duty to abort a disabled child. Parents who abort their disabled children won't be asked to justify their decision. Rather, it is the parents with disabled children who must justify themselves to a society that tacitly asks: Why did you bring into the world a child you knew was disabled or might become disabled?

Andrew Kimbrell points out that many parents are given the complicated information prenatal screening yields with little to no guidance from doctors. "We're leaving parents with complete confusion. Numerous parents are told by doctors, 'we think there is some fault on the 50th chromosome of your child.' A number of polls have shown that people don't understand those odds. There is enormous confusion out there and nobody is out there to help them," he says. "This is a huge tangle. And it leads people to abort out of confusion: 'I guess I better abort,

because I don't know. It sounds really bad and I don't know what the percentages mean."

Andrew Imparato of AAPD wonders how progressives got to this point. The new eugenics aimed at the disabled unborn tell the disabled who are alive, "disability is a fate worse than death," he says. "What kind of message does this send to people living with spina bifida and other disabilities? It is not a progressive value to think that a disabled person is better off dead."

Each year in America fewer and fewer disabled infants are born. The reason is eugenic abortion. Doctors and their patients use prenatal technology to screen unborn children for disabilities, then they use that information to abort a high percentage of them. Without much scrutiny or debate, a eugenics designed to weed out the disabled has become commonplace.

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

Not wishing to publicize a practice most doctors prefer to keep secret, the medical community releases only sketchy information on the frequency of eugenic abortion against the disabled. But to the extent that the numbers are known, they indicate that the vast majority of unborn children prenatally diagnosed as disabled are killed.

Medical researchers estimate that 80 percent or more of babies now prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted. (They estimate that since 1989, 70 percent of Down-syndrome fetuses have been aborted.) A high percentage of fetuses with cystic fibrosis are aborted, as evident in Kaiser Permanente's admission to the New York Times that 95 percent of its patients in Northern California choose abortion after they find out through prenatal screening that their fetus will have the disease.

The frequent use of eugenic abortion can also be measured in dwindling populations with certain disabilities. Since the 1960s, the number of Americans with spina bifida has markedly declined. This dropping trend line corresponds to the rise of prenatal screening. Owing to prenatal technology and eugenic abortion, some rare conditions, such as the genetic disorder Tay-Sachs, are even vanishing in America, according to doctors.

In light of all of this, CHASK is grateful for the tiny crack CHASK families are making in the world of the unborn that are disabled. **PARENTS ARE CHOOSING LIFE!** We appreciate the opportunity God gives us to save the lives of babies not-yet-born, and affect the lives of the newly born. It makes an incredible statement to the world having CHASK families available to share their lives (and resources) with children who are disabled. Some call us noble, some call us crazy, but here at CHASK we just want to be called Followers of Christ, sharing His love.

How does CHASK work?

- Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (page 17 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 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 an example 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

Unruh Update



The Unruh family has assisted with NATHHAN and CHASK for the last 8 years. They continue to share a unique, compassionate, perspective with NATHHAN families as members of the NATHHAN / CHASK board. They are a great support to the Bushnell family and volunteer with office work, the NATHHAN directory and library.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Cor. 12:9a

Wow! These words have never been more real in my life. To begin with, my hoped for home birth became a high speed adventure to the hospital. God graciously allowed Sherry to drive at break neck speed without a deer, elk, moose or car in sight! Labor had been great! My midwife, Joyce, along with Sherry and Jim were there seeing me through each contraction, and then everything changed. We lost our little one’s heart beat and could not find it. I only remember snatches of the next few hours. My clearest memory is of lying in the back of the car, looking into Jim’s eyes and feeling the Lord holding me.

We both thought we had lost her, yet the Lord gave us peace. An emergency C-section was performed and we are thankful to have Lily Grace. When we chose her name we had no idea how much grace we would need. Eight days later, with the love and support of friends and family, we gave our only... I mean other daughter, Joy, away to Ian, a fine man. Also, our house sold and we signed papers just a few days after the wedding. We began moving the next week. A few years ago I would have struggled with all the wonderful, loving help that was lavished on us during this time. I would

have felt ashamed that I couldn’t do it all myself (superwoman syndrome). During the depression that followed the birth of our last little one, I recognized that I have a tendency to trust in my own strength instead of relying on the Lord’s. I had to accept the fact that I am a work in process; that the Lord is faithful to teach me daily to trust in Him and to realize that I am indeed weak! Imagine that!

“Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
2 Corinthians. 12:9b-10

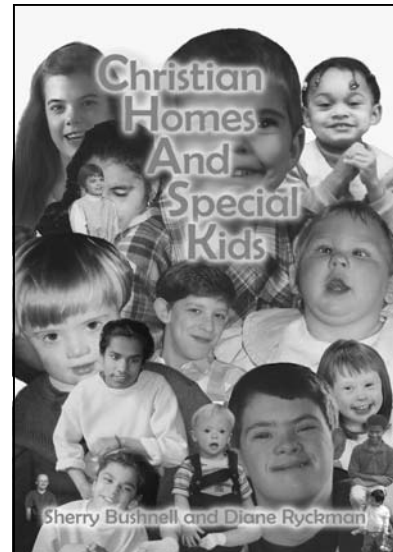
To say that I have learned to trust wholly in the Lord and that I have this one figured out would be a falsehood. If so, I don’t think I would have had to go through even more training in weakness. But, I do, daily. Daily I have to allow myself to trust; to trust in His word and to obey it.

Preserve me, O God, for in you I put my trust. Psalm 16:1

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 32

**Has it been a long time since your family
enjoyed a restful week together?**



Join us for a week of family camp.

Meaningful family life does not come easy. From out of nowhere come stress and pressures that cause strain on your family's relationships. In a family affected by disability, sometimes it doesn't take much to push it over the top. Since 1991 families from around the country have attended

Joni and Friends Family Retreats seeking a time of rest and recreation, Christ-centered encouragement, and the tools to build a stronger family. Held at accessible camp and conference centers across the United States during the summer, Family Retreats provide dynamic five-day programs that refresh and strengthen your whole family. Joni and Friends Family Retreats provide a lifeline to families – families just like yours – who want hope and encouragement that will last. You and your family will be blessed, inspired, and make new friendships that will last a lifetime. Join us this summer at a retreat near you.

www.joniandfriends.org/retreat

or call 800-523-5777 and ask for the family information packet

CHASK Adoption Family Heroes

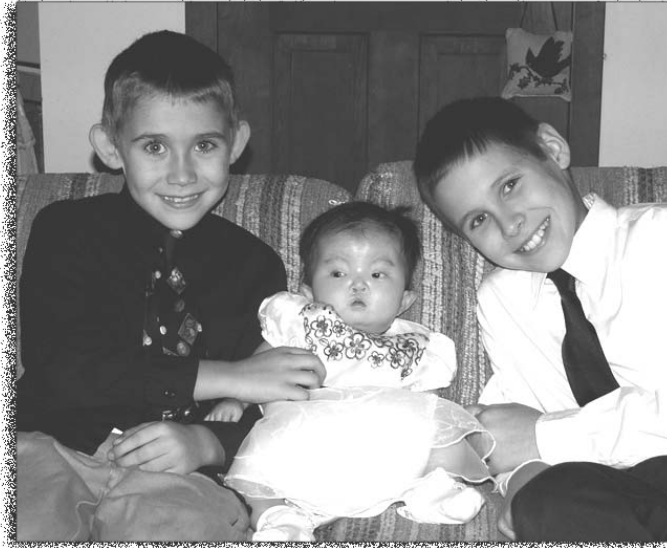
CHASK would like to name Chip and Cathy Hildebrand CHASK Adoptive Family Hero for 2005. Being a CHASK family is not always a bouquet of roses, and does not always guarantee a child... as you will read.

The Hildebrands have gone beyond caring for their personal feelings, and have chosen instead to minister to the souls of a lonely, frightened family that immigrated from China. Today there are other CHASK families portraying Christ's love to hurting families in tangible ways. We want to express our admiration to all of you for your bravery and say THANK YOU for your commitment of time and finances to minister to families in crisis.

Lynn's Story

By Cathy Hildebrand

On August 24, 2005 we got a call from CHASK about a little Chinese girl living in Maryland. She had a cleft lip and palate. She had already had open heart surgery and she was born with a chromosome abnormality that was very rare. She would probably have some retardation and possible small limbs. She was at that time, 5 months old. She immediately stole my heart. I really felt she was going to be our daughter. We gave permission for our bio to go to her birth parents, who supposedly were sure they could not keep her and wanted no contact after the adoption.



The following day we received another call about a little boy named Jack. He was 9 weeks old and had several problems including vision issues. We were torn but felt we needed to be available for Lynn. Because the other family bio that was sent had Asian family members, it was strongly felt that Lynn's parents would choose them. Knowing this, we

still chose to be available for Lynn if that was the way God led. I do know that Jack went to a wonderful Christian home.

A few days later, we got a call that Lynn's parents wanted to talk to us by e-mail. We do not have the internet, so we had to go through a friend's e-mail which complicated things a bit. Their communications were very short and non-committal. We pushed to try to find out what they expected from us and if they still wanted to put their daughter up for adoption. We did not hear from them for about a week. Thinking it was over, we called CHASK for advice. CHASK contacted the birth parents and found they still wanted to communicate. They asked if they could come to see where Lynn would be living. They wanted to make sure she would be safe and well cared for. We made the arrangements and met with them on a Sunday afternoon. They were satisfied but were not ready to commit to any date.

During this visit we had the opportunity to ask about their religious beliefs. He was adamant that they were not Christian. They were Buddhist/Darwinist. She was quick

to say, "We do not go to church."

Throughout our conversations, we continuously told them that Lynn would be raised in a Christian home where she would be loved unconditionally and that we would keep them in our prayers.

About two weeks later, Lynn's father finally made the arrangements to bring her to us. It was a Friday afternoon, October 1, 2005. He was very late, due to traffic he said. Tensions were already very high. When he arrived he began to instruct us on how to care for Lynn. He placed all of her things in her room or the kitchen, depending where they needed to be. He insisted he had to put her mobile on her crib. After he did this he left her room and went to the kitchen alone. When we went



in there, we found him very distraught. He could not speak and could not look at us. He left the house and went to his car. He sat in his car for about half an hour. He walked across the road and stared off into the woods. We could tell his heart was breaking and we did not know how to help. Chinese men do not show emotion and definitely do not do it in public.

When he came back into the house, it was obvious that he did not want to leave her. We began to talk to him about God's amazing love. How his love for his daughter did not compare to the love God has for him. We talked about the birth of a Savior and the gift of salvation God gave to His children when His son died on the cross. As we talked, he wept openly and as he dropped to his knees he cried out, "O God".

Through all of this, we told him he did not have to give Lynn away and they did not need to be ashamed of her. She is a gift from God that they have been entrusted with to care for. It was obvious that he was struggling, so Chip and I handed Lynn to him and we went into the living room to pray. We asked God to let us

know in no uncertain terms what we were supposed to do. As we went back into the kitchen Lynn's father looked at us and said, "I have to take her home." We said, "Then we will help you pack." Something far more important than our getting a baby happened that day. We believe that God touched Lynn's father. As he left our home he told us, "I am going home to start a new life with my family."

What we didn't know is that our work was far from over. On the following Monday I got a message from Lynn's mom on my cell phone. She said, "I still want you to take Lynn. If you not available, I will find another way. Please call me."

You have to understand. These are not bad people, they are just lost. They need Christ. They have been raised in a culture that told them any child born imperfect was a mutation and it meant they must be bad people to get a child like that. A baby like Lynn would most likely be killed at birth in Communist China. They loved her, they just could not accept her disabilities.

We did call them and they said they could not keep her. They were ashamed of her. Her mom said she did not know what she did so bad to get a baby like this. She said she was very angry. She said she did not know how she was going to hide her when she got bigger. She said she knows she will miss her, but this is best for Lynn. He said he goes to work every day and worries because his wife is so very sad.

We agreed to meet them in Maryland on Wednesday, October 5, 2005. When we arrived at their chosen meeting spot, they immediately began to load our car with Lynn's things. They were afraid people that knew them would see them there with Lynn.

We agreed to take Lynn for one week to baby sit. After she had been without her daughter for one week we would see how she felt. We left them with a Bible and told them to spend some time together and make sure this was really what they wanted. If they wanted her back after a week,

we would bring her back. At the end of one week, they called and told us to start the adoption process. We were thrilled and began to make the necessary arrangements.

As it turned out, Lynn was a great deal under weight and she was immediately hospitalized for 4 days. She had failure to thrive. She had no tone in her little body and most everything was underdeveloped. We definitely had our work cut out for us. But we were relying on the Lord and we knew He would get us through all of it. We had begun to make major strides with Lynn's weight and overall health. She was really beginning to shine and we were in love. Lynn's birth parents had called a couple times to ask how she was doing. We never discussed the details, but told them she was doing great.

After about 3 weeks, Lynn's mom called and was asking a lot of questions. Then she said she thought she was changing her mind. I was very upset and I told her that she could not hide Lynn. She would have to treat her with pride, just like their other daughter, and I did not think she could do that. She said, "I think I would like to try." I was devastated and could not talk to her. Chip took the phone to try to figure out what was going on. He suggested she come up for a visit to see how well Lynn was doing. Maybe this would give her some closure. We put this letter together and mailed it to them in hopes of changing their minds.

...Please know that we understand that you are feeling a great loss without Lynn. You cannot raise a baby for 7 months and not miss her when she is suddenly gone from your life. That is a natural feeling and part of the grieving process. We do not pretend to love Lynn more than you



do. That would not be fair.

Because of our upbringing, we are able to accept her disabilities unconditionally. We love her regardless of the life that she may have. The doctors cannot tell us what type of life she will have because as you are aware her chromosome deletion is so very rare. They are saying, however, that she will require a great deal of special care - with surgeries and possible braces for her legs, feet and arms. Of course none of this is definite - they are guessing. This is not news to you. You have been dealing with these possibilities for 7 months. It was our understanding, that is why you sought out CHASK and they led you to us. You wanted to find a family that would love Lynn in spite of her health concerns and you wanted them to adopt her. That is what we want to do. We love her and want her to be our daughter. We do not care that she may have visible handicaps. We simply want to provide her with a loving home where she feels safe, loved unconditionally, and can grow with pride in her appearance and self confidence in spite of her handicaps. We understand that this is not easy. We are not trying to make it more difficult. Lynn must come first so you must make up your mind. She can not continue to go back and forth. It is not good for our family and most important, it is not healthy for her. You will be receiving termination papers in the mail soon. Please consider them carefully.

Please know that if you decide to give Lynn to us through adoption, that it is a gift of love, not only to us, but also to Lynn. Some day we pray you will find a peace and joy in that choice...

Lynn's mom came the following Friday. She stayed about 2 hours and wept most of the time. She said she missed Lynn so very much. She brought clothes that were her older daughter's for Lynn. She said they were too big for her now but I could dress her in them next year.

We were under the impression that they were settled on leaving her with us. We gave

her the termination papers to take home to sign and send back. Then we waited some more.

On November 29, Lynn's mom called again wanting to come to visit. We told them we were concerned because the termination papers had not been signed. That is when they told Chip that they did not want to sign them because they wanted Lynn back. Because Lynn's mom had been calling more and more frequently we had been praying that God would give us the strength and courage to do whatever He had for us and Lynn.

I asked God to please not take my little girl from me, but if it was His will, to help us get through it and help us heal. I have to admit I did not understand all that was happening, but we stepped into this in order to be in God's will. That was still where we wanted to be.

I have never had to do anything more difficult than telling my 3 boys that we were not going to get to keep Lynn. We all cried and prayed together and then we prepared to say our goodbyes.

On December 1, 2005, Lynn's birth parents came to get her to take her home to Maryland which is about 4 hours from us.

There were so very many emotions that day that I can not begin to express all of them. We asked our pastor to be with us when they came in hopes of using that time to bring them to Christ. It was our greatest hope that they take Lynn and raise her in a Christian home. We felt that God had touched Lynn's dad the first time he was here. We had not had such an opportunity with Lynn's mom. They kept insisting that we would remain an important part of Lynn's life. We told them the only thing we wanted for Lynn was for them to find a Bible teaching church and begin attending in order to seek a lasting relationship with God. We wanted both of their girls to grow up in a Christian home. Our pastor had several opportunities to talk about God and His love for them. We had found a church on the internet near where they live, so we gave them the information we had and asked them to consider calling that pastor and talking to him, maybe even attending that church.

We packed up all of Lynn's things, all the toys we received from family and church family and friends, all the clothes she had been given by the same, the Christmas gifts we had gotten for her and we gave her back to her birth parents.

The days that followed were similar to what I believe we would have experienced with a death in the family. Emotions ran high and the tears flowed often. We prayed a lot and asked God to take care of our daughter, the boys' sister, and to give us a peace about everything that happened. About a week and a half later we got a Christmas card from them thanking us for all that we did and telling us they had attended the church we told them about. They said they enjoyed it very much.

God gave us peace. Lynn will always be our daughter, the boys' sister, but she is where God wants her to be now. I believe He led us to her for reasons we may never understand, but He did indeed set all of that in motion. We thank God for the time we had and we are asking Him to always walk with Lynn and to soften the hearts of her parents so they can accept Him as their Lord and Savior.

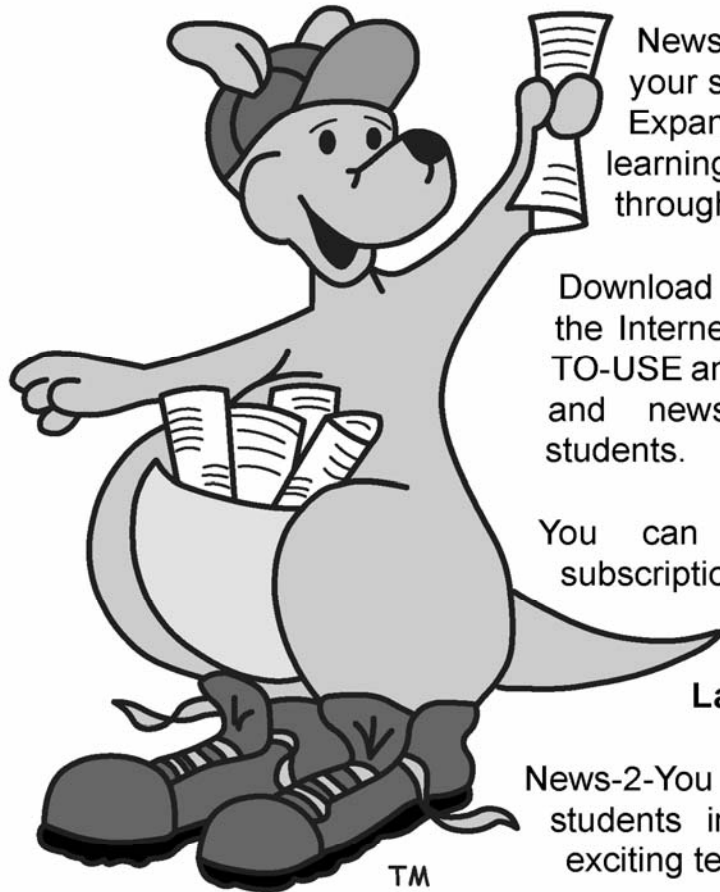
We serve an awesome Savior. Finding God's will for our lives has not always been easy, but it has always been a blessing. We are excited to know He is willing to use us and it is our prayer that we will be open to whatever he may have for the future.

The Hildebrand family is presently adopting a sweet, newborn, baby girl born with spina bifida. They have named her Rebecca Grace. The Hildebrand family is very excited about having a daughter and sister to love.



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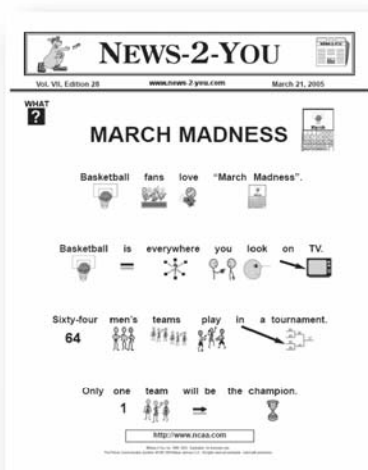


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WHAT IT IS LIKE TO HAVE A LEARNING DISABILITY

BY STACY SNIDER

My name is Stacy. I'm 28 years old. I'm married and have two beautiful children. I am writing this information about growing up with a learning disability. It is my hope, as well the wish of my family and friends, that through this article, people will better understand those of us with a learning disability.

I was born in Champaign/Urbana, Illinois in 1978. I was put in foster care when I was one month old because my birthmother couldn't take care of me.

At that age, I was placed with people who later became my parents. By the time I was two years old, it was official and I was adopted, but my parents didn't know what struggles they were going to get into with me.

When I was at the age of two to four, living in Illinois, my parents, Stephen and Jessie, noticed I was having difficulty in preschool. I was a very happy kid, but I couldn't count and didn't know my ABC's. My parents knew that others kids my age could do these things but I couldn't. They were concerned about their daughter, Stacy.

My mom took me to see a doctor to see if there was any difficulty with my hearing or vision because she was very concerned about me. The doctor noticed my mom was worried. He reminded her that I was in a coma and barely hanging on to life when I was a baby and that I had every excuse to die.

He also reminded her of all the hurdles I cleared during the early months and years of my life. He reminded her that my muscles were not spastic and I didn't have cerebral palsy or brain damage. The doctor said to her in a kind voice that her daughter was sweet and happy and only had a learning disability. Of all the other problems, the learning disability was only a small problem. My dad found out about all of this information from my mom. He was glad to hear there was a name for it and he and mom could help me anyway.



In the Spring of 1983, my mom took me to a neighborhood school in Champaign for a pre-kindergarten evaluation. The school gave me several different tests when I was there to determine what was wrong. When they found out the results, they called my mom. They told her that her

daughter's scores were all below the normal range. My mom knew from that point on I was going to have difficulty in school.

Not everything was hard for me. At eight months old, I could stack the Fisher Price colored donuts on the peg. At one year old, I knew how to get the raisin out of the bottom of the test tube. When I was three, I also could find my dad's office that was almost five miles across town. That meant my disability was limited, but they realized I would have to work harder in learning. I might not be able to learn as others do. The other thing

they recognized was that I was going to have difficulty in finding a job.

My parents never sat down with me and told me that I had a learning disability. Through time they would explain it to me. Like when I struggled in school, then they would explain why. They always kept it in a positive perspective way. My parents didn't want me to think a disability was anything to be ashamed of. But even to this day I do feel ashamed about it.

When I wake up every morning, I always wonder, "Will I mess up today?" I think in my mind, saying, "Will I say something stupid or act crazy in public?" I have to really think when I talk to someone. That even includes my own family and friends. When I do say something wrong or crazy, don't understand or can't say the right word, I think that people think I'm a lunatic. I try to make an excuse like, "I didn't have my cup of coffee or I didn't get enough rest." When I do say something wrong, people look at me in a puzzled way. They look at me and might say, "Do you know what you are saying? and "Why don't you know what that means?" I wish with all of my heart that I could say something important without people looking at me strangely.

It is hard for me at church. When the pastor talks, it is very hard to understand what he is saying. Occasionally, I understand pieces of the sermon. It's hard to tell someone what I learned because I didn't understand. That's why I don't do many things like Bible studies or small groups because I don't understand what they are talking about. I wish I could understand them.

My parents always told people about my disability so the people around me would understand to try to be patient with me. My Uncle Ashley challenged my mom on why she told people because he thought of me as absolutely normal.

People on the outside world and even me don't think I'm normal. To me, normal is a person with a college degree and knows how to spell big words and talk to people and knows what they are saying in the conversation.

Sometimes, I wondered if my folks were thinking about things that they didn't want me to know. My dad said one major thing that came to his mind was his concern about my future. Another thing was that he often told people quietly about my disability, so I and other children would not hear. He did this so he wouldn't embarrass me or make me feel more self conscious about it. My mom doesn't remember anything specific because she was more open about it.

All of my brothers, Joe, John and Mark, were never specifically told about my disability from my parents. They just learned about it while growing up with me. If they did remember being told they might have forgotten. They loved me for who I was.

Did my family ever go through disadvantages with me? My dad didn't remember any with me, but my mom did. She remembers the sorrow of having to watch me suffer the insults and being ignored by kids at school. Two of my brothers, John and Mark, said that they didn't recall anything. My other brother Joe said at times he would have to explain to people who didn't know me why I behaved the way I did. I was also not very good when it came to money, which always concerned Joe.

The good side of this situation is that they all had good advantages with me. My parents both said that they enjoyed my kindness towards people even when they were mean to me. I know one person in mind; her

name was Meghan. She would be so unkind to me, but that made me stronger to be more kind to others. Both of my parents tried to be more understanding with people like me. My brothers all said that I was always very concerned about them or other people in my life. They also knew that my kindness went to other people because I showed it. I'm glad that I showed them my kindness and I hope they can show that to others.

When I went to school, all the kids would tease and pick on me. The reason why they did this was because I couldn't read well or I would have to sound out the words. I always prayed that I wouldn't be picked to read out loud. I even had trouble in math. The teachers would get very frustrated with me because I was the slowest one in the whole class. They wanted me to go faster and catch up with the others. Everyone would laugh and stare at me when I couldn't do anything right. I wanted to say to them, "Stop making fun of me." I remember one time in school. We had to say a memory verse on the chalkboard and everyone else got it right, but when it came my turn, I didn't do so well. Everyone started to laugh at me. I put my head down and started to cry. My teacher, Mr. Rome, told everyone that laughed at me to leave the room and to expect extra homework. I knew from then on I would be OK because he would protect me.

When I was thirteen years old, after sixth grade, I decided to leave the school from the cruelty and pain. I started homeschooling with my mom. Even when I was in homeschool, I still had a hard time.

I had to do lower schoolwork when I really wanted and wished I could do harder work. I knew it would be impossible to do. It always made me sad to know that I wasn't smart enough. Even to this day, I still feel and think I am not smart enough in this world. The only time I think I am smart is when someone asks me a question and I know the answer and they don't know it. It makes me so happy and emotional to know that I helped someone. One time my brother, Joe, had to call and ask me how to make tuna and macaroni casserole. When I hung up the phone, I cried in a happy way.

My most worry is when I embarrass my family and friends when we are in public. Every day I think or know that I was an embarrassment to them. My family remembers a lot of embarrassments with me. My mom remembers that when I would talk like a baby and she would tell me to talk like a grownup. Also I would talk too loud in public. She would really have to tell me to quiet down. My dad remembers a really good one that I did. I told a police officer in a restaurant, "My dad speeds all the time." He felt very embarrassed by it because he told me in the car. He also told me to never tell an officer again about his speeding. Trust me I haven't.

Two of my brothers said they don't recall any embarrassments by me. Oh, good! My other brother, Joe, said he did remember an embarrassment by me. I often at times would have a conversation with total strangers as if I knew them. That really bothered Joe. I didn't mean to do those things in a bad way. Sometimes and often I don't realize I am embarrassing them.

I do get very frustrated when I can't do something right or have to ask someone for help. When people do explain to me, they have to make

it very detailed like they are talking to a child. I would have to ask for help if I didn't know what a word meant, couldn't spell a word, couldn't count money or how to add and subtract. To me, I know those things are very easy to everyone but not to me. People say, "Why can't she know this stuff. It isn't that hard. Man, look how dumb she is. Why can't she just go back to kindergarten?" It does break my heart but I'm me and I can't change my disability. I have to put on a face and put on an act to hold back the tears.

When I would do something right, I thought it wasn't good enough so I thought I had to do a lot better in it. Even when people would compliment me when I did do something great, I still knew it wasn't good enough. It is hard for me to realize that I was good. I put out more effort than anyone because of my disability. When I walk out of my home, I have to put my thinking cap on. I hope that I will come out with no mistakes on me. I do know when I go to bed, all my problems are gone and I don't have to worry about my disability. The best thing I truly know is when I am asleep, no one can hurt me.

I thought I wasn't going to get married. I thought nobody wants a girl like me. Happy to say, I did get married to a man named Troy. I do struggle a lot not able to do bank statements, insurance papers and much more. Troy does get very frustrated with me because I can't understand these things. But he still loves me through the struggles.

I have two wonderful kids. Their names are Michael and Elizabeth. I do worry

about if they will have a learning disability like me? If not, will I be able to help them in life? How far can I help them in school? It will be very hard to tell and explain to my children why mommy has a disability. I'm afraid of their reaction towards it. They might even say, "Why can't we have a smart mom? Couldn't we just have a smart mom like everyone else? Sometimes she acts like a little child. Can she just grow up like all the other moms?"

My whole family did go through some bad times with me. When I got pregnant at the age of eighteen, they all felt embarrassed and sad that I got pregnant. They couldn't believe that I would do such a thing. Through it all they still loved me.

Yes, they all went through good times with me. They enjoyed my happiness, kindness and my love towards others and them. When they were sick or needed some encouragement, I knew how to cheer them up and make them feel good. It is amazing how they have put up with me through the good and the bad, but I'm very glad they all love me for who I am.

This is how I think about my learning disability. The reason why my brain doesn't know how to click on is that it takes a bit longer to find the answer. To me it is like finding a plug-in in the dark. The minute you turn on the light, you can find it. That is how I think my disability works.

Yes, I do at times act like a child. The reason why I do this is because I have a child-like brain. When I act like this, I truly don't realize I am doing this around people. A lot of the people do not want to be around me when I act like a child. I want to act like a real grown

up, but it is hard for me. This is how I came into this world and I can't change one thing about me, but I can truly accept who I am and what I have in life.

Sometimes, it is like I am looking through a two way mirror. On one side it has the perfect and normal Stacy. On the other side I don't have the perfect and normal Stacy. It will never get easier for me while I am in this big world. The people around me who are not my family and friends will always treat me the same. I will always take their negatives and criticism. I just wish they would stop.

Have you ever gone to a special class even when everyone else went to a regular class and you really wanted to be in that class instead of the one you were in? Have you ever been stared at when you did something really dumb, even when it was everyday or every moment of your life? Did you ever have to ask someone, even a stranger, to help you understand something or spell a word that you couldn't, even when you know that it was probably easy? Let me tell you, I do go through this everyday of my life and it is very hard. I do cry sometimes when I can't make it work. I wish I was normal. I wish I could do everything like everybody else. I ask myself a lot why I couldn't have become completely normal like everyone else? My response is that I really don't know. I am still trying to figure that answer out. I will have my disability for the rest of my life. It will never get easier for me in this life, but when I get to heaven it will. It will always get harder for me on earth, but not with Christ.

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NATHHAN Resource Room



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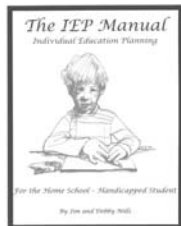
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Spanish teacher creates a resource to help the students who suffer from ADD.

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The name of the book/CD combination is Comic Mnemonics for Spanish Verbs and you are welcome to take a look at www.learnspanishfaster.com/homeschool.html.



Classified Ads

Thumb-sucking?

I am a dentist and have written and illustrated a children's story book The Little Bear who Sucked His Thumb. It is designed to help kids who have a thumb-sucking habit. It is sold over the internet at www.oliverthebear.com. Thumb-sucking is a very common habit in kids, and as a dentist I have often been asked for advice from parents. There is surprisingly very little information or children's literature on the topic. Parents who have children with a persistent thumb sucking habit would find the website and book useful. We have had excellent feedback from parents. Dr Dragan G Antolos (Melbourne, Australia)

.....

Special Needs Educational Consulting (including ABA program assistance).

Would you like some help designing an effective homeschooling program for your child with special needs? I am a Christian mom of two children and have been homeschooling for over 8 years. My youngest son is 11 and has autism. I am listed as a Special Need consultant with HSLDA. I offer AFFORDABLE help in determining appropriate educational goals for your child, choosing and/or modifying curriculum, as well as individualized teaching tips and educational strategies. I can also help families who would like to implement ABA therapy

themselves for their children with autism but cannot afford to pay outside therapists and /or ABA professionals. I have been doing ABA and Verbal Behavior (among other therapies) with my son for 7 years and have learned from the best professionals. All consultations are by phone and email so I work with clients across the U.S. *Mention NATHHAN to receive a free 30-minute phone consultation! To learn more, visit: www.ochomeschooling.com/specialneeds Contact (Mary Gusman) at homeschoolinghelp@hotmail.com or (949) 888 5953

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For more details, or to listen to some stories, visit www.storynory.com

Letters From Families

Mom with Asperger's, would like help or support from other parents or ministry whose kids have similar needs.

Dear NATHHAN News,

I just received a copy of your magazine from a friend of mine who's 13 year old son has high functioning autism.

I am 32 years old and have 2 kids, ages 5 and 6, with developmental delays. They are both about a year or more behind in their development and have learning disabilities. The 6-year-old, Davey, has mild CP. The 5-year-old, Walter, is hyperactive with behavior problems. We think he may have Asperger's or ADHD. The 6-year-old is in second year of K-5. He spends most of his time in a regular class and 30 minutes in a resource class. He also has an IEP with occupational and speech therapy in his school. He struggles a lot to learn in school, but doesn't have any real behavior issues. The 5-year-old is in his first year of K-5. He is in the contained special ed class most of the time. He has lots of problems with his behavior in class and his learning- as he requires lots of one on one attention to do his work. He has the most struggles with his writing, drawing and fine motor skills. Plus, he doesn't like to sit still for long periods of time and throws a fit whenever he gets mad or frustrated about something. I spend so much time with him that I don't always have as much time for my other son. The school keeps talking about the possibility of sending him to a public school for kids with special needs. But I'm totally against it and know that it wouldn't do anything for his development or social skills. I also have Asperger's, so homeschooling would be a real challenge for me. I want to be able to find some help or support from other parents or ministry whose kids have similar needs as mine. But I don't really know where to look, especially close by.

Wendy Pierce
P.O. Box 3032
Sanford, NC 27331

Ride A Bike!

This is a successful program for children with special needs to learn how to ride a bike:

<http://www.losethetrainingwheels.org/>

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What About the Future? A Special Needs Trust? lee.ann@earthlink.net

I am curious to know if any one has ever addressed the issues families with multiple special needs children face as they grow older. We now have 4 children with Downs. Each of them will need some sort of assisted living when they get older. I doubt our non-disabled children will take them into their own homes. We are setting up a special needs trust fund with a financial planner, who happens to have an autistic son. This has worked out well since he personally understands the issues. We would like to add more children with Downs to our family but are concerned for the future. I am just wondering if other families like ours have brought this subject up. We know this is a ministry, but we sometimes wonder when enough is enough.

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On-line support or help for working with older children with Down syndrome?

My sister, Joy, is 28 years old, has the intelligence of a nine-year-old (or so we've been told). She "graduated" high school when she was 21, yet she cannot read, do simple math, etc. She needs more training in life skills, but I think my parents have just resigned themselves to the fact that she has learned all that she is able.

I guess the main thing I need to know is - is it still possible to train a person who is this old? Train them to take care of themselves, train them to do chores, to be respectful, and to read, write, etc?? I know it depends on the person to a large extent, but Joy is really a smart kid. She's

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got to be capable of doing life-enriching things and be able to serve others as well. I just want the very best life for my sister and I feel like her life is being wasted. She could be doing so much more - for herself and for others -- and I think she would be so much happier if she realized some true accomplishments. You should see her when she gets a good score in bowling - she's so proud! (She really is good at it, too, always scoring above 150).

Anyway, if you have any help for me, I would be so grateful to you. I was so excited to hear about your ministry. What a need you are meeting! May God bless you and your family!

Respectfully,
Mrs. Gina Leake
leakeclan@earthlink.net

.....

Our Ooops on ABC discovery's ad in last issue...

Thank you so much for the great review you did for ABC Discovery. I have received several contacts by phone. Unfortunately, one tiny typing error has probably prevented some from making contact. My e-mail address is: reincoeducation@mail.com.

In the review, it was written as "reinsoeducation".

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Mother of daughter with bipolar disorder would like encouragement.

I am at the end of my rope trying to educate my daughter. She is now at home and I am trying to homeschool her. I am a single parent and I also have a dissociative emotional disorder myself. I work full time outside of the home. She is identified by the local school district as a special needs child-emotionally disabled. Her diagnosis for the last two or so years is a rapid cycling type of bipolar disorder. She gets frustrated trying to work at home on her own, but I know that she can focus on certain things that she likes when she wants to. For example, she loves to read fantasy and anime books. She also is a gifted poetess and writer. I have had a terrible time the last several weeks-progress is so slow. I don't even know what kind of help to ask for, but I am hoping that you know what may help us.

Harriet
heallen@wisc.edu

.....

I am interested in finding other families with Celiac.

Today I am having lymphnodes removed from my neck due to Lymphoma, one of the complications that can come from untreated Celiac. 5 different areas showed up as worrisome on the PET scan and now I need to deal with that as well. Monday and Tuesday the children will be seen at Nemours in Orlando for their Celiac issues. I believe NATHHAN will certainly be a great blessing and help to us all. Thank you so very much for your kind-

ness and generosity.
Lynne Marie Monnett
3065 Howland Blvd.
Deltona, FL 32725

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Visually Impaired Teen

I have a 13 year old boy who was born with multiple birth defects. We have always kept him at home until about 3 years ago when we move to the state of NJ. We enrolled him in public school and couldn't have asked for a better situation for John Michael. He attended school there for 2 years then we moved to Florida.

I tried to set up a meeting with the school special ed teacher here at three different times but to no avail she never even called me back. So therefore we opted to keep John Michael at home again (he has other siblings that have always home schooled also). He gets so frustrated at home and the biggest thing that he misses is his friends. Here we have not found anyone for him to hang with sometimes. Do you have any ideas? Also I am looking for curriculum that I can use with a child who has a speech delay and is totally blind in one eye and legally blind in the other. He is a great kid with a good attitude and we have always allowed him to do anything that he thought he could as long as it was safe. Do you have any hints? Teresa sauerfamily@bellsouth.com

www.time4learning.com . This program has been the turn around for us.

I wanted to write to you to tell you about time4learning and how it has worked with my daughter who has SPD (Sensory Processing Dysfunction) We have been home-schooling going on 6 years now and have tried many different things. It wasn't until our SPD child came along that I was actually at a loss for what to do. I thought at times that I just was not going to be able to school her at home. I tried everything to grab her attention and keep it so that she would learn. After many battles and tears (from me) I came across the on-line program at **www.time4learning.com** . This program has been the turn around for us. We are ending our 8th week this week and my child loves it. Instead of fighting with the youngest to attempt to do anything at all, she asks first thing in the morning to do her "school work" and I have to make her take a break. It is so animated and tells the child what to do with each step. They have it set up so that as each lesson is finished, the icon, which is a star, twirls as she has completed it. This has increased her self esteem which had been lacking. I can not say that it will be this way with all children and to be honest I was a little skeptical about it working for her. They had a 2 wk trial period so I thought, what the heck, it is worth a try. We plan on keeping it because it is grabbing her attention and keeping it. She is learning academically and her expressive speech has been improving as well. The program has little songs and stuff that it asks her to sing along with and repeat things and because it is more fun she does it with out a fight. The sound in the program is one of the clearest I have ever heard.

Her eye hand coordination has gotten better from using the mouse, and her listening skills have also improved because the program tells her what to do and then shows her how to do it. I also find that it works with all learning styles as it has visual, auditory, and with a little help from the parents it can also be done with movement for those kinesthetic learners. A child can stand at the desk, wiggle in a chair that moves etc. I do stay near her so that I can see what she is doing and sometimes throw in my own stuff but it has helped me to not have so much scheduling, grad-

ing, and logging. I am really excited about the program and all that it entails. If I have a question and send them a quick email, my question is answered relatively fast and they have even called me afterward to see if my issue was resolved. I am now finding more time to do some of those things that we always say we want to do in home school but never seem to find the time. If you have questions, I'm Terri at: <http://www.homeschoolblogger.com/JTSKH/>



Adoption Scammers Beware!

My wife and I have fallen prey to two adoption scammers in our search to adopt a child. After the second scam artist took our money and tore our hearts apart, we decided to step up to the plate and do something about it.

I am a former Police Officer and have obtained access to one of the same network of databases that law enforcement uses to track fugitives as well as past criminal behavior.

We have started a business (AdoptionScam.com) and focus 100% on adoption scams. Uncovering these scammers is 3rd on our top priority list. 1st is God, 2nd is our Family. Please take the time to visit our site. Should you have any questions, please call Chris or Lori at 423-338-8734



Follow this CHASK correspondence with a Christian family facing an adverse prenatal diagnosis...

2/13/06 I thought maybe you could give me some advice. I just got back from an ultrasound at 18 weeks and our baby has major heart defects, no nasal bone and most likely some form of Down syndrome. I am supposed to go see a perinatologist tomorrow. The word terminate pregnancy keeps coming up. My midwife said they might recommend it because of maternal health issues. My husband and I are Christians and do not believe that God would want us to terminate a pregnancy. I want to stand firm in our belief but what do I do when faced with those words "maternal health issue". Why would it be a maternal health issue?

We are very sad but I am more scared as

to what lies ahead tomorrow with the doctors. I thought you might have some advice. God is so good, we have been a part of NATHHAN for a couple of years now. Tom came and spoke at our church, New Hope Mennonite Church in Marysville, WA a couple of years ago. We really felt a need to support the organization and be involved in some way. Well, here we are faced with a Downs child of our own.

3/31/06

I wanted to update you on what is going on with our baby, (Elijah Lucas). I am now 24 weeks pregnant and just saw a cardiologist today. Elijah has a major heart defect called Tricuspid valve atresia and as we already knew, also has Downs. We got a 3D picture of him today and he is beautiful! I was going to scan it and attach it but our computer is not cooperating. Remember they told me he didn't have a nasal bone? Well he has the cutest nose you have ever seen. And it is in no way small or flat.

If our little boy was "normal" he would have heart surgery without a doubt, but they are using the Downs as a factor to throw in as to whether we should pursue the surgery or not. The Cardiologist says that Downs children have extra pressure in their lungs and are more susceptible to respiratory infections which could be devastating to Elijah with his heart defect. I told him I have met many families with Downs children that do not have any health issues. He said that is a possibility. Right now it is just a wait and see. Even after birth it will depend on

his health as to whether or not he will be able to have surgery. I am just praying for a miracle.

The most disturbing thing of all is that the cardiologist brought up termination. I am still in shock at how easy it is to just terminate a baby. They had just handed me 3D pictures of this cute little boy and they still gave us the option to terminate. I am just floored to say the least. This whole experience has given me even more enthusiasm for CHASK. I had no idea that it was so easy to just eliminate a child that is not normal.

My family and I are all accepting of the Down syndrome and are reading books about it and meeting with families that have children with Downs. We just met Ruth (member of NATHHAN) and 5 of her wonderful children including Zach, who is almost two and has Downs. He was born at 29 weeks and is super healthy. We all had a great visit and hope to get together again soon.

I can really say that we are getting exited about Elijah. There is still so much unknown about what will happen, but we are leaving it in God's hands and resting in His grace. I am really enjoying every move little Elijah makes.

If you have any advice or know of anyone whose child has this heart defect I would love to know more about others who may have had to make similar decisions for their baby.

Blessings,
Lori, wife to Chris, homeschool mom to 5 blessings ages 16g, 13b, 12g, 4g,1g and #6 due in July. Brappel5@juno.com

PossAbilities OT

Hello from Kansas!

I have had a few people contact me with questions regarding occupational therapy through your website. I continue to consult and work with homeschooling families and I opened up a small clinic space last fall. Do you still have my information on your website? I couldn't find it but I'm not sure that I was looking for it in the right place. If not, how do I get added again, i.e. Do I need to pay for an ad? In less than a month, I should have my own website up and running!

God's blessings on all that your hands do! Jean Wetherilt, OTR/L
jwetherilt@hotmail.com



Too much unproductive time on our hands...

My DS son is now 15 years old. I have always home schooled him. I do a little school and speech with him each day. I am seeing that he has too much unproductive time. He has some chores to do and he does them. Do you have any suggestions on what I can give him to do that does not require a lot of supervision? Debbie Pugh
brycepugh@comcast.net



Summer Joy is in the NATHHAN NEWS again! We rejoice with yet another CHASK family whom she has touched with her little life.

My oldest daughter, Donna, and her husband have 3 children. Kelsey Anne, who is the third was born with Down syndrome and its accompanying heart defect. She is a wonderful gift from God. She had her heart repaired at a Children's Hospital in Denver when she was 3 1/2 months old and now has a clean bill of health. She will be 2 in February and is such a joy to our family. She has an angelic smile that draws even strangers to want to talk to her. She is so active, and a vital part of our whole family. Of course, her Grandma and Grandpa think she is just so precious. Her 8 year old sister and 5 year old brother adore her and play with her all the time, and she loves them. She is very high functioning and NO ONE HAS EVER TOLD HER SHE IS ANY DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF THE FAMILY OR TREATED HER DIFFERENTLY. So she is very happy and adored by all of us. I can't imagine anyone who is knowledgeable about Down syndrome aborting their baby.

Our other daughter, Kristy, and her husband have to adopt children. They have currently have a son who was 2 in September, and just last week received a new born son. But on August 22nd, they had been chosen by another young couple to adopt their yet-to-be-born child. The mother went into labor the very next day and gave birth to a little girl who had severe physical birth defects. The child was flown to Denver and was not expected to live through the night. My daughter and son-in-law immediately went to the hospital to be with her so she wouldn't be alone. But the diagnosis was wrong and she was found to be healthy except for her physical defects. They spent 10 hours a day for 6 days at the hospital with her, agonizing over whether they could deal with her critical needs since they have such a young child at home already. It was a terrible time for our whole family.

About a year and a half prior to the birth of this child, I had been told about CHASK by a friend and had started to send you donations. I gave that information to Hope's Promise, the Christian adoption agency they go through in

Castle Rock, CO and they contacted you. This infant girl was adopted by Sally in Wyoming.

How amazed I was when I received your magazine to find that "Summer Joy" was on the front page. God indeed works in mysterious ways to accomplish HIS will. Kristy and Sally have written back and forth to each other.

I am so glad your organization is there for special needs children who need loving homes. Sincerely, Nancy and George Hollen



2 Adopted boys from Russia have ADHD. Mom needs suggestions.

We have two boys we adopted from Russia - ages 8 & 10. They both have ADHD and the older one is very developmentally delayed. I am having difficulty with managing free time. They seem to only find things to get into trouble with when they are playing alone.

Do you have any suggestions of materials that discuss how to structure life and play outside of the time we are in school.

I am somewhat organizationally challenged myself so this has been challenging. Thanks, JGlaze44@aol.com



Family wishing more information about adopting a child with Albinism from the US.

I have been doing a lot of research on albinos and it sparked my interest so much that I would like to adopt a child with Albinism. I have not been able to find anything online on how to even start. I particularly would like to adopt one that is American but would be willing to adopt from a foreign country. Would you be able to help me with resources? It would be very appreciated. Vettegirl_82@hotmail.com



Mom with Albinism seeks to share resources with a family in need.

Thanks for the extra brochures you recently mailed me! Last night I came across a couple more people who are interested in CHASK/NATHHAN. Anyway, we are getting ready for a move and I came across some

things I wasn't sure if someone else could use. I have albinism and vision problems and when I was in college an agency provided me with a computer and software to help. I'm now a stay at home mom and don't need special software for the little time I spend on the computer. If anyone else could use it, I'd be glad to pass it on.

I will also say that that was in 1996, so all the stuff is 10 years old. One program is called ZoomText, a screen magnification software. The other program is called An Open Book Unbound. You could place your book on a scanner and then it would read the text aloud to me. I couldn't begin to explain to anyone how to use it because it's been so long, but I think I have all the software and instruction manuals that came with it. I'm willing to mail the software, hardware, and instruction manuals to anyone who could use it. We are moving soon, so I need to get rid of it fast and I also noticed that you have sons interested in computers and I could mail it to you guys and they could figure how to use it and be better able to explain it to whoever needs it. I'm not a computer person except for e-mail and internet, so it's all confusing to me. I also realize that this stuff is 10 years old and they may have better programs out there and maybe I should just trash it. Let me know what you think.

Suzan George
acts3v19@hotmail.com



Mom seeking to start a prenatal hospice and would like your suggestions.

Hello, I'm looking for help, guidance or direction. I am a mother to a baby, Riley Nathan, that recently passed away from a fatal birth defect. I was urged by 3 different doctors to abort my baby, I did not and my baby lived for 12 months. Those 12 months were difficult but the most significant of my life. My baby was the greatest soul I will ever meet and I promised my baby that I will live my life with his spirit of goodness. My time with my baby was eased by the support of a local pediatric hospice program, they enabled us to love our baby, assist with medical care and provide needed support. Sadly I did not receive their services until after I deliv-

ered, I desperately needed support during my pregnancy; I was terrified, alone and uncertain (I was going against medical advise by continuing the pregnancy, no risk to me just that the baby was incompatible with life). Anyway, the reason I am contacting you, and everyone that I can, is because I believe that prenatal support is vital, I am trying to put together a proposal for our local pediatric hospice program to establish 'Riley's Hope' my vision of perinatal hospice for the Detroit, MI area. We have no services available here currently. The hospice doctor and staff are interested in perinatal hospice and I want to make this a reality in our area. They have many questions and currently are understaffed and overworked. I guess that my first attempt in this area is to provide a multidisciplinary approach; although if I can't get the support from the existing pediatric hospice program, my next step is to try and establish something on my own (which really overwhelms me).

Can you provide any information to guide me? When I approached hospice about this, their first area of concern, would be payment for their services? Is it possible to bill for social work consultations? I, as a parent, also feel that I could assist in providing parent-to-parent support... I want to make this a comprehensive established alternative to abortion in our area and they will not be receptive in supporting this program if there is no payment for services.

Any direction on initiating 'Riley's Hope' in our area would be appreciated, I want to know what I'm doing before I start seeking support from locals.

Kelly Sitkiewicz, Mom to Riley Nathan
www.caringbridge.org/visit/rileynathan
(586) 992-3704
Macomb Township, MI



Maid or Mother?

Thank you so much for your article "Maid or Mother?" I finally knew that someone else had been through exactly what I am going through. I've had (and still do) the same anger and bitterness you felt. We felt strongly that

God had given us this task, and we felt so utterly incapable of doing His will. My husband and I and my mother are the only Christians in my family, so the others think that I am just a bitter, mean, mom and my brother turned me into children services for abuse. (I told my sister how I felt about my son and she told my brother). My sister also witnessed me implementing some of the techniques Nancy Thomas recommends and thought I was abusing him by making him look me in the eye, and refusing to listen to him, or I would stop talking when his eyes wandered off. Usually this meant him going to his room and me calling him back until he would do it right. They never bothered to find out what life was like here, and they never offered respite. I don't know what children services plans to do, but I do know that no weapon formed against me shall prosper. Thanks again for your article. I had pretty much just isolated myself from everyone because I got tired of being judged or having to explain to people, knowing they didn't get it. God Bless you, jiter@saferinternet.com

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Help for my sister. My hope: that there is some kind of homeschooling for the mentally disabled.

My name is Deena Hassaballa. I am a sister and guardian to a mentally retarded woman. She will be 21 years in March. My sister used to be in the special programs at the high school in our area but there was a situation that prompted my parents to take her out at the age of 17. We have tried taking her to classes or community colleges but the problem is without a high school diploma she really cannot get a lot of opportunities. I am at a loss for words to describe what it is like to watch my sister deteriorate day by day. She really wants to learn. She is always searching the internet for programs to receive her diploma and learning methods.

My hope: that there is some kind of homeschooling for the mentally retarded. I am not sure where to look. I am not qualified to teach her and I am looking for someone that would come to our home and teach her, under supervision of course.

If anyone has any resources or advice or anything, I would truly appreciate it. We live in the USA in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Sincerely, Deena ishtaah@gmail.com

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I have been told that unless my son, John, has a note from the doctor to say that he needs to have homebound services, he will not be able to receive homebound services. Meaning I will have to put John in school. My husband and I are not willing to do that.

My name is Christina Busch, I have a three year old son, John Matthew, he has Myotubular Myopathy, neonatal (low muscle tone condition, non-progressive). One of my son's private duty nurses read your article in Review magazine and told me about it. My husband and I decided before we had children that I was going to stay home and homeschool.

We come from Louisiana and all of our friends homeschool and when we found out that I was pregnant everyone said that they would help me with EVERYTHING, including homeschooling when the time came. Well, when John was born he did not breathe or move and he was in the NIC unit for 3 1/2 months and came home with a trach, g-tube, no muscle tone (floppy) and no diagnosis. A year and half later he was diagnosed. Needless to say that none of my friends could help me with anything. I was first a nurse then a mother.

Now we have had to relocate to Texas because of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I am just now starting to learn about the laws in Texas. John turned three January and is now in the "homebound" school system. John will have a school teacher come out along with OT, PT, and Speech. He also has had therapy with Arc of Jefferson and Cooks Home Health.

I find myself in an unusual situation because he is now three. I am seeking help from you because my friends can only help me so much, and I am not willing to put John in school at age five, much less at age three. I will still bring him to therapy, but when I brought that up to the school they said that John has to be in

school to get their services, unless the doctor can continue to write notes to say that it is medically necessary to have John at home. I have talked this over with his doctor and he said that he would try and help me anyway he can.

With all that said, I would like to find a way to teach John myself and not have to worry about the rules of the school system, or that I might have to put him in school if the doctor feels he can go.

I was already apprehensive about teaching my child but now even more since he has "special needs". I really know that God has called me to teach John and I know that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That is how I got this far.

I can be reached at (817) 297-4224 or via email bcjbusch@charter.net



Our Hearts are Crying with You...

Dear Lisa Saunders and family of Elizabeth (Riding the Train With Elizabeth).

NATHHAN /CHASK would like to share our love for you and your family as Elizabeth has moved to her heavenly home, awaiting our arrival there. We know that Elizabeth has touched many lives, including ours, with her sweet bravery and tenacious spirit. We appreciate Elizabeth and all that she has stood for, when "quality of life" seems so confusing. Elizabeth you are a joy!!

Love,
Tom and Sherry Bushnell—
NATHHAN /CHASK



Encouragement to someone with an adverse prenatal diagnosis of spina bifida.

Hello. A friend of mine is currently on her way to Philadelphia for surgery to try to repair her unborn baby's spina bifida. This inspired me to share my own story, in hope that it would be an encouragement to someone with an adverse prenatal diagnosis of spina bifida.

My son is now eighteen years old. I did not know he had spina bifida until after he was

NATHHAN Web page

**What does
www.nathhan.org
have for you?**

How about a collection of 14 years worth of articles, organized by subject, ranging from toilet training a child with Down syndrome to "How to handle visits from a social worker."

The NATHHAN Lending Library catalog is arranged by subject.

Family Directory. Folks are listed by state and list disability. Form your own support network. Find families homeschooling with the same special needs you are dealing with. Search the *entire web site* for a subject of interest when you participate in the NATHHAN family directory. Additional password needed for security.

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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born. The only sign was a dimple on his back, which during an early well-baby checkup was noticed by the NP, who referred him for x-rays. The x-rays showed that he did, indeed, have spina bifida. I was given no information about spina bifida. I was just told that he had it, but he appeared to be fine, so I didn't find out more until years later. He developed normally in nearly every way. The two major effects his spina bifida have had are that he had trouble staying dry at night until he was about ten years old, and also that he developed meningitis at the age of five, as a result of a serious infection making its way into his spinal fluid. However, he was treated with intravenous antibiotics for about three weeks and made a full recovery.

I hope that this will provide encouragement to someone, that there truly is a wide range of severity with spina bifida. Had we not been told by the early x-ray, my son would have gone through life never knowing he had a birth defect. None of my other eight children have had spina bifida or any other major birth defect.



Heart Transplants—Organ Transplants

I home-educate three daughters, two with special needs. Shivan, 11, and Lindsea, 8, had heart transplants at age 6. I would like to be able to connect with other homeschooling families who care for children with organ transplants. Is this a good organization to assist in my quest? Susan Friesen
www.homeschoolblogger.com/dolphindancer



I just launched a website about my son and I. He has Down syndrome.

I've become concerned about the early prenatal tests leading to more children with Down syndrome being aborted. This is a multimedia presentation on our story that I'd love to have your feedback on.

<http://content.impactengine.com/ieViewer.php?tid=61948>

Please let me know what you think...I could really use some feedback before I launch this on-line. Thanks, Sam (Gabriel's Dad)
sam@ingersolladvertising.com



Adoption Disruption Support

I just want to let you know about a new yahoo group. We have recently experienced a disrupted adoption and found it very hard to find a support group. I have set up a disruption support group e-mail list at yahoo. I know you have contact with families who have disrupted from time to time. I set this group up so those of us who have experienced this very difficult thing in our lives can have a safe place to share and give support. Anyone who has or is disrupting is welcome to join :

Subscribe: [adoption-disruption-support-
subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:adoption-disruption-support-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



Resource for Velo-cardio-facial or Nail Patella syndromes

Do any of the families you deal with have a diagnosis of Velo-cardio-facial or Nail Patella syndromes, associated with severe to moderate learning disabilities and many other disabilities? If not, I would be willing to provide information on this.

Teresa Bennis BennisTere@aol.com

A Message to Mom and Dad ...from Jordan, a 14- year old boy with severe autism.

The following article was written by Ruth Schroeder, mom of 14-year-old Jordan, who has severe autism. This boy hears the voice of God in ways his parents wish they could. The following article is written from Jordan's perspective as he delivers a very special message to Mom and Dad.

Ruth is a Life Coach (www.copetohope.com) who helps families with special needs move from just coping to hoping through in-home consultations and coaching by telephone nationally and internationally. She is also a popular retreat and conference speaker. Ruth lives in Gresham, Oregon, with husband Matt and two terrific kids, Jordan and Gracey. She anticipates graduating with her Masters degree in Counseling from Portland, Oregon's Western Seminary in April. Ruth can be contacted at Ruth@copetohope.com or by calling 503.661.1196.

What is "Life Coaching"?

*- Coaching focuses on your **gifting and strengths** and your unique ability to live the life you have been given.*

*- Coaching can clarify your focus, build confidence and **bring learning**.*

*The result is **intentional** progress.*

"Imagine...if someone knew your values and life purpose and was holding you true to them." — (Laura Whitworth, Co-Active Coaching)

*Ruth Schroeder
Cope to Hope
2229 NE Burnside, #132
Gresham, OR 97030
503.661.1196*

What's that, God? You have a message for me to deliver? I'll try, but You know my brain and my mouth don't always work together so good... You want me to say that? Yeah, I know, Mom and Dad really need to hear it. They get so tired. Both of them walk like they're carrying boulder-filled backpacks. Sometimes I know it's because of me. I hear them use the word "autism." I'm not sure what that is, but when they say it, they sound sad and worried. And always tired.

God, I worry about my Mom. She's exhausted. Sighs around the house. I've even seen her crying while she does dishes and she thinks she's alone. Last night, she got grouchy. I don't know what to do when that happens.

You're right. She needs this message from you. Please help my brain and mouth to cooperate when it's time to deliver Your words to her.

Sunday School is bothering me, they're changing the schedule. Oh, God, help me, please help me keep track of myself so I can deliver Your message...

Miss Ginny's lining us up to go out the door. Not on the schedule! Gotta flap. Soothe myself. Ee,eeee! Miss Ginny smiles at me, I feel her touch somewhere..ok, that's my arm. Miss Ginny likes me, I can go out the door. Flap, flap, flap. Eee-eeee. Walking, rocking, flapping, rocking.

Dad's in the hallway with a big smile. Too much. Cover ears, look down. Glance up. Look down again. Dkadeeee! I love Dad. He's big and strong. I can relax and find myself when Dad's nearby. I know his voice and it is full of love and patience. He thinks I'm a great kid and he's proud I'm his boy.

Walking into Big Church. Lots of people, col-

ored lights. Piano music, bouncing off the walls hitting my ears in every direction. Rock. Flap. Rock. Flap. The tag in my shirt rubs my back like a plastic fork. A woman's perfume smells strong like vinegar. That one like bleach. The lights flash. Rock, flap. I'm losing myself. Too much...rock, flap, rock, flap. Eeeee! Dad whispers, "Jordan, that's too loud." Dad's big, meaty hands rub my shoulders, patting, rubbing. OK, my body is coming back into this space. That's better. I know where my arms are. Rock, flap.

Dad, I can do this if you go with me. Take a step, take another step. Dad's hands. I turn. Fingers in ears. Look at all the smiling people. Today, I'm not looking down. I'm taking their happy in. Kids start singing. I like it. No singing for me. That would be too much. Too wonderful. Look at the man, he's smiling. She's smiling. He's smiling. He's smiling. She's smiling. Kids singing. Dad's hands. I smile back. I like it. Almost too much. But I like it. The kids stop. The music stops. They're clapping! All 500 adults are clapping....FOR ME! I did it! I've never done this before. I'm standing with my class. They're still clapping for me!! And maybe the other kids, too.

Time to walk down the steps. Dad's hands on shoulders. Adults smiling at me. I did it! I did it! Now in the hallway. Too much. All those voices,

too many faces. I'm overloading. How will I say Your message, God? Too much movement. I bury my face in Dad's big, burly shoulders. I feel safe when Dad's here. Gotta say it. Fingers in ears.

A girl says, "Good job Jordan." Face back in Dad's shoulder. OK, God this is it. Help my mouth say the words. C'mon, brain, it sounds like d...d...d...
"Difficult...but not impossible."

We did it. You and me, God. We delivered the message.

From Mom:

God knew how badly we needed to hear the message of "Difficult, but not impossible." On days when melt-downs are frequent, strength is low and perspective is narrow, God again reminds me that this life is difficult—sometimes horrifically so—but not impossible. Why not? Because of His presence. Emmanuel. God with us.

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, OH 74063
(918) - 245-1500

*Editor's note: We have just received the newest edition of this book here at the office. It looks like a lot has been added and updated.
We look forward to reading it all over again!!*

NATHHAN Resource Suggestions

Fine Motor Skills for Children with Down Syndrome - A Guide for Parents and Professionals

By Marianne Bruini, BScOT (Reg)

A new and expanded version. Dozens of easy home-based activities, which help. Work these fun ideas into your every day living and forget the word "therapy"!

Why Pro-Life? Caring for the Unborn and Their Mothers

By Randy Alcorn

Some believe that we have to choose between helping the unborn and their mommy. It is critical that we help both. Here are factual answers to the central issues of the abortion debate.

Homeschooling The Challenging Child

By Christine M. Field

Addresses ADD, disabilities, personality differences, and learning styles.

Homeschooling Methods Seasoned Advice on Learning Styles

Contributions by folks such as Ruth Beechick, Clay and Sally Clarkson, Christine Field, Diana Waring and more. Includes section on special needs homeschooling.

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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Getting Started Homeschooling with Special Needs

by Diane Ryckman, with help from
her friends at
DownHomeLearning
ryckman@kootenay.com

Whether a veteran homeschooler or just starting out, teaching a child with special needs opens up a whole new way of looking at “school.” No longer can I rely on nicely pre-packaged curriculums, but because of learning differences, physical challenges, and a unique developmental time frame, it becomes necessary that I design a custom-fit curriculum for my child. When we began looking into how to homeschool our sixth child, Andrew, who has Down syndrome, my whole understanding of “school”

was wonderfully transformed – not only with respect to Andrew’s education, but also for each of our children. The beginning of that transformation was in my understanding of the word “education.”

Defining Education

Education consists of so much more than academics, especially for the Christian homeschooling family. It is equipping for life - providing our children with the opportunity to gain the skills and understanding they will need for the life that lies ahead of them. It requires determining the best way to help our children learn and grow. Besides the “3 R’s” it includes spiritual understanding, character development, life skills, verbal communication, physical development, social skills, and more.

Because we’re all individuals, our educational priorities will vary from family to family. We each need to determine what is of greatest educational importance for our children. What a blessing to remember that each child is placed by God into the family He chooses, in order to best equip that child for the job He has in mind for him or her!

Where are we?

Having determined educational priorities, I can now begin planning my child’s curriculum. The first step in doing so is to **evaluate what my child already knows**. Because I know my child intimately, this doesn’t necessarily require a formal assessment. After all, we are the expert on your own children! For some, just sitting back and thinking about it is all that is needed. For others, developmental checklists or diagnostic inventories can be useful tools for evaluation. Either way, consider each of the areas of education that are relevant to your child at this stage in his life – what does he know already? Disregard any time frame associated with a checklist – your child is on his or her own time frame, and with your love and assis-

tance will develop right on schedule – his and the LORD’s! There’s no such thing as being behind when it comes to special needs homeschooling (or to ANY schooling, special needs or not. After all, who determines what is “behind” anyway?).

What are we aiming for?

Once you’ve determined where your child is developmentally, it’s time to **set some educational goals**. These should include more generalized, long-term goals as well as specific short-term goals – breaking a goal down into as many little steps as possible. Again, checklists are tools that can help us know what direction to take.

How will we get there?

Determining just **how to accomplish those goals** is the biggest challenge in home schooling. What materials are available? What materials are appropriate? How does my child learn best? How can I best help my child to learn? How can I adapt existing materials to ensure learning? These are important questions to explore when choosing the materials you will use for teaching your child. As you prayerfully examine what is available to you, the LORD will guide your steps.

The following are some favorite resources that fellow homeschoolers of children with special needs have discovered in their home school journey. Thank you, ladies, for sharing these resources with the rest of us!

“How to Teach” Resources

Learning in Spite of Labels, by Joyce Herzog www.joyceherzog.com. This was the first book that I read about special needs homeschooling, and it is full of so much wisdom! I highly recommend it.

Homeschooling Children with Special Needs by Sharon Hensley - Came out over ten years ago and was like water in a parched desert. Explains helpful details about main categories of disabilities and suggests which resources fit best and how to use them. Only problem is that the materials and supplier lists are out of date. Still a great read. Another great feature is that the emotional and spiritual issues of dealing with special needs kids are so well addressed.

Our Special Child by Bette Ross (an old book, but interesting reading)

Christian Homes and Special Kids available through NATHHAN. Written by parents for parents, this book shares many “how we do it” stories, as well as wisdom gleaned through years of experience, and much more.

Choosing and Using Curriculum For Your Special Child by Joyce Herzog

www.joyceherzog.com - Written to help you determine what type of homeschooler you want to be and where your child is on the spectrum, and then help you choose the companies to buy from to match what you decide. Includes a long list of curriculum modifications (and more).

The Way They Learn by Cynthia Tobias - Describes learning styles to help you determine just what kind of a learner your child is, and the best ways to help them learn.

Assessment and Goal Setting

The Brigrance Inventory of Basic Skills is a huge collection of short exercises to give to your child in order to determine what he or she knows. Get together with other families and pool resources to pay for it, rent it from HSLDA, or borrow it from NATHHAN’s lending library. Can be used from preschool all the way up through 8th grade level. Parents are quite capable of following the instructions and individually pinpointing areas of strength and weakness in everything from self help skills to formal academics. No time limit, will take several days to a week to complete, working just as long as is comfortable for the child each day. (Also available: **The Brigrance Inventory of Early Development**) <http://www.curriculumassociates.com>.

Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) Series and **Behavioral Characteristics Profile (BCP)** published by VORT Corporation - Assessment Stands (an inventory) and learning activities for early education & elementary school ages. Sample pages of their publications are available on their website www.vort.com. I use them a great deal for planning and breaking skills down for teaching. You **MUST** be a professional to order so

always remember you are a special educator! I did not ever feel the need to name our homeschool until I began to order special education materials so now we have a name and a school to have materials sent to...very official!

Luke's Life List and **Luke's Academic List** by Joyce Herzog, www.joyceherzog.com. Rather than diagnostic, these are checklists that can be used to give direction as to what to concentrate on teaching next. Organized from a Christian perspective, these include Bible teaching and character development in a comprehensive way.

Communication

Love and Learning video series - teach sight reading, but also a great help in speech development. An effortless way of teaching at a young age when more "traditional" teaching just isn't in the picture yet. www.loveandlearning.com

It Takes Two to Talk by Ayala Manolson

Communication Partners

www.jamesdmacdonald.org - very "home-friendly" and hands on. Explains how to build language while individually facilitating each child's needs where he is. Emphasizes working at each child's unique speed rather than pushing a particular agenda.

Easy Does it for Apraxia and Motor Planning by Robin Strode and Catherine Chamberlain, available through LinguSystems. Terrific multi-use tool which will last for many years. My favorite feature is the hand signals taught to facilitate production of all the consonant and vowel sounds as well as major combinations. We all know how sign language facilitates speech; these hand signals do the same thing for sounds. Many games and activities are included, not just for phonics, but covering many language skills as well.

Preschool Learning

Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready by June Oberlander - This is a terrific list of weekly developmental activities to do with your child from birth to age 5. Of course, we can use it much longer with our children. These super-easy hands on activities even gently weave in phonics for reading and spelling, as well as ideas for self-help skills and behavioral issues. Written for the typical child, this is a very affordable resource. Available through many

homeschool suppliers. Published by Xulon Press.

Helps For Special Education Teachers Curriculum and Activities to Promote Basic Skill Development in Special Needs Children

Written by Eileen Shaum, this book is designed to be used by teachers/parents of preschool children. This book lists goals and objectives with activities for the stages of development from early childhood through first grade level. IEP's are discussed with many helpful hints regarding curriculum planning, teaching tools and techniques.

Available from Rod & Staff, 606.522.4348

Ready Bodies, Learning Minds: A Key to Academic Success

by Athena Oden, P.T. www.readybodies.com. Discusses physiological and neurological development, and how incomplete development in specific areas can affect my child's ability to perform many academic tasks. Describes how to identify an immature system, and is full of simple, fun exercises and methods to encourage neurological development.

Life Skills

Steps to Independence, Teaching Everyday Skills to Children with Special Needs,

By Bruce L. Baker and Alan Brightman A book that covers everyday skills from play skills, to self-care and self-help skills, to skills needed for independent living. This book not only has skill inventories, it teaches how to teach! Included is an extensive appendix with proven teaching strategies. Skills for toddlers to young adults. Available from Brookes Publishing. <http://www.brookespublishing.com/>

Reading

Love and Learning videos, books, and cross-word puzzles to teach sight-reading. An effortless, effective way of doing school, especially for strong visual learners.

www.loveandlearning.com

Bob Books - simple phonetic readers that steadily build reading skills www.bobbooks.com

Farm Animal Words Reading Kit by Diane Ryckman – sight word reading instruction, book, and double set of flashcards. <http://www.kootenay.com/~ryckman/DownHomeLearning.html>

[DownHomeLearning.html](http://www.kootenay.com/~ryckman/DownHomeLearning.html)

Clayphonics – a simple, multi-sensory, method for teaching letter sounds. www.clay_phonics.com

Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome by Patricia Oelwein- presents a system for teaching sight-reading, very effective for visual learners. www.woodbinehouse.com

Three R's Series by Ruth Beechick – Ruth Beechick has given us this elegantly simple and ridiculously inexpensive set of three little booklets guiding us through reading, language, and math skills from preschool through grade three. The booklets explain in very simple terms how to teach the three above mentioned disciplines thoroughly but without unnecessary clutter.

Writing

Handwriting Without Tears – A hands on system of teaching handwriting. Begins with the easiest to write letters and moves to more difficult ones. Teaches frequently reversed ones in ways to help reduce reversal. www.hwtears.com

Math

Math-U-See - a manipulative based math curriculum with a video guide for the teacher, which can also be viewed with the student.

<http://www.mathusee.com/>

Teaching Math to People With Down Syndrome and Other Hands-on Learners – by DeAnna Horstmeier, www.woodbinehouse.com. Full of practical ideas for evaluating student understanding, and teaching math skills which are essential for everyday living.

Maximum Math by Kathryn Stout <http://>

www.designastudy.com/products/mathematics.html A detailed breakdown of K-8 math skills, along with activities and teaching strategies for teaching each skill.

Science/Social Studies/Language Arts...

Five In a Row - a great literature based curriculum. Selected stories are read 5 days in a row, with daily activities related to the story. Presents a variety of activities to choose from. The stories are loveable; the activities cover social studies, science, art, language arts, a bit of math, and music.

www.fiveinarow.com

Bible Teaching

Betty Luken Through the Bible in Felt (expensive, but well worth it) – Beautifully crafted flannel graph pieces. A great tool for teaching Bible stories.

The Bible in Pictures for Little Eyes by Kenneth N. Taylor – The reverent language speaks to the child in the simplest terms and has two or three questions to spark discussion after each short lesson. It begins with creation and ends with the missionary journeys of Paul. If you can find the older edition accompanied by the excellent set of 45rpm records it would be well worth the price.

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.)



We have come through a mild winter in Northern Idaho with abnormal rainfall, cold freezing temperatures and snow. We enjoyed the snow and the beautiful frost paintings on the windows. Now we go forward into warm spring days, planting a garden and warring with the persistent ants under our house!

As we considered what to share for this issue the thought kept coming, "make the most of your pain and suffering". Here is an attempt to share some of the things we are learning along the way.

All of us experience seasons of pain and suffering or trials and tribulations in our lifetime. Some come through an illness or accident; or sudden turn of events that leave us asking "Now what Lord?"; a loss of a loved one; or a financial crisis. You will have your own list as we have given some of ours. The longer we have lived, the longer our list and the

wider the variety of experiences. You would think, at our age, we would have figured out how to face life gracefully. (Can't we pick and choose which trials we want to endure and when?) But each new situation offers new challenges to see things God's way.

How have we handled these times in our lives? We would like to be able to press the rerun button and go back and redo some of our reactions. At times our reaction has been to resist it, or to deny it, blame someone else for it, run from it, or ignore it and hope it will go away. (Please God! Please!) All of these responses have only made the experience more difficult.

Even in our advanced stage of life, we are learning to STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and ask ourselves "What is the Lord wanting to show us in this situation?" before we react. Take any one from our personal list above, where we have had a change in

"our plans" or a loss of our "hopes and dreams". We are learning to seize the moment, pray, wait patiently, and listen – (for the next move?!!)

There are some things we know NOW:

The Lord has allowed each experience and HE is with us in it -- even through our grumbling, complaining and wrong response.

He will provide all that we need to carry us through physically, emotionally and spiritually.

He will help us grow through it, if we will allow Him to teach us (old folks can learn very slowly!).

He will provide us opportunities to share our experiences with others to encourage and comfort them --- after we put our pride aside and lighten-up.

So, how is it going for you? Are you in the middle of a trial, or pain and suffering? Can you take a moment, and step back and take a new, fresh look at your experiences? Take courage and make the most of it. There are friends and help if we will just ask.

Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path."

Moriah's Miracles

Becky Bennett

24007 Flint Creek Dr.

Lake Barrington, IL 60010

andybeckybennett@sbcglobal.net

"I saw a child who for about four hours sat in a chair calmly, who has bright red cheeks, who ate a big meal-fed to her by her father, a child who is full but not fat and heavy as a stone, with bright, shining, pretty eyes and thick, full-bodied, dark hair.

At that, the child was not edgy, did not fall, was not squirming, but was sitting calmly, with interest looking at the people surrounding her, and as it seemed to me, wanted to say something."

This was the description of a dear Russian friend of ours who took a huge interest in our daughter some years ago. He had seen her not well and felt so badly for her that I guess he thought often of her and was always looking for a way to find treatment for her. He wanted her to be placed into a research program with the National Institute of Health in Washington, D.C., but as she is now 11 years old, no one would take her. They prefer to have babies whose development they can follow for years.

Not to be deterred, our friend tracked down a Russian pediatric specialist in Chicago, our home area, and was told that he would like to have a description of our daughter after our friend visited us. This is the description that he gave to the doctor, having not seen Moriah for several years himself.

As I read his letter, I was struck by the fact that this description is in and of itself a miracle. Moriah has had many years of poor health (i.e. catch-

ing every virus that comes along between August and May), as well as long periods of screaming which often came at dinner time due to tiredness at the end of the day and extra commotion from the other kids being home. We never pinpointed what caused the screaming, but it does not matter. We don't have it this year and I was a little ashamed that we did not see the miracle ourselves. But this was only the first miracle.

Our walk through life with Moriah has been one of putting one foot in front of the

other totally in the dark. She appeared to be normal at birth until a few weeks later when her head had not grown at all and feeding issues began to crop up. Still, I told myself, I have had four children and nursed them all. You don't wake up a content baby just to try to get her weight up. Or do you? This was the beginning of a long and arduous journey which is not yet over. We have seen many specialists and Moriah has only been diag-



nosed with microcephaly, meaning a smaller than normal head. All parts of the brain are there, although some are smaller than normal. There is no sign of bleeding or trauma. She does not fit any other syndrome though she has been tested for some of the rarest as recently as last summer. She just is what she is, created by God for His purposes.

In the course of eleven years, we have used cranio-sacral chiropractic therapy, typical speech and physical therapy, neurodevelopment therapy, and hippo therapy, even enjoying our own pony for 3 years. We have used drugs to control seizures and then made the decision to stop using them because they

did not completely cure her while definitely making her less aware and alert. We have suffered through the decision of changing doctors because a longtime trusted pediatrician changed direction completely and has embraced New Age medicine to the point of always wanting his “medical intuitive” with him at our appointments. In short, we have wandered many paths never quite knowing if we were making right choices or doing anything of value for Moriah.

Anyone who has a child with severe problems as well as other children will realize that there is always a battle to deal reasonably and fairly with the other children in the household. They must learn to be compassionate and loving without love being returned by the handicapped sibling. They must be helpful to the parents with cheerful attitudes even though “no one else they know has so many burdens.” They must be educated and allowed to spend time with friends so that they DO have times of feeling normal. They must be prayer warriors in a way that peers will never understand.

This is where our second miracle shows itself. From the time we realized that Moriah would have severe difficulties, my children prayed for her. Their prayers, as young children, did not alter. “Please let Moriah walk and talk.” Moriah does neither of these things. How do you encourage your children in a prayer life when their deepest felt requests of innocent childhood did not seem to be answered? How do we, in the midst of our own tumultuous thoughts and emotions assure them that God is a loving Father and His ways are beyond ours and good for us?

Let me return to the beginning of this letter and give you the quote of the Russian doctor upon hearing Moriah’s description. “This sounds like a fairy tale. In more than 50 years of my practice, I have not met a single child with such amazing, outstanding indicators with this illness. I do not know how the parents were able to achieve this, but it looks like a miracle. Stop all the searching and research on how to treat this child. What you told me is not achievable with the help of the present therapeutic methods known to me.”

My oldest four are ages 15-20 now, and I am able to turn to them and say, “Look at this! All those years of prayers and God was giving us a miracle. We just didn’t know it.” Oh, we can’t give

quarterly updates on Moriah’s progress and are even hard pressed to find something nice to say in a Christmas letter. But God has been here all along. Furthermore, He gave us this letter to encourage our hearts at a difficult time in life and to change our perspective. God has His special treasures stockpiled for us. We must not limit Him to what WE think would be best for our family or make us happy. If we do, we may miss the little miracles along the way.

Finally, there is a third miracle. We are at peace with Moriah and who she is. Don’t get me wrong. I have days I wonder how much longer I will be able to lift her or get her out of the house. I dare not wander down a mental road trying to figure out how our children will deal with her financially one day should we die first. But I am at a place of peace that we have done what we could do and God is truly putting one foot in front of the other in the dark. About two years ago I stopped praying terribly specifically for Moriah in most prayers. Instead my hearts cry was that God would be her advocate. He has clearly answered that prayer and will continue to do so because I am convinced He loves Moriah more than I ever will.

10 Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew

By Ellen Notbohrn
South Florida Parenting

The child who lives with autism may look “normal” but his or her behavior can be perplexing and downright difficult. Today, the citadel of autism, once thought an “incurable” disorder, is cracking around the foundation. Every day, individuals with autism show us they can overcome, compensate for, and otherwise manage many of the condition’s most challenging aspects.

Equipping those around our children with a simple understanding of autism’s most basic elements has a tremendous effect on the children’s journey towards productive, independent adulthood. Autism is an extremely complex disorder, but we can distill it to three critical components: sensory processing difficulties, speech/language delays and impairments, and the whole child/social interaction issue. Here are 10 things every child with autism wishes you knew.

1. I am a child with autism. I am not “autistic.” My autism is one aspect of my total char-

acter. It does not define me as a person. Are you a person with thoughts, feelings and many talents, or are you just fat (overweight), myopic (wear glasses), or klutzy (uncoordinated, not good at sports)?

2. My sensory perceptions are disordered. This means the ordinary sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches of everyday life that you may not even notice can be downright painful for me. The very environment in which I have to live often seems hostile. I may appear withdrawn or belligerent to you, but I am really just trying to defend myself. A “simple” trip to the grocery store may be hell for me. My hearing may be hyper acute. Dozens of people are talking at once. The loudspeaker booms today’s special. Music whines from the sound system. Cash registers beep and cough. A coffee grinder is chugging. The meat cutter screeches, babies wail, carts creak, the fluorescent lighting hums. My brain can’t filter all the input, and I’m in overload! My sense of smell may be highly sensitive. The fish at the meat counter isn’t quite fresh, the guy standing next to us hasn’t showered today, the deli is handing out sausage samples, the baby in line ahead of us has a poopy diaper, and they’re mopping up pickles on Aisle 3 with ammonia... I can’t sort it all out, I’m nauseous. Because I am visually oriented, this may be my first sense to become over-

stimulated. The fluorescent light is too bright. It makes the room pulsate and hurts my eyes. Sometimes the pulsating light bounces off everything and distorts what I am seeing. The space seems to be constantly changing. There’s a glare from the windows, moving fans on the ceiling, so many bodies in constant motion, too many items for me to be able to focus – and I may compensate with tunnel vision. All this affects my vestibular sense, and now I can’t even tell where my body is in space. I may stumble, bump into things, or simply lay down to try and regroup.

3. Please remember to distinguish between won’t (I choose not to) and can’t (I’m not able to). Receptive and expressive languages are both difficult for me. It isn’t that I don’t listen to instructions, it’s that I can’t understand you. When you call to me from across the room, this is what I hear H*%&%\$#2, Billy. #)%&*%\$&***’ Instead, come speak directly to me in plain words: “Please put your book in your desk, Billy. It’s time to go to lunch.” This tells me what you want me to do and what is going to happen next. Now it’s much easier for me to comply.

4. I am a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally. It’s very confusing for me when you say, “Hold your horses, cowboy!” when what you really mean is “Please stop running.” Don’t tell me

something is a “piece of cake” when there is no dessert in sight and what you really mean is, “This will be easy for you to do.” When you say, “It’s pouring cats and dogs,” I see pets coming out of a pitcher. Please just tell me, “It’s raining very hard.” Idioms, puns, nuances, and double entendres and sarcasm are lost on me.

5. Be patient with my limited vocabulary. It’s hard for me to tell you what I need when I don’t know the words to describe my feeling. I may be hungry, frustrated, frightened or confused; but right now those words are beyond my ability to express. Be alert for body language, withdrawal, agitation, or other signs that something is wrong. There’s a flip side to this: I may sound like a little professor or a movie star, rattling off words or whole scripts well beyond my developmental age. There are messages I have memorized from the world around me to compensate for my language deficits, because I know I am expected to respond when spoken to. They may come from books, television or the speech of other people. It’s called echolalia. I don’t necessarily understand the context or the terminology I’m using; I just know it gets me off the hook for coming up with a reply.

6. Because language is difficult for me, I am very visually oriented. Show me how to do something rather than

just telling me. And please be prepared to show me many times. Lots of patient repetition helps me learn. A visual schedule is extremely helpful as I move through my day. Like your day planner, it relieves me of the stress of having to remember what comes next, makes for smooth transitions between activities, and helps me manage my time and meet your expectations.

7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can’t do. Like any other human, I can’t learn in an environment where I’m constantly made to feel that I’m not good enough or that I need fixing. Trying anything new when I am almost sure to be met with criticism, however constructive, becomes something to be avoided. Look for my strengths and you’ll find them. There’s more than one right way to do most things.

8. Help me with social interactions. It may look like I don’t want to play with the other kids on the playground, but sometimes it’s just that I simply don’t know how to start a conversation or enter a play situation. If you can encourage other children to invite me to join them at kickball or shooting baskets, I may be delighted to be included.

9. Try to identify what triggers my meltdowns. This is termed “the antecedent.” Meltdowns, blowups, tantrums, or whatever you want to call them are even more

horrid for me than they are for you. They occur because one or more of my senses has gone into overload. If you can figure out why my meltdowns occur, they can be prevented.

10. If you are a family member, please love me unconditionally. Banish thoughts such as, “If he would just...” and “why can’t she....?” Without your support, my chances of successful, self-reliant adulthood are slim. With your support and guidance, the possibilities are broader than you might think. I promise you I’m worth it.

It all comes down to three words: Patience. Patience. Patience.

Work to view my autism as a different ability rather than a disability. Look past what you may see as limitations and see the gifts autism has given me. I may not be good at eye contact or conversation, but have you noticed I don’t lie, cheat at games, tattle on my classmates, or pass judgment on other people?

You are my foundation. Think through some of the social rules, and if they don’t make sense for me, let them go. Be my advocate, be my friend and we’ll see just how far I can go. I probably won’t be the next Michael Jordan, but with my attention to fine detail, and capacity for extraordinary focus, I might be the next Einstein. Or Mozart. Or Van Gogh.

They had autism. too.

Understanding And Working with “Math Problems”



By Sharon Hensley, MA

NOTE: The bulk of this article has been summarized from two books: *Number Concepts Using Unifix Cubes*, and *Teaching Mathematics to Students with Learning Disabilities*. Both are fabulous resources and highly recommended.

Children who have difficulty with math, present different challenges than those encountered in the reading and language areas.

Often with reading or writing difficulties, we can continue building on content even if the independent reading or writing level remains low. In math, however, there is no way that we can continue on in content until lower level skills have been mastered or at least understood to the point that they can be utilized (even if not memorized!). Thus, it is common for parents to feel that their child is “way behind” because there is such a clear, sequential progression to mathematics.

Let’s first look at the typical progression for learning math skills, and then at the ways that learning problems affect math performance. Finally, we will look at methods for working with

math dysfunction and the curricula best suited for different types of learning difficulties.

The Development of Math Skills

Number Concept (Pre-Math Skills): The beginnings of number concept include a number of different notions, but the general concept is that “number is an idea” which can’t be seen. It is this abstract nature of math that makes it so difficult for some children. The mastery of these basic concepts makes it possible to move on to being able to use numbers in meaningful ways. While most children are comfortable with these basic concepts by the mental age of about 9, more severely handicapped children may never completely master these basic concepts, and other learning disabled children may grasp the concepts only superficially which impedes higher level mathematical reasoning skills.

Number concept as a whole is made up of the following concepts:

1. Classification - the ability to sort by specific properties into consistent categories.
2. Ordering - the ability to organize materials in a logical sequence. Rote counting is not ordering. To truly understand ordering, a child must understand more, less, before and after concepts, and be able to put numbers, items, or problem steps in order even if they are presented out of order.

3. Inclusion - the idea that “three” includes items one and two, it is not the name of the object.
4. One-to-One Correspondence - the idea that you must say or think only one word for each object.
5. Conservation - the idea that the number of objects does not change if the objects are moved, rearranged or hidden.
6. Connecting Symbols to the Number Concept - recognizing that the symbol ‘4’ means 4 objects, and then being able to write the numbers to represent a group of objects. (This is different than just learning to write numbers, which is a handwriting task.)

Basic Operations:

After children master the basics of number concept, they move on to learning how to manipulate numbers through the four basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In order to understand these number manipulations, the ideas of *ordering* (e.g. when adding, the numbers get larger) and *one-to-one correspondence* must be expanded upon, and new concepts such as *place value* need to be understood. At this stage, we are talking about simply computing numbers to gain an answer.

There are students with learning difficulties who understand the process of basic operations, but are unsuccessful in computation because of spatial difficulties in lining up problems or motor difficulties in writing answers. For these students, calculators are invaluable and highly recommended to allow moving on to the more crucial aspects of problem solving and applications.

Problem solving (Application):

The next step, and one that most children with learning problems have difficulty with, is moving from simply computing numbers to solving problems. This is the point at which a student can interpret given information and decide how to solve the problem. In order to do this, the student must understand what the problem is, what information is relevant and irrelevant to solving the problem, which operation is needed, and whether the solution he arrives at is reasonable.

This process involves integrating many skills such as language, sequencing, patterning and reasoning. Often we think of this area as just “word problems,” but most “real-life” mathematics involves these skills.

Using time and money concepts on a day-to-day basis requires application skills. For example, consider the integration of skills needed to even accurately assess something simple like what time it will be one hour from now. First, it takes language skills to understand that “an hour from now” is an addition problem; sequencing skills to determine the next number; and the possibility of both patterning (how is a clock constructed) and reasoning skills if it is now 12:00 to know that the next hour will be 1:00 NOT 13:00!

Thinking and reasoning skills are related to math problem solving skills. Even though this is not “math”, working in this area can be helpful. Always begin by working on thinking and reasoning skills using your child’s strong area (verbal or nonverbal), and then move into his weak area. Critical Thinking Press has many great resources for building reasoning skills. One good general resource is the “Building Thinking Skills” series, but they also carry reasoning skill books directly related to math. Logic problems and thought puzzles (such as tangrams) or spatial puzzles (for children with spatial as well as reasoning difficulties) are also excellent for building problem solving skills and flexible

thinking.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CANNOT EVEN COUNT?

There are many ways to work on “math” even if your child cannot count. Go back to the list of pre-math skills and you will realize that there is a lot of “math” that can be done without knowing how to count. My daughter could not count past 3 objects for the first 10 years that we home schooled. Even today, she can only count to 10 and she cannot count objects that do not have a defined end. In other words – she can count six blocks if I put them on the table, but she cannot count six blocks out of a bag of 20 blocks and know where to stop. Therefore, the majority of the math I have done with her has focused on sorting, matching, number recognition and sequencing.

Obviously, when you have a child at this level, you have to make a lot of the materials. I have used many ideas from the books, “Developing Number Concepts,” but even the first book in that series had skills in it that my daughter cannot comprehend. However, I have found many of the ideas in that book could be modified and brought down to my daughter’s level. For example, I have done a lot with number cards that I made on index cards. Each card has the number and that number of dots on it in a pattern that we then use consistently to represent that number. We have done matching (with a second set of cards), sequencing (putting the cards in random order on the floor and finding “one” then “two” etc. Eventually, she could do this by herself without me telling her which card to look for). We have used the cards to “count” by putting one block on each card and then reading the number we “stopped on”. Even though this isn’t really counting in the true sense, it helped her to gain the concept of counting. I now use the cards as a moveable number line and she does “addition” by finding a number and then telling which number is “one more.” We have also used this number line

to work on the concepts of “more” and “less.” So you can see – there is a lot that can be done even when a child can’t count!!

METHODS FOR SLOW MOVING MATH

Working with students having difficulty beyond the pre-math stages involves three basic things: Simplify, Repeat and Vary. Since math builds on itself, repetition is a necessary, but often frustrating part of having a child with a math “problem”. Always remember to relax and move at your child’s pace. Let go of worrying about being “ahead” or “behind” and concentrate on giving your child the best math understanding of which he is capable.

Simplify:

Employ techniques that minimize the effect of the learning problem.

- Use manipulatives and charts to make abstract concepts more concrete.
- Use visual cues to assist students with figure-ground and other perceptual difficulties: Graph paper, lines, boxes, color coding, large problems.
- Balance computation and application problems. Allow calculators when doing word problems. This minimizes both frustration and errors.
- Concentrate on the most practical aspects of math. Working a problem correctly is practical - Speed Drills are not practical.

Repeat:

Review concepts and procedures many times.

- Solidify basic number concepts - always plan review of previous concepts and operations into your daily routine.
- Introduce new material in small chunks.
- Don't be afraid to move slowly - at the pace your child needs.

Vary:

Use a good variety of materials to review concepts.

- Games •Computers •Drill activities
- Real life situations

MATH RESOURCES AND CURRICULA

The following resources are grouped according to the main type of learning disability (visual or auditory) that it is the MOST appropriate for. In other words, if your child has a visual processing problem, then first look under the grouping for Visually Based Learning Problems. The curricula grouped there will be larger, less cluttered and more "language" oriented than others. However, if your child is a visual learner, look at the curricula grouped under Language Based Learning Problems. Do read through all of the explanations, however. Some of the curricula can be easily adapted for a variety of learning problems. General Resources are grouped separately as are high school resources and resources for older, severely handicapped children.

Unless otherwise noted, these resources are available from AVCS Books at www.avcsbooks.com

GENERAL RESOURCES:

These resources will help you learn HOW to teach math.

Teaching Mathematics to Students with**Learning Disabilities**

A manual that will help you understand the impacts that learning disabilities have on math performance and how to teach math so that learning disabled students can understand it. A great resource.

On Cloud Nine: Visualizing and Verbalizing for Math

If you are familiar with the Lindamood-Bell language and phonics materials, this manual will seem like an old friend. Taking the Lindamood-Bell idea of using visual imagery to develop memory aides, this manual explains step-by-step how to help students learn to visualize number lines and concepts such as place value, carrying, borrowing, multiplication and division. Students should either have good visualization skills or have been taught the basic visualization techniques (see *Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking*, AVCS Books). This is a good next step for students who have been through standard approaches to teaching math and just can't seem to remember the basic concepts.

Developing Number Concepts Using Unifix Cubes Book 1 – Patterns and Counting; Book 2 – Addition and Subtraction; Book 3 – Place Value, Multiplication and Division.

Appropriate for: Learning Disabled, Slow Learners, any child having difficulty with basic math concepts who is helped and *not distracted* by manipulatives.

Computer Programs and Helps

Computer math programs can be great resources for adding in extra practice and variety. One of the best features of most computer games is that problems are presented at random so that you may have an addition problem followed by subtraction followed by multipli-

cation. This variety of problems forces students to think through operations and make decisions about how to solve the problems. Another wonderful thing about using computers for review is that the computer is never frustrated that your child cannot remember what 7×8 is – even if he has seen it 10,000 times!

Resources for computer math games are plentiful. I personally like just about anything put out by The Learning Company and Edmark. Broderbund now owns these companies. See their HUGE website at www.broderbund.com. We have used **Treasure Mountain** from The Learning Company for years. Skills such as telling time, place value, equality and money are presented along with all basic operations. The format is fun, but educationally sound. Some of the other popular math games are **Millie's Math House**, **Math Rabbit** and **Math Blaster**. I have heard good things about all of these programs.

There are also many Internet websites that offer review helps. One I have used is the Saxon math website. You can create math practice sheets that the kids complete online and submit for instant scoring. Other websites such as www.edhelper.com and www.superkids.com offer worksheet creators that allow you to customize and print worksheets for areas your child needs review.

VISUALLY BASED LEARNING PROBLEMS

Mastering Mathematics

Levels: 1st -6th grades, remedial

Appropriate for: Just about anyone! The literature accompanying this program says that it has been used successfully with children who have IQ scores as low as 45 and with gifted students as well.

Available from: Mastery Publications 90 Hillside Ln. Arden, NC 28704 828.684.0429
www.masterypublications.com

This is a very complete program for just

about any student with learning problems, although I have put it in the visual section because of the large problems and uncluttered pages. It is a good choice for most kids who are ready to start “pencil and paper” math. However, children who have not yet mastered the idea of one-to-one correspondence are not ready for this program and should start with the activities in the Developing Number Concepts book (see General Resources above). Also, some children reach a point where they “bog down” with this program because of the high emphasis on memorizing the math facts. For these kids, drawing dots and counting them (like in the Attack Math program below), works better when they can't seem to memorize all of the facts. In a year or two they may be able to memorize more math facts while learning new concepts. Based on the idea that if a child can count, he can add, so the first book (Attacking Addition) jumps right into addition problems after a few pages of counting review. The entire program (addition through fractions) offers excellent variety (games, number wheels, and a variety of workbook page formats) along with enough repetition of concepts to promote mastery. The workbook pages are uncluttered and the numbers are large, which is a real bonus for kids with motor control issues. In my program, we have children with mild retardation, language disorders and learning disabilities using this program with very good results. *Note to mom: you do need to make time to play the review games that come with this program in order for it to work well.*

Attack Math

Levels: 1st - 5th computation skills (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)

Appropriate for: Visual processing, visual-motor difficulties

This workbook series gets my highest recommendation for its clear step-by-step presentation of basic computation skills and its large problems on uncluttered pages. Excellent for

children with motor difficulties or visual perception difficulties as well as those who need a very systematic presentation of basic skills.

Touch Math

Levels: Counting, addition, and subtraction available in the One-to-One series made for home instruction. Multiplication and division skills are currently only available in classroom kits.

Appropriate for: A wide range of disabilities. Basic counting skills required.

This is a really great program that helps students learn basic operations by using “touch points” strategically placed on each number. Students develop a mental image of the number based on both value and shape. The four basic operations are then taught using a multisensory (visual/auditory/tactile) approach. I’ve seen this program used successfully with even some severely handicapped children once they master the concept of counting.

LANGUAGE BASED LEARNING PROBLEMS

Recipe for Math

Levels: 1st - 6th grades, remedial

Appropriate for Learning Disabled, Language Disabilities

This teacher’s manual was written specifically for teaching students with dyslexia and gives daily lesson plans, goals and objectives for each concept (so you know exactly why you are doing each activity). The author also gives one of the best explanations of why math is difficult for children with language difficulties that I’ve ever seen. Workbooks are available to coordinate with the manual; however, we prefer the Attack Math workbooks because of the larger print and less cluttered pages. Unifix cubes work well with this program. There are many game suggestions for reinforcement. One

drawback to this program is that it has no word problems, but you can supplement with the word problems in Attack Math.

Developmental Mathematics

Levels: K-6th grade (approximately)

Appropriate for: Learning Disabled, Slow Learners

This workbook series is not intended for children with learning problems, but it has several nice features, which make it useable for some kids. First of all, the program is very visual. Students see visual representations of most concepts as they are taught and draw their own representations to demonstrate comprehension. This approach is particularly helpful for kids with auditory processing difficulties who often get lost in long explanations (even with manipulatives) but can “see” a concept via these diagrams. Another nice aspect is that the program is very structured and incremental (step-by-step) which is what most slow learners and mildly learning disabled children need. There is a good mix of new learning, practice (including word problems) and review throughout the series. The practice pages have a lot of problems per page, and they are small which is a drawback for kids who are easily overwhelmed by the LOOK of a page, but you could cover all but one column or cut the pages up into the individual columns for practice and review. One drawback to this program is that it does not include teaching of time, money, or calendar skills, however, these are not too difficult to add in on your own.

Math Teacher’s Press

Levels: K-6th grade

Appropriate for: Mildly Learning Disabled

Available from: Math Teacher’s Press
1.800.852.2435

This curriculum is also not designed

for kids with learning disabilities, but it has some very nice features, which make it a good choice for many children with mild learning problems. The use of manipulatives is encouraged, but the manipulatives are also illustrated on most pages so that a visual representation is available even if the actual building of the blocks is not needed. The pages are fairly uncluttered, but still not a good choice for those students who get lost in too much visual information. This is a more complete program than the Developmental Math because it includes time and measurement skills. A very nice feature is the Math Capsules, which provide random daily review (5 problems per day of previously learned material).

Calculadder

Levels: Basic Skills - Addition through fractions

Appropriate for: Learning and Language Disabled, Slow Learners with modifications.

Many math programs not intended for special needs students can be made usable by adding in extra practice. Calculadder is an excellent practice supplement. I usually recommend omitting the timed aspect (i.e. 3 minutes per page) and instead have the students concentrate on accuracy and bettering their own personal times.

It's Elementary

Levels: 2nd - 4th grade reading levels

Appropriate for: Students with language based learning disabilities (remedial).

This is another series, which teaches students the vocabulary needed to understand and solve math story problems. In addition to vocabulary, this series also gives students a framework to organize information from each word problem, which is a very nice visual aide.

Math-U-See

Levels: K-10th grade skills

Appropriate for: Children who need a tactile, visual approach to math and who are not distracted by manipulatives.

Available from: www.mathusee.com

You have to watch a video to learn how to teach a lesson. If you have time, it is a great confidence builder for an inexperienced teacher. I think this program will be best suited for very mildly disabled children and children with attention problems who need the tactile approach.

Additional Resources for More Severely Disabled Older Students

Counting Money

Levels: 1st grade reading level

Appropriate for: Elementary students to Adults who need to master basic money skills.

This series of 5 workbooks proceeds in ordered steps beginning with small coins in Book I and culminating with bills in Book 5. The pages are highly visual with pictures of the coins and bills and are large enough for kids with motor skill difficulties. A good amount of repetition and review is built in to the series.

The Time Is Now

Levels: 1st grade reading level

Appropriate for: Elementary through Adult needing to master basic time skills.

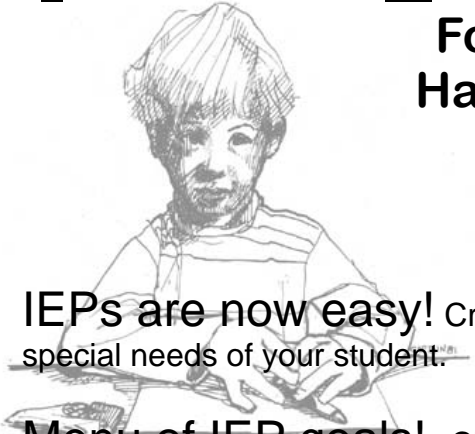
Another highly visual workbook series designed for more severely disabled students. These four workbooks teach numeral time (e.g. 1:30 instead of half-past one) to enable students to be able to quickly learn to read digital clocks and time in print. Book I teaches time to the hour, 30 minutes and 15 minutes. Book 2 reviews Book 1 and adds 45 minutes, 10 minutes and 20 minutes. Book 3 adds 40 minutes, 50 min-

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