

# NATHHAN NEWS

CHASK - Christian Homes And Special Kids  
NATHHAN - National Challenged Homeschoolers Associated Network

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Equipping Christians to raise  
their children with special needs, confidently.

## Spring / Summer 2005

Volume 13 No. 1



Preschool Level  
Learning Again and  
Again...?

Little Miss Persistence

Errorless Learning

Lots of Letters from  
Families

Lots of Resource  
Reviews

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.

## NATHHAN / CHASK

National Challenged Homeschoolers  
Christian Homes And Special Kids

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## Front Cover

This is Miranda Van den Berg. Her story and intro can be found on page 23.

## Letter from the Editors

Hello from the Bushnell's!

Our family is so glad for an early Spring. By mid February, instead of sledding, we were basking in beautiful sunshine (albeit a little cool).

The volunteer spinach in our garden tasted wonderfully fresh in the venison stir fry. We have planted the basics and look forward to being diligent about weeding...right kids???

Spring here brings about some looked forward to occasions beginning with Easter. Our annual NATHHAN / CHASK board meeting is held over a three day session. We also look forward to our family spring picnic. This year it includes a bike ride around our local wild game reserve. Watching moose, elk, eagles, owls, and many other wildlife we feel so privileged to be a part of God's earth. This year Grandpa and Grandma are with us so it makes it extra fun.

We thank the Lord for many things (too numerous to write here). Among them are folks like you, who care enough to be sure our family is well taken care of. If only we could meet all of you and share our thankfulness with a hug and smiles.

Jake is now 21 and a very integral part of the NATHHAN / CHASK office. If you call on the phone, he'll probably be the one answering. He also passed his flight exam and now is a full fledged pilot!

Josh is 19 and has set up a great wood shop for making log railing for various log home companies in the area. This keeps the younger brothers working and making some money, too.

Jordan, our son with Down syndrome, is 16. He is still at the 3-4 year old level academically, although we have seen some great strides in his cognitive ability as he is working next to mom on the computer in the NATHHAN / CHASK office.

He loves working on the computer and although learning is slow, we do see some connecting of ideas and ABC recognition. Recently he wrote a “book” with several pages written in small squiggles (hand writing) and included illustrations. Mommy was thrilled!

Sheela (she is totally blind and mildly mentally disabled) is now 16. She is still our steady worker and is constantly looking for ways to bless others. She eagerly sets a happy tone for doing the dishes with her sisters and keeps the laundry going. No easy task for a family of 14.

Liza, our mildly mentally disabled 19 year old we have guardianship of, has really melted her way into our hearts. As the months have gone on, she has learned how to adapt to our family. She is extra careful to help keep Sheela and Lynny busy. She is working on an afghan of rainbow colors and loves to read biographies about families that have adopted children and the stories of special needs children and their parents.

Zack is 13. He broke his elbow snow boarding with his dad and brothers early this January. It required surgery and a long titanium screw to keep it together to heal properly. All better now, his only therapy recommended by the orthopedist is to carry 5 gallon buckets of water 5 minutes a day! Zack is our film producer. With his computer he has captured some great footage and produced a hilarious short clip starring Mommy called “Perfect Noodles.”

Lynny, our daughter who has cerebral palsy, autism, and is 12, has continued to improve her posture and coordination. Her new wheelchair and abductor has kept her legs apart enough to keep her back from arching. This is really good, since her stander had to go back to the United Cerebral Palsy in Boise, ID, 500 miles away. (She was really too heavy to get up into it anyway.) She has learned to crochet one-handed and is making a hat.

Zeph is now 11. He shares his big brother Jake’s interest in airplanes. He saved up money to purchase a BMX bike and has been really helpful in the garden rototilling.

Sheraya is 9. She has mastered reading to the point of being a book worm. The boys are really applauding her gaining ability to cook. Banana bread, and other treats are the norm at

lunch. She loves her baby sister to distraction and sends the boys into groans of despair as she squeals “lovey” noises, making baby ShaHannah giggle with delight.

Mercy Grace is 7. She has gotten through the 1st grade and is now heading toward being a real reader like the rest of them. Ever willing to be a help, she wants so much to learn to play the piano, cook, and is terribly worried that there might not be enough time to learn all that she needs to know before she is a mommy some day!

Mercy has such a tender heart for Jordan and Lynny. She watches out for them and is careful to include them in her activities.

Jayben, now 3 1/2, is a rough and tumble little guy who is the epitome of a “command man.” His personality is such that we know that he will make a good leader some day. He just needs to learn not to be a tyrant! He has gotten much more tender-hearted as he relates to his sweet little baby sister. He recently got a bike with training wheels and loves to ride on the cement apron in front of the shop with the other children.

ShaHannah Faith will be 1 year old in August! How amazing that in a year’s time her little life has made such a special impact on our family. We love her dearly. She likes to cuddle and with all the love to go around here that is a very good thing. There are “mama’s” at every turn. However, she holds a mommy-only tone of voice and sometimes only THE MAMA will do.

Tom (otherwise known as Daddy around here) had a poor “good” cholesterol count. So, in enthusiasm to “save Daddy”, we went on a very low fat diet. He started running 3– 5 miles a day, which he likes to do anyway, and/or biking or playing basketball with the boys (basket brawl?). This promptly lowered his good cholesterol EVEN MORE! Yikes!

We then did some research and found out that a very low fat diet actually lowers the good HDL cholesterol *even more* in some people. After doing some more research, we found some nutritional evidence that **lowering carbohydrates** is a good way to raise HDL cholesterol. We are also taking liquid Omega 3 – 6– 9 oil and keeping up with a consistent good

exercise session everyday. This worked! Within 2 weeks Tom was registering within normal range on his total cholesterol count. Anyway, this whole “get-back-in-shape” thing has been a whole lot of fun for the kids, as Daddy has been much more available to them.

Because we work together as a family all day, we cook 3, sit-down-at-the-table, square meals a day. To make sure Tom *stays* heart healthy, we are attempting to avoid trans fats like shortening, Crisco, or anything with partially hydrogenated vegetable products, (that makes most store bought bread products out). In addition, a diet low in saturated fats and high in mono and poly saturated fats includes lots of olive oil and fish (in Idaho where we are not near the coast!). This lately makes our meals more errr... interesting. We'll make fish lovers out of our land lubbers yet!

Are we the only family that needs 2 shopping carts, minimum, and goes through 2 cases of oranges and 1 case of bananas a week?! Our family would love to hear about how other families with 10 plus children (several with special needs), keep clothing organized, keep school work up, and do ordinary shopping. Our visit to the grocery store has turned into an athletic event...sneakers included.

What has the Lord been teaching your family lately? During our Bible times, we have been working on being more Christ-minded in our attitudes toward each other and ourselves. Jayben has learned by heart the verse in Matthew.

“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” This is so true. Happy in our hearts means happy on our faces. When our attitude reflects the face of Christ, then our lives exhibit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self control.

Tom and the boys flew to MO to find and purchase an MCI, over-the-road-coach style bus that has a wheelchair lift, for us to convert to a customized NATHHAN RV. They found one with the engine in good shape for lots of future use.

We are busy taking the seats out, putting

in bunks, a full-size kitchen, and traveling seats. Tom and the boys were given lots of professional advice about how to convert the bus to work well for us. We will be doing this in stages over the next year, as the Lord provides.

This summer we are hosting quite a few visitors and really look forward to sharing our home with those who are traveling in the northern part of Idaho. There is always something exciting happening around here!

If you're dropping in at the right time, we might even let you help us weed or rototill the garden...cook a big batch of hamburgers, finish sewing projects (don't worry we have 3 sewing machines), work on converting the bus, clean the office, can up some strawberry jam, apricots or cherries, hang up a huge load of wet jeans on the clothes line, make a giant pancake breakfast, bake some loaves of whole wheat bread, feed the horses and chickens or milk the goats.

Looking forward to sharing Christ's love from our home to yours,

## The Bushnell family

**Tom, Sherry, Jake, Josh, Jordan, Zack, Zeph, Liza, Sheela, Lynny, Sheraya, Mercy Grace, Jayben and baby ShaHannah**



**ShaHannah Faith Bushnell**

# Resource Listing

|   |        |   |  |
|---|--------|---|--|
| Adoption Fundraising & Grant Program                | pg. 34 | People With Disabilities Press          | pg. 32   |
| <u>Allergy and Candida Cooking Made Easy</u> ...    |        | Phonics Plain & Simple                  | pg. 33   |
| .....   | pg. 59 | PICC (New York, plus)                   | pg. 9  |
| An Eagles Nest Home School                          | pg. 34 | PRAISE (Michigan)                       | pg. 9  |
| AVCS Books (Sharon Hensley)                         | pg. 9  | OUCH (Ohio)                             | pg. 9  |
| Bethel Baptist Academy                              | pg. 9  | <u>Riding The Train With Elizabeth</u>  | pg. 29   |
| Braille Sharing Library                             | pg. 9  | Shepherd Boy (Autism)                   | pg. 9  |
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| Chin Moppet Bibs                                    | pg. 33 | SNACKS of Delaware                      | pg. 9  |
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| Drymids   | pg. 34 | <u>Straight Talk, 1st and 2nd</u>       | pgs. 10 and 11   |
| Dynavox   | pg. 42 | Wisdom Seekers, Unique Learners         | pg. 34   |
| Especially Yours                                    | pg. 9  | New Christian Adoption Web Site         |  |
| Exceptional Kids Consultants                        | pg. 37 | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.G2Gadoption.com">www.G2Gadoption.com</a>   |
| Farm Animals Word Kit                               | pg. 8  | Parenting Kids With Issues              |  |
| <u>Feingold Cookbook for Hyperactive Children</u>   |        | .....                                   | Yahoo Groups type in   |
| <u>and Others With Problems Associated with</u>     |        |   | adoption/ parenting kids with disabilities   |
| <u>Food Additive and Salicylates</u>                | pg. 59 |   | (Shirley Couch, an adoptive mom moder-   |
| Freedom Ride  | pg. 35 |   | ates and shares candidly about RAD and   |
| <u>Gluten-Free Friends</u>                          | pg. 63 |   | other difficulties parents experience.)  |
| <u>God's Special Child</u>                          | pg. 29 | Augmentative and Alternative Communica- |  |
| Grace And Truth Books                               | pg. 31 | tion web site                           |  |
| H.A.N.D.S.On (Pennsylvania)                         | pg. 9  | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.aacoinstitute.org">www.aacoinstitute.org</a>   |
| Home School Legal Defense Association               | pg. 8  | Fetal Alcohol Effect web sites          |  |
| Homeschooling The Challenging Child                 | pg. 52 | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.nofas.org">www.nofas.org</a>   |
| HOPES (South Carolina)                              | pg. 9  | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.acbr.com/fas">www.acbr.com/fas</a>   |
| ICAN DO   | 34     | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/fas">www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/fas</a> |
| <u>Individual Education Planning Manual for the</u> |        | .....                                   | <a href="http://adopting.org/rwfas.html">adopting.org/rwfas.html</a>   |
| <u>Homeschool Handicapped Student</u>               | pg. 64 | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.come-over.to/FAS">www.come-over.to/FAS</a>   |
| Innovative Children's Services                      | pg. 32 | .....                                   | <a href="http://www.well.com/user/woa/fsfas.htm">www.well.com/user/woa/fsfas.htm</a>                         |
| Joni and Friends Family Camp                        | pg. 21 |   |  |
| <u>Meditations For Adoptive Parents</u>             | pg. 35 |   |  |
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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, due to the exponential growth experienced by NATHHAN 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.

In the Spring of 1999, the Bushnells moved to Porthill, Idaho at the end of the panhandle, 1 mile from the Canadian border. A board meets periodically to make decisions. Its officers are Jim and Jerri Unruh in Copeland, ID, Ralph and Debbie Poole in Pacific, WA, John and Diane Ryckman, Creston, B.C., and Tom and Sherry Bushnell. Financial Advisory board: Dennis and Linda Lamphere in Porthill, ID, William Byler and Dayton Skrivseth in Bonners Ferry, ID, and James and Dana McKenzie in Battleground, WA. In the Fall of 2002, as an outgrowth of NATHHAN, CHASK was born. CHASK is Christian Homes And Special Kids. CHASK 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 is printed as funds allow. It includes resources, articles from parents and professionals, and lots of letters from families, plus much more.

#### NATHHAN WEB PAGE [www.nathhan.com](http://www.nathhan.com)

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. Password is needed to access the NATHHAN membership portion. Hundreds of articles from the last 12 years of NATHHAN 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.com](http://www.nathhan.com). Book donations are gladly accepted.

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

### CHASK's Ministry

#### Christian Homes And Special Kids

Parent's 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 that needs a home, before-born or already born, with a Christian family. No agency fees.

[www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org)  
[chaskinfo@aol.com](mailto: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 or request a gift membership.

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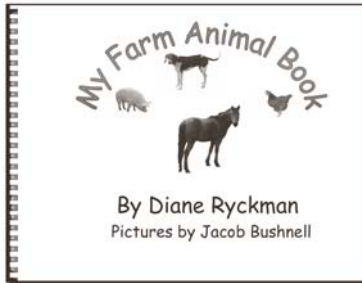
## **Preschool Level Learning Over and Over Again?**

*- By Sherry Bushnell*

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

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

e-mail: [ryckman@kootenay.com](mailto:ryckman@kootenay.com)

phone: 1-250-428-7798

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

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ASSOCIATION**  
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# Special Needs Support Groups

## **Deaf Ministries List**

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

**Especially Yours** - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs. All are welcome. Call Patricia Rendoff (303) 937-3428 or at [prdiggie@juno.com](mailto:prdiggie@juno.com)

## **Shepherd Boy -Strategies for Autism**

4241 Faye Drive  
Olive Branch, MS 38654  
[www.shepherdboy.org](http://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 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](mailto:mercedchristian@yahoo.com)

## **AVCS Books**

Sharon Hensley, MA Author  
6291 Vegas Drive  
San Jose, CA 9512  
408-997-0290  
[www.almadenvalleychristianschool.com](http://www.almadenvalleychristianschool.com)

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

Support group for special needs homeschoolers in PA  
Web Page: <http://geocities.com/kellilynette/handsonhomeschool>  
Newsletter: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handson\\_westernpa/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa/)  
Online forum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson/>  
Database form: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson/files/>

## **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. [tewjr@flash.net](mailto:tewjr@flash.net)  
Contact: Tita Wyatt

## **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  
[Strengthunto strength@juno.com](mailto: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 home school support group for parents homeschooling special needs children.  
947 Park SW Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
(616) 451-3620  
[sbloemen@aol.com](mailto:sbloemen@aol.com) Contact Shannon Bloemendaal

## **Parents Instructing Challenged Children (PICC)**

Allen and Barb Mulvey  
615 Utica St. Fulton, NY 13069 (315) 592- 7257  
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.  
440 944-4782 Please RSVP. [RCHOSEN@visn.net](mailto:RCHOSEN@visn.net)  
"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](mailto: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  
[ryckman@kootenay.com](mailto:ryckman@kootenay.com)



## 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



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Video is \$20.00 separate from the manual.

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## 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

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

Order online at [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org) or use the order form on page 30!

# CHASK—Christian Homes And Special Kids

## How thankful we are for you!

CHASK families are the back bone of a unique organization that is getting the notice of the pro-choice movement. Why? Your willingness to really commit to saving lives of special needs babies is speaking volumes about Christ's love to the world.

Recently PBS contacted CHASK to find a couple of families that they could interview who would share about why they chose life over abortion for their child with special needs. The families needed to have known about their baby's needs before birth and to have navigated through maternal fetal medicine.

We sent out a letter from CHASK via e-mail (if your e-mail address is not current with us, you would not have received the letter.)

We received many wonderful responses and were able to give PBS several families to choose from in the North East.

In addition, you as an organization and part of CHASK, are gaining the attention of genetic counselors, Christian social workers and OBGYNs advocating a women's right to make a birth choice.

We are just about ready to send out a CHASK letter of introduction to genetic counselors and social workers. Getting the assistance of several genetic counselors in crafting this all important letter, we feel confident that we can gain some friends for CHASK. Our goal is to enable these health care workers to present life choices,

if they feel it would really benefit a birth parent facing an adverse prenatal diagnosis.

We know that not all of the genetic counselors who get our letter of introduction are going to be ready to receive CHASK brochures, but we are overjoyed to have at least a crack in the door of an otherwise closed one. These are very important health care providers and are the very folks speaking with parents

who are facing the idea of disability in their unborn child.

## COLD FACTS:

**8 out of 10 children with special needs are aborted.**

**3 out of 10 children are aborted**

**1 of every 10 children have special needs.**

**7,000 abortions are performed every business day.**

**=**

**1,867 special needs children are aborted each day.**

A woman comes into a Christian crisis pregnancy care center. Her unborn baby has a diagnosis of Trisomy 18, almost always fatal at birth. She is scared, exhausted from lack of sleep, and feeling pressure from her doctor to interrupt this pregnancy as soon as possible and try again.

The care center nurse counsels her to choose life. This nurse does so with confidence because CHASK families, like yourself, are willing to comfort, encourage and share with birth moms. Choosing life in the face of opposition from the medical community takes fortitude. In addition to the heavy sorrow of carrying a baby to term that will probably die at or before birth, some birth parents who choose life must steel themselves to argue firmly to give their baby a chance at life, no matter what the life expectancy is.

Incredibly touching stories of families making it through maternal fetal medicine all have a similar theme. It can be a struggle to

convince medical care givers that, as parents, they are solidly convinced that they want to birth their baby in God's timing. This angered one doctor to the point of throwing the chart onto the floor and stalking out of the room shouting.. "Then there is nothing I can do for you!"

Another husband and wife facing a stern upbraiding from their physician refused to agree to an abortion for their baby who was terminal. After not getting anywhere with the couple, the doctor turned and started chewing out the wife in front of her husband.

If these descriptions sound horrifying, they are, yet very real. We want you to know that there **are** Christians or at least sympathetic doctors who are very supportive of their birth parents choosing life.

But the law states that even they must present the abortion option.

If they see that a family is leaning toward life for their baby, they can be very eager to support them. **These are the professionals we are looking for.**

Christ is truly miraculously holding these families up. Under intense persecution for their pro-life beliefs (the very time when folks should be surrounding them with love and support) some are pierced again and again, tempted to take the life of their baby.

This letter from a birth mom says it

all... *"Dear Tom, Right when I got off the phone with you, my next call came from the doctor. My son does have Trisomy 18 and with the heart defect. The doctor doesn't think my baby will live long. I am scared but trusting in Jesus. "Even*

*though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for THOU are with me." Thanks for everything CHASK."*

Can't you just hear the sorrow, yet deeply rooted faith of this mom. We are amazed at the strength that God is giving these birth parents who choose life in opposition to the medical field.

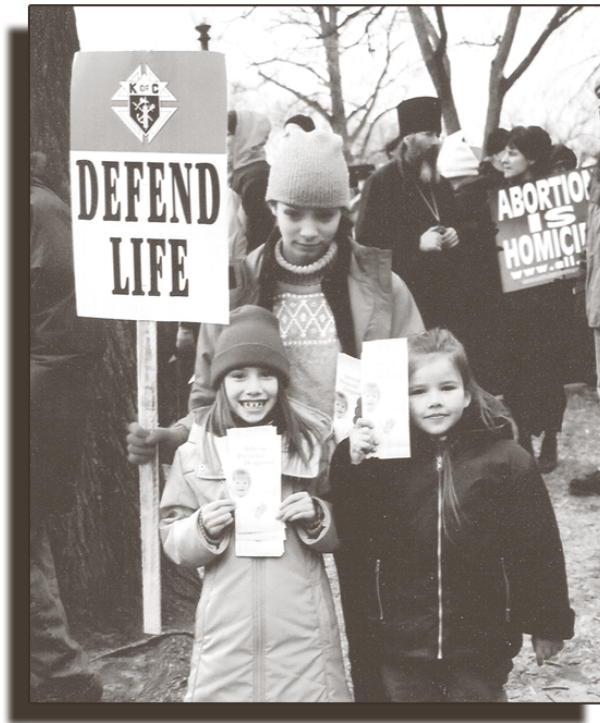
This is why we really are needing to keep the CHASK momentum up without failing. We have got to be there for those birth parents who have no other resource to turn to who will tell them, "Choose life because it is

in your best interest and God really cares for you and your baby with special needs right now."

One by one, you who are part of CHASK are speaking volumes about the issue of choosing life. You are laying down your lives to share your home and heart with those who are disabled. This very fact is astounding to some folks.

CHASK now has over 500 families either waiting to adopt a child with mild to severe special needs or to counsel a birth parent who is pregnant with a baby who has disabilities. These are experienced parents who know what liv-

ing with special needs is all about and can offer honest, real-to-life solutions and resources to birth parents.



"We thought you might be interested in seeing this picture. We attended the March for Life in WA D.C. This year we took some of your CHASK brochures along to hand out. We encouraged people to take them to a local pregnancy center. Our children handed out a good portion of your flyers. Attending this event is so uplifting. The enormity of it is almost overwhelming. There are thousands of people all there to protect innocent unborn babies. Three of our children are adopted. Our prayers are with you and CHASK families."

Paul and Tina Jenkins and family, Maryland.

Here in the NATHHAN /CHASK office we have been through a variety of experiences with families, each one equipping us to better encourage birth parents facing a poor medical diagnosis for their baby. Our goal is to convince birth moms that God is in control of their and their baby's life. Evangelism is always upper most in our minds as we seek to encourage and uplift those who are hurting. We seek to win souls for Christ as much as we want to save the lives of babies that God cherishes.

### CHASK's Older Children / Adoption

CHASK is also ministering to families facing a difficult adoption situation and are choosing to disrupt the parent/child relationship. We have offered a spot on the CHASK web site for families to put a picture and information about their child to find another Christian home. Not all of these families are dysfunctional, with out-of-control children. Rather, each situation comes with its own tangled web of hurts, misunderstandings and grief. We have sought to help provide a safe and secure way for Christians to get themselves out of a dangerous situation. It is only after much prayer, thought and counsel that most families post their adopted child, grandchild, or child they have guardianship of.

We want to be very sensitive to these hurting families who have needed our support from the beginning and might not be in this situation if they had you or others to support them earlier. They disrupt because they feel their whole family is in danger. Or it may be because they are not able to struggle out of the shroud of bitterness that a child who has bonding difficulties can place on a family. Not all families are

suiting to care for all children with all problems.

If you are interested in supporting families who are facing the idea of disrupting and would be open to counseling them with honest, careful input, we'd love for you to be a part of CHASK's group of parents supporting others in this area.



### Interstate Compact?

After having a few placements under our belt, we'd like to share with you some of the observations we have had.

One is that not all adoption lawyers are educated about what it takes to implement a private adoption in the USA. We are assuming that this is just ignorance, but some lawyers are putting their clients through thousands of dollars of needless interstate compact paperwork. Basically the law states that if an adoption is not through an agency

or social services entity, and is strictly private, parent to parent, regardless of the distance between states (could be from Maine—Washington!) the interstate compact is not needed.

The law states.. And you can read it for yourselves at [www.casenet.org](http://www.casenet.org) Article VIII, Part A as thus: *Article VIII. Limitations*

*This compact shall not apply to:*

(a) *The sending or bringing of a child into a receiving state by his parent, stepparent, grandparent, adult brother or sister, adult uncle or aunt, or his guardian and leaving the child with any such relative or non-agency guardian in the receiving state.*

### How Does CHASK Help Birth Parents Choose a Family?

We can hardly contain our excitement about having so many wonderful families for birth parents, who are contemplating whether

to give their special needs baby life or terminate the pregnancy, to choose from.

We are currently submitting families to birth parents by state first. If a potential adoptive family has worked hard at placing CHASK brochures around their area, they should be the first to be introduced to a birth family looking for a loving Christian home for their child.

After that, we choose surrounding states. If we are having a fairly difficult placement, we then have the birth parent (or adoptive parent if it is an adoption disruption) write a bio and send a picture of the child and we put it on the CHASK web site [www.chask.org](http://www.chask.org) under "Waiting Children." Rarely do we need to place a younger child here. Mostly they are in the over-5-year-old and up bracket having bonding difficulties or other social problems.

Since January 2005, we have worked with families each week. Many of these birth moms are choosing to keep their babies, and not abort...even though their baby may pass into heaven upon birth on this earth. Read page 50 and 51 for one of these incredible stories. These parents are our heroes.

**Please consider adding CHASK to your daily prayer list.**

This spring and summer, please pray for birth parents making life choices. Please also pray for the ministry of CHASK and the Bushnell family, as we are walking out into the pro-choice arena seeking genetic counselors, social workers, doctors and others who can be the keys to finding more birth parents we can tell about your love for them and the ministry

**Please join us in ministering to birth parents.**

NATHHAN /CHASK P.O. Box 39 Porthill, ID 83853  
[www.chask.org](http://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](http://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

## CHASK seeks to win souls for Christ, saving lives of unborn special needs babies.

We have noted with much interest the impact the “choice of life” has on families. Those who choose life for their unborn baby with special needs (whether their baby lives or dies) grow in godliness. A Christian family is certainly not immune to the pressure of having an abortion. In fact, shockingly enough, the rate of pregnancy interruption in the churches of America is about par with the world’s.

Statistics aside, what we really need to have is a heart for birth parents innocently led into sin by the temptation of “sacrificing their children via abortion” so that “all will be well with you.”

Who likes hardship? Satan has even convinced some pastors that even with “God’s help” handicaps are a horrible horror to avoid. We can no longer stand by and turn our hearts and eyes away when we hear of birth moms struggling to make a decision for life. It is not just a matter of, “Their baby is their business...” Truly some birth parents are so confused that they cannot discern right from wrong.

Do you see the horrible chasm of mental hell up ahead? People are daily walking toward it, innocently choosing abortion as what they see as the “right” solution. In a mental stupor, mesmerized by Satan, stepping off the final patch of God’s protective, solid ground, falling, falling, down into anguish-of-mind (abortion truly causes this) with screams of terror on the way...can’t we at least speak up and say, “My sister, there is unspeakable horror up ahead. Please turn away. I can help you find answers. Abortion hurts.”

CHASK **Adverse Prenatal Diagnosis** brochures are available for you to give to people who are helping birth parents make decisions about their baby’s life.

**These brochures are FREE for the asking. We would be glad to send you the amount you need to share with others in your community.**

**Call 208-267-6246**

### How does CHASK work?

- Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (page 18 or [www.chask.org](http://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 to give life, instead of abortion, to 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

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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](http://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 pastor .....Name \_\_\_\_\_ 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](http://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](http://www.chask.org)

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## Enjoying Sabrina.... An update on a CHASK baby!

*(Editor's note: Here is an update from the Carper family about little Sabrina, They adopted her in 2002 as a newborn who had just undergone heart surgery all alone. She is thriving and is a very special addition to their home as you can see!)*

Dear Friends,

Here is a picture of our precious daughter, Sabrina Joy. She has Down syndrome and was one of the first babies placed through CHASK. Some of you may remember us from a past issue in the NATHHAN NEWS or in the update letter that CHASK sends out to its families.

She is now 19 months old. She weighs a little over 22 pounds and is 26 inches long. She is tube fed still and does very well on our goat milk. I also tube feed her carrot juice and some baby food. We are working with a therapist to help her feeding problems. She had surgery in October to remove her adenoids which were blocking her breathing by almost 100 % we were told. She also has problems with reflux.

Sabrina belly crawls or rolls where she wants to go. She does not get up on all fours



to crawl yet. She says da-da and some other sounds. She has just learned to sit up. She loves music and any paper she can get into. While we do school at home, she likes to empty the book shelf with the encyclopedias on it. A book worm in the making!

Nathaniel our oldest son (15) and Sabrina are best of buddy's. He really looks out for her. It has been good for him. It's like they have things in common. Rebekah (14) loves to baby-sit her sister. She tries to teach her new things. Wendel (11) plays with her and tells her how beautiful she is. They all include her in their board games, even though she doesn't know what is going on. They even have her winning the game!

We are really enjoying our daughter.

Mark and Wendy Carper and Family  
Greenville, PA.

### CHASK REPORT:

#### Since January 1, 2005

- We have 317 registered CHASK families waiting to adopt babies with special needs.
- 512 CHASK families willing to counsel birth moms.
- 22 mothers, who were pregnant with babies who have special needs, who were undecided about whether to choose life, contacted CHASK.  
(Many times we do not hear the birth or death outcome, but pray with the birth moms or dads and encourage them to choose life.)
- 15 babies or children were placed in loving Christian CHASK homes.

# Unruh Update



*Editor's note: Jerri Unruh lives in Copeland, ID about 9 minutes from the NATHHAN office.*

*We are very grateful for her help in the office, which the Unruh family has provided as a generous love offering to you.*

Two years have passed since we drove into the Bushnell's driveway and were so warmly welcomed. Much has happened in that time: illness, wheelchairs and miracles; babies, depression; house-building and selling; adult children (how can a nest feel empty when there are still so many in it); normal (!) life and homeschooling; church seeking and finding (yeah); finding new friendships, kindling old ones; sharing our home long-term; discerning God's will and trying to be faithful to it at the same time!

I, Jerri, feel that I am just coming out of a fog. I didn't realize I was even in it! How tempted I am to forget the struggles we've been through, but I believe God challenges me to remember and to praise Him.

Just this morning I found this poem tucked away in a cookbook while preparing breakfast for my beautiful family. God's mercies certainly are new every morning!

## My Name is I AM

I was regretting the past and fearing the future.  
Suddenly my Lord was speaking.

"My name is I Am"

He paused. I waited. He continued.

"When you live in the past with its mistakes and regrets, it is hard. I am not there.

My name is not I WAS".

"When you live in the future with its problems and fears, it is hard.

My name is not I WILL BE".

"When you live in this moment it is not hard.

I am here.

My name is I AM".

By Helen Mallicoat

Thank you to all who have prayed for us. We especially thank Tom and Sherry for their love and patience.

Jim, Jerri, Peter, Joy, Zack, Luke, Jonathan, Daniel and Sean Unruh

## In the Library - Check Us Out! Feast Without Yeast

By Bruce Semon, M.D., Ph D and Lori Kornblum

Here is a very informative guide to implementing a yeast, wheat (gluten) and milk (casein) free diet. Divided into stages, it allows for slow elimination with hints for using the plan with children. Developed through much research to help their own child, the authors have included many yummy recipes, shopping lists and ingredient information to help others be successful, too.

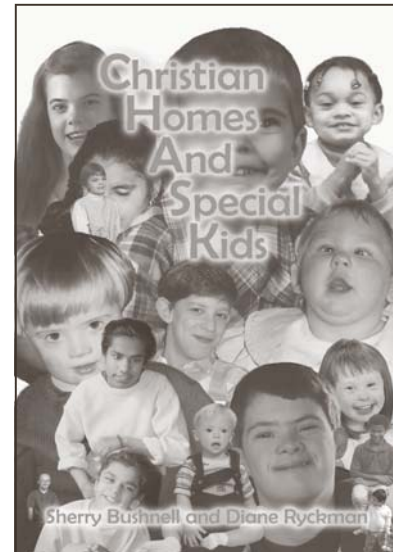
**(More mini reviews of books on page 59)**

# A book written by NATHHAN families

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## 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  
Christian Homes And Special Kids

**PLUS** a large topical subject and resource index.

See order form on pg. 30

Has it been a long time since your family  
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**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](http://www.joniandfriends.org/retreat)

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

# Interesting Information...

## Cued Speech

- Developed by Dr. Orin Cornett at Gallaudet University

This shortened report is taken from Deaf Homeschool Network

January/ February 2,000

Written by Laurene Gallimore

Cued speech is a system that substitutes a visual representation for sounds which cannot be heard by the hearing impaired. In other words, cued speech allows an individual to see, with their eyes, the sounds that their ears cannot hear. The genius of the methodology lies in the fact that Cued Speech provides a full representation, including phonemes, of the spoken language. (It is currently used with over 50 different languages.) Cued Speech, when used on a continuous basis at home, even allows language to be picked up vicariously.

The effective result is a means that the deaf can access grammar, syntax, tense, order, idiom, etc. the full content of the spoken language. Everything that language offers a hearing person, can now be gained by the profoundly deaf. In turn the deaf can learn to speak, read, write, and use the native language of the parents. National Cued Speech Association (NCSA)

c/o Cued Speech Discovery  
23970 Heritage Rd.  
Cleveland, OH 44122-4008  
800- 459-3529 - TTY OK  
[cuedspdisc@aol.com](mailto:cuedspdisc@aol.com)  
[www.cuedspeech.org](http://www.cuedspeech.org)

## Examples of Cued Speech Signs

A = pull chin down (use 3 fingers on the chin)

B= cover your mouth, puff up cheeks with air and produce the /b/ sound.

C (K) = “choke it” throat and produce /k/

D= thumb underneath teeth and pull away

E= place each index finger on the corner of the mouth.

F= push finger on top of the lips (pointer finger)

G= “choke it” throat and produce /g/.

H = exhale air from throat while producing an outward “choke it” motion

I = head back and forward while producing elongated /i/

J = cross fingers

K = cross fingers

L= make an /L/ with your fingers

M = turn fist on cheek (ASL for apple)

N = similar to /D/ but keep the thumb still

O = like squeezing your cheeks

P = pointer finger coming out from the mouth

R = similar to /F

S = index finger under lip and parallel to bottom lip

T = same as /D/

W = make a /W/ with fingers and place in front of lips

Y = similar to / A/ and / E/

## Meet ....Miranda Van den Berg

We'd like you to meet our precious daughter, Miranda.

Our names are Peter and Corrie Van den Berg. We live in Picture Butte, Alberta, Canada.

Miranda is our youngest daughter (through adoption).

She was born November 1, 2002. In addition, still at home, we have brother Michael 22, and sister Shannon who is 17. Our two oldest girls are married. Lenora and her husband, Johan have two adopted children. Yolanda and Gary have 5 biological children. That makes 7 grandchildren for us!!

Miranda is born with Oromyelia. It is a severe form of dwarfism. It is very rare. We have found 3 more with the same condition (short humerus bone and upper radial-ulnar diastasis.) She also has a heart condition, but hopefully doesn't need an operation. She sure throws up an awful lot...but we can live with that! They say it gets better.

Our family would love to be in contact with other Christian families who are dealing with dwarfism. Do you know of a Christian family that would be willing to correspond with us? We understand that Miranda's form of dwarfism is different than most, but there are similarities we can relate to. We do have a multitude of

sources for information of dwarfism, but it would be so precious to correspond with fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Our address is:

Peter and Corrie Van Den Berg

P.O. Box 423

Picture Butte, AB Canada T0K 1V0

403-732-5689



She has other issues too such as allergies, eczema, emotional problems and really poor sleeping.

However, as we have experienced, nothing is going to stop her from having fun climbing and yes, even walking now. She is so much fun!

She only talks Dutch yet, but is rapidly going to be bi-lingual, speaking English too.

Miranda loves books and music. She is our whole life. I could

go on and on about her.

She is a real blessing and has touched many hearts. Also, Miranda's birth mom has changed through this all.

Some people say that she is so lucky to be raised in a Christian home. Yes, this is true, but we say **WE** are the lucky ones to have been blessed with Miranda in our family.

# Special Needs Computer Learning Package

Recommended for: Children with Language-Learning Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities, Physical Impairments and Autism.



Colorful graphics guide the students through self-paced independent learning

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Animal Babies - Whose Baby is it - Where do they live - Animal Habitats
- \*Places and Things: Sounds I hear - Vehicles I see - Land-Air Water - Sports - Weather -Sign I need to Know
- \*People and Feelings: People - Around the Neighborhood - Recognize Emotions - How do I Feel
- \* Verbs and Objects: Action Verbs - Real or Toy - Function of objects - Categories - What does not Belong  
Sizes and Quantities - What belongs Together
- \* Language Concepts: Questions Who - Where - When - Which - Why - Pronouns - Prepositions - Plurals - Opposites  
Numbers 1-100 - Count to 10 - Count by 2's 5's 10's 100's - Telling Time by the Hour  
Sort Letters and Numbers - Letters Upper Case - Letters Lower Case - Ordinal Numbers
- \* Pre-Academics: Roman Numerals - The Alphabet - Numbers Before - Numbers After  
Numbers Before and After -Letters Before & After-Letters Before and After  
Adding to 10 - Fill in the Blank - Minus to 10 - Fill in the Blank Minus - Mixed Math
- \* Academics: Letter Picture Combinations - Letter Sounds -Vowels - Consonants -Rhyme time  
Calender Concepts -Days - Month - Seasons -Before and After Month - Days - Seasons
- \* Calender and Money: ID Money - Count Money - Money Concepts - More or less Money
- \* Telling Time: Telling time digital and Analog by the Hour - Minute s- Quarter and Half
- \* Cognitive Concepts: Continue the Patterns - Auditory Memory - How Much do you Know
- \* Word Recognition: Picture Words - No Excuse Sight Words - Color and Number Words  
Direction Words

Palsprogram@AOL.COM Toll Free (866) 725-7148  
www.Palsprogram.com





# Little Miss Persistence

*(Editor's note: This story of Stephanie Bushnell, daughter of Dan and Joan Bushnell in Washington state, gives us all a glimpse of the heart-felt struggles and joy that a family working with challenges can face.*

*In case you are wondering about the name Bushnell in connection with ours, the answer is YES! Stephanie is our very own niece. We are very proud of her.)*

Who would guess that having a stroke at birth would be the blessing to catapult our little Stephanie into a successful entrepreneur venture? As she grew older Stephanie became more and more determined to accomplish what came easy for others: she focused on each task, out worked everyone, and never quit. Stephanie was the type of person who, when receiving a latch quilt rug for Christmas, had it completed before New Years Day. She was nicknamed "Little Miss Persistence."



At first we didn't realize the amount of determination this little girl carried. We knew something wasn't "right" when, prior to her second birthday she was communicating through her own repertoire of sign language instead of speaking words. We thought her older two sisters (Melinda and Kristin) were speaking for her, therefore Stephanie didn't need to talk, but we soon realized that they were only interpreting the language Stephanie had developed. After months of doctor visits

we took her to a neurologist who, within a minute, diagnosed the cerebral palsy and confirmed the degree through an MRI.

With the help of a speech therapist, Stephanie worked consistently on perfecting those pitiful sounds to make sense for others. After working for two and a half years at riding a bicycle (something the doctors said she'd never be able to do), her younger sister (Brianna) ran to the front door and started yelling... "Come and see, come and see...Stephanie is riding..." I could see my

wife's eyes tear up as Stephanie road by, white knuckled, head and eyes facing straight forward, eye brows down, determined to master riding this bike.

This persistence carried on to her academics. While her younger sister read fluently at the age of 5, Stephanie struggled at nine. Without her stubborn streak, she would have given up; however, she was determined to read and a good reader she has become.

My wife and I have learned that there are certain trials, which became poisonous for her. From kindergarten to fourth grade Stephanie attended public school. Although her teachers were great, recess and the bus ride were the "valley of the shadow of death." Everyday she would talk about how wonderful her teacher was, but the tears would flow when describing the latest recess song... "Dumbo Stephanie can't jump rope, Dumbo Stephanie can't jump rope... It's OK, Dad," she told me, "the rocks are my friends, I just sit in the gravel, making little

farms, with fences, roads, and little rock animals, they like me. Dad? I just can't get that song out of my head, It's what everyone sings as they jump rope... Dumbo Stephanie can't jump rope, Dumbo Stephanie can't Jump rope, Dumbo Stephanie..."

Just walking without a limp was a major accomplishment, but to hop? Well, she just could not get that blasted special left foot to leave the ground at the same time as the other foot. To practice jumping rope at school was now out of the question. Her sisters and mother started helping Stephanie practice hopping while at home.

I couldn't help but think, "What else will she not be average or above in that would invite ridicule?"

As I think back, "Was it every-day Stephanie came home and broke down in tears as her oldest sister rocked the sobs away and Stephanie dozed into a peaceful slumber?" If this wasn't enough of a warning signal, her mood change must have been a neon light attached to a siren. Stephanie was angry and even lipped off at her own mother. What a shock to us and her sisters. Stephanie, sweet Stephanie's determined personality was slowly dying...

"Our Stephanie is back," were the words of my wife after a month of home schooling, and she was right! Her two distinct smile dimples were the neon signs we



saw now! The anger that was budding up left her.

Different interests sprang within her as we began our Washington State History travel course. Visiting these predetermined historical sites of Washington State and tweaking an interest in history became a passion. Now was Stephanie asking to visit a museum or stopping to study a roadside historical marker.

Set backs are just a part of life for Stephanie. Life just is not normal without some type of challenge. Steph decided to write a K-2 workbook

for children to learn Washington State History. Her hope was to spark the same interest in history that she enjoys. No one at home told her that it is not normal for a 14 year old to write a book, so... she just did it. Forty pages of fun filled activities, completed when the computer hard-drive crashed.

Here we go again, this is the life of Stephanie. She is born with a stroke, the kids reject

her, and when she does something great it disappears. But, when you get Stephanie there is one thing that comes along with her, persistence. About six months later I found a hard copy of her previous work and all those tears turned to cheers as she stayed up late, night after night, working to re-create and add more activities for her history book.

The next week at the Washington's Home School Conference was her opening debut. Stephanie was hoping to sell 10 copies but made 20 "just in case." She sold out after the first day and that night had 30 more printed up. People

who came by her Washington State History booth loved the activity book and at \$5.00 a book they seemed to fly off the shelf. I listened as one patron asked her what she was going to do with the money, Stephanie replied, "Now I can pay for my car insurance and save a bunch for the missions trip to Honduras that our youth group (First Baptist of Marysville) is planning. We are going to help the local Church build their own building."

I remember the first time she mentioned this missions trip. "Daddy I need a job so I can make \$1,500 for a missions trip to Honduras." The same day she designed and printed handfuls of resumes and went job hunting. After months of not landing a job she continued.



Stephanie did NOT give up; after all, this is Stephanie. Ideas sprout in her mind like a batch of popcorn ready to expand. She came to me and said, "Dad, I have orders for 39 pies." My mouth dropped, I envisioned spending nights trying to help her make pies, and where was she going to get the berries?" After making a few encouraging comments I kept quiet and watched. Earlier, Stephanie had looked in the freezer and saw the years of raspberries and wild blackberries piling up so she decided to clean it out. She started making pies. 16 pies EVERY night for five nights (I didn't realize we had stored up over 80 quarts of berries.) She sold the pies for a donation and placed a little thank you card on every pie explaining the missions trip to Hon-

duras.

One day she made 16 extra pies, but Stephanie had no fear of selling them and within 20 minutes they were all sold. It was neat how she recruited Brianna, her younger but much stronger sister. I heard the story from one customer, "There these two teenager girls were, one carrying this heavy box of pies while the lanky Stephanie chatted to everyone she saw" (did I mention Stephanie could talk the ears off a mule?) She earned over \$700 at the end of the pie adventure. Yesterday Joan and I found Stephanie in the raspberry field weeding and singing away. I can already predict the outcome of wild blackberry season .... because of Stephanie's persistence, our former 80 quarts of berries will seem like mere pittance.

One Saturday before making the pies, she decided to cut out and sew two skirts for two of her sisters to wear on Sunday. While the pies baked and cooled, two by two, Stephanie was at the computer creating another activity sheet for her book.

Although Stephanie does not attend the public High School (over 2000 students) she does her home schooling through a Home link program where she teams with many encouraging friends that have gone through similar valleys.

Watching Stephanie struggling through her handicap I started thinking... "Do we have it wrong? Are we not the ones who are handicapped?"

## NATHHAN Membership Form

**NATHHAN NEWS**—Print and internet style. Find new resources, read letters from families like yours, adoption of special needs children, articles pertaining to raising and homeschooling challenged children with joy and competence.

**NATHHAN FAMILY DIRECTORY**—Families willing to correspond with each other. Internet style, password included with membership.

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| <b>TOTAL</b>             |   | _____ |
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| ADDRESS _____            |   |       |
| _____                    |   |       |
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# NATHHAN Resource Room



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

**By Sherry Bushnell and Diane Ryckman.....\$17.00**



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

**By Donna Adee..... \$10.00**



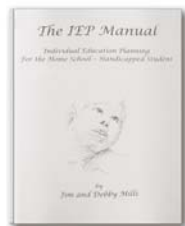
**Phonics Plain & Simple Part A** - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down etc.. abc's, early phonics and the vowels.

No speech or handwriting required, although activities do require pointing or "x's". Comes shrink wrapped in plastic and drilled for three ring binder. See ad on page 37. Printed on one side only for ease of copying. No tabs or binder included. **147 pages.....\$20.00**



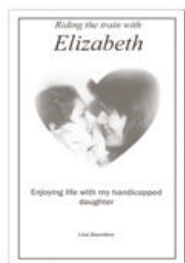
**Phonics Plain & Simple Part B** - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words

No speech or handwriting required, although activities do require pointing or "x's". Comes shrink wrapped in plastic and drilled for three ring binder. Printed on one side only for ease of copying. No tabs or binder included.. See ad on page 37. **204 pages.....\$30.00**



**Individual Education Planning Manual For the Homeschool Handicapped Student** - IEPs are now easy! Create your child's professional looking IEP specific to the special needs of your student.

**By Deborah Mary Kathleen Mills.....\$47.00**



**Riding the Train with Elizabeth** - Riding the train with Elizabeth charts the depression and the joy, the support and the solitude, the doubt and the faith of one woman's emotional roller-coaster ride toward learning to accept, love, and care for a very special child. Saunders' story unfolds like pages from a private diary. Poignant memories, as well as humorous anecdotes, highlight a series of yearly Christmas letters, which simultaneously masked Saunders' pain while conveying her hope for the future. Her desire to share her message of hope, as well as her love for Elizabeth, shine through on every page.

**By Lisa Saunders.....\$20.00**

# NATHHAN Resource Room Order Form

| Quantity          | Item   | Price        | Total |
|-------------------|--|--------------|-------|
|                   | CHASK Book   | \$17.00      |       |
|                   | God's Special Child                                | \$10.00      |       |
|                   | Riding The Train With Elizabeth                    | \$20.00      |       |
|                   | Phonics Plain & Simple Part A                      | \$20.00      |       |
|                   | Phonics Plain & Simple Part B                      | \$30.00      |       |
|                   | 1st Straight Talk (See page 9)                     | \$45.00      |       |
|                   | 1st Straight Talk with DVD                         | \$55.00      |       |
|                   | 2nd Straight Talk (See page 10 )                   | \$45.00      |       |
|                   | I.E.P. Planner By Debbie Mills                     | \$47.00      |       |
|                   | Please renew my NATHHAN membership with this order | \$25.00      |       |
|                   | Donation to NATHHAN / CHASK                        | \$ _____     |       |
| Shipping is Free! |  | Total Cost = |       |

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**Please remember that your address must match the address that is registered with your card! Otherwise we will not be able to process your order.**

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## Music and Picture Books Based on ABA Therapy!



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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.

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## NEW BOOK

### Managing Special Needs Trusts

The Special Needs Trust Administration Manual: A Guide for Trustees is a valuable reference guide for anyone who is managing a special needs trust for a person with disabilities. In an uncomplicated, user-friendly way, it explains the rules that govern Special Needs Trusts and how those rules relate to the many complicated government benefit programs that assist people with disabilities.

In clear, easy to understand language, the authors (all attorneys experienced in guiding trustees through the complex rules of Special Needs Trusts) explain how a trustee can use trust funds to meet the medical, recreation, and transportation needs of a person with disabilities without risking the benefits of government programs such as SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, and Section 8 housing. The authors give useful advice and provide many concrete examples.

Answers common questions such as:

- What are my responsibilities to the disabled beneficiary?
- Can I spend money for a car, trip, or gift?
- Can I buy a house or condominium, and if so, who should own the property?
- What expenses can I safely pay without risking SSI benefits?
- How do I open a bank account?
- Does the trust need its own taxpayer identification number?
- What happens if I need to resign?

Although the manual explains how federal laws and regulations are applied in Massachusetts, it can be useful throughout the United States. Massachusetts laws, especially in respect to Medicaid, may differ significantly from other states' laws. Trustees outside Massachusetts should work with a local attorney who can guide them through the standards and practices in their state.

The Special Needs Trust Administration Manual is a welcome addition to any disabilities library. To purchase the manual, please go to: <http://www.disabilitiesbooks.com/catalog-servechildren.htm>

Stanley D. Klein, Ph D Series Editor  
People with Disabilities Press  
Director, [www.DisABILITIESBOOKS.com](http://www.DisABILITIESBOOKS.com)  
(617) 879-0397

### **Innovative Children's Services**

**Family Match**—Our Family Match program is a unique and free service to all families across the US. It is designed to help families find play dates for their children and find other families with whom they can exchange ideas. All you have to do is email us at [family-match@smallstrides.com](mailto:family-match@smallstrides.com) with information of which city and state you are from, and whether you are looking for friends for your child, or families that think in the same wavelength as you. Give us some details and when we find families in your township, we will try to arrange for a session in your township. This is a great opportunity to meet families in your neighborhood, especially if you homeschool or you have a child with special needs. You can also fill out the online form [www.smallstrides.com/family-match.htm](http://www.smallstrides.com/family-match.htm)

**Services**—We operate out of Middlesex county, New Jersey and serve families in Middlesex, Somerset and Union counties. The service we provide includes:

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# Classified Ads

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

Please TYPE your ad and send with your check. Ads must be received by the deadline date below, to be printed in upcoming issues. Please phone first, as we fill up very fast.

We hope you understand... we reserve the right to refuse ads we feel are inappropriate. (No multi-level style products or companies.) \$300/ full page, \$150 / half page, \$75/quarter.

Deadline dates: Sept 15th, January 15th

## Phonics Plain & Simple

Back by popular demand!  
And Cheaper!

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

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

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

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

See order form pg. 30  
More info at [www.nathhan.org](http://www.nathhan.org)

## FREE ADS

No cost for  
NATHHAN  
Members!

Thousands of NATHHAN families read this section.

Sell your used curriculum, therapy equipment, used Kitchen Aid or grain grinder, educational toys, or set of 1950's hymnals!

Need a pen pal? Here's your chance to find one before they are all gone!

## Stevenson Learning Skills

Younger and older children who are struggling with learning to read will find this program easy to use. Mnemonics helps them remember letters and spelling rules.

—*We've used Stevenson Learning Skills this year. This method of helping children remember letters and spelling rules really works. We especially like its usefulness in teaching older children who learn differently.* - Sherry Bushnell - NATHHAN

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"CHIN MOPPET" bibs

Bright, cheerful, custom made with pocket  
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Soft opaque plastic backing  
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# Classified Ads

## Adoption Fundraising & Grant Program

[www.kkadoption.com](http://www.kkadoption.com)

**Kingdom Kids** We have developed a program to help prospective adoptive families raise funds for their adoption. Families apply to Kingdom Kids for a grant and help raise funds for their grant by notifying friends and family of their adoption plans.

## Bedtime Wetting

**Alarms** - Have 2 alarms, one auditory and the other vibrating, for sale. My children have had success with both and have no further need of them. Will sell for whatever donation you want to give. Call Marilyn at 503-873-8451.

## Please visit us at... An Eagle's Nest Home School

[www.eaglesnesthome.com](http://www.eaglesnesthome.com)

"Homeschooling On a Shoestring", "Educational Travel On a Shoestring," special needs, health, A Wise Steward's Club For Writers, life issues, publishing, the Internet, shareware, freeware, and freebies, discount Christian books, music, movies.

Based on the neurodevelopmental flash card approach and used by ICAN, the **In A Flash Series** computer program is a fun and innovative way to teach children of all ability levels the ABC's and sight reading. Visit us at <http://www.flashseries.com> for a free online demonstration.

**My husband and I are looking for any other parents who have used cued speech with a child who has Down syndrome.** Contact us at: [sandib@epix.net](mailto:sandib@epix.net)  
Thanks! Sandi Demme

**Wanted: a used BRIGANCE® Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills or BRIGANCE® Inventory of Early Development.** If you have one that you want to sell contact Mary Melvin at [melvins@direcway.com](mailto:melvins@direcway.com)

## HELP!!

**Pictures Needed!!**  
**NATHHAN / CHASK** has run out of photographs of babies and children for the magazine and other publications. Please send us photos or digitized pictures of your child with special needs to [pictures@nathhan.com](mailto:pictures@nathhan.com)

**ICAN-DO** It's a great program! National website is [www.icando.org](http://www.icando.org) national phone number is 253-588-5177

This is information for ICAN-- International Christian Association of Neurodevelopmentalists  
Wash [ican@hotmail.com](mailto:ican@hotmail.com)

My personal info is:  
CAN-DO  
Cyndi Ringoen  
P.O. Box 9822  
Spokane, WA 99209  
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Carries MANY products for students with special needs that homeschool. You can order online, and if you can't find what you need, we'll try to help you find it. We also have 3 print catalogs: Unique Learners (Special Needs) materials, Homeschool materials, and Mainstream Educational Products. Call us at (406) 771-0069.

# Classified Ads

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## Free child-sized shower chair in excellent condition.

The frame is made of white plastic pipes, and it has blue cushions. It has wheels, a foot rest, and a seat belt. It would probably fit a child up to about 12 years old. Free to anyone who can use it, but you pay the shipping. Andrew and Linda Dillon 360-387-9970 or e-mail AndyLinda14@aol.com

## Free adult-sized shower and commode chair.

It has a metal frame with gray cushions, and head support. It will tilt-in-space so the patient can recline a bit. It has a U shaped padded seat for going potty, and a big plastic removable container underneath the seat for use as a potty. It has wheels with a locking mechanism. It has arm rests and foot rests. The brand is ACTIVEAID, Inc. model # 282. It can be viewed on-line at [http://www.activeaid.com/products/model\\_282.asp](http://www.activeaid.com/products/model_282.asp) We only used it once and decided it would not work out for our daughter. Free to anyone who can use it, but you pay the shipping. Andrew and Linda Dillon 360-387-9970 or e-mail AndyLinda14@aol.com

## Reading and Story Writing Using Science Concepts

Step by step lesson plans guide you and your child through interactive activity pages where your child will practice reading strategies, spelling and writing techniques. Your choice of a bird watching or pond and stream habitat theme. Each manual \$35.00 plus \$3.00 shipping. Also interactive story books. Call or write for more information or sample pages. Heidi Sobotka 27640 SE Orient Dr. Gresham, OR 97080 (503) 663-0494

## Freedom Ride providing services to Special Needs families

We are a NARHA premiere certified facility located in Central Florida and provide therapeutic horseback riding to the disabled and currently have a number of home schooled families involved with our program. We welcome you to join our program.

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Executive Director  
Freedom Ride, Inc.  
407.293.0411  
[www.freedomride.com](http://www.freedomride.com)

## Stander for Sale

I have a (gently used) Easy Stand Mobile Magician Stander for sale. I can no longer lift my daughter to place her in it. It goes from a sitting to standing position using hydraulics. It is in excellent condition, selling new for \$2,685.00. I am asking \$1,000.00 plus actual packaging/ shipping costs. I am located in San Diego County, CA for pick up. Call Ruth 619-445-9477 [insitches1571@yahoo.com](mailto:insitches1571@yahoo.com)

## Meditations for Adoptive Parents

The perfect gift for adoptive parents in the style of the best-selling Meditation for the New Mother. Using her family experiences, Vernell Kalssen Miller includes theories about bonding to infants and older children, the stages in relinquishment and adoption, how "entitlement" happens and the advantages of the adoption. Copy right 1992 88 pages LC 92-18480 Paper back 0-8361-3606-3 \$9.00 US in Canada \$13.99.

Meditations for Adoptive Parents won the Silver Angel Award in Media in 1993. It is available through any bookstore or directly from Herald Press 1-800-245-7894. [www.heraldpress.com](http://www.heraldpress.com)

# Letters From Families

## Anyone heard of the Sharper Minds Centers?

I'm struggling with teaching my daughter who is ADD (with some hyperactivity). I have heard of an expensive program by Sharper Mind Centers that stimulates new neurological wiring in the brain as a treatment for ADD/ADHD. Is anyone familiar with this treatment, and if so, has it been successful or not? Marilyn  
Agenbroads@ncn.com



I was reading the ad on page 24 of your newsletter for PALS software. It looks excellent for my daughter, who is legally blind, for teaching her to use the computer. Do you know if there are any organizations for the blind or handicapped that would help pay for this software? Both cd's cost \$100. Jennifer Racancoj  
Reneandjen4@aol.com



## Augmentive and Alternative Communication

Hello!

I've just spent a little time in your web site. It appears to be a powerful and useful resource.

In the field of AAC (augmentative and alternative communication), a specialty area of speech-language pathology, there are two resources that you may wish to add as links.

1. AAC Institute is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to the most effective communication for people who cannot speak. <http://www.aacinstitute.org>

2. CAMA (Communication Aid Manufacturers Association) is an organization of manufacturers of AAC products. <http://www.aacproducts.org>

Barry Romich, P.E., AAC Institute  
1022 Heyl Road  
Wooster, OH 44691-9786  
330-262-1984 x211  
bromich@aacinstitute.org  
[www.aacinstitute.org](http://www.aacinstitute.org)

## Here are some different pictures and things that we can use with our special needs kids

I found this and thought it might be helpful to you. <http://www.dotolearn.com/picturecards/printcards/coloring/large.htm>

Love, Annette reevesroost@dybb.com



## NEW Christian Adoption Web Site!

We are a multi-ethnic adoptive family. We have two adopted daughters, one biological son and are in the process of adopting from Haiti. We have started a new web site:

**www.G2Gadoption.com** It focuses on providing a clearing house of information about adoption from a Christian perspective!



## Need Help in Modifying Curriculum from a Special Ed Teacher?

Current Special Education Teacher at a public school in CA is modifying curriculum on a daily basis to meet the needs to her mild to moderately disabled students. She is wanting to offer her services as a Special Education Teacher to parents that need help with curriculum modification. She says "It takes some creativity and experience to do this on a daily basis and I know some parents may need help." She is wanting to tap into the homeschool market to reach learning disabled students and their parents. Any suggestions of leads would be greatly appreciated by her.

Cindy Stallman  
Special Education  
530-538-2310 Ext. 215

### Yahoo Groups : parentingkidswithissues

As a birth mom and an adoptive mom that has, and is parenting special needs kids , I started up this group to help parents that are parenting kids with issues, RAD, PTSD, FAS, ADHD, medical issues , behavioral issues, mental issues and emotional issues. This group is also for parents thinking about disrupting an adoption, wanting to adopt , information about guardianships. Any issues you want to talk about, just post. You can also post helpful information such as web sites for families dealing with RAD or other web sites that may be a help to others....Or if you are just having a bad day and want to vent, vent all you want!

Shirley Couch  
 Parentingkidswithissues.com  
 Go to yahoo groups  
 Go to families  
 Go to adoption  
 Type in adoptive parents  
 Type in Parentingkidswithissues

### Exceptional Kids Consultants

Cheryl Gabbert  
[www.homepage.mac.com/gabbert/](http://www.homepage.mac.com/gabbert/)  
 304-228-6671  
 Providing a wide-range of services to families who homeschool a child having special needs. Services include assistance getting started, complying with state regulations, curriculum/ instructional support, research

new therapies/treatments, ISP development, periodic written cumulative evaluations, portfolio development. All clients receive unlimited email/telephone support.

.....  
 Greetings in Jesus name!

We adopted our son, Alex, about 3 1/2 years ago. He was born in Russia, addicted to Opium and from what I understand, both of his parents were alcoholics. He was in a baby orphanage until about 10 1/2 months. Then he was adopted by a family in Michigan. Things didn't work out and he was given back to the agency, where the director now lives here in MT. We learned of Alex and after much prayer, knew he was to be ours at four years of age. He has adapted quite well and will be 8 in January. Alex has come a long way. We think his change of diet (from junk food to healthy eating) has made a great difference.

We are also learning a lot about Mercury Toxicity and currently working on getting his black fillings (mercury amalgam) removed and replacing them w/ composite fillings.

He has had minimal speech therapy and some P.T. He is very active, with a good disposition. He wears plastic braces on his legs but they don't seem to hinder him in the slightest! (Smile)

I started working on school this year. He's doing preschool stuff right now. What I'm realizing is that I don't know HOW to teach him! (I have homeschooled our other sons,

ages 25, 18 and 16.) The older two are graduated. The 16 year old basically teaches himself. And now I am working on Alex who, of course, has many learning issues, mainly because of his drug history and Cerebral Palsy. I'm not sure how to go about assessing or testing him or to determine the ways to go about teaching him. I'm using some traditional things and he is catching a little—but sometimes it seems he forgets completely what we do one day to the next. Any guidance you have or suggestions would be helpful.

AROSENTHAL@INTERBEL.NET

Some resources we recommend as reference books:  
Silver Dental Fillings  
The Toxic Bomb by Sam Ziff

Are Your Dental Fillings Poisoning You? (The Hazards of Mercury in Your Mouth and What you Can Do About Them)  
 By Guy S. Fascinan, D.M.D.

The Complete Guide to Mercury Toxicity from Dental Fillings by Joyal Taylor, D.D.S.

ALSO:  
Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder By Karyn Se-roussi

This is a very readable and excellent book of one mother's story and how she was able to help her son. It reads like a novel.

.....

**Hi Tom and Sherry,**

**If you are uncomfortable with this topic, I understand. Not sure where to go for information with a Christian perspective.**

Our son with DS is eleven, and developing. Not sure how to help him discipline himself to control natural desires. It's a constant issue. I feel sorry for him, because I can see him getting edgy and preoccupied even while trying to do something else to distract him. I've never seen an article, or a reference to material that may help. I'm sure we are not alone in dealing with this issue. I won't go in to detail--probably needless, but there are several areas of problems. One issue is he is so affectionate, as people are to him, and I even wonder about innocent hugging if we should start going to handshakes only, and if cuddling with his sister with DS needs to be restricted. They are so close and affectionate towards each other. It's sweet, but I don't want to be naive. Any suggestions you have would be appreciated. I've heard people with older special needs children say it is a constant battle to teach them to at least be "discreet." Any encouragement would be appreciated. Marla

*(Editor's note: We welcome your responses to this subject. Please be sure you are coming from a Christian parents' perspective and have had personal experience in living with older teenagers, especially boys, with moderate to severe mental disability.)*

Dear Marla,

I am so glad you have opened up this topic. Are there other parents who are wondering the same thing?

I will answer you here also. I hope that it will help, although you may need to apply the info where needed in your own situation.

When our children were young, we were fortunate enough to also be in contact with families who had already raised their children with special needs and had "been there." They were kind enough to candidly share with us what they wish they had done differently. One of the issues that we were not concerned with at the time (as we had no older children yet) was the issue of

appropriate touching. This included others and self.

We must admit, masturbation, inappropriate fondling or affection (even the words made us uncomfortable) we could not imagine taking place in our sweet home, with our sweet little ones.

However, they encouraged us to set standards that would carry into the older years right now. Setting new standards, 1/2 way through the game when problems start, is much harder. Habits die hard and when urges come, it may encourage them to touch more than they should. If the habit is to fondle, then catching them might be a trick (as in masturbation).

The rule in our home is: Do not fondle genitals for fun, even in the bath or shower, on the couch or otherwise.. Fondling others is VERY BAD. We must not allow "hugs" to turn into an excuse for satisfying an urge to fondle.

Hugs ( for the sake of others later) should be done sideways. 1 arm around the shoulders to the side, not front to front contact. Allowing little brothers and sisters to sit on laps is fine for a two - three year old, but not fine for an older boy — Not for my normal older children or my children with special needs.

Being discreet is good manners. We can never give up teaching our children to think of others and their needs.

In our home we do not cuddle on laps as the boys get older. Little ones bouncing can create problems that may be embarrassing. (Teach our children to be wary of any man that likes to put little ones on his lap a lot.)

If we do find Jordan, our son who is 16 and has Down syndrome, acting inappropriately affectionate or fondling self, we are quick to nip it in the bud, starting with "Jordan, that is impolite!" and if he is not listening, ultimately we would have to discipline appropriately.

Masturbation is not allowed at any time in our home, as we feel it is a form of

serving self. There are other ways to not be bored or to make use of extra energy, such as physical exercise. Hope this helps.

Tom and Sherry Bushnell NATHHAN

**Here is a story I wrote about our son, Jimmy, who has Down Syndrome.**

**A Circle of Love  
By Cheryl Haskell Whitten**

The immunization clinic waiting room was packed. Mothers sat on hard plastic chairs, trying to corral their children with low spoken words. The television blared a loud dialogue, and children's voices filled the air with a din that ebbed and flowed as parents tried to hush them.

None of the mothers there were there because they liked it. No mother worth her salt likes to see her child hurt for even an instant, but they all felt that the vaccinations were necessary to keep their children healthy.

Older children sat nervously, knowing what was going to happen, but the little ones played in blissful ignorance. I am sure that some of them noticed that some of the children who walked through the door on the left side of the room returned whimpering, while their mothers tried to wipe the tears away. Sometimes the sound of screams could be heard coming from somewhere beyond that door.

David sat with 7 of our children in that waiting room. The older ones were quietly bickering with each other, but 3 year old Jimmy was unaware, and chatted happily with Daddy or spent his time flirting with other babies.

Jimmy has Downs Syndrome. We adopted him when he was 7 weeks old. He was born with several complex medical conditions that required close attention and 'round the clock' care. Although we did not require it of them, all the children had learned to listen for the apnea monitor, to clear his airway when he had reflux, and to alert us when the colostomy bag needed attention. Thankfully, most of these problems were resolved by surgery when he was almost a year old. Helping to care for Jimmy's needs sealed a

tight bond between him and the older children.

When our family was called to go through that door, some dragged their feet and had to be hurried along. In the back they lined up for their shots, oldest to youngest. Some took them in stoic silence, frowning or wincing. Others whimpered a bit. Emily cried for a couple of minutes then calmed down.

When it was little Jimmy's turn, the nurses expected a fight. They were surprised by what happened next. As the nurses prepared to give Jimmy his shots, the other children encircled him. Gentle little hands reached out to turn his face away so that he wouldn't see the needles. Others massaged his back and tenderly reassured him that it would be over soon and that they loved him.

When the shots were given, Jimmy did not scream or fight. Encircled with love, he winced and then flashed a smile at his loving siblings.



**In response to "Toilet Obsession" from the Fall Winter 2004 issue.**

I have three boys, two of whom have PDD and I'm pretty sure the youngest also has it. Obsessions have been a way of life, especially in the preschool and early elementary years. One thing I have learned is that their current craze is like a security blanket: the harder you try to take it away, the more they cling. One thing that I have done is to miniaturize, or make more manageable a dangerous or inappropriate obsession. My 4-year old is obsessed with small electrical appliances and plugs. Just giving him a substitute toy didn't help much, but many ADD or PDD children love watching you make something or making it themselves. I have created rough little approximations of hair dryers and vacuums out of small cardboard boxes or toilet paper tubes while he sat in the high chair and watched. By the time he began to recognize the shape he would be laughing in anticipation and when I attached a "plug" made out of Christmas ribbon, he was nearly beside himself with excitement. Then I showed him how to poke the ribbon into any old slot around the house except

for outlets, of course. He had a whole new obsession, perfectly safe. This led to a much greater interest in all toy vacuums, blenders, power tools, etc. I feel that my boys' lack of imagination makes toys "unfun", but when they participate in the creation of the toy, it perhaps fills in a missing link. Perhaps you could find a little miniature toilet in a set of dollhouse furniture. It might be worth buying the whole set to have a "dry" toilet. I know this sounds ridiculous, but even letting him make a scrap book with pictures of toilets cut from home improvement magazines or catalogues might interest him. Make them out of Playdough, create a stylized plunger out of a bottle cap and a lollipop stick. I don't care, just give him the message that you think toilets are fun in certain circumstances, too, and he may not think the obsession has to be guarded so fiercely. My older child with PDD has recovered quite a bit and he has been helpful in giving me insight about the younger ones. Bonnie Stewart  
Bonnie.Stewart@pobox.com

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### **In response to 9-year-old with Fragile X from the Fall / Winter 2004 issue...**

My 3 children (ages 19, 17 and 7) have Fragile X Syndrome and autism. The boys have both had issues with aggression, and the 19 and 7 year olds, particularly, have issues with anxiety. In your letter, you say that your 9 year old is "angry much of the time". In my experience, the aggression/acting out behavior is not about "anger" but about over stimulation, fear or anxiety. I would suggest you try to track the "triggers" of the behavior. In my boys, the biggest triggers are abrupt changes without a leading warning (we have a visual timer ([www.mailjust4me.com/crafts/timetracker.htm](http://www.mailjust4me.com/crafts/timetracker.htm)) for things like the computer and TV and also use the timer when we are going out, or if they are waiting on something like dinner, etc.). This by itself is a tremendous help. There are numerous behavior tracking

charts that you can use to identify the triggers for tantrums/aggressive behavior/acting out. For example, check out this link: <http://caacs.uta.edu/uploads/Behavior%20Tracking%20Form.doc> It is important to identify these triggers, and modify the environment/routine to allow your child to experience success at regulating their own behavior. I understand your reluctance to try medications, and I commend you for looking into behavioral solutions before jumping to the "quick fix" of a pill. The behavioral/environmental/logistical modification may be all the solution that you need. Don't be overly afraid of medications, however. There is a biological root to your son's difficulties. It may be that the modifications alone may not be enough. In this case, appropriate medication can make all the difference. Folic Acid is a good first line for Fragile X (my youngest son takes 5 mg twice a day...compounded by a pharmacist at 5mg/ml concentration...it is his only "behavior" medication). My 17 year old is on Seroquel, and it is wonderful for him. He has violent aggression (much worse since puberty) when he does not take the Seroquel. My 19 year old daughter gets Buspar for anxiety and Prozac for depression (common in females with Fragile X). I am grateful for the pharmacological advances that we live with. I view it like diabetes. No one would hesitate to "medicate" for diabetes if diet were not enough. This is no different. Try the least invasive thing first, but don't close yourself (or your child) off to medication they may need just because it is "medication". Feel free to email me privately if you like. I don't know everything, but I do have a lot of years of experience in dealing with the things you are now facing! My children are the greatest blessing and I enjoy them every day. Our lives are not without struggle (I am a single mom) but they are truly blessed, nonetheless! Praying for you and your son, Claudia in Indiana - Mom to Catherine (19), Phillip (17) and Christopher (7)...three awesome kids who just happen to have Fragile X Syndrome and autism.

claudiamedic@yahoo.com

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**In response to "How to tie shoes" from the Fall / Winter 2004 issue...**

My two older children have trouble learning motor skills. My son has autism, my daughter does not, but I have taught them both to tie their shoes by using what we used to call "pipe cleaners"

The problem for them was that the shoe laces were too floppy to "remember" the shape of the steps in which they were to loop the string I removed the lace from the shoe. In each eye-let nearest the ankle I wired a 12-inch pipe cleaner each of a different color. They pretended the pipe cleaners were shoe laces. The stiffness of the wire made the opening much more obvious to them where they were to put the loop from the other side. The contrasting colors also helped them to follow the path of each lace visually.

They learned the sequence quite easily, but then they had trouble tying the laces tight enough. I had to teach my son especially not to make his beginning loop too long. By using a shorter loop to start off, the end of the lace was less likely to come all the way through and pull loose. Bonnie Stewart  
Bonnie.Stewart@pobox.com



**In response to the Mom and Dad who wrote in the Fall / Winter NATHHAN NEWS that have a daughter with a brain tumor.**

Dear Mom and Dad of a daughter with a brain tumor,

My wife and I were amazed to read your note in the Nathan News Fall/Winter 2004-2005. We have a child who had a brain tumor, too.

Our son Ben had the same diagnoses, astrocytoma. Ben had this kind of tumor in his cerebellum and very close, if not touching, his brain stem. If I remember correctly, the tumor was around the size of a golf-ball. Ben, in October 1998 at the age of 5, had surgery at Children's Memorial in Chicago, by a very outstanding neurosurgeon.

Ben's surgery was truly life-saving. In Ben's case, the surgery went very well. As with your daughter, astrocytoma is a benign tumor, which was a wonderful answer to prayer. Subsequent MRIs, have shown no reoccurrence of the tumor. We still go periodically to get another MRI.

Ben did not swallow for over one year. Needless to say, this changes one's life. The lasting physical effects from the tumor are truly difficult for most to see. Because of where his tumor was, affecting several cranial nerves, he does not really hear in the left ear (his right ear is fine), and his left-side coordination suffers from dsymetria...(weakness on his left side). But, according to his Neurologist, not very

much.

Ben had several smaller surgeries to try to help him swallow in the year after the main surgery. A PH D from Northwestern University could not understand why Ben couldn't swallow. But God was gracious to us, somewhat "out of the blue" Ben swallowed after a year of prayer by many. And he still swallows.

Ben is now 11 years old. We have home-schooled him since the middle of first grade. He is doing well and he is in 6th grade.

Do I have any words of wisdom? I wouldn't presume that I do. Each situation is different, but God's promises are the same. I realize sometimes events happen that we see our prayers for blessing and healing work out, and sometimes they don't. I am a pastor, and although we may know some reasons why some prayer is "answered" and some is "not answered", many times we are just called to trust Him, no matter what our circumstances. Our faith is still in a God who is good and has grace on us every day. I trust that you are doing what you humanely are capable of, and God will do what only He can do. May God bless you abundantly, and your precious daughter. In Christ,  
Phil Ostwald, father of Ben  
pvostwald@juno.com



**Response to family with 8 year old with Down syndrome with speaking delays from the Fall / Winter 2004 NATHHAN NEWS.**

Our daughter with Down syndrome is 10 yrs old. Due to multiple hearing problems/ear surgeries/hearing aides, her speech is very much delayed. Just last year, at 9 years of age, her speech therapist helped to get her started on an augmentive communication device called a Dynavox MT4. With this little computer-like 'talker' she has improved so much with her communication. The sign language and pictures and everything else we'd tried still hadn't improved her speech, but with this 'talker' we are seeing her try to talk with it, and her speech is improving remarkably.

She still has a long way to go, but with this 'talker' she is able to tell us and others things that she never could before. It is so wonderful for us and fun for her. Her behavior problems that stemmed from frustration because of lack of communication have greatly been helped with this. We are seeing great advances in that area and are hopeful for more advances in her good behavior as she learns more and more how to communicate with her new 'voice'.

We wish that she had known of this years ago because we think it would have been easier for her to learn this at an earlier age, but at least she can get started with it now and start improving her life with it as much as possible at this stage in her life. Our insurance paid for every bit of it, but Medicaid also covers it if your insurance doesn't. To find out more about this, contact Dynavox at:

Dynavox Systems  
2100 Wharton St., Suite 400  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203  
1-800-344-17778  
www.dynavoxsystems.com

If any further personal questions, contact me at:  
Annette reevesroost@dybb.com



**Information about Guardianship**

from Pat Geary gearypk@ev1.net

I also want to respond about the guardianship question. Sorry, my experience is in Texas, not Oregon. My daughter, Kathleen, is 36 years old and has Down Syndrome. She lives with me, a single parent.

Sometime ago a group of professionals, arranged through the local ARC, presented a parent seminar that included an attorney who dealt with wills/trusts, a Social Security Rep, and School District Reps. I learned that it is critical to obtain "Guardianship of the Person" [right to make decisions regarding the person's well-being] in order to protect your loved one and even to make medical decisions for them. Without this legal document, unscrupulous people can talk your adult child into signing contracts or have a relationship that would be unhealthy for them. Without it, you may not even be able to find out what medical decisions have been made for them, much less your not being able to give your input.

The other guardianship is of the estate, but is not as critical unless the individual has been left a lot of money from a relative for instance. An attorney can help you establish a "Special Needs Trust Fund" to receive monies from relatives that will not interfere with your child's receiving SSI. If you are named as "Trustee" you do not also need to have a "Guardianship of the Estate." The relatives' wills (as well as your own wills) need to have specific wording directing the Trust Fund as beneficiary rather than naming your child.

Just make sure the attorney you choose is well acquainted with the federal/state laws regarding disabilities. I was pleased that my attorney even contacted me a couple years later and said we needed to revise some wording in my will because laws had changed. I will give you the name of my Texas attorney, who may be able to refer you to someone knowledgeable in your state. Or, you may get a good referral from your local Assn for Retarded Citizens (ARC).

Michele N. O'Brien  
 P.O. Box 27448  
 Houston, TX 77227-7448  
 713-960-8543

Recently, I had my daughter's child support revised upwards. I knew the amount of the support would disqualify her from receiving SSI. Ms. O'Brien created a Special Needs Trust specifically to receive the proceeds from the child support. The attorney (a different one) crafted the legal support papers to direct the money to go to the Trust fund to be spent on items not covered by SSI. The judge agreed and signed the order! If anyone would like more details they may contact me by email.

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**Response to "Daughter diagnosed with PDD-NOS from the Fall/ Winter 2004 issue..**

**Response #1**

My heart goes out to you. I have a 12 year old PDD-NOS daughter who had similar behavior. She was very unpredictable. One minute she would be nice, and the next dangerous/violent. I could not leave her alone with her younger sister or the cats. For my daughter, the Feingold diet has been extremely helpful. In case you aren't familiar with it, the diet removes artificial colorings and flavorings, BHA, BHT, TBHQ (three petroleum based preservatives) and foods high in salicylates. Foods high in salicylates may be perfectly good and healthy foods, but some people react negatively after eating them. For instance, 15 minutes after eating grapes, my daughter became very aggressive towards me and her sisters, when she had been very pleasant prior to eating. Food coloring is in ALOT of things. We had a surprise when I used up her bottle of yellow pills, and gave her the equivalent dosage in pink pills. One or two days after the switch, out of the clear blue, she bit me. After two weeks on the pink pills she was so wild and dangerous that I was afraid we'd have to commit her to an institution. Thankfully, I learned about the Feingold diet and it has made all the difference in the world. All that nightmare behavior is gone. She still has autism, but she is more pleasant than

she has ever been in her life. And I don't have to fear for others' lives. I would be glad to give you any more information if you're interested. Also, FYI, the website for the diet is: [www.feingold.org](http://www.feingold.org).

Chris  
 Stonebrakers5@sbcglobal.net

**Response #2**

I read NATHHAN News to learn what is going on in the 'world' and be able to help people when I see something that isn't quite right. I have no clue what PDD-NOS is; but, your description sounds a great deal like my now 20-year-old daughter. We went from professional to professional ...people who were called "the best in the area" and were told our daughter was normal, that we, her parents, were the problem. Not. Anyway.

For starters, I am an ADD homemaker, schedules and structure are things that are impossible for me to do. I have 4-5 organizational structures that I use so I can pull stuff together at the end of the year for our cover school. I am amazed at what I read in Nathan News about the structure some families live by. It is definitely a calling from God. I couldn't do it. As a result, I come at homeschooling from quite a different perspective.

I began homeschooling because of my second daughter, Rebecca. I knew there was something not quite right even before she was born, but was never able to find appropriate help. She is really sharp and can wrap a professional counselor around her little finger in no time flat (we took her to 4 different ones before we gave up). The first time I went to cuddle her after she was born she went board straight and stiff on me...at three I spanked her and she turned around and laughed at me saying, "I'm not going to do what you want me to even if you spank me forever." That was the last day I spanked her. At 5, she argued circles around me remembering things I could care less about, and at that point I quit reasoning with her. We had knock down drag outs about going to school. There were days I would

physically carry her to the car and drive her to school in her pajamas. By the time she was 11 she was climbing out the window and walking the streets at night. (A friend of mine has the same problem and had a security system installed to keep his daughter in the house, not to keep anyone out.) She played soccer on a travel team, running 3-5 miles a day and at night would go to judo class and get thrown around (wrestling would do the same). Now that my second and third daughters are 20 and 18 I hear stories about Rebecca repeatedly trying to drown Rachel in the community pool and from Rebecca about standing in her younger sister's doorway, with a butcher knife, at night after everyone was asleep thinking seriously about killing her sister. She didn't because she knew she would get in SO much trouble if she did (at least the lesson 'you clean up the mess you make' struck home!).

About the time Rebecca was 12 I ran across the "unschooling" movement and put her in charge of her own schooling. It still wasn't easy. But at least I got her graduated from high school. I sat her down and told her the law of the land...she needed to be in school until she was 16. She could do it through me or she could do it through the state in a home. I let her know what the score was and what the world was like...She could run away but she needed to think about being cold and hungry all the time and probably selling her body to some man who would misuse her and beat her up on a regular basis. Even though she said she didn't care, she didn't run. I had to watch what she did though, not what she said. There was a time for about 6 weeks that she went to one of my friends (an orthodox Jew) as a mother's helper/housekeeper. She came home grateful there were fewer rules to follow, but just as defiant. But she was beginning to see that not everyone lived like us and that there were some things she just wouldn't do. She always admired power and strength. The most powerful being around was her idol. She began to learn that power could be used in evil, wicked ways. She needed to see that she needed to make proper choices or she would be on the receiving end of someone's misused

power. Not pleasant.

I gave her the list of what courses she needed to have for each grade level through 8th grade, the minimum number of classes that she needed to graduate from high school and the requirements she needed to complete for the cover school to get credit for the classes. She picked her books, if books were necessary for the work to be done. If the book didn't work she found another one. She did the work in her own time frame. I kept checking and grading her work. If I could get the work done via an apprenticeship or practical service instead of books, I did. Documentation was not easy and it took a great deal of creativity on my part. I let her know in no uncertain terms that her life was hers she could choose how she lived it. She needed to watch what was going on around her and choose wisely, because once she left my house she was on her own (which is what she wanted anyway). She needed control and I gave it to her within the rules and laws I had to function in. She was amazed that as an adult I had to follow rules, too. I made it clear that society would attempt to punish me if she failed, because I was the responsible adult (which wasn't fair to her either). But I also made it clear that I wasn't going to take the fall for her and would document everything she did.

I oversaw the minimum schooling she needed to do to graduate from high school. I told her she could do this as fast or as slow as she wanted, but once she graduated there would be no more school, she could work, earn money and live at home until she was 16 then she could leave or stay, as she desired. Since she wanted money in her pocket, she finished her school fairly quickly. When she was in her junior year of school (14.5 years) she went out and tried to find a job. She couldn't. And we had many arguments about how unfair society was.

Eventually, she found someone to apprentice her to be a small engine mechanic. The experience of trying to find jobs kept her at home until the day after her 17th birthday when she took me to the recruiter's office and had me sign her into the military. At the end of basic training she called me up in tears telling me how much she loved me and how much she wanted

to be home. Her first duty station was Japan.

She is now married. She had a miscarriage and got pregnant again. She was told her second child should be aborted because it would have Down syndrome. She and her husband chose life, and now have a healthy little girl, in spite of a very difficult pregnancy. Rebecca has chosen to be a full-time, stay-at-home mom. She tells me she never realized how difficult it was to be married and be a helpmate, run a household and raise a child. She calls me every day to talk.

God knows why He created her. I don't. He loves her more that I ever can. And because she rejected my best efforts, God really needed to be in charge of her training. That is what the chain of command is there for, yes? I told God so. I would help, but He needed to undertake directly with her. There are many, many such children in Christian households. I have come to believe that in the future they will be desperately needed by the Christian community. The need for their ministry has not yet been made evident. But because God needs them, He will undertake their training, we need to step aside and let Him work. And, let me tell you, it isn't easy. God's College of Hard Knocks isn't fun for either student, the parent or the child. Rebecca's gifting is just now beginning to be seen. I really feel sorry for the entity that God releases this group of His children on....I'm glad it's not gonna be me.

Helen McProuty  
hmcprouty@earthlink.net

**Here are some web sites for FAE and FAS that I wanted to share.**

**Deborah in PA**

My daughter has FAE, not FAS. No facial features, just as difficult, in some ways because she doesn't have the features to alert professionals, or myself, either. I often forget, and get very frustrated. I have to remember it's not her fault.

- www.nofas.org
- www.acbr.com/fas
- www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/fas.html
- www.adopting.org/rwfas.html

www.come-over.to/FAS  
www.well.com/user/woa/fsfas.htm

**I need some advice.**

Hi, I bought the pals software for autistic children that I saw advertised in your magazine. We tried teaching my child to use the mouse and she is unable to grasp the idea. I heard there is a touch screen that allows them to use the computer without a mouse. I was wondering if you know of any organizations that will help fund computer equipment for the handicapped. She goes to school, but I teach her at home also. Some organizations may say the school should pay for it, but it is hard to get the school to do anything and besides I want her to be able to use the computer at home.

Thank you, Jennifer Racancoj  
JENANDRENE@peoplepc.com

**Question about Schizophrenia**

My 13 year old son who I have homeschooled for nearly seven years has recently been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Over the last year, we have seen him plummet from the 90th percentile to barely able to do things he learned in 3rd grade. As I look around, I cannot find any Christians who are in the same position who could offer me encouragement. Do you have families struggling with schizophrenia in NATHHAN? Christine blair.family@verizon.net

**My son Elijah has been diagnosed with autism. I need suggestions on homeschooling.**

Hello! My name is Dana and I am starting to homeschool my children. My son Elijah, who will be 6 on April 16th, has been diagnosed with autism. I would like any suggestions on homeschooling him. I would appreciate it. Thank you! Blessings to you! Dana Rankin

merciformetoo@hotmail.com



### Frustrated Myself

I have a son who is deaf and has other neurological hurdles. He is deaf but oral and uses a cochlear implant. That has done wonders for him and helped him to come out of his world. At first, he displayed a lot of autistic like behaviors (no eye contact, not wanting affection, self stimulating behaviors, repeated motions). Since then he has progressed wonderfully. The last month has been a different story. He has started showing great frustration and anger regarding discipline issues. Homeschooling has also been a great source of frustration for him. He is quite able and can pick things up quite well. The problem, though, is his "wanter". Less and less, he wants to learn. He has also started displaying more self stimulating behaviors like clapping. He is seven now and well past the time when kids appear normal and then digress at age 2 or 3 into an autistic like cocoon. My wife and I are greatly distraught, and though we know that GOD loves us and has a great plan it is hard to appreciate it at this moment. We wondered if any of you have had or know someone who has had a similar circumstance and might be able to pass some wisdom on to us. Through all of this, yet we trust Him who laid down his life for us not only to display His love but to particularly purchase us as His own.

Thank you. David  
 hms\_david@bellsouth.net



**Toni is a foster child. She needs braces very badly. The system will not pay for them.** She will need

about\$5,000.00 to get braces. If anyone knows who can help her to get braces, please send information to address below.

Thank You. Jean Baer  
 70 Dewmar Dr. Newark,Ohio 43056  
 Phone 740 928 5344 or 740 504 1474  
 jeanb\_29@msn.com



**Esta M. Rapoport**  
**61 Cowdin Circle Chappaqua,**  
**New York 10514 Phone-914-241-**  
**3147**  
**Cell Phone-914-629-4225**  
**E-mail-Erapoport1@aol.com**

I am a doctoral student at the Boston University School of Education in the department of Special Education, doing research for my dissertation. **My research entails looking at the social interactions of parents and their children in homeschools. The population of children that I am studying is children who have ADHD-inattentive type and/or ADHD- hyperactive type.** My interest in this population of children stems from the struggles that my own son, now aged 21, has endured his entire school experience, and the hope that my research will help other children who deal with similar obstacles. All children in the study **must** be homeschooled, between 7-13 years old, and diagnosed to have ADHD-inattentive type and diagnosed by a physician, a psychologist, school officials or according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-TR-IV-R)*. Additionally, neither the parent nor child can have another special needs diagnosis nor any psychiatric illness or disorder. Each child and parent who participates in the study will receive remuneration. Please contact me either by phone or e-mail if you know any families who would be interested in participating in my research.

# Climbing The Mountain

## Cynthia L. Simmons

Each morning I stood at my door praying before I left the bedroom to teach Caleb. I am a homeschool mother; I work at home teaching all day. Crying out to God is my lifeline because instructing Caleb takes more strength and wisdom than I have. Caleb is my fifth and youngest child. He has ADD, visual motor integration, sensory integration among many other disabilities. Nothing is easy to learn. Both of us need God's help.

"Caleb, Caleb, where are you? We need to start school," I called. Caleb answered with screams. His round face turned red and wrinkled with anger.

"I hate school. Why do they make it hard? I hate them," Caleb said.

"Caleb, go to the office and sit down. We will start with geoboard." Again, he screamed. After much persuasion, I saw Caleb's chubby body inch toward our office and school-room.

Later in the office, I tried to get him to focus on the geoboard. A geoboard is a tool I used to teach Caleb shapes and their positions because he reverses letters and numbers. At that time, I used a five-pin geoboard. It is an eight-inch square piece of wood with five nails. The first four nails are in the shape of a square with a single nail centered in the middle of the square. The teacher makes shapes on paper with dots that corresponded to the position of the nails. The student copies the shape with rubber bands onto the geoboard. Later, the teacher asks the student to draw the shape on paper once he learns to complete the shape with rubber bands.



"Caleb, you need to look carefully at the shape you are copying. It is not on the left side," I instructed.

"Does the cat like it when I pick him up?" Caleb's cocoa brown eyes focused on the neighbor's cat outside.

"Caleb we are talking about this shape in front of you. Do you see it? It is a triangle and it is on the left side."

"Do cats like cars?" I noticed Caleb's eyes follow the car as it passed our house.

"Caleb, do you hear me? We are now working on learning this shape."

"Does Mr. Knightly like to play wif (poor diction) the cat outside?" he asked as he ran his short fingers through his straight blond hair.

"I cannot understand you. Besides, we are not talking about cats," I said with a sigh.

"Does Mr. Knightly like to play WIV other cats?" Caleb yelled and frowned.

"Caleb, you need to say wiTH. Use your tongue to touch the bottom of your teeth." I allowed him to get off the subject to correct his diction. We were accomplishing nothing anyway.

"WIV cats!" Caleb's high-pitched voice was tinged with tears and anger.

"Caleb, let's say the 'th' sound.

Say it with me. TH. That was better, now let's say it again," I said.

My lesson ended when Caleb lost all control over his temper and screeched. Throwing himself on the floor, he bellowed with pent-up frustration. I knew that I had continued with that lesson too long. The work I asked him to do was not just hard – it hurt. I knew what I had to do. I sat down on the floor and took Caleb in my arms and squeezed. After ten minutes or so, his screams subsided and I tried to return to teaching the shape.

“Look at my hands, Caleb. I have my fingers over the diagonal line. Can you copy it?” Caleb made a line that was not straight, but not diagonal either.

“No, let’s try again. Watch my pen.” I held my pen over the line.

“I hate this. I hate you. Why do they make this hard?” He threw the rubber band across the room and hit the table with his hand.

“Caleb, you may not say that you hate me.” He began to cry again. “It is okay to say, ‘This is hard. I don’t like it.’ Just don’t tell me you hate me.” I got a whimper as an answer. I knew he felt frustrated. Anger

boiled inside him because he wanted to do what I asked, but could not. Teaching him was one job, but he needed to learn how to handle the anger, too.

Finishing with Caleb, I started talking to Daniel, Caleb’s older brother, about his school.

“Daniel, let me see your math,” I said.

“Mom, will you be my best, best friend?” Caleb interrupted.

“Caleb, I’m now teaching your brother. Can you please play in your room?” I asked. Caleb had my complete attention all morning. I didn’t have the energy to deal with more of his screams while I helped Daniel.

“Mom, will you be my best, best, best, best friend?” Caleb asked with pleading eyes.

I had explained to Caleb that mothers and best friends were not the same. Today, however, I did not want to repeat that speech. I had finished Caleb’s school and Daniel needed my time. How could I teach two at the same time? I won-



dered if Caleb was jealous. I think God gave me the correct answer that day because I realized what he wanted to know. Caleb was asking if I loved him – just the way he was.

“Caleb, you are my son. I love you so much.” I reached out to grab him and gave him a long hug. He liked me to squeeze hard. When I let go, Caleb smiled and wandered off with a contented smile.

Days passed. We repeated our drills and Caleb screamed. At times, Caleb refused to budge. Those were the times I told him stories. Caleb thinks in pictures so I try to make my stories and explanations concrete.

“Caleb, do you know who you were named after?” I knew that this story would capture his attention.

“No, but was he in the Bible?” He listened without interruption.

“Yes, his name was Caleb. He was one of the twelve spies sent into Canaan. The

Israelites had come to the borders of the land of Canaan. Moses needed spies to gather information. Moses sent in twelve spies. However, ten of the spies saw the giants who lived in the land. They decided it was too hard. Joshua and Caleb were the only two who believed that God had the power to help them overcome the giants. The people of Israel did not believe God, so the Israelites had to wait forty more years to enter the land. Later, when Caleb was an old man he had to destroy those giants. He had to climb a mountain to do it. Even though he was old, Caleb trusted God and climbed that mountain. Caleb, you have a mountain to climb, too. God is big enough to help you do it. There are rocks in front of the door of your mind. The door is locked and chained. You and I need to move those rocks and take off the chain. Then we can unlock the door so you can think better.”

“Moving rocks is hard.” He had listened with interest. Now, his face was serious and sol-



emn.

“Yes, it is, but God can help us,” I said.

“It will be hard,” Caleb answered. I saw fear on his face.

“Yes, but we can do it with God’s help. Will you let me help you?” I asked.

“Yes,” he whispered with a sigh. He was six and he felt overwhelmed.

One day I noticed that Caleb completed his geoboard without tears or errors. I gave him the same shape, but rotated. He looked at the geoboard and then at the design. Without hesitation, he turned the geoboard to match the position of my drawing. After months of constant practice, he had mastered the five-pin geoboard. This was a small step. With God’s help, we had moved one rock that blockaded the door of his mind. Caleb and I celebrated our triumph. We learned to thank God for little victories.

# Pictures to Teach a Thousand Words

**S**tages® 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.

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# Victorious Hearts of Grace

Below is a more-beautiful-than-words eulogy that was given for the death of the granddaughter of Bob and Jo Ann Tolliver.

Her journey was short, but it was long. From the outside it appeared frightening and uncertain with foreboding shadows, but from the inside she was walking in pure light. To us in the visible world it was a mystery and a puzzle; inside her world her everything was simple and clear. It lasted five and one-half months, and yet it spanned eternity. Because she was known and planned before time began, and because her future was determined, she was cradled between Alpha and Omega. She was an answer to a mother's and daddy's prayer, and she was named before her gender was known, but her birth and life were determined long ago, and her purpose to touch thousands was clear to the Father though hidden for a time from man.

She never heard a sound, and yet she listens to the angels singing praise to the One Who created her. She could not see, and yet today she beholds the wonders of Heaven. She never expressed love to anyone, and yet she is loved by all. She never laughed, and yet she brought joy and laughter to the hearts of many. She never walked a step, and yet she guided thousands in their spiritual journeys. She never hugged one person . . . not even her own mother, and yet her heart has embraced hearts in scores of countries on five continents. Her tiny whimper was almost inaudible, and yet around the world today the sounds of weeping can be heard from those who mourn her parting.

She never played with her brother and sister, and yet today she's dancing around the throne of God with her cousin and great grandparents she didn't know before. She seldom breathed unassisted, and yet today she gulps the invigorating realities of heaven itself. Most of the valves in her heart never worked properly, and yet the flow of the very life of God courses through her being. Her heart had a hole, but now it is whole. Two parts of her brain were never developed, and yet today she knows fully and completely as she was so known before eternity began. The broken has been made whole, the incomplete has been completed.

Sunday afternoon, at 3:55 pm, our little Nicole Grace gave it her last shot, and at five and one-half months of age, entered into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. While she lost the battle, she gained the victory. Nicole means "Victorious Heart". Grace expresses God's act of mercy by which He opens the full resources of heaven for us to be and do all we were thus created.

You understand that at this time, Jo Ann and I cannot fully express the emotions we felt as we stood beside her crib in the hospital in Quincy, IL, and watched her life ebb from such an imperfect body and enter into ultimate perfection. As I thought about yesterday's culminating event of the past five months, the thought occurred to me that Nicole had been on a long and difficult journey with a friend she had never seen and had never heard with physical eyes and ears. And yet, as they walked together through this soundless and mysterious journey, a point came when that unseen friend simply said, "Nicole, it's closer to My house than yours; why don't you just come on to my place."

Nicole Grace was born June 10, 2004 with Mosaic Trisomy 18, a genetic malfunction that left 91% of all the cells in her body containing a third Chromosome #18. This left her with deformed heart valves, a hole in her heart, two parts of her brain missing, webbing on the fingers and toes of her right side. Few babies live more than a month. 90% die between five and

seven months following birth. Less than 10% live a year.

We had prayed . . . thousands had prayed . . . literally around the world (thanks to the internet) . . . that God would miraculously heal and restore her. He did . . . just not here.

So, today, as we did a year and a half ago when my father died, we utter shouts of joy from weeping hearts. We grieve in hope and not in despair. We praise God from grateful hearts and not with bitter spirits. Watching certain things progress with Nicole, we understand more fully God's merciful intervention that has protected her from a future that would probably have been incomprehensible. As the day closes, we can all say beyond any doubt, "It is well with my soul". We are sad, but not mad. We are disappointed but not disillusioned. We are heavy of heart, but not burdened down.

### **Our Victorious Heart, Nicole Grace Reynolds,**

went to be with her other Daddy (The Lord) today, just before 4 pm.

Deanna and I and Grandma and Grandpa Tolliver were there as her breathing and heart slowed and stopped. She quite literally took one last breath here and one glorious breath there. It was that simple, that quick, that peaceful. Her first steps were on streets of gold. Her first word may very well have been Hallelujah. Her first sound (she was deaf for at least the last 4 months of her life) was angel choruses. And her first unclouded sight was more than we can fathom.

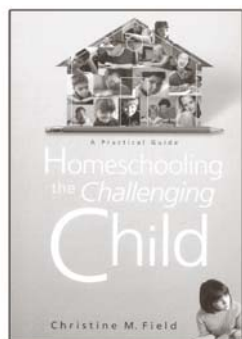
In the preparation of grief, I commented to Deanna that I couldn't believe that we were sitting here waiting for our daughter to die. She beautifully reminded me, "We're not waiting for her to die. We're waiting for her to live."

From her early days, I "experimented" with numerous "pet names" for her. Whatever came out of my mouth. So she was everything from "potato bug" to "Nic" to "my heart." But, the name that "stuck" was "Punkin Seed." I told her she was too little to be a full "punkin," so she was my "punkin seed." The Bible says somewhere (I just don't want to find it right now) unless a seed falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it falls into the ground and dies, it will bear much fruit. Our prayer is that our little "Punkin Seed" continues to bear much fruit in many lives, especially now (somehow). She has changed us forever. And, hopefully, these days have changed your lives as well.

Don't stop quite yet, however. We are confident and exalting in the fact that Nicole is in heaven (probably being passed around among the great grandparents). We rejoice along with our other 2 children that she can laugh and play, finally free of her limitations. But, as Joy Linn is beginning to understand, since all of that is true, she can't be here anymore. And, obviously, that leaves a big gap in our hearts.

One of the things our Lord told me early on (don't remember if I ever shared it here or not) was that "Nicole's was not the only heart that would be victorious here." Please continue to allow Nicole to live up her legacy by continuing to allow our experience to challenge you to greater Christ-like-ness.

# NATHHAN Resource Review



## Homeschooling the Challenging Child

**Author - Christine M. Field**

**Review—Dr. Jay L. Wile, president of Apologia Educational Ministries, Inc.**

In this book, Christine Field discusses how to homeschool a challenging child. What is a challenging child? Essentially, she says that any child who demands special effort or dedication is a challenging child. I like that definition, because many of the children who are held up as examples of the success of homeschooling can be challenging.

There are several things that make this book valuable to homeschoolers. First, Christine Field dispels a lot of myths that seem so prevalent in the homeschooling community. Second, Field dispels the myth that you should not make use of the evaluation services provided by the public school system or the child psychology community. Most importantly, the author dispels the myth that learning disabilities are discipline problems.

Of course, Christine readily admits that many discipline problems are incorrectly labeled as learning disabilities. As a result, she stresses evaluation as the key. She stresses that you must learn what the problems are before you can address them. To that end, she gives

specific suggestions on how to evaluate your child and even refers you to other resources that have detailed evaluation tools such as personality tests. As she says over and over again, the more you know, the better you will be at making an informed decision on how to homeschool your challenging child.

Field gives specific suggestions on how to approach discipline, daily routine, personality issues, and learning programs for a challenging child. When I got done with this book, I felt as if I had been at a weekend seminar that was full of panel discussions between experts in child-rearing, experts in education, and parents who had personally dealt with the struggles of raising challenging children.

If you want specific ideas on how to evaluate your child as a unique creation, how to help your child develop into an adult that will be pleasing to God, how to develop a homeschooling program that works for your child, and how to deal with the emotion and stress that results from doing so, you should definitely read this book.

Dr. Jay L. Wile, president of Apologia Educational Ministries, Inc.

*(Editor's note: We are glad to receive Homeschooling the Challenging Child as a great addition to our library. We heartily recommend Christine Field's book for parents working with children who have learning delays. We found this well-thought-out resource easy to follow and easy to understand. Thank you Christine for your organized book written from your heart.)*

### Ordering details:

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1-800-247-4784

# 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. )*



It is hard to comprehend that it has been a year now since we began calling Porthill, Idaho our home.

Many of the plans we originally came with are not even recognizable as the days have unfolded. Have you ever had that happen for you?

We are beginning to see that it is not the plan but the process (and the godly living out of that process) that is more important. We have had our attitudes checked out more than once!! The phrase "more is caught than taught" is very true.

The Bible passage in Philippians 1:6-7 is very encouraging if we are in the midst of an attitude change. *"Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus"*. We go through the day with a phrase on our hearts, "not I, but Jesus in me."

When living with a large family, with 24 little eyes and ears close by, it is essential to be quick to change and yet keep going. Are we too old for this? No, we are all God's children needing to be changed

into His image day by day.

We are learning that it is not beneficial to look back and compare or to look too far into the future and strategize. The important time is now... living each day to its fullest and capturing the joy of the moment. Life with all of its decisions and complications can cloud our view.

We have been reading Charles Swindoll's book "Laugh Again". We would recommend it to anyone needing to get a new perspective on life and lighten up a little from the seriousness of life's problems. Especially for Grandparents, as it is so important that we be a positive, encouraging cheering section for our children and grandchildren.

Are you interested in what we daily see in the Bushnell family as grandparents...? We see a busy family with twelve children with diverse interests and abilities, juggling life's daily tasks with homeschooling and the ministry of NATHHAN and CHASK. Homeschooling here

involves a lot of "capturing the moments" using them for learning... sometimes using a work project for fun and family time.

Some days are long and difficult as the challenges come across the phone line. Our family's total commitment to the ministry of NATHHAN and CHASK is awesome.

Our whole family has received rewards along the way as homes are found for the children, and birth parents choose life.

Here is a special note. Perhaps some of you are in the role of grandparents. Some might even be in the dual role of parents/grandparents. Privileged to be in that role ourselves, we would like to encourage all grandparents to make time to be involved their grandchildren's lives. Time passes very quickly. More than birthday gifts or special treats, our grandchildren want our time and attention.

May the Lord bless you as you serve your families.

# Preschool Level Learning Over and Over...and Over and Over...AGAIN?

**By Sherry Bushnell**

Stuck at the preschool level? You are in good company!

We may be here for awhile, so let's learn to enjoy it.

Those of us in the moderately mentally delayed club may be looking at living with our adult sized "preschoolers" for the rest of our lives. As such, maybe it would help to re-evaluate "preschool" and divide it up into a slower paced level, better suited to a lifetime of learning.

Perhaps for some families, the idea of never moving past the "beginning" level might seem tragic. But to be honest, after living there for many, many years thus far, it's not so bad.

The positives definitely out-weigh the negatives. Our wonderfully innocent and see-throughish children at this level are not complicated. They may be inattentive and impulsive, but assuredly curious, too. They rejoice when the first snow flakes come drifting down and they are ecstatic when Daddy gets home from work!

The kittens, puppies and baby animals (not to mention the big ones) fascinate them.

Even if they can be hyperactive, make excess noise, and seem to have an incredible short term memory loss, they can respond to simple discipline procedures, are not offended when corrected and will take learning reinforcement of new concepts again and again and again.



**Jordan and Mercy Bushnell**

If our preschool level learners are disrespectful, dishonest, defiant and exhibit a lack of self control, we still have time to work on it! Unlike an adult child, who is mentally non-disabled, who is ready to leave the nest, who exhibits the above and won't be corrected, it is not too late for our "preschoolers."

With this in mind, how might we divide up the preschool years into more than one long blur? Some of you experienced ones might well have better terminology than I can come

up with and I would love to hear it.

One of the first things to do that will help is to arm ourselves with a mini library of books, manuals and curriculum guides for the preschool kindergarten level.

There are several great ones out there.

Early Education At Home by M. Jean Soyke

The Brigance Inventory

Learning At Home- Preschool and Kindergarten by Ann Ward

Anyway, you get the idea. Always be on the scout for new books and good ideas for preschoolers. You are going to become an expert pre-school teacher.

Understanding the preschooler mind set is the key to successful learning.

It is so easy to be complex. We have had professionals at our finger tips since our child was born. Professionals tell us how to eat, tune up our cars, design and build our houses even clean our houses sometimes.

However, children are not machines. They are consistently simple. They don't get more complicated like computer technology does.

Fact. Professionals

cannot meet the needs of our children like we as parents can. This is not to say that professionals can't give us great ideas. But as a parent, we don't have to attend years of college to do an outstanding job with our children's learning needs.

Are you familiar with the term "developmentally-appropriate practice?" In plain English, this means that children are presented with what they need to know when they are ready for it.

**How do we know that our children are ready to understand beginning concepts?**

One of the most important ways we can see that our children are ready is if they are symbolizing. For example, does your son recognize a toy car as a car and then make motor noises while driving across the floor?

We can observe our children. Are they trying to jam the round peg in the square hole? Or are they choosing the correct round hole after a moment of thinking.

Increased coordination is also a sign that the brain is ready to handle pre-school level concepts. Running, jumping, hopping and skipping, balancing and one-handedness is usually established, are they right handed or left?



**Diane and Andrew Ryckman**

**Let's start with the "Curious and into everything" mode.**

While a six month old is unashamedly into everything, our patience may be tried as we secure the cupboards, shut the doors and pick things up more often. Have you ever looked at this stage as an incredible blessing?

Indeed, some of us longed for the day that we would see our children getting into curious mischief. Once they started, we were not about to squelch the momentum!

Using this high interest mode, we want to keep supplying data for them to process in a non-threatening way and to keep up with new levels of understanding so they don't get bored. Got that?!

**"Trial and Error" level**

We can watch our children work and work at understanding how to get into something they want to (such as the box mom brought home hiding

in the closet) I am sure we have also watched them rise to great frustration as they express their inability to figure something out.

Is your pre-schooler angry a lot? A good example of this might be watching them work carefully folding a piece of paper and inserting it into the envelope, but not being able to get it in "just so." In their mind's eye they know how it should look, *but how to get it there is another story.*

For those of us that have a child who has learning delays or is mentally disabled around the preschool level, having run out of ideas on how to teach them to handle frustration appropriately, we suggest the book the Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Disorders. This book published by Hawthorne is available through them at 1-800-542-1673.

This book gives loads of suggestions to modify behavior in the child who is pre-school level of understanding and above. Although not all suggestions would apply to all families, there are some interesting ones to consider.

**The "why" stage.**

Another way to tell if our children are ready to understand beginning academic concepts, is a good increase in language comprehension. Have they added more words (about 50 a month) including

the infamous “why” word?

Our children do not have to be talking yet to be at the preschool level. Verbal language is of number one importance, but as I can well attest, communication is of more importance. Words may come slowly for our children with special needs. We are after mental preschool level, regardless of language.

“Why” means, I want to connect with my world. I need input. So, to reduce frustration, the all-important task for the preschooler is learning how to communicate to get answers to life’s questions.

The best way to succeed at communication is to communicate. Amazing! By allowing our children to participate in our conversations we help them gain reasoning skills, expression and important listening skills. The more we converse with our children, the more they will learn to listen. You may feel worn out at the end of the day, but the time you take to hear stories, read books, and the time you take to listen to them, is incredibly instrumental in your child’s pre-school level of development.

We must also remember that just because our child has an increased awareness of written language (THE ABC’S) they probably are not ready for formal learning.

In fact, most preschoolers do not have the ability to see, hear or discern the fine distinctions between sounds or dif-

ferent letters and numbers. Vision and coordination, are not ready, hence, FAT crayons, large print and big pencils.

### Let’s Get Organized.

Preschoolers vary in their ability to understand concepts.

Although they can remember events in the past and can plan for the future, the con-



### Jordan and Jayben using letter mag-

cepts of time, space and age still elude them. They have a hard time remembering things that are not truly meaningful to their world.

This is why if the ABC’s do not interest a child and reading is not even on the radar screen for them, they will probably not remember letters!

Learning to pick up toys, put everything in it’s place (via our example of course. Smile.) is so important to helping them understand everything has a place in life.

Our preschoolers are

the ultimate Amelia Bedelia. For example, when they hear that someone “lost his head” they’ll want to know where it was lost!

### “I am big, really I am.”

Social development is of great concern to all parents. We desire our children to behave in public, to be able to make friends and to play well with other children without fighting or being rude. The home is the best place to learn appropriate social behavior. Learning to play with brothers and sisters is excellent practice.

Our preschoolers are great imitators. Just as the father who is watching his preschooler re-play his own reaction to the football game that was just lost, or the mom who finds herself rolling her eyes when frustrated. “Where did that come from???”

As our children grow in social awareness, we can allow them to play unobserved and to build friendships. Modeling correct behavior in the home is their special God-given foundation for being good at handling social problems later on.

Now that we have broken down some of the areas a preschooler might be showing us as signs that they are going to be able to retain information, we can think about what kinds of materials fuel a great preschool “classroom” environment. Thankfully it is not expensive.



### Let's start with:

Big crayons, thick pencils with big erasers, and hefty, safe scissors.

We like an ordinary stapler, a nice big roll of clear tape, labels, that stick to make "stickers", construction paper, washable tempura paint, paste, glue and other mediums for creating masterpieces.

In addition add to your cupboard magazines to cut up to make scrap books, egg cartons, noodles, dry cereal, ribbon, buttons, paper bags, strings and yarn.

All manner of scrap fabric you can spare, cardboard pieces, sandpaper, and felt, boxes of all sizes, and yogurt containers.

Bean or rice bags are good, finger-painting mediums such as toothpaste, shaving cream, pudding, and anything else that sounds like fun.

### What to scout around for or ask Grandma..

Lego / Lincoln Logs beads to string, "cooker set", sand and water toys, appropriate videos, DVDs and tapes, blocks, colored chalk and a chalk board, a trike or bike with training wheels and helmet, books, books and more books... puzzles, rubber stamps and musical instruments.

Wow! You get the picture. This already sounds like a lot of fun to me.

### Skills to Check Off

Just so that you can stay on track, plan to purchase a skills checklist. These are often included in the pre-school level curriculums we just listed previously. Start with those skills that are necessary before starting formal instruction or an educational program that costs lots of money. These would be things like:

Climbs, catches a large ball, bounces ball, skips, walks heel to toe, can walk on tippy toes, balances on each foot ect..

Assess not only the gross motor development but the fine motor. Look for things like, stringing beads, folding paper, tracing lines, using scissors fairly accurately and stacking smallish blocks.

The other areas are social, body awareness, communication, and cognitive ability (right and left don't count!)

### Who sets the schedule around here anyway?

As homeschoolers, we have a great advantage. School doesn't begin at 9:00am and end at 2:00pm. We teach all day. Preschoolers are very much in favor of this, since life is one big happy experiment.

"Mommy, are you making pancakes? Can I

make tiny ones for my plate?

"Johnny, you can pour your own syrup, but you must use the measuring spoon and be reasonable"

"Oh great, it's time to sort clothes. Sally, you put all of the white clothes in this basket. Daddy's jeans and these pants go in this blue basket."

Scheduling time for learning can come later. Although some parents do function better with a "learning time" of say 1 hour. I don't know about your children, but the attention span of my preschoolers allows them to stick with it for not much more than 15 minutes...and less if someone else comes along with a more interesting activity.

Simplicity is the name of this great adventure. You see, they are learning about life. Household skills are reconstructed in the best pre-school classrooms in the country.

### Are We Having Fun Yet?

I think that the most important thing for me to remember is that we are striving to teach and HAVE FUN.

We need to have the attitude that although we know that we are purposely setting them up for learning new skills and understanding, shhhh.. this is our secret. To our preschoolers, they are simply "big helpers".

Responsibility is so important to them. They are so much wanting to be big and make their mark on their

world.

In our home, although we have not completely attained this by a long shot, anger has no place in teaching. If we as mothers feel our frustration level rising, it is better to teach our children to have a quiet time or to sit still reading a book to give us 5 minutes of peace.

Keeping our cool when the weather is awful outside is important for the tone of the family not to mention keeping learning alive. No one likes a crabby pre-school teacher.

### **I do have a funny story to end with:**

Recently, one of our preschool level learners was totally into having a pet of his own. *He wanted one so badly.*

Our home is heated with wood during the winter. We patiently endure the different creatures that firewood, stored outside, brings into the house.

Unfortunately, his older sister spotted a large maggot that had fallen onto the hearth, out of a crack in the log. Pointing out this interesting creature, she proceeded to tell him that a beautiful flying something or another would soon appear if he took good care of it. Wow!

Unfortunately, while mommy was napping and feeding baby ShaHannah upstairs and Daddy was in the office outside, he hunted and hunted for just the right environment to keep his "pet."

Deciding that the big bin of rolled oats best resembled a beautiful pile of dirt, he dropped his maggot on the waiting soft mound. Sure enough he thought he saw that maggot wiggle comfortably to the bottom of the bin.

Unfortunately, mommy went through the roof when he explained in careful terms just how

he made his new pet feel at home.

Fortunately Daddy was home. Daddy carefully sifted the entire bin of oats with a hand strainer to find his little pet, who was not coming into ready view.

(Fortunately for Daddy the bin was almost empty to begin with.) As Daddy extra carefully sifted the last bowl and no nesting maggot appeared, our pre-schooler kind of remembered that perhaps he didn't really see his pet land in the oatmeal. Perhaps it landed to the side of the container.

Off to the pantry run a troupe of howling sisters, mourning their churning stomachs, hoping, just hoping that he was right.

A sister, a little less squeamish than the rest, volunteered to check the bucket of raw potatoes sitting close to the bin of oatmeal.

Out came each potato, carefully inspected for this giant specimen of the pre-fly family.

As the bottom of the bucket came into view, the bottom layer of straw was dumped into a another bucket. As the last bit of straw was then carefully lifted out, with happy triumph, our preschooler shot his hand into the bowl and

retrieved his erring maggot.

A mason jar was immediately employed along with much advice on how to screw the lid on tightly and, "Oh, yes, poke a few holes in the lid... and feed it some damp lettuce."

It survived a record 3 more days.... (It could have lived much more..) until it somehow disappeared off the kitchen counter, jar and all...Daddy????

So, you see, preschool level learning is all about adventure. Ask any parent. Is your child mentally disabled and "stuck" at



this level? Rejoice. We think this is one of the most precious times of life.

Our attitude towards presenting simple ideas and teaching the beginning skills makes our child either want to stop learning or to move forward.

Here are some stay-alive ideas for us parents

1. Let's teach our children to give us the space we need to recoup.
2. Take time to make new game plans if our present ideas and actions are not working.
3. Character development over activity. This means that if our children are experiencing anger over not being first, learning to resolve conflict and taking turns comes first.
4. Being able to "help" is more important to our child than learning the ABC's.



## NATHHAN Lending Library

The NATHHAN Lending Library is being well-used. We are working at updating records, looking for lost and overdue books, and filling your orders for books.

Some of you may have noticed (or used) the used book sale on our web site. This has been very successful. We would like to continue selling the books for extra reasonable prices, in order to save up to get some of the more popular resources. This provides two things:

1. Families can read the older books having to do with special needs and homeschooling, at budget-helpful prices.
2. We have been able to save up enough money to purchase the newer resources that veteran homeschoolers would love to read. This seems like savings all around. What do you think?

### In The Library... Check Us Out!

#### Allergy And Candida Cooking Made Easy

By Sondra K. Lewis

This is a cookbook plus! You will find it to be a huge resource for allergy cooking, natural organic meal preparation, nutritional analysis, rotation meal planning plus more. An excellent book written by those who've been there.

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#### The Feingold Cookbook For Hyperactive Children and Others With Problems Associated with Food Additives and Salicylates

Ben F. Feingold, M.D. and Helene S. Feingold

This book has been written in response to requests from families throughout the world who have hyperactive children. Dr. Feingold explains the problems of dietary management, and provides lists of forbidden foods. A family cookbook!

# Errorless Learning

## Errorless Learning – Ensuring Success Each Step of the Way

Errorless learning is really a fancy name for something we do quite naturally with our little ones as they learn and grow from babyhood to childhood, and it is something we can continue to do with our children on into their formal education. So just what is errorless learning? It is guaranteeing that my child does not fail at a given task by helping him along until my help is no longer necessary. It is making sure that he gets the answer right every time. It is giving him the answer whenever he hesitates. And it is a very legitimate teaching technique!

### Why Errorless Learning?

For many children with learning challenges it is so important that they are not given the opportunity to make mistakes when learning a new skill. Making mistakes often leads to discouragement, which results in a lack of motivation to even try the skill again. Often once a mistake is made, it becomes very difficult to unlearn it. Errorless learning is an excellent way to avoid discouragement, and to build success and self-confidence in a new skill. Another huge deterrent to learning is frustration, whether it's me getting frustrated with my child "not getting it", or whether it's my child becoming frustrated because it just doesn't make sense. Errorless learning eliminates both.

### Introducing a skill

When teaching my child a new skill using errorless learning, I must first make sure that he knows what I expect of him. This can take a long time and a lot of patience on my part as we go over and over and over a new skill together. There are a number of ways I can introduce a new skill. I can prompt my child by talking through each step of a new skill. I can provide hand over hand support. I can do the skill with my child over and over again. I can



By Diane Ryckman

provide him with cues he can "peek" at to guarantee his success. I can do the skill for him when he hesitates, modeling my expectations. Whatever approach I take, I need to provide my child with all the help he needs to accomplish the learning task given.

Here's how Nila has been applying errorless learning with her daughter Anna: "We are trying to get Anna's auditory sequencing up, and one of the computer programs we have has animal sounds and instrument sounds which they play in different orders and require her to play them back in the same sequence. Until she understands exactly what is required of her, I actually do it for her. Today I did the exercise many times myself, walking through it with her, until she seemed to grasp what they were requiring. It may have been a simple task for another child that doesn't have learning challenges, but for Anna it involved several things that she had to think through. When I could hear that she was actually saying them back in the right order, then I would use the mouse myself to start her with the one she had said first. Otherwise she had a tendency to say them right, but when I asked her to move the mouse to the first one, she would always go to the one she heard last. Her problem was that she had to keep the order in her mind, and remember to get the mouse working, and recall

the right order, while they may have interrupted her concentration with asking her to find the right order or repeating the sounds. Had she got it wrong repeatedly she would have become very disappointed and probably would have just shut down for the day or a few days. As soon as I got her going on the first sound, she could recall the others and would say, "Anna do it." We did this over and over as long as her interest was there, and we ended on a positive note."

### **Reducing your help**

As my child shows that he is beginning to understand what is expected of him, I need to slowly reduce the help I've been giving, but I also need to be prepared to give him help whenever he hesitates. The key, again, is keeping his learning error free. Here's what Amy does with her daughter Reagan: "When Reagan knows something, she is very quick to respond. If I show Reagan a sight reading flashcard and she hesitates more than 2-3 seconds I give her the correct word so that she doesn't just guess and "cement" the wrong word vs. what is represented on the card."

### **Breaking it down**

If my child just doesn't seem to be catching on, it may be necessary to break the skill down into small steps that need to be learned first. When Andrew was learning to count, I realized that though he had learned to count up to 10, he did not understand the concept of quantity – that 3 meant three things. Using errorless learning I made up some games to help Andrew learn about numbers. Here's what I did:

### **Number Games**

I made a "game board" out of a piece of construction paper with 3 recipe card size squares glued onto it. On the squares, I wrote the numbers 1 to 9 as well as the corresponding number of dots, using a different color for each number.

I also made a set of number cards, with numbers on one side and corresponding dot patterns on the other. I color-coded the dot patterns to match with the colors on the game board, but made



Anna Nasby with mom, Nila working at the computer.

the numbers on the cards black.

The games for this board are simple matching ones - match the numbers, match the dot patterns, name the numbers as you match them, call the number that you want your child to match, place the number cards in order. The purpose is to help your child to become familiar with numbers, to recognize number names, to be able to count in order.

I then made a second "game board" similar to the first, but with just the dot patterns on it - still color-coded to match the game cards (I made it on the back of the first board). The game for this board is to match the number cards to the dot patterns. Peeking at the colored dot pattern on the back of the card is allowed and encouraged until it is no longer necessary. Another use for the game board is to place counters (buttons, coins, raisins, Lego, whatever might be fun and interesting for your child) on the dots, counting them as you do. From here you could match counters to the number cards without the dot patterns to guide, though allowing peeking on the back as necessary. The purpose of these games is to help your child recognize that numbers represent specific amounts.

### Being consistent

Using the same language with each lesson, following the same steps, in the same order, using the same words, can become a prompt for my child to help him know the response I'm looking for. As Amy has been teaching Reagan to answer "who, what, where, when and why" questions, she uses visual cues and has also developed a script to use when delivering lessons.

"Reagan is not always appropriate in her responses to "wh" questions. In trying to resolve the situation, I decided that maybe she didn't know the definition of the "wh" involved and that maybe if I asked the question and gave the appropriate response it would help her to define the question. Slowly, she is making progress! I talk a LOT to myself these days. The lesson begins with a picture book. During the story I will ask the "wh" question while holding up a cue card with the "wh" question we are working on. I will ask 3-4 or more "wh" questions per story. If I do not get an immediate response, I give the answer. As long as we are having fun and she maintains an interest in the "wh" question & answer "game" (aka errorless learning) I will continue. I then use the same technique in our everyday conversation and focus on the same "wh" question to generalize the concept."

### Matching, Selecting, Naming

One errorless learning technique that can be used in teaching many concepts is Matching, Selecting, Naming – a method developed by Patricia Oelwein for teaching children with Down syndrome how to read sight words. The key to this technique is using a double set of flashcards of whatever the concept you want to teach. As an example, let's look at teaching shapes. Matching: First show your child a card with a triangle on it. Tell your child, "This is a triangle". Place the card in front of your child, along with 3 other cards with shapes on them. Give your child another card

with an identical triangle on it. Ask your child, "Find the triangle" and have her match the card in her hand with the correct card on the table. Selecting: Ask your child to give you the card with the triangle on it. If she's unsure, find it for her and go back to matching triangle cards with her. Naming: Once she's able to pick the triangle out of a group of shapes, ask her to name the card you show her. If necessary, prompt her, then go back to matching or selecting until she's familiar enough with the shape to name it for you.



Reagan Dunnaway

This technique of matching, selecting and naming can be used for teaching many concepts: colors, letters, letter sounds, sight words, numbers, math concepts, money, telling time, the list can go on and on....

### The Master Teacher

In writing this article, I've been thinking a lot about errorless learning lately, and in thinking it hit me that the only true errorless learning we can experience is when we have an errorless teacher. And the only errorless teacher I know of is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What a blessing it is to realize that as He teaches us the lessons of life, He is there beside us modeling ("...but as He who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" I Peter 1:15), prompting ("Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, *This is the way, walk in it...*" Isaiah 30:21), guiding ("He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Psalm 23:3), and ensuring our success (...to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy..." Jude 24). As I go through the school of life, I hope that I will be a willing and co-operative learner in the hands of my Master Teacher.



## Gluten-Free Friends:

# An Activity Book for Kids

By Nancy Patin Falini, M.A. R.D., L.D.N.  
Forward by Dr. Alessio Fansano, MD

Gluten-Free Friends: An Activity Book for Kids is an award-winning activity book for 4 -11 year old children with gluten sensitivity. Depending on the child's cognition it may be used for younger and older children as well. It also describes methods to eliminate casein making it useful for the autistic community. Through an enticing, delightful, optimistic story and abundant multi-sensory learning activities the child becomes empowered with the ability to independently make gluten-free food choices even in the face of peer pressure.

Methods to manage the fundamental intricacies of the gluten-free diet are addressed as well as good overall nutrition. In addition to parents the book may also be used by healthcare providers, educators and therapists. Nancy Patin Falini, a dietician in private practice specializing in celiac disease and the gluten-free diet, is the author. She is also a homeschooling mom with some special needs children. Dr. Alessio Fansano, MD, an internationally renowned pediatric gastroenterologist, wrote the forward.

This book sells for \$18.95 with a price reduction for 10 or more orders. It is available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and the publisher Savory Palate at [www.savorypalate.com](http://www.savorypalate.com) or 1-800-741-5418

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