



## “CONNECTEDNESS” PART TWO

In the last edition of *PTI Press*, we were pleased to share the story of Madison, a sixth grader with severe food allergies and her “life-protecting” group of friends. In this edition, Madison’s mom, Jennifer Anderson, shares her story of finding her own sense of “connectedness” as a parent working with educators. We’ll also build on the ideas we offered in part one to help students with disabilities find connections in school and in their communities, focusing this time on involvement in extracurricular activities, volunteerism, clubs, and organizations.



### FROM ROCKY ROADS TO REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS

#### ONE FAMILY’S JOURNEY TO A STRONG PARENT-SCHOOL CONNECTION

*Jennifer Anderson, a Central Iowa Parent*

It seems like every fall as the start of the new school year approaches, I get that familiar feeling of dread, but not for the usual reasons. Not for the annual shopping trip for school supplies and clothes, or trying to get everyone back into a routine including a bedtime, or even because it means that another summer has slipped away. No, at our house a new school year signals IEP (Individualized Education Program) time. My husband, Doyle, and I have three children: Colten, a senior, Cody, a sophomore, and Madison (Madi), a sixth grader. The IEP road is a road that is frequently traveled at our house due to the fact that all three of our children have an IEP. Our two sons have dyslexia and our daughter has multiple medical issues—the scariest being her food allergies.

#### ***It’s Been a Rocky Road***

The IEP road has not been a smooth one for us to travel in the past. We have had more than our fair share of problems. There always seems to be a new challenge. Every school year we have found ourselves trying to get accommodations met or trying to work

things out with the school—getting our son more help to learn to read, making sure his teachers were following the accommodations in his plan, being told our daughter would have to be home-schooled, and convincing skeptical educators that her allergies are really life-threatening.

My husband now knows when I am starting to show signs of IEPitis. Before school started this fall, he and I were discussing the upcoming school year with another batch of the new teachers, and thinking about everything we have had to endure just to get here. He made a comment that caused me to stop and really think. He said, “We were given Madi to help lead the way for the other kids and families that are going to come after us. We are going to make it easier for them, by fighting so hard for her.” Now, I am a typical wife and I know what happens to a husband’s head when you admit he’s right. But I am going to chance it this one time—he was right. We have helped so many families already. When people find out about Madi they tend to get curious and ask questions. Those questions usually lead to them

knowing someone who also has problems and that leads to opportunities to help.

#### ***Sometimes the Most Important Thing is to Just Listen***

We start conversations. We give out specialists’ phone numbers when there is a need. We talk to people who do not know what step to take next. And we know how important it is just to be there to listen. Sometimes the most important thing you can do for someone is to just listen to their story. They may have everything else they need, except just knowing that they are not alone out there. We are glad to be there to offer our support until it isn’t needed any longer. Then we stand back and have the most incredible feeling knowing they can make it on their own. And then it hit me! We could not have helped other families if someone had not helped us out along the way. Look at all of the people that have helped us over the years! There is one person in particular that has earned a great deal of respect from our family for all the help he and his staff gave us

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The Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa exists to serve families of children with disabilities. The PTI of Iowa is a statewide service of ASK (Access for Special Kids) Resource Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping families of children with disabilities.

*The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. Products and services described herein are not endorsed by ASK or the U.S. Department of Education.*

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during the last school year and all the support they have continued to provide for us this year.

### ***The Best School Year Ever***

The 2007-08 school year was the best school year our daughter had ever had despite missing more than thirty-five days of school. It is my belief that it all started with the support that we received from the Fair Oaks Middle School principal, Mr. Jess Matsen. Mr. Matsen and the team of teachers that he had picked for Madi met with us while she was still in fourth grade. This was the first sign that the year we were starting was going to be different.

To understand why it meant so much to us, you need to know that on May 1, 2007 Madison had an anaphylactic allergic reaction and she was Life-Flighted to Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines. From there she was referred to a pediatric allergist, Dr. Martha Hartz, at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. There we got the diagnosis of a lifetime. Madison had an anaphylactic allergic reaction due to airborne milk protein when she simply walked through the kitchen while we were cooking. We were frying mushrooms in butter, and by heating the butter, or manipulating the protein by heating it, the milk protein became airborne. When Madi walked through the kitchen she inhaled the airborne milk proteins causing the anaphylactic reaction. Dr. Hartz informed us that Madison was the first child to be diagnosed with this so it was going to be a learning process for all of us.

### ***Invited, Welcomed, and Respected***

My husband and I invited (okay, actually we begged) Madison's primary pediatric physician, Dr. Debra Bixler

from Blank Children's Physicians in Des Moines, to come to Madison's school to talk to the staff about Madison's food allergies. Dr. Bixler agreed and took time off work to make the considerable trip to Madi's school to discuss Madison's allergies and other medical issues. Mr. Matsen welcomed the opportunity of having Madison's physician at the school. He invited several people that he felt would need this information to attend the meeting.

Dr. Bixler took her time explaining allergic reactions. She drew pictures on the dry erase board to illustrate what happens to Madison as she talked her way through an allergic reaction. We were surprised when Mr. Matsen took out a notebook, started asking questions and taking notes. He not only asked us what accommodations she needed but he asked why she needed them. He asked about her diagnoses and how each one affected that part of her body and how that would affect her in school. He showed my husband and me a great deal of respect when he accepted our answers when he could have just as easily asked Dr. Bixler for confirmation on all of the items that we addressed.

### ***Setting the Tone for Success***

Because Mr. Matsen was so at ease, the rest of the staff attending the meeting also seemed to feel at ease. They soon joined in with their own questions and concerns. I felt that Mr. Matsen taking everything seriously set the tone for the entire staff. The meeting was a huge success because there was such an open dialogue between the school staff, Dr. Bixler, and ourselves. And all this was happening before Madi was even a student in his building.

After the meeting, Mr. Matsen took

things into his own hands and started the process to get the building ready for Madison's accommodations. He kept us informed on the progress of the things that needed to be changed within the building throughout the summer. This proved to us that he was serious about having everything in place so that Madi would be able to attend school on the first day of middle school.

Mr. Matsen wanted the entire staff at Fair Oaks Middle School to have some knowledge of Madison and her allergies, so he had all of them assemble in the library before the school year started, and invited Madi and me in to explain to them what food allergies were and how to deal with them on a daily basis. Madi did a wonderful job. She stood in front of this group of adults and showed them how to use an Epi-Pen and a Twin-Ject [auto-injectors used to treat anaphylactic shock].

### ***Watching Your Child Find Her Voice***

Madison answered questions for Mr. Matsen and some of the staff. For the first time ever Madi was included in the discussions of her care. She was given the opportunity to tell people what it was like to be her. What a wonderful experience to get to watch your child find her voice for the first time ever. Mr. Matsen gave Madi the opportunity to have that voice.

One of the main concerns for the school was where Madi would eat safely. She could not eat in the lunch room if any dairy products were being cooked. Mr. Matsen located a room where Madison and a small group of her friends could eat, so Madi would not be eating in the cafeteria where she might run into problems. Because her friends were allowed to eat

with her, Madi's anxiety level decreased and some of her feelings of being so different were eased. Mr. Matsen suggested that some of the other girls in Madi's class also be allowed in the special lunch room to see what it is like and learn about Madi's allergies. One new girl came in each week and had lunch with the regular group of girls. This helped everyone become more comfortable with each other and expanded Madi's base of friends. We felt that this man genuinely cared and that he did not see our daughter as a problem to overcome, but as someone he was there to help. This was the first time we had felt that way since she had started school.

### ***A Safe Environment to Learn In***

The teachers he had chosen also had questions. They wanted to make sure Madi had a "safe environment to learn in." They sat through several movies about allergies to get more information. When Madison's primary pediatrician wanted to be sure Madi would be safe if something were to happen to her in school, these teachers stayed after school for even more training. They learned what signs to look for in case of an allergic reaction and what steps to

take if something did happen. This was the first time many of them had seen an Epi-Pen. They tried giving Epi-Pen shots to an orange for practice, and I showed them how to give oxygen if the need were to arise. These teachers encouraged each other through the whole process and supported each other when someone made a mistake. It was incredible to watch these ladies and know that things were going to go fine if there was a problem, because they were there for each other and they were all there for Madi.

They also made changes in the way things were done in the classrooms. Food parties are dangerous for Madison, so they came up with other ways to reward the students. They asked for a list of foods that Madison could have for treats and for a way to check the ingredients to see if they were safe. Having them ask was great—having them follow through and provide safe treats was outstanding. The usual pizza and popcorn parties would not happen with her class. Oh, the relief that came over me when that decision was made. The five "Red Team" teachers did so much to ensure Madison's safety that I will never be able to thank them. They gave me the gift of knowing they would

help keep Madison safe throughout her 5th grade year.

### ***Working Together to Achieve a Solution***

Our 5th grade journey was not without a couple of set backs, but it was the most success-

ful year Madi has had. By working with Mr. Matsen and the staff things went smoothly even when problems did arise. It was easy to listen to the reasons things could not be done or if things had to be changed when he explained there was a legitimate reason. He took the time to tell us why things were the way they were and then as a group we discussed what steps to take next. By working together to achieve a solution, even the set backs were easily managed. Madi had the opportunity to have teachers care about her and her environment, and to help ensure that she had a very successful year. Madi grew as a person, and became very accepting of the questions that go with the unusual diagnoses. We feel it all started with Mr. Matsen. It was because of his attitude and effort that Madi was able to have a safe and a successful academic year. Madi is in 6th grade this year and her success has continued.

### ***Managing IEPitis***

Currently my IEPitis is manageable thanks to that successful school year. To this day I am not sure if Mr. Matsen knows how much it meant to us to have him show us that first sign of support and understanding after everything we had been through. As parents, we were allowed to watch as our child came to discover herself and even start to accept who she is and what comes with her medical conditions. There have been so many people who have helped us get to where we are that we cannot possibly count them all. Our list of people that we need to thank has to start with Beverly Fisher, a former Director of Instructional Services at AEA, and Sondra Price, a former nurse consultant at AEA, for all

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## **OUT OF IDEAS?**

### **Attention! Parents and Educators!**

If you're having TROUBLE resolving DIFFERENCES over educational services and issues, try using a RESOLUTION FACILITATOR to get things going again.

An OBJECTIVE third party can help SMOOTH out the rough spots and SPEED you towards a SUCCESSFUL outcome for all involved.

CALL the ASK Family Resource Center for more INFORMATION

**(515) 243-1713**



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AEA, for all they did, for standing by my side and supporting me those first years when we were learning the ropes of 504 Plans and IEPs. But that is a story for another time. So, to everyone out there who has supported us in any way at any time, THANK YOU!

### ***Our Children Are Worth It***

And for those of you out there with your own case of IEPitis, or 504itis or just having a hard time right now, take a look at the people who have helped you in the past and let that memory sooth your "itis" away. Remember there is someone out there waiting to help you, or that may need your help. Our journey may be difficult, but our children are worth it!

***My name is Jeff Schmidt.*** I am a Junior at Johnston High School. During the summer of 2008 I volunteered at the ASK Family Resource Center, usually on Mondays and Wednesdays. The ASK Family Resource is a place in the East Village of Des Moines



where teachers, parents and anyone with questions about teaching kids with special education needs and learning disabilities can call or walk in.

If you want to volunteer somewhere, I would recommend ASK Family Resource Center. They are very friendly and funny. It is a good place to volunteer. You can contact them by phone or emailing them. Their website is <http://www.askresource.org>, or call 515-243-1713.

Things that I did for ASK: I helped with everything that I could do. I made copies with the copy machine of information to give to families about issues they were dealing with.

I also helped with the FIND program (Families of Iowa Network on Disabilities) by entering data on the computer and making information packets for meetings.

Once a month on Tuesday after their staff meeting they have potlucks. They are fun. They bring so much food. I loved going to the potlucks because I love to eat food. The workers at the ASK Family Resource Center are VERY nice.



They are so nice I want to go back next year and the year after. This summer I learned how an office business works. If I could, I would work there full time. At the ASK Family Resource Center it is very

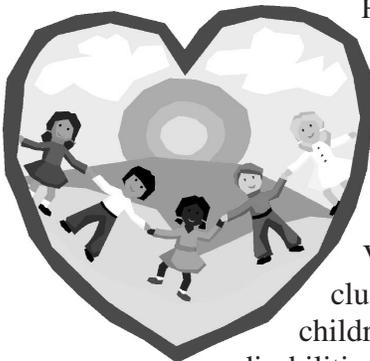
FUN and your days go by so fast when you are having fun and working!

Even now, on my days off of school, I go down and help out. I like seeing all of the staff and it is a fun place to volunteer.

## Iowa Activities for Youth with Disabilities

Being part of a community is important for everyone, and getting involved in community activities can really help youth of all abilities engage and make friends outside of school. Many organizations and programs actively reach out to youth with disabilities and know how to provide supports or accommodations they might need. Other groups or programs may need your help—either as a parent or as a young person who wants to get involved—to learn how they can make their programs more welcoming and accessible or how they can best meet the unique needs of youth people who want to be a part of what they do.

Here are just a few ideas for organizations or activities you might want to explore—if none of these seem like the right fit, maybe they will spark an idea that will lead you to your community connection:



**VSA Arts of Iowa**  
[www.iowa.gov/vsa](http://www.iowa.gov/vsa)  
 (515) 281-5839

VSA Arts of Iowa has an exclusive dedication to assisting children, youth, and adults with disabilities and "at risk" conditions to improve their learning, employment and life skills through art based education and programs.

**Special Olympics** [www.soiowa.org](http://www.soiowa.org) 515-986-5520

Year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

**Best Buddies** [www.bestbuddiesiowa.org](http://www.bestbuddiesiowa.org) 515-282-6218

For middle or high school, college, online, and adult citizens with intellectual disabilities to be matched with their same age peers. Iowa has many high school chapters and needs to start some at the middle school level.

**Boy Scouts** [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)  
1-800-999-SCOUT(7268)

While there are Scouting units/groups composed exclusively of youth with disabilities, experience has shown that Scouting works best when all Scouts with disabilities are part of an inclusive unit/group. Many local councils have established their own advisory committees for youth with disabilities and special needs while others have professional staff members responsible for the program for Scouts with disabilities. Contact your local council about opportunities for your youth.

**Girl Scouts** [www.girlscoutsiowa.org](http://www.girlscoutsiowa.org) 800-342-8389

In an accepting and nurturing environment, girls build courage, confidence and character for success in the real world. In partnership with committed adults, girls develop qualities that will serve them all their lives - like strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth.

**Easter Seals - Camp Sunnyside** [www.eastersealsia.org](http://www.eastersealsia.org)  
515-289-1933

Boating and swimming, horseback riding, campfires, arts and crafts, sleeping under the stars, making s'mores and much more! Campers will gain independence, self-confidence, old friends and new! Camp Sunnyside offers programs for campers of all ages and abilities.

**Camp Courageous** [www.campcourageous.org](http://www.campcourageous.org)  
319-465-5916

Camp Courageous is a year-round recreational and respite care facility for individuals of all ages with disabilities located in Monticello, Iowa. Contact [info@campcourageous.org](mailto:info@campcourageous.org) for more information.

**Miracle League Challenger Division Baseball**  
[www.kiwanismiracleleague.org](http://www.kiwanismiracleleague.org)

The Kiwanis Miracle League at Principal Park in Des Moines allows children from 5-18 years with a wide range of disabilities to play ball. The field is made of rubberized turf that prevents injuries and can be navigated with wheelchairs. It is the first in Iowa, hopefully with more to follow.

**4-H** [www.extension.iastate.edu/4H](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H)

Through project work, club activities, and individual learning, with the assistance of caring adults, 4-H members develop their citizenship, leadership, communication, and other life skills. 4-H club membership is open to all youth in grades 4 – 12, with opportunities for youth of all abilities. 4-H programs are available in every county in Iowa, and county extension staff will be glad to talk with you about how your child can participate in and benefit from 4-H membership.

*Start your own social group or club focused on your child's favorite activity in your neighborhood. Consider rotating activities like bowling, card or board games, movie night, outings to museums or the zoo, cooking or athletic activities, etc. Meet weekly or monthly at someone's house, a local restaurant or park.*

*Also, check with your local recreational center and children's museums for programs.*

## **EXTRA OR ESSENTIAL? ARE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES REALLY EXTRA?**

by *Connie B. Fanselow*

What do you remember best about your school days? Do you remember the problems on your final algebra test or the thrilling basketball game your team won by a long shot at the final buzzer? Do you remember the finer points of comma placement or the sleepover party when you and your friends stayed up all night talking and

giggling? Obviously, what you learned in class is important, but the school activities you participated in and friendships you made also played a huge role in helping you discover who you are as a person and making school a positive, welcoming experience for you. Not to mention those experiences were a whole lot of fun. The moments you

remember are the ones that still have meaning because they connected you to other students, to your teachers, and to your school. I hope you do remember something of what you learned in algebra and know (generally speaking) where to place a comma, but I bet it's the memories of the ball games and sleepovers that make you smile.

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Extracurricular activities are a big part of the overall school experience. They often provide critical motivation for students who struggle in the classroom, and they are packed with educational value of their own. Participation in extracurricular activities help youth:

- discover their talents
- explore their interests
- try new things
- improve their skills
- learn new skills
- make friends and build social networks in school
- meet new people and make friends outside of school
- learn to be part of a group or team effort
- develop a sense of belonging
- gain leadership skills
- work on pre-employment skills
- become involved in service learning
- prepare to be better citizens
- form the basis for life-long recreational pursuits

Involvement in extracurricular activities has been linked to improvement in academic achievement and to better post-school outcomes for youth. Building relationships, pursuing interests, and being involved in activities outside the classroom are an integral part of healthy development for all youth. Maybe we should start calling them “Essential-Curriculars.”

### Participation by Students with Disabilities

Just as children and youth with disabilities often need accommodations, modifications, and individualized supports to fully participate in the classroom, they also often need the same kind of supports for extracurricular activities. Two federal laws provide protections that may entitle students with disabilities of all types to receive those needed supports. Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (the IDEA), the federal law that governs special education, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, require that eligible students have an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities with non-disabled students “to the maximum extent appropriate” to the needs

of the student with disabilities. This requirement indicates that while the student’s right to participate may be naturally limited by his or her own disability-related needs, it must not be limited by other factors, such as physical barriers, or the need for special supports, supervision, or accommodations.

Schools have an obligation to offer students with disabilities genuine opportunities to participate in all school activities—those held during the school day and those held before and after school, as well as those held at the school or in other locations. School activities include lunch, recess, transportation, athletics, band, music, plays, field trips, and recreational activities, and school sponsored groups and clubs.

If a student has an IEP, the IEP must include consideration of extracurricular participation, specifically:

- A statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum *and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities*; and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and non-disabled children.
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

These provisions clearly indicate that the IDEA anticipates all students will participate in extracurricular activities, just as all students are expected to make progress in the general education curriculum. Requiring an explanation in the IEP when a student’s participation is limited helps ensure that the limitations are due to the disability, not due to other factors such as cost, convenience, or discriminatory treatment.

While there is no separate “extracurricular section” on the IEP, it is important for parents, educators, and the student to talk about what activities the student is interested in and how to make the connections to facilitate involvement. IEP teams have a lot of ground to cover, so it helps if students and their parents come to the meeting with ideas. It is the duty of the school to ensure that opportunities are available to stu-

dents with disabilities, and it is the job of the IEP team to help the student decide what activities are best for him or her and plan the supports that are needed to fully participate.

For students with 504 Plans, the team involved in creating and monitoring the plan should address any accommodation needs for extracurricular involvement as part of the plan development process.

### Making Activities Welcoming to All Students

It may be easy to just assume that everyone knows school events and activities are for all students, but think about whether students with disabilities, especially those who spend part or all of their day in a setting other than the general education classroom get the message that they are included. If you advertise an event or group, describe it as “accessible” and “welcoming to everyone.” Make a special effort to communicate the information about events and invitations to extend them to students with disabilities. Be very clear that they are welcome and that they can ask for and receive reasonable accommodations to participate.

- Do you need to use different methods or be creative to make the information accessible to everyone?
- Are special education students invited to assemblies or orientations to introduce them to new groups or activities?
- Are posters or flyers hung in special education classrooms and resource rooms?
- Do notices routinely indicate how to request accommodations?

Consider providing disability awareness training to school personnel and the student body so they will understand and develop the habit of planning for, reaching out to, and including students with disabilities in all activities. Most people don’t intend to exclude, but if they do not have a level of disability awareness, they may not realize that they are doing things in a way that is insensitive to the needs of students with disabilities and their families.

### Making Activities Accessible to All Students

Plan ahead and infuse disability awareness in all aspects of your planning. Be prepared

for participants using wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches to attend activities and events. If the activity is inside, stairs or other obstacles may present a barrier. If the activity is outside, grass or gravel surfaces can be very difficult for wheelchair users and others with mobility issues.

- Are their physical barriers like stairs? Is there alternate access?
- Is the building, room, or area accessible? If not, can an accessible location be identified instead?
- Are there accessible restrooms?
- Is there appropriate wheelchair seating that is not segregated?
- Is transportation available for wheelchair users?
- Are there sidewalks or other hard surfaces to use?

Think about alternative methods of communication. Be prepared to provide sign language interpreters if requested. Be prepared to share information and materials in alternate formats (for example: Braille, signs with universal symbols, web pages that support text readers, movies or films with closed-captioning). Don't wait until someone asks to find out where these kinds of services and supports are available in your community. Do your homework ahead of time and you will know who you can call if the need arises. Be prepared to respond to requests for accommodations in a timely manner. It doesn't do much good to offer a sign language interpreter next month for an activity that's scheduled for next week. Be aware of accessibility issues when planning and scheduling events.

Make sure someone is identified as responsible for accepting accommodation requests and acting on them. Get the word out so that everyone is aware of the process and knows who they should contact. Build a team of volunteers and service providers you can call on when extra support is needed to provide requested accommodations. Provide volunteers with any training they will need.

Learn about and practice universal design principles. Universal design is the concept that environments, products, and communication can be designed in ways that make them useful and attractive to people with diverse abilities. Universal design concepts can be applied to almost anything, and ben-

efit everyone, not just people with disabilities. As an example, building homes and apartments with wider doorways and using lever handles instead of conventional round doorknobs may be essential to people with mobility impairments, but they are also convenient and attractive features for any prospective user. Everyone benefits when products and services are easily adaptable, not unnecessarily complex, and designed to be responsive to individual needs and preferences.

If you don't think about and plan for accessibility and acceptance in all activities, it sends the message to children and youth with disabilities that they really aren't welcome even if you say they are because you haven't taken the practical steps necessary to really include them.

### Thinking About the Student Perspective

Remember how desperately important it was to "fit in" in middle school and high school? All kids want to fit in and be accepted, so think about how you can help make sure kids with disabilities have the opportunities and supports they need to participate without causing them to "stand out" instead of "fitting in." Rather than starting new activities for kids with disabilities, do some brainstorming and figure out how to make existing activities more disability friendly. Work on developing both cooperative and competitive activities that can appeal to students with a wide range of skills. Ask students what they want and what they need to make that happen. Give them the opportunity to tell you what they don't want too.

Here are some important "wants" and "don't wants" that youth with disabilities have expressed:

- They don't want others to make assumptions about their interests
- They want to be able to choose what activities they will participate in
- They don't want therapists or other professionals involved in student activities
- They don't want parents around unless the parents of all students are included
- If they need the support of an adult during a peer activity, they want it to be limited to the absolute minimum
- They want to be able to choose who will provide support in social settings

- They want time alone with their friends
- They don't want to be seen as "different"

### Knowing the "Don'ts" for Effective Inclusion

Don't place students with disabilities with younger kids because you think they may be at a similar developmental level. Students who are developmentally delayed still need to build relationships with same age peers and engage in age appropriate activities.

Don't segregate students with disabilities by providing separate seating or separate transportation. It's just not a field trip if 25 of your classmates are on the big yellow bus and you are riding behind in the van. (Now, sometimes health and safety concerns may have to override social concerns, but make sure not to segregate kids if there is a safe, inclusive choice.) If there is limited wheelchair seating at an event, make sure other students can also sit with the student using the wheelchair.

Don't require parents to accompany the student for trips or outings. There may be times when a parent is the right choice, but don't make it a practice, and don't tell parents their child can only participate in an activity if the parent accompanies the student unless you are going to require all parents to escort their children.

### Is it Extra or is it Essential?

Whether you are a parent, an educator, or just someone who still remembers how important the social aspects of school life are to a young person and how much you learned from your participation in extracurricular activities, you can make a difference. Think about disability inclusion in all school, work, church, community, and recreational activities, and do your part to help make any activities you are associated with welcoming and accessible for all.

That doesn't mean every young person should play an instrument, or be on a sports team, or star in the class play, or work on the school newspaper, but it does mean every student should have the opportunity to pursue the activities he or she chooses. Making friends, acquiring skills, pursuing personal interests, and building connections at school and in the community shouldn't be

# Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa



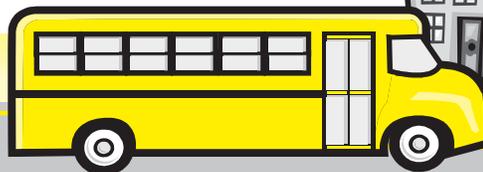
**Education begins with a good IDEA.**

Disability Information, Advocacy and Technical Assistance

Ph: (515) 243-1713 • Toll Free: (800) 450-8667

Fax: (515) 243-1902 • TDD: (800) 735-2942

✉ info@askresource.org -- 🌐 <http://www.askresource.org>



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“extra” for any young person – they should be nothing less than ESSENTIAL.

**For more information see:**

“Making Extracurricular Activities Inclusive: An Accessibility Guide for Campus Programmers,” by Chris Gaulin and Jennifer Dunn, National Educational Association of Disabled Students (Canada), March 2005, available at: [http://www.neads.ca/en/about/projects/inclusion/guide/inclusion\\_reference\\_guide.pdf](http://www.neads.ca/en/about/projects/inclusion/guide/inclusion_reference_guide.pdf)

“Tips on Developing Extracurricular Activities,” Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative, Transition Topics A-Z (extracurricular), available at: [http://www.wsti.org/transition\\_topics.php](http://www.wsti.org/transition_topics.php)

“Beyond the Classroom,” by John S. Allen, Clinical Law Programs, University of Iowa, available at:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/infotech/BeyondtheClassroom.htm>

“The Principles of Universal Design,” The Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, available at:

[http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about\\_ud/udprinciplestext.htm](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm)

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