

Fed Express

Summer, 2004

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Fed Express

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Summer is Here!

Schools out! Sun's out! Time for sleeping in, playing and summer fun. This is the time of year many parents want to take their child off prescriptions that were needed for school. STOP!! Do not change or alter your child's prescription without first consulting with your child's physician. If you have concerns about any medication, side effects, and/or changing dosage, always check with your pediatrician before and thoroughly discuss your interests and concerns. Often, this discussion can take place over the telephone without charge.

Remember: diet, sleep, sugar, pop, and exercise can greatly impact your child's behavior. Sudden changes can cause behavior differences in youth. For many children who are used to a routine, a sudden change can also create confusion and frustration, which impacts the entire family. Keep your child's schedule as normal as possible without sudden routine, diet, and/or medicinal changes.

Some handy items to keep by the door are sunscreen, visors, sandals/shoes and water bottles. If you have an area that you can keep these items together where kids can get items themselves, they are more likely to use them. All of these items also will affect the child's health, safety, and behavior. Believe it or not, dehydration occurs easily in children and can be affected by medications.

Just a couple of tips to help your summer days go by smoothly.

Family Involvement

The Idaho Federation staff and board works hard to ensure the family voice in all aspects of services and policy making when it comes to services for families with a child with a SED. Across the state, efforts are in place to recruit families/parents/youth who believe families should be involved in the decision making for their child. Parent support groups are getting established and we encourage each and every parent/professional to join us in building strong support groups in all regions of Idaho. Family involvement is key to successful outcomes for children with a SED. The Federation has developed a definition of family involvement which we promote throughout Idaho. Here is the official IFFCMH philosophy:

- To provide leadership in the field of children's mental health and develop necessary human and financial resources to meet its goals.
- To ensure the rights to full citizenship, support and access to community-based services for all children and youth with emotional, behavioral or mental disorders and their families.



Welcome to New Staff

Welcome goes out to our new **Key Family Contact, Ms. Trish Wheeler**. Trish has an extensive background in working with families, persons with disabilities, training and program development. Trish has a Bachelors degree in Journalism and a minor in Psychology and completed graduate work in communications and anthropology. She is a parent who knows the challenges families face when needing services for their child. Trish will be working with Regional Councils, establishing Family Partner groups throughout the state, as well as serve as a core member on the Building On Each Others Strengths team. Look forward to meeting Trish soon in your area. *(Contact her via e-mail at twheeler@idffcmh.org)*

The IFFCMH also welcomes **Ms. Kathryn Gillenwater as our Youth Coordinator**. Kathryn is excited about the opportunity to work with youth and help establish youth groups across the state. Kathryn has a Bachelors Degree in Communication with an emphasis in social psychology. Her passion is working with youth and she comes with some great skills in communications and high tech to help us put together some youth user friendly materials. Kathryn will be visiting your area soon, so please extend a welcome to Kathryn Gillenwater as the Youth Coordinator for the System of Care Cooperative Agreement. *(Contact her via e-mail at kgillenwater@idffcmh.org)*

Family Partner Meetings—You are Invited!

The IFFCMH, in partnership with the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, currently sponsors two support and information groups for family members who have a child with an emotional, behavioral or mental disorder.

In Northern Idaho, the meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Athol City Hall, 30355 3rd Street. These meetings are coordinated by Lisa Rivera, the Family Specialist for Region 1. For information, call Lisa at 683-3070 or 699-3065.

In Southwest Idaho, the Family Partner meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month, at various locations in the Meridian area

(check our website at www.idffcmh.org for details). Nikki Tangen, Family Specialist for Regions 3 & 4 organizes these meetings. For more information, call Nikki at 713-2424.



Children are welcome at these meetings, but parents are responsible for their care.

These meetings are fun and informative. Join with other parents and be part of the Family Partners in your area.

If there isn't a Family Partner support and information group in your area and you would like help getting one started, please contact Trish Wheeler, our Key Family Contact at 433-8845 or 800-905-3436.

Rx for Free—A New Organization in Treasure Valley

Prescriptions For Free is a new non-profit serving the Treasure Valley. PFF works with over 200 pharmaceutical manufacturers and can offer assistance for acquiring certain prescriptions. If

you are interested, contact PFF at 2645 N. Cole Rd, Suite M, Boise, ID 83704, (208) 376-2114. The website is: www.prescriptionsforfree.com.

Training Complete

The Federation recently completed its “Families Matter” trainings across the state. We are very pleased with the evaluations received.

The IFFCMH also had opportunity to provide a workshop at the Idaho Children’s Mental Health Conference in May. On both days, the room was filled with parents, professionals, educators, care providers and interested youth. Again, evaluations concluded the information to be very useful and encouraged more such training.

In each training, we asked the participants to write down a question or two they wanted to ensure was answered. The most common questions included:

- ◇ How do families access services?
- ◇ How do children get referred to a local/regional council?

- ◇ How do I get an assessment for my child?
- ◇ How do we get the school to do an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
- ◇ Who can attend regional and local council meetings?

These questions and many more can be answered at the Families Matter trainings in your area.

If you didn’t make the training this year, be sure to join us next year. Check our website (www.idffcmh.org) for up-coming events.

The IFFCMH is proud to be a partner with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare in providing training to families and professionals in ways to work with children with an SED. If you know of anyone who needs information, encourage them to contact the IFFCMH.

The Phoenix Rises One Year Later

Across the State, the IFFCMH staff is working to help and train families and professionals in advocacy, involvement, and partnering when it comes to services for children with a SED. Long hours, thousands of miles, and tons of paperwork are logged in by the IFFCMH team.

The IFFCMH experienced an almost deadly setback, but began a re-growth approximately one year ago. I came on board to review, clean-up, re-group and re-build. To date, I am proud to say, we’re back, stronger and more determined than before.

Through the faith and support of talented IDHW staff, the IFFCMH contract with IDHW, the Federal Statewide Family Network, and very talented peer mentor helps, the IFFCMH ensured

grant funding continuation. Many thanks to the staff at IDHW: Jody Carpenter, Chuck Halligan, Ross Edmunds, and Lynn Richter for their continuing partnership with the Federation.

Quietly in the trenches, our Administrative Assistant, Judy Repp, came on board, rolled up her sleeves and was determined to help alleviate a disaster left by IFFCMH’s previous staff.

I salute everyone who kept the faith and helps us today—my sincerest appreciation to all and I look forward to another very productive year.



Salute—
Marlyss Meyer
Administrative Director

“Children need permission to make mistakes and not be called “bad” for it...and children need to know that they are loved and trusted!
(Kirshner 1996)

Back by Popular Demand

Oh, oh, typo! We need to let you know that we make mistakes, too. It's so nice to be human. If you liked our Dr. Suess on IEP, please know it should read, "I do NOT like these IEP's," so for those of you who saved it and want to share Here is the corrected version. Enjoy!

Dr. Suess on IEP's

I do not like these IEP's,
I do not like them, jeeze Louise!
We test, we check, we plan, we
meet,
But nothing ever seems complete.
Would you, could you like the form?
I do not like the form I see,
Not page one, not two, not three.
Another change, a brand new box
I think we have all lost our rocks.
Could we all meet here or there?
We cannot all fit anywhere.
Not in a room, not in a hall,
There seems to be no space at all.
Could you, would you meet again?
I cannot meet again next week.
No lunch, no prop, please hear me speak.
No, not at dusk. No not at dawn.
At 4 p.m., I should be gone.
Could you hear while all speak out?
Would you write the words they shout?
I could not hear, I would not write,
This does not need to be a fight.
Sign here, date there, mark this, check that,
Beware the student's advocate.
If you will let me be,
I will try again, you'll see!
I almost like these IEP's, I think I'll write 6,003.
And I will practice day and night
Until they say, "You got it right."

Reprinted from Indiana Family Action Network



The only people who can make a difference are the ones that get involved. Please find out how you can become involved in working with communities and families of children with a SED.

For Your Reading List

Two great books for parents who medicate their children and still have questions are: "Should I Medicate My Child?" and "Running on Ritalin." Author Lawrence H. Diller (published by Basic Books) does a fantastic job addressing questions parents frequently ask. These books are designed to help parents make informed choices and do not replace treatment by a physician or other licensed health care providers. The IFFCMH does not support any one particular method, but seeks to provide information to help families make wise choices for their child.

We hope this will help answer some of your questions.

Mark Your Calendar and Register Early



The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health 17th Annual Conference is scheduled for December 9 - 12, 2004 in Washington, DC. The theme is: "Resiliency – Hope, Choice, and Self Determination for Children, Families and Communities." These conferences are very informative and filled with expertise in many areas. For more information, please check out the website at www.ffcmh.org. The conferences fill up fast, so anyone interested should register early. Hope to see you there!

Early Recognition and Treatment of Behavior Disturbances

While growing up, it is normal for children to react to stresses in their environments – home, school, peer pressure, social interactions, even playtime can put various stress challenges on the calmest child. In addition, many children experience poverty, abuse, deprivation, and/or take on the role of an adult caring for their siblings. Some children even have to face the loss of a loved one or deal with the stigma and embarrassment of an incarcerated parent. Many children are experiencing foster homes or living with an elderly relative. Nature itself creates challenges for children as they shift from one developmental stage to another with hormones racing and bodies changing. As adults, we often are faced with our own stresses and forget the challenges our children face.

Albeit, these various environmental factors can impact a child's mental, emotional and behavioral health, they do not cause mental illness. Early onset brain disorders are biologically based. A chemical disturbance in the brain controls their behavior and undermines the child's ability to cope and address their real world. Even though environmental stress can trigger the onset of mental illness and make the experience worse for the child, it is the chemical imbalance that causes the mental illness.

The challenge for the medical profession and families is identifying which set of behavior disturbances are which. Can the child's behavior be addressed through family counseling or does the behavior represent symptoms of a brain disorder

requiring close psychiatric treatment and monitoring? Only a qualified child psychiatrist (*NOT* psychologist or counselor) should make the determination. Medicating a child whose problems can be effectively remedied by therapy alone is as clinically misguided as denying medication to the child whose condition cannot improve without it.

Brain disorders in children are often not easily recognized and children are often diverted into counseling rather than medical treatment. Any child with persistent behavioral difficulties should have a psychiatric evaluation in order to verify clinical features that may have diagnostic significance in intensity, duration and level of distress. Children with a serious mental illness suffer constant, unrelieved misery. Therapy can (and often should) be helpful to the child and family but may have little impact on the severe illness-driven behaviors because of the chemical disturbances in their brains. Parents should watch for early signs of severity and disability to they can speed the referral to a qualified psychiatrist.

To find a qualified psychiatrist in your area, contact your pediatrician for a referral. Before taking your child to any medical practitioner, contact them and ask the questions you need to feel comfortable taking your child in. For more information or a list of psychiatrists in your area, contact the Idaho Board of Medicine (1-800-333-0073) which is the licensing agent in Idaho.

Please show your support of the IFFCMH by donating today!
TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION FOR IFFCMH

As a non-profit, the success of the Federation comes from donors like you.

Name(s) _____

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Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
3173 N. Cole Rd.
Boise, ID 83704
www.idffcmh.org
208-433-8845 Fax 208-433-8337 Toll Free 800-905-3436

Opportunities

FAMILY SPECIALIST (Part Time Contract)

Lewiston

Idaho Falls

Pocatello

- * Help in the development, implementation and supervision of an effective regional System of Care in Idaho. Facilitate a family support network, community outreach and promote family advocacy efforts for children and youth with emotional, behavioral or mental disorders and their families. Assume a leadership role, provide trainings, develop strong community partnerships, develop support groups, oversee Family Partners, participate and serve on boards and committees as needed. Solicit membership and involvement in IFFCMH.
- * Must be a family member of a child who is/has received services for mental health related issues. Maximum of 15 hrs per week, \$10/hour. Must have good skills in negotiation, public relations and training. Ability to work independently and travel as necessary.
- * To apply, send a resume by e-mail to idffcmh@idffcmh.org or by fax to 208-433-8337 or mail to 3173 N. Cole Rd., Boise, ID 83704.

FAMILY PARTNERS (Volunteer)

Throughout Idaho

- * Provide information to find and access resources, build confidence in those mentored and supported, teach strategies to deal with difficult situations. May serve on boards and committees, provide trainings, and establish or participate in support groups.
- * Must be a parent with experience with emotional, mental and/or behavior problems and have a desire to help other families. Guidance, training and support provided. Time commitment is based on availability, interest and community need.
- * To apply, call the office at 1-800-905-3436 or go to our website at www.idffcmh.org and download an application.

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