

EARLY INTERVENTION

FOCUS TOPIC: WHAT NEXT? TRANSITION PLANNING

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- From Here to???—The Transition Process
- Family Focus
- Conceptual Framework
- Family Networking
- Family Resources

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Family Focus



Early Intervention In Georgia

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

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Family Focus by Karen Addams, BCW Parent Educator

Transitioning. What a scary thought! Another change - just when we're getting used to one thing, it's time to move on to another.

Of course, transitions occur throughout life. They are the natural changes we experience as we grow, age and mature. Transitions can be joyful, enriching experiences (marriage, jobs, parenthood) and/or sorrowful, maturing life-changes (death of a parent/spouse). But transitions for our children (preschool, elementary school, adulthood) are just plain scary. Not to the child, but to us - the parents. If our child has special needs, transitioning and the uncertainty of what lies ahead seems especially scary.

I mean, really ... you've just become accustomed to terms like BCW, IFSP, PT, OT, SLP and natural environments when you start hearing about IEPs (Individualized Education Programs). And your service coordinator keeps saying that word:

"TRANSITION." And you're thinking things like, "He's only two. How can I know what he'll be ready for in another year?" or "She's just a baby. How could I possibly think about sending her off to school?" You know you should be thinking about it. You know your child will turn three and you know you (and your child) will have to move on, to make a change, to transition into a new program. "But, do I have to think about it now?"

Yes. Start thinking about it now. Start looking into what appropriate programs and services are available for your child. These may include private programs, home-schooling, Head Start and/or the public school system. Visit the programs. Take advantage of your service coordinator's experience - let her help you through this transition. Ask lots and lots of questions and read as

much information as you can about your child's educational rights and your rights as the Parent or Legal Guardian. Most importantly, talk to other parents! Join the BCW Families internet discussion group (email BCWFamilies-subscribe@yahogroups.com or visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BCWFamilies>) or talk with a Parent Educator or another parent - transition is always a favorite subject! Ask the programs you are interested in to refer you to other parents in the program. Plan to go and check out the public and private options available in your county.

Fear of transitioning is a normal parental feeling. It will occur over and over again as your children grow and their needs change. The important thing to remember is that ... being
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"Start thinking about it now. Start looking into what appropriate programs and services are available for your child." Karen Addams

From here to ...? The Transition Process

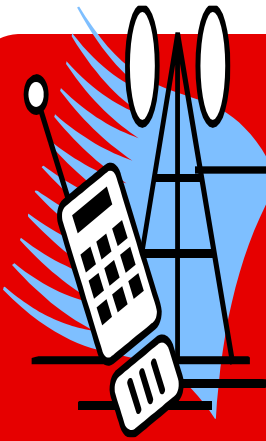
by James Ernest, Ph.D., BCW Technical Assistance (TA) Unit

Transition is often a stressful time for families in Babies Can't Wait (BCW). Early intervention research shows that families tend to be happy with the supports/services they receive in early intervention programs but worry about what will happen next. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),

eligibility for BCW supports/services ends on a child's third birthday. When a child reaches three, a variety of options are available to families. Although BCW can't provide further supports/services, BCW professionals work with families to make sure that they are aware of these options for their child. In an

effort to help families, the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) have put together a booklet, *Transition at Age 3: Steps for Success*. The BCW Service Coordinator (SC) should provide each family with a copy. The booklet

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BCW Families: GETTING CONNECTED

Parent to Parent
of Georgia, Inc.

Parent Resources

- ☑ Central Directory for the Babies Can't Wait Program
- ☑ Parent Peer Support
- ☑ Special Needs Database
- ☑ Roadmap to Services
- ☑ Disability Literature Library
- ☑ Online Chat With An Expert
- ☑ Spanish Services

Parent to Parent
of Georgia, Inc.
1-800-229-2038
www.parenttoparentofga.org

FAMILY FOCUS

Getting Connected: Parent to Parent of Georgia

by Debra Tucker, Executive Director of Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc.

The Central Directory for the Babies Can't Wait Program

Caring for a family member who has a disability is an experience that few parents anticipate and plan for. When parents first learn their child has a disability, they are in the process of resolving a difficult life crisis, often without full knowledge of or access to necessary support and information. They must not only cope with the typical demands of family life, but also with a host of disability-related issues that accompany the transition from the non-disability world to the world of disability. The problem is that parents and professionals do not always have easy access to support and information. Parents must learn the languages of the medical, legal, financial, and special education worlds. Parents are entering a whole new arena that can be very confusing. Fortunately, Georgia recognized this, and the Babies Can't Wait Program partnered with Parent to Parent of Georgia to assist families in bridging this gap.

Parent to Parent of Georgia began in 1981 as a support network for families raising children with disabilities or special health care needs. Our mission is simple—to provide emotional and informational support to Georgia families affected by disabilities. With the support of Babies Can't Wait, we assist more than 20,000 families each year. And we won't consider our work done until we reach every family that needs support...

So how can we help you? Here's a summary of the services we provide:

Parent Peer Support: Do you want to talk to someone who has already walked in

your shoes? Someone who has shared your same experiences and feelings? Parent to Parent maintains a database of over 2200 volunteer Supporting Parents willing to provide support to you. We can match parents raising a child with the same disability, in the same region of the state, or even parents who have shared similar life experiences. Just call our toll free number, 1-800-229-2038, or visit our website (www.parenttoparentofga.org) to request assistance, and a regional coordinator will start the process for you!

Want to offer support to other parents? You can become one of our Supporting Parents simply by completing a form. Just call our toll free number, 1-800-229-2038, or visit our website (www.parenttoparentofga.org) for more information.

Special Needs Database: Not sure where to go to find resources? Parent to Parent of Georgia's Special Needs Database is your "One Stop" for information! This database contains over 5,000 resources organized into 150 categories, covering the entire state of Georgia. You can access this database two ways: either on our website or through a regional coordinator (by calling our toll free number).

If you know what type of service you are looking for (say for instance, inclusive childcare), you can easily use the database on our website! We have a new search page, which allows you to do basic or advance searches. And once you get your results, you can select whether you would like to print all of them, or pick and choose just the ones that interest you.

Not sure exactly what you are looking for, or perhaps feel you need help with

EVERYTHING? Just call the toll free telephone number and one of our regional coordinators will assist you. All of our coordinators are parents of children with special needs, so they know firsthand not only how important your time is, but how important finding the right resources is! They can do database searches for you and send you the results. They can also provide immediate answers and assistance to problems. We consider our coordinators your first line of support, and are more than happy to assist you!

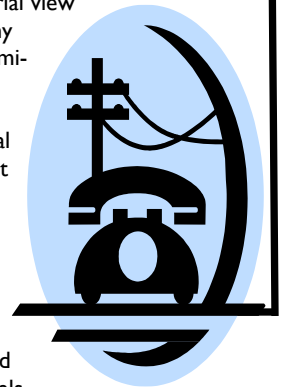
Roadmap to Services: In 2004, Parent to Parent of Georgia unveiled the Roadmap to Services on our website.

This pictorial view of the many systems families raising children with special needs must navigate has received numerous accolades from both parents and professionals.

Parents can find links to a wealth of information simply by clicking on the buildings! If you have never visited this part of our website, you should make a point of checking this out! (www.parenttoparentofga.org/roadmap)

Disability Literature Library: Parent to Parent maintains a disability library containing literature on over 1,200 disabilities and medical conditions. We pride ourselves on finding information that is easy to read, and easy to understand! If you are looking for information on your child's diagnosis, just give us a call and we'll get this sent out to you.

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Provider's View by Debra Pileggi, Early Intervention Specialist

Transition

Within the Babies Can't Wait (BCW) system, transition is an ongoing process that begins as soon as a child enters. Preparation for transition begins at intake as the service coordinator introduces BCW to the parents/guardians. This information is to aid parents in preparation for the time when their child is three years old and no longer eligible for supports within the BCW system or when the child leaves BCW for any reason. At this first meeting, the service coordinator informs the family about the BCW program and what supports/services will look like within a family-centered framework. She/he informs the family about system policies, procedures, and timelines that are in place to provide for transition to other community services.

At the first Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, the service coordinator introduces the family to a variety of ideas for possible supports/services for their child

after 3 years old. I have seen that it is valuable to discuss transition repeatedly so that the families understand what will be happening within BCW and what to expect when their child is three years old. Many times families are dealing with so many issues around the health and learning of their child that it is difficult to digest everything they are being told. It is the task of the service coordinator to ensure that the family is familiar with the services within their community.

During each meeting with the family, the service coordinator will educate the family on the transition process; briefly at first then later in greater detail. Other team members will also talk with the family about their priorities for future services. The service coordinator will give a copy of the booklet *Transition at Age 3: Steps for Success* to the family. It is important that the family and service coordinator and/or other BCW professionals on the team talk about the book so that the family can ask any questions

they may have at the time.

As the child nears 24 to 30 months of age, the service coordinator will approach the family about contacting the local school system. At this time the family, service coordinator, and other team members will explore any and all ideas that are appropriate for the child to have a smooth and seamless transition. If the family desires, a formal transition meeting will be held with the local school system from 9 months to at least 90 days before the child's third birthday. If the family does not wish to meet with the school, a transition meeting will still be held with the family, service coordinator, and other appropriate professionals. At this time the service coordinator will provide specific information about other community options that the family may want to consider. It is helpful if other team members are also at this meeting because of their relationship with and knowledge about

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"During each meeting with the family, the service coordinator will educate the family on the transition process: briefly at first then later in greater detail."
Debra Pileggi, Early Intervention Specialist

From here to ...? The Transition Process cont.

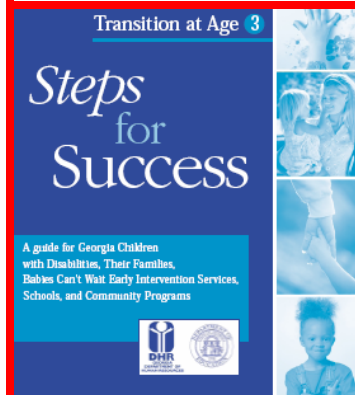
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is also available on the web at <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/publications.asp> in English and Spanish. In short, here's what BCW will be doing ...

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Transition Planning

It is never too soon to start thinking and planning for the future. Children may enter BCW when they are 2 months old or when they are 30 months old. If a family will be with BCW for the better part of three years, then they have plenty of time to think about the different options available to them when their child turns three. If the family's time with BCW is short, then most of the help that BCW provides should be directed toward providing options and information about transitioning. Discussion

<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/publications.asp>



about transition should be a part of every IFSP meeting from the time the child enrolls in BCW, regardless of the child's age.

Ongoing Transition Planning

When a child is somewhere between 24 to 33 months of age, the

BCW SC will further explore transition options with the family, and may assist in scheduling potential program visits. This is a time for those who work closely with the child and family to discuss family priorities and explore how community options match those priorities. This often includes considering and visiting programs within the local school system, as well as community programs. The types of questions that are useful for families to ask themselves and share with the BCW professionals are: What would you like to see happen with your child? What are some important pieces of information that will help determine the best community placement for your child? Have you considered family child-care, Head Start, a private preschool, the public preschool, the home or combinations of settings as options for your child? If you visit pro-

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From here to ...? The Transition Process cont.

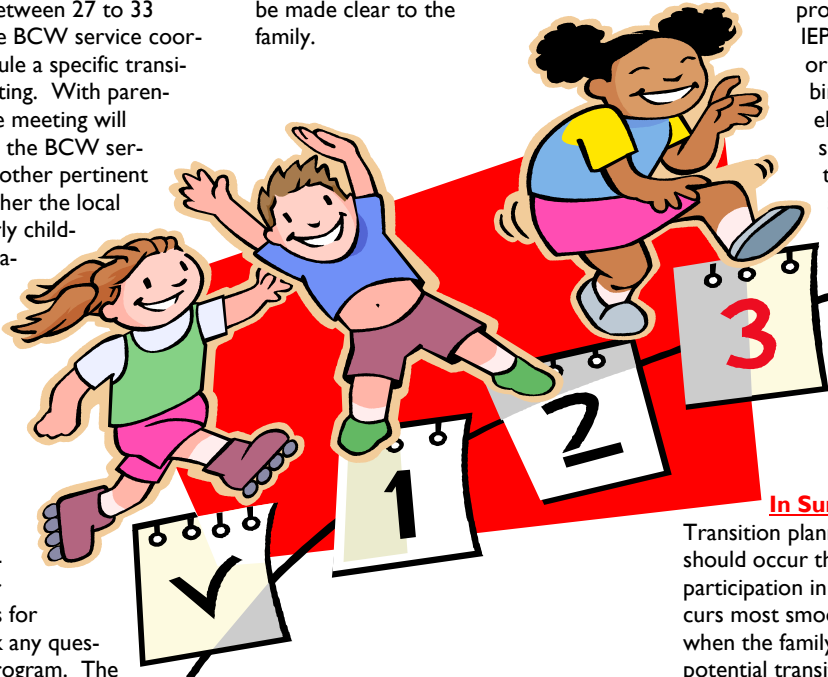
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grams, what questions do you have for the program staff? Finally, do you know about enrollment procedures for the various programs you are considering?

The Transition Planning Meeting

When a child is between 27 to 33 months of age, the BCW service coordinator will schedule a specific transition planning meeting. With parental permission, the meeting will include the family, the BCW service coordinator, other pertinent BCW staff and either the local school district early childhood special education (Part B) personnel or representatives from potential community placement settings. During the meeting, the family will have the opportunity to share their hopes and dreams for their child and ask any questions about the program. The family and the rest of the team will then determine a transition plan. If the family wishes to pursue a public school district option, they will sign the appropriate forms and the school district will initiate the "determination of eligibility" process. Although the child has been

eligible for BCW services, he/she will have to go through a different eligibility process to determine eligibility for school services. During the transition planning meeting, program differences applying not only to eligibility but also affecting the types of supports/services the family and child will receive should be made clear to the family.

between 33-36 months old, and (3) a meeting to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for an eligible child when the child is between 34 and 36 months. The IEP is similar to the IFSP in some ways as it lists a child's present level of functioning, the child's goals, the people who will provide services, etc. The IEP needs to be in place on or prior to the child's third birthday. If the child is not eligible for early childhood special education services through the local public school district, a transition plan will be developed linking the family/child to other available community programs/resources.



In Summary

Transition planning is something that should occur throughout the family's participation in BCW. Transition occurs most smoothly and successfully when the family is knowledgeable about potential transition options and feels comfortable making decisions for their family. BCW can aid in this process by helping the family identify and access their options. If you have questions, make sure you ask ... transitions are a part of life and a family is the one constant in their child's life.

School District Eligibility

If a family chooses the public school district option, the following steps will occur: (1) an evaluation by the local school system when the child is between 33-36 months old, (2) a meeting to determine eligibility when the child is

Family Focus cont.

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positive and proactive will work better than the "pull the covers up over the head and go back to sleep" approach. Besides, your service coordinator is going to keep bringing it up. It's im-

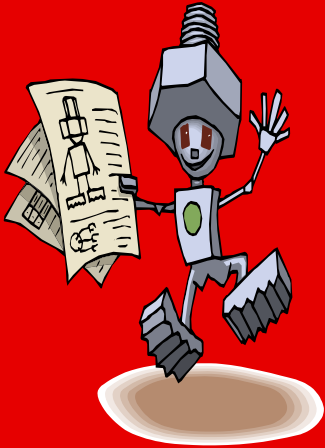
portant for your child... and it's a requirement of the Babies Can't Wait program.

For more information on transition, including a summary of the transition process, a guide to evaluating classrooms and a chart for recording your child's development, see

The Parent Handbook for Success in Babies Can't Wait at <http://education.gsu.edu/sceis/> or

for a summary of transition planning *Transition at Age 3: Steps for Success.* <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/publications.asp>

**"...being positive and proactive will work better than the 'pull the covers up over the head and go back to sleep' approach."
Karen Addams**



NUTS 'N BOLTS

ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS IN EARLY INTERVENTION AT INTAKE

FOR PROVIDERS:

- ☑ **INTRODUCE TRANSITION TO THE FAMILY EARLY AND OFTEN**
- ☑ **KNOW AND SHARE WHAT COMMUNITY RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES**
- ☑ **SCHEDULE TRANSITION PLANNING MEETING AT LEAST 90 DAYS BEFORE TRANSITION**

FOR FAMILIES:

- ☑ **EXPLORE COMMUNITY OPTIONS BY VISITING OR CALLING**
- ☑ **COMPLETE TRANSITION AT AGE 3: THE STEPS FOR SUCCESS BOOKLET**
- ☑ **ASK QUESTIONS**
- ☑ **DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOUR CHILD**

What's a Person to Do?

Roles and Expectations In Early Intervention

Part 4: Transition

Knowing what to expect may help your family feel more comfortable as you prepare to exit out of the Babies Can't Wait (BCW) program. The more informed you are about the available options, the more empowered you might feel taking an active role in the transition process.

It may sound odd that you will start talking about leaving as soon as you enter the program, but your service coordinator (SC) is expected to start talking with you about transition from the very beginning of your time with Babies Can't Wait. Transition probably was addressed on your very first IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) and frequently after that.

Your SC knows about many of the community resources that are available in your area. He/she will be able to help you find out about eligibility requirements, costs, schedules, transportation options, how to obtain written information about the programs, and how to arrange a visit for you and your

child. Even if you do not plan for your child to transition into another program after BCW, you might want to get information on the programs now while you still have a service coordinator to help you. That way, if you decide later that you would like to consider having your child participate in a program, you will already have the information.

The options will vary depending upon where you live. Some options may include: home, Head Start, private child care, private preschool, public preschool, and private therapy.

Your service coordinator will schedule a transition planning meeting at least 90 days before your child transitions out of the program on their third birthday. Often there is someone from the school system at the meeting to answer your questions. You may invite representatives from other programs as well. There should be a transition meeting even if you decide you do not want to participate in another program after three or even if your child

leaves BCW before his/her third birthday.

Georgia's BCW program has been conducting research over the past few years to see how satisfied families were with the transition process. Over all, families have been very satisfied with the process. Some families that have already gone through the process, however, indicated that they wished they had received more written information about options and had been able to visit the potential programs and speak with other families who were currently in those programs. If these are activities that are important to you, make sure you let your service coordinator know.

Be ready to decide what you want for your child, be willing to ask questions, and explore the community resources. This is the only way that you will be able to decide what is best for you and your child. YOU, as the parent, are the primary decision-maker in determining the choice of services for your child.

Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc. (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

Online Chat With An Expert: On the Parent to Parent Website, parents can get involved in our Chats with an Expert. Our Experts cover a wide variety of topics (past topics have included disaster preparedness, sensory diets, and physical therapy issues), and beginning in January 2007, these chats will happen monthly. Visit our website for dates, times,

and topics. Then join us for some lively online conversations, and get your questions answered by the "experts"!

Spanish Services: Parent to Parent services are also available in Spanish. We have bilingual staff on site available to assist families. In the Metro Atlanta area, we coordinate monthly Hispanic support groups. For more information, please call 1-800-229-2038.

Ultimately, Parent to Parent of Georgia was created by parents for parents!

We'll continue to update and add innovative services until we are able to meet the needs of the families in Georgia who need us! And we are here to help YOU! So give us a call or visit our website as often as you need. You have found your One Stop for Information!

Conceptual Framework

Research indicates that some ways of providing supports and resources to children and families are more effective than others. In order to consistently provide Babies Can't Wait families the supports and resources in the best possible manner, Georgia has adopted five ideas or concepts. These concepts are supported by the research on effective early intervention. They also represent the intent of the federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

These evidence-based ideas form the backbone or **conceptual framework** that guides early intervention in Georgia.

Families have long been recognized as a very important part of the early intervention process. You are the EXPERT on your child, and Babies Can't Wait provides staff with expertise in child development and

family supports. The conceptual framework provides the foundational structure needed to support the teaming between parents and providers (coaches) that is needed to help children succeed.



New	Traditional
<p>Promotion Models Focus on promoting competence and positive functioning</p> <p>Capacity-Building Models Provide opportunities for people to use existing abilities and develop new skills</p> <p>Strength-Based Models Acknowledge the assets of people and help them use these assets to improve functioning</p> <p>Resource-Based Models Describe practices in terms of a wide variety of formal and informal supports within a community</p> <p>Family-Centered Models View professionals as agents of families and responsive to family desires and priorities</p>	<p>Treatment Models Focus on remediation of a disorder, problem, or disease, or its consequence</p> <p>Expertise Models Depend on professional expertise to solve problems for people</p> <p>Deficit-Based Models Focus on correcting a person's weaknesses or problems</p> <p>Service-Based Models Describe practices primarily in terms of professional services</p> <p>Professionally-Centered Models View professionals as experts who determine the needs of a person from their own as opposed to the other person's perspectives</p>

Adapted from Conceptual Framework for Evidence-Based Practices in Early Intervention Dunst (2000)

Alphabet Soup

- ☑ **FAPE:** Free and appropriate public education. A public school system is required by federal law to provide services to eligible children with special needs ages 3-21 that are appropriate and are free to the family.
- ☑ **IEP Meeting:** A time when the family meets with representatives from the local school district to design a plan to meet the educational needs

of an eligible child with special needs. The plan is called an Individualized Education Program or IEP. (For children from 3 to 21 years of age.)

- ☑ **Transition Meeting:** A meeting of the family, representatives from BCW, and others who will be working with the child and family after the child leaves BCW. It could be someone from the school system, childcare, Head Start,

etc. It is hosted by BCW and the purpose is to make specific plans for the child's transition.

- ☑ **Transition:** A change in service delivery method such as moving from the hospital to the home setting or when a child turns age three and moves from early intervention to other programs.



Words To Know

Provider's View cont.

(Continued from page 3)

the family/child. If families are interested in a particular program/setting, a representative from that program may also be present at the meeting.

Every child participating in BCW will have a transition plan. It is important that this plan reflects the goals

and interests of the individual family.

During the meeting, the service coordinator will review once more all of the options a family has within their community. She/he will give them information, including contact people, addresses, and telephone numbers. The service coordinator will also advise the family as to the information they will need on hand to pass on to the school or

other programs. This may include birth certificates, social security cards, and immunization records. It is important that the family feels comfortable with the information given and how to use it. It is imperative that the service coordinator answers fully all questions to ensure that the family is armed with all the information they need to assist their child with the next step of their journey.

"Every child participating in BCW will have a transition plan. It is important that this plan reflects the goals and interests of the individual family." Debra Pileggi, EIS



Local Program Contact Info

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5



Featured Family Resources

Families enrolled in Georgia's Babies Can't Wait program frequently indicate a need to locate additional resources for their children and family members.

Babies Can't Wait: Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

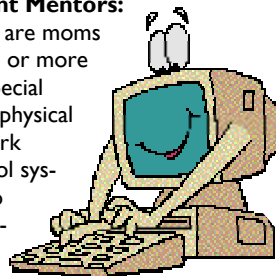
Family Village: A global Community of Disability Related Resources. It "includes informational resources on specific diagnoses, communication connections, adaptive products and technology, adaptive recrea-

tional activities, education, worship, health issues, disability-related media and literature, and much, much more!"

Georgia Learning Resources System (GLSR): is a network of 17 centers throughout Georgia that provide free training and resources to educators and parents of students with disabilities.

Georgia Parent Mentors:

Parent mentors are moms and dads of one or more children with special learning and/or physical needs. They work within the school system by trying to build bridges between home



and school. The parent initiative is spearheaded by the Department of Education's Division for Exceptional Students.

Georgia Yellow Pages for Kids: Sponsored by Wrightslaw, this site provides listings of Georgia resources that are of possible interest for families of children with special needs.

Parent to Parent of Georgia: Providing support and information to parents of children with disabilities. The site has many resources including Parent Match (telephone peer support with another parent with a child with a similar diagnosis as your child), Special Needs Database, and a Roadmap to Services for children with special needs and their families.