Your Expectations: What They Really Mean

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Parent Power

• Parents (caregivers) are the most powerful influence in a child’s life.
• Parents provide unconditional love.
• Parents model through their behaviors...values, beliefs, biases.
• Parents reinforce learning in natural environments.
• Parents’ expectations can make a difference.
Sibling Power

- Siblings are an extremely important influence in a child’s life.
- Siblings provide unconditional love but also provide a raw reality and social perspective that few others have...intolerance of weirdness.
- Siblings reinforce age-appropriate learning in natural environments.
- Siblings’ expectations can make a difference.
Parent Challenges

- Responsibilities – 24/7.
- Lack of training in disability techniques.
- Few, if any, role models.
- Societal stigmas and prejudices.
- Other children and spousal demands.
- Shelter and well-being responsibilities.
- Transportation demands.
- Advocacy role imposed, not chosen.
Sibling Challenges

• It’s hard to be invisible.
• Difficult sometimes to get parents’ attention.
• Societal stigmas and prejudices.
• No one tells you what to do to help your brother or sister to fit in.
• You may feel imposed upon, resentful, or jealous.
Parent Rewards

• Joy of parenting next generation!
• Opportunity to see dreams come to fruition...legacy concept.
• Influence on younger generation.
• Support of community & culture.
• Fun with youngsters...uninhibited by adult responsibilities & expectations.
• Someone to assume responsibility for you in the future.
Sibling Rewards

• You get to learn early on about the importance of diversity.

• You may well be more responsible and mature than many of your friends without disabled siblings.

• And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make...
What you may not know...

- It’s okay to be blind...lots of very successful adults with jobs, families, homes, etc. are visually impaired.
- There are lots of adapted tools (aids & appliances) that can make life more livable for people with VI.
- There is no mystery to teaching a blind child...use common sense!
What you may not know...

• Treating your blind child the way you would treat any child (same rewards, punishments, expectations) is critical.

• The stigma is in being unable to do for yourself or being awkward when you could be skilled (e.g., cane, braille!!!).

• Your attitude toward blindness and low vision influences your child’s.
What you may not know to do...

- Reach out to blind & low vision folks for advice about AT, any tricks of the trade!
- Use the Internet, read books & magazines, ask questions of professionals and adults with VI.
- Attend consumer conventions and professional conferences.
- Ask your child...
Resources

Books:

*Skills for Success*

*Focused On...Social Skills*

*Teaching Social Skills*

*ECC Essentials*

*Transition Tote system*
Resources

A Parents' Guide to Special Education for Children with Visual Impairments (AFB Press)

NAPVI & NOPBC (Future Reflections)

www.familyconnect.org
www.nfb.org
www.e-advisor.us
www.tsbvi.edu
www.blindchildrenscenter.org
Resources

www.hadley.edu
www.uacoe.arizona.edu/viliteracy/
www.afb.org/braillebug
www.afb.org/careerconnect
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People, people, people..
Thank-you
...for your participation and support of children with visual impairments!