

Autism is a strange and often difficult thing to understand.

My family was touched by autism when our 4th child was turning 3 years old. Levi had a natural birth, he was healthy and came home to a loving family with three siblings and loving parents. I sensed something was not qpp2i ag inthisdese810.4(l)-22.op2me810.8(n)-4.t b(d)-21.6p
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Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder-NOS (not otherwise specified) are developmental disabilities that share many of the same characteristics. Usually evident by age three, autism and PDD-NOS are neurological disorders that affect a child's ability to communicate, understand language, play, and relate to others. Autistic disorder is one of the disabilities specifically defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal legislation under which children and youth with disabilities receive special education and related services. IDEA, which uses the term "autism," defines the disorder as "a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, usually evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences." (In keeping with the IDEA and the way in which this disorder is generally referred to in the field, w6(a)1.2(15.9(n)(e)2520.9(e)w6(-8.8.6(d)12.3(,)ed)12.3((r)3

**Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center at California State University, Northridge
Invites Families of Children with IEP's age 3-22 yrs. and Interested Community Members to
Attend the Following Free Educational Seminars and Events:**

- **December 13th 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** Brandie Rosen Inclusion/Teacher Collaboration. Held in Santa Clarita Valley CA. At Progressive Steps 28093 Smyth Drive, Valencia CA 91335. It is necessary to RSVP for Childcare 661 250-3943
- **Feb 14th 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** Dr. Michael Spagna Schools Attuned. Held at CSUN Education Building Arco Conference Room ED 1214. 18111 Nordhoff St. Northridge CA. 91330
- **April 10th 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.** Dr. Ivor Weiner Working with the Student with ADHD. Held in Santa Clarita Valley At Progressive Steps 28093 Smyth Drive, Valencia CA 91335. It is necessary to RSVP for Childcare 661 250-3943

**March 2004, FAMILY EMPOWERMENT MONTH FFEC WILL PRESENT A SERIES OF
CONFERENCES PROVIDING FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS ACCESS TO THE LATEST
RESEARCH IN EDUCATING AND REARING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

- 1. SAVE THE DATE MARCH 6, 2004** FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL EMPOWERED FAMILIES HAVE THRIVING CHILDREN CONFERENCE. THERE WILL BE LOTS OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERTS. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN THE COMING WEEKS. IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AT GRANADA HILLS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
- 2. SAVE THE DATE MARCH 13, 2004** FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL EMPOWERED FAMILIES HAVE THRIVING CHILDREN CONFERENCE. THERE WILL BE LOTS OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERTS. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN THE COMING WEEKS. IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY AT HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL
- 3. SAVE THE DATE MARCH 20, 2004** FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL EMPOWERED FAMILIES HAVE THRIVING CHILDREN CONFERENCE. THERE WILL BE LOTS OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERTS. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN THE COMING WEEKS. IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY AT LA MESA JR. HIGH CHARTER SCHOOL

Seminars for Adults with Disabilities, their Families, and Interested Others Free

Unless otherwise noted, the meetings are at CSUN in the Education Building Conference Room. RSVP to Kathryn Lincoln at 818 677-7063

- Dealing With Anger And Jealousy—Sat., 11/15 from 10-2 noon.
- Just 4 Us Thanksgiving Potluck Party—bring a dish to share. Sat., 11/15 from 12:30-2:00 p.m.
- Open House and Holiday Potluck Party—bring a dish to share. 12/13 from 12:30-2:30 p.m.
- Social Recreation and Transportation Tips— Sat, 1/24/04 from 10am.—12n. CSUN, Education Room 1214
- Just 4 Us Valentine Craft meeting—Sat. 1/24/04 from 1—2 p. CSUN, Education Room 1214
- Learning About disabilities—Sat. 2/21/04 from 10a.m.—12n.
- Just 4 Us St. Patrick's Craft Meeting—Sat, 2/21/04 from 1—2 p.m.
- Living on a Budget—Sat, 3/20/04 from 10a.m.—12 n. CSUN Education Room 1214
- Just 4 Us Spring craft meeting—Sat, 3/20/04 from 1-2 p. CSUN Education room 1214
- Solving Problems the Self—Advocacy Way—4/17/04
- Just 4 Us Spring Craft and Picnic Planning Meeting—Sat, 4/17/04 from 1-2 p. CSUN Education room 1214
- Just 4 Us BBQ Potluck Picnic—Thursday 6/17/04 from 4-7 p.m. Meet at Picnic tables at Northridge Park on Reseda Bl. at Mayall. Hot dogs, games and fun. This is a potluck-bring a dish or drinks to share.
- Healthy Living—Medical Care, Nutrition and Activity—6/19/04 from 10 a.m. -12 n. CSUN, Education Room 1214

The Just 4 Us Social Group is open to adults with developmental disabilities who are parents and other interested adult consumers. They share ideas and resources on good parenting, learn crafts, and socialize. Co-coordinator Sheila Oullettes-(818)677-7063.

Family Focus Resource Center Open House Announcement Dates For 2003

Come in and meet the staff of the Family Focus Resource Center. Take advantage of the information, resources, and supports available for families of children with special needs. You will find a lending library of books, videos and use the Internet, take home written information on disability related issues. We are located at California State University, Northridge 18111 Nordhoff St. Northridge Ca 91330 in the Education Administration Building room #E109I. Just North the Education Building. Corner of Etiwanda and Plummer St. **Please call to reserve your free parking pass. (818) 677-5575. Enter kiosk at Prairie Ave. Park in Lot B5 or B6.**

Friday Afternoons 4-6 p.m.

*November 14, 2003 *December 12, 2003 *January 9, 2004 *February 13, 2004 *March 12, 2004

New Parent Support Groups: It is important at times to get help from other parents. Meeting with other parents can help reduce the feelings of isolation that parents may sometimes feel

A Support Group for Parents of Special Needs Children will begin meeting on Sunday at 6 p.m. at shepherd of the Hills Church, 19700 Rinaldi St., Porter Ranch. Special needs childcare is available at the 11:30 a.m. Sunday service at the church. Call (818) 831-9333

The Ken Project: Attention Parents of Children in Special Education Do you have questions about your child IEP? An attorney and advocate will answer your questions. Dec. 10, 2003 7:00—9:00 p.m. 6430 At UCP Offices 6430 Independence Ave. Woodland Hills Ca. 91367 for more information please call: 818 782-2211

Cultivar y Crecer Support Group for Hispanic families. (childcare provided by FFRC) Meeting are held in Spanish. Speakers will present important information for families and individuals with special needs. Meeting location: NLACRC San Fernando Valley, 15400 Sherman Way, 1st Floor Conference Room. For meeting dates and more information please call (818) 778-1900 **Dates are as follows: December 12, 2003 6-9p.m. March 12, 2003 6-9p.m. January 9, 2003 6-9p.m., February 14, 2003; 6-9p.m. March 12, 2003 April 9, 2003; 6-9p.m., and May 14, 2003 6-9p.m.** Childcare provided by FFRC.

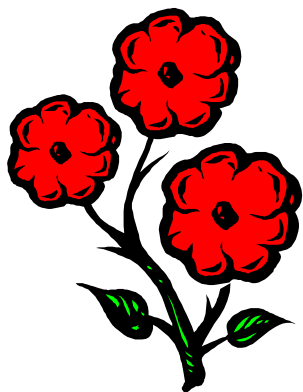
Upcoming Events For Birth-Three

1. **Autism and Young Children with Visual Impairments Sponsored by the Infant Development Association of California. December 2, 2003. 8:00—2:30 at the Braille Institute, 741 N. Vermont Blvd., Los Angeles Ca 90028. To register, call (916) 453-8801. Scholarships available.**
2. **Tuned in to Language: Sponsored by the Infant Development Association of California January 9, 2004, 8:00-3:30, Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn Universal Studios. To register, call (916) 492-4000 Scholarships Available**
3. **Early Start Statewide Institute Core III Putting It All Together: Natural Environments: everyday routines relationships, activities, places and partnerships. January 22, 2004, 8:30-4:30. Fresno, California Call for more**

News from Antelope Valley Family Focus Resource Center

We have been very active in outreaching to our community and Early Start providers in the AV. We will be placing a FFRC family support person at the AV Hospital Medical Center in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. This will give parents direct contact to resource and supports in their community. We are planning a conference collaboration with the AV SELPA and FFEC in March 2004. We encourage families to attend.

We are planning to establish Board of Directors and invite parents to join the Family Focus Resource Center Board. FFRC Staff of AV would like to Thank the NLACRC for making us feel so welcome in their Lancaster office. We are growing so much and are in need of an office with a little more room so families can visit. If you know anyone who may be renting an appropriate office for our staff and families please give us a call.



La Shonna Goodman

Birth to Three Family Support Coordinator

Antelope Valley Family Focus Resource Center (661)951-1205

Legislative Update:

Permanent Regulations That Narrow Eligibility For Regional Center Services Public Hearings November 25, 2003 and December 1, 2003

Please mark your calendar for the eligibility hearing at the end of November and December 1, 2003. All though this won't effect current regional center consumers it will impact 400 individuals yearly that will be denied based on the new criteria. Please provide written or oral comment.

The Department of Developmental Services as required by law, will hold two public hearings, one in Los Angeles on November 25 and the second in Sacramento on December 1, to hear public comments on the proposed permanent regulations - now in effect as emergency regulations - that narrows eligibility for regional center services that people with developmental disabilities can receive. The emergency regulations now in effect, expire after 120 days unless permanent regulations are proposed. While public comment is not allowed for emergency rules, the proposed permanent regulations must allow for public comment before the agency can consider adoption. The Department of Developmental Services estimates that, beginning this year, about 400 persons with developmental disabilities every year would not be eligible for regional center services, saving the State \$2.1 million annually of state general fund money. Many advocates for people with disabilities strongly opposed the narrowing of eligibility when Governor Davis first proposed it in January 2003 as part as his budget proposal. **The new regulations do not apply to persons who are currently eligible for services.** Any reassessment of their eligibility would be based on the original criteria that was used to determine their eligibility. That in essence - at least for now - means that those people currently already in the regional center system will not be impacted ((or will be "grandparented" in) by these new regulations. Some advocates who worry about those 400 people being denied eligibility under the new standard, also fear that the Legislature might eventually eliminate the "grandparent" clause and apply the standard to everyone receiving services if the budget crisis worsens this or next year. **The new emergency regulations now define "substantial disability" as the "existence of significant functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity, as determined by a regional center, and as appropriate to the age of the person: self-care; receptive and expressive language; learning; mobility; self-direction; capacity for independent living; and economic self-sufficiency."** Any reassessment of a person's "substantial disability" for purposes of continuing eligibility for regional center

services shall utilize the same criteria under which the person was originally made eligible. The proposed permanent regulations, if adopted, would make the emergency rules permanent.

The Two Public Hearings to Provide Oral Testimony:

Nov 25, 2003 (Tue) Begins at 10 AM (until everyone is able to testify)
320 4th Street - Second Floor, Pacific Room Los Angeles, CA

AND

Dec 1, 2003 (Mon) Begins at 10 AM (until everyone is able to testify)
744 P Street - Auditorium Sacramento, CA

Written Comment Deadline:

Persons can also Submit Written Comments on the Proposed Permanent Regulations. Dec 1, 2003 (Mon) by 5:00 PM

Mail/Fax or Email Written Comments To:

Department of Developmental Services

Attention: John Ellis, Community Program Specialist II

OR Ken Freeland, Chief Early Start Local Support Section

1600 9th Street - Room 330, MS 3-8 Sacramento, CA 95814

Email: elis1@dds.ca.gov OR kfreedla@dds.ca.gov

Fax: 916/654-3255



Meet Our Staff:

Hi I am Sheila Ouellette, I have been working at Family Focus Resource Center for 6 years with Kathryn Lincoln, in the Adult Program. Currently I am employed as an office assistant in the Family Focus Empowerment Center. One of the exciting and wonderful things I am working on here is being the co-coordinator of the Just 4 Us Support Group. The Just 4 Us Support Group helps parents with developmental disabilities interact with other parents in the community. We meet once a month, to do crafts, plan for upcoming activities and events, parent education training and to just have fun.

Did you know: about the 7th National Self -Advocacy Conference, which is put on by People First of California. It is the mission of People first of California to help start, inform and support local chapters so that we, and all people with developmental disabilities are able to speak for ourselves, know our rights and responsibilities and are respected, valued members of our communities. This conference provides a wonderful opportunity for adults and families to speak out for themselves, learn from one another about what self-advocacy is and to know your rights. It will be held in Anaheim on May 27-30 , 2003. You can ask about scholarships from the Regional Center. Just give your Service Coordinator a call.

The Just 4 Us Support Group is having two fund raisers to help individuals and families attend this wonderful conference.

- Our Book Sale on 11-15-03 See below for time and location.
- Come to our Boutique Gift Sale on 12-13-03 See below for time and location.

If you would like more information you can contact me at 818 677-6854.

Take care now. Hope to see you at the conference.

Sheila Office Assistant FFEC

'California Dreamin': Live the Dream-May 27-30, 2004 (Memorial Day Weekend) Anaheim, California at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel . 7th National Self-Advocacy Conference
www.peoplefirstca.org. Listen to Nationally known self-advocacy leaders from many states on important national, local and personal issues. Enjoy Music, Art, Self-Advocacy songs.
Meet new people, Greet old Friends.



Sheila and her son, Daniel. Daniel likes to dance, play basketball, and soccer and spend time with his family.

Just 4 Us Meetings and Dates

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2003 Thanksgiving Potluck Party

Saturday January 24, 2004 Valentine Craft Meeting

Saturday, Feb. 21, 2004 St. Patrick's Craft Meeting

Saturday, March 20, 2004 Spring Craft Meeting

Saturday April 17, 2004 Craft and Picnic Planning Meeting

Saturday, May 17, 2004 BBQ Potluck Picnic

Location: Family Focus Resource Center California State University
Northridge Education Building, Room 1214

-On Etiwanda Ave. 1/2 block South of Plummer

All are welcome to attend.

The Just 4 Us Social Support Group for adults with developmental disabilities who are parents, their children, and interested others. Monthly meetings and craft activities coordinated

by Sheila Ouellette and Kathryn Lincoln.

News From Santa Clarita Valley Family Focus Resource Center

On October 31st, the SCV FFRC hosted two separate feedback groups at the request of UC Berkeley. Lacy Clayton, of Berkeley, had previously contacted us regarding the "FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA" kit. This is a new parent kit containing: 6 videos, a resource guide, and a child's book. She had also asked if we would be able to get a group of parents, of special needs children, and a group of providers together for a survey they were doing on "FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA". Thanks to Erica Henson, head of the Special Education Local Plan Area, low incidence early intervention program, PACT, (Parents and Children Together) and KayLynn Smith, PACT support group facilitator and counselor, we had our parent volunteers. Thanks also to the providers of the PACT program for their voluntary efforts. We had seven parents and eight professionals answer questions and/or provide input on the "FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA."

Mona Desai and Susan Obarski of Berkeley came out and presented questions to the groups i.e. How did you get the kit? What did you like about it? What do you think it needs? When do you think it should be given out? For participation in the survey, the parents and providers were each given a twenty-five dollar stipend. Additionally, the PACT program received a four hundred dollar gift certificate to Lakeshore.

All in all, the groups were able to share good information during this time. As a result, we are hopeful that something appropriate and suitable will be added to the new parent kits which will be helpful to the future parents of special needs children.

Patty McKee

Santa Clarita Coordinator, Birth - Three

Family Focus Resource Center

Office (661) 299-4572

Fax (661) 250-4832

News From Family Focus Empowerment Center Santa Clarita Valley

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the four elementary districts of Santa Clarita

If you wish to be placed on our mailing list for future activities and information, please complete the following:

Your name _____ Your Child's Name _____

Name of School/Program _____ Is student in an inclusion program? _____

Parent Professional Other Agency/Title _____

Address _____ email _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____

Please return to
Family Focus Empowerment Center
California State University, Northridge
18111 Nordhoff Street, E109I
Northridge, CA 91330-8265

Family Focus Resource Center Birth to Three

Serving Families of Children birth to three with a developmental disabilities or at risk of developing a developmental disability. Three locations to serve you:

San Fernando Valley Office: Santa Clarita Valley Office:
Phone:(818) 677-5575 Phone (661) 299-4572
Fax: (818) 677-5574 Fax: (661) 250-4832
Email:family.focus@csun.edu Email:familyfocus@sbcglobal.net

Antelope Valley Office
Phone: (661) 951-1205
Fax: (661) 942-4050
Email: familyfocus_av@msn.com



Check out the Family Focus Resource Center's website for up-to-date information on upcoming trainings, seminars, and support group meetings. From CSUN home page go to Alphabetical Index, Click on F for FFRC. You can also find links to news stories of interest, as well as links to many other disability-related information on the Internet.

Family Focus Empowerment Center

Serving families in the regions of SFV LAUSD Districts A, B, and C, Santa Clarita Valley, and the Antelope Valley

LAUSD District A and B

Gloria Castro – Coordinator
Sandra Baker -Family Support
Fatima Castaneda – Family Support
Teresa Lund – Family Support

818-677-6854

Santa Clarita Valley

Michelle Lewis – Coordinator
Delmy Calderon – Family Support

661-250-3943

Family Focus Resource Center Adult Program

Kathryn Lincoln
(818) 677-7063

LAUSD District C

Marissa Campos – Coordinator
Rosa Villegas – Family Support
Kelly Hill – Family Support

818-677-6854

Antelope Valley

Renita Russell – Coordinator
Jackie Ross – Family Support
Elva Pena–Family Support

661-308-1046

Empowerment Center Office

Leticia Romo Administrative Assistant

818 677-6854
family.empower@csun.edu

Antelope Valley Birth to Three Staff

La Shonna Goodman–Coordinator
Ofelia Luna–Family Support
Sheala Bowman– Family Support Staff
Maryetta Bowman– Volunteer

Family Focus Resource and Empowerment Center
Michael D. Eisner College of Education: E109I
18111 Nordhoff St. Northridge Ca. 91330-8265