



Special Needs

Meet the People We Help...

Problem

Zachary's parents were just coming to terms with his autism diagnosis when it came time for the 6-year-old to start kindergarten. The young boy didn't make eye contact or try to establish friendships. He often repeated the same phrases over and over again. Body rocking and hand flapping scared other children away. Zachary's mother and father wanted their son to succeed in school and knew early intervention was critical. But they didn't know what programs and services were available—or his legal rights as a child with a developmental disorder.

Solution

One phone call to a knowledgeable and empathetic JF&CS special needs resource coordinator gave Zachary's parents access to the resources they needed to make sure their son could reach his highest potential. They were directed to Web sites to learn about special education law. They received booklets and videos teaching them how to participate in the educational decision-making for Zachary. They learned what responsibilities the public school district had related to their son and how to take action if they disagreed with his special education plan.

Outcome

Zachary is now a second-grader who receives speech and physical therapy, psychological counseling, and the personal attention in the classroom he requires. As his needs change, his parents reconnect with the special needs resource coordinator for additional help. Zachary is now relating better to other children and communicates more, according to the special needs resource coordinator. "Without the valuable information we provided, his parents may not have known their sons rights and how to protect them—or understood how to make sure he received the best education possible," they say.