

FAMILY LINK

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Dear Parents / Guardians,

Family Link was initiated from a firm belief that a strong connection between the family and the educators or trainers will greatly enhance the full development of the children and adults MINDS serve. The family of the person with special needs is not limited to parents but it embraces his siblings, grandparents and relatives. Wow! If all these family members are behind him, supporting his learning and growth, the future road he travels along would definitely be one of excitement and achievement! Hence, we hope that this Family Link will reach out to parents, siblings, grandparents, aunties, uncles, neighbours.... etc. and together, we can envision a great future for all persons with special needs.

Beginning with this issue, we will share thoughts and tips for interacting fruitfully with your children and adults with special needs to help them to develop and acquire the necessary social behaviours and skills for inclusion into the community. You as parents cannot do this alone. Share this with the rest of the "family" members mentioned above.

We hope that you and all who read this 'Link' will share your views, readings and tips with us. We firmly believe all of you have much to share with us and we will gladly share your contributions with other families through this 'Link' Together we learn and grow to be better 'enablers' of the development of our children and adults with special needs.

MANAGING INTERACTIONS WITH TEENAGE INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

.In our previous issue, we have shared about changes in the teens at puberty and how parents and adults with better understanding of this stage of their development could help their teens to manage this phase of their life smoothly.

To enable us to assist our teens with special needs, we need to manage our interaction skills With them. Good interaction skills begin with a good understanding of our basic needs as a person. These needs are also basic for our teens.

The teenage person needs to:

- Have basic sustenance provision for physical comfort
- Belong
- Be empowered
- Have choice
- Have fun

Helping develop a brighter future

Recognising these needs, parents will be in a better position to understand when teens seem to be non compliant to instructions that do not provide choices or make them feel like a child. Verbal interactions with them could then be more adult in nature and more of a firm request rather than a demand.

In this way, parents would be modeling to the teens the socially acceptable mode of verbal exchange. Often, our children imitate and subconsciously acquire our mannerism, voice tone and loudness of verbal interactions. A gentle verbal upbringing will produce a gentle and polite child while a rough verbal environment will likewise produce a loud and impolite child.

Like us the adults, the teens need to feel empowered to share their thoughts and their needs and to be heard. They desire to make their choice on type of food, dressing and interactions with friends. Hence, it is essential to teach them to know that empowerment to make choices come with responsibility and consequences. Parents need to be firm regarding this and assist them to know the consequences and responsibilities that may result from the choice made. Often parents give in and allow the teenager to change their choice, thus they will not learn to be responsible adults.


Besides being assertive when handling tantrums and inappropriate behaviours, parents should explain the reasons and consequences of these behaviours and model the right expected behaviours in our daily routine so that they become the expected daily norms of behaviour.

Perhaps, the common weakness of most parents is in not recognizing that the child has grown and will be an adult and the larger part of his life is lived as an adult. Parents tend to treat their young teens like children, doing everything for them, making all choices for them and protecting them from the knocks of growing up.

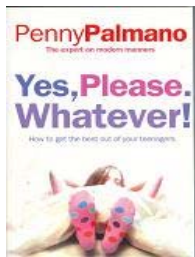
Mainstream children and teens in the course of their upbringing, education, interactions and life experiences acquire skills for responsible adulthood. Parents expect them to be productive adults who will provide for their families and their parents. However with teens with special needs, parents often do not have these expectations. On the other hand, parents tend to expect to take care and provide for them.

Hence, it is crucial that parents change their perception and thinking and begin to see the possibility of a productive adult life of quality for their special needs teens and empower them with the necessary skills to live as a responsible adult.

In summary, the guiding principles for parents for interacting with their young adults are:-

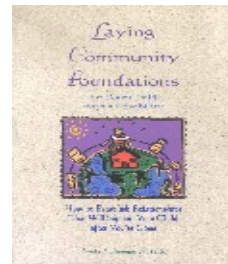
- *Recognise that your teen will be an adult one day and soon.
 - * Treat him and dress him age- appropriately.
 - * Model adult socially acceptable verbal and behaviour interactions.
 - * Empower your teen through opportunities for choice making and responsible behaviour.
 - * Raise his self esteem.
 - * Relate to them at times using the adult-adult relationship. Share his feelings and interests.
 - * Be firm and assertive when necessary and set boundaries for expected behaviours.
 - * Enjoy fun times together.
 - * Be consistent and work as a team.
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Books Available for Loan from CDU



Yes, Please. Whatever

This book offers parent-to-parents on how to understand and get along with adolescents and teach them the all important life skills.



Laying Community Foundations for Your Child with a Disability

This practical guide shows families how to establish a network of non-paid people that can provide lasting relationships for their child with a disability.

Surfing the Net

www.fathers.com.sg

This is a website for the Centre For Fathering (Singapore). The center is dedicated to promoting role and responsibilities of fathers in rearing of children. Their website provides pointers to becoming more effective fathers as well as a list of related websites.

www.ccc.sped.org

Although a US based organization, the Council for Exceptional Children(CEC) has an International Division and members in many countries. From their website, you can access membership information, browse through catalogues for products and read articles on a wide range of special education issues.

www.aboutfamilylife.org.sg & www.mcads.gov.sg

These two websites provide ideas on how to nurture family with love and materials for readings on parenting skills.

Workshops for Parents

Topic: Seminar for Parents of Senior Students by MINDS Psychologists

Date: Saturday 22 September (for parents of LGS & TGS)

Saturday 29 September (for parents of YGS, GGS & JGS)

Time: 9.00am – 12.00noon

Venue: MINDS Seminar Room, 6th floor

at MINDS Seminar Room, 800 Margaret Drive

ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIIES

The Singapore History Consultants organizes conducted Heritage Walks and Trails to Little India, Kampong Glam, Chinatown and Downtown Trial.

Contact: 24B Sago Street, Singapore 059020. Tel. 6221-3804

Website: <http://www.singaporehistoryconsultants.com>

The Original Singapore WALKS Pte. Ltd. has tours scheduled for Aug to Dec 07 to different heritage places from Mon. to Sat except public holidays. Get more information from their brochures or visit their website: <http://www.singaporewalks.com>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ☀ MINDS Executive Committee had appointed Ms Chia Poh Hong to be the Director of MINDS School Services cum Head of Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) with effect from 1 July. Ms Chia was formerly the Principal of Towner Gardens School, MINDS.
- ☀ MINDS CDU has initiated the review and redesign of the schools Curriculum to enhance the transition of students from schools into adult life and the adult service options. The CDU team is in consultation with curriculum consultant, Dr Julianne Moss engaged by the Ministry of Education for SPED schools and Prof.Trevor Parmenter, engaged by MINDS.
- ☀ 5 athletes from our schools and 8 athletes from our MINDS adult services will be going to Shanghai to participate in the Special Olympics World games from 28 Sept to 12 October. The sports that they are competing in include athletics, aquatics, bowling, badminton and bocce.

Quotable Quote

If you treat an individual as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.

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