



Our mission is to empower families raising children with mood, behavioral and emotional disorders, by providing support, training and advocacy skills and collaborating with community partners to improve the system of care for children.



Welcome to the School Year!

Dianne Shaffer, Executive Director

Here we are at back to school time again! For many of us and our families this is both an exciting time as well as anxiety-ridden. Is my child going to have a teacher he/she clicks with? Will this year be better than last? I don't want to fight about homework! These are some of the thoughts that go through our heads. In this issue, to help get the school year off to a good start, you will find information about helping your child to develop good study habits, CHAMPS behavioral initiative in schools, an IEP flow chart, and much more.

Please don't forget that ASK offers monthly support groups with different topics and speakers. See the calendar insert in

this newsletter for dates, times and locations. We would love to have you join us to meet other families, share your knowledge and learn from others.

I am excited to announce that our new Program Manager, Lara Johnson, will be joining ASK on August 24, 2009. Lara comes to us from Goodwill Industries where she worked as a Vocational Developer and Trainer. We are very excited to have her. She will introduce herself more fully in our next issue!

ASK has enrolled in the Harding's eScrip Community Card. We encourage anyone who shops at Harding's to call ASK at 269-343-5896 and we will send a card to you with the ASK

group number on the back. Or, pick up a card at any local Harding's store. Enroll online at www.escrip.com/hardings.jsp, or by calling 1-800-931-6258. Don't forget to add Advocacy Services for Kids to your donor list; Harding's Markets will contribute up to 4% to our agency every time you use your card!

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer. We are moving into my most favorite season of the year, autumn. I think it's a great time to get outside in the cool, crisp weather to watch the leaves turn colors, play in big piles of leaves, pick apples and enjoy the beauty of the Michigan seasons!

Raising kids can be tough. If you need help, just ASK!

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Mackenzie Hunter, Youth Involvement Coordinator

CHAMPS

Christine Eckrich, Family Support Partner

While most of us have been enjoying the long, lazy days of summer, many representatives from local school districts, as well as the Family Support Partners from ASK, have been attending "workshops" on a relatively new model of an effective, research based practice called "CHAMPS". The CHAMPS means:

- Conversation: Can students talk to each other during this activity or task?
Help: How can students ask questions during this activity or task?
Activity: What is the task/objective of this activity/transition? What is the expected end result?
Movement: Can students move about during this activity or transition?
Participation: What does appropriate student work behavior for the activity/transition look or sound like?
Success: When students meet CHAMPS expectations, they will be successful!

CHAMPS strategies are easy to implement and aim to:

- Reduce classroom disruptions and office referrals
Improve classroom climate
Increase student on-task behavior
Establish respectful and civil interactions

Key Benefits of CHAMPS:

- Teachers establish clear expectations with logical and fair responses to misbehavior.
Teachers spend less time disciplining and more time teaching.
Teachers learn tools to motivate students to do their best.
Students are taught how to behave responsibly.



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**Question:** The newness of school has worn off and my child is again experiencing difficulties. The teacher is getting frustrated and I'm afraid that this year may be as bad as the last. My daughter doesn't qualify for Special Education Services. What can I do?



**Answer:** There are many interventions that can be tried with your child, that do not require Special Education Services. Depending upon *what* the problem is and *where* the problem is happening, each child can be given a behavior plan that addresses problematic situations. A good question to ask yourself is: "Are we positively sure that my student *understands* the behavior that is desired?" One way to find the answer to this is to ask the teacher a few questions:

**Has your child been taught the desired behavior?** Teaching behavior looks a lot like teaching reading or math. It should not be assumed that each child knows what to do. If a child has not been taught, then teaching must occur.

**If so, has the desired behavior been taught with consistency?** In other words, is the behavior taught and expected in every situation by every adult the child encounters in the school?

**Have records been kept** of the *problematic* behavior(s), to be able to determine the events that surround the behavior(s)?

Often students do not follow the rules because the rules change and confusion occurs. Sometimes what is followed successfully in the class, falls apart when walking in the hall or eating in the cafeteria. Desired behaviors must be taught, in the same way (*consistently*) in all environments that the student will encounter. If this has not been done, then the student

has not failed, the system has.



**This is true in our homes as well.** Children do watch what we do and imitate it. However, we often want our kids to do something that we really haven't taught them, because it's something we think they should just *know*. Taking the time to teach your child *what* you expect of them can make for happier compliance and more satisfaction in the family. If you have any questions about how to make this happen, please give us a call!

*Ginger Skidmore*  
Family Support Partner

## Return to school! Return to HOMEWORK???

*Mary Beth Mapes, Family Support Partner*

Homework has been a part of my life for the past 50 years! Really, it still gives me nightmares and at times reduces me to tears, and it's not even my homework anymore!

I hate homework, I think even more than my girls do; but I have learned a few things over the years. Hopefully, these tips will help make your "return to homework" less painful!

- **Have a homework place for your child.** Each place might be different depending on the child. Some need to be near the action and others need to be far away.
- **Have all the things they will need in one convenient place.** A box or basket works well, include things like: pens, pencils, erasers, colored markers, crayons, scissors, ruler, protractor, calculator, (what ever is grade/age appropriate).
- **Set a specific time, each day, when homework is to be done.** If there REALLY is no homework, have them use that time to read something of personal interest to them.

- **Set a time limit.** Some will need breaks, some will want to

plow on through and get it done. This is just a general guideline, as all kids are different:

Kindergarten-2nd Grade	15-20 mins
3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade	30-45 mins
6-8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1 hour
9 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	1-2 hours

(depending on classes and study hall time)

- **Communicate with your child's teacher.** They usually have good ideas to help with homework and will be able to clarify things that are confusing to you or your child! If things get to be too much, let the teacher know, "we tried but just couldn't get through this."
- **Let your child make mistakes.** It is not your job to fact check, spell check, or provide your child with all the right answers. Your job is to provide tools, guidance and support. Mistakes build character – allow your child those precious learning opportunities.
- **When you hear the words, "I'm done," stop what you are doing.** Check the homework, look it over, *pay attention*. Show your child that his/her work is impor-

tant not only for school but also to you!

- **Praise and reward your child for a job well done.** Your child *wants* to succeed and sometimes an encouraging word from you, even if they're struggling, makes all the difference.

Here are some great homework help sites:

- The Beehive**  
<http://www.thebeehive.org/school/k-12-students>
- Hippo Campus**  
<http://www.hippocampus.org/>
- The Discovery Channel**  
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/homeworkhelp>
- The Fact Monster**  
<http://www.factmonster.com/>
- Yahoo Kids**  
<http://kids.yahoo.com/learn>

**REMEMBER, be positive, be encouraging, and be strong,** winter vacation is on the way!



ASK provides refreshments and **CHILDCARE** during all ASK support groups, doors open at 6:15!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>Kalamazoo goes BACK TO SCHOOL On Tuesday, Sept 8!!!</b></p>		1 <b>PAG/CAY</b> 6:00-7:30pm	2	3	4	5
6	7 <b>LABOR DAY</b> ASK Monday Night Group RESCHEDULED for 9/14	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 <b>ASK Parent Support Group</b> 6:30-7:30pm	15 <b>PAG/CAY</b> 6:00-7:30pm	16	17 <b>ASK Parent Support Group</b> 6:30-7:30pm	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1 <b>October</b>	2	3
4	5 <b>ASK Parent Support Group</b> 6:30-7:30pm	6 <b>PAG/CAY</b> 6:00-7:30pm	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 <b>ASK Parent Support Group</b> 6:30-7:30pm	16	17
18	19	20 <b>PAG/CAY</b> 6:00-7:30pm	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 <b>ASK Family &amp; Provider Luncheon</b> Guest Speakers: The Recovery Institute 12-1pm in the Arcus Depot Conference Room call ASK for details!	29	30	<b>31</b> 

**ASK Parent Support Group** with a general focus is held on the **1st Monday of each Month** at **Prince of Peace Lutheran Church** ~ 1747 W Milham Rd, Portage

**Kalamazoo Wraps Parent Advisory Group (PAG)** & **Kalamazoo Wraps Calling All Youth (CAY)**  
Meet the **1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month** at **Bronson Gilmore Education Center**, 7 Healthcare Plaza, Kalamazoo

**ASK Parent Support Group** focused on supporting families receiving Community Mental Health services is held on the **3rd Thursday of each Month** at **First Presbyterian Church** ~ 321 W. South Street, Kalamazoo

Please contact ASK at (269) 343-5896 with questions regarding updates, cancellations, or alterations to this schedule  
Or visit our website, [www.askforkids.org](http://www.askforkids.org)

It's Back to School – Your child is struggling and you feel it may be time for some additional supports. You've spoken to his/her teachers and with their input, determined that your child may benefit from an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Your next step is to:

By Kathy Howard,  
Family Support Partner

Request a Special Education Evaluation, **in writing**.  
Give one copy to the school principal and keep one copy for your records.  
The School has 10 Days to determine if they will perform an evaluation for your child.

The school determined that they will not perform an evaluation for your child. The school must provide you with a written statement regarding their reasoning, and offer you information about due process (in the event that you dispute their findings).

The School has determined that they will perform an evaluation/testing for your child. You will be given a 'Permission to Evaluate' form; sign and return to the school ASAP. The school has 30 days, from receipt of that form, to perform the evaluation.

If you disagree with the evaluation, you may request an independent evaluation, to be conducted at the school's expense.

The school will set up an appointment to review the evaluation results with you. (typically within a week)

The evaluation has indicated that your child is **NOT** eligible for services.

The evaluation has indicated that your child **IS** eligible for services.

You can sign a disagreement form and request that issues be reconsidered OR request mediation or due process.

You and the school will set an appointment to develop your child's IEP and determine goals. You may invite *anyone you want* to this meeting.

You disagree with the IEP, or are having trouble collaborating with school personnel.

You agree with everything written into the IEP.

**For more information about the IEP process, give an ASK Family Support Partner a call at 269-343-5896 Or visit [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)**

You will consent to the IEP (by signing) and the school is required to implement the IEP on the agreed upon 'effective date', within 15 days of your signed consent.

You should receive a copy right away. The IEP will be reviewed annually; your child will be re-evaluated every 3yrs.

### CALLING ALL YOUTH!

*Are you a young person between the ages of 11-17 who feels like life is happening around you?*

Calling All Youth (CAY) is your chance to speak up and be heard by adults, teachers, government, therapists, counselors, juvenile justice, schools and all of the authority figures in your life.



**IT'S TIME YOU HAD A VOICE!**

For more information contact Mackenzie Hunter At (269) 343-5896

**Are you a parent or caregiver of a child with a mood, emotional, or behavioral challenge?**

**Are you passionate about improving the system of care for children's mental health?**



**Consider joining Kalamazoo Wraps Parent Advisory Group!**

*Childcare and Refreshments are provided*

For more information, contact Kathy Howard at (269) 343-5896

Funding by Greater Kalamazoo United Way, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and contributions from members and friends.



**CHAMPS Continued** Many times students come home confused and frustrated about the day's events in school. Often times it is not known what is expected of them and communication between the teacher and student is often strained. Students can become confused and angry because the punishment is sometimes not consistent from student to student for the same offense. They may feel that they are being treated unfairly, or being unjustly "labeled". Teachers have a lot of responsibility and are dealing with many different kinds of personalities, but *all* kids deserve to be treated fairly. They simply need to know what the expectations are. They *deserve* to know what the expectations are. Children go through a lot of different teachers in their K-12 years. Year to year and class to class, each teacher has different expectations. Teachers should not assume that students know what theirs are!

**CHAMPS** teaches simplicity and organization. Redundancy and consistency go a long way, for all kids.

- Keep the number of rules to a **MINIMUM**.
- Keep the wording of rules **SIMPLE**.
- Have rules logically represent your **BASIC** expectations.

- Keep the wording **POSITIVE**.
- Make your rules **SPECIFIC**.
- Make your rules describe behavior that is **OBSERVABLE**.
- Tie following the rules to **CONSEQUENCES**.
- Always include a compliance rule.
- Deliberately teach the consequences for rule infractions **AND** rule compliance.
- Do not assume that kids *know* the consequences!
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!
- Be flexible-different tasks/activities can have different rules!

By following the effective, research-based practices outlined in CHAMPS, teachers develop methods for clearly communicating their expectations on every classroom activity and transition!!

The CHAMPS model is also a fantastic tool for us as parents, to use in our homes. Let's all look forward to a very successful school year, both at home and at school, for our children!



## Youth News and Updates

*Mackenzie Hunter, Youth Involvement Coordinator*

Are you struggling at school? Worried that you may not pass? Frustrated with the way things are done? You're not alone.

Let's face it—conventional schooling isn't the best option for everyone. You may be having difficulty passing required classes, need to work to support yourself, or maybe you are experiencing some personal issues—whatever the reason, it's time to look for an alternative option.

There are numerous opportunities available for youth who feel their individual needs are not being supported by traditional schooling. There are General Educational Development (GED) programs, alternative schools, facilities that are specific to certain populations, and even home schooling! In fact, there are *so many* options that navigating through the system and deciding which route to take can be a somewhat complicated and overwhelming process.

Requesting information and exploring all options can help you determine which program is *best suited* to meet your needs. Here in Kalamazoo there are two testing centers that offer GED programs:

**Kalamazoo Community Ed. Center**  
714 South Westnedge Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
(269) 337-0420

**Comstock Community Education**  
3010 Gull Road  
Kalamazoo, MI 49048  
(269) 388-9477

There is also a variety of alternative schools including:

**Phoenix Alternative High School**  
1411 Oakland Dr  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 337-0760

**Barclay Hills Education Center**  
1125 E Mosel Ave  
Kalamazoo, MI 49004  
(269) 488-1470

**Portage Community Educational Center**  
1010 West Milham Avenue  
Portage MI 49024  
(269) 323-6700

**Comstock Alternative High School**  
3010 Gull Rd  
Kalamazoo, MI 49048  
(269) 388-9477

Additionally, Kalamazoo offers a school that works specifically with youth who have Severe Emotional Disturbances:

**Valley Center School**  
3122 Lake St, Kalamazoo, MI  
(269) 388-9494

**Take the first step to get some more information! You'll be glad that you did!**



advocacy services for kids  
414 East Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Please visit us at [www.askforkids.org](http://www.askforkids.org) for valuable information about our services, links to resources, and an archive of our newsletters.

You can also opt-in to join our electronic mailing list to receive updates about ASK and community events.

If you no longer wish to receive this publication, please email us at [mail@askforkids.org](mailto:mail@askforkids.org)

## Please consider supporting ASK!

Donating is easy.

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- 2) Make checks payable to: Advocacy Services for Kids
- 3) Mail to the address shown.

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