

## Parents' Role

As a parent of a child with special needs, you will gather a tremendous amount of information about your child from various professionals and service agencies. Each time you seek services for your child, you may be asked to supply information. Record keeping is not mandatory for parents of special needs children, but as a primary decision-maker, observer, and advocate for your child, it is to your benefit to keep complete and up-to-date records. A good way to keep your records organized is in a binder/folder which can include the following sections:

**\*Family History:** Include the name, birth date, any place of birth of family members; parent/guardian name, address, phone number, place of employment, and so forth; brief health history of grandparents, aunts, and include, parents and siblings.

**\*Developmental History of the Student:** Include the mother's health during pregnancy and any unusual circumstances at birth or during the infant/toddler stages. Also note the child's behavior patterns and other significant growth and development information.

**\*Medical History and Reports:** Include the names and addresses of doctors, dates and nature of serious illnesses and operations, records of the child's immunizations, medications taken, and a copy of the child's birth certificate.

**\*Educational History:** Include the names and dates of schools attended; names of teachers and principals and other staff who provided services for your child; copies of IEPs, test results, therapy reports, or progress reports and examples of (dated) homework.

**\*Personal/Social History:** List the child's interests, clubs and organizations, camps, special awards, and pictures.

**\*Written Correspondence:** Include copies of records from any other agencies with which you have had contact. Also, include letters you have written or received.

**\*Telephone Log:** Log all phone calls or visits from agencies or professionals. Include dates, names, phone numbers, and the purpose and outcome of such contacts.

### Helpful Hints:

\*Support and maintain close contact with child's teacher to encourage student's success.

\*Keep your child's school informed of changes in child's health, routine, medication, behavior, and home environment.

\*Insure that your child has adequate rest, nourishment, and health so that he/she is ready to learn.

\*Build your child's confidence by encouraging all learning efforts.

\*Identify both strengths and needs of your child as you see them.

\*Discuss homework with the teacher frequently

\*Read and play games with your child.

\*Reward positive behavior.

\*Provide opportunities for your child to experience new learning situations and discuss them.

\*Attend IEP meetings and bring a list of possible questions, suggestions, and concerns. Bring and discuss written records of pertinent development, medical, and educational information kept in notebook discussed earlier.

\*Participate in parent groups to learn about special education.