



Summer Recreation Programs lead to future joint endeavors.

Summer programs with the Rec. Dept. fun for all.

The programs the Butler PEC and the Butler Recreation Department held this summer were a strong start to a long and rewarding collaboration for exceptional children. By filling a need for recreation, children with special needs will have the opportunity to become active members of our community.



The Summer Swim and Play proved to be fun and educational for all. The Flowers at Stony brook program gave our kids some horticulture skills and knowledge. We must thank the Butler Rec. Dept. and the Home Depot in Riverdale for their help. Success would not have been possible without them.

We look forward to creating more opportunities for children with special needs with local businesses and entities. Butler PEC hopes to make Butler a very active place for the children with special needs in our community. We will be holding arts and crafts programs with the Butler Library this fall and winter and hope to have bowling at Butler Bowl. If you have any suggestions for future recreation activities please contact us at butlerpec@optonline.net. •



The Anxiety and Challenges of “Back to School”

Overcoming the challenges of a new school year.

We have all seen the television ads showing parents rejoicing over the return to the school year, but for many parents of children with special needs it can be a stressful experience. Many of our children have challenges with the changes and uncertainty that comes with a new school year. New teachers, classmates, or a new school can be difficult for students with special needs to manage.

Though the start of a new school year presents challenges for children with special needs, with the help of proper planning your child's school year can be one of achievement in both academic and social realms.

Many children with special needs function best in a structured environment. Change can bring anxiety, so give your child time to adapt to a new teacher and a new classroom. Thankfully, there are some things you and your child's teacher can do to help your child adjust.

Start by speaking to your child's teacher at the start of the school year, and maintain regular communications. Make sure he or she is aware of your child's needs and encourage your child's teacher to familiarize themselves with your child's IEP. They may have read it, but with all the hustle and bustle of the start of the school year, they may not have absorbed all the details. Give suggestions on how you and your child's previous teachers have met your child's special learning needs. Aside from learning strategies in school, parents should consider behavior modifications at home and possibly individual or family counseling.

The best way to ensure a successful school year is to start on the right foot. With the help of caring teachers, informed and active parents, and a well thought out plan, your child can experience the fruits of academic and social success. •



Parental Involvement in Special Education

Parental involvement means more than going to IEP meetings

It has been said many times, but it bears repeating: parents are a child's first teachers. Every research study on parent involvement conducted in the past 20 years has shown the same result: parent involvement increases student achievement and self-esteem. Parents spend more time with each individual child over the course of his/her lifetime than any teacher will. Parents can play a very positive role in the education of their children. By working together with the schools, parents can have an even greater influence. They can encourage their children to excel, build self-esteem, and reinforce skills taught through the schools. Clearly, not every parent can volunteer in the classroom, go on field trips or attend every meeting. However, parents can be involved and have a strong influence in a wide variety of ways;

- *Establish a positive relationship with your child's teacher early in the school year and maintain it*
- *Meet with the teacher and other school personnel as regularly as possible.*
- *Never missing a parent-teacher conference and using the opportunity to share information with the teacher.*
- *Make sure that communication flows two ways, both from school to home and from home to school.*
- *Exercise your right and responsibility to voice your questions and concerns in constructive ways*
- *Recognize and acknowledge how difficult teachers' jobs can be.*
- *Take every opportunity to let school personnel know when they are doing a good job.*
- *Ask for ways you can work with your child at home to reinforce what the teacher has done in class.*
- *Volunteer to help on school projects, events, field trips, etc., if possible.*
- *Volunteer to help in the classroom if possible.*
- *Become active in your child's school; participate in school PTA, or other advisory committees.*

Parent involvement is the participation of parents in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood. Parent involvement takes many forms, including the parent's responsibilities in decisions about their children's education, health and well-being, as well as the parent's participation in organizations that reflect the community's collaborative aspirations for all children. So go and get involved, it's your child's future you are working for. •

Sources:

*The Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University
(Parental Involvement Series)*

*The Council for Exceptional Children
(Improving Family Involvement in Special Education)*

ARE YOU AN EXCEPTIONAL PARENT
AND WANT TO MAKE EXCITING
IMPROVEMENTS TO THE QUALITY OF
LIFE FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL
CHILDREN IN BUTLER?
JOIN US AT OUR NEXT MEETING!

Butler PEC meets twice a month on
Thursday evenings from 7pm to 9 pm at
The Butler Public Library located at
1 Ace Road Butler NJ

Contact Us by E-Mail at
butlerpec@optonline.net

or

Visit us online at www.butlerpec.org