Supporting Parent/Caregiver Advocacy for Positive Behavior Supports In Schools

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Introduction
When a child is struggling with aversive behaviors in the school setting, it can be a difficult, expensive, emotional process for parents and caregivers to advocate for productive, positive supports. Children with behavior issues are at risk for disciplinary action, restraint and/or seclusion, and segregation to out-of-district placements. Families often do not know what help to ask for or how to ask for it.

Data Collection: 45 parents/caregivers were polled in an informal survey regarding school-based behavioral issues:

- 84% of respondents have a child with an IEP or 504 plan, with 45% of those with an IEP classified as “Autistic”
- 81% had been contacted by a teacher or school staff regarding behaviors
- Of those respondents, 63% of the children had pervasive behavior issues for a year or more
- Behaviors reported were aggression (17%), elopement (10%), and less dangerous behaviors such as talking, schoolwork refusal, stimming, screaming and meltdowns
- Additional support was provided through a series of informational interviews with LEND Family Discipline Coordinator Amy Kratchman, and Dr. Robert Larue, NJLEND Psychology Faculty Discipline Coordinator and Clinical Professor at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology

Purpose:
Provide parents/caregivers with the knowledge needed to understand what supports their child needs and how to access them in an effective way. This will not only yield results in the classroom, but help parents navigate the school systems, know how to utilize the services of an advocate/attorney without wasting money, and recognize if current supports are effective or ineffective.

Behavioral Toolkit:
➢ Q & A discussion on topics such as how to identify when a behavior has become a “problem,” the components of a comprehensive Functional Behavior Analysis, how to request one and who should perform the evaluation
➢ Who’s Who of the Child Study Team
➢ Glossary of common terms
➢ Templates for letters
➢ Basic procedural safeguards
➢ Resources

Next Steps: Each area will be accessible online at www.inclusionmom.com, with an option for a printable download. A Likert Scale-style survey will provide continued access to the Toolkit’s effectiveness and collect information on subjects that are important to parents/caregivers.