

Christine's Chronicles: Work, Family, and Finding that Perfect Website

Christine discusses work/life mix and asks about useful websites for learning and sharing information



Christine and Luke

After Luke's transition from Early Intervention into preschool, I found myself with more time on my hands. I decided that I wanted to reach out and share the information and knowledge I had gained over the past few years with other parents and caregivers of children with disabilities. I joined the CONNECT project to help create online modules to teach evidence-based practices on how to best serve children with disabilities in inclusive settings. It felt great knowing that I was helping teachers and caregivers to be better prepared and to see how quality inclusion is within all of our reach.

It never occurred to me that by doing the work I was doing I would be directly helping my own son, too. But it has. I think when parents and caregivers start to advocate at a higher level, your assumption is that you are helping the next generation, the children and families to come after you. But when I gave my first presentation last year at the Inclusion Institute on literacy and how to encourage literacy for children who don't speak and use alternative communication, lo and behold my son's future preschool teacher was in the audience. She was sitting there taking notes, watching the video footage of me demonstrating literacy and shared reading activities with my son at home. You can bet for sure that helped with my son's transition into his new classroom that fall and continued to make a difference for him throughout the year.

Six months later, I found myself giving the same presentation at a different conference to a different audience, and again to my surprise, I meet an audience member who is very likely to be my son's kindergarten teacher next year. So it's to be seen exactly how this will impact Luke next year, but his new teacher thought the video footage of him was great and is looking forward to him joining her

class.

Sharing knowledge and helping others to become better advocates for their children doesn't have to be a full time job. It doesn't have to be traveling to conferences and making presentations. With online support groups, discussion areas, and blogs, we can all share our experiences and knowledge more easily now. It only takes one post to share a story that may bring insight to others, a solution from another, and most importantly a sense of hope and comfort knowing that you are not alone.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

What are some of the websites you have visited for sharing information and learning? Are there online groups, discussions or blogs that you find useful?
(besides this one of course!)

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