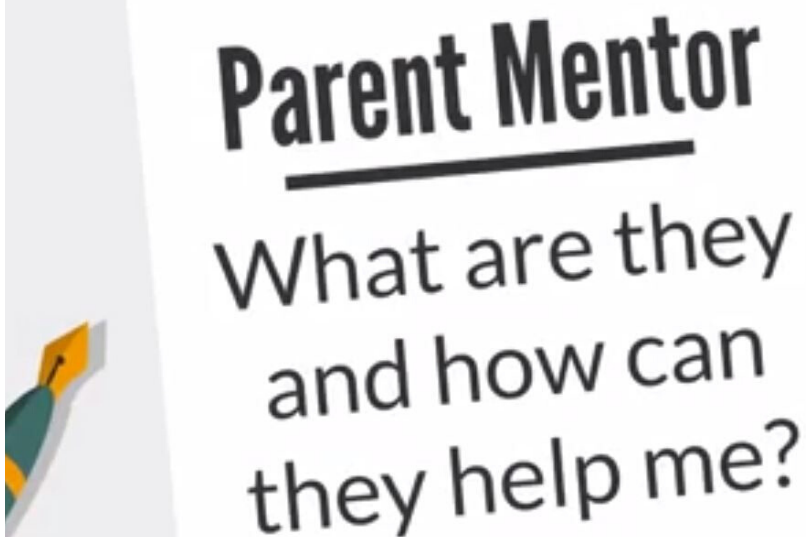


A NOTE FROM...

PARENT MENTOR NEWSLETTER - PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS

Video: What is a Parent Mentor?



Parent Mentor
What are they
and how can
they help me?

*Contents of this
month's issue:*

SELF CARE - 1
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Put Your Mask on First

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY THOREEN

Parenting a child with special needs takes resilience, strength and often times a lot of patience. It can be stressful, overwhelming, and heartwarming all at the same time. I would be lying if I said I never sat alone and cried because of the stress and insecurities felt by the unknown future for my child. But what I always try to remember is to 'put my mask on first'.

If you have ever flown you know the standard safety speech; put your oxygen mask on first before you attend to any other passengers. Life is no different. If you do not have the ability to care for yourself, you're not going to be able to support others to your full capacity. It took me a long time to learn that, but it's vital in providing the best life for my special needs son.

Don't feel guilty about taking an extra five minutes in the car to listen to a favorite song before going in the front door. Don't hesitate to stay in the shower and soak in the water and self reflect. It's time to make self care a priority:

1. It's okay to need help - find support when you need it.
2. Take time for yourself - do the things you love.
3. Remember - you must put your mask on first.

Preparing for Parent Teacher Conferences

Don't let preparing for conferences overwhelm you. Think of this time as a check in to see how well your child is progressing and consider ways to help them grow. Here are three helpful tips to ensure success at your upcoming Parent Teacher conference:

1 PREPARE: Write down your questions, listing the most important ones first. If you have a lot send them ahead of time so the staff can be prepared. Bring pen and paper or your binder with ETR/IEP documents. Don't have one but love the idea; check out this suggestion from understood.org. If you would like someone else to be with you don't be afraid to reach out to me - I would be happy to attend with you! Advance notice is appreciated however!

2 ATTEND: Be on time; your time is valuable as well as the teachers. If possible, attend with the least amount of distractions. Conference time is a perfect time to find a sitter for your child and other siblings. These meetings do not last long so your attention during the conference is very important.

Next, commit to open and honest communication, listen and then reply. Remember becoming defensive can shut down your listening skills. Use your list of questions to stay on topic.

Before the meeting ends, be sure to go over any items that need action, for instance if you are asking for resources agree on a time frame that those will be given to you and how you will get them.

Don't be afraid to ask for another meeting so that your concerns can be heard. A partnership between you and your child's teaching staff are important. You both should be on the same page for your child.

3 FOLLOW UP: Speak with your child about the results, especially if there are going to be changes, so they know what to expect. This also let's your kiddo know that you and their teacher are on the same page. Don't forget to reiterate what your expectations are for their time at school.

If there are any resources that you asked for be sure to follow up with staff you have not received them on the agreed upon timeline.



Helpful Resources and Links

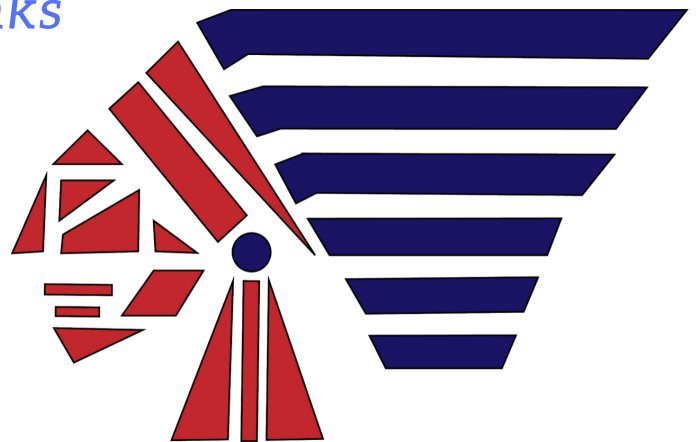
piqua.org - Piqua City Schools website, be sure to check out 'Special Education' under Departments

riversidedd.org - Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities

ohioparentmentor.com - Ohio Parent Mentor Project for resources and history on the project

[Basics of Special Education](#) - Video series from the Ohio Department of Education

[National Association of Parents with Children in Special Education](#) - finding what you need to be your child's best advocate



Suggestions for Newsletter Topics or Questions?

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