

# Family Support

INFORMATION AND REFERRALS



## FAMILY SUPPORT NEWS

FALL 2007

### THE IMAGINE! INITIATIVE: PARTNERING FOR SOLUTIONS

Imagine! has long been recognized as a leader in creating innovative solutions and supports for people with developmental disabilities. One of the key reasons for our success has been our ability to partner with consumers, families, and service providers to develop effective programs.

Our success in developing meaningful partnerships with the people we serve and their families has been the driving force behind our latest project: The Imagine! Initiative, a series of informational meetings and strategy sessions designed to bring families, providers, and Community Centered Boards together to create solutions to the crisis facing the Developmental Disabilities system in Colorado (see the box at the right for more information on these issues).

The Imagine! Initiative will work to create lasting solutions to some of these concerns.

You can learn more about upcoming Imagine! Initiative events, including a November 13 session about housing options and alternatives, by visiting the Imagine! website at [www.imaginecolorado.org/initiative.htm](http://www.imaginecolorado.org/initiative.htm). You are encouraged to attend any of these free sessions as well as to suggest topics for upcoming events (you can do so through the website listed above). Be sure to bookmark the page and come back often. Together, we can face this challenge and learn how to provide even better supports for the people we serve.

#### The Crisis Facing the Colorado Developmental Disabilities System:

- More than 4,000 families supporting individuals with developmental disabilities are in need of family support services.
- Colorado ranks 48th in the nation in fiscal effort toward providing funding for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- There are currently 3,746 individuals with developmental disabilities on a waiting list to receive services in Colorado.
- Since 2001, the number of people on the waiting list for comprehensive (24 hour) services in Colorado has increased 189%.
- Since 2001, the number of people on the waiting list for Supported Living Services (used to supplement already available supports for adults who either can live independently with limited supports or are principally supported from other sources such as families) has increased by 117%.

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## WORKSHOP HELPS PARENTS PREPARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FINANCIAL FUTURES



*Richard Vincent (l) and Hal Wright (r) presented valuable financial planning advice to families at a workshop hosted by Imagine! on September 18.*

On Tuesday, September 18, Imagine! hosted a Family Financial Planning Workshop to help families with financial planning specific to children with special needs. Guest presenter Hal Wright, a financial advisor for Waddell & Reed, Inc., emphasized the importance of financial planning for all families, saying, “A financial plan is a roadmap for your financial future.”

Also presenting at the event was Richard Vincent from Ridgway, Romeo & Vincent, LLC. His talk focused on the specifics of special needs trusts. He also seconded Mr. Wright’s comments about the importance of planning ahead, telling the more than 60 people in attendance, “These types of trusts need to be put in place as soon as possible—you’ve got to get going on these things.”

The workshop was presented by Imagine! as part of the Imagine! Initiative, a series of

informational meetings and strategy sessions designed to bring families, providers, and Community Centered Boards together to create solutions to the crisis facing the Developmental Disabilities system in Colorado.

You can find copies of Mr. Wright’s and Mr. Vincent’s presentations on Imagine!’s website by going to [www.imaginecolorado.org](http://www.imaginecolorado.org) and choosing “About Us” on the main menu, then clicking on “The Imagine Initiative.”

## DISCOVERY CLUB OFFERS FUN FOR PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES



Easter Seals of Colorado has created a new program called The Discovery Club, which will provide a chance for kids with disabilities to explore and learn, while parents get some time to themselves.

Starting in October and taking place on the second Saturday of each month through May from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Boulder Valley Christian Church, kids at The Discovery Club will be able to take part in arts and

crafts, sports and games, drama and singing, and group activities. Snacks will be provided, however kids will need to bring their own lunch.

Meanwhile, parents will get some time to meet with their friends, be with their spouses, and have the luxury of time for themselves and for other children.

Professionals and trained

volunteers will provide care for kids who need help with mobility, eating, and other special needs, and a nurse is on staff at all times. There is a \$25 registration fee, and the fee for each Saturday is \$20 per person per day, or \$15 per person per day for two or more from the same family.

For more information or to make reservations, contact Nancy Hanson at (303) 233-1666, x 237 or [nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org](mailto:nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org).



# EXCEPTIONAL FAMILIES CONNECTOR

*SUPPORTING FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH  
SPECIAL NEEDS*

## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

Who we are:

Exceptional Families of Boulder and Broomfield Counties is a parent-to-parent non-profit organization. We bring together local families who have children with developmental issues or special health care needs to share their experiences, exchange information, and promote a parent voice in shaping the community.

We are supported by Boulder County Public Health and Imagine!.

## JOIN EXCEPTIONAL FAMILIES!! HELP US HELP OTHERS

We meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at different locations. We plan our social events, report on community events and meetings, and support one another. We really want to encourage you to join us. It's a fun and supportive way to reach out to other families who are raising children with disabilities. You can join us at a board meeting, a moms' night out, our summer picnic, or our Spanish group. We are most in need of:

- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) liaisons
- Event coordinators (picnic, bowling, pumpkin patch)
- Leadership roles

Please call us to talk about your interests. You have something to offer, and other parents need it! We can be reached at [exceptionalfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:exceptionalfamilies@yahoo.com), or call Kim at (303) 772-0953.

**Free Event!**

**Exceptional Families  
Fall Festival 2007**

Hot Chocolate  
Hot Cider  
Donut Holes

**Join us on Saturday,  
November 3, 2007**

**From 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

**At Sunflower Farm  
11150 Prospect Rd.  
Longmont, CO 80504**

Petting Zoo  
Pony Rides  
Hay Rides  
Large Sandbox  
Tree Fort  
Hay Maze

For more information or to  
RSVP

Call:  
303-441-1555 ext. 92243

E-Mail:  
[exceptionalfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:exceptionalfamilies@yahoo.com)

### Exceptional Families Advisory Board

**Kim Taylor**, Coordinator  
**Mary Joe Weston**, Treasurer  
**Kerry Lewis**, NICU Coordinator  
**Anna Stewart**, Newsletter  
Editor  
**Emmy Conroy**, Moms' Night  
Out Coordinator  
**Donna Wilson**, Bi-lingual  
Liaison  
**Maria Gomez**, Spanish Group  
Liaison  
**Heather Forsyth**, Outreach  
Coordinator

Email:  
[exceptionalfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:exceptionalfamilies@yahoo.com)  
Phone: (303) 441-1555, x92243



# EXCEPTIONAL FAMILIES CONNECTOR



## JOIN US AT ONE OR MORE OF THESE EVENTS!

### Familias Exepcionales en Español

Nos reunimos de nuevo en Septiembre. Tú puedes acompañarnos, tenemos cuidadao de ninos y pasamos un rato agradable.

Ponte en contacto con familias que tienen la misma nesecidad que tú.

Para mas informacion llama a Rocio Alvarado (720) 276-4142.

Spanish group planning committee:

**Maria Gomez**

**Maria Arredondo**

**Rocio Alvarado**

**Rafaela de Santiago Enriquez**

**Maria Elena Ortiz**

**Erendira Juarez**

### Exceptional Families Moms' (& Dads') Night Out

Join other moms (and dads are also welcome!) to come out for dinner, a drink, or dessert. RSVP to Emmy Conroy at (303) 664-1295 or email [emmyconroy@earthlink.net](mailto:emmyconroy@earthlink.net).

**Friday, November 30 at 7:00 p.m.**

Call Emmy for location.

Emmy is also hosting a GFCE (Gluten-free, Casein-free) **Special Diet Group** that meets monthly. Call her for details.

## NEWS FROM THE NICU

Many of you know Kerry Lewis, our NICU liaison. Having recently been on hospital bed rest while waiting for her son to grow, she has a fresh perspective on the difficulties parents experience when their babies are in the NICU. Kerry and her third son Rylan are home and doing well. Kerry wanted to share these thoughts with you...

*"All three of my boys were born prematurely, so I know what it's like. You might think with all that hard-won experience, I wouldn't seek out other parents who have been through what we have been through. But I do. I still seek out groups to stay connected with other moms. I have realized that you just never know when you or someone whom you met through your NICU journey will need to hear, 'I know what you are going through.'*

*"If you or someone you know has a baby in the NICU, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of coffee hours or group times offered at the hospital where families can come together. You may be not only helping yourself, but also helping some other parents who need to know that they are not the only ones going through this unexpected and challenging time. Keep connected to ongoing support groups either by email or getting together for coffee even after you are home with your baby. Having gone through the same kind of vulnerability, you have a lot to base a solid friendship upon."*

If you or a friend needs support while a baby is in the NICU, please contact Kerry at [klew25@aol.com](mailto:klew25@aol.com) or call the main Exceptional Families number, (303) 441-1555, x92243.



Kerry Lewis's son  
Rylan

## SCHOOL DAZE

Exceptional Families board member Anna Stewart is also the Special Education Parent Liaison for Boulder Valley School District. She would like to invite all of you to attend any of the free and public workshops and meetings listed below. Please call her with your questions or concerns at (303) 245-5918 or email her at [anna.stewart@bvsd.org](mailto:anna.stewart@bvsd.org).

### Conversation with Andrea Kutinsky, BVSD Director of Special Education

Wednesday, November 7, 10:00 a.m.—noon,  
at the Education Center, 6500 Arapahoe in  
Boulder.

### ADHD Support Group

First meeting is Monday, October  
22, 6:00—8:00 p.m. at Douglass  
Elementary. Please call Anna to  
register.

### Special Education 101 Workshop

Tuesday, November 13, 6:00—8:00 p.m. with  
pizza dinner at 5:00. Childcare and Spanish  
interpretation available upon registration. Please  
contact Anna for location and registration.

## FAMILY SUPPORT DEBUTS NEW WEB-BASED, USER FRIENDLY CONSUMER CENTER

As any family who has a child with a developmental delay or disability can tell you, navigating the human services system can be extremely frustrating. Imagine!'s Family Support team is constantly striving to develop new and innovative ways to assist families and eliminate some of that frustration.

That is why we are pleased to announce a new way for families to access Imagine! grant applications: a user-

friendly and easy-to-navigate online Consumer Center.

Eligible families will be able to use the Consumer Center to apply for a new grant, fill out a Families Most in Need Questionnaire (FMIN), or update an address online. Families can also view historical Imagine! grant applications, FMIN information, and address updates. **Imagine! will contact families when they are eligible to apply for a grant.**

You can access the Consumer Center through Imagine!'s website at

[www.imaginecolorado.org/famServ.htm](http://www.imaginecolorado.org/famServ.htm), but you will

need a username and a password. Please call or email Gail Scott at (303) 604-5420 or

[gscott@imaginecolorado.org](mailto:gscott@imaginecolorado.org)

to receive your personal username and password. Please fill out the application online, as it will be processed more quickly than paper forms.

**IMAGINE!'S  
FAMILY  
SUPPORT TEAM  
IS CONSTANTLY  
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FAMILIES.**

## AUTISM SOCIETY OF BOULDER COUNTY WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT

The Autism Society of Boulder County (ASBC) recently elected Gena Rieck as its new President. Gena completed her undergraduate BA at the University of Colorado, concentrating in Ethics. She continued her Master's work at CU and Naropa. She received a certification from the CU School of Nursing in Caring and Healing. Gena served two terms as Secretary with Catholic Charities (Denver) Hospice Board and has more than 17

years of corporate managerial experience with Fortune 500 companies.

Gena is a member of the Individual Education Plan Cadre of Parent Volunteers through PEAK Parent Center and Boulder Valley School District's Parents as Mentors program. She considers the wisdom, knowledge, and guidance their family has received from the ASD community as their blessings. She served this past year with ASBC as a board member and was

elected to a second term.

Gena is a wife and a mom of two children.

Imagine! would like to recognize the dedication of Gena's predecessor, Theresa Wrangham, who served four terms with ASBC as President. Theresa is also a co-founder of ASBC, and her tireless efforts will continue to have an impact on the achievements and successes of people with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Thank you, Theresa, and welcome to Gena.



*Gena Rieck was recently elected as president of the Autism Society of Boulder County.*

## KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE – AVOID SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME



*The Kempe Foundation for the Prevention & Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect is offering resource materials to families on how to avoid Shaken Baby Syndrome.*

Shaking a baby, even for a second, can cause serious injury or death. Shaken Baby Syndrome is a serious type of brain injury that happens when an infant or toddler is violently shaken – usually in response to crying that will not stop.

That is why The Children's Hospital, in partnership with Kohl's Department Stores and The Kempe Foundation for the Prevention & Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect, is offering resource materials to families, particularly parents and caregivers of babies and young children.

No one plans to shake a baby, but without a plan in place to help calm a baby, it can happen. If you are feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, or angry:

- ***Set the baby down*** – It is OK to leave a crying baby alone in a safe place for a short time. Close the door and go into another room for a quick break.
- ***Get control of your emotions*** – Take several deep breaths, calm down, and wait a few minutes before you return to the baby.
- ***Call a reliable adult to help*** – A friend or relative can help calm you down or even take care of the baby while you take a break.

For more information and resources, visit [www.dontshakeababy.com](http://www.dontshakeababy.com).

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## PARENT TO PARENT OF COLORADO PROVIDES RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Parent to Parent of Colorado (P2P-CO) is a parent initiated, parent controlled, organized group that builds inclusive communities, takes effective and constructive group action, and supports each other on the journey of parenting sons and daughters with special health care needs or disabilities.

The organization provides resources including:

- Toll free information and referral line in English and Spanish (1-877-472-7201)
- Quarterly newsletter
- A variety of "parent only" internet discussion groups
- Matching to connect parents with veteran parents
- Parent Wisdom, a compilation of parenting tips on different subjects
- Parent partner training
- Referral to parent support/cluster groups throughout the state



Parent to Parent of Colorado

For more information on Parent to Parent of Colorado, visit the website at [www.p2p-co.org](http://www.p2p-co.org).

## YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY INVESTIGATING SOCIAL VULNERABILITY IN ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

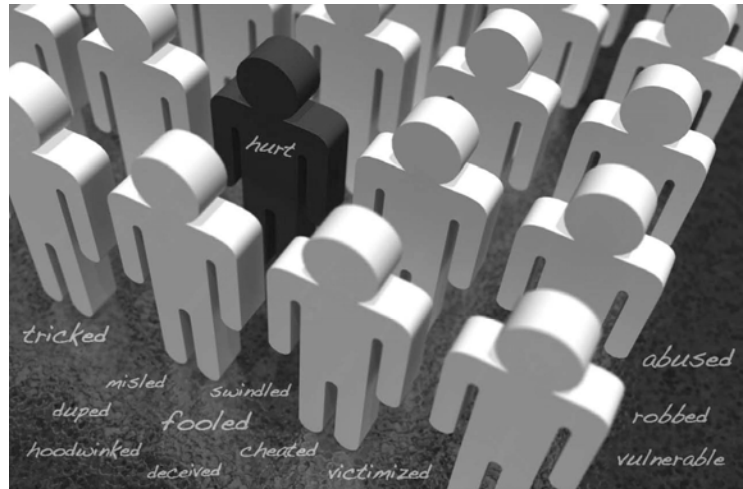
The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development is conducting a study on social vulnerability in adults with developmental disabilities. The flyer on the right has more information.

Researchers are inviting parents of individuals with developmental disabilities ages 16-50 to participate in the study.

Participation will include completion of several questionnaires by mail. The surveys will be mailed to you with prepaid return postage.

Anyone interested in the study can contact Marisa Fisher at (615) 202-0773 or [Marisa.Fisher@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Marisa.Fisher@Vanderbilt.edu).

If you are not eligible for the study, but know someone who is, you are encouraged to pass this information along.



*Why are our sons and daughters with disabilities at higher risk of being taken advantage of?*

If you care about a 16 to 50 year old person with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability, and would like to help us answer this question, complete surveys about the personality, habits, behavior, gullibility and living situation of your family member with a disability.

Contact Marisa Fisher at (615) 202-0773 or [Marisa.Fisher@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Marisa.Fisher@vanderbilt.edu).

Surveys are mailed to you, with prepaid return postage.

**VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER**  
FOR RESEARCH ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Family Support News**  
is the newsletter of Imagine!'s

**Family Services Department**

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Lafayette, CO 80026-2790

Phone: (303) 665-7789

Fax: (303) 665-2648

[www.imaginecolorado.org](http://www.imaginecolorado.org)

Jan Rasmussen, Family Services Director

**THE MISSION OF IMAGINE! IS TO CREATE AND OFFER INNOVATIVE SUPPORTS TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES WITH COGNITIVE, DEVELOPMENTAL, PHYSICAL AND HEALTH RELATED NEEDS SO THEY MAY LIVE FULFILLING LIVES OF INDEPENDENCE AND QUALITY IN THEIR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES.**

Imagine!  
1400 Dixon Avenue  
Lafayette, CO 80026-2790

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In This Issue of  
Family Support  
News:

*Exceptional Families  
Connector*

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Watch me  
achieve.



**Family Support**

INFORMATION AND REFERRALS

BELIEVING IN THE POTENTIAL OF ALL  
**Imagine!**  
Innovative Resources For Cognitive and  
Physical Challenges

[www.imaginecolorado.org](http://www.imaginecolorado.org)