Western Michigan University

From the SelectedWorks of Luchara Wallace

May, 2011

Determining Effective Formats for Providing Informational and Emotional Supports for Families

Luchara Wallace, Western Michigan University
Jillian White, Western Michigan University
Monica Spear, Western Michigan University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/luchara_wallace/2/
Determining Effective Formats for Providing Informational and Emotional Supports for Families
Luchara Wallace, Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies and Jillian White and Monica Spear, Department of Psychology, Western Michigan University

THE BOTTOM LINE

Presented here are the results of two family-focused informational events that were designed to connect families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) with key support resources in their communities. The ultimate goal of these efforts was to determine the most effective formats for providing informational and emotional supports for families. Overall, families reported benefit from both events. Families noted informational support being most greatly appreciated across both events—weekend camp vs. day-long. While families noted that emotional support was most appreciated during the weekend camp.

BACKGROUND

• The first event, Family Autism Camp, was a three-day event where families converged at Dakota Black Goose Farm in Lake Preston, SD to hear speakers from around the state and nation on supports and services that could facilitate the access of available supports and services.

• The second event, Family Disability Resource Day, was a day-long event in Kalamazoo, MI, where families were invited to attend various workshops and a disability resource fair to connect them with supports and services available across the county and state.

OBJECTIVES

This study sought to determine the efficacy of both the family camp and resource day experience for families of individuals who have a member with IDD as well as compare the benefits and drawbacks to each model.

METHODS

• Evaluation study using pre and post event surveys to identify family goals for participation and the capacity in which those goals were met during the events (replication of Day and Kleinschmidt, 2005).

• Data collected via: surveys and telephone or email interviews.

RESULTS

Overall, families reported high levels of satisfaction as a result of participation in both Camp and the Resource Day. Primarily, families reported the greatest satisfaction with those areas of the program that provided the greatest amount of informational support. Families who attended Camp also emphasized the emotional support experienced as a benefit of participation and noted that part of the benefit was a result of the extended, multi-day experience of the Camp atmosphere, while the Resource Day did not provide the same level of opportunity, thus did not result in that same level of emotional support. Families from each group reported a desire to participate in future events similar to Camp and the Resource Day. Future research will seek to address the benefit of the Camp and Resource Day experiences on the long-term life outcomes of individuals with IDD and their families.

Most Common Reasons for Attending Camp or the Resource Day (PRE-Survey)

* Share information and experiences
* Learn more information about family member’s disability
* Exposure to more disability related resources
* Learn how to be more effective in advocacy on the behalf of family member

Most Common Outcomes from Attending Camp or the Resource Day (POST-Survey)

* Shared information and experiences
* Learned new information about family member’s disability
* Exposed to new resources
  a) Found an adequate representation of relevant resources present
* Learned more effective advocacy strategies