

This Mother's Day, give yourself the gift of support

By Sophie Taylor

Without the support of a tight-knit neighborhood or small town community, and often far from family, modern moms sometimes need to consciously create their own "village" (you know, that one it takes to raise a child), one understanding person at a time. That can be especially true for parents of children with disabilities. Here's how:

Step 1: Recognize where you need support

Do you and your husband need a regular date night and a regular sitter to help make it happen? Do you need a fellow mom to compare notes with? Is there a nagging medical question associated with your child's care, or with your own health, that you need help answering? Do you need emotional support (encouragement and reassurance)? Journaling, brainstorming, or creating lists are all great ways to start looking at your own needs.

Step 2: Call on the pros

Make a list (paper or otherwise) of professionals who can help (lawyer, doctor, dentist, skilled caregivers, counselor, homework helper...). Then start filling in that list with names and contact info. Ask friends, family, acquaintances and associates for referrals or recommendations. Look around online (you can start with SacramentoParent.com's [Extra-Ordinary Kids Guide](#), a resource list of services and support for families and parents of children with special needs).

Step 3: Reach out

Follow the same process for more personal support sources: “Someone I can trade childcare with”; “A mom friend who gets what I’m going through”; “A play group where I can let my child just be himself!” Again, ask around, search local parenting groups, and don’t be too timid to search Facebook or local blogs to start a friendly connection. Be brave and take the first step. Someone out there is no doubt hoping you will.

Sacramento Parent Magazine is proud to announce the debut of *Dandelion*, our area's first and only magazine just for parents of special needs kids (fall 09)! Please send us your family snapshots, your input and opinions, information you'd like to share, questions, concerns, passions, your stories! Email our editor: amy@sacramentoparent.com.