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Nobody's Perfect: Living and Growing with Children Who Have Special Needs
by Nancy B. Miller PhD, MSW. Brookes Publishing Co., 1995

The Professional Relationships You Want

The professionals you admire and trust are the ones who sit down, listen to you, make good eye contact, respect your knowledge about your child, see the positives about your child, are willing to admit when they don't know, and are willing to find out about something or send you to someone who knows more. When you are going to have longterm relationships with any professionals, you need to feel that that person knows your child, likes working with your child, is accessible when necessary, and does not take away your hope.

Stephanie: Early intervention programs should be required for every family, whether their child has special needs or not. They make you feel so good about your child and about your parenting. They always stroke you.

Susie: But sometimes it was confusing because I'd leave thinking maybe nothing was wrong with her. I knew she couldn't walk or talk or do anything.

Janet: They took your child's one strong point and made it big and made you feel so good about your child. That kept you together when you got home.

Diane: Every parent should have someone saying, "You're doing a good job and it's okay to set limits."

Janet: Ryan's first pediatrician was such a grandpa: he talked right to your eyes. He gave us his home number and told the nurses, "This lady has a special situation and when she comes, don't make her wait."

I clung to everything positive he said about Ryan. He always asked how my husband was doing. "I just want you to know that when a child like this comes into a family, you're at a high risk for marriage problems. I don't know if that applies to you, but if it does, I have some professionals I can recommend." I felt offended at the time, but later on I thought that was really important.

Diane: All our doctors knew each other and worked together. And they talked about the financial part on a really practical level. Every time I went for a visit they found something else wrong with Catherine, and one day our pediatrician said, "And how's the mom doing?" He touched my arm, and I just went to pieces. He closed the door, sat down, and said, "Tell me what it's like. Help me understand."