

# Working with Schools

## Syllabus

### Introduction

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Expert – Karen Jorgenson, MA, former Executive Director of the National Foster Parent Association  
Ginger Gorham, MS, former public education teacher, former parent educator on the parents' role and rights in special education  
Panel of foster, adopt, and kinship care providers

This course addresses problems parents of special needs student encounter in dealing with the child's school, and offers concrete guidance on developing a positive partnership with the school.

### Roles and Responsibilities

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Caregivers can help the teacher and student get off on the right foot by informing the teacher of the child's history, needs and strengths before the child joins the class.

- Grade placement
- Prior curricula the child has used
- Attendance and health records
- The child's attitude about school
- Special needs
- Contact information
- Parents' Responsibilities (reproducible handout)

### New School

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How to cope when a child gets off on the wrong foot at a new school.

- Understanding the problem
- Working with the school toward a positive solution
- Advocating for the child
- Educating the child about appropriate behaviors and inappropriate behaviors
- Logical consequences for negative behaviors
- The benefit of involvement in activities outside of school

## Special Education

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A look at learning disabilities and how to get the help the child needs.

- Asking for help
- Special education services
- Positive rewards as motivation
- Checking in with the caseworker
- Individualized Education Plans

## Homework

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When a child refuses to do homework.

- The work may be too difficult
- It may be a control issue
- Homework may be a new concept to the child
- Talking with the teacher
- Talking with the child
- Create a homework plan of action
- Working next to the child (paying bills, handling correspondence)
- Modeling appropriate behavior and focus
- Giving positive attention
- Communicating directly with the teacher about assignments

## Behaviors at School

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Getting to the bottom of the problem when a child acts out at school.

- Schedule a meeting with the teacher
- Make a list of concerns and questions and take it with you
- Keep an open mind about the teacher's viewpoint
- Looking for patterns for when the behavior occurs (triggers)
- Rewarding small steps towards improvement

## Final Words

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Summary and acknowledgments.