



A Grassroots Network of Families and Friends Speaking on Behalf of Children with Special Health Care Needs

The Benefits of Families as Advisors

Benefits for Families

- Improves services for own family
- Provides opportunity to affect meaningful change
- Feels good to make a contribution
- Provides opportunities to network with other families
- Builds knowledge and skills
- Models community involvement and empowerment for own children and family
- Creates less passive recipients of care and services

Benefits for Providers

- Enhances relationships between families and providers
- Enhances providers' ability to do their job
- Develops providers' knowledge and skills
- Increases responsiveness to family identified needs
- Provides a reality check
- Develops fresh perspective on how services could be delivered
- Increases empathy and understanding of families
- Shares responsibility

Benefits for Programs

- Improves quality of programs and services
- Increases responsiveness of programs and policies
- Keeps programs relevant and realistic
- Brings fresh perspectives, creative solutions, limitless creativity
- Increases visibility of program in community
- Increases cohesiveness and collaboration between agencies
- Helps save money
- Helps to accomplish mission
- Creates a constituency that can advocate for program/agency

Adapted from Thomas, J. & Jeppson, E.S. (1997), *Words of advice: A guidebook for families serving as advisors*. Bethesda, MD: Institute for Family-Centered Care.