

Connecting with Families

It is our joy, not only our responsibility, to connect with families affected by special needs. By connecting with parents, we communicate care for their child and a desire to grow in our knowledge and service to them. We hope the following tips will help you connect and foster good relationships with these precious families.

HELP FAMILIES PROCESS DISABILITY

- Disabilities happen for many different reasons. Some are induced by man's choices like trauma, RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder), and FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), but most are not.
- Many families joyfully care for a child with special needs but also experience the weight of that responsibility. It is important to help them view their child's disability within the context of eternity (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

MAINTAIN A CHILD-SPECIFIC APPROACH

- Learn about special needs diagnosis specific to your students and ministry.
- Learn calming techniques and ideas to redirect behavior of individual students.
- Coordinate with parents, following up with calls or visits, to determine diagnoses and triggers that will help you plan ahead with child-specific solutions.
- Record trigger points during club and adapt the curriculum or environment accordingly.

COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES REGULARLY

- See each parent as a unique person, not just someone's parent.
- Include the student in conversation by asking questions, then involve the parent in additional discussion.
- Reinforce a student's positive interaction and behavior.
- Be proactive by asking for input and looking for solutions BEFORE there is a situation.
- Seek help with student-specific challenges.
- Schedule additional follow-up with parents as needed.

SERVE BEYOND CLUB

- Connect with families outside of Awana Club.
- Host volunteer trainings and refresher courses regularly.
- Walk through crises with families and pull the rest of the church in for support.



For more insight on discipling kids and students with special needs check out [Awana's Special Needs Guide](#).

