



M U L T I P L Y

SPECIAL NEEDS  
LAB

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T R A D E R S   P O I N T   C H R I S T I A N   C H U R C H

### Reasons to Refer a Child or Student to the Special Needs Ministry

- A. There is difficulty engaging in large group and/or small group experiences on weekends and all efforts and resources have been exhausted by your volunteers.
- B. A parent makes you aware of a medical, behavioral, emotional, or school-related diagnosis.
- C. Concerning behaviors (kicking, hitting, hiding, withdrawal, running away, etc.) are seen on regular basis (at least 4 separate instances over a 2 month period).

### Process for Referring Kids and Students or Contacting Parents

1. A staff member or volunteer in the Kids or Student Ministry will contact parents about struggles or challenges. Gather information about the child and family.
2. The Special Needs Director will work with the Kids and Student Ministries to develop individual strategies and accommodations. These will first be implemented by volunteers and staff in the specific ministries.
3. If needed, the Special Needs Director will contact the family. A meeting may also be scheduled with parent(s) and staff, as appropriate.
4. Permission will be granted by the parent(s) before a special needs observation takes place or a buddy is provided.

### What if the parent(s) do not wish to work with Special Needs Ministry?

5. The Special Needs Director will continue to work behind the scenes to equip staff and volunteers with strategies and accommodations.
6. If frustrations and challenges continue to persist, the Special Needs Director will meet with the parent(s) and ministry leader to further discuss concerns.
7. As a last resort, the Special Needs Director will work with the Age Level Pastor to develop solutions on a case by case basis.

### Helpful Tips

- Be sure to communicate how much you love their child.
- The reason for your communication is to learn how to better serve their child and help him/her meet Jesus.
- Only discuss the impact the challenges have on that specific child and their spiritual growth; do not mention the impact on other kids, volunteers, etc.
- If possible, try not to have an unplanned conversation after church on the weekends.
- This parent is probably feeling tired, guilty, jealous, disappointed, and fearful. We want the conversation to end with the parent feeling *rejuvenated, loved, trusting, pleased, and hopeful*.

## Things to Remember When Talking to Parents of Kids with Special Needs

1. They are almost always tired.
  - a. They are tired physically, emotionally, spiritually, and any other way possible.
  - b. Their children's successes can be few and far between, while trials occur on a daily basis.
2. They are NOT usually sad.
  - a. Parents of kids with special needs have learned to accept and make the best out of the situations God brings.
3. They often feel guilty.
  - a. Because of the overwhelming demand of kids with special needs, the other children are often overlooked.
  - b. Parents of kids with special needs often feel guilty because they can't "fix the problem".
4. They often feel disappointed.
  - a. Parents of kids with special needs have learned to accept this emotion on a daily basis.
  - b. Despite their efforts, situations often go awry.
5. They are often jealous.
  - a. While difficult to admit, they are often jealous of what other children are able to do.
6. They are fearful.
  - a. Parents of kids with special needs are fearful that the behaviors, lack of progress, or lack of success will be the result of their not doing the right thing.
7. They are human.
  - a. They aren't "superparents".
  - b. Parents of kids with special needs are doing what they have to do because this is where God has placed them.
8. They have emotions.
  - a. Parents of kids with special needs are hurt emotionally, and sometimes physically, by their children's actions.
  - b. They are sometimes embarrassed by the things their children do.
  - c. They are often angry at how other people stare, make rude comments, and threaten to call the police without asking if they can help.
9. They live one day at a time.
  - a. Every angle, possibility, situation, and problem that could arise is thought of.
  - b. Every detail of every day is well thought out and planned.
10. Activities are limited.
  - a. They often don't get to participate in adult functions because they are unable to find child care.
  - b. Don't avoid or stop asking. They will participate when able.