



# Family Support Network™ of WNC

## **A Parent-to-Parent Program Serving Families of Children with Special Needs**

Family Support Network™ of Western North Carolina is a program of Mission Children's Hospital and affiliated with The Family Support Network of North Carolina, and an Alliance Member of Parent to Parent USA.



### **Mission:**

The Mission of the Family Support Network™ of Western North Carolina is to enhance the lives of children of WNC with or at risk for special needs by providing support, information and education to the families who care for them and by encouraging parent-professional collaboration in the design and delivery of services for these families.

*Revised September 2015  
FSN/WNC Introduction Folder*

We all want to know we are not alone  
and that someone cares.

Parents and caregivers need others who  
know what it is like to be where they are in life.

***This is why Family Support Network™ exists!***

The Family Support Network™ of Western North Carolina is a parent-to-parent program that offers outreach and community activities; emotional support; education and training; guidance navigating systems; and resources on the many facets of caregiving to parents, caregivers, community agencies and professionals serving children with special health care and developmental needs.



## Parent Support

*Support is essential for parents and caregivers raising children with special needs.*

While friends and family provide much-needed encouragement, perhaps no one offers emotional understanding, information and guidance as well as people who are in a similar life situation. Parents of children with special needs have learned from their own successes and frustrations, acceptance and guilt, joy and grief. They have also found specific creative ways to meet their child's needs. By sharing their experiences, seasoned parents can assist and support others along the journey.

Family Support Network™ of Western North Carolina:

- Coordinates Parent-to-Parent matches by offering trained “parent mentors” for “new” parents from all settings - inpatient, outpatient, community, state and national - to connect for support
- Provides training to parents who want to be a “parent mentor” for another parent or family
- Offers monthly Family Groups Nights (below)

## Family Group Night

*Family Group Night* allows each family member to attend a group that addresses their needs! Children with special needs often have difficulty finding a group they can fit into. Family Group Night's children and youth groups are designed for the child with special needs and their siblings to connect with peers in their community. No matter what challenge your child faces, we believe they have gifts that they can share with others in the group they attend. We encourage families in surrounding counties to join us!

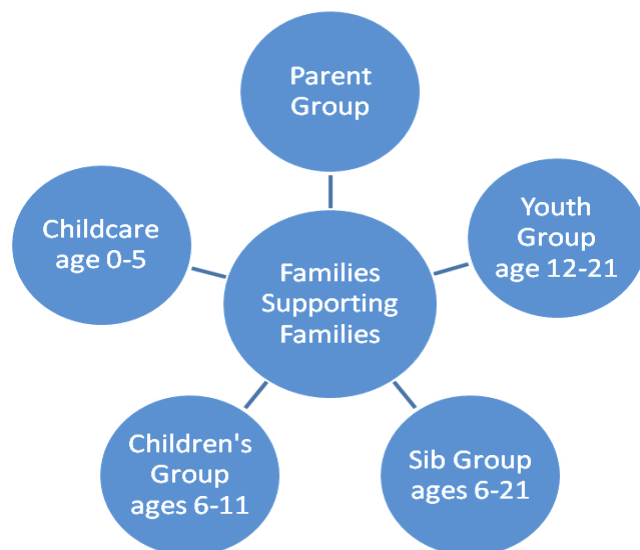
**Please RSVP! Signing up helps insure enough food for dinner and volunteers for groups.**

**To Register Call 828-213-0047 or email [FSN@msj.org](mailto:FSN@msj.org)**

**Family Group  
Mission Children's  
Reuter Outpatient Center  
11 Vanderbilt Park Drive  
Asheville, NC**

**1st Tuesday, Monthly**

Dinner 5:30pm to 6pm  
Meeting 6pm to 7:30pm

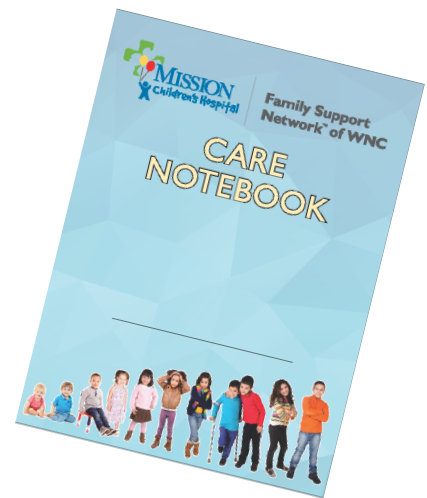




## Education

FSN/WNC provides the following resources and offers educational support to parents and caregivers to help increase their understanding of key aspects of raising a child with special healthcare needs or developmental concerns:

- **Resource center and lending library available to families, professionals and community**
- Info/Referral requests (walk-ins & phone calls) for parents, caregivers, service providers
- **Community Resource Guide for Special Needs Services for an eight county area**
- Electronic newsletter listing current workshops, parent/family groups and community resources
- **Assistance navigating public services and community resources**
- Summer Camp Guide (updated annually)
- **Medical Home Care Notebooks for parents (Birth to Three and Birth to adulthood)**
- Visual picture boards made for specific communication needs of a child
- Educational workshops
- **Information packets on Guardianship, SSI, Transition to Adulthood , Homeschooling**
- Welcome Bags/Information Packets for newly diagnosed Autism Spectrum, Down Syndrome, and cleft palate
- **Triple P, offering helpful tips in parenting all kids**
- Project **SPEAK** - **S**upporting **P**arents through **E**ducation and **A**pplication of their **K**nowledge (financial support to conferences, service on boards and committees, speaking opportunities and Family Leadership Skill Development)



## Community Networking

- There are a variety of interagency meetings and events that FSN/WNC is involved with in order to bring family issues to the table, engage parents with service planning efforts and actively participate in community-wide initiatives to improve services for families and their loved ones with developmental or special health care needs.

## What families have to say about FSN/WNC...

“More than anything, FSN/WNC means community to me. It has increasingly become a place where community comes together. As a result, FSN also means kindness, caring, love, compassion, and acceptance, which are all so important to individuals and families of every kind. FSN has made a real difference in my son's life and in my own. As FSN moves forward, increasing community—extending participation within the special-needs population in WNC, facilitating dialogue, understanding, and supportive interactions with the non-special-needs community in WNC—as well as improving and extending education and information-sharing will be essential aspects of continuing FSN's success and mission.”

R. H.

“Initially we came to FSN for education. We needed to understand autism, IEP's, therapies, etc. The FSN/WNC staff are nurturing, compassionate, professional, and wise. We attended many trainings and support groups. It was such an important part of our grieving and healing process. We needed to learn from the experiences of other families and find a community of people that we could really identify

with that understand the many heartaches and triumphs of raising a child with special needs. We progressed through the grieving process and were encouraged to become more involved and to participate more actively. It is because of FSN/WNC that I feel privileged to have this more challenging, more demanding, and more beautiful motherhood experience. This is not something that was taught to me at a workshop, or read in a book. It is simply by having a community of parents to learn from and to witness the peace, grace and dignity that they have earned by such dedication and love for children.

*I think that our overall quality of life as a family has been changed due to FSN/WNC.*

*What a blessing it has been!  
We are eternally grateful!”*

*The Johnston Family*

### Family Support Network™ of Western North Carolina FSN-WNC Advisory Council

Cynthia Alleman, Attorney  
LeighAnn Coddington, Parent, Buncombe  
Mary Euler, Parent, Buncombe  
Natasha Evans, Parent, Buncombe  
Robert Ford, Community Partner  
Leslie Hales, Parent, Buncombe  
Ray Hemachandra, Parent, Buncombe  
Anne Johnston, Parent, Buncombe  
Lars Johnson, Asheville City Schools  
Shawn Henderson, Mission Children's  
Susan Swan, Buncombe Schools  
Katie Weber, CDSA  
Mary Lou Wright, WNC Early Intervention,  
Program for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Parent and Community involvement  
is always welcome at FSN/WNC.

If you are interested in participation  
on the FSN/WNC Advisory Council  
please contact us  
for more information.



Family Support  
Network™ of WNC

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<http://www.missionchildrens.org/family-support-network.php>

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If you are outside of the FSN/WNC service area check out this  
website to locate your local FSN program  
& the Central Directory of Resources

**Family Support Network™ of North Carolina**  
Serving families since 1985 through a network of affiliated local programs

[www.fsnncc.org](http://www.fsnncc.org)