

empower

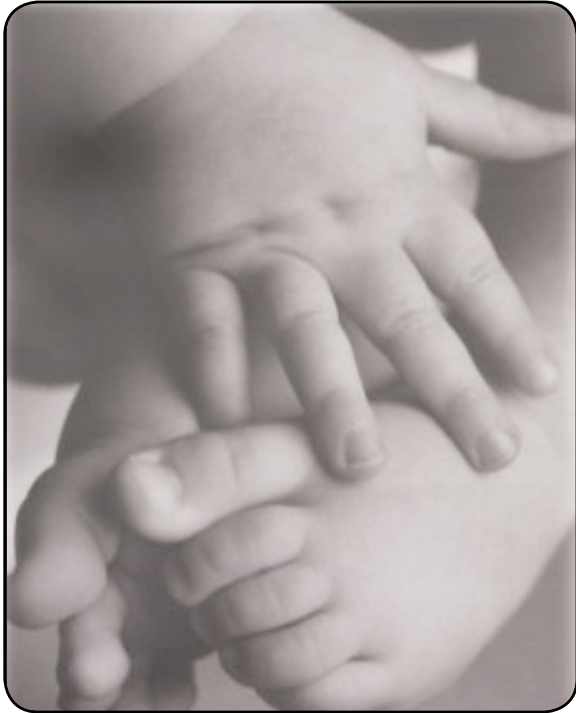
support

educate

inform



parent network
+ resource center



Welcome to Matrix

Family Resource Center An Early Start Program

our mission: empowering families of children with special needs to successfully understand and access the systems that serve them.

800.578.2592 | www.matrixparents.org | serving: marin, napa, solano, and sonoma

from our parents...

I cannot describe what a positive difference Matrix has made in my family's life. It is impossible for me to imagine my daughter, and what her life would be like, without you!

Matrix is a necessary tool to help navigate the frustrating, emotional process of helping our different learners. The professionals there have been, and/or helped parents, through the many challenges they have never imagined encountering. Thank you a million from all of us!!!

I can't say enough good things about Matrix. I am also a speech language pathologist in the public schools, and I refer the children I see to Matrix. Although I have an extensive background in Special Ed., there was still a wealth of info. that Matrix provided to me. I believe my whole family is much better off for the help Matrix provided.

I am very pleased with Matrix services. I don't know where parents would be without them.

I felt completely alone with my children's problems - except for Matrix.

Matrix helps to focus our ideas, supports us through hard times, and encourages us to find and try new approaches.

All my questions and concerns were answered immediately and thoroughly. It was literally as if the "clouds had parted".

There are too many useful strategies and too much vital info I received to be able to pick out any one thing. Matrix has been tremendously helpful to my whole family.

Matrix helped me to create a notebook of my toddlers' work. I have another notebook of the articles Matrix supplied to better understand my children's problems and interventions. My children would have never benefited from services if it weren't for the help Matrix provided.

Their response and assistance was invaluable; I only wish I had known about them sooner.

The Matrix staff goes beyond being helpful in any situation with any need. They are fabulous!

Because of Matrix I achieved a better understanding of my child's world.

I am so grateful MATRIX exists.

an early start WELCOME!

For 25 years, Matrix has been providing information, education and emotional support to parents of children with special needs from birth through age 26. Our Parent Advisors have children with special needs themselves and are trained to guide others on their journey of advocating for their child.

Our Matrix Family Resource Center (FRC) program is part of California's interagency system of early intervention services for children, birth to 36 months. Our FRC staff is here to provide information and support to help you care for your baby.

Matrix offers many services, all of which are free of charge to families in Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties. Check out our website for updated information about our Helpline and 1:1 parent support, events, support groups, workshops and more! You can sign up for our print and on-line newsletters by calling us at 1-800-578-2591 or on our website at www.matrixparents.org.

We invite you to become a part of our parent network by using our services, sharing what you have learned with others, referring others to us, or giving back to Matrix. Every link in our network strengthens the positive difference we collectively can make for children with special needs.

Thank you for your interest in Matrix.

The Matrix Staff.

offices in:

novato • 94 galli drive, suite c, novato, ca 94949 • tel: 800.578.2592 • fax: 415.884.3555
fairfield • 1615 w. texas st., ste. 4, fairfield, ca 94533 • tel: 800.578.2592 • fax: 707.425.4585

why matrix early start is here...

We are here for you and your family!

The Matrix Early Start Program, serving families of children with special needs from birth to age 36 months, is staffed with Parent Advisors who have “been there” – parents whose children received early intervention services. We offer information, resources and emotional support to families who are walking the same road we have walked. We are a network of parents helping each other.

Why do parents with children in Early Start call Matrix?

- to learn how to nurture their baby’s or toddler’s strengths
- to learn ways to navigate various agencies such as Regional Center, Health Care, and Early Intervention programs
- to find resources or referrals
- to find an empathetic listener.... someone with whom to share the ups and downs....the challenges and the celebrations
- to talk about ways to support themselves.....take time for respite
- to come to our library to check out books, DVDs and more
- to organize paperwork
- to sign up for a workshop or attend a support group
- to receive our monthly e-newsletter and bi-annual Networker publication and/or to sign up for our Yahoo group.
- to build skills to advocate for their child and family needs
- to see if a home visit is needed

We recognize that each child and family system is unique and needs to be honored. We are not here to tell you what to do. Instead we are here to help you find your path and support you along the way.

For more information on Early Start in California go to: www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart and click on “Resource Materials.”

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who we are...

matrix in the beginning...

In 1983 three mothers gathered around a kitchen table to share the challenges, heartbreak and frustrations of raising a child with special needs -- at the time there was no place for a family in crisis with a diagnosis to turn to for compassion, encouragement, support or information. Forming a network of parents, they decided to educate, support, and encourage families who were facing the same challenges they had faced alone. Together, they founded Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed to serve families of children with special needs in the North Bay.

matrix today....

Matrix is now a federally funded **Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)** through the U.S. Department of Education and a state-funded **Family Empowerment Center (FEC)** and **Family Resource Center (FRC)** through the California Department of Education.

Parent Training and Information Centers: Matrix is one of 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) nationwide, providing training and information to parents of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with all disabilities – physical, cognitive, emotional and learning. Matrix also serves as the leading agency for the West Regional Center for the Alliance, providing assistance to Parent Centers in eight states to ensure they have the information and training needed to provide quality services to families in their areas.

Family Empowerment Centers: Family Empowerment Centers provide family training, empowerment, and parent-professional collaborative activities in the area of educational needs for families of children with disabilities, ages 3 to 22 years old. Each center provides support and services to help families navigate the educational system and ensure that every child is receiving a free and appropriate education. Services include support groups, parent leadership training, and special education workshops for parents of children with disabilities who are historically underserved.

Family Resource Centers: In California, Early Start Family Resource Centers are part of the Early Start Program. Staffed by families of children with special needs, family resource centers offer parent-to-parent support and help parents, families, and children locate and use needed services; serving birth to age 36 months. They offer support services and resources in many languages, which may include newsletters, resource libraries, websites, parent-to-parent groups, sibling support groups, hotlines, and information and referral for parents and professionals.

In addition to federal and state funds, Matrix is supported by the generosity of private foundations, corporations, and individuals.

the matrix philosophy...

Matrix was founded upon the belief that parents can and must be the primary managers and advocates on behalf of their child with special needs. Agencies and professionals provide assistance, education, health care, and activities, but ultimately it is the parents who are the constant element in a child's life. Parent-to-parent support and networking is central to the Matrix philosophy – it is powerful, effective, and allows us to continue expanding our services in the community, particularly to populations who are historically underserved.

what we do...

Matrix offers families of children with special needs support, information, training, and advice. Serving 4 counties: Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma.

Services are available in English and Spanish.

- **The HELP Line: (800) 578-2592** staffed by Parent Advisors who answer questions, give referrals, offer advice, and provide more in-depth assistance and consultation if needed. *Hours: Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 3 PM.*
- **Support Groups** where parents find support, share information, and network around common needs. Online support groups: **Matrix Parent Yahoo! Group** and **Matrix Teen Yahoo! Group** for teenage siblings of children with special needs. **Sibshops** are offered for children ages 8 to 12 who have a sibling with special needs.
- **Trainings and Workshops** on Special Education, disabilities, transitions, and other related topics.
- **Early Start** – Specialized parent advisors through our Family Resource Center (FRC) offer emotional support and information about various early intervention agencies to help families whose infants or toddlers are at risk for disabilities or developmental delays. Serves birth to 36 months.
- **Lending Library** with special needs/parenting-related books, reference materials, magazines, articles, audio-visuals, and periodicals.
- **Networker**, a semi-annual print newsletter with in-depth information on relevant topics.
- **Networker Express**, a monthly e-mail newsletter with helpful ideas, tips, links and more for parents of children with special needs and professionals who work with them.
- **Website** – www.matrixparents.org with current, up-to-date Matrix information, including event calendars, training and support group schedules, and helpful links to other disability support organizations and resources.
- **Information Packets** to answer questions on topics such as Special Education, 504 Plans, specific disabilities, behavior, assessments, retention/promotion. Available by request and accessible on-line at www.matrixparents.org

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join our network of sharing

We encourage you to be part of our network of parents sharing, connecting, and helping each other. There are many ways you can strengthen and grow our network...

Connect: Help other parents to know that they are not alone...sign up for the Matrix Parent online chat group (sign up at www.matrixparents.org); join one of our many support groups; or attend a quarterly Parent Advisory Committee Meeting.

Spread the word: Help raise awareness of Matrix in the community...refer another parent to our services, share information or materials you have obtained from us with another parent, encourage service providers to recommend Matrix to other parents, or direct potential donors and sponsors to Matrix.

Volunteer: Help Matrix in a myriad of ways by giving some of your time, skills, or professional experience...office work, mailings, special event planning, assistance with support groups and workshops, participation in fundraising events, or serving on our committees or board.

Make a financial contribution: Help us continue to provide services free of charge to all families in need...make a direct contribution or pledge, give a memorial or tribute gift; seek out employee-matched funds; participate in workplace campaigns; donate funds or stocks; or make Matrix a beneficiary of a trust, life insurance, or your will. When you give to Matrix, know that you are giving to a nonprofit that has received the “**Best in America**” seal based on a comparative review by nonprofit “watchdog” groups of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations. All contributions are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

Provide: Help us build our resources and equip our offices to allow us to better serve families...donate parenting and or special needs books, DVDs, or magazines for our libraries, office equipment or supplies for our offices, or provide us with other in-kind donations. Sign up for **e-Scrip** and designate Matrix as a beneficiary – a small percentage of your credit card or debit/ATM card purchases at participating local business partners will go to support Matrix (visit www.escrip.com to learn more); or bring in recyclables such as bottles and cans redeemable for cash and computer print cartridges for Matrix to redeem and recycle.

Support our Events: Help Matrix educate and empower more families...attend or sponsor special fundraising events; support participants in fundraising events such as the Marin Human Race, sponsor a “house party” for donors, or assist with the planning of special events.

Visit our website www.matrixparents.org for more ideas and information.

web sites of interest for early start

General

www.cec.sped.org	Council for Exceptional Children
www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart	Department of Developmental Services, Early Start
www.easterseals.com	Easter Seals
www.eric.ed.gov	Education Resources Information Center
www.marchofdimes.com	March of Dimes
www.nichcy.org	National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

Special Needs

www.aacap.org	American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
http://aarr.stanford.edu/	Autism and Asperger Research Reports
www.autism-society.org	Autism Society of America
www.blindbabies.typepad.com	Blind Babies Foundation for Children with Visual Impairments
www.pbis.org	Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
www.cherab.org	The Cherab Foundation (communication impairments)
www.ccbd.net	Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
www.asperger.org	MAAP Services for Autism and Asperger Syndrome
www.curesearch.org	National Childhood Cancer Foundation
www.ncapd.org	National Coalition on Auditory Processing Disorders
www.ndsccenter.org	National Down Syndrome Congress
www.ffcmh.org	National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
www.rarediseases.org	National Organization for Rare Disorders
www.speech-express.com	Speechville Express (Communication Disorders)
www.spinabifidaassociation.org	Spina Bifida Association
www.scdd.ca.gov	State Council on Developmental Disabilities
www.ucp.org	United Cerebral Palsy

Education and Special Education & Advocacy

www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/	California Department of Education/Special Education
www.copaa.net	Coalition of Parents, Attorneys and Advocates
www.fape.org	Families & Advocates Partnership for Education
www.pai-ca.org	Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (PAI)
www.ed.gov/ocr/	U.S Dept of Education Office for Civil Rights
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers	U.S. Dept of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
www.wrightslaw.com	Wrights Law

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