

THE NETWORKER

a publication of Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center • Spring 2019

Matrix Parent Network is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1983 to serve families of children with special needs. We serve Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties.

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SOME MUSINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Transitions for Everyone!

This issue of the Networker focuses on the “T” word – transition. We have had several resources, trainings, and articles in the past about the transitions our children make. **These transitions include Early Intervention to Preschool, Primary to Middle School, and Special Education to Adulthood.**

Hopefully you have found effective strategies and tools to help your children overcome challenges as they grow and learn. This time I want to address the transitions that we, as parents, have experienced and will experience as we travel through this confusing, crazy, joyous maze of raising a child with unique needs.

This issue is an enormous transition for me. It is the last time I will write the opening for the Networker. After almost 30 years with Matrix, I am retiring. Our dedicated board of directors is working hard to find the next Executive Director who will lead Matrix into the future while keeping our mission, vision, and values alive.

After almost 30 years with Matrix, I am retiring.

As you read through the following articles in this issue, it may strike you that they are written from a similar perspective. That's because instead of my talented staff writing them, as they usually do, I have taken on that task. I view it as a way to be slightly self-indulgent and leave some last words to all of you. It's my way of sharing a teeny



“To our dedicated and wonderful Matrix family, I continue to learn from you. You will live in my heart forever.”

bit of what I have learned from all of you over the past many years.

Transition means change. It means getting from here to there (wherever there might be). It means stepping into the unknown while trying to prepare, as much as possible, for a smooth landing. For me this transition means leaving a familiar, comfortable place full of people who have been so important in my life. It means learning new ways and finding new people to take on significant roles.

The hardest part of my retirement is saying goodbye and thank you to all of the wonderful people who have shared wisdom, tears, and lots of laughter with me. To the folks who mentored me, you will never know how grateful I am that you were there. To the many families I have met and spoken with, thank you for allowing me to be a small part of your journey. It means so much. To our dedicated and wonderful Matrix family, I continue to learn from you. You will live in my heart forever. I am who I am today because of all of you. I approach the next part of my journey knowing that I have been so very blessed to have you all in my life.

Nora

Nora Thompson,
Executive Director



Transitioning for Everyone

Parent Services



Your child is growing up and getting ready to make the big transition to a different school setting. There will be many new faces. Classrooms change and there are more teachers who need to get to know your student. All of this preparation takes place as your child transitions towards more independence.

Making a difference...

New activities require a lot of planning, coordination, and research to smooth the path for your child. As the parent, you have probably been scurrying around, gathering information, making connections, and doing all you can to assure that the necessary pieces are in place for your son or daughter. Although it's been one more exhausting round as a parent of a child with unique needs, your preparations will make a big difference. Your hard work will help to ensure that your student benefits from this new educational setting.

But what about you? How is your child's transition impacting you?

Although the work and preparation needed for school is challenging in itself, you are also becoming the parent of a teenager. After you take away all of the organizing and advocacy that goes with being the parent of a child with special needs, you are still the parent of an imminent teenager and everything that entails. This is a transition time that will make some of those other transitions look like a walk in the park!

ALGUNAS REFLECCIONES DE LA DIRECTORA EJECUTIVA: ;Transiciones Para Todos!

Este número de Networker se centra en la palabra "T", transición. Hemos tenido varios recursos, capacitaciones y artículos en el pasado sobre las transiciones que hacen nuestros hijos. **Estas transiciones incluyen Intervención Temprana a Preescolar, Primaria a Secundaria, Transición de Educación Especial a la Aduldez.**

Esperamos que haya encontrado estrategias y herramientas efectivas para ayudar a sus hijos a superar los desafíos que surgen a medida que crecen y aprenden.

Esta vez quiero abordar las transiciones que nosotros, como padres, hemos experimentado y experimentaremos mientras viajamos a través de este confuso, loco y alegre laberinto de criar a un niño con necesidades únicas.

"Después de casi 30 años con Matrix, me retiro". Este tema es una transición enorme para mí. Es la última vez que escribiré la apertura para el Networker. Después de casi 30 años con Matrix, me retiro. Nuestra junta directiva está dedicada

trabajando arduamente para encontrar al próximo Director Ejecutivo que guiará a Matrix hacia el futuro, manteniendo nuestra misión, valores una viva visión. A medida que lea los siguientes artículos de este número, le puede sorprender que estén escritos desde una perspectiva similar. Eso es porque en lugar de que mi talentoso personal los escriba, como solemos hacerlo, he asumido esa tarea. Lo veo como una manera de ser un poco autoindulgente y dejo algunas últimas

Middle School and High School Blues – What Does This Mean for You?

BY NORA THOMPSON

Puberty, in all of its glory, is coming to a child near you!

This will be a time when your child may start to talk back or act out more. You will wonder what happened to your sweet child. Doors will be slammed, voices will be raised, and chaos will ensue. It maybe a bumpy ride for a while.

Is an obnoxious behavior related to adolescence or a child's disability?

Often parents find themselves trying to figure out if an obnoxious behavior is related to adolescence or a child's disability. This can be puzzling for families. Sometimes it is clearly related to the age and stage of the child and sometimes it is not so clear. Regardless, all of this drama certainly makes for interesting times.

This is as much your transition as your child's.

It's about preparing for change in your family. As your child propels towards adulthood, you are also transitioning. You will learn new skills and behaviors to cope with these monumental changes in your child. And remember, you are not alone.

The wisdom and experience of other parents who have gone before you is available. Reach out and connect with others. If you are having a hard time, give Matrix a call and we will help connect you. Remember, this bumpy ride will pass eventually, and you will survive. I promise.

Blues de Secundaria y Preparatoria ¿Qué Significa Esto Para Ti?

BY NORA THOMPSON

Su hijo está creciendo y preparándose para hacer la gran transición a un entorno escolar diferente. Habrá muchas caras nuevas. Los salones cambian y hay más maestros que necesitan conocer a su estudiante. Toda esta preparación se lleva a cabo a medida que su hijo pasa a una mayor independencia.

Hacer una diferencia...

Las nuevas actividades requieren mucha planificación, coordinación e investigación para allanar el camino para su hijo. Como padre, es probable que haya estado corriendo, reuniendo información, haciendo conexiones y haciendo todo lo posible para asegurar que las piezas necesarias estén en su lugar para su hijo o hija. Aunque ha sido una ronda más agotadora como padre de un niño con necesidades únicas, sus preparativos harán una gran diferencia. Su arduo trabajo ayudará a asegurar que su estudiante se beneficie de este nuevo entorno educativo.

¿Pero qué hay de usted? ¿Cómo le está impactando la transición de su hijo?

Aunque el trabajo y la preparación necesarios para la escuela son un desafío en sí mismo, también se está convirtiendo en el padre de un adolescente. Después de eliminar toda la organización y la promoción que conlleva ser el padre de un niño con necesidades especiales, usted sigue siendo el padre de un adolescente inminente y todo lo que eso conlleva. ¡Este es un tiempo de transición que hará que algunas de esas otras transiciones se vean como un paseo por el parque!

¡La pubertad, en toda su gloria, está llegando a un niño cerca de ti!

DE LA DIRECTORA EJECUTIVA: ¡Transiciones Para Todos!

palabras para todos ustedes. Es mi manera de compartir un poco de lo que he aprendido de todos ustedes durante los últimos años. Transición significa cambio. Significa ir de aquí para allá (donde sea que haya). Significa entrar en lo desconocido mientras trata de prepararse, tanto como sea posible, para un aterrizaje suave. Para mí, esta transición significa dejar un lugar familiar y cómodo lleno de personas que han sido tan

importantes en mi vida. Significa aprender nuevas formas y encontrar nuevas personas para asumir roles importantes.

La parte más difícil de mi jubilación es despedirme y agradecer a todas las personas maravillosas que han compartido sabiduría, lágrimas y muchas risas conmigo. Para la gente que me guió, nunca sabrá lo agradecida que estoy de que hayan estado allí. A las muchas familias



Este será un momento en el que su hijo puede comenzar a responder o actuar más. Te preguntarás qué le pasó a tu dulce hijo. Las puertas se cerrarán de golpe, las voces se alzarán y se producirá el caos. Tal vez sea un viaje lleno de baches por un tiempo.

¿Un comportamiento odioso está relacionado con la adolescencia o la discapacidad de un niño?

A menudo, los padres se encuentran tratando de averiguar si un comportamiento odioso está relacionado con la adolescencia o la discapacidad de un niño. Esto puede ser desconcertante para las familias. Algunas veces está claramente relacionado con la edad y la etapa del niño y otras veces no es tan claro. En cualquier caso, todo este drama sin duda es un momento interesante.

Esto es tanto su transición como la de su hijo.

Se trata de prepararse para el cambio en su familia. A medida que su hijo avanza hacia la edad adulta, también está haciendo la transición. Aprenderá nuevas habilidades y comportamientos para hacer frente a estos cambios monumentales en su hijo. Y recuerda, no estás solo.

La sabiduría y la experiencia de otros padres que han ido antes que usted están disponibles. Llegar y conectar con los demás. Si está teniendo dificultades, llame a Matrix y lo ayudaremos a conectarse. Recuerda, este viaje lleno de baches pasará con el tiempo y sobrevivirás. Lo prometo.

con las que me he reunido y con las que he hablado, gracias por permitirme ser una pequeña parte de su viaje. Significa mucho. A nuestra dedicada y maravillosa familia Matrix, sigo aprendiendo de ti. Vivirás en mi corazón para siempre. Soy quien soy hoy por todos ustedes. Me acerco a la siguiente parte de mi viaje sabiendo que he sido muy afortunada de tenerlos a todos en mi vida.

Nora Thompson, Directora Ejecutiva



The Early Edition

a publication of Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center • Spring 2019

The Early Edition is a publication of the Matrix Family Resource Center (FRC) program — part of California's interagency system of early intervention services for children from birth to 36 months. Our FRC staff is here to provide information and support to help you care for your baby. Additional information and resources are also provided in a designated Birth to 3 section on our website, www.matrixparents.org.

BIRTH TO 3

Step by Step and Up They Grow

BY NORA THOMPSON

As parents of little ones, you are becoming familiar with change. The transition from Early Start to Preschool is the first of many transitions your child will go through. Once preschool speeds by, you will be looking at kindergarten programs. Then, in the blink of an eye, your child will move on to middle school, then high school, and then...

What impact do these big changes...these transitions...have on you as the adult?

This may seem far off, but each one of these moves involves a transition. Matrix has created resources and supports to help you and your child manage these big changes when they come up. What I want to address is the impact these big changes...these transitions...have on you as the adult. These changes are hard but manageable. You will learn to adjust and adapt.

Managing uncertainty builds resilience.

Your little one will experience several important transitions as he or she grows up. Each event will offer new opportunities. Learning to manage uncertainty and establish new routines will help your child build resilience. It's important to remember that your child is not the only person impacted by these changes. You are also affected as a secondary participant.

Don't let the anxiety vampires suck out the successes.

You work really hard to learn all you can about what the options are, who the players will be, what the day will look like, etc. You are in the background, making sure all the



wheels are spinning the way they need to so your child can be successful. This can feel very stressful and cause anxiety. Remember to stop and breathe. Your child can sense your stress. Don't let the

anxiety vampires suck out the successes and the joyful moments as your little one grows. Remember to celebrate the victories, large and small. These will ease your transition as you watch your child grow.

What can you do when friends and family treat your child like a baby?

On a slightly different note, here's one of the things young parents have mentioned to me over the years. While grappling with changes and watching their little ones grow and learn, friends and family sometimes cannot see what you see as a parent. What can you do when friends and family (grandparents – this next part is for you!) think of and treat your child like a baby? Perhaps he or she still wears diapers at four years of age or has a special diet of pureed foods... but that kid also loves dinosaurs and super heroes (completely age-appropriate).

As parents, you want the people in your life to understand and accept your child and celebrate his or her uniqueness. It is hard when those people only seem to see the areas where he or she is behind. You don't need pity. You need partners who think your child is as awesome as you do. This may require you to have some uncomfortable conversations.

Having uncomfortable conversations...

Be as honest and kind as you can. Let folks know how it makes you AND your child feel when viewed as less than. The conversations you have can start the transition of those potential partners. It can change the lens of how they view your child now and will interact with your child in the future. Learning to be brave and have uncomfortable conversations is a skill to be developed over time. As you go forth, advocating for your child, it is a critical skill to have.

You got this!



We can help with
transition to preschool.
call 800.578.2592



La Edición Temprana

una publicación de Matrix Centro de Recursos Familiares • Primavera 2019

La Edición Temprana es una publicación de Matrix Centro de Recursos Familiares (FRC) programa como parte del sistema interinstitucional de los servicios de la intervención temprana para niños de California desde el nacimiento hasta los 36 meses. Nuestro personal de FRC está aquí para proporcionar información y apoyo para ayudarle a cuidar de su bebé. Información adicional y recursos también están proveídos en un área designada en la sección recién nacido a tres en nuestro sitio de web, www.matrixparents.org.

NACIMIENTO A 3

Paso a Paso y Arriba Ellos Crecen

BY NORA THOMPSON

Como padres de los pequeños, se están familiarizando con el cambio. La transición de Early Start a Preescolar es la primera de muchas transiciones por las que pasará su hijo. Una vez que el preescolar haya pasado, estarás viendo programas de jardín de infantes. Luego, en un abrir y cerrar de ojos, su hijo pasará a la escuela primaria, luego a la escuela secundaria, y luego...

¿Qué impacto tienen estos grandes cambios ... estas transiciones...tienen en usted como adulto?

Esto puede parecer lejano, pero cada uno de estos movimientos implica una transición. Matrix ha creado recursos y apoyos para ayudarles a usted y a su hijo a manejar estos grandes cambios cuando surjan. Lo que quiero abordar es el impacto que estos grandes cambios ... estas transiciones ... tienen en usted como adulto. Estos cambios son duros pero manejables. Aprenderá a ajustarse y adaptarse.

La gestión de la incertidumbre crea resiliencia.

Su pequeño experimentará varias transiciones importantes a medida que crezca. Cada evento ofrecerá nuevas oportunidades. Aprender a manejar la incertidumbre y establecer nuevas rutinas ayudará a su hijo a desarrollar resiliencia. Es importante recordar que su hijo no es la única persona afectada por estos cambios. Usted también se ve afectado como un participante secundario.

No deje que la ansiedad de los vampiros aspire los éxitos.

Trabaja realmente duro para aprender todo lo que pueda sobre cuáles son las opciones, quiénes serán los jugadores, como se ve el día, etc. Está en segundo plano, asegurándose de que todas las ruedas giren de la manera que necesitan

para que su hijo tenga éxito. Esto puede sentirse muy estresante y causar ansiedad. Recuerde detenerse y respirar. Su hijo puede sentir su estrés. No deje que la ansiedad de los vampiros aspire los éxitos y los momentos felices a medida que su pequeño crece. Recuerde celebrar las victorias, grandes y pequeñas. Esto facilitará su transición mientras observa a su hijo crecer.

¿Qué puede hacer cuando los amigos y familiares tratan a su hijo como a un bebé?

En una nota ligeramente diferente, esta es una de las cosas que los padres jóvenes me han mencionado a lo largo de los años. Mientras lidian con los cambios y observan a sus pequeños crecer y aprender, los amigos y la familia a veces no pueden ver lo que ven como padres. ¿Qué puede hacer cuando amigos y familiares (abuelos, esta próxima parte es para usted) piensa y trata a su hijo como a un bebé? Quizás él o ella todavía usa pañales a los cuatro años de edad o tiene una dieta especial de puré de alimentos ... pero a ese niño también le encantan los dinosaurios y los superhéroes (completamente apropiados para la edad).

Como padres, usted quiere que las personas en su vida comprendan y acepten a su hijo y celebren su singularidad. Es difícil cuando esas personas solo ven las áreas donde él o ella están detrás. No necesita lástima. Necesita compañeros que piensen que su hijo es tan increíble como usted. Esto puede requerir que tengas algunas conversaciones incómodas.

Tener conversaciones incómodas...

Séa tan honesto y amable como pueda. Deje que la gente sepa cómo se siente usted Y su hijo cuando se le ve como menos. Las conversaciones que tenga pueden iniciar la transición de esos socios potenciales. Puede cambiar la lente de cómo ven a su hijo ahora e interactuará con su hijo en el futuro. Aprender a ser valiente y tener conversaciones incómodas es una habilidad que se desarrolla con el tiempo. A medida que avanza, abogando por su hijo, es una habilidad crítica que debe tener.

¡Lo tiene!



Podemos ayudar con la
transición a la pre-escuela
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Our Annual Matrix Classic Charity Golf Tournament Returns Friday, April 26th, 2019

We want to thank our repeat sponsors, and welcome our many new sponsors, to our biggest fundraiser of the year!

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When local businesses partner with, and support Matrix through sponsorship, it makes a direct impact on our community. Not only does this support allow us to continue and grow our critical services to the families and children we serve, but it also brings awareness and creates spaces for inclusion in our community!

We still have sponsorship opportunities available! For \$300, your business can sponsor a hole. Do something fun at your designated hole, bring your company some great visibility, all while doing something amazing for your community!

Sponsorship information is available on our website:

www.matrixparents.org

Email Kristie Anderson at kristiea@matrixparents.org

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Make an Impact

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Having a child with special needs and being a family run business, we understand the importance of investing in our community. Supporting an organization that has come along side of us when we needed support and guidance is very important to us.

~ DuCharme Family

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO JOINED US AT HOPS AND HARMONIES!

Hops & Harmonies



The rain did not stop our Matrix community from gathering to enjoy a festive night out!

It was a dark and stormy night on Tuesday, February 26...but the mood at Lagunitas Tap Room in Petaluma was light and cheery. Over 100 people braved the pouring rains to enjoy an evening of music, pasta, and beer, making this year's Hops and Harmonies event a resounding success.

Thanks so much to Domenic Bianco & The SoulShake and Odd Man Out for donating their time and musical talents to create a lively, festive mood. A huge thanks to Lagunitas Brewing Company, who donated the space and all the proceeds from their beer sales. (They open up this space to non-profits every Monday and Tuesday throughout the year. What a great way to give back to the community!)

Of course, none of this would have happened without a ton of hard work by Kristie Anderson, Matrix Development Director, and her dedicated group of volunteers.

Hops and Harmonies brought our community together. People visited and renewed old friendships. Children ran around having fun. Families danced to the wonderful music...all while supporting Matrix. Thank you one and all!

Matrix News

TRANSITIONING TO A NEW WEBSITE!

Speaking of transitions, Matrix will soon launch a new website (still at www.matrixparents.org). It will have a new look and feel and will be equally wonderful on your computer, pad, or mobile phone. We have been dreaming of having a website that is beautiful, fast, and easy to use. Our new website accomplishes these goals and more.

We are very grateful to **Paloma Patiño** and her team at **West County Net** for all the work they have done to make this dream a reality.

West County Net is a website design, website development, and digital strategy firm located in Sonoma County.

New Hires

ERIKA SANDERS, PARENT ADVISOR



We are happy to welcome Erika Sanders to our Matrix team. Erika lives in Sonoma County with her family and is currently working towards a master's degree in Environmental Science. Her hobbies are gardening, hiking, and identifying native plants. Erika is enjoying our Matrix community and feels honored to work with Matrix families as a Parent Advisor.

BIRGIT SWITENKI, PARENT ADVISOR



Birgit Switenki, our newest Parent Advisor, grew up and currently resides in Marin County. She has two sons, and her elder son has special needs. While working as a clinical social worker, Birgit worked with individuals with brain injury, stroke, and spinal cord injury. She is excited to assist other parents who have children with special needs.



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COMING THIS FALL

- Advocating for Your Child with Special Needs
- Abogando por su Estudiante con Necesidades Especiales
- The IEP Form: One Page at a Time
- El Formulario IEP: Una Página a la Vez

Trainings are held in both English and Spanish at several locations in Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties.

NETWORKER

Transitioning Issue • Spring 2019

Our mission: To empower families of children with special needs to successfully understand and access the systems that serve them.

Nuestra misión: Capacitar a las familias de niños con necesidades especiales para entender y acceder a los sistemas que los sirven.

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