Partnering Together

Spring, 2008
Southern Edition

"The Myth of the Bad Kid"

Six-year-old Jimmy is having trouble in school. As a first grader, he already has a reputation among the teachers as a "bad kid." He spends most of his school day sitting in the corner or the principal's office. With 30 other children in his class, the teacher has little time for Jimmy. He isn't learning anything in the classroom, and he has trouble making friends.

We all have memories of the "bad kid" in our class - the child who was always in trouble and often alone. We tend to blame this kind of behavior on a lack of discipline or a bad home. We say the child was spoiled, abused, or "just trying to get attention." But these labels are often misguided. Many of these children suffer from serious emotional problems that are not the fault of their caregivers or themselves.

Myths about children's behavior make it easy to play the "blame game" instead of trying to help children like Jimmy. Often, in making assumptions, we "write off" some children. However, with understanding, attention and appropriate mental health services, many children can succeed - they can have friends, join in activities and grow up to lead productive lives. To help children with emotional problems realize their potential, we must first learn the facts about the "bad kid."

- **Children do not misbehave or fail in school just to get attention.** Behavior problems can be symptoms of emotional, behavioral or mental disorders, rather than merely attention-seeking devices. These children can succeed in school with understanding, attention and appropriate mental health services.
- **Behavioral problems in children can be due to a combination of factors.** Research shows that many factors contribute to children's emotional problems including genetics, trauma and stress. While these problems are sometimes due to poor parenting or abuse, parents and family are more often a child's greatest source of emotional support.
- **Children's emotional, behavioral and mental disorders affect millions of American families.** An estimated 14-20 percent of all children have some type of mental health problem. Jimmy and the many others mislabeled as "bad kids" can use the support of their communities.

Source: http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/Ca-0021/default.asp retrieved on April 21, 2008

'Life is a Highway'

Family Partnership's

Annual Parent & Caregiver Retreat

November 7-8, 2008

Best Western Inn

Learn the art of creating positive Family-Professional Partnerships!

Saturday, August 16, 2008

10am – 3pm in Springfield

For more information, contact Carla

or to register visit:

http://familyprofessionalpartnerships.eventbrite.com

Keiki Cards is a nonprofit based in Hawaii whose mission is to send out handmade greeting cards weekly to children who have life threatening illnesses throughout the US and Canada. Their goal is to give the child support through the mail and to let the child know that someone is thinking of them. Children range in age from infant to eighteen. Keiki Cards will also send monthly birthday gifts and holiday gifts. Children are referred to Keiki Cards by friends, family, school teachers, social workers, churches and families through the Internet.

Visit their website at: www.keikicards.org

Check out Family Partnership's exclusive listserv for families of children with special needs and professionals serving them!

To subscribe, send an email to:

MO-FP-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Sharing Our Strengths

- *Are you the parent of a child with developmental disabilities or special health care needs?*
- *Do you feel like no one else understands the feelings and changes you are going through?*
- *Would you like to talk with another parent, family member, or self-advocate with a similar situation?*
- *Do you need information related to your child's (or your own) special needs?*

Sharing Our Strength's (SOS), is Missouri's parent to parent/peer support network for parents of children with developmental disabilities or special health care needs, individuals with disabilities, and professionals. You may have questions and concerns about dealing with your child's needs and your own feelings. You are not alone. We have been there. Let us be there for you.

For more information on locating peer support in your area, contact **Jane St. John** at SOS:

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