From the Desk of Janine Chittenden, CSHCS Program Supervisor

This fall, change is in the air. Lansing has been working diligently to bring Medicaid Health Plans to CSHCS enrollees who also have Medicaid. If this is you, or your child, do not miss the CSHCS POLICY and PROCEDURE CHANGES on pages six and seven. It outlines what is required of you, and describes the expanded services you will receive by being enrolled in a Medicaid Health Plan. It will also prepare you for making the required enrollment call to MIEnrolls.

Another change, we are sad to report is that due to funding challenges, your CSHCS Parent Liaison, Amy Fontaine, who also writes and edits “Special Kids Corner”, will be leaving us after the spring 2014 edition. She has done an amazing job collecting information and writing about community resources that serve children with special health care needs and their families. Our staff has learned so much from her and her children. Her compassion and skills are outstanding and she will be missed for what she has brought to us in emotional and educational growth. See her story about life with triplets in ‘The Parents Corner’ on page four, and an article entitled “Taking care of the Caregiver” which offers ideas of support and renewal for CSHCS families on page five.

We also want to let you know how much fun we had with you at the Allendale Park Parties this summer. From the many games, to the face painting, fire truck, splash pad and food tasting it was your children’s smiles and laughter that were the best! The turnout was amazing and we hope you enjoyed the summer fun as well.

Happy Fall to all our CSHCS families!

Continuous Improvement Award
The Children’s Special Health Care team was honored to receive the Ottawa County Health Department’s ‘Continuous Improvement Award’. The CSHCS team was chosen for their “depth of commitment to improving client experience”.

Your Ottawa County CSHCS Team (pictured left to right): Donovan Thomas, manager; Sandy Boven, manager; Laura Haiderer, RN; Leslie Ver Duin, RN; Mary Cushman, representative; Brenda Kempf, support staff; Janine Chittenden, supervisor; Amy Fontaine, parent liaison.
CSHCS Staff Contact List

Mary Cushman, CSHCS Representative
Phone  616 844-2366
Fax    616 846-1270
E-mail mcushman@miottawa.org

Laura Haiderer, CSHCS Nurse
Phone  616 844-2488
Fax    616 846-1270
E-mail lhaiderer@miottawa.org

Leslie Ver Duin, CSHCS Nurse
Phone  616 844-2977
Fax    616 846-1270
E-mail lverduin@miottawa.org

Brenda Kempf, Support Staff
Phone  616 844-2155
Fax    616 844-1778
E-mail bkempf@miottawa.org

Janine Chittenden, CSHCS Supervisor
Phone  616 844-2399
Fax    616 844-1778
E-mail jchittenden@miottawa.org

Although all staff members can assist you with any question or need, specialty areas are listed here:

Contact Mary for:  Annual Renewals; Adding Providers; Financial Concerns such as billing issues and significant income changes; Travel/lodging requests; and to schedule an appointment with your CSHCS nurse.

Contact Laura if you live in areas other than Grand Haven, Holland, or Zeeland and have questions or issues regarding: Coverage; Medical Information; Plans of Care; and Adding New Medical Diagnosis.

Contact Leslie if you live in Grand Haven, Holland, or Zeeland and have questions or issues regarding: Coverage; Medical Information; Plans of Care; and Adding New Medical Diagnosis.

Contact Brenda for changes in name, address, phone, e-mail, and insurance information, or to schedule an appointment with your CSHCS nurse.

Contact Janine for help with problems or questions that have not been able to be answered by other staff members.

Helpful CSHCS Contact Information

The CSHCS Family Center
Send an e-mail to:
fccyshcn@michigan.gov
or call:
The CSHCS Family Phone Line
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday -- Friday
1-800-359-3722

Family Support Network
The parent-to-parent support arm of the CSHCS Family Center
1-800-359-3722

CSHCS Online payment site:

Family-to-Family Health Information & Education Center (F2FHIEC)
www.briges4kids.org/fc
1-800-359-3722

F2FHIEC Parent & Professional Training Schedule:
http://www.bridges4kids.org/f2f/training.htm

The Children with Special Needs Fund
Online applications available at:
www.michigan.gov/csnfund
1-517-241-7420
For help with the application, call your local CSHCS office, or the CSHCS Family Center Phone Line
Your Opinion Matters!
CSHCS WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

We value your feedback as we continue to strive for excellence in providing service to our clients and families.

Please send us your ideas, comments, and critiques by contacting any staff member (see page 2), or send a confidential e-mail to our CSHCS parent liaison at: afontaine@miottawa.org.

Do We Have Your Correct E-mail Address?

CSHCS uses e-mail to keep families up-to-date about changes in policy or procedure, and upcoming community happenings.

You can also e-mail us to ask questions, discuss issues, or to request information and even forms. Help us save time and money so we can help even more families!

Please update your e-mail address today at: bkempf@miottawa.org.

CSHCS Allendale Accessible Playground Park Parties

We had a wonderful time with the families who were able to attend our summer park parties. It was a great opportunity for us to provide a fun day for our CSHCS families and to showcase the Allendale Community Park’s Accessible Playground.

If you haven’t had the chance, be sure to check out this beautiful park’s wonderfully accessible playground. It is a very special place for all! Check out these pictures of the fun!

We wish to thank these generous sponsors for making the parties a huge success: The Allendale Community Foundation; The Michigan Department of Community Health, The Children’s Special Health Care Services Family Center; The Ottawa County Health Department; and Meijer of Grand Haven. Thank you also to the Allendale Fire Department for adding to the fun for all!
Life with my special needs triplets can be demanding yet rewarding, exasperating yet hilarious, and overwhelming yet fulfilling. We can be cruising along one minute, feeling like I have a handle on things, and then something will happen that reminds me that life with special children is different. Different without judgment of good or bad. Just different.

When the kids were around six or seven, I decided to take them to the circus. Outings were never easy, but I was determined to be a 'mom who took her kids to the circus'. Excitedly, I recruited my mom to accompany us, even though she is not a big fan of the circus. I kept our destination a surprise, anticipating the kids’ excited reaction.

The big day finally arrived. We stopped for lunch on the way, and I decided to give the kids some hints about where we were heading. After many guesses, they finally discovered that we were headed to the circus. Immediately, Emily offered, “But Jolie is afraid of clowns”. Figuring it was Emily herself that was feeling afraid, I explained how clowns were really funny and that they wouldn’t come near where we’d be sitting.

A chorus of desperation erupted from the back of the van, “Oh No”, and “Let’s go home”, and “We don’t want to go to the circus”. I explained with enthusiasm how much fun we would have and reminded them of their Disney Sing-A-Long circus movie which they loved. Though the chorus from the back of the van continued, I was still determined to be a mom who took her kids to the circus.

Finally, my mom, being the voice of reason, said “I really don’t think they want to go”, to which I dejectedly responded, “Fine, we won’t go to the circus!”. This time, the joyous chorus from the back yelled, “Yay! We don’t have to go to the circus!!!!” My mom and I laughed so hard tears streamed down my face.

Years later, we did finally make it to the circus when we accompanied Jolie’s classroom. The kids had a great time and hope to go again next year. However, when something comes up that is different about raising children with special needs, my mom and I just smile and say to each other’ “Yay! We don’t have to go to the circus!”.
Caring for the Caregiver

Flight attendants always instruct us to ‘Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others’. Of course this makes perfect sense, but as parents of special needs children know, it can be difficult to put yourself first. Caring for a child with special needs can take everything you have, and then some. Life can be so challenging that self-care gets placed at the end of a long list of ‘Things to Do’.

Putting your own needs toward the top of the list might even feel selfish, but it is actually the most self-less thing you can do for the ones you love. Taking care of yourself can give you the physical, emotional, and mental strength you need to deal with the often over-whelming demands of parenting a special needs child.

Here are a few self-care ideas-not to add to your burden-but to inspire you to carve out some time for yourself. The most important idea is that you think about what you need and give yourself permission to put yourself at the top of the list.

♦ Find the Humor:
Laughter really is the best medicine. Science has found that even forced laughter relieves stress and promotes healing. Try to find something to laugh about every day. Gilda’s Club Laugh Fest in GR will be hosting a special event for parents of children with special needs. Laugh Fest’s 2013 dates are March 7-17. Find more info at: laughfestgr.org

♦ Celebrate the Smallest Triumphs:
Both your’s and your child’s! Focusing on the moments of joy and the little successes can make you feel more powerful and give you the strength to keep reaching for the next ‘We did it!’.

♦ Count Your Blessings:
Being mindful of the things that are going well, or (thank goodness) aren’t going wrong, can help put a positive spin on the bleakest of days. Reflecting on life’s blessings and the things for which you are grateful can give you comfort amidst life’s chaos.

♦ Take Care of Your Health:
Physical Health: Make and keep those doctor and dentist appointments that we parents of special needs children all tend to put off. Eating healthfully will give you more energy and boost your immune system, and nothing beats exercise to boost your mood and health.

Mental Health: Seeking help from a professional to help with overwhelming stressors is not a sign of weakness, but one of strength. Counselors and religious clergy are trained to help you manage stress and to help you heal. Commonly used prescription medications are available as well. Only you and your doctor can decide what is right for you. Know your choices and keep your options open.

♦ Claim the Little Things:
A quick coffee break here, checking your e-mail there, taking a quick walk or a shower:) A few small things can be squeezed into a really hectic day, and doing them con-sciously will help you feel more cared for. Claiming these little things for yourself are small steps toward putting yourself at the top of the list.

♦ Find a Comrade in Arms:
◇ Talking to someone who is traveling your path, can help you feel less isolated and more understood, because let’s face it, unless someone walks a mile in your shoes, they just don’t get it.

◇ There are many support groups for parents with special needs children (check out the now forming OAC caregiver support group on page 10). To find one in your area check with your CSHCS nurses, the local papers, your child’s school, or on-line.

◇ There are many on-line support groups for special needs parents, as well as a number of excellent blogs.

◇ You can find information, inspiration, and comfort in books published just for parents of special needs children. More Than A Mom by A. Baskin and H. Fawcett is full of great advice.

♦ Take a Break:
Taking a break from caregiving may seem like an impossibility, but having a chance to rest and recharge is truly important for you, your child, and your family. Need help making this happen? See the respite article on page 10 to learn more about the respite services offered through Community Mental Health of Ottawa County.

♦ Ask For and Accept Help:
Overcoming a reluctance to ask for and accept help can bring relief beyond measure. Be prepared with a response to the question ‘Is there anything I can do to help’. People really do care and want to help, but often just don’t know what to do to help.

Take advantage of community resources that are available to families of children with special needs. Some fabulous resources are listed for you on pages 8-10. Your CSHCS nurses are also happy to help you find what you need for your family!
ATTENTION:
FAMILIES ENROLLED
IN BOTH
CSHCS & MEDICAID

Starting October 2012, many Michigan families who have children enrolled in both CSHCS and Medicaid will or have received written notice of the new requirement to join a Medicaid Health Plan (MHP). If this is your family, read on for important information and for tips on enrolling in a MHP through MIEnrolls (Michigan Enrolls).

We want to assure you that dual-enrollment in both Children’s Special Health Care Services and a Medicaid Health Plan (MHP) will not change the services covered by CSHCS.

Dual-enrollment will allow for expanded services for CSHCS clients through the MHP, such as:

• Help finding a primary care physician
• Help arranging medical care and treatment (including well checks and immunizations)
• Coordination of all medical care between specialists, primary care, and other providers.
• Access to outpatient mental health services
• Arrangement of travel to medical appointments, and mileage and lodging reimbursement.

Once you receive your MIEnrolls packet, choose your Medicaid Health Plan by calling MIEnrolls at 1-877-274-2737. MIEnrolls has specially trained staff to assist you in choosing the MHP that works best for you and your family.

Your five MHP choices in Ottawa County are: McLaren; Meridian; Molina; Priority Health; and United Healthcare.

⇒ Before you call, have a list of your child’s providers including doctors, specialists, supply companies, pharmacies, therapists, etc.

⇒ Here are some important questions to ask MIEnrolls when choosing your MHP:
  • Are my medical specialists in the plan?
  • Are my preferred pharmacy, lab and hospital in the plan?
  • What is the travel assistance procedure and guideline?
  • What happens if not all the medical providers are in the plan network?
  • When will enrollment start for the plan I choose?

Do not delay—If you fail to choose a MHP, one will be assigned for you.

For questions about MHP enrollment, call MIEnrolls at 1-877-274-2737 or call the CSHCS Family Center on the toll-free line at 1-800-359-3722.
A Message from Ottawa County CSHCS
Regarding MHP Enrollment

After you enroll in a Medicaid Health Plan, you will receive a letter from Ottawa County CSHCS providing further detail about how CSHCS will work with your new MHP. Thank you for your patience as we work together to make this a smooth and successful transition. We look forward to continuing to serve you and your family.

A Reminder: Your Ottawa County CSHCS Representative and CSHCS Nurses are still here to help you find community resources that are available to your family (such as Early ON, WIC, Children’s Special Needs Fund, etc.). Please call us if we can assist you in finding help for your family.

Will I still be able to take my child to the same doctors and hospitals?

The Medical Health Plans (MHP’s) must make sure your child can keep getting care from their established doctors and hospitals. You will be able to continue to use your child’s current doctors, specialists, and hospitals.

If an out-of-network doctor or provider is not willing to coordinate with your MHP’s case management team regarding care coordination, prior authorization issues and medical management activities, then the MHP will consult with you and your care team to discuss transitioning the CSHCS/MHP enrollee to an appropriate network provider.

More providers serving children with special needs are being signed-up and added to MHP provider lists daily. Your doctors and hospitals will be asked to join your MHP. This is why it is important for you to contact your new MHP after your enrollment to give them a list of your providers.

How can I make sure my child receives the care he or she needs during these changes?

Contact your new MHP right away to:
1) discuss your child’s needs and ongoing medical care;
2) tell them about any upcoming appointments, and
3) provide them with a list of all your child’s providers so that the MHP can work to contract with them.

Will the coverage that I receive now stay the same?

The Medicaid Health Plans must cover the same basic services that your Straight Medicaid did. However, some things that may be different are:

- Brands of medicine or supplies your child uses
- Supply companies
- Drug stores
- Therapists
- Hearing Aid companies
- Vision companies

Can I change my MHP if I decide that another one is a better fit for my child’s care needs?

You will have 90 days from the first day of enrollment to change to a different MHP. However, until the start date for the new MHP, the current plan will be responsible for all covered services.

Families can also change plans during their annual open enrollment period. Each year you will receive a letter from MiEnrolls prior to the open enrollment period reminding you of the opportunity to change your plan.

To change your MHP during the initial 90 days of your plan or during annual open enrollment, call MiEnrolls at 1-877-274-2737.
Play n Learn is a free program designed for families with children from birth through age five. Each session will be based on a children’s book and will include:

- Story
- Finger plays
- Creative art experiences
- Educational play
- Snack centered on the story

Each family will receive a children’s book to take home. Information on child development and reading readiness will be available for parents.

For questions, and exact locations call:
1-877-702-8600 ext. 4019 or ext. 4106.

For Bilingual Playgroups call:
1-877-702-8600 ext. 4033.

November 2012 Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. Nov 2*</td>
<td>10:00-11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>St. Francis de Sales</td>
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<td>9:30-10:30, 10:45-11:45, 6:00-7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Holland</td>
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<td>Tues. Nov 13</td>
<td>9:30-10:30, 10:45-11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Loutit Library</td>
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<td>Grand Haven</td>
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<td>Wed. Nov 14</td>
<td>9:30-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Spring Lake Library</td>
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<td>Spring Lake</td>
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<td>Thurs. Nov 15</td>
<td>6:00-7:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Springview Elem.</td>
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<td>Allendale</td>
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<td>Fri. Nov 16</td>
<td>10:00-11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Maplewood Elem.</td>
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<td>Holland</td>
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<td>Mon. Nov 19</td>
<td>9:00-10:00, 10:15-11:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Maplewood Elem.</td>
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<td>Holland</td>
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<td>Thurs. Nov 15*</td>
<td>9:30-10:30a.m.</td>
<td>Early Childhood Cntr.</td>
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<td>Zeeland</td>
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<td>Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues. Nov 20*</td>
<td>9:30-10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Pine Creek Elem.</td>
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<td>Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Nov 21</td>
<td>9:30-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Spring Lake Library</td>
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<td>Spring Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Nov 26</td>
<td>9:30-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>West ECC</td>
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<td>Coopersville</td>
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<td>Tues. Nov 27*</td>
<td>9:30-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Third Reformed Church</td>
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<td>Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. Nov 30</td>
<td>9:00-10:00, 10:15-11:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Early Childhood Cntr.</td>
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Play 'n Learn Playgroups are brought to you by: Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, Early On Michigan, Great Start, and Parents as Teachers. *Events are made possible through ‘Ready for School ’ a Holland/Zeeland/Hamilton initiative ensuring all children enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed.

CSHCS is on the Web!
Ottawa County CSHCS has a new website. You’ll find complete information on CSHCS, copies of Special Kid’s Corner newsletters, and links to many useful resources. Find us at: www.miottawa.org/health.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT CSHCS
Do you know other families who have children with special healthcare needs? If so, please tell them about Children’s Special Health Care Services.

CSHCS covers over 2,600 medical diagnoses! You can help us spread the word about CSHCS by telling other families, your child’s school district, teachers, therapists, doctors and specialists, and everyone else you know. At CSHCS, we want to help as many families as possible!
Pathways, MI

The mission of Pathways, MI is to “provide life-transforming services to children, families and our community”. Pathways, MI was formed in 2006 through the merger of Child and Family Services of Western Michigan and Children’s Resource Network, Inc. Pathways, MI represents over 80 years of experience serving communities throughout eleven Western Michigan counties.

Pathways, MI offers programs to support parents and strengthen families, including:
- Strengthening Families
- Parenting Wisely
- Circle of Parents
- Nurturing Parenting
- Love & Logic

One Pathways, MI program, the Great Start Regional Resource Center, provides a database to help parents find licensed childcare and early education providers at: www.greatstartconnect.org. You can search to find a provider with knowledge and experience in the area of your child’s special needs.

If you require additional assistance to find care for your special needs child, contact Colleen Macy at: 1-800-396-0241 ext.143.

Pathways also offers many other valuable services and programs in the areas of:
- Counseling
- Foster care
- Adoption
- Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Juvenile Community Justice
- Strengthening Youth
- Parent and Family Groups
- Community Efforts toward the Prevention of Child Abuse & Substance Abuse
- And more…!

To learn more about the specific programs and services offered by Pathways, MI call: 1 800 396-0241, or find them on the web at: www.pathwaysmi.org.

To sign up for Pathways, MI’s free e-newsletter ‘What We’re Doing to Help Area Families’, or to read the past issues, go to pathwaysmi.org and click on the “Information” heading. This newsletter is full of valuable information, helpful resources, and a list of upcoming events/classes/trainings.

Attention Parents & Caregivers:

In an effort to meet the needs of parents and families with children who have special needs, conversations have begun and professional development is in place to better support early learning and care programs throughout Ottawa County.

The Great Start to Quality Western Resource Center (a program of Pathways, MI) is working to offer training to early learning and care programs that will give them an opportunity to increase knowledge of caring for children with special needs, foster more effective communication with parents and families, and increase the quality of care in their programs.

For more information about these trainings, or to register, please visit www.greatstartconnect.org. Or to speak with a Great Start to Quality staff member about high quality learning and care programs, please call (800) 396-0241, ext. 121.

Whole Family Connection
On the Web at:
wholefamilyottawa.com

Whole Family Connection serving Ottawa County is an interactive web-based program that helps you identify what you need for your family, and then links you to available services. Whole Family Connection is free, easy, and completely private.

Whole Family Connection gives families access to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health care</th>
<th>Special Needs Programs</th>
<th>Safety Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-natal Care</td>
<td>Child Care/Preschool</td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Activities</td>
<td>School Preparation</td>
<td>Parent Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>Faith-Based Programs</td>
<td>And More!</td>
</tr>
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Whole family connection is brought to you by a collaboration of many local agencies. It is being headed up by the Great Start Collaborative of Ottawa County and Pathways, MI.
Respite Services

Community Mental Health (CMH) of Ottawa County provides respite services to families of adults and children with developmental disabilities and children with serious emotional problems. Respite care services are designed to offer families the opportunity for a break from care giving responsibilities.

While the overall goal of respite is to support primary caregivers so that families can keep their child living at home, respite can also help to strengthen the whole family’s health and well-being. Respite services can provide relief from stress and the opportunity for rest and rejuvenation. They can also provide valuable time to attend to other family relationships.

Respite care can be used on a regular or occasional basis, depending on your family’s needs, and can be provided by a family member, friend, or skilled care provider.

To learn more about respite services or to find out if your family qualifies contact:

Michael Berghuis, Respite Specialist
Community Mental Health of Ottawa County
616 393-5687
mberghuis@miottawa.org

*Please note that CMH respite is different from CSHCS respite. CSHCS respite is for children who require at home nursing care due to complex health care needs.

Ottawa Area Center Caregiver Support Group

The Ottawa Area Center is in the process of forming a Caregiver Support Group. The group will be open to anyone who cares for and/or loves a child with special needs.

The mission of the group is to “share knowledge and experiences on caring for special needs students in a setting developed to enrich, empower and encourage”.

Evening meetings will be held at OAC throughout the school year. Parents and caregivers will gather to hear a guest speaker, share knowledge and experiences of caring for a child with special needs, and to support parents who may be struggling with issues.

An encouraging atmosphere will allow parents and OAC staff members to discuss caregiver related topics and to openly exchange ideas about caring for special needs students of all ages.

If you are interested in attending the group, or you would like more information, please contact Michelle Jaarsma at OAC: 1-877-702-8602 ext. 4600.

Michigan’s Family Support Subsidy Program (FSS)

Michigan’s FSS program provides financial assistance to families that include a child with severe developmental disabilities.

Families are able to use the monthly FSS payment of $222.11 for special expenses incurred while caring for their child. The intent is to help make it possible for children with developmental disabilities to remain with or to return to their birth or adoptive families.

To Qualify:
- The child must be younger than 18 years of age and live in the family home in Michigan.
- The family's most recently filed Michigan income tax form must show a taxable income of $60,000 or less.
- The child must be recommended for an educational eligibility category of: Severe Cognitive Impairment; Severe Multiple Impairment; or Autism Spectrum Disorder by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team of the local public or intermediate school district.
- Children with autism spectrum disorder must be receiving special education services in a program for students with autism spectrum disorder, or in a program for students with severe cognitive impairment or severe multiple impairments.

For an FSS application, or to learn more about the program, contact Valerie Renkema, FSS coordinator for Ottawa County, at: 616 494-5544 or by e-mail at: vrenkema@miottawa.org.