



Dare to Dream
Families Recommendations
2003

Dare to Dream—

- A community/world where individuals are provided the opportunity to learn and live up to their potential.
- **On the Day the Dream Comes True For Families**
 - Needed services are available for all.
 - Having all the information needed to help our special needs children become independent adults.
 - Not having to worry about financially supporting our children through the process.
 - Not having to give up my child so that he/she can receive the help needed to succeed in life.
 - Society would want to help our kids without hesitation.
 - All families will have equal opportunities for their disabled or special needs child.
 - Systems in Rural Areas equal to those in Metro areas.
 - All families will be equals in all processes.
 - All individuals will have access to a living environment, which fit their needs and desires.
 - When every disabled person is able to function normally in every day society.
 - Families will have access to and the availability of a full range of teaching strategies which best suits the child strengths and weaknesses. In other

words, all children will have an individualized education plan.

- For all the families to understand what's going on with their child.
- 'Child In Need of Assistance' will mean exactly that.
- There would be no abused or hungry children, or children in drug environments.
- That the four children I was given to raise can be successfully educated to be able to be socially independent and employed and not need state financial assistance all of their lives.
- When parents can 'parent full-time' instead of the families working two jobs to keep a roof over their heads.
- That every child with a disability will be able to receive some type of waiver service, which will help each child and family, grow and overcome disabilities.
- Parents of special needs consumers are usually primary care providers and need the support of the community as well as the consumer.
- Staff availability and higher pay for respite workers. Right now part of the pay goes to the organization providing the worker. Please help families with this. The non-disabled child needs attention, too!
- All families will have equal access to all facilities in the community.

- Health insurance for every person in the family.
- When children get to live at home and receive the help that they need.
- That families get the help they need to help their child.
- All Children need to have all of their needs meet.
- That mental illness is seen as a real illness and is given equal parity in insurance, care, support, funding, and attitude as any other illness.
- For services to help the child/children regardless of payment.
- All families would have enough food, a home, health care and no fear of feeling inferior to any other family.
- Peace for all.
- No kind of abuse takes place.
- All families have money enough for all basic needs and care.
- Those families don't feel like they are alone.
- Positive words are spoken to families.
- All children and parents feel understood and supported.
- Where families get the level of assistance they need without going through hours of work and months of red tape to get that assistance.
- When families do not feel penalized because they have a child with a disability.

- Families get to stay together and get the help they need no matter what the disability.
- When families do not feel penalized because they have a child with a disability.
- When families feel the system is allowing their child to achieve their dreams while achieving their dreams while achieving their highest level of independence.
- Understanding from individuals outside the family and the learning center.
- For families to be able to get the help and tools they need for the care of their child.
- The training to teach our children without income (work) interfering.
- Help with parent stress toward each other. So families don't break up.
- To give more attention to families in need whether financially, socially, or help with disabilities.
- Make more programs and systems available to help the "underdogs" succeed. Bring everyone up the same.
- My child will be able to communicate and freely get around our home by herself.
- Both my children will understand each other's needs and differences.
- Our house will be free of unruly acts of destruction, uncontrolled tandems, and a half hour of total peace and quite.

- That families have the resources readily available to meet the needs of their children whether they are social needs or not.
- Families work with the school and other government aids to help children achieve their potential.
- Families and their children with special needs will be embraced in the school and community.
- Schools will have the funding and skills needed to provide for all students.
- Communities will address accessibility to parks, buildings, programs, etc., so all community members can enjoy and participate.
- That I could feel happy that my child's needs are being met, and not be sad and stressed all the time.
- That our children who are growing up with free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
- Everyone can learn to be accepting of all people and then teach these values to their children so society would be far more accepting of our children.
- No one will have to justify why their kids deserve special attention and education.
- We are able to have our child taught so that he can grow, learn and function to the best that he can be and become a productive member of society that can be accepted and lead a meaningful life.
- To have all the needs meet for all families whether it be childcare, education, emotional. All met

without the red tape associated with trying to get their needs met.

- That (parents) opinions are respected.
- Families will spend more time together bonding growing and learning from each other.
- Adequate- inexpensive health care.
- Educational training programs will be readily available for first time parents and caregivers.
- Substance abuse free home - parent seeks treatment for substance abuse instead of paying only court fines. Children will be safe.
- Parents get to parent their child while receiving the services and treatment that they need.
- The end of violence; the end of the threat of violence; extended families would remain close - knit and help each other to not need help from the court system.
- Children will be safe.
- Parents will have the resources available to meet their children's needs.
- The importance of parenting and family are recognized and a parent's employer will not hinder a parent from attending/participating in there Childs health care, school activities, etc.
- Better access to information on mental health services.

- To have more information and services available to families and let them know what is out there to help their children, even in small towns.
- More one-on-one time with the child, and parents in the home.
- Systems will do what needs to be done to keep a family intact instead of separating families and then simply working towards reunification.
- There will be resources that families will be able to go to, find out the rights their children have under the law - the resources will be available for their needs and coordinators/advocates who can put it all together for them. It is sometimes over whelming for parents to find out or make contact with all available programs.
- Process and paperwork is simplified and easy to understand.
- Incentives are provided for communities to offer employment to individuals with disabilities.
- Services and schools are effective in teaching functional transition skills for independence and employment.
- That all families will have enough money and resources to live a happy, rewarding life. Kids don't come to school hungry, dads don't lose their jobs, utility bills are paid, and no child or spouse is abused.

- Our children will be accepted in all aspects of their lives the way “we as families” accept them.
 - Families will not have to fight to obtain services for children who need them. Schools will not label children - schools and communities will make every effort to include disabled children as “full citizens”.
 - Stricter background checks on teachers and aides and others working with children before hiring.
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- **On the Day the Dream Comes True In Schools:**
 - Resources are available for all.
 - All children will succeed in school.
 - Resources are available as needed for all.
 - Teachers are paid five times more than they are now.
 - Schools never have to worry where the money will come from or how to budget with less money every year.
 - Schools and teachers are responsible for the future of our children. We rely on them to ensure our future, yet education is one of the first items to be cut.

- Special education programs will be expanded in the school to help all children in need.
- Schools will have the funding and skills needed to provide for all students.
- Every child will get the education they deserve regardless of special education or regular education.
- Education programs will be readily available for first time parents and caregivers, also more support groups for parents and children.
- All schools will have staff and resources for teaching disabled students.
- Assistance for working through alternative assessments.
- They will not be concerned about what it will take financially to educate children in the method that is best for each "kid" individually.
- There are sufficient supports for educators, administrators, parents, and students.
- Every child is able to receive the help they need because the schools have the services and tools needed to provide it.
- Adequate training and monetary support for teachers to be able to use multiple strategies when teaching.
- Teachers have all help they need to work with all children in the school and they will have the knowledge and resources to help all children.

- There would be enough funding to help students that struggle, even in special education.
- 18-1 teacher is not a good ratio for special needs students.
- Financial assistance will be available to small private schools who's small size is able to provide all day resources rather than 1-2 hours per week.
- When students are treated with respect and kindness not only by their peers but also by teachers and administrators.
- That all children are treated the same and given the same opportunities.
- Children are integrated into all regular activities in school, both social and involved with sporting activities.
- Team members come to an agreement to support the student through objectives that are reasonable for their ability yet challenge the student a bit. Give the student a choice and make them a team member as well as teachers, administrators, families, and service systems.
- Make changes if necessary, make it easier to open enroll students.
- Peer support helps.
- The money will be available to do all the things that the government is asking them to do.
- More money for learning and teaching.

- Schools have the resources to teach and direct the mentally ill student as a person who matters and not a number on a data sheet.
- For all the funding needed to make it possible for them to thrive and have a wraparound process for schools.
- If we want the best kids in the world, we must provide the funding necessary.
- There would be money enough to purchase learning items for all students. Or schools would be updated to teach our students at the newest levels. No child will get left behind.
- Students feel safe.
- School/parents working together.
- That plenty of help is available for the children.
- Associates are a part of the school system.
- Knowledge and tools for accommodations and modification are readily available and each teacher is trained to use the tools.
- When each child is viewed as a unique individual instead of a child with a disability who cannot do certain things.
- Have different type of techniques; tools/materials available to meet the needs of the child instead of trying to force a child utilize the materials available within the school district. Work on the skills the child has, not what they cannot do.

- Pay for teachers is increased so that qualified individuals do not turn their backs on going into this profession. It is hard to understand how athletes or actors make millions, when the people aside from parents who helped them along the way make a small percent of that.
- For parents and teachers to have more communication. That interaction in the school with the parent and teachers and other children, not to be limited to materials.
- For schools and teachers to get funds and materials to create a better learning environment and to guide our children, whether disabled or not, in to a much higher knowledge bracket, strengthen their brains.
- Schools have the equipment and training needed to teach all children. Include all children with their peers.
- Treat parents as partners in education.
- Schools will treat each child as an individual, not like the kid from last year that had similar problems.
- That classrooms be designed to specifically meet the needs of children who are for example ADHD, ADD, and ODD. In order to further help these children, allow qualified high school students to earn credits by helping younger special needs children.

- Schools support their educators. Work one-on-one and learn new strategies to help children continue to learn.
- Educators will have the skills needed to address the needs of all students, funding will be provided as needed as long as student progress to their ability.
- Families become an involved partner in their child's education, working with the educator.
- Parents, educators and service providers will work together for the benefit of the student.
- They would understand his problems and provide support and a positive environment for him.
- Our schools will be staffed with certified special education teachers and Para educators who will be well compensated for their time, attention, and devotion to our children.
- They will have all the resources they need to promote effective education.
- Trained associates in all classrooms; active buddy systems; willingness to learn about disabilities and the flexibility to implement what they have learned to use it in the classrooms.
- To have enough teachers, associates, staff to meet the needs of all students.
- To have all staff knowledgeable of all laws governing special education.
- Work hand in hand with the families to educate all students.

- Quality trained associates to help teachers and students achieve their highest abilities and goals.
- There will be emotionally/socially healthy environments in the school.
- Staff have caring warm relationships with students, families and each other.
- Schools will be able to meet the needs of behavior-disordered children. For example, some of the schools I've been involved with do not offer a BD room, therefore my client had to attend an alternative school.
- They would be better suited or prepared to care for the melting pot of children's culture languages and behavior. Teachers would have enough resources to work with and be prepared for many diverse families.
- Schools will be safe.
- Children will be taught using methods that match their learning style.
- Teacher to student ratio will be appropriate.
- The value and importance of the teacher's job will be acknowledged.
- Resources will be available to meet the educational needs of all children.
- More teachers to teach all kids.
- More school time for the child's individual needs on a one on one basis.

- Money will no longer be an issue that stops progress and services or keeps borderline kids away from services.
- Process and paperwork is simplified and easy to understand.
- Knowledge, experience and professional success are rewarded.
- Financial support is provided for necessary professional development with a focus on how to enact and employ change. District size doesn't effect school's financial situation.
- There is enough money to allow all probabilities for learning. Field trips, new textbooks, etc... All teachers are teaching because they want kids to learn.
- All educators will open their arms to teach our special kids with special needs in the way they will learn best. They will welcome all students and will be aware and will act upon the fact that we are not all the same and do not learn in the same way.
- Schools will teach to fit/accommodate each child's learning style or ability in a way that doesn't stigmatize children who receive special services.
- Higher wages/more resources for special education teachers and aids.
- Better disability awareness in the general education classroom. Especially in the secondary level.
- Administration support for volunteerism.

- Regular Ed. teachers better educated on accommodations in the classroom.
- Teachers need time to attend training. They also need time for mentoring and implementation of new ideas.
- Schools to focus on strengths.
- Mentors can be anyone, not just other teachers.
- There needs to be funding to support teacher training.
- Teachers need to have the opportunity to spend time with families.
- Funding for "traveling" training (with parents involved.)
- Transition planning needs to improve.
- Better access to information on mental health services.
- Parents need to get the transition information they need to understand educational opportunities after high school.
- More options need to be available to students with mental health issues at the post secondary level.
- Parents need more choices for post secondary education.
- Schools/Parents need to be made aware of post secondary opportunities.
- Schools and teachers need to understand and work together better and make informed decisions based on individual needs.

- Schools need to be more flexible in placement.
- Project Pride to every special education student/family.
- The new IEP form is good; we just need to make sure that the vision is truly what drives it.
- If you want the pot of gold you will need the label.
- When transitioning into adult system you have to have a label.
- Give students more choices in their careers.
- Do not push or make their decisions for them.
- Educate teachers on job choices.
- Job coaches need to be better advocates and salesmen.
- Transportation needs to be made safer for students.
- That small schools will remain so that communities in rural areas will survive and nurture their community members.
- Schools will provide quality education to provide future quality employees for the community.
- Students graduate ready to work. Schools realize the goal of education is not graduation- but just beginning at graduation all of that education was to prepare the student for life after graduation.

- **On the Day the Dream Comes True In Communities:**
 - Community services and support are available and provided to all families.
 - Communities will address accessibility to parks, buildings, programs, etc. So all community members can enjoy and participate.
 - Increase the number of special needs summer programs to assist with learning and developing our children.
 - A community where special needs children are treated equally.
 - These students reach adults, and then lead our communities because of the education they received from programs like this.
 - Prejudices are erased against people with disabilities.
 - Everyone will understand and accept all.
 - Communities will accept identification and diagnosis as easily as they recognize childhood illness.
 - All individuals are independent, tax paying citizens to the best of their abilities.
 - Community accepts and supports disabled persons in their every day life.
 - Adequate services including transportation for all people who live in the community.

- For the communities to know how to help and understand families who have children who have mental and emotional issues.
- We will all work together to help our children and families.
- Communities will have an obvious concern for all children through out a community with single and multiple school systems.
- All communities will work together for the good of all their citizens.
- When people look at one another as individuals instead of stereotypes; money, race, religion, disabilities will not be who/what you are judged by.
- That children are educated through school that people with disabilities are just like them and learn to accept them as a person and not a freak and these children can educated their parents, grandparents that we are all the same and they have a right to a education, employment (not sheltered work shops) and a right to live in the community just like you and I.
- When all components (teaching skills) of the community services interact well. The child or adult has a staff person who is supported by the community - stores, organizations, families and schools.
- The medical community also plays a huge roll. Support means the most to the consumer and

family. Hopefully the consumer can be an important part of the community and has the skills to work in the community.

- Educational facilities will be available (with adequate space and personnel) to meet the needs of the community.
- To keep local school in the communities. Small schools do provide many services and are needed for communities and families to survive.
- When the mentally ill co-exist.
- All services for all children regardless if disabled or not. Provide funding for community groups to keep kids involved and not out in gangs-drugs etc...
- All people will work together to help one another- not only in times of need/crisis but for everyday concerns.
- Each person to feels comfortable enough to wave and say hi to everyone they meet.
- Communities strive economically.
- Every one looks out for everyone- children included. No violence.
- When understanding of rights are listened too.
- Support is not a chore, but a willing act. The community is involved in learning more about disabilities and everyone takes responsibility.
- Make individuals with disabilities feel welcome in participating in all activities within the community - i.e.- various lessons, classes, group activities, day

care, etc... Peer groups - general education/undertaking of people who do not have knowledge/understanding of what other peoples' needs are and what they can do to make changes within their part of the community.

- That a child with a learning or developmental disability is giving the same chances as an individual without a disability.
- To have the communities to be informed and educated on the needs of our special children. So when a child sees someone with special needs they are friendly and treat the special child with respect and help them. And not to be scared.
- It would be nice to involve community with family and school issues. The more people who are involved causes more communityness and less of a government problem. More help/less stress.
- All buildings and restrooms will be accessible to all.
- There will be a place for every child and adult no matter what the difficulty or needs are.
- The community will have a positive supervised after school and weekend hang out spot for children and teens with and without disabilities.
- Every one in the community works together to help children. Don't have one part of the community have all the decision making for a child and for children's programs.

- Families and children from all backgrounds, life experiences, disabled and non-disabled are equally included and embraced.
- That our children will be truly safe in our schools.
- Schools cannot police themselves on abuse issues, the police must be called to investigate these matters. Make it so that when we tell our children that they can trust their teachers with any secret (abuse, bullying, drugs) that they will not have to fear them as abusers. That very intense background checks will be done on anyone working with children.
- The benefit of employing and servicing those with disabilities is automatically understood and embraced.
- Everything is handicap accessible.
- People will learn to step in and help where needed. Also to have everyone accepted no matter how he or she act or what they look like.
- To have families schools and service systems work together to promote a positive out come for next generation.
- More activities directed towards kids with special needs.
- More after school programs, groups, clubs, or activities will be offered to children. Communities will take pride by keeping buildings, schools, proprieties, and parks clean.

- More funding for libraries, more funds will be directed towards developing appropriate social development for children. Educationally focused day care programs and outreach programs that don't charge a fee or membership.
- It takes a village to raise a child. Everyone is held accountable to help the children in the community.
- Everyone will be safe.
- After school and evening day care for children whose parents work, especially 2nd shift.
- Utilities will not cost so much money that people cannot afford the basics of life.
- Everyone will have equal access to quality health care including mental health and substance abuse.
- To have more than one therapist for special areas so they can have more time with the child. That if services are needed, the child gets them no matter what the age. The sooner you start, the better.
- Acceptance, understanding and inclusion of all people regardless of disability.
- Graduates are prepared for self-care and are employable.
- Future leaders are encouraged and retained within the community.
- Everyone is safe from crime and violence.
- Everyone will accept all people the same.
- Services will be readily available to meet the needs of all the members of the community.

- Better understanding of special needs children and adults by educating the public.
 - Voc Rehab needs to know more options for students-post secondary.
 - Voc Rehab and schools need to work together. Communities need to support summer employment opportunities; also job coaching (funding).
 - Social Security benefit planners available at all levels and in all communities.
 - More advocates needed across the state; even in the smallest community there should be a family advocate.
 - Expand PEC and Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health program; have them work together more. They both do good things and need to work together.
 - Better collaborations with CPC's.
 - Quality universal pre-schools and day care (help kids stay out of Special education).
 - Head start needs to be inclusive not exclusive.
 - Empowerment needs more funds. Process needs to be simplified and creative.
 - Legislators need to provide tax incentives for businesses to offer more work opportunities for special needs people.
- **On the Day the Dream Comes True In Service Systems:**

- They had the resources and staff available to meet the needs of all children and families.
- Needed services are available for all.
- The knowledge and awareness of the various services available. You should not have to hunt and research for information.
- More money instead of cutbacks, to serve the needs of all their clients.
- Everyone will work together in the pursuit of what's best for families.
- Adequate Research and funding is available.
- Service providers are able to perform their job because the funding is available to provide them the tools needed.
- Adequate money to provide services.
- To have all the help you need.
- All services will work collaboratively to benefit the child. There should be no boundary or battles. I dream that service systems would have the funds necessary to protect children and support families in need.
- There will be an abundance of funding so that there are ample amounts of staff and supplies in needed areas.
- Parents, teacher's, service providers all need to work together with state and local and federal government to guarantee that no child is left

behind. And everyone be accountable to each child no matter what their disability.

- DHS case management, Home Health Care, SCL and respite workers, Children at home or institutions and organizations are there to support not blame. Goals are achieved and the consumer can work within the community. New goals can be set and the consumer can be productive.
- Money available to hire the needed personnel.
- That job availability will increase; budget cuts will not take away our jobs.
- That they get the recognition that they deserve.
- Lots of people available to support families.
- When children can go into adult services based on need, not disability. Counties do away with policies that individuals must fall into disability area before they will pay for services. Look at need.
- That funding will not only continue for things such as this conference, but also be increased, not only for this but for research as well.
- That they are dealing with people, not just a number, become sensitive to needs, not insensitive.
- Not have to fight to get info needed.
- No child left behind.
- The school, the community, and the family collaborate for the benefit of the student, so that when the service system becomes involved, there is a working program and partnership already set up.

- That I could find appropriate help for my child.
- Communication will always happen and be effective.
- If there is a need and a service, that the two shall be allowed to meet and see what happens. If it works, keep it; if it doesn't, reform just that piece so it will work in that setting.
- Communication.
- Appropriate funding will be provided for families and children in need.
- Needed services would be immediately available. They wouldn't have to be begged for.
- That they are able to service all the individuals that are in need. Opportunities are given to all individual who seek the services.
- Service agencies will be qualified and have resources available to provide adequate and successful services to meet the needs of every person they service.
- More funding for education, department of human services, child welfare, family organizations and other agencies across the state.

Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health is a statewide organization, which provides support, information and referral and training for parents/families of emotionally, mentally and behaviorally challenged children.

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