



Bill of Rights of Parents of Children with Disabilities

Parents are acutely aware of their responsibilities to provide for their offspring, but are seldom aware that the rights they also have as parents of a child who has a disability are those of just plain people.

FREEDOM TO:

- Feel that you have done the best you can.
- Enjoy life as intensely as possible, even though you have a child with a disability
- Let your child with a disability have his/her own privacy.
- Have hostile thoughts once in a while without feeling guilty.
- Enjoy being alone at times.
- Have a vacation yearly without the children; couples have dates, celebrations, weekends away, time together to enhance your relationship.
- Say at times you don't want to talk about your problems. Say, "I'm tired of talking about my child with a disability."
- Fib once in a while. Say everything is fine. Don't feel compelled to tell the truth to everyone who asks.
- Tell your child if you don't like certain things she/he does, even though she/he has a disability.
- Don't praise your child gratuitously because you've been told to offer much praise.
- Freedom to devote as much time as you want to the cause of disabilities, and then get away for a while, and return if you want.
- Tell teachers and other professionals what you really feel about the job they are doing; demand they respect your opinions.
- Tell people about your child's progress and achievements with a real sense of pride.
- Have your own hobbies and interests. Spend a little extra money on yourself even though you feel you can't afford it.

WARNING:

Parent who do not enjoy all of these freedoms are in trouble. Martyred parents are seldom appreciated by anybody, even their children.

Adapted from "A Survival Guide for People Who Have Handicaps" by Sol Gordon, Director, Institute for Family Research and Education, Syracuse, NY . Taken from ACLD Newsbrief, Assc. For Children with Learning Disabilities, 5225 Grace St., Pittsburgh, PA

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