

On-Boarding:



Practical Steps to Engaging Families Impacted by Disabilities in our Churches

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Objectives

- Acknowledge roadblocks that currently exist
- Address what families need for the best possible experience
- Identify what staff/volunteers need for retention



Roadblocks

- A lack of understanding the existing needs
 - Needs often grossly under-shared
- Mindset misunderstandings
 - Modeling and training
- “Staffing” shortages
 - Educate and prevent burnout



What do parents want you to know?

- Say, “Hello” and make eye contact with the person you are speaking to
- Provide a partner for programming
- Work to foster relationships outside of church
- Support and modeling from the pastoral staff is critical
- Listen to us and believe us, despite presentation
- Visible vs. Invisible disabilities



Practical Application

- Provide training for ministry groups throughout the church to impact the culture and model expectations
- Build a “buddy” program
- Implement accessible opportunities for fellowship
 - Consider peers/parents
- Engage in ongoing communication with pastoral staff
- Listen authentically
- Meet with families to gather information—have a form on hand



What do volunteers want you to know?

- We come when we're ready
 - Allow for space and margin
 - Give permission to step away even with commitment
 - Burnout is real!
- Consider service capacity



What do parents want parents to know?

- Share and trust in confidentiality
- Volunteers want the best for you and your children

