

The Dance of Partnership: Why do my feet hurt?
Strengthening the Parent-Professional Partnership



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This keynote is designed to assist participants to better understand the challenges of forming and maintaining partnerships between parents who have children with special needs and professionals who work with families. Drawing from both her social work and her parenting experiences, she explores the unique dimensions which complicate this working relationship from both the parent and the professional perspectives. Some of the questions she explores are: *Can there truly be a partnership? What does each partner bring to the relationship? What strengths? What constraints? What strategies promote the partnership?*

Learning Objectives of the Keynote Training

- Enhance insight and understanding of the unique dimensions which complicate the forming of partnerships.
- Identify practical strategies which promote the partnership, including positive communication skills.
- Renew a personal commitment to forming partnerships.

Janice Fialka is a nationally recognized social worker, author, and trainer. Her publications include: *It Matters: Lessons from my son*, a collection of her poems and prose which focuses on the range of feelings and experiences of being a parent of a child with special needs. The writings deal with inclusion, use of labels, the power of support groups, and ways professionals can support families. Her second book, *Do You Hear What I Hear? Parents and Professionals working together for children with special needs*, co-authored with Karen Mikus contains insights about partnerships and offers practical suggestions for strengthening this collaboration. Her third book she co-authored. *Whose Life is it Anyway? How one Teenager, Her Parents, and Her Teacher View the Transition Process for a Young Person with Disabilities* invites the reader into the internal thinking and emotions of all the partners involved in planning with the teenager for life and learning post high school. Janice has published numerous articles and poems including two articles in *Young Exceptional Children*, "The Dance of Partnership" and "Working with Families: Rethinking Denial." In addition to these books, Janice has produce a CD of three of her poems set to music and a stunning power point titled, *From Puddles to PRIDE: A mother's poems about her son, his disability, and her family's transformation*. In 2006, Janice and her family produced a 25 minute documentary about about Micah's inclusive education on a college campus, *Through The Same Door: Inclusion Includes College*. It was awarded the TASH Image Award for the Positive Portrayal of People with Disabilities.

For more information or to order her books, contact Janice Fialka at:
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