

# How to Use a Resource List

- Look at the date when the list or pamphlet was written. Use current version.
- Don't become obsessive about lists! One doesn't need to call all of the resources.
- Pick out resources that sound of interest to you.
- Call and ask organization-specific questions, e.g. address, who they serve, web page, etc.
- Give some overall, yet focused, information about your need and ask if they can help.
- If they can't help you, ask who the "competition" is, or where else they can refer you.
- Sometimes you will need to talk to someone in addition to the person who answers the phone. You will know if that person gives you a flat "no we can't serve you" answer. Then ask to talk to a Program Manager, Director, Case Manager, Social Worker (a title of someone with whom you can problem solve and brainstorm). Many times the person answering the phone, although well meaning and good at what they do, is not in a position to tweak the system or to know about other opportunities around town.
- Always, always keep a soft, level voice and demeanor. Smile when you talk, even when you are on the phone!
- If you don't have internet access, ask them to send you some written information.
- Even if the organization is listed under a heading that doesn't appear to meet your need, if you would like information associated with the condition, give them a call. It is just one more way to network.
- Keep your own files at home. You may not need the information now, but you may want it in the future. Organize in a notebook or file, either by organization name or topic.
- Realize that lists become out of date quickly and most lists are out of date within a year of printing. Notify the author if it needs an update or call for an updated list.
- Realize there isn't a children's or adult "system"—it is more diverse than that.
- Talk, talk, and talk...to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other parents to hear what and whom they may know at any particular organization. Get the inside scoop!
- When accessing an agency, try to get some one-on-one time with them. Ask if you can come into their office. Acknowledge they must be very busy. Bring a picture. Have specific information the organization may need. And don't forget to thank them as a way of honoring and valuing their time with you. If you say you are going to do something, do it. Keep your commitments. After all, if you don't follow up, why should they? Keep in touch. You may not utilize services now, but you have gained a friend for the future.