

A few guiding principles in raising and supporting a child with disabilities

(Thoughts from the Fialka-Feldman Family!)

www.danceofpartnership.com

www.throughthesamedoor.com

www.facebook.com/whatmattersinclusion

www.intelligentlives.com

Take a quick look at these ideas. It is NOT about doing all of these, all the time, but rather finding the one or two that seem to fit for you right now.

- Support great expectations for your child and their community (Expect, not accept.)
- Build intentional circles of support/friends. Engage peers. View this as an ongoing process.
- Invite help---with dignity and grace, not apology. To "ask" is a strength and helps build connections. "There is no giver, no gift, no receiver....just the universe rearranging itself." -Jon Kabat Zinn
- Hold tight to the idea of *interdependency*. No one does this alone.
- Let not your needs determine your dreams, but let your dreams determine your needs. (Colleen Tomko)
- Provide diverse opportunities and choices.
- Work toward believing that some risk-taking is absolutely necessary!
- Remember that learning is a life-long process. Our children do not stop growing post high school.
- Learn about disability history, culture, and disability pride.
- View disability as a difference, not a deficiency.
- Drop the labels and focus on the dreams and needed supports.
- Remember that feelings, the positive and uncomfortable ones, are part of parenting and living. Find compassionate people who can listen to you and honor where you are at that moment.
- Take time to pause, reflect, consider where you are in your journey. What have you learned, what are your strengths, what seems to be missing, what do you need to learn more about, what is working?
- Take care of yourself. Laugh more. Connect with people, hobbies, or whatever makes your heart sing!
- Find the meaning to this life-changing experience. (Make the sometimes 'mess' into a message!)
- Add yours here: _____

Listen to Janice's interview on NPR-Michigan Radio (91.7): <http://www.j.mp/2c5dAyj>