

Family Support



*...to hold up or serve
as a foundation*



As the parent of a child with special needs, you have many questions and concerns, and it's easy to feel isolated as you enter this complex new world of developmental disabilities.

But you're not alone.

At Harbor Regional Center, we believe that a good support system is a critical asset for you and your family. A network of people and information gives you a good foundation for navigating the service system and dealing with the many issues you face when you have a family member with a developmental disability. And most important, with the right support, you can make better choices and achieve a better quality of life for your child and your family.

We're one of your first steps on a journey that will continue lifelong. We're people who understand, and will help connect you to support, information and choices.

This booklet describes the many types of family support available through Harbor Regional Center, so you can determine which will best meet your family's needs.

WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE AT HRC?

At Harbor Regional Center, your greatest resources for obtaining family support are your HRC Service Coordinator, the HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center, and HRC education and training events.

You have many different needs, and we offer help in many different ways – through information, through education and training, and through the supportive people who are a part of Harbor Regional Center as staff members, clients, and family members.

SUPPORT THROUGH INFORMATION – THE HRC RESOURCE AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Access to accurate, timely information is a critical component of support. Having the right information can give you confidence in your ability to make good choices for your child and can make you a more effective advocate.

The informational heart of Harbor is our Resource and Assistive Technology Center where you will find more than 6,000 books, pamphlets, journals, software, and other multi-media items for use on site or to check out.

Materials are available in English and other languages, and some are available in large print editions. Many items are also available on our Web site, www.harborrc.org. The Resource and Assistive Technology Center also offers computer interface with libraries and resource and assistive technology centers throughout the world.

The Resource Center public access computer offers links to local, state, and national organizations, current information on issues important to HRC clients/families, and general sites of other community resources. Families are welcome to use the computer with the assistance of Resource Center staff to search for information.

And the Resource and Assistive Technology Center is not just for parents and family members, it's available for people with developmental disabilities, professionals, students and anyone interested in learning more about developmental disabilities.

If you're interested in volunteering, the Resource and Assistive Technology Center is your portal to those opportunities as well.



The HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center now has two locations. Our main center is in our Torrance location. Our HRC office in Long Beach, which hosts a number of educational and support activities, is also home to a branch of the Resource and Assistive Technology Center. The shelves at our Long Beach branch are stocked with many of our most popular books, videos and developmental toys. It's simple to request that any material we have available at our Torrance location be brought to the Long Beach branch for you. Simply go to the HRC Web site at www.harborrc.org, click on the Resource and Technology Center, go to the online catalog page, and follow the directions to request material.

PRINT MATERIALS

Our print resources range from journals and periodicals, to books and training curricula on a huge range of topics having to do with developmental disabilities. Some are from commercial publishers, while others have been produced by HRC specifically for our community. Some materials are available in Spanish or other languages.

All of the materials available in our library are also listed in our online catalog, which you can find in the Resource Center section of our Web site, www.harborrc.org. You can access this online catalog from home, or from any computer that has Internet access, and search by subject, author, title or key word. If you do not have Internet access and would like to find out about materials on a topic of interest, simply contact the HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center at (310) 543-0691.

Here's a partial list of subjects in the Resource and Assistive Technology Center:

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|---|--|---|
| Accessibility | Communication/ Language Development | Intellectual Disability (Mental Retardation) |
| Adaptive Play | Community Living/Integration | Lanterman Act |
| Adolescence | Computer Access | Legal Issues |
| Adult Services and Supports | Cultural Diversity | Mental Health |
| Advocacy & Client Rights | Daily Living Skills | Motor Development |
| Aging | Developmental Toys | Nutrition |
| Assistive Technology | Down Syndrome | Occupational Therapy |
| At-Risk Infants | Early Intervention/Infant Development | Parenting |
| Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder | Employment | Preschool |
| Augmentative Communication | Epilepsy | Recreation |
| Autism | Family Support | Self Advocacy |
| Behavioral Issues & Strategies | Fatherhood | Sexual Development |
| Caregivers/Caregiver Training | Health Care | Siblings |
| Cerebral Palsy | In-Home Support | Social Skills |
| Child Development | Inclusive Education | Special Education |
| Cognitive Development | Independent & Supported Living | Transition |

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER PUBLICATIONS

HRC has developed informative booklets and brochures, including our *Making It Happen* series, especially for our clients and families, to help you understand the services and supports offered through the regional center and other essential service programs. These booklets provide the information you need to work effectively with the regional center, schools, and other programs such as Social Security, Medi-Cal and In-Home Supportive Services. They will also help you guide your child through major life transitions.

HRC booklet topics which our clients and families have found helpful include:

Your HRC Service Coordinator

A Parent Guide To Psychological Assessment

A Key to Your Future: Your Individual and Family Service Plan

Planning For Your Future/Planning For Your Child's Future

Parent Training in Behavior Management

A Parent's Guide To Autism

Respite Services

In-Home Nursing Services

Hand in Hand: Early Intervention Services

Moving on At Age Three: Transition

Team Up With Your Schools

Transition to Adulthood

On Your Own: A Guide To Supported Living Services

Supplemental Security Income

In-Home Supportive Services

Obtaining Third-Party Health Insurance Coverage

A Family's Guide To The Appeals Process





RESOURCE INFORMATION

Our Resource Center provide information about a wide range of community resources.

Examples are:

- programs for infants, toddlers, and children
- summer camps
- social-recreational activities for children and adults
- services for adults
- support resources for people living on their own in the community
- services for seniors
- benefits and entitlement programs
- parent support groups
- health and wellness

MULTI-MEDIA

Our multi-media products include video and audio tapes and DVDs, as well as CD-ROM, covering the same comprehensive array of topics which can be found in our print materials. (See list on page 3.)

Harbor Regional Center has also developed some of our own videos and CD-ROM which are designed to provide the information and answer the questions which so many of our clients and families have shared. Examples include:

- HRC parents speaking to other parents about the experience of having a child with a developmental disability
- an interactive overview on CD-ROM of four types of developmental disabilities (autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and intellectual disability, also referred to as mental retardation) served by regional centers
- *We're Here To Speak For Justice*, and *How Far We've Come: The Journey Toward the Lanterman Vision*, companion films which chronicle the history of the regional center system
- working and planning together with the regional center on behalf of your family member

- early childhood services
- parent training in behavior management
- transition to adulthood
- supported work autism
- and much more.

You can view videos in the Resource and Assistive Technology Center, or check them out to see at home. You can also watch selected HRC videos in our online viewing room at www.harborrc.org.

The Harbor Resource and Assistive Technology Center is a one-stop shop for valuable resources, as well as knowledgeable staff who are always available to answer questions or lend a hand.

WHAT ELSE IS AVAILABLE IN THE RESOURCE AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CENTER?

In addition to the print and multi-media collection described above, HRC's Resource and Assistive Technology Center contains other valuable resources.

Assistive Technology (AT) Lab

We are firmly in the digital age, and the **Assistive Technology (AT) Lab** helps children and adults lead more independent lives through the use of the most current computer equipment and other technology that assists them in essential life functions, such as:

- communication devices
- switches
- environmental controls
- specialized computer hardware and software.





Assistive technology and Speech/Language Pathology specialists in the lab provide services to clients such as individualized assessments and consultations. In addition they provide training and consultation for regional center staff, clients, families and service providers in all areas related to assistive technology. Client services include learning how to use assistive technology in areas such as augmentative communication, environmental controls and computer access.

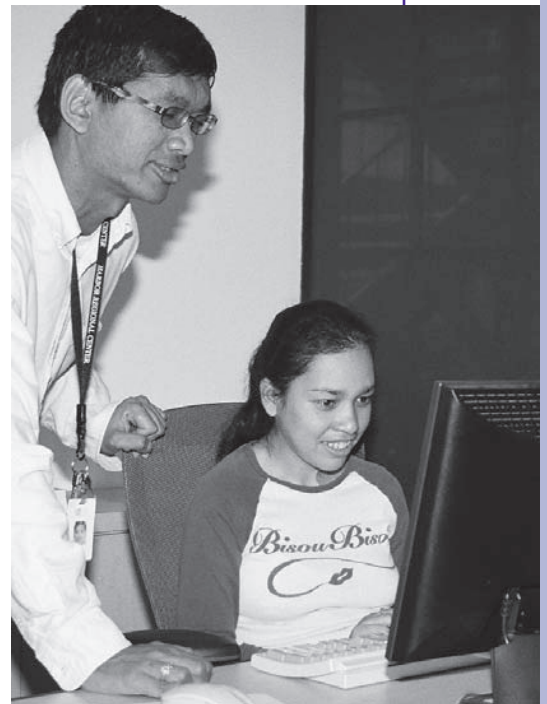
Clients who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication and other assistive technology often visit the AT Lab, to work together with lab professionals, meet with other communication device users, practice using their communication device, and improve their communication and socialization skills.

Computer Lab

The Computer Lab is equipped with a variety of adaptive equipment and software programs, in order to ensure that all HRC clients have access to the computer. Staff offers consultation for clients, family members and service providers. There are also special classes for clients, from pre-school age through adulthood, on how to use computers for a variety of purposes. Specialized trainings include:

- Assistive Technology Workshops for Parents
- Communication Device Demonstrations and Training
- Activity Schedule Development Using BoardMaker™
- Computer Access Demonstrations and Training

Adult clients may also learn to use computers to develop skills such as computer basics, budgeting, job seeking, passing a written driver's test, planning their day, and much more.



Educational Software is available in the Computer Lab to support clients' development with programs for:

- reading skills
- spelling
- counting, money skills, and other math skills
- educational games
- typing



Toy Lending Library

This innovative program lets you check out and experiment with developmentally-appropriate and switch-operated toys for your children. These toys can provide much more than an outlet for fun for your child, they can also help promote the development of basic cognitive, language, motor, and social skills, facilitate positive parent-child interactions, and so much more. Our toys come with special guides, called Toy Dialogues, which can help you to get the maximum benefit from playing with your child.

Help Line

The Help Line (310/543-0691) is available to clients and families, service providers and other members of the local community. When you call the HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center, our staff is ready to take your call, listen to your questions, and provide general information, referrals, and support.

Our goal is to let you know what information and training is available to you at Harbor Regional Center, answer your questions, and point you towards helpful resources in the Resource and Assistive Technology Center and in the community.

The Harbor Regional Center Web Site

The HRC Web site is designed to offer you a comprehensive and interactive source of information about developmental disabilities, Harbor Regional Center services, resources in the community, training opportunities, parent support information, helpful links to other online resources, and much more. Our site also comes equipped with a search function, allowing you to type in key words to help you find the information you are looking for!

Here's just a sample of the topics you can find on our Web site:

- our mission statement, vision statement, and core values
- meeting dates for our Board of Trustees (open to the public)
- service policies
- information on who is eligible for regional center services, and an easy online application form for people who believe they may be eligible, but are not yet clients of the regional center
- diagnostic information, definitions of terminology, and Internet links related to intellectual and other developmental disabilities, including autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and other disabling conditions similar to mental retardation
- online copies of Harbor Regional Center publications
- an online video viewing room for watching short videos which can introduce you to Harbor Regional Center and our services
- an online catalog of books and videos available
- support groups at HRC and upcoming meeting information
- computer lab class information and other scheduled events, for adult clients of HRC
- resource directories
- health and wellness information, including links to information on nutrition and fitness for adults with developmental disabilities
- upcoming training events at HRC for parents, family members, service providers and caregivers
- contact information for Harbor Regional Center staff
- maps and directions to Harbor Regional Center locations

We update our Web site frequently, so visit it often. Simply log on to www.harborrc.org

POPULAR TRAINING TOPICS

Assistive Technology
Communication
Visiting the Doctor
Toilet Training
Managing Behavior
Activities of Daily Living
Genetics
Community Resources
Working With the Schools
Living Options for Children and Adults
Social and Recreational Opportunities
Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood
Services and Options for Adults
Addressing the Needs of Older Adults
Conservatorship and Guardianship
Estate Planning and Special Needs Trusts
Medication Use and Side Effects

You can find more information about all the educational programs we offer in the ***Training & Events Catalog***, which is mailed to all HRC clients, families and service providers in June and December. Classes are also highlighted on the Training and Events section of the HRC Web site.

SUPPORT THROUGH EDUCATION/TRAINING

Most parents would like to learn as much as possible about their child's diagnosis, as well as what they themselves can do to help their child. An excellent way to obtain this information is through participation in HRC's educational workshops or classes.

We offer a diverse selection of topics of interest to clients and families, including parenting, special education, health issues, advocacy, and much more. Presenters provide up-to-date information and encourage the active involvement of students, giving participants a special opportunity for informal discussions with experts in the field. Trainings are held at two Harbor Regional Center locations: our main office in Torrance, as well as at our HRC Training Center in Long Beach.

One of our most popular classes provides training for parents in managing behavior. In these classes, parents learn to apply the basic principles of behavior modification to help their child develop new, appropriate behaviors and eliminate undesirable behaviors. Classes are also available which help parents apply these principles for toilet training, and for the development of daily living skills.



SUPPORT THROUGH PEOPLE

Hearing from other parents about how they have dealt with their own challenges is an invaluable learning tool. Harbor offers you two ways to connect with parents of children with special needs: support groups or one-on-one parent mentors. Either way, you'll meet friendly, compassionate parents who understand, listen, and have the knowledge and experience to connect you to resources. We have seen many lifelong friendships, as well as strong networks of support, blossom in these sessions.

Support Groups

Support groups bring together people with common concerns and experiences in an atmosphere of mutual emotional support and understanding. These experiences help reduce the sense of isolation often experienced by parents of a special needs child.

Groups vary in size and meet weekly or monthly. Some groups have a general focus and deal with concerns that are universal among families dealing with developmental

disabilities. Others have a specialized focus on a specific developmental disability, while still others may be oriented toward particular participants such as siblings, or targeted toward individual languages or cultures.

Support is available at HRC for groups of parents and family members with special interests and conditions in common such as:

- parents of HRC clients of all ages and all diagnoses
- Down syndrome
- siblings of individuals with a developmental disability
- groups for parents who speak Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, or Cambodian



The Sibling Club program at Harbor Regional Center is a special resource for families at Harbor Regional Center, to provide an opportunity for brothers and sisters of our clients to meet other siblings and obtain peer support in a recreational setting. Members of the groups can learn about disabilities and special needs, share their experiences and concerns about their disabled sibling, and learn strategies for dealing with their sibling and the special situations they encounter.

If we don't offer a group in your area of special interest, you can share your ideas with us. The HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center may be able to help get a new group started and can also refer you to a wide array of support groups which are available in our local and surrounding communities.

To learn about the many options available, ask your HRC Service Coordinator for more information, contact the Resource and Assistive Technology Center, or check our Web site for upcoming meeting information.



Parent Mentors Providing One-on-One Support

Sometimes when you have a family member with a developmental disability, the mixture of emotions and the number of questions can overwhelm you. Many times, just speaking with someone who's been there and understands what you're feeling can be a tremendous help. At HRC we offer you the opportunity to connect with a more experienced parent (called a Parent Mentor) who is trained to provide an empathetic, non-judgmental ear and support.

Like you, Parent Mentors have a family member with a developmental disability, so they know what you're experiencing. We carefully select parents who express an interest in becoming a Mentor and provide them with special training on how to support other parents. We also try to match parents with Mentors who have common concerns.



If you think you might be interested in connecting with a Parent Mentor, or in becoming a Mentor yourself, talk to your Service Coordinator or contact the Resource and Assistive Technology Center.

Volunteer Opportunities

For those of you who'd like to help others whether as a Parent Mentor, or working in the Resource Center itself, the HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center offers you the chance to put your skills and enthusiasm to use. Just let one of the staff know if you're interested in getting involved.

SUPPORT FROM SPECIALISTS

Periodically questions arise in the life of your family member with a disability that are best answered by clinical professionals. These questions may relate to issues such as your child's diagnosis, health or medical needs, challenging behaviors, or other aspects of development. If you have such questions, your HRC Service Coordinator can arrange for a special meeting, called a Family Meeting. This meeting brings together a multidisciplinary team of clinical specialists who can help you identify alternatives for intervention and treatment, direct you to the appropriate resources, or provide guidance about your family member's current services or treatments.

Depending on the nature of your concerns, the team may include one or more of the following professionals: nurse, physician, psychologist, behaviorist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech pathologist, or pharmacologist.

The Family Meeting is generally considered appropriate in the following types of situations:

- You want to gain a better understanding of your child's diagnosis.
- You have specific questions regarding the appropriateness of a particular service or alternative treatment.
- You have questions about your family member's progress in treatment.



WHICH TYPE OF SUPPORT IS BEST FOR YOU?

How do you decide what information and support services are right for you? Do you just need someone to talk to about your hopes, fears or concerns? Would taking a workshop or class make you feel more comfortable with choices you make for your child? Will sharing experiences with other parents, individually or in a group setting, make you feel more comfortable about the things you choose to do for your child? Will speaking with a clinical specialist give you the knowledge you need to make better decisions about services for your child? How much time are you able and willing to spend seeking out support and getting information?

Whatever your answers to these questions, Harbor Regional Center has a support that will be right for you and your family. No one option is right for everyone, and many times a combination of supports is the best solution.

Remember, whatever your need, we're here to help.



HOW TO CONTACT US:

The HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center phone number is (310) 543-0691.

Our e-mail addresses are:

Resource.Center@harborrc.org

ATLAB@harborrc.org

ComputerLab@harborrc.org

Locations:

The HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center located at our main Torrance office is open during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

The Resource and Assistive Technology Center branch in Long Beach is open for limited hours, with more hours to be added in the future. Call our main telephone number above, or check our Web site, to find out our current hours.

Resource and Assistive Technology Center

Harbor Regional Center

21231 Hawthorne Blvd

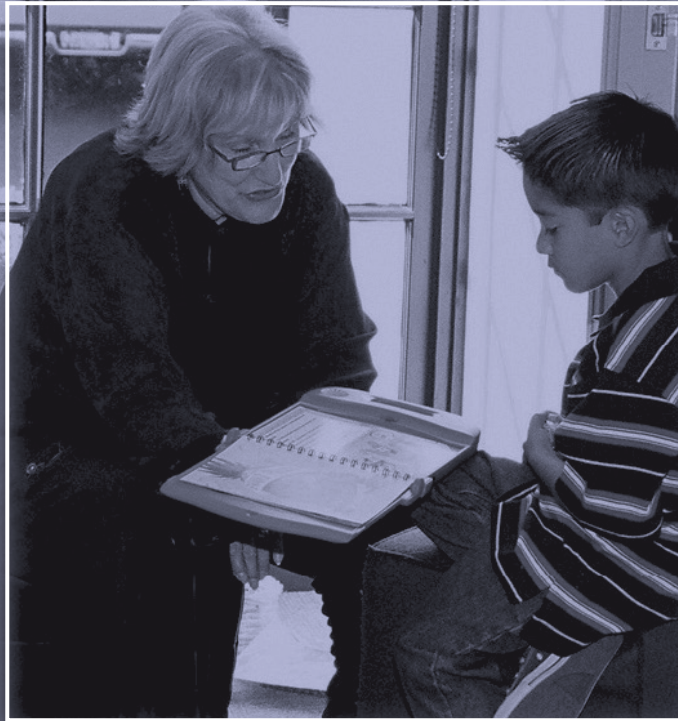
Torrance, CA 90503

Resource and Assistive Technology Center, Long Beach Branch

HRC Training Center

1155 E. San Antonio Drive

Long Beach, CA 90807





DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FOUNDATION, INC.

21231 Hawthorne Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503

(310) 540-1711 • www.harborrc.org

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