



# The Parenting Center Groups

Join Us!

Attend one or all the meetings of any group

Parenting Center groups are free of charge and open to all. Groups meet at the Board of Education Building ▪ 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ

(Unless otherwise indicated)

## 2019-2020 Parent Groups

- **SEPAC**
- **Word to the Wiser**
- **PANDAS/PANS Parent Support Group**
- **Selective Mutism Parent Group**
- **ADHD Parent Support Group**
- **Screen Smart Kids**
- **Using Effective Behavior Strategies at Home**

## SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Committee)

SEPAC is an advocacy group focused on policies, programs, and practices within the South Orange/Maplewood School District. Families and caregivers of student(s) with learning needs or students eligible for or receiving services under an IEP or 504 plan are encouraged to attend SEPAC Meetings.

SEPAC provides parents with tools and information to work collaboratively with the school district and to be more effective advocates for their children with special educational needs. Our meetings consist of featured conversations/ presentations as well as support, resource sharing, and the ability to connect with other members of the special education community. Meetings with targeted topics are our attempt to get those with similar concerns in the same room at the same time but **all** are always welcome!

**Questions?** website: [sepacsoma.org](http://sepacsoma.org) Email: [annleeb@optonline.net](mailto:annleeb@optonline.net) Location: Central Office District Meeting Room, unless otherwise specified.

All meetings are 7:30-9:00 pm

### **Thursday October 10 - General Meeting/ Voting for New Executive Board**

Attendance is encouraged for anybody with an interest in Special Education in the South Orange Maplewood School District. Introduction to the "advocacy for all" and the "support of the individual" that is at the core of what SEPAC does.

### **Tuesday, November 19-Preschool, Elementary School and Newcomers-Location to be determined**

Target audience: those with children in or entering Preschool, in or entering Elementary School or are newcomers to Special Education in the school district.

### **Wednesday, January 22-Middle School/High School**

Target audience: those with children in or entering Middle School or in or entering High School. **Thursday,**

### **February 20 -Get SMART! (IEP goals, that is)**

Target audience: anyone who wants their children's IEP goals to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Time-bound.

### **Wednesday, March 25-Out of District**

Target audience: those with children in out of district placements **and** those who want to learn more about the subject.

### **Tuesday, April 21- In and out, here and there-Transitions at every age and at every stage**

Target audience: those with children facing transitions from PreK to Kindergarten, fifth grade to Middle School, Middle School to High School, and High School to Beyond (with Marshall Jefferson transition also addressed.) Plus an update on the Integration and Elementary Reorganization plans for 2021-2022.

### **Tuesday, May 19-General Meeting**

Year's wrap up and parental preparation for the summer just ahead.

## Word of the Wiser

Based on a simple and transformational reading strategy called “Notice and Note”, school social worker and former language arts teacher, Catherine Lazen offers a fun, multimedia program of her own design that trains parents to help their children (of all ages) build both academic and social/emotional skills at the same time. Over this multi-session program, parents will learn to:

- Inspire a love of reading
- Boost reading, writing and critical thinking skills
- Facilitate meaningful family conversations about literature, music movies and art
- Practice Mindfulness
- Foster self-awareness, empathy and wisdom

Sample - Session 1:

“There’s no place like Home” :the meaning of life

What was the lesson in Wizard of Oz? Easy. “There’s no place like home.” Every artist, author or filmmaker has a purpose. Maybe it’s lesson or a message or a call to action. The reward in literature, film and art is the ability to conceptualize and answer the “so what?” question. “Comprehension” is the ability to get to the end of the story, or a film or the end of your day or week or year and be able to make some meaning. Or, to be able to look at a painting and take a guess at “why”. In this session, parents will learn to recognize six “Notice and Note” “signposts” or clues that are found in both stories and in real life. Parents will be able to help their children find these signposts as a way to help them formulate an idea about an author’s purpose and to find meaning in real life moments.

Questions: email [clazen@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:clazen@somsd.k12.nj.us) Meetings will be held on Mondays on the following dates:

October 21  
November 25  
January 27

February 24  
March 30  
April 30

## PANDAS/PANS Parent Support Group

PANS stands for Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuro-Psychiatric Syndrome, including PANDAS which is caused by strep. If your child has a PANS/PANDAS diagnosis, or if you are questioning the possibility, you are welcome to join us as we share experiences, concerns and resources. The goal of the group is to smooth out the often confusing and multi-faceted journey for parents, teachers, and students.

Questions or can't wait for the next meeting date?

Contact Brenda Bitzer at [brenirene@gmail.com](mailto:brenirene@gmail.com)

Or find us on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/groups/SOMA](http://www.facebook.com/groups/SOMA) PANS Support

Meetings will be held 7:00 - 8:30PM (dates listed below)

October 24  
November 21

February 27  
March 26

April 23

## Selective Mutism Support Group

Main purpose of the group is to provide help to families new to Selective Mutism by sharing experiences, information and resources, and answering their questions as well as aid in formulating pertinent questions to ask. Secondary purpose is to provide a virtual and physical space for all local SM families to communicate current needs regarding their child with SM and share information specific to the local area. Overall mission is to bring awareness to SM as an anxiety disorder and inform general public, families, school administrators, teachers and staff on proper methods in approaching a child with SM.

Questions and can't wait for the next meeting or want to join our email group? Contact Kathleen Hong at [kitkathong@gmail.com](mailto:kitkathong@gmail.com)

Meetings at 7:30 pm

**Tuesday, October 22**

**Tuesday, January 21**

**Tuesday, March 17**

## **ADHD Parent Group**

The *ADHD Parent Group* offers parents of elementary and middle school children who have been diagnosed with ADHD or who have attentional difficulties the opportunity to share information, concerns and solutions. This is a supportive group open to ongoing members and "Drop-ins". "We've all been there" is our motto, so know that we have a welcoming attitude with no judgments. Please join us! Questions?

Contact Alison Steiner at [asteiner@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:asteiner@somsd.k12.nj.us).

**Meetings will be held 7:30 - 9:00PM on Wednesdays.**

**October 16**  
**November 13**  
**December 11**  
**January 15**

**February 12**  
**March 18**  
**April 22**  
**May 20**

## **Screen Smart Kids**

**Screen Smart Kids** is a parent's group for those interested in exploring the ways in which technology and social media are impacting their kids' developing minds. This group will equip families to best address the challenges of our technology immersive culture.

### **Exploring Alternatives to Smartphones**

Are you Considering whether to give your child a cellphone in middle school or sooner? Do you have concerns about the effects of social media and amount of time spent on the phone? **Learn about the latest in parental control software, smartphone alternative technologies, and hear directly from parents of current middle schoolers.**

### **Creating a Cellphone Contract**

Learn how to create a cell phone contract with your child that positively influences their relationship to technology, helps them balance tech time with non-tech time, mitigates conflicts around cell phone use, and best suits your family's needs.

*For more information, contact:*

*Stephanie Bourgeois, LCSW [stephanieblcsw@gmail.com](mailto:stephanieblcsw@gmail.com) or Claire Kaplan, LCSW [info@claireskaplan.com](mailto:info@claireskaplan.com)*

### **Dates:**

**Feb 11th: "Creating a Cellphone Contract"**

**April 7th; "Exploring Alternatives to Smartphone"**

## **Using Effective Behavior Strategies with Our Kids to Help Them Create Peace & Harmony at Home & at School**

Join this one-time group and...

Learn common behavioral triggers and how to identify behavioral triggers.

Learn techniques to improve and enhance communication with your children, adolescents, and young adults.

Learn valuable strategies to maximize the attention you are giving to on task behavior. Learn ways to establish effective limits and boundary setting.

Led by Dr. Penny Petcher, School Psychologist and Behavior Management Specialist Questions?

Contact Dr. Penny Petcher, [ppetcher@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:ppetcher@somsd.k12.nj.us).

Date: TBA