

## PEOPLE YOU NEED ON SIDE

These are people who provide a service for your child or for you, and whom you want to keep working hard and feeling positively about you and your child.

The list of these people seem endless... paediatricians, GP's surgeons and specialists, ophthalmologists, early interventionists, school principals, child care workers, bus drivers, baby health sisters, social workers, therapists, classroom teachers, psychologists.

For the most part these are people you are going to see again and again, so you need them to see your point of view. This can be tricky, because sometimes they can say or do something to upset you and you need to handle the situation carefully. Sometimes, too, you find that it is hard to deal with them because of an aspect of their personality, as a parent describes the following situation:

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*John's paediatrician is supposed to be one of the best in Melbourne - I know that he is excellent. The trouble is, he's awful to talk to. I find his manner really pompous and he makes me feel put down when I ask him to explain things or when I disagree with him. I know I should change paediatricians but he really knows John's history back to front and he knows all of the other specialists John goes to.*

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This parent respects her paediatrician's abilities but not his personal qualities. If she chooses to stay with him for the sake of her child, she needs to find a way to indicate to him that her opinion deserves to be listened to, and to find a way of allowing his manner to upset her less. She could, perhaps, make an appointment to see the doctor without John.

Another parent relates:

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*I'm not very happy about Jane's educational setting. I seem to have a run-in every day with her class teacher and I just don't seem to be able to communicate with the School principal. My friends tell me to shift to another school but they don't really understand about transport problems and I don't know what the effect would be on Jane. She likes*

*school, besides there are some things about the school that I like and I don't really want to be seen by the staff as "that dragon Mrs Brown".*

This parent is aware that People You Need on Side can be hard work and because you need their skills rather than their friendship you need to think about your approach to them and your reaction to them.

*This is an excerpt from:*

**FACING THE CROWD – MANAGING  
OTHER  
PEOPLE'S INSENSITIVITIES TO YOUR  
DISABLED  
CHILD.**

By Deborah Fullwood & Peter Cronin,  
Burwood Education Series - No. 7, Royal  
Victorian  
Institute for the Blind, Victoria 1986 Pp  
15, 16 & 24.

