

Surviving the Roller Coaster of Life with Autism

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Welcome Aboard!

When a child with a disability is introduced in the family, the dynamics often change dramatically. And so begins the roller coaster of Life with Autism!

This session will offer parents and caregivers with strategies for surviving these challenges. As a parent of a son on the autism spectrum, as well as a mental health professional holding a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Dr. Jagers presents a unique perspective of effective strategies to maintain your sanity, marriage, and family through these challenging times.



My Introduction to Autism...



- This is my son Dalton
- When my son was two years old..... the experts at Texas Childrens Hospital told us that he was “UNRECOVERABLE” and that we should set up a trust fund because he would most likely be in an institution by the time he was a teen.
- We are fortunate that we have had a successful outcome with our son. He is a result of a lot of hard work, a lot of luck, and intense interventions.....a constant work in progress!
- Today at twenty three..... my son is happy and thriving. For the past three years he has successfully been a roommate to his sister, while working part time at an oil company and attending a transition school part time. He’s a great driver who takes care of his car. He does his own laundry and grocery shopping. He will be starting college classes in the fall. He would want me to tell you he’s a huge Astros fan!
- He is NOT in an institution.....



WHAT YOU MUST DO TO RIDE THE ROLLER COASTER.:

1

YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

2

CREATE A SUPPORT SYSTEM

3

EDUCATE YOURSELF

4

ADVOCACY IS ESSENTIAL

5

THERE IS HOPE!



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

What kind of job are you doing taking care of your child's parent?



Step 1

*Acknowledge
that caretaker
stress is huge
and often
overwhelming*

Step 2

*Prepare for
the
Marathon,
not the Sprint*

Step 3

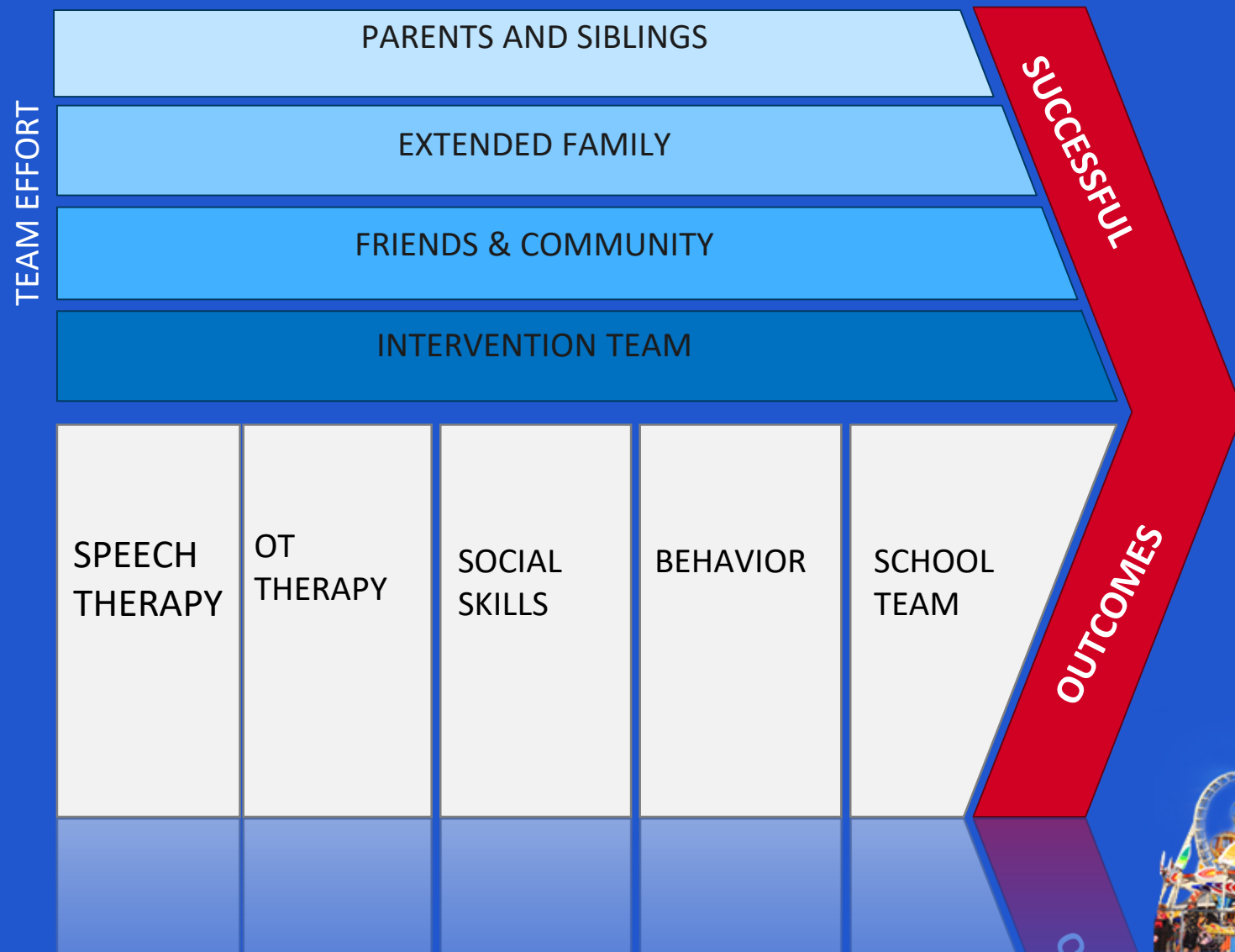
*Seek out a
support
system*

Step 4

*Circle the
Wagons*



IT'S A TEAM EFFORT....



RECIPE FOR A HAPPY CHILD

HAPPY
PARENT

HAPPY
MARRIAGE

HAPPY
SIBLINGS

HAPPY
FAMILY

HAPPY
CHILD

It is important that you do your best to take care of your relationships with your spouse, family and other children.

This is hard. **It is harder alone.** Try to work as a team with your spouse. Make time to nurture your marriage and friendships.

Take care of your own health.....People often say that they would die for their child but they must also remember to make themselves a priority so that they can LIVE for their child.

It is imperative to set aside individual time with your other children.



ALWAYS REMEMBER...



Learn to see your child **FIRST**, not the disability



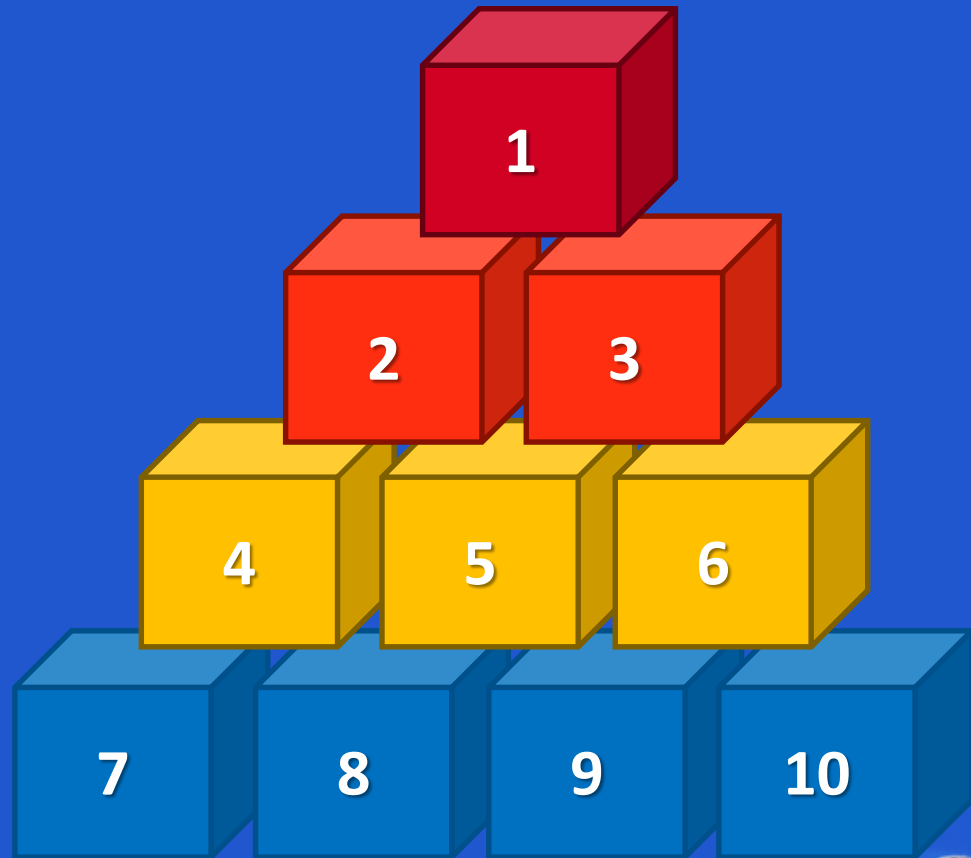
Its important to have FUN



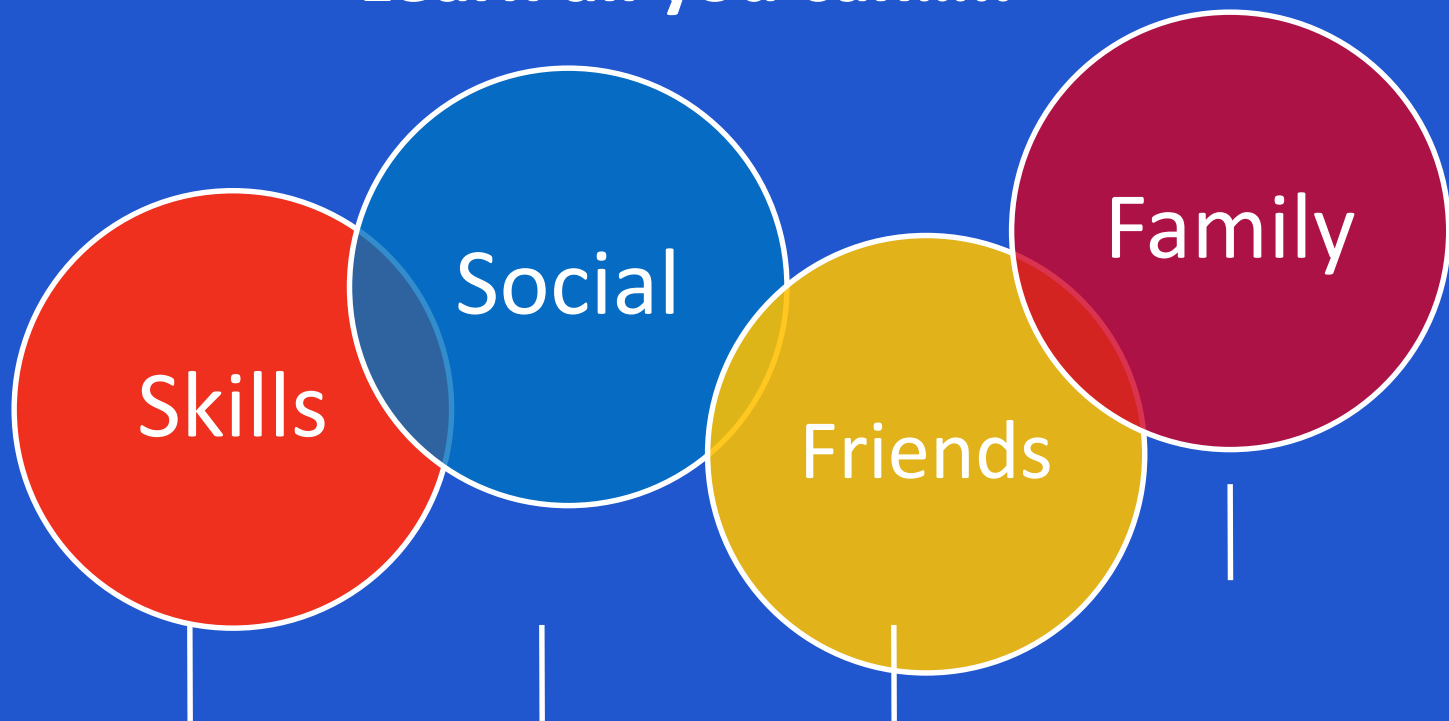
Every child has gifts



Lack of language does not mean lack of intelligence



Learn all you can.....



Children have splinter skills. Learn what your child loves to do and develop it!

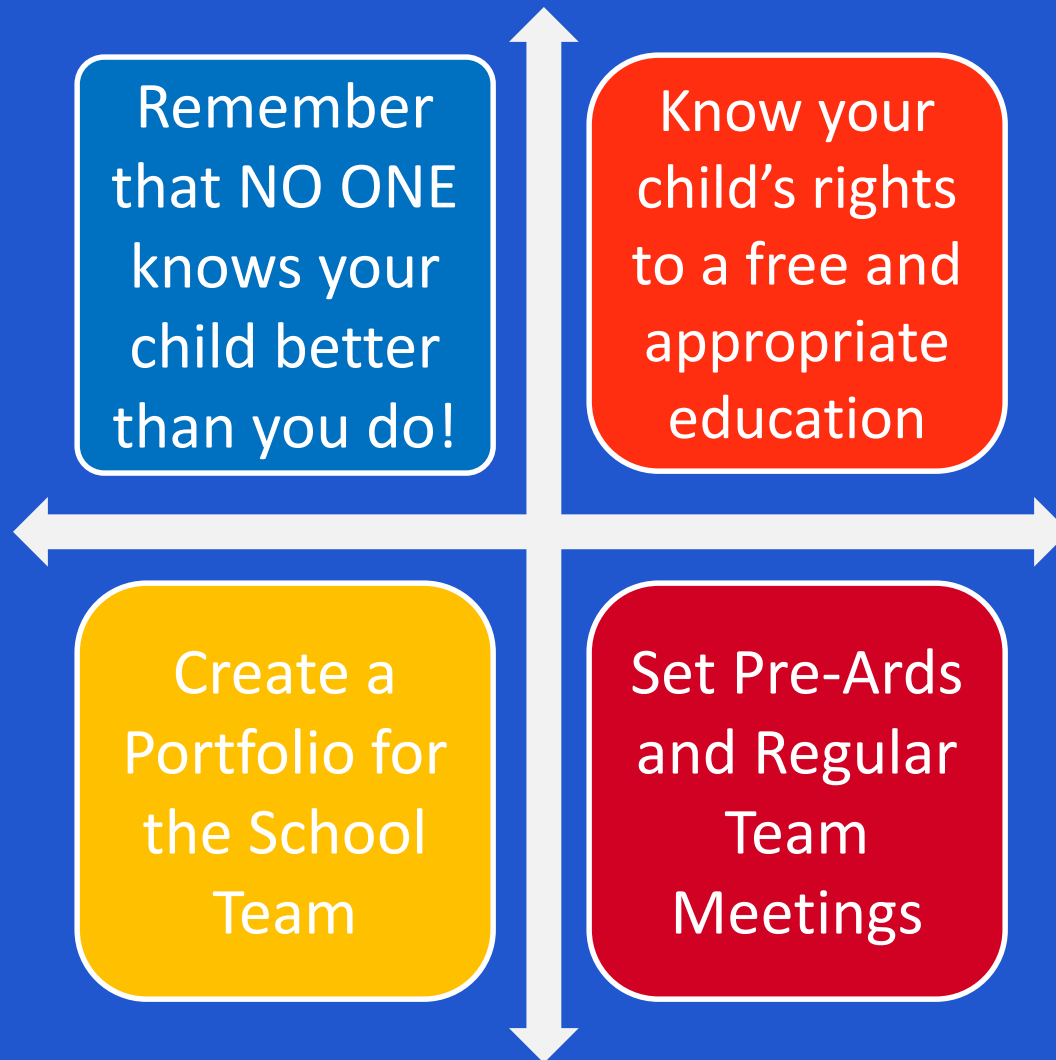
Work on social skills always. There are social opportunities to be found anywhere.

Its important for your child to have neuro-typical and typically-developing peers

The family is the most important relationship for a child



SCHOOL RULES



TREATMENT OPTIONS

YOU are the
parent and
YOU decide
what your
child needs

Learn all you
can about
intervention
and make
educated
decisions

RESEARCH
FIRST --- There
are conflicting
reports on
causes and
treatment

Everyone
will have
an opinion



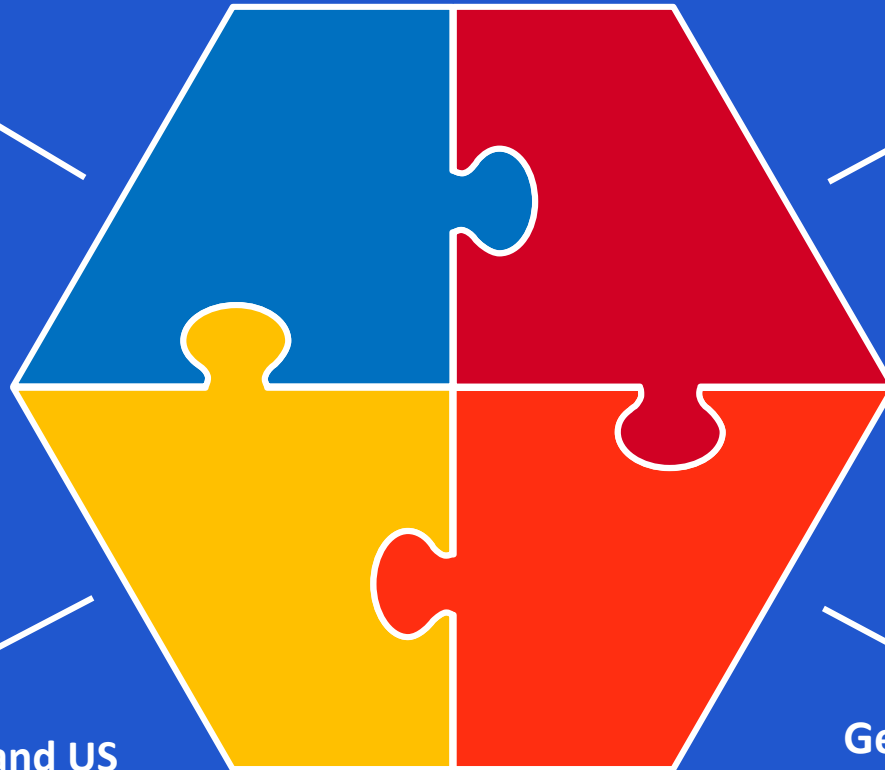
ADVOCACY IS ESSENTIAL!

Know your
childs rights
(Wrights Law)

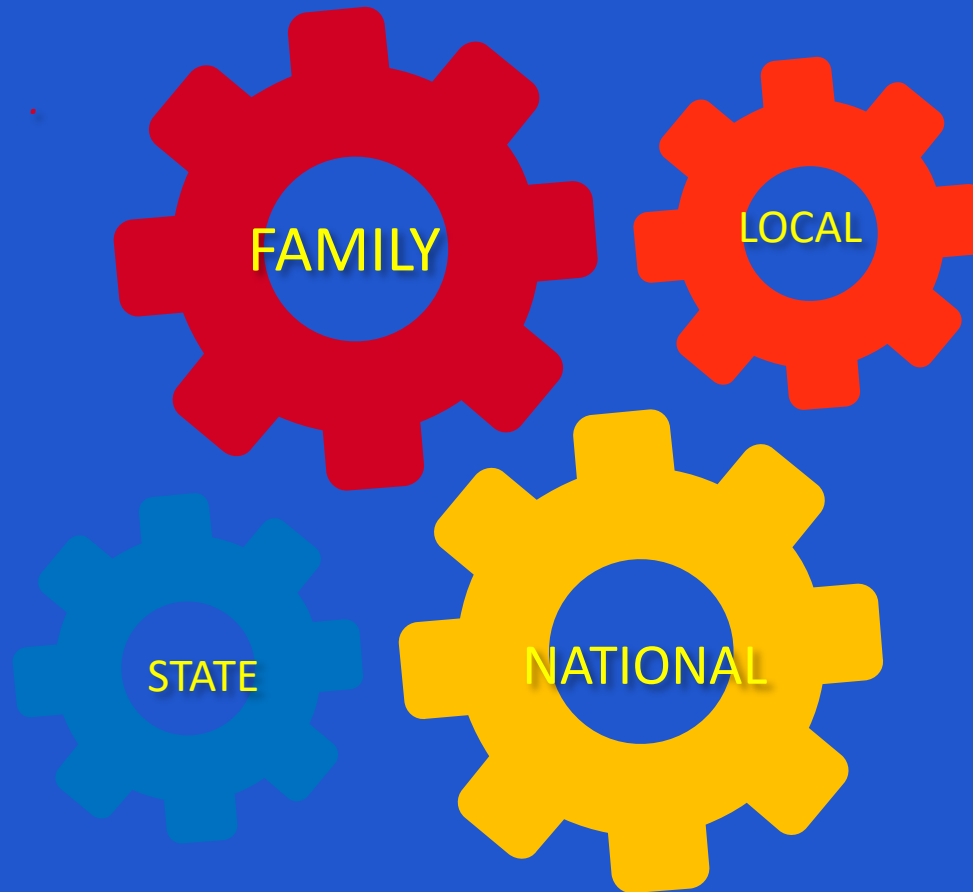
2. Attend
Special
Education
Trainings
offered by your
district

Know your city, state and US
representatives. Develop an
elevator speech about your
child

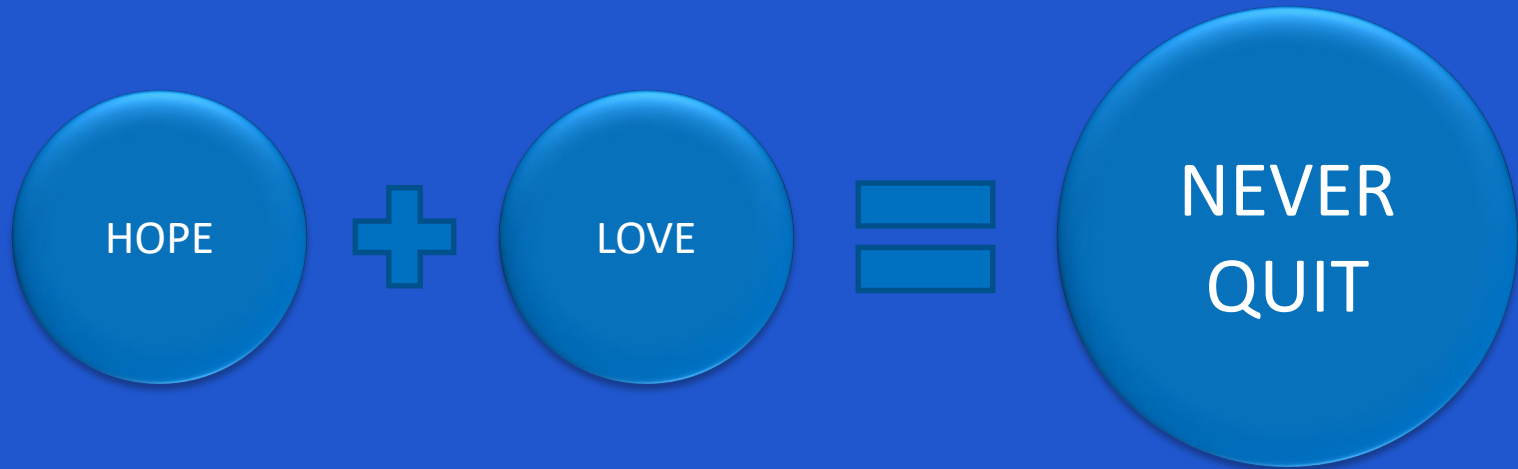
Get to know your
School district Sp Ed
Personnel



IT TRULY TAKES A VILLAGE REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT



DON'T STOP TRYING



*Don't ever let people tell you that your child cannot succeed.... No one can see the future...
New interventions arrive every day!*



**Do you have
any questions?**





THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

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