

# EFFECTIVE SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS WITH COGNITIVE DIFFICULTIES

A companion to the TASP webinar by Cathy Haarstad

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## Parents with cognitive difficulties lead complex lives with challenges that may include:

- Getting information to fit their learning styles and needs
- Limited income
- Transportation, childcare, housing
- Social isolation.
- Difficulty managing routines
- Navigating multiple systems
- Unhealthy relationships.
- Accessing community resources

## Effective Supports Help Families Grow and Thrive!

### The best kind of support is:

- Practical: helps a family get the resources they really need.
- Meaningful: helps the family to be resilient and stay together.
- Respectful: seeks to build competency instead of judging.
- Customized: meets the unique needs of the family

### To provide effective support, you can:

- Listen to what families tell you.
- Use a strength-based approach.
- Help each family set priorities.
- Customize support delivery.
- Build parenting capacity.
- Use practical support strategies.
- Match families with peer mentors
- Send positive messages.
- Increase or decrease support as needed.

### Choose an Approach that Works

On-going support that focuses on the needs of the adults in their role as parents and the needs of the children. Support is adjusted, not eliminated, in response to changes and challenges. It is flexible and ever-changing.

### To start:

- Build rapport
- Begin to engage the family
- Seek to understand the family's perspective
- Strive for cultural humility (the parent is the expert on their culture and family)
- Move from rapport to trusted ally

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## To Effectively Support:

- Triage Need → Make Plans → Link to Resources (don't just give a flier or a phone number, that's not enough!)
- Find Mentors → Build Capacity → Learn the System

## Types of Service Models

Multi-Disciplinary Service Model	Provider Service Model	Peer Navigator Service Model
<p>Works best when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family is not in crisis or overwhelmed.</li><li>• Family has stable and positive relationships with the service team.</li><li>• Family knows what they want and need.</li></ul>	<p>Works best when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provider has the knowledge and skills to support both parents and children.</li><li>• In-home providers have adequate supervision.</li><li>• Family has robust natural networks.</li></ul>	<p>Works best when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family is in crisis, new to services or easily overwhelmed.</li><li>• Family responds better to a reliable peer ally as a model.</li><li>• Peer-navigators have appropriate supervision.</li></ul>



**We are not here to judge, but to help.**



**Expect and plan for change!**

**The ultimate goal: Finding common ground while growing and staying together for the long haul.**

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