

## **A Grandmother's Story of How Wraparound Helped her Grandson's Special Education Experience**

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I have been asked to share what the wraparound team means to our family. If you took the wraparound program out of special education it would be like taking the urgent care or the emergency room out of a hospital.

Many of you have heard of college students who attempt or commit suicide due to the stress. How many have heard of elementary students who are suicidal due to everyday stress of school, home and not having a friend to play with or someone to talk to. Before the wraparound program families had no where to turn. My husband and I are raising our emotionally disabled grandson and have been involved with the wraparound program for over a year.

Prior years my grandson would be hospitalized sometimes for as long as Oct – Feb (4 months) due to the stress of the holidays. This year because of our team work we had him home for the holidays. There was just as much stress this year maybe even more but we worked as a team and got him through it.

Wraparound program is not just for the child it is for the family. There were so many times I was ready to give up. I wondered if I could do this one more day. I could not talk to family or friends they didn't understand. I wouldn't have either if I wasn't living it. Like I said I was ready to give up. But how could I. I have my grandson and he deserves a chance. But I was so tired how could I keep going. Now that we are involved with the team on those bad days I can call someone on the team. They will either help me with ideas to help the problem or come over and talk to him or even take him out for an hour or two and give us a break from each other so that we can regroup and start over again.

Before the team was formed I was the go between Human Services, School, and the doctors. They didn't talk to each other they all came to me a person already too stressed to handle one more thing. Now we all meet together in one room and brainstorm ideas. Which has made my life a little better.

I am still stressed and wonder what will happen with my grandson as we struggle with his illness and trying to find a way to educate him. But we are making progress. Two years ago my husband and I were told to institutionalize him and walk away. This was from a private doctor and a private hospital.

But because Fort Atkinson Schools believe in No Child Left Behind and are willing to spend money for the wraparound program they have saved one child from a live in an institution and will save many more. That is cost effective in our community in dollars. But much more importantly in lives.

There are not enough words for me to say Thank You for helping us save our grandson.