

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

BOOK 3 / AGES 6 - 13







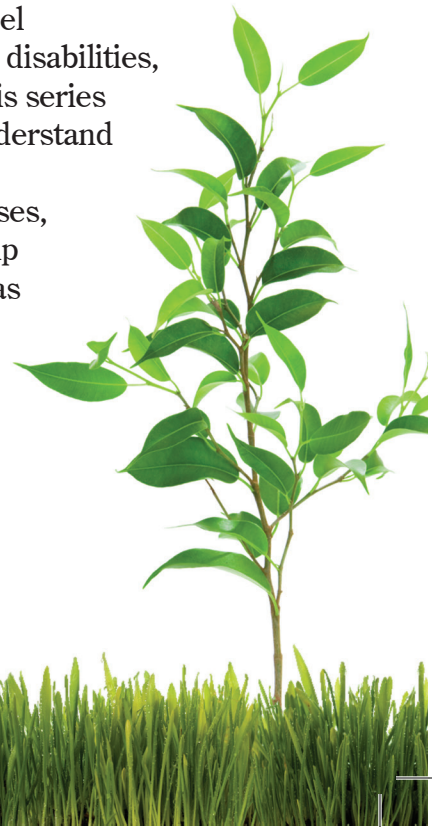
# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

BOOK 3 / AGES 6 - 13

## This Series

This series is about you and your child with disabilities. Throughout the series, we will use parent to identify the adult(s) caring for a child with disabilities - even though, many times, that person may be a grandparent, foster parent or other relative. We know there are all kinds of parents and families.

Too often as a parent or caregiver, we all feel overwhelmed. As the parent of a child with disabilities, you probably have additional concerns. This series was developed with parents to help you understand some of the special issues you may face. Throughout the series, you will find exercises, examples, and success stories that may help you understand how to help your child be as independent as possible. Each booklet is based on your child's age and covers 6 important areas: Community Involvement, Independence, Health & Wellness, Finance, Employment Skills and Self-Advocacy.



## Special Advice for Parents of Children with Disabilities

Your child may be ahead in some areas and need more specialized work in others. Since this series is designed to help children with all types of disabilities, your child may have excellent verbal skills but poor mobility – or in the case of autism, great mobility but poor interaction with others. Use the suggestions as a guide to think about the areas of development that you need to stress.





Your child's disability may make it difficult to follow all the suggestions in this booklet. But just because something may be harder than usual for you or your child, doesn't mean you should give up. **Our goal is to help guide you in raising a strong, independent, well-adjusted child who happens to have a disability.** As you come to a crossroads, ask yourself, "Is this something my child will need to be able to do in the future?" If you say yes, then how can you adapt the situation so your child can be successful?

## Planning for the Future - Preparing for Independence

Very soon your child may be involved in developing a transition plan. The transition plan is an official part of your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and is intended to prepare your child for the world after high school. By law, this must begin by age 14 1/2. You can make the process more effective by starting to think about it now.



The IEP's transition plan identifies your child's education, training, employment and independent living goals. As you and your child think about their strengths, areas needing improvement, interests and dislikes, you can begin to help your child develop their natural talents and nurture progress and self-confidence which can carry over into life-long successes.

	Comments	Where Will We Get Additional Resources?
<b>Strengths</b> _____ _____ _____ _____		
<b>Areas Needing Improvement</b> _____ _____ _____ _____		
<b>Interests</b> _____ _____ _____ _____		
<b>Dislikes</b> _____ _____ _____		

## Emotional Support / Community Involvement

Begin involving your child in school and after-school activities (scouts, sports, etc). Let your child interact with children with and without disabilities. As your child gets older, increase outside and after school activities (theater, choir, art classes, self-defense classes, sports, summer recreation, etc), as appropriate. Let your child compete as much as possible to give the opportunity to be successful at various levels.







## Independence / Self-Care

Have your child begin planning and preparing meals (breakfast or lunch for younger kids, family dinner for older kids) with your supervision as necessary. Your child can also begin to participate with laundry, house-keeping, and other household chores. Each year, give your child more responsibility in helping with cooking, cleaning, laundry, and yard work. Begin art and music lessons, if appropriate, in order to support creative outlets and interests.

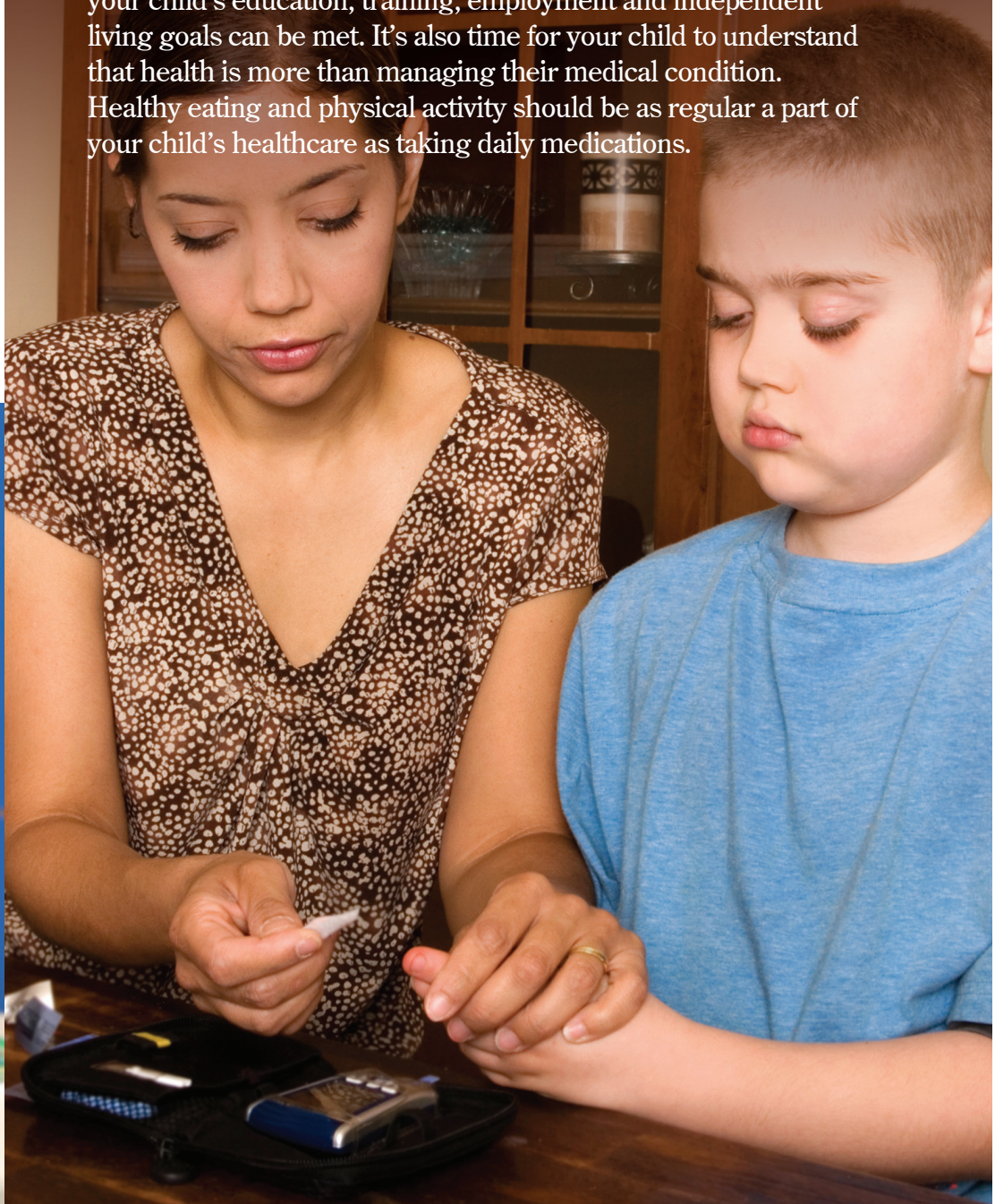
## Health & Wellness

Your child should begin to understand their medical condition. Help your child to understand any limits, triggers or issues that result from the medical condition. As your child gets older, have them practice with you how they could explain the medical condition to others in simple terms and how they might handle an emergency situation. Start to let your child answer questions that the doctor asks about how they are feeling and how things have been going. If you need to, you can add to their answer, but by letting them do as much as possible, you are empowering your child to handle these questions appropriately when you're not around.

**“My mom used to go in the exam room with me. Now that I’m in middle school, she understands that I may want to ask the doctor questions privately. She writes down any questions she has for the doctor and trusts me to get answers for her.”**



Remember to include health goals in your child's IEP to ensure your child's education, training, employment and independent living goals can be met. It's also time for your child to understand that health is more than managing their medical condition. Healthy eating and physical activity should be as regular a part of your child's healthcare as taking daily medications.







## Finances

Begin Pay-for-Performance with your child. Let your child earn an allowance. Give your child specific responsibilities and rewards, along with bonuses for extraordinary work. Start a savings program. Teach the importance of saving for future wants and needs and the value of delayed rewards. For middle-schoolers, begin introducing more advanced budgeting and financial issues, like comparing the value between items (cost per ounce, low price vs lasting quality, etc). Also, have your child begin paying for some personal items and gifts out of their own funds to give them the satisfaction of working for something and sharing with others.

## Employment Skills

Increase the level of responsibility your child has – taking out the garbage, helping wash the car, etc. Support your child to be involved in charitable/school fund raising. There are a lot of lessons that your child can learn from selling cookies or magazines door-to-door. Lessons like how to approach strangers, how to interact with different kinds of people, how to take rejection without taking it personally, and how good it feels to support something they think is important.

“I have always loved animals. Then, I found out that I could become a veterinary assistant and work at my neighborhood veterinary clinic. I applied at the community college and I want to become a veterinary technician so I can do even more.”

Encourage future dreaming and planning by your child. Ask questions like, “what do you want to be?” “how would you do that?” “what would you need to do?” Let your child investigate careers that are interesting to them.





## Self-Advocacy

Begin involving your child in coming up with solutions to family and personal problems. Thinking out the possible solutions, the results of the various solutions, deciding which solution would work best and how to start implementing the decision. Continue to support your child's self-advocacy skills. Help your child to develop their personal story and ways to express their needs. For example, "The reason I need this is that I've tried the other before and it didn't work..."

Assist your child in the development of their transition plan and to take an active role at their IEP meeting. Participating in their IEP meeting is a great way for your child to learn successful ways of sharing information about their disability, their goals, and their support needs. Support your child's involvement in non-personal issues (advocating for something your child believes in, for example, environmental causes). This creates a non-personal, less threatening environment to practice advocacy skills that can translate to personal advocacy.

# Great Expectations Series:

Book 1 - Age 0 to 3

Book 2 - Pre-school

Book 3 - Grade School

Book 4 - High School & Beyond

**Additional web resources including community supports and disability-specific organizations to support parents of children with disabilities are available at:**

***[www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com)***



**Printed with funding from the  
Illinois Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG).  
The MIG is administered by the  
Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services (HFS).**