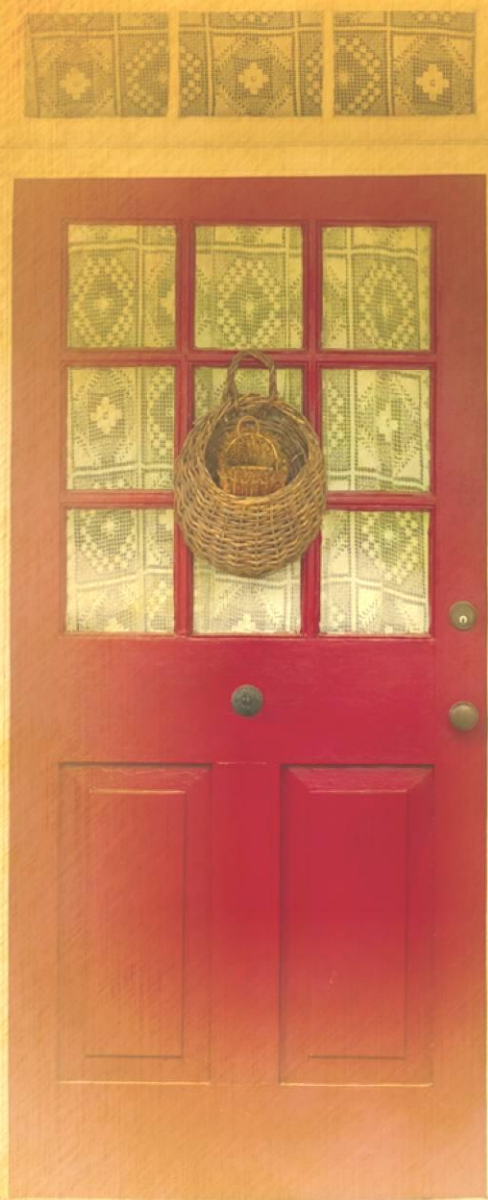


# Raising a Child with Special Needs



HomePointe™  
*Pointers*

# Raising a Child with Special Needs

*With Kurt Bruner, The Center for Strong Families*

Only those with first-hand experience truly understand the blessing and challenges of raising a child with special needs. Parenting is hard work under the best of circumstances. When you add managing the needs of a child with physical or mental disabilities it can bring a whole new level of physical and emotional stress for parents. But it also brings a level of joy others rarely comprehend.

Whether you have just recently received a troubling diagnosis, are moving into a new stage of care, or have just started attending this church, we want to be a source of encouragement and hope as you fulfill your calling to parent a child with special needs.

We believe every child is a gift from God made in His image and reflecting His dignity. We also consider those caring for children with special needs worthy of special honor and support. To become intentional about your unique situation, we encourage you to reflect on your blessing, your call and your challenge.

## **YOUR BLESSING: A special connection**

Those nurturing a child with special needs often encounter the heart of God in ways that can only be described as a spiritual mystery. While these children may be unable to participate in certain physical and/or academic pursuits, they can thrive in the most important arena of life – the spirit. Even those who can't understand the written word of God embody what it means to love and be loved as one totally dependant upon the Giver and Sustainer of life. And those honored to serve these children are given a unique connection with the God whose image they bear – seen in a gazing smile, a shrieking laugh, or an unspoken moment of delight that proclaims to all “the refreshing water of God’s joy is available to us all.”

## **YOUR CALL: Laying down your life**

You have one of the most difficult yet vital callings in the kingdom of God. But how can you maintain the ongoing energy and passion needed to parent a child with special needs?

There's no other way to do it than to daily embrace the call to lay down your life. Philippians 2 says:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8).

All Christian parents are called to mirror Jesus by taking on “the very nature of a servant” at home. But it is especially real in the midst of the never ending sacrifices demanded of those caring for special needs. Even if those around you never understand the load you bear, you play a part that is immensely important from God’s perspective and is credited as serving Christ himself (Matthew 25:40).

## **YOUR CHALLENGE: Finding support and replenishment**

Whether your child has mild or severe needs, you require replenishment in order to stay faithful and avoid burnout. You need practical help and spiritual nourishment. Stephen Covey talks about the importance of “sharpening the saw”—of prioritizing physical, emotional and spiritual restoration so that your efforts can be fueled with new strength and purpose. Following that advice is an extra challenge for you— but even more essential. You and your child need periodic breaks. Of course, making that happen can be difficult because very few offer to help and those who do may not understand what to do, your child’s unique needs, or just how hard it can be. That’s why this church offers a variety of ministries for families just like yours.

## **GOING FURTHER – Lake Pointe Support**

### **SOAR – Helping Those With Unique Needs Reach New Heights**

The Rockwall Campus of Lake Pointe Church has an extensive ministry for families with special needs—including summer camp, a special needs fall festival, and more. **For information or to register for any of the following, contact Wendi Akers, [wendia@lakepointe.org](mailto:wendia@lakepointe.org), 469.698.2310.**

- **Bible Study Classes for Children with Special Needs:** Offered during all Life Group (LG) hours.
- **Parent Workshop:** Quarterly. Experts and speakers address issues that parents of children who have special needs face. No cost. Dates and class locations vary.
- **Friday Night Fun:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month from 6-9:30pm. A free program for children with special needs and their siblings ages 6 months thru 13 years old. Parents may drop off their child and enjoy a much needed night out. Enrollment is offered to all campuses however the event takes place at the Rockwall Campus only. Reservations are required.
- **Fun Day:** Offered three days a year, Fun Day is packed full of all the fun things kids like to do. Open to children with special needs and their siblings ages 6 months to 13 years of age. There is a cost of \$10 per child that includes lunch, snacks, bounce houses and more. Reservations Required.
- **Mom's Support Group:** For mothers and grandmothers who love a child with special needs. Childcare provided for children ages 13 and under. Reservations required.
- **Older Children Fun Events: *Night at the Pier*** – Students with special needs ages 13 and older will be partnered with our Student Ministry youth for a night of fun. Cost is \$10 per student and includes dinner & a snack. Reservations Required.