



21[•]NEXT COMMUNITIES

5 RESOURCES

Cuyahoga County Board of
Developmental Disabilities
www.cuyahogabdd.org

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
<https://ood.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ood>

Employment First
<http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/>

Best Buddies
<https://cuyahogabdd.org/helpful-supports/best-buddies/>

Services for Independent Living
<https://sil-oh.org/>

INTRODUCTION

I chose to be the mother of three children; however, I was chosen to be the mother of a very special young man, my middle child – Kobe. Nothing in life prepares you to be a parent of a child with special needs.

It is incumbent upon parents of children with disabilities to identify, and in some cases, create the resources and spaces we need to give our children the best advantage. Ensuring that my son had the same opportunities as his typical siblings or peers has been one of my goals for him.

Kobe has always proven to be a very strong-willed and independent spirit guy. Our family continually fosters that.

I look for resources that guide and support Kobe in being the man he envisions. Kobe does not see himself as a person with special needs. He wants the same things for himself that almost every other young person does. He shared his plan to obtain employment and get an apartment long before he was out of high school. Additionally, he expressed a desire "to be married to a woman who will attend church with him, not have any children, and be willing to watch our family dogs."

5 TIPS



- 1. Your child's abilities/successes/failures should not be defined by anyone else.** Had I listened to the school psychologist, I would have dimmed a truly magnificent bright light. She told me I was setting my son up for failure by insisting he attends all-day kindergarten. At the end of the school year, she publicly apologized for being wrong and doubted my belief in my son and Kobe's ability to be great.
- 2. As much as your son or daughter is able, allow them to give voice to their hopes and dreams for the life they desire to live.** Even in the face of differing abilities, every individual must know they are capable human beings, deserving of abundantly fulfilling lives.
- 3. Whenever possible, allow your child to safely participate in as many of the activities as their typical peers.** They are not made of glass and are not nearly as fragile as we protective parents oftentimes think they are.
- 4. Make mental health hygiene a priority for the entire family.** Having a child with developmental delays can put a strain on even the strongest of family units. Ultimately, having clear, concise mental health action plans can derail negative behaviors and actions before they cause irreversible damage to your mind and your home.
- 5. Instill the greatest sense of pride in your special person that no one can take away.** Being different is never easy until you realize that is where the beauty of strength lies. We live in an age of ramped-up bullying and emotional toxicity that we see wreak havoc in far too many lives. When the scales are already tipped in what some may perceive as an unfortunate, balance-even them, out by instilling a great sense of pride in your loved-one from the onset. Equip them with tools to know they are worth the life they are given.



Tocombamaria Murphy is a healthcare advocate, public speaker, artist and all around creative whose son, Kobe, taught her the true definition of a life worth saving/living. Her hardest fought battles have been won to ensure he has every opportunity to be whomever God has called him to be.

"When you change how you view things, you change how you do things."

Tocombamaria Murphy