

PF CS & YOU

Putnam Family
and
Community Services

Take Note ✓

SUMMER 2009: EXCERPT

Spotlight On... **RAPP** (*Relatives As Parents Program*)

RAPP. It's not a new kind of music, or something you'd read in a text message. It's the Relatives As Parents Program, and it's a **lifesaver for many grandparents**, aunts, uncles, and siblings who suddenly find themselves responsible for raising a relative's child.

This monthly support group welcomes the **families that form when Mom and Dad can no longer care for their kids**. When parents struggle with addictions, run into trouble with the law or pass away, children may have no place to go...until a kind relative steps in and takes on the parenting role. But raising a child can be especially difficult for a grandparent on the verge of retirement, or a single aunt in a small apartment. Seemingly simple questions – from “how will the children get medical coverage” to “where will they sleep” – can become **overwhelming challenges** to these “new parents.”

RAPP provides a safe place for these special families to connect and figure out the answers together. Adults can talk about difficulties they might be facing, learn about available resources, and find out what has worked for other caregivers. Meanwhile, children are given the opportunity to engage in a fun, educational activity with other kids from families like their own.

At each RAPP meeting, relative-caregivers and children see firsthand that they are not so different, that **although there may be obstacles, there is no need to face them alone**.