

Chris Curry has her Master's degree in Special Education from Kansas University. She is the founder of Families Together for People with Disabilities[®], a family support program for families who have a child with a disability. Please visit www.familiestogether.org for additional information. Chris and her husband raised their two sons in Moscow, Idaho.

She began her career as a teacher for children with severe disabilities. In 1982, while she was teaching, she founded Families Together, Inc. in Kansas when her work with families made her realize that families needed a support system that would strengthen families and enhance family functioning through education, networking and family fun.

The Family Enrichment Weekend model (www.autismfamilyenrichmentweekend.com) that was developed by Chris in 1982, continues to be offered to all families served by Families Together. This service is funded through scholarships and sponsorships that cover the costs for all attending families. Thirty years later, Families Together, Inc., in Kansas remains a strong statewide parent support organization.

In 1986, when Chris moved to the Northwest, she founded the second Families Together organization and served as a volunteer director for 13 years. During that time, from 1987 to 1999, Chris held a position at Washington State University as the director of the Center of Supportive Education, a statewide training program to promote inclusive education in preschool, elementary and secondary programs in Washington State.

Since 1982, Families Together for People with Disabilities[®] has conducted 85 Family Enrichment Weekends where 1600 families have attended Family Enrichment Weekends. In addition, each year there are Holiday Parties, Parent Support Meetings, workshops, home visits, school meetings and phone calls from parents who just needed to talk to someone who could help.

In 1999 Families Together received two federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education that were directed by Chris. These grants funded the National Native American Families Together project that provided information and support to Native American families across the country for 10 years. The second grant was a regional grant that enhanced ongoing Families Together programs to provide additional support to rural families in southeast Washington. While these grants were active Families Together was able to provide Chris with a funded position.

Although Chris has retired from her position as Executive Director of Families Together, she continues to conduct trainings on Special Education Law, IEP development and Procedural Safeguards to families and professionals across the country. Chris also works with schools across the country to create positive learning environments for children with diverse needs by providing technical assistance and training to schools and parents on using Positive Behavior Supports, adapting curriculum, and parent involvement. Her weekly webinars for Children who Challenge are attended by Head Start programs across the country and allows Families Together to continue their work with Native American families. She has an extensive background in working with students with autism, multiple disabilities, and severe behavioral problems.

She has written a parenting curriculum "Parenting Children who Challenge" and conducts several parent trainings for parents in the Palouse. Families Together is also home to the Temple Grandin Eustacia Cutler Autism Fund. This fund provide insight and guidance to parents and professionals through webinars and networking.

Chris is a musician and song writer and has produced several recordings with the Music Room in Austin Texas. Her songs are about the children she has known and issues in Special Education. Her music can be found on <http://www.familiestogether.org/media/music/>.