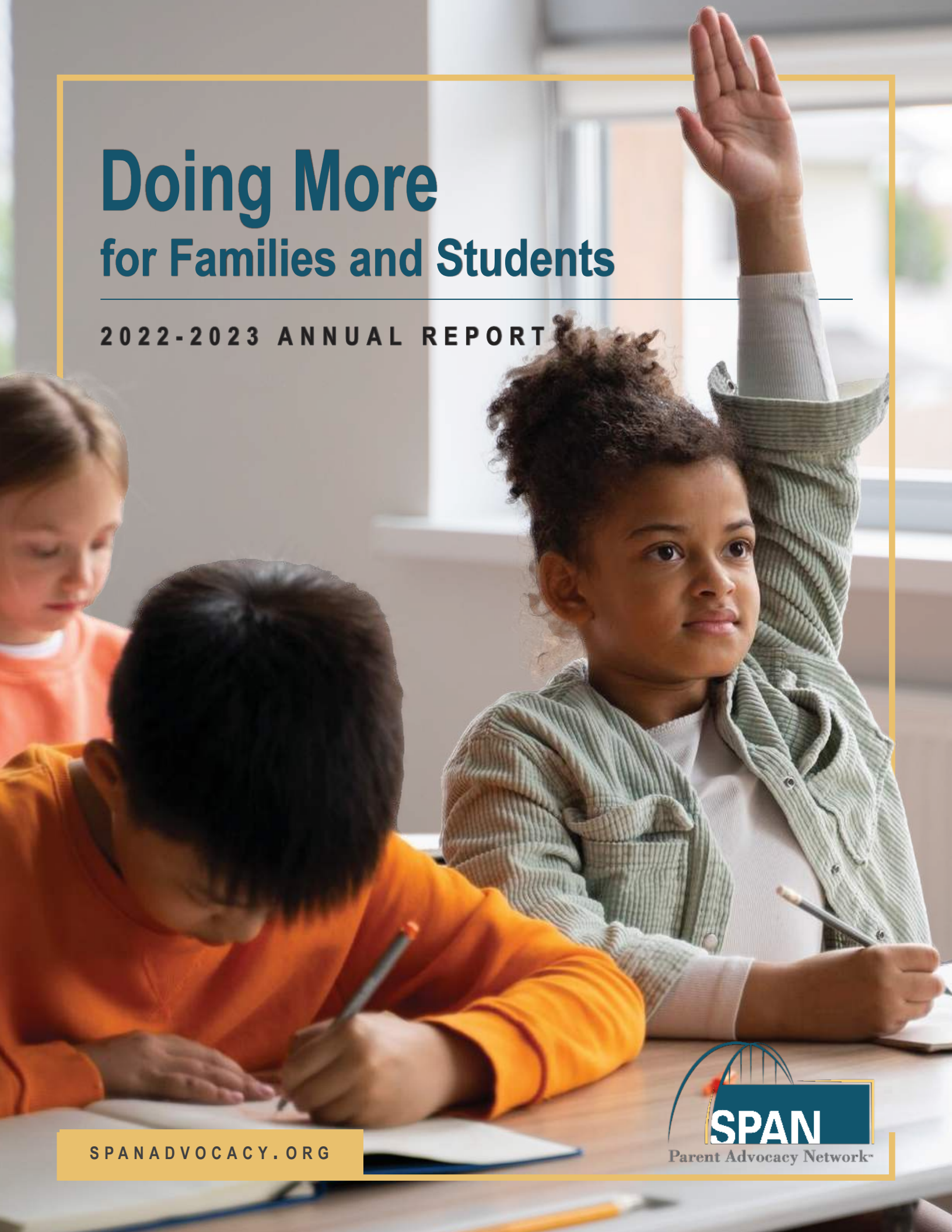


Doing More for Families and Students

2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



SPANADVOCACY.ORG



A photograph of two young children crawling on a grassy lawn. In the foreground, a child with curly hair and a grey shirt is smiling at the camera. In the background, another child in a blue shirt is crawling towards colorful toys. The scene is bright and outdoors.

Our Vision, Mission and Committment

Our Vision

SPAN's vision is that all families will have the resources and support they need to ensure that their children become fully participating and contributing members of our communities and society.

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower and support families, and inform and involve professionals interested in the healthy development and education of children and youth.

Our Commitment

Our foremost commitment is to children and families with the greatest need due to disability or special health/mental health needs; poverty; discrimination based on race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, immigrant or homeless status; involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems; geographic location; or other special circumstances.



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Board of Directors

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Marsh USA, Inc.

John Pennett, Board Vice President
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Engagement and Programming Newark Alliance -
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Nekia Lewis, Program Manager, Global Health and
Wellness Strategy, Corporate Benefits
Verizon

Libby Stone-Sterling, Director, Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation,
Maine Department of Labor

Management Team

Carolyn Hayer, Executive Director
Peg Kinsell, Institutional Policy Director
Jeanne McMahon, Senior Program Director
Roy Maynard, Director of Finance

Our Board Chair

Explaining what we do is getting harder – and more exciting!

So often I am asked, what does SPAN do?

Every organization has an “elevator pitch” or abbreviated way to explain what it is that they “do” on a daily basis. We often joke internally at SPAN that explaining what we do can be tough, and now that the organization runs more than 40 programs, that job seems to be getting tougher.

But our many programs are complementary and they usually come down to building **access, equality, engagement, or leadership**. In the past, most of these programs have been centered around families of children, youth and young adults with disabilities or special healthcare needs. As of last year, with the launch of our N.J. Family Engagement Hub, we’re also supporting the success of ALL students in New Jersey, by building engagement between parents, educators, administrators, and other family-serving organizations.

So now, if you’re a parent in New Jersey, you need to know about SPAN, as we can help you advocate for your children in ways we couldn’t before. That’s exciting!

Here’s my attempt at a SPAN “elevator pitch” for our present times:

SPAN provides services to, and advocates for, families of children/youth with disabilities and special healthcare



needs, as well as training to other professionals who serve them, parent leaders and advocates. We also support family engagement between NJ school teachers, administrators, family-serving organizations, and parents.

I’d like to ask for your support in making SPAN an even more powerful and enduring force in the lives of families by making a donation. This year, we have a beautiful new way to thank you for your support by memorializing your donation on our Tree of Gratitude. To learn more about it and all the ways you can support us, view the back page of this report.

I’ll close with a note of personal thanks. First, to the remarkable staff at SPAN, “thank you” for all you do to serve our many constituents each and every day. To our magnificent Executive Director, Carolyn Hayer, “thank you” you for your talent and stewardship as SPAN grows and evolves. Finally, to all our partners, grantors and individual donors, “thank you” for your trust in us and your own sense of advocacy. We wouldn’t be here without you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Morel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Morel, CPCU, ARM
Board President, Board of Directors
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

and Executive Director

Settling in as we spread our wings.

Greetings family, friends, and colleagues!

I am proud to present SPAN's 2023 Annual Report reflecting on another year of change and growth. As with prior editions, this report is intended to keep you and all of our stakeholders informed about our activities.

The past fiscal year has been a testament to our collective commitment to supporting families, regardless of circumstances, particularly those with the greatest need, as well as helping to build parent leadership and train other professionals who share our commitment. In this report you will find stories and data that demonstrate our success and progress, triumphs and challenges.

Notably, we've expanded our programs and initiatives considerably with the renewal of existing grants and with new funding to touch the lives of even more students across New Jersey – now supporting the success of those both with and without disabilities or special healthcare needs by building engagement between families, educators, districts and other family-serving organizations. This is a natural expansion for SPAN, as we have always been about building bridges to find lasting solutions.

Our office on Broad Street in Newark now really feels like home and we have built a "Tree of



Gratitude" on our wall to memorialize those who have supported our mission with a donation and we invite you to join these foundational friends of SPAN with your own contribution. See the back page of the report to find out how you can add your name to our tree. We are deeply grateful to all who have donated.

None of our achievements would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, staff, Board of Directors, partners, and donors. A heartfelt thank you for your unwavering support that fuels our passion and lights the path to progress. Your belief in our mission, your commitment, and your contributions are the driving force behind our accomplishments. With your ongoing support, we will continue to create opportunities and triumphs for infants, toddlers, children, youth, and their families. I continue to be filled with a sense of profound gratitude for the privilege of leading this incredible organization.

As you explore this report, join us in celebrating our successes and acknowledging the new milestones we've reached together.

With deep appreciation,

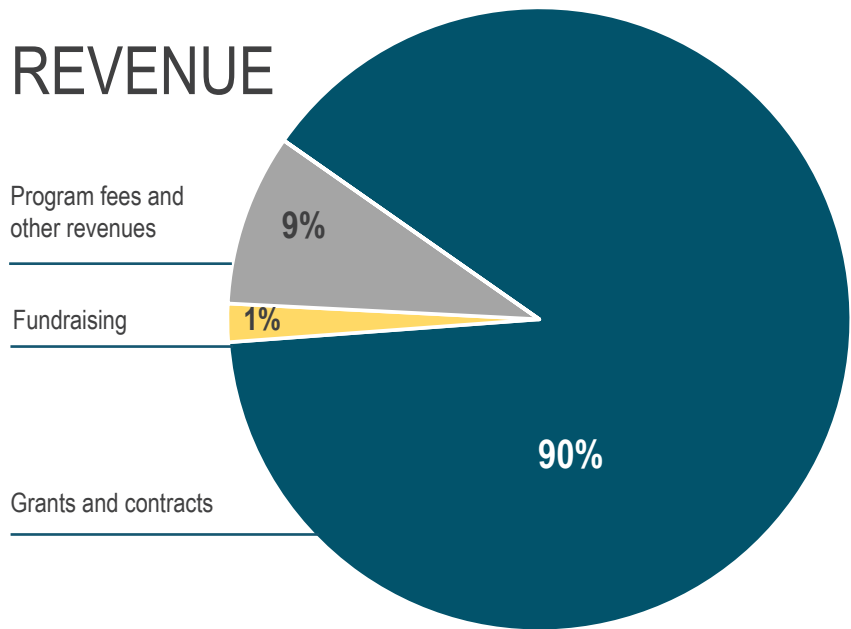
Carolyn Hayer
Executive Director
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

2022 - 2023 Fiscal Year

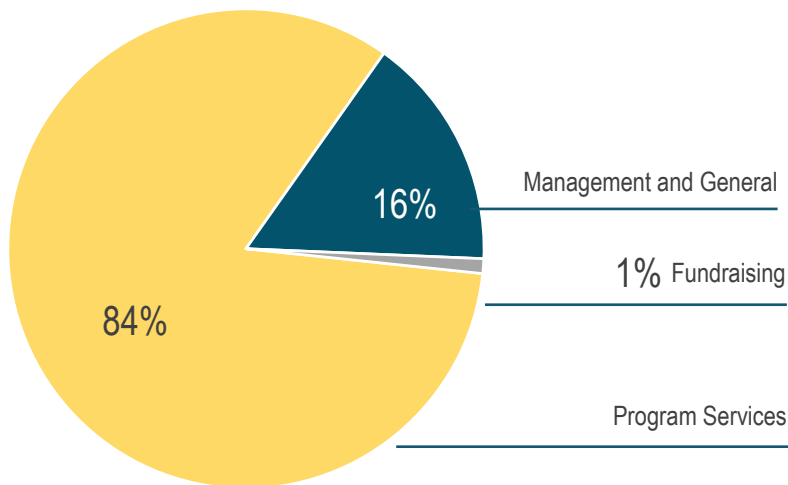
SPAN is primarily funded via state and federal government grants. This has been the case for many years and while it is a testament to our ability to deliver successful program outcomes year after year, such money may be restricted and can limit our ability to be as flexible as we need to be in order to meet the quickly changing needs of our families and professional partners. A higher percentage of donations from individuals and organizations will allow us to broaden our services and more quickly pivot to meet the evolving needs of the communities we impact.

Total Funds:
\$5.6M

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Paul W. Franklin



My wife, Karen and I are blessed to have three grown children.

All of them attended an excellent public school system. This system is one of the treasured aspects of our town and all three of our kids received a top-notch education and went on to attend highly competitive, post-secondary institutions.

While none of our children were born with disabilities, they each had experiences, during their public-school years, interacting with fellow classmates who did have disabilities, whether visible or invisible, and these interactions contributed to the very quality of their overall educational experiences.

When I first learned about SPAN from a family member, and then later got a real education during the SPAN 35th Anniversary Celebration, I understood how much the organization has done to assist, train, and advocate for parents so their children with disabilities can actually stay within their local public schools. I had no idea how challenging this whole endeavor can be for many parents and I understand intimately the value of a good public education and it simply makes sense to me that outcomes are better for children with disabilities when they are able to matriculate with their peers who do not have disabilities.

*But I am communicating to you now that outcomes are **also better** for the students **without** disabilities, as their own minds and hearts are opened by their interactions with peers who do have a disability. Such has been the case with my own children, and I think this perspective should not be overlooked.*

Karen and I raised our kids to keep an eye out for others, to live with empathy, and to reach out to others who are not like themselves in order to learn and expand their capacity to love. They have done this, and we are immensely proud of all three of them.

So, for this and other good reasons, Karen and I have made a decision to support SPAN with our giving and we highly recommend the organization to you as well.

*With thanks for **all** you do,*

Paul W. Franklin

Gwendolyn's Advocacy Journey

Gwendolyn Booker Brown, pictured here with her children, represents the heart of the parents and caretakers we proudly support in their journey to advocate for their children. At our core, we are not only advocates; we are parents ourselves, deeply committed to empowering others. This shared dedication fuels our mission to help families secure the resources their children need and deserve. In her own words, Gwendolyn shares how she has successfully advocated on their behalf:



I am writing this testimonial in reference to my twins, Antonio and Antonasia Brown. I would like to extend my gratitude to SPAN for empowering me over the years, particularly through my children's elementary school and high school education. They taught me how to advocate and gave me the knowledge that I now have about advocating for my children with disabilities for their IEP plans, school workshops and everything else.

And I would like to give a special thanks to SPAN employee, Ms. Shirley Johnson, who has always been on our side sharing information, education, support and anything else my husband and I have needed to work through this process for our children.

I am proud to announce that my twins received a full ride scholarship to attend the EOF program over the summer of 2024 and started their first year of college on September 4th at Bloomfield College.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do for our children with disabilities.

“They taught me how to advocate and gave me the knowledge that I now have about advocating for my children...”

-Gwendolyn Booker Brown

Outreach Highlights

SPAN takes a holistic approach to empowering families and engaging professionals across New Jersey, the United States, and around the world. We manage and/or partner in more than forty programs at any given time that engage tens of thousands of families - parents and youth/young adults - and professionals each year. From prenatal care and support, to early childhood development, to youth education and healthcare advocacy, all the way to young adult transition guidance; our programs follow the lives of those with the greatest need.



822,978

individuals reached about our services.



37,785

People provided with Individual Assistance.



53,692

Parents/professionals and youth provided with training and support.

SPAN operates more than 42 projects within nine holistic program areas.



Expanding Visibility

2023



Follower growth +7.4%;
+20.8% Brand Awareness growth



Follower growth +51.3%;
Engagement +50.8%



Follower growth +4%;
Engagement +3835%



Follower growth +24.2%;
Engagement +10%

1.5M

Center for Parent Information and Resources

Our Parent Center Hub site is our largest resource website housing thousands of documents, webinars, trainings and more. 1.5 million visitors navigated to parentcenterhub.org in 2023.

188K

In 2023, 188,552 people visited the SPAN website. Since the application of our Strategic Communications Plan, our SPANAdvocacy.com website traffic has grown 50%.

40K

Our RAISE Center site provides support to individuals with disabilities through the transition from secondary school into competitive employment and independent living. The number of visitors to raisecenter.org in 2023 was nearly 40,000.

The dedicated parent leaders at SPAN are so fortunate to enjoy many wonderful relationships with our grantors, in some cases spanning many years. We offer our sincere thanks to all of our funders and donors.

About Us

[https //spanadvocacy.org/about/](https://spanadvocacy.org/about/)

Our Dedicated Staff

[https //spanadvocacy.org/staff/](https://spanadvocacy.org/staff/)

Our Programs

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Find Resources

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The Learning Portal

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Our Affiliated Networks

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Find News

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Fax: (973) 642-8080 | Email: info@spanadvocacy.org



Building bridges of support, one family at a time.

**Make a lasting impression today
by supporting our Tree of Gratitude**
Your generous donation will
enable us to continue offering
invaluable resources to parents
and professionals across New
Jersey and beyond.



Scan the QR code
to see more

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