



In November, 2012, my 16 year old daughter was scheduled for back surgery for her scoliosis after a long and failed course of conservative treatment. The operation takes all day, with the surgeon actually moving the patient's spine, fusing portions of the spine, and inserting rods in the back to stabilize it. For months leading up to the surgery, I couldn't think about it without becoming emotional and frightened. Fiona Patrick suggested that I consider utilizing Parent-to-Parent for support. As it turns out, Marci Davis, a parent who had gone through the exact same surgery with her son, Blake, ten years prior, worked in my office building. Marci understood, like no one else could, the fear and the emotion I was experiencing. She understood that, prior to the surgery; I could only talk about it for short periods of time. While my daughter, family and I were surrounded with tremendous support from family and friends, having someone who knew exactly what we were experiencing made all the difference. For example, when my daughter had some initial trouble with her pain medications post-operatively, Marci assured me that it would take a bit of time for the doctors to figure out the precise medication protocol for her, and that this had happened with Blake as well. This kind of support, reassurance, and information was invaluable. I highly recommend Parent-to-Parent (PA) for any parent whose child has a disability or special needs.

Kerry V. Smith
Director, Office for Dispute Resolution

