



## **Relationships for Sons and Daughters with Disabilities**

**By Max Barrows**

Having a relationship is really about true inclusion. What do we mean by true inclusion? The first things that come to mind are working in the community or taking typical classes in school. Our definition of true inclusion goes beyond that. When fully included, your son or daughter will have relationships with other people. There are different types of relationships. For example, having friends is essential because your child needs someone else to talk to, and do fun things with. You want your child to be liked for who they really are! This is also a great way to learn the basics about having a healthy relationship. Beyond friendships, there are many other kinds of relationships. Examples might include having a boyfriend/girlfriend/partner, getting married, and having a family of your own.

This may make you feel a little bit nervous. It is a common feeling that almost all parents have, so it is totally understandable. Looking ahead, you need to prepare yourself for your child growing up. Over time, parents get older and eventually may not be able to take care of their sons or daughters who are now grown up. Persons with disabilities need to discover what independence is to them, which can mean lots of opportunities to look into. For example, one person with a disability may like to move out of their parent's house into a shared living situation. Another person may desire living on their own. Others may have goals of living with housemates, a partner or a spouse. Your son or daughter may have no problem living at home, but still wants a "significant other" in their life. What really is important is self-determination among persons with disabilities!