

**Family Resource
Center for
Disabilities &
Special Needs**

The

Coalition

**Parent Training
& Resource
Center (PTRC)**

Truancy - What You Need to Know

According to the US Department of Education, there is a growing and compelling body of research that demonstrates chronic absences from school - typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused - is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of which students will eventually drop out of school. Statistics indicate that chronic absenteeism is a national problem that seriously undermines collective efforts to improve education and life outcomes among our youth. Guidance on school absence was addressed with the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which replaced No Child Left Behind in 2015.

State law requires all children from the school year in which the child is 5 years of age before September 1st until the child attains his/her 17th birthday or graduates from school must attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten or be approved by the district or the South Carolina Independent Schools Association for home instruction. A parent/legal guardian whose child or ward is not 6 years old on or before September 1st of the school year may waive kindergarten attendance for his/her child. Further, state law requires that all students who attend public school in South Carolina must be in attendance a minimum of 170 days to receive credit for any course. This law is excusable only for cases of illness certified by a physician. Excuses brought in at the end of the school year to cover absences will not be accepted and the students are responsible for being aware of their overall number of days, absences, and individual class absences. If a student in grades 10-12 has more than 5 unexcused absences in a year-long subject, the student will not receive credit for

that course. If a student is absent more than 3 days unexcused from a semester course, the student will not receive credit. Please note this applies to each class individually.

If a child, who is at least 6 but not yet 17, accumulates 3 consecutive unlawful absences or a total of 5 unlawful

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Thank You Webb-Croft Foundation

With generous funding sponsored by the Webb-Croft Foundation and the Coastal Community Foundation, the Family Resource Center is offering direct Mentor Support to families of children with disabilities or suspected disabilities in the tri-county who are not English proficient. We are so pleased to once again offer training, information, and outreach to underserved families in our communities. If you know of families looking for help, we have contracted with Laura Vazquez, our bi-lingual Mentor, to provide assistance. For more information please call: 843-266-1318. OR

Comuníquese en español con Laura Vazquez, consultora de servicios y padre mentor, del Centro de Recursos Familiares para Discapacidades y Necesidades Especiales. (Family Resource Center for Disabilities and Special Needs) 803-814-8666

Un grupo de soporte para familias de habla Hispana se reúne el cuarto Viernes de cada mes de las 6 a las 8 en la Clínica MUSC Northwoods 2070 Northbrook Blvd, Suite A-16, North Charleston. Para mayor información llame a Martha al (843) 876-2505.

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**And
So
Much
More**

Truancy.....continued

absences, that child is classified as a truant. Reg. 43-274 (II)(A). Once a child is classified as a truant, the child's parents and school officials have additional responsibilities to improve the child's attendance.

As defined by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), a student who is absent a minimum of 10 percent of the enrollment period – for any reason (e.g., suspension, illness-excused or unexcused) is considered to be chronically absent. According to the OCR, a student is absent if he/she misses 50 percent of the instructional day for any reason (excused or unexcused).

Absences are classified as “lawful” and “unlawful” as determined by circumstances. While districts may designate specific guidelines, the following are typically considered lawful: 1. Absence caused by illness; 2. Absence because of a medical/dental appointment. (A medical statement from a physician will likely be required upon return to school. Students who exceed 10 days because of routine dental, doctor, or clinic visits must have all days in excess of 10 approved by a school administrator.) 3. Absences because of serious illness or death in a student’s immediate family. 4. Absences because of a recognized religious holiday. 5. Absences because of special circumstances that are approved by the student’s principal, the superintendent and the Board of Trustees. 6. Absences because of a school sponsored event, provided the student has acquired less than the 10 lawful or unlawful absences. Absences are considered unlawful in the following situations: 1. When a student is willfully absent without parent/guardian knowledge; 2. When a student is absent without an acceptable excuse, regardless of parent/guardian knowledge. 3. When the Board of Trustee’s designee does not declare a student’s absence lawful. Each district may have a different policy as to what is required in excuse documentation.

As part of resources made available to families for clarification, Dorchester District 2 provides the following frequently asked questions:

1. I told my child to inform his teacher that he was absent because he was sick. Do I have to send in a written note? Yes, a written note (excuse) is required every time your child is absent from school. The written note (excuse) must be submitted to the school within three (3) days of the student returning to school. *2. What happens if our family has planned an out of town trip that will require my child to miss school?* Out of town trips, vacations, cruises, etc. are not acceptable reasons for lawful/excused absences. The days will be unlawful/unexcused and will count towards truancy. *3. How many days is my child allowed to miss school because of sickness?* The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) states that a school year consists of 180 days of instruction. Students who miss 10 or more days risk not receiving credit for classes. In the event of a serious medical issue/illness,

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please contact your child’s school to investigate the possibility for homebound instruction. *4. My child missed the bus. Is this an excused absence?* No. If your child misses the school bus and subsequently misses an entire day of school the day will count as an unlawful/unexcused absence. *5. My child was absent from school because of a death in the family, are the two days for the funeral services excused?* Yes, the child’s absence will be lawful/excused for “bereavement” in the event of a death of an immediate family member. Upon the child’s return to school a written note (excuse) will be required. *6. One of my children is sick, are his/her siblings able to be excused from school because of the medical appointment?* No, if siblings are not sick and are absent from school, the absence would be unlawful/ unexcused. *7. I took my child to the doctor, but forgot to get a medical excuse note when we were in the office. Is it too late to submit the excuse?* No, as long as it is submitted within 3 days of your child’s return to school. Please make every effort to secure a medical excuse note whenever your child is seen by a doctor. *8. My child was seriously injured and is physically unable to attend school. What are the options?* In the event that your child is battling a significant illness, prolonged hospital stay, surgery, etc. the student may qualify for medical homebound instruction. Contact your child’s school to investigate the possibility. *9. Is the annual band trip considered an excused absence for my child?* Yes, school days missed because of school activities, trips or functions will be lawful/excused absences. *10. My child was late to school/signed out early, why has my child been marked absent?* Students must attend school for 50% of the instructional day to be counted present. If your child was not in school for at least 50% of the instructional day, then the student is considered absent for the day.

School districts must adopt policies to define and list lawful and unlawful absences. Parent are encouraged to contact their school/district attendance clerk for questions regarding truancy policy.

City of Charleston’s 2nd Inclusion Summit

Tuesday, October 2 - 9:00 AM - Noon
Dock Street Theatre - 135 Church St, Charleston

Join the City of Charleston Commission on Disability Issues, the Charleston County Diversity Committee, and Disability: IN South Carolina Low Country as they meet with local businesses, disability employment resources, & community leaders to foster new directions and collaborations to promote Inclusive Employment. For more information, including speakers & presentations, contact Janet Schumacher, ADA Coordinator, City of Charleston, at (843) 577-1389 or schumacherj@charleston-sc.gov

Keeping Children Safe at School

The tragic shootings at high schools in the US are stark and sad reminders that our children may not be safe at their own school. Of course we want to know what can be done to protect our loved ones. Below you will find an excerpt from the South Carolina Code of Regulations - Chapter 43 - State Board of Education that addresses school safety.

South Carolina §43-166. Student and School Safety School Safety Assessment

1. The State Department of Education shall develop a Model Safe Schools Checklist designed to assess schools' safety strengths and weaknesses. The checklist must include items addressing the following topics:

- the existence of a comprehensive safety plan;
- communication of discipline policies and procedures;
- intra-agency and interagency emergency planning;
- recording of disruptive incidents;
- training of staff and students;
- assessment of buildings and grounds;
- procedures for handling visitors;
- assignment of personnel in emergencies;
- emergency communication and management procedures; and
- transportation rules and accident procedures.

2. The State Department of Education shall submit the checklist to the State Board of Education for approval prior to dissemination to the school districts. The checklist may be revised on an annual basis by the State Board of Education in compliance with relevant provisions of the Safe Schools Act of 1990.

3. Prior to September 30 of each school year, the State Department of Education shall disseminate a copy of the model safe schools checklist to every public school district in the state.

4. School districts shall be advised by the Department of Education of the requirement to use a safe schools checklist in compliance with Section 59-5-65, S.C. Code of Laws, 1976. This safety assessment should be part of the comprehensive needs assessment conducted for school improvement purposes in compliance with Section 59-20-60(4)(d), S.C. Code of Laws, 1976. In particular, a safe schools check list should be utilized in determining "school climate" needs, one of the six indicators of school effectiveness.

In 2016, Superintendent Molly Spearman sent a memorandum to all South Carolina schools which included this language: "Proviso 1A.46 (SDE-EIA: Aid to Districts Draw Down) states, in part, that "in order to draw down funds appropriated in Part IA, Section 1,

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VIII.A.1, Aid to Districts, school districts, Palmetto Unified District and the Department of Juvenile Justice must work with local law enforcement agencies, and when necessary, state law enforcement agencies in order to ensure that the district has an updated school safety plan in place. The safety plan must include: safety directives in the classroom, a safe student and staff exit strategy, and necessary safety staff. Notice of completion of the updated plan must be submitted to the Department of Education no later than September 1, of the current fiscal year." Superintendent Spearman's memorandum can be found at:

<http://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-archive/model-safe-school-checklist-notice-of-completion1/model-safe-school-checklist-notice-of-completion-memo/>

The expectation is that every school should have a Model Safe School Checklist in place. If you're not sure about this in your child's school - ask the Principal.



CHANGE HOW YOU SEE, SEE HOW YOU CHANGE

WWW.POSITIVEEXPOSURE.ORG

Positive Exposure

Positive Exposure, an innovative arts, education and advocacy organization working with individuals living with genetic differences and other disabilities. Positive Exposure utilizes the visual arts to significantly impact the fields of genetics, mental health and human rights. Rick Guidotti, an award-winning photographer, has spent the past eighteen years collaborating internationally with advocacy organizations/NGOs, medical schools, universities and other educational institutions to effect a sea-change in societal attitudes towards individuals living with genetic, physical, behavioral or intellectual difference; his work has been published in newspapers, magazines and journals as diverse as Elle, GQ, People, the American Journal of Medical Genetics, The Lancet, Spirituality and Health, the Washington Post, Atlantic Monthly and LIFE Magazine.

Recently, Mr. Guidotti presented a talk at a conference in Charlotte attend by staff from the PTRC. It was clear from his presentation that Mr. Guidotti loves working with individuals with disabilities and their families and this love is illuminated in his work. Check it out at: www.positiveexposure.org



Set Your Bookmarks to the New IDEA Site

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will automatically redirect users from the Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004 website to the new Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website starting April 30, 2018.

OSERS launched the new IDEA website in June 2017 in order to provide updated department information regarding IDEA to the public including students, parents/families, educators, service providers, grantees, researchers and advocates. While the Legacy site will redirect users to the new IDEA site, content from the Legacy site is available for reference on the new IDEA website on the "Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004" historical reference page.

IDEA website users are encouraged to bookmark the new IDEA website: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea>

OSERS has made updates to the site based on the feedback it received from stakeholders since the initial launch of the new IDEA website last year. They will continue to gather feedback about the new website in order to enhance and add content, and to ensure the new site remains current.

Stay tuned for video tutorials highlighting features of the new site in the coming months. Visit the *OSERS Blog* (<https://sites.ed.gov/osers/>) if you have feedback regarding the new IDEA website and leave a comment.

Transition Alliance of South Carolina

5th Annual Interagency Transition Conference
Building Bridges: Constructing & Navigating Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities

Sept 30 - Oct 2, 2018
Embassy Suites Hotel
5055 International Blvd
N. Charleston

For more information contact Transition Alliance of SC
at
803-935-5231 or Email: transition@uscmed.sc.edu

You can register by visiting:
<https://transitionalliancesc.org>

While you're visiting their website be sure to check out the information on the new South Carolina Employment Credential

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Check It Out - Exceptional Parent has an all new website

WWW.EP-MAGAZINE.COM



It's Exceptional Parent's Innovative New Digital Strategy that features a bold new design with an intuitive site-wide navigational system with improved menu functionality that directs you to the information that is most relevant to you. On the site you can read the latest edition of Exception Parent magazine as well as find access to a wide variety of information and resources. You can be sure to find something for everyone!



South Carolina Disability Voting Coalition

ADVOCATING EQUAL ACCESS TO VOTING

Voters with disabilities cannot be denied the right to vote solely on the basis of a disability. People with disabilities have the right:

- ◆ To vote in elections independently or with assistance
- ◆ To vote privately and in the same manner as any voter
- ◆ To be treated with dignity and respect in all aspects of the voting process

In order to vote, you need to register at least 30 days before the election. To be eligible to register in South Carolina, you MUST:

- ◆ Be a United States citizen and a resident of South Carolina
- ◆ Be at least 18 years old on or before the next election
- ◆ Not be under a court order declaring you mentally incompetent
- ◆ Not be in prison resulting from a conviction of a crime
- ◆ Not be on probation

A citizen who wishes to register to vote may:

- ◆ Register in person at your county voter registration and elections office
- ◆ Register online or download a form at scvotes.org, complete it, and return it to your county voter registration and elections office.

You can also register to vote at any of the following:

- ◆ Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. SC Association of the Deaf
- ◆ SC Commission for the Blind
- ◆ SC Dept. of Disabilities & Special Needs
- ◆ SC Dept. of Mental Health
- ◆ SC Dept. of Motor Vehicles
- ◆ SC Dept. of Social Services
- ◆ SC Vocational Rehabilitation

VOTE !!

A person with a disability may vote absentee, in person, or by mail. You may vote in person by visiting your county voter registration and elections office, complete an application, and cast your ballot. You may vote absentee in person up until 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election. You may request an absentee ballot application online at scvotes.org or by visiting your county voter registration and elections office. Return the completed application to your county voter registration and elections office by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the election. You will then be mailed an absentee ballot. Complete the ballot and return it to your county voter registration and elections office by 7:00 p.m. on the day of the election. You may have another person return the ballot for you by completing the authorization form available from your county voter registration and elections office. A list of county voter registration and elections offices can be found under the General tab at scvotes.org.

If you plan on voting on election day, polling places are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. You must present one of the following items to vote on Election Day:

- ◆ SC Driver's license
- ◆ SC DMV issued ID card
- ◆ SC voter registration card with photo
- ◆ Federal Military ID
- ◆ United States Passport

If you do NOT currently have one of the items listed above, you can get a photo ID free of charge at the following locations:

- ◆ Your county voter registration and elections office by providing your date of birth and the last four digits of your social security number.
- ◆ Your local DMV office. Check with DMV or scdmvonline.com for the required documents.

If you do NOT have a photo ID on Election Day, you may vote a provisional ballot by providing a reasonable impediment (any valid reason beyond your control which created an obstacle to obtaining a photo ID). To vote under the reasonable impediment exception at the polling place present your current, non-photo registration card and sign an affidavit stating why you could not obtain a photo ID. Then cast a provisional ballot that will be counted unless the county election commission has reason to believe your affidavit is false.

If you do not have a photo ID, a reasonable impediment to obtaining one, or simply forgot to bring your photo ID to the polling place, you may still vote a provisional ballot. For your provisional ballot to be counted, you must provide a photo ID to the county election commission prior to certification of the election.

Voters needing assistance may be joined by a person of

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your choice except your employer or a representative of your employer's union.

Curbside voting is available to any voter who cannot enter the polling place or is unable to stand in line to vote. Vote "curbside," outside the polling place in your vehicle. Poll Managers monitor the area at least every 15 minutes. A "Curbside Voting" sign should be visible at your polling place.

For more information or to report voting concerns contact: Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. 803-782-0639 (voice), 866-275-7273 (Toll Free), 866-232-4525 (TTY), Info@pandasc.org (Email) or visit: http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/client_affairs/scdvc_brochure.pdf

The SC Disability Voting Coalition is a non-partisan coalition dedicated to increasing the numbers of people with disabilities who vote through voter education and improved access to the voting process.

Save the Date: March 7-8, 2019

**Converge Autism Conference
TD Convention Center - Greenville**



Featured Speaker: Dr. Temple Grandin

Springbrook Autism Behavioral Health invites professionals from across the nation to converge for two days of presentations and breakout discussions covering a wide range of topics related to Autism—from diagnosis, behavioral health, and treatment and therapy results. Although the Converge Autism Conference is geared towards industry professionals it is open to parents and caregivers from around the nation as a chance to meet and discuss educational, therapeutic, social, and psychological topics related to Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition to Dr. Grandin, the two-day conference will feature A-list speakers who represent a variety of fields including Occupational Therapy, Behavioral Analysis, Special Education, Speech and Language Pathology, and Youth Psychiatry. Registration has not yet opened but check this website for updates: <https://convergeautism.com/>

There's TA For That!

If your child has behavior problems you may have heard about positive behavior support. To help you understand this evidence method of behavior intervention visit:

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): www.pbis.org

This website is supported by the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports funded by the US Dept of Education to provide assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide behavior practices.

The ASD Virtual Library

With their Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Virtual Library, the SC Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services (OSES), provides support to educators, administrators, students, and families. The ASD Virtual Library serves to further provide support to those searching for resources to support the community in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorders. The population of students identified as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder and eligible to receive special education services in South Carolina schools continues to increase. Working to support educators in our schools includes the need for resources such as include early identification, academic and social behavior support, along with post-secondary options. The resources on the website have been vetted to include current information and useful resources for a variety of audiences. The links are for information only, and not required by OSES for use by any entity.

The OSES provides this webpage as a resource for administrators, educators, students, and parents who have an interest in learning about and supporting those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This Virtual Library serves to provide research resources, along with virtual trainings, printables and links to community agencies and universities that can further provide support for the ASD community. An opportunity to ask a general question regarding ASD is provided with the answer and question being posted for others to see in hopes of providing more information. Questions will be posted as deemed appropriate.

The SCDE provides the following disclaimer: While the resources have been vetted by experts in the field, the OSES in no way requires the use of any of the resources provided, nor the purchase of any linked or suggested resources. The resources are provided as information only and to be used at the user's discretion.

Visit the ASD Virtual Library at:

<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/special-education-services/additional-information-and-assistance/asd-virtual-library/>



The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the US Dept. of Education, # H328C160018. However, contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Julia Martin Eile.



The Coalition



The folks at Healing Farms hope that you and your family can attend their special night with the Riverdogs on Sunday, August 26! Look forward to a fun night filled with friends! Enjoy free parking, pre-game catch on the field and kids eat free. Also, kids run the bases after the game. Please RSVP by clicking the link below.
<https://goo.gl/forms/DgcojZKPCfjnRouJ3>

Healing Farms gatherings are meant to provide opportunities to socialize with friends and maybe even make some new ones! They hope to hold these throughout the year in order to build and strengthen our community.

South Carolina Department of Disabilities & Special Needs (DDSN)



In case you don't know...

SCDDSN is the state agency that plans, develops, oversees and funds services for South Carolinians with intellectual disability, autism, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury and conditions related to each of these four disabilities. Their mission is to assist people with disabilities and their families in meeting needs, pursuing possibilities and achieving life goals, and to minimize the occurrence and reduce the severity of disabilities through prevention.

According to information posted on their website, DDSN works with other state agencies to coordinate, arrange for and deliver services to eligible persons. DDSN's specialized services supplement and enhance, not replace, services provided by other state agencies. DDSN also advocates on behalf of all citizens with severe, lifelong disabilities and special needs to ensure that their needs are addressed by the appropriate state, federal and local agencies.

If you think someone in your family may qualify for services, all requests for eligibility require calling the DDSN Eligibility Division Intake Center at 1-800-289-7012 between 8:30- 5:00, Mon-Fri, excluding holidays. If the applicant is 2 years 11 months of age or younger, please contact: First Steps/BabyNet toll-free at 1-877-621-0865 instead. At the time of your call, please have available the applicant's social security number and Medicaid number, if Medicaid eligible. Please call when you have at least 20 minutes available to allow the DDSN Intake Operator time to collect the needed information.

For more information & to prepare for the eligibility intake, visit DDSN website for more information:
<http://www.ddsn.sc.gov/Pages/default.aspx>



TIPS FOR PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL “BACK TO SCHOOL”



The new school year brings about a chance for a fresh start for both children and teachers. Now that summer vacation is over and you’re looking at the upcoming year, you may want to consider some of these suggestions.

Remember, students with disabilities are general education students first. Think about what benefits all children and helps with school success. These will include: adequate sleep, an established routine, nutritious breakfast and lunch, supportive family, parents/guardians who take an interest in their child’s school program, adequate medical and dental care, and appropriate clothing. Keep in mind that your child with a disability needs the same things a typically developing child needs – and probably more. Start by making sure you provide the basic support and then consider what special services and supports your child may need to be successful.

Keep in mind that the first few weeks of school can be hectic for everyone – students, teachers, administrators, and parents! When possible, attend the functions held at your child’s school (open house/meet the teacher/PTA). If it works for your schedule, consider volunteering. The more positive interaction you have with school staff, the better the communication. If your child has a new teacher, be sure to start off on the right foot. Ask the teacher when the best time is for parents to call. Does the teacher prefer contact by email, text, phone, or a note in the agenda? Share information about your child, both strengths and weaknesses. Explain what worked well during the previous year and what didn’t. Be sure to tell the teacher that you want to be an active member of your child’s team, whether it’s an IEP or 504 team, and that you expect to attend every meeting that is held to discuss your child’s progress. If your child has the same teacher(s) as the previous year, talk about any changes in health, routine, and/or living situations. Don’t forget to ask the names of other individuals who will be working with your child such as related service providers (Speech/PT/OT, etc), guidance counselor, Assistant Principal, and classroom aid. If your child has a health condition that might impact attendance, discuss this as well. If there is a health concern, you may want to discuss this with the school nurse and consider a health plan.

The beginning of the academic year is a good time to organize your child’s records. It may be helpful to put everything in a 3-ring binder. You’ll want to have ready access to the IEP and progress reports, report cards, discipline referrals, work samples, and any other paperwork you accumulate regarding your child’s school year. Get

in the habit of taking notes during IEP meetings and keep those with the other records.

If your child is attending a new school or has a new teacher you may want to convene an IEP meeting. Remember that you know more about your child than any one. Share what you know with others who serve your child. Allow a few weeks for everyone to settle in and some time for the new teacher to get to know your child. Although an annual IEP meeting is required, parents may request a meeting at any time. It may be a good idea to have a “get to know you” meeting before any major issues arise. That way the first meeting can be pleasant and positive – what a great way to start the year!!

A Few Recommendations for



- Learn to disagree without being disagreeable. Be kind and courteous to everyone. It’s all right to be assertive, but not aggressive, abusive, or abrasive.
- When someone says something with which you disagree, try not to be judgmental.
- Maintain eye contact when greeting people, and shake their hands.
- Remember that civility is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- Speak softly. (People tune out loud, angry voices.)
- Saving face is important. Give your “opponent” the opportunity to withdraw.
- Your attitude is more important than your aptitude.
- Mutual respect is the key to avoiding conflict.
- Give the other person a chance to be heard without interrupting.

In Other Words:

Don’t make it personnel

Avoid putting down another’s ideas

Use “I” statements to communicate how you feel, what you think and what you want or need

Listen to the other point of view

Stay calm (and carry on)

When “Back to School” Means Special Education Preparing for School-Based Meetings



Why Special Education Law Is Complex

Special Education is, and always has been, a complex, law-driven process. It is a world with its own language full of required forms, required meetings and required participants at those meetings. It has timelines which must be met, categories of disability that students must be "fit into"; and precise definitions of key words and phrases.

One may well wonder why it is that so much regulation and legislation would be required for students with special needs. After all, children naturally want to learn, and parents want their children to learn as much as they can and get along well with others. This is exactly what schools were created to do.

Teachers are individuals who care deeply about children and about society in general, and who have chosen a career dedicated to helping young ones learn all they can and grow up successfully. Therefore, it seems obvious that parents and teachers have the same ultimate goal; the success of their student. If there are disagreements, why can't parents and teachers just sit down and figure out what's best for the child?

One answer is that it's not always so easy to just sit down and figure out what's "best". Teachers and parents can have honest disagreements about how to educate a child. A school may have the overall goal of serving all students equally with their available resources. Parents may have the goal of getting the best education possible for their children even if it is more expensive than normal. Educating special needs children is a multi-faceted, often complicated process which is rife with the possibilities for disagreements. Parents and teachers can both become very emotional about a child's education. After all, it is true for all of us that our children are our future. Educating children is a high stakes enterprise.

A second answer has to do with the issues of trust and communication. The more we trust someone, the less formal and detailed our agreements need to be. We simply trust that the plan will be carried out, and we trust that our ability to communicate with the other party will resolve any differences.

However, the special education laws could not be written relying on trust. They were written to cover every detail and imagine every contingency. We may regularly complain about the detail, complexity and paperwork the law requires, but in fact the law is very carefully designed to respond to important concerns and issues.

Special Education, Trust, and Good Agreements

The law does not have to be intimidating or overwhelming. If we can communicate well and trust each other, we can create agreements for educating our children in spite of the complexity of the law. What's best for the child can always drive our decisions, rather than a simple adherence to 'what the law says we should do. We will find that when we make decisions in this manner, we will be able to fit our educational recommendations into the framework of special education law. Our ability to be successful in building this kind of trust will stem largely from our skill as dispute resolvers, problem solvers and communicators, as well as from our commitment to responsibly carry out what we agree to do.

Quick Guide

If Your Child Receives Special Education Services You Should:

- Understand the special education process and your procedural rights.
- Be involved in every step of IEP development from assessment to writing the IEP, and reviewing the IEP
- Ensure that all IEP members are present and that there is someone with expertise in your child's disability on the team.
- Not be afraid to ask questions and don't be rushed
- Understand that programming precedes placement
- Know the answers to the following important questions:
- Have all my child's needs been identified & addressed

Go to Page 15 for a Great
Back-to-School Tip for Organ-
izing IEP records

Quick Guide Continued on Page 9

Quick Guide

Continued

- Are the goals measurable? (e.g., How will you measure that? Observation of what? Percentage of what?)
- What services will be provided & are they based on research?
- How will my child's progress be monitored? When? How often? How will this be reported to me?
- Is my child placed in the least restrictive appropriate environment?
- Understand that an IEP is not a guarantee of success—but it is a guarantee that the school will make good faith efforts and will provide the services specified in the IEP
- Understand that the best programming comes from parents and school-based personal collaborating to develop, implement, and evaluate a program that confers meaningful educational benefit
- Make all requests in writing
- Understand problem-solving mechanisms for situations in which problems haven't been resolved (IEP facilitation, mediation, state complaints, due process hearings)

Special thanks to Dr. Mitch Yell, Professor of Special Education in the College of Education at USC, who allows us to share this important list he uses in the training he provides to the Staff of the FRC's Parent Training & Resource Center.

We love this resource from the SC Department of Education & think you will too.

Questions to ask about IEP Development:

Did the LEA take the required steps to ensure that the parents could meaningfully participate in the IEP process, and did the LEA obtain parent consent when necessary?

Did the LEA ensure that necessary parties were invited to and/or participated in the IEP process?

Did the LEA adhere to required time lines and procedures, including those for initial evaluations and reevaluations?

Did the IEP team appropriately consider all relevant special factors?

Did the IEP team develop an appropriate statement of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance?

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Did the IEP team develop appropriate, measurable annual goals and designate how and when the goals would be measured and progress reported to parents?

Did the IEP team appropriately develop: measurable post-secondary goals; a statement of transition services; course of study; and, when appropriate, a notice to the student and parents of the transfer of rights?

Did the IEP team appropriately identify in the IEP: special education and related services, supplementary services, testing participation, and classroom and testing accommodations and modifications?

Did the IEP team appropriately explain the extent to which the student will not participate in general education classes and activities, and the IEP team's decisions with respect to least restrictive environment (LRE)?

Did the IEP team appropriately consider the need for extended school year services (ESY)?

Did the LEA/SOP provide appropriate notice (PWN) to the parents in a reasonable time before changing, or refusing to change, the student's eligibility, evaluation, program, or placement?

If there was disciplinary action that involved a potential change in placement for the student, did the LEA follow the applicable procedures?

Questions to ask about IEP Implementation:

Is there evidence that the LEA is providing specialized instruction and related services as delineated in the student's IEP?

Is the LEA providing appropriate reports to parents on the student's progress towards meeting IEP goals with the frequency set forth in the IEP?

Is the student participating in educational activities with non-disabled peers for the amount of time designated in the IEP?

Is there evidence that the student's teachers received notice of, and have a system in place to implement, the accommodations listed on the IEP?

Is there evidence that the school site administrators and the student's teachers are familiar with, and are prepared to utilize when necessary, the student's behavioral intervention plan (BIP)?

Looking for more information? Check out the PTRC Parent's Guide at: <http://frcdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NEW-PARENT-MANUAL.pdf>



All of this “Back to School” Discussion can cause some anxiety & stress. Who hasn’t worried about that next IEP meeting? Does any of this sound familiar?

IEPs According to Dr. Suess

Author Unknown

Do you like these IEPs?

I do not like these IEP's

I do not like them, Jeeze Louise

We test, we check

we plan, we meet

but nothing ever seems complete.

Would you, could you
like the form?

I do not like the form I see.

Not page 1, not 2, not 3.

Another change,

a brand new box. I think we all
Have lost our rocks.

Could you all meet here or there?
We could not all meet here or there.

We cannot all fit anywhere.

Not in a room
Not in a hall

There seems to be no space at all.
Would you, could you meet again?

I cannot meet again next week

No lunch, no prep

Please hear me speak.

No, not at dusk and not at dawn
At 4 p. m. I should be gone.

Could you hear while all speak out?
Would you write the words they spout?

I could not hear, I would not write
This does not need to be a fight.

Sign here, date there,
Mark this, check that.

Beware the student's ad-vo-cat(e).
You do not like them, so you say

Try it again! Try it again!
and then you may.

If you let me be,

I'll try again and you will see.

Say! I almost like these IEP's
I think I'll write 6,003.

And I will practice day and night
Until they say
"You've got it right".

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School Refusal

Going to school is usually an exciting and enjoyable event for young children. However, for some it can cause intense fear or panic. Parents should be concerned if their child regularly complains about feeling sick or often asks to stay home from school with minor physical complaints. Not wanting to go to school may occur at any time, but is most common in children 5-7 and 11-14, times when children are dealing with the new challenges of elementary and middle school. These children may suffer from a paralyzing fear of leaving the safety of their parents and home. The child's panic and refusal to go to school is very difficult for parents to cope with, but these fears and behavior can be treated successfully, with professional help.

Refusal to go to school often begins following a period at home in which the child has become closer to the parent, such as a summer vacation, a holiday break, or a brief illness. It also may follow a stressful occurrence, such as the death of a pet or relative, a change in schools, or a move to a new neighborhood.

The child may complain of a headache, sore throat, or stomachache shortly before it is time to leave for school. The illness subsides after the child is allowed to stay home, only to reappear the next morning before school. In some cases the child may simply refuse to leave the house. Since the panic comes from leaving home rather than being in school, frequently the child is calm once in school.

Children with an unreasonable fear of school may:

- feel unsafe staying in a room by themselves
- display clinging behavior
- display excessive worry and fear about parents or about harm to themselves
- shadow the mother or father around the house
- have difficulty going to sleep
- have nightmares
- have exaggerated, unrealistic fears of animals, monster, burglars
- fear being alone in the dark, or
- have severe tantrums when forced to go to school

Such symptoms and behaviors are common among children with separation anxiety disorder. The potential long-term effects (anxiety and panic disorder as an adult) are serious for a child who has persistent separation anxiety and does not receive professional assistance. The child may also develop serious educational or social problems if their fears and anxiety keep them away from school and friends for an extended period of time.

When fears persist the parents and child should consult with a qualified mental health professional, who will work with them to develop a plan to immediately return the child to school and other activities. Refusal to go to school

School Refusal

Continued

in the older child or adolescent is generally a more serious illness, and often requires more intensive treatment.

Excessive fears and panic about leaving home/parents and going to school can be successfully treated. You should feel comfortable discussing this with your child's physician or therapist.

Standards-Based IEPs: What You Need To Know

At a Glance

- * Standards-based IEPs are based on academic state standards.
- * A Standards-based IEP can help students stay on track for their grade.
- * Some critics disagree with this type of IEP.

In recent years some states have begun using a type of IEP called a standards-based IEP. Standards based IEPs are based on academic state standards. State standards describe what students are expected to learn in every subject, in every grade.

Traditional IEPs: A traditional IEP starts by focusing on a student's learning and social-emotional strengths and challenges. Using evaluation and test results, the IEP team develops a clear picture of the student's present levels of academic achievement. The IEP team then sets instructional goals for the child to develop the areas of need. But there's often no direct connection between these goals and the general education curriculum. As a result, with the traditional IEP, a child could achieve his annual goals and still not reach grade level. This can set up students in special education to fall further behind over the years.

Standards-Based IEPs: The standards-based IEP takes a different approach. It determines how a student is currently performing compared to what he is expected to be doing based on grade-level academic standards. Then it sets IEP goals to help close that gap. Standards-based IEP assumes that students should be working towards doing grade-level work and will make progress if they get the right support and services. Even severely disabled students, whose cognitive abilities may make it difficult for them to ever fully operate at grade level, will be exposed to grade-level content with a standards-based IEP. This way there is still a progression through the years toward grade-level performance.

The Benefits of Standards-Based IEPs

Many educational advocates are in favor of this approach. The belief is that a standards-based IEP better helps children stay on track for their grade.

Standards-based IEPs can help everyone - special educa-

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tion teachers, general education teachers, parents, and other IEP team members - get on the same page. They encourage the team to discuss what the state expects kids in the grade to learn and where your child may fall short. The team can then work together to figure out what your child needs to catch up to his peers.

As a key member of your child's IEP team, you will have a clearer understanding of how your child is doing compared to the state standards. Is your child a year behind in math, for instance, but on target in social studies? The standards-based IEP will help spell that out. It also may help you understand what you and the school can do to make it easier for your child to learn fourth grade math, for instance.

The Downside of Standards-Based IEPs

Some people criticize the use of educational standards to set IEP goals. They say this approach ignores a student's individual needs and abilities. If a student's academic skills are far below grade level, a standards-based IEP must be carefully written. For example, an eighth grade student reading at a second grade level will need lots of support. Critics tend to be most concerned about students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Key Takeaway

A Standards-based IEP compares a student's present level of performance to grade level expectations. This type of IEP creates instructional goals that are designed to close the achievement gap. If you don't think a standards-based IEP is right for your child, discuss your concerns with the IEP team.

*This information on standards based IEPs is from:
<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/standards-based-ieps-what-you-need-to-know>*

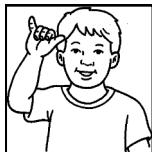
Additional guidance on this topic may be found in a Dear Colleague Letter at:

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-fape-11-17-2015.pdf>

If your South Carolina student will have a standards-based IEP it will be important to familiarize yourself with the state standards. **State standards may be found on the SC Dept of Ed website (<http://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/>)**

Make  On The FRC

Don't forget - you can make a donation to the FRC with every purchase from Amazon. It's easy, just do your shopping through **smile.amazon.com** and designate the Family Resource Center for Disabilities and Special Needs as your charity of choice. We'll thank you for it!



South Carolina Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Releases New American Sign Language Videos

P&A is excited to be launching the first of their new set of American Sign Language (ASL) Videos. These new videos will help many South Carolinian's better understand their rights on a variety of topics. This first video discusses who P&A is, what they do, and how to contact them to receive help. In addition to ASL, each video will have closed captioning and voice over. P&A will be making more videos in the months to come. Check their website and new YouTube page for future videos.

Do You Know About Smart911?

Over 70% of calls made to 911 come from mobile phones. When you dial 911 from a mobile phone, the 911 call takers have very little information to help you – only your phone number and a very general sense of your location. Smart911 is a national service that provides 911 dispatchers with a private online profile of the individual or household calling with an emergency. The program allows citizens to create a free Safety Profile for their household that includes any information they want 911 and first responders to have in the event of an emergency. If that citizen needs to dial 911, their Safety Profile will immediately display on the call taker's screen, saving seconds and even minutes in response to the emergency. Smart911 has been adopted in 1,000s of municipalities across the country, including Charleston County, which adopted the service in 2015. The service is free to Charleston County citizens.

Smart911 is private and secure, and is only made available to 9-1-1 when an emergency call is made. You can sign up to create a Safety Profile at www.smart911.com. By utilizing this service, people can provide vital information that will be available to responders when a call is made during times of distress. This can save valuable time during an emergency.

Information in a Safety Profile can include details on the household, such as the names and photos of family members, health conditions, medications, pets in the home, vehicle details and emergency contacts. All information in each profile is voluntary and one can add as much or as little to your profile as you want. It's up to you, and your information will only be seen if you ever have to call 9-1-1. Each household can determine what details are important and may include information on:

- Medical condition details for citizens affected by epilepsy, diabetes, Alzheimer's, allergies or other medical conditions, their medications and emergen-

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cy contacts.

- The needs of the elderly, individuals with developmental disabilities and/or physical disabilities which can address mobility restrictions, speech/language deficits, special equipment used, cognitive impairments and/or medical needs.
- General emergencies: whether in a vehicle or in your home, Smart911 can provide details to responders such as an address associated to a mobile phone.
- It can be made known that there are pets and service animals in the home, so responders are aware prior to entering a home and fire crews can be aware of exactly how many people and pets need to be accounted for in the evacuation of your home. For owners of a service animal, responders can be alerted that your animal needs to be transported with you any kind of emergency.

To sign up for Smart911 in Charleston County contact:
<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/consolidated-911/smart911.php>

How About PIP?

Partners in Policymaking® (PIP) is a leadership training program which teaches self-advocates and parents how to be community leaders and how to obtain the best available services for themselves and others. Since 1987, more than 27,000 people worldwide have received this training to become agents of long-term change, be active partners with the policymakers whose decisions will shape their future, and to dream about a future with possibilities. Focus Areas include Parliamentary Procedure, Assistive Technology, Education, Making Your Case, & Employment. Participants receive information, training and resources about local, state and national issues that affect people with disabilities

Participants in PIP are expected to attend 5 two-day sessions monthly between October and March. All sessions are held in Columbia and begin at 12:00 PM on Fri & conclude by 4:30 PM on Sat. There is no financial cost for any of the sessions. Participants are reimbursed for their travel to and from Columbia and lodging and meals are provided. Participants receive dinner Fri. and breakfast and lunch on Sat. Attendant care and respite services are reimbursed when necessary. Other reasonable accommodations and all program materials are provided at no cost to the participant.

**If you're interested - Act Now
Registration ends 8/31/18**

For more information:

<http://scddc.state.sc.us/documents/PIP%20Brochure%20final.pdf>

Or Call: (803) 734-4190



SC DDSN Offers Free Training on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The Coastal Autism Division offers training on a variety of topics at their office at 9995 Miles Jamison Road, Summerville, located on the campus of the Coastal Center. All training sessions are held on that campus from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Room details will be provided to registrants by email prior to their scheduled training day. For more information contact 843-832-5561. The following training sessions are available:

9/14/18 Understanding ASD for Parents/Families

This is an introductory course for parents and family members. Participants will review characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), teaching strategies, and available resources to support individuals with ASD and his/ her family. Time for open discussion will be allotted to provide information on specific areas of concern/ interest.

11/14/18 Dealing with Difficult Behaviors

This session is designed for professionals and parents. The objective of this training is to introduce antecedent strategies and positive behavior reduction strategies that can be implemented with simple environmental changes that are low to no cost.

2/13/19 Make and Take Visual Supports

This training is designed for professionals and parents. Participants will learn about various types of visual supports and how to create them. Come prepared to identify a need and make a visual support to take home for immediate use.

5/15/19 Toileting Training

This is a training designed for Early Interventionists and parents. The focus of this training is to identify the strategies for teaching children with Autism to toilet independently. Additionally, participants will learn how to proactively address undesirable behaviors associated with toileting.

A Child Who Wanders or Runs?

Tips for Parents, Teachers, and Other Caregivers

Plan

- Watch the child's behaviors
- Have an emergency plan to respond
- Keep information about the child up-to-date (picture, description)
- Secure your home (fences, door locks)
- Keep identification on the child (ID bracelet or information card)

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Prevent

- Notice signs that the child may wander off before it happens (for example, child makes a certain sound or looks towards the door)
- Be alert about the child's location
- Provide a safe location
- Inform neighbors and school workers
- Alert first responders

Teach Safety Skills

- Responding to safety commands ("stop")
- Stating name and phone number (or showing ID)
- Swimming, crossing the street

Notify First Responders

First responders are vital for maintaining the health and safety of members of our communities. They are likely to be called upon in the event of a missing child or youth. It is important for first responders to be prepared by knowing which children in the community might wander, having family contact information, and having a plan to respond. Be proactive.

Healthcare Providers and Other Professionals

Healthcare and other professionals need to be aware of wandering as a safety issue. Their role includes discussing safety issues and helping caregivers come up with prevention and response plans.

Many parents of children with Autism report that their child wanders, is a runner or engages in escape behaviors. This may be the case for children who don't have an ASD diagnosis. As a resource for these families and other caregivers, the National Autism Association developed a comprehensive resource guide "Big Red Safety Box" which can be found at: <http://nationalautismassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/BeREDyCaregiver2015.pdf>

Your State Department of Education

Congratulations to Rebecca (Beckie) Davis on her appointment to Director of the Office of Special Education Services (OSES) at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). Beckie replaces John Payne who is now Deputy Superintendent for Innovation & Effectiveness.

You may not know that the SCDE-OSES employs Jenny Dillon as Ombudsperson (1-866-628-0910) who parents can call to ask questions regarding the laws and regulations pertaining to students with disabilities & regarding specific concerns about the IEP process. Ms. Dillon also assists in resolving informal complaints by acting as an intermediary between parents/guardians and LEA or SOP administrators.



Looking for a Support Group? So Are We

Our list of support groups has dwindled over the years. We're not sure if more people are meeting virtually and the old-fashioned live & in person groups have fallen out of fashion. If you know of any support groups that meet regularly that you think should be added to the list, please call to speak with anyone at the Family Resource Center at 843-266-1318 or email Shana at shanameyer@frcdn.org with details.

Trident Head Injury Support Group: meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 7-9PM at Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital, Classroom #1, 2095 Henry Tecklenburg Dr, Charleston. To obtain a monthly schedule visit: www.thisg.net; for more info call Robert Darland at 843-822-1967. Follow on Facebook.

Down Syndrome Association of the Low Country: sponsors four Information Programs and four Social Events each year - in addition to Mothers Night Out. For a complete calendar of events, check their website at: www.dsawlowcountry.org or follow them on Facebook. You may also call: 843-654-1552.

Parent & Guardian Association of the Coastal Center: This group supports those with a family member residing at the Coastal Center. General meetings are held four times a year. For more information contact Richard at (843) 821-5809 or Suzanne at 843-276-1001.

Rett's Syndrome Support: Families in need of a contact person to access support services for girls with Rett's Syndrome may call Hollis Gunn at 843-847-1248.

Low Country Breeze: This group is open to any person with a spinal cord injury or other mobility difficulties. The meetings provide a forum for the members to discuss issues and concerns and receive immediate feedback. Some members use the meetings to brainstorm possible solutions to ongoing problems. In addition, the group provides members with opportunities to develop a social network. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday evening of every month (6:00-8:00 PM), location to be determined. They also host special events throughout the year. For more information & to obtain current information on the meeting location contact Barb Delia at 843-557-4827.

Sickle Cell Sisters (for teenage girls with sickle cell disease) is a therapeutic support group for teenage girls between the ages of 13 and 18. The group meets every other month at MUSC Children's Hospital and focuses on psychosocial aspects of living with sickle cell disease. For more information call **Michelle Thompson at 843-792-0792**.

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) of the Charleston area offers support group meetings for individuals who suffer from a brain disorder and for family members and caregivers of those who have severe and persistent mental illness. Meetings are held at various locations and times. NAMI Charleston Area offers monthly support groups for family members and friends of those who have a loved one who suffers from a mental illness and also for individuals recovering from a brain disorder/mental illness. All meetings are confidential. **First Thursday** of the Month @ Seacoast Church, 750 Long Point Road, **Mount Pleasant**, Family Support Group in Nursery Room 11: 6:00pm - Connection Support Group in Nursery Room 12: 6:00pm; **Second Monday** of the Month @ Seacoast Church 2049 Savannah Hwy, Suite H, **Charleston**. The receptionist inside the main entrance will assist you to the proper room. Support: 6:00pm – 7:15pm; Education: 7:30pm – 8:30pm; **Third Monday** of the Month @ Bethany United Methodist Church, 118 West Third South Street, **Summerville**, Support: 6:00pm – 7:30pm; **Fourth Thursday** of the Month @ Berkeley Mental Health Center, 403 Stoney Landing Road, **Moncks Corner**, Support for those in recovery: 1:30pm – 2:30pm. For more information on all groups contact: 843-872-5080

Summerville Autism Support - Join the Summerville ASD Mom's Facebook page to keep up with activities. The group meets periodically for a night out. Please call Jodi Hortman (870-3485) for info.

Epilepsy Support Group for families of children with epilepsy meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at Cathedral of Praise, Bldg. A, Room 103, 3790 Ashley Phosphate Rd., N. Charleston. Look for SAFE sign outside building. The Group meets from 11am-1pm (First hour is education/business meeting, second hour is support group) For more information contact Karen St. Marie at 843-991-7144 or at Karen@scepilepsy.org. Also check out their Facebook page under "South Carolina Advocates for Epilepsy".

Parent Support Group For Families of Children with Asperger's, HFA, Anxiety & Related Conditions: Beginning Sept. 10th, this group will meet each Monday from 6:00 - 7:30PM at the Family Corps Office, 3601 Meeting Street, Suite H, North Charleston, SC 29405 Free child care is provided. For more information contact: thayward@familyconnectionsc.org

Looking for Someone to Talk with about Autism & can't make a support group? There are two on-line ways to reach out to others in the "autism community." There is an on-line support group for teachers, professionals, service providers & family members. To subscribe, send a blank email to: autismsouthcarolina-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Also, there is a discussion group for parents & families who want to share their joys, stories, challenges, and solutions. To subscribe, send a blank email to: scautismforum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Limbs Without Limits is an organization committed to support, motivate and empower individuals living with a mobility impairment. Check their website (limbswithoutlimits.org) or Facebook page for scheduled events, or call Jeff Molan at (843) 991-2563 for more info.

Adult Rex Meet Up: Open to any past Project Rex graduate, this meet-up offers the opportunity to reconnect with friends, obtain lesson refreshers, and continue practicing conversation skills with one another. The group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month from 4:00 – 5:30 PM at 5 South at the Institute of Psychiatry, MUSC. The group is open to any adult and their social skills coaches who have previously completed the Adult Rex socialization program. The group is led by James Truelove, LISW-CP and Dr. Nancy Warren. Advance registration is REQUIRED. Please plan to arrive 15 minutes early for sign-in & registration. Medicaid covers the program 100% and most private insurance is accepted. There is a discount for self-pay. Contact Lavinia Bowens at 792-4113 for information or visit: <https://www.projectrex.org/groups/meetup/>



We try our best to keep this information current. If your group is listed here and no longer meets or if you have a group that should be listed but isn't, please call us: 843-266-1318

An IEP Binder

The folks at Understood Understand! Amanda Morin at Understood.org created a great resource on keeping your child's records organized and readily available. Our Parent Resource Manual (available on-line at the FRC website) makes similar suggestions on pages 28 & 29. After reading the summary below you'll want to visit the Understood. Org to see Amanda's great recommendations:

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/how-to-organize-your-childs-ief-binder>

Making an IEP binder is a great way to keep information organized. An IEP binder can help you prepare for IEP meetings, stay up to date on your child's progress, and help you communicate and collaborate with teachers and your child's IEP team. Here's what you need to get started: A three-ring binder; 6 tabbed section dividers; 3 hole punch. Organizing an IEP binder with your child's evaluation reports, IEPs, report cards and other paperwork may sound like a lot of work. But this guide walks you through what to gather and where to put it.

Start With the IEP Binder Checklist which is available on the Understood website & put it in the front. The checklist has details about what you can put in each of the tabbed sections. *Label the Tabbed Section Dividers* for each of the sections of the checklist: Communication, Evaluations, IEP, Report Cards/Progress Notes, Sample Work and Behavior. You can organize the following documents, ideally in chronological order, in the appropriate sections:

Tab 1: Communication: File school contact sheet; communication logs; letters & emails.

Tab 2: Evaluations: File all evaluation paperwork here (requests, consents, reports)

Tab 3: IEP: It's a good idea to start this section of your IEP binder with a copy of your rights and procedural safeguards the school gives you. File your child's IEP, the prior written notice, signature pages, & meeting notes here.

Tab 4: Report Cards/Progress Notes: File progress notes, report cards, school-wide test results (MAP,etc). Understood offers a method of tracking your child's progress with their IEP goal tracker (available on their website).

Tab 5: Sample Work: File samples of your child's homework or classwork monthly to show signs of progress or concern. (This is especially important for work that's noted on the goal-tracker form.)

Tab 6: Behavior: File a copy of the school's code of conduct & classroom rules. If your child has received a functional behavior assessment (FBA) and/or behavior intervention plan (BIP), those can go here as well as any disciplinary notices. You may want to include the section of the procedural safeguards as related to behavior here as well as in the IEP section. It's a good reference regarding your child's rights related to behavior issues.

Plan on bringing your binder to your IEP meetings. Consider including a zippered supply pouch stocked with pens, sticky notes, paper clips, and tissues. You never know what you may have forgotten to grab before the meeting.

For the full article on creating an IEP Binder be sure to visit the Understood website and read Amanda's great recommendations.



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¿Su hijo tiene una discapacidad?

¿Tiene su hijo un IEP (programa de educación individualizado)?

¿Usted está enterado de lo que está disponible en las escuelas públicas para estudiantes con discapacidades?

¿Usted necesita ayuda para entender los servicios de educación especial?

A través del programa de Compañero-Padre Mentor, el PTRC brinda apoyo individualizado gratuito y capacitación a los padres que acceden a los servicios de educación especial para niños con discapacidades. Un Compañero-Padre Mentor que trabajan con familias ha recibido capacitación especializada en áreas de derecho federal, como la Ley de Educación para Individuos con Discapacidades (IDEA) y la Sección 504, políticas y procedimientos de educación especial del distrito escolar, así como también técnicas de comunicación. El Compañero-Padre Mentor esta dispuesto a atender reuniones con las familias para asistirlas en defensa de los derechos de sus hijos. A las familias que reciban ayuda de un mentor se les proporcionará un paquete de materiales de recursos en español para referencia. Los servicios de mentor los cuales incluyen atender en las reuniones de IEP están disponibles para familias en los condados de Charleston, Berkeley y Dorchester.

El Centro de Recursos para Familias con Discapacidades y Necesidades Especiales / Centro de Capacitación y Recursos para Padres no es una agencia de servicios legales y no puede brindar asesoramiento legal o representación legal. Cualquier información proporcionada por el personal del programa o los Compañero-Padre Mentor, o en los materiales de recursos del programa, no pretende ser un consejo legal y no debe utilizarse como una sustitución de asesoramiento legal.

Comuníquese en español con Laura Vazquez, consultora de servicios y padre mentor, del Centro de Recursos Familiares para Discapacidades y Necesidades Especiales. (Family Resource Center for Disabilities and Special Needs) 803-814-8666