

# Quarterly Informer

January, February and March 2024 Edition

2023 was a busy year for Families Helping Families of SWLA!!

We have a small but mighty staff and we served the community in many ways! This is just part of who we are and what we do... Thanks to all of our community partners, donors and friends...we couldn't do what we do without YOU!!

- Attended countless health resource fairs
- Collaborated with ImCa, City of LC and Mardi Gras SWLA to bring back the Mardi Gras dance and two others
- Worked with the Mayor and the City to relaunch the Mayor's Commission on Disability
- Designated charity for Styx concert and presented a signed guitar to two happy concert goers!
- Presented the Family Empowerment Expo in April with over 120 attending and a great keynote speaker
- Held the first FHF Easter Stop & Hop Event at our new location combining resources and fun!
  - This is Home Fest collaboration
  - Hosted the Fusion Five group for a coffee field trip
- Healthy Blue collaboration to give away school supplies to more than 120 students with disabilities and their siblings.
- Mayor's Commission on Disability Conference relaunched after 5 years
  - Fore for Families Golf Tournament returns for the 15th year
    - Over 50 webinars and workshops on disability issues
  - 2nd Annual Jolly Santa Drive thru - gifts given to over 150 individuals with disabilities

And so much more.... Happy New Year!!

## FHFSWLA Board of Directors

### Chair

Molly Morgan

### Vice Chair

Leslie Knox

### Treasurer

Leah Fuselier

### Secretary

Tracy Clark

Bernadette

Courville

Mona Timpa

Howard Foreman

Kimberlee Gazzolo

Khaja Moinuddin

## Who we Are ... What we Do!

**Susan Riehn**

Executive Director

**Cynthia Brown**

Bookkeeper

**Wallace Johnson**

Education Support  
Specialist

**Mylinda Elliott**

Program Manager,  
LaCAN Leader &  
Senior Education  
Support Specialist

**Beryl Cook**

Education Support  
Specialist

**Davelyn Patrick**

Community  
Resource Specialist

**China Guillory**

Early Steps COS

**Carla Chenier**

ImCA DD  
Facilitator

**Nicole Jones**

I&R/Clerical  
Assistant

## FHF SWLA Mission:

Our mission is to enable and empower individuals with disabilities and their families by providing information, referral, education, training, peer support and advocacy skills.



## Like Us On Facebook

Want to keep up to date with FHF of SWLA?

Like our Facebook page!! You will receive event information and other bulletins about what is going on in the SWLA region!

[www.facebook.com/fhfswla/](http://www.facebook.com/fhfswla/)









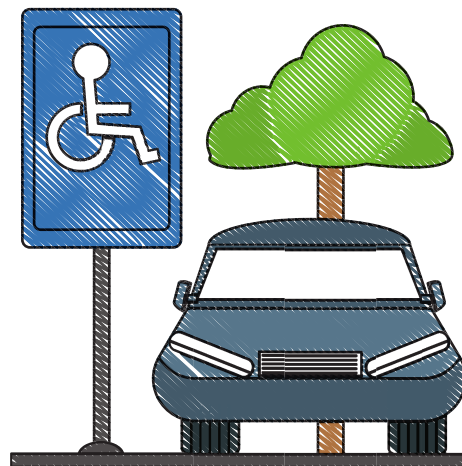
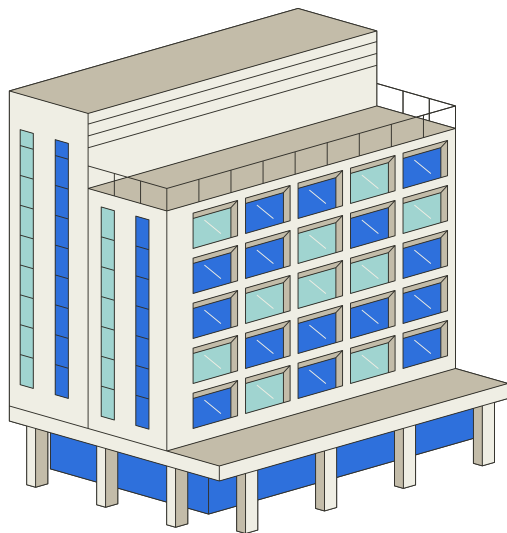


# Accessible parking spaces

Accessible parking spaces are required for each parking facility on a site, such as lots and garages. Requirements apply equally to public and employee or restricted parking. On sites with multiple parking facilities, the minimum number of accessible spaces must be calculated separately for each parking facility instead of on the combined total of parking spaces provided on the site. At least one of every 6 accessible spaces, or a fraction of 6, in each parking facility, must be sized to accommodate vans.

Additional Information available at:

<https://www.access-board.gov/ada/guides/chapter-5-parking/>



**March is  
Developmental  
Disabilities  
Awareness Month**



**Spread the Word Inclusion Day**  
Wednesday, March 6, 2024

The Spread the Word Inclusion campaign was created and re-imagined by youth, and is intended to engage schools, organizations and communities to rally and pledge their support of inclusion and to promote acceptance of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



# Marketplace Open Enrollment

**ENDS January 16th 2024**

**Call us to help fill out an application, compare plans,  
and enroll in health coverage for 2024 by January 16.**

**Coverage can start February 1st—*Don't Delay!***

To schedule an appointment for **FREE**  
enrollment assistance connect with a  
certified navigator

- Scan the QR code
- Call 1-800-435-2432
- Go to [www.GetCoveredLA.org](http://www.GetCoveredLA.org)



# Riddle



I can be cracked or  
played; told or  
made.

What am I?



Answer on the Last Page





## Adults With Disabilities 5 Important Daily Living Skills to Have

Adults with disabilities have a wide range of daily living skills that can help them achieve independence and improve their quality of life. It is important to recognize the value of these adult independent living skills with disabilities, as they are essential in helping individuals reach self-sufficiency and full potential. With this understanding, it is vital to provide resources to support disabled adults in gaining access to these valuable life skills.

Gaining knowledge of various life skills can benefit an individual's ability to manage daily tasks on their own, such as cooking meals, cleaning, budgeting finances, maintaining personal hygiene, managing medication, and much more. This can potentially equip those living with disabilities with the ability to navigate everyday challenges better while cultivating confidence and autonomy. Furthermore, understanding communication techniques, including verbal or nonverbal methods, may improve how one interacts with others professionally and socially.

Learning how to drive a vehicle or take public transportation could open up many opportunities for employment or recreational activities. Additionally, utilizing technology through computers or mobile devices allows people with disabilities increased access to information, which could boost academic pursuits or assist in finding job positions. By providing resources for disabled adults to access these independent living skills, we create a community where everyone feels included and respected regardless of physical or mental limitations.

Today we're going to talk about five of the most important ones. From learning how to budget wisely and navigate public transportation systems independently to making sure they get enough rest—these skills make all the difference when it comes to improving their quality of life and achieving their goals.

### Skill 1: Personal Hygiene

Maintaining personal hygiene is one of the most essential adult independent living skills. Not only does it help keep them healthy, but it also boosts their self-esteem and confidence in social interactions. Establishing habits such as brushing teeth twice a day, washing hands regularly, and bathing or showering daily helps prevent the spread of germs that could lead to illnesses like colds or worse. Setting up routines can make these activities easier and less daunting over time.

Adaptive tools are available to assist those with physical and cognitive impairments when performing tasks such as grooming and brushing their teeth. For instance, long-handled brushes may be useful for people who have trouble reaching certain areas of their bodies. Other items, such as adapted utensils and toothbrushes, can aid those with limited dexterity due to arthritis or other conditions. It's important to seek assistance from medical professionals if needed to find the best solution for your particular needs.

Good personal hygiene practices benefit physical and emotional well-being by increasing one's sense of pride in oneself and helping one feel more confident when interacting socially. Developing this habit starts early on in life, but no matter what age, making small changes toward better hygiene will pay off in the end!





## **Skill 2: Meal Planning And Preparation**

For adults with disabilities, meal planning and preparation is an important life skill. For instance, consider Margaret, a woman in her mid-30s with cerebral palsy who lives independently. Meal planning and preparation can be challenging for people like Margaret due to sensory, motor, or cognitive challenges associated with their disability. However, adapting meals to suit individual needs doesn't have to be difficult.

By understanding dietary needs and creating healthy and balanced meals on a budget through meal prepping, using community resources, and seeking guidance from nutritionists or dietitians where needed, adults with disabilities can become more independent regarding meal planning and preparation. A good starting point could be focusing on basic menu items such as soups, sandwiches, or salads that do not require cooking skills beyond boiling water or using the microwave/oven. To promote adult independent living skills, it is essential to ensure that mealtimes are made easier for adults with disabilities. Simple adaptations, such as cutting food into smaller pieces for those who cannot cut food themselves or providing straws for those who struggle to eat solid foods, can greatly improve access to nutritious meals and create an enjoyable dining experience. With the right support network in place, adults with disabilities can develop the skills necessary to plan and prepare healthy meals tailored specifically to their individual needs.

## **Skill 3: Household Management**

Household management helps keep one's living space clean, organized, and safe and can also be a source of comfort, self-confidence, and independence. Learning the basics of household management can go a long way in helping individuals with disabilities lead successful lives.

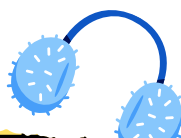
Several resources are available to those who require assistance to develop these skills. Breaking down tasks into smaller steps can make them more manageable, while visual cues can provide helpful reminders on how best to complete activities like laundry or cleaning. Adaptive tools such as specialized equipment or technology can also be used for physical or cognitive challenges that may arise during these processes. Moreover, seeking support from family members, friends, professionals, and disability services organizations could prove invaluable when learning new skills related to household management.

These strategies combined can give adults with disabilities the confidence they need to approach everyday tasks independently and successfully manage their home environment—something everyone deserves access to!

## **Skill 4: Time Management And Organization**

Time management and organization are critically important life skills for adults with disabilities. These skills allow them to take control of their lives, build independence, and create a sense of accomplishment, something that can be hard to come by even in an able-bodied world.

Like a kaleidoscope turning slowly, time management and organization offer people living with disability more than just structure—they give them freedom from rigid societal expectations. With effective strategies for setting positive goals and developing organizational skills, they can learn to manage their time effectively without feeling overwhelmed or frustrated. By taking charge of their day-to-day tasks, those living with a disability gain autonomy over their own lives.







In addition to these benefits, adaptations or accommodations can help individuals overcome cognitive, sensory, or physical challenges when managing their time and organizing activities. Some examples include using calendars as visual reminders of upcoming appointments or tasks, breaking down large projects into smaller chunks, setting realistic deadlines, utilizing lists that provide step-by-step guidance, creating audio recordings instead of written notes, and having someone else assist with scheduling responsibilities.

By understanding the importance of mastering the art of time management and organization, those living with a disability are better equipped to take on life's daily challenges—increasing productivity and providing a greater sense of purpose along the way.

### **Skill 5: Budgeting And Money Management**

Financial independence and responsibility are key in every person's life, with or without disabilities. Budgeting and money management can be challenging due to cognitive, sensory, or physical limitations, but it is possible to make adaptations to succeed. Developing good financial habits, such as creating a budget, tracking expenses, and seeking guidance from professionals or caregivers, helps create stability and freedom for individuals with disabilities.

Creating a budget is the foundation of financial security—understanding income sources and what bills must be paid each month. Expense tracking allows people with disabilities to stay organized and be aware of where their money is going on a day-to-day basis. Seeking professional advice or assistance from family members or caregivers who understand their needs can help ensure they make smart decisions when managing finances.

Having control over their finances gives adults with disabilities more autonomy in life. It also builds confidence by allowing them to make responsible choices about how much they can spend without sacrificing other aspects of spending like health care costs or saving for retirement. With practice and support, budgeting and money management are invaluable tools for those striving for financial independence regardless of disability status.

### **Conclusion**

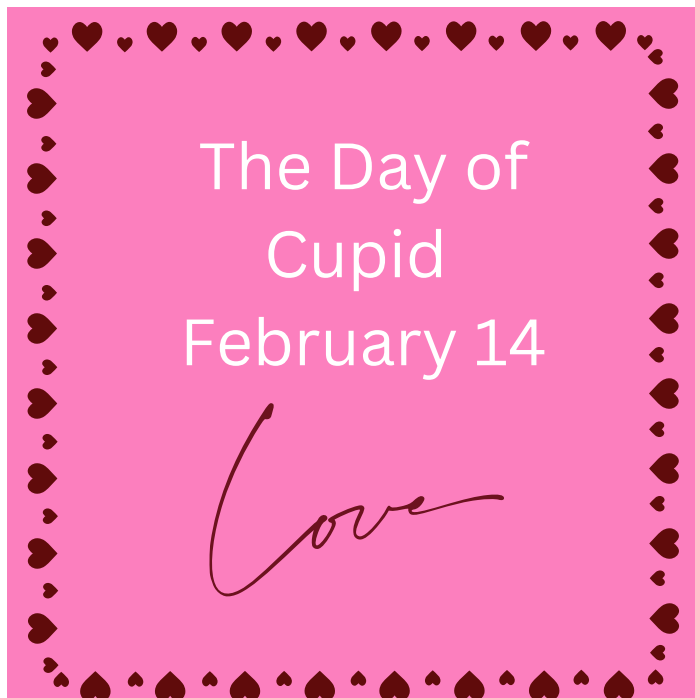
Adults with disabilities have the right and opportunity to lead independent lives, just like any other adult. With practice, support, and adaptation of important daily living skills, such as personal hygiene, meal planning and preparation, household management, time management, organization, budgeting, and money management, adults with disabilities can strive for greater self-sufficiency. The development and mastery of adult independent living skills are crucial for individuals with disabilities to enhance their ability to live independently and thrive in their communities.

It is essential that those around these individuals guide them throughout this process without taking away valuable opportunities for growth or hindering progress. This includes family members, who should be a source of emotional and practical assistance. This can come in the form of reinforcing good habits and providing resources when needed. Friends, too, play an integral part in an individual's journey towards autonomy by being there to listen, offer advice if asked for, and motivate each other on days when they don't feel like doing anything at all—true friends help build confidence from within.

<https://www.integrityinc.org/5-important-daily-living-skills-to-have-adults-with-disabilities/>



live  
your  
dream.



What you do *today*  
impacts someone's  
*tomorrow*

## Calcasieu Parish Head Start Coordinated Enrollment Round up

<https://www.cpsb.org/Page/789>

Head Start is a child development program for children from age 3 to 5 years old. Head Start provides services to promote academic, social, and emotional development, as well as providing social, health, and nutrition services for children and families.

- To enhance children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development
- To enable parents to be better caregivers and teachers to their children
- To help parents meet his/her own goals, including economic independence

Children who are 3 to 5 years old are eligible for Head Start services. Children and families are homeless, in foster care, or receive TANF and SSI are eligible for services. Families may also be eligible if it is determined that the families income is at or below the federal poverty guidelines. Calcasieu Parish enrolls up to 10% of children from families with income above the poverty guidelines. These students are typically students with disabilities.

Round up Date is

**April 27, 2024 at the Lake Charles Civic Center.**



# Resources for Military-Connected Children with Disabilities

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/military-connected-children-with-disabilities/>

The families of military-connected children with disabilities may have the added challenges of frequent separation from family and support networks and disruptions in the continuity of early intervention services and special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) because of frequent transitions.

The following resources can help to support states, parents, families, and others to meet the unique needs of military-connected children with disabilities and ensure the timely provision of required early intervention and special education and related services.

[Letter from OSEP Director Valerie C. Williams on Military-Connected Children with Disabilities \(Nov. 9, 2023\)](#)

## ACT Test Accommodations and English Learner Supports



ACT is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for examinees who take the ACT test. To request accommodations, you will need to work with a school official, because the accommodations requested should be similar to the accommodations you currently receive in school. Accommodations **MUST** be approved by ACT before testing. A request alone is not enough.

All requests, including appeals, must be submitted by the **late registration deadline** for your preferred test date. If your request is not properly submitted, it may not be approved in time for your preferred test date.



# ***Special Education Advisory Council Meetings***

## **Calcasieu SEAC Meetings**

Held at the CPSB School Board Office on Broad St at 5pm.

Monday, January 29, 2024

Monday, March 25, 2024

## **Jeff Davis SEAC Meeting**

Jefferson Davis Parish School Board Office in Jennings at 3PM

Thursday, May 2, 2024

Please check other parish websites for information on SEAC meetings



Families Helping Families office will be closed January 15, 2024 to celebrate MLK Day

**GET INVOLVED**



**School Activities**







## Extended School Year Services: Empowering Special Education Students All Year Round

Education helps ensure that every child can learn, grow, and thrive. Education is important for all students. Some students need extra help to learn and continue to do well in school. Extended School Year (ESY) services are here to support these students, with the goal of getting them help all year long.

Extended School Year services is a special educational program designed to help some students with disabilities. They would have help at school during the holidays or summer. These services are made to meet the needs of the student with an IEP. These services help keep the progress they made during the regular school year.

### **ESY services are important in so many ways.**

- 1. Stopping Learning Loss:** Some students can forget what they learned during breaks. ESY services stop this from happening. They help students keep what they learned, so they don't fall behind.
- 2. Learning at Their Own Pace:** Every student learns differently. ESY services understand this and teach students in ways that work best for them. This makes learning easier and more enjoyable.
- 3. Feeling Confidence:** ESY services help students feel good about themselves. ESY services provide a familiar routine and help students engage with teachers and peers they are comfortable with. When they know they're getting the help they need, they become more confident in their abilities.
- 4. Preparation for Transitions:** For students going to another grade or getting ready for college ESY services can help them prepare. They learn skills that help them succeed.

Sometimes it is hard to get ESY services. There needs to be money and teachers. Parents and school systems need to work together to address those needs.

Extended School Year services are a big help for those who need them. ESY helps some students keep what they have learned even when regular school is out. By providing support, individualized attention, and more learning experiences, ESY services can help these students. As society sees the importance of inclusive education ESY programs help some students get the help they need and have a bright future.





Daylight Saving Time Begins  
March 10, 2024  
Spring Forward



Families Helping Families  
office will be closed  
March 29, 2024  
to celebrate Good Friday

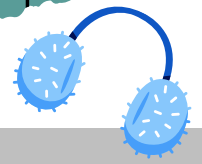


Families Helping Families  
office will be closed  
February 12-13, 2024

for  
*Mardi  
gras*







# 5 steps to kick-start school-year routines for kids with ADHD

By Gail Belsky Expert reviewed by Sarah Greenberg, MA, MEd

<https://www.understood.org/articles/kick-start-school-routines-adhd-kids>

Returning to school-year schedules and routines after a long summer break can be hard. That's especially true for kids with ADHD, who struggle with executive function skills like flexible thinking, organization, and working memory. The key is to switch to back-to-school mode early – don't wait until just a day or two before school starts.

Use this five-step plan to get your child back into school-year routines.

## 1. Start “back-to-school” mode at least a week before the first day of school.

The more time your child has to get back into the school groove, the easier the transition will be. Let your family know what the game plan is ahead of time. For example, “On Monday we're getting back into our school routine.” You can even put it on the calendar:

Back-to-school begins.

## 2. Remind your child what goes into a school-year schedule.

Your child may not remember what life was like two months ago. Remind them that back-to-school means earlier bedtimes and wake-up times. There are set times for things like baths and meals. It also means picking out clothing the night before, and routines for getting ready to leave for school and for doing homework.

## 3. Use organization tools to help your child stay on track.

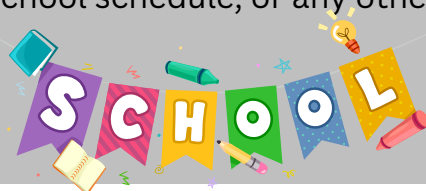
Tools like lists, charts, and picture schedules can help your child stick with routines. Start with the toughest part of the day first. For many kids with ADHD, that's school mornings. Use the week before school as a test run. Make sure you're leaving enough time for your child to complete each task. Be specific. For example, you might list the first wake-up call at 7:15 a.m., and the second and final call at 7:20 a.m. Then, dressed and ready for breakfast at 7:40 a.m.

## 4. Get your child ready for after-school schedules.

Set a specific time for when your child will do homework during the school year. Have your child do a quiet activity they enjoy during that time. It could be reading, listening to music, drawing – but nothing with screens. Practicing this homework time can be especially helpful for kids who have trouble with planning and managing time.

## 5. If your child takes ADHD medication, adjust that routine, too.

You may need to adjust your child's routine around ADHD medication. This is especially true if your child took a break from it over the summer. Talk to your child's health care provider about when to start back on a school schedule, or any other questions about medication.





# early steps

Louisiana's early intervention system

Early Steps would like to invite you to participate in the **State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)** and the **Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC)**

to discuss early intervention strategies for the Louisiana and the Southwest Louisiana Region. All family members are invited to attend, including providers, and other early intervention personnel. Our mission is to: -Provide a way to participate in the SICC and RICC to represent regional issues.

**The SICC meeting will be held on:**

**Thursday, January 11, 2024**

**1:00p-3:00p via Zoom**

**&**

**The RICC meeting will be held on:**

**Thursday, January 25, 2024**

**1:30p-3:30p via Zoom**



Please contact China Guillory for Zoom information at (337) 436-2570 or email: [cfguillory@fhfswla.org](mailto:cfguillory@fhfswla.org)

Thank you in advance for your participation, if you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.



## Apple-Glazed Chicken Thighs

### Ingredients

- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs (1-1/2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 cup unsweetened apple juice
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme or 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme

### Directions

1. Sprinkle chicken with seasoned salt and pepper. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Brown chicken on both sides. Remove from pan.
2. Add juice and thyme to skillet. Bring to a boil, stirring to loosen browned bits from pan; cook until liquid is reduced by half. Return chicken to pan; cook, covered, over medium heat 3-4 minutes longer or until a thermometer inserted in chicken reads 170°.



# Preventing Flu at Work and School

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm>



One of the best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu and its potentially serious complications is to develop good health habits like avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like flu. There also are flu antiviral drugs that can be used to treat and prevent flu. The tips and resources below will help you learn about actions you can take to protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs.

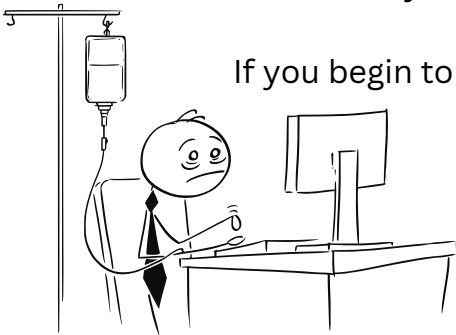


## At School

- Find out about plans your child's school, childcare program, and/or college has if an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs and whether flu vaccinations are offered on-site.
- Make sure your child's school, childcare program, and/or college routinely cleans frequently touched objects and surfaces, and that they have a good supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs, and disposable wipes on-site.
- Ask how sick students and staff are separated from others and who will care for them until they can go home, and about the absentee policy for sick students and staff.

## At Work

- Find out about your employer's plans if an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs and whether flu vaccinations are offered on-site.
- Routinely clean frequently touched objects and surfaces, including doorknobs, keyboards, and phones, to help remove germs.
- Make sure your workplace has an adequate supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs, and disposable wipes.
- Train others on how to do your job so they can cover for you in case you or a family member gets sick and you have to stay home.
- If you begin to feel sick while at work, go home as soon as possible.

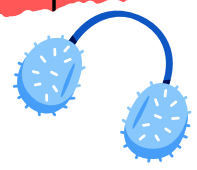


# Stay HOME

# IF SICK







### All-Terrain Track Chairs Now Available at Eight Louisiana State Parks

All-terrain track wheelchairs are now available at eight Louisiana State Park locations. Specially designed for the outdoors, the all-terrain, electric-powered chairs provide users with the ability to navigate trails and areas of the park not suitable for conventional wheelchairs. Louisiana State Parks acquired the first chair this June and recently added seven more to its inventory.

Reservations are now available at the following locations: Bogue Chitto State Park in Franklinton; Louisiana State Arboretum at Chicot State Park in Ville Platte; Fontainebleau State Park in Mandeville; Jimmie Davis State Park in Chatham; Lake D'Arbonne State Park in Farmerville; North Toledo Bend State Park in Zwolle; Port Hudson State Historic Site in Jackson; and, Sam Houston Jones State Park in Lake Charles.

There is no fee to use the chairs. Chairs must be reserved 48 hours in advance. Users must complete a user agreement and liability waiver form as well as a short in-person training in order to check out the all-terrain chairs.

For more information, visit the [Louisiana State Parks All-Terrain Track Chair webpage](#)



# More Medical Schools Expected To Train Doctors On IDD

by Michelle Diament | November 6, 2023

A new effort is underway to dramatically expand training on intellectual and developmental disabilities at the nation's medical schools.

The health insurance company Elevance Health is putting up \$1.42 million in funding with a goal of more than doubling the number of medical schools preparing future doctors to care for this population.

The investment will back the National Inclusive Curriculum for Health Education Medical, or NICHE Medical, an initiative of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry that helps medical schools develop and implement a curriculum on intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Currently, 20 medical schools are supported by NICHE Medical, representing just 10% of all the programs across the country. With the funding, that number is expected to grow to 25%, Elevance Health said, a threshold that's likely to encourage all medical schools to follow suit.

"More than half of medical students have no training in caring for adults with IDD, and education about children with IDD remains minimal as well," said Dr. Priya Chandan, who serves as NICHE Medical project director and clinical associate professor in physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. "However, Elevance Health's collaboration and landmark funding is going to accelerate the inclusion of IDD in medical education, empowering thousands of future physicians across the nation to equitably and effectively address the needs of patients who have IDD."

Over the next five years, the new funding is expected to support curriculum implementation at an additional 28 medical schools as well as scholarships, Elevance Health said. Already, grants have been awarded to Albany Medical College in New York, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, New York Medical College, Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine in New Jersey, Stanford Medical School in California, UMass Chan Medical School in Massachusetts and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

The lack of training on developmental disabilities at medical schools has led to significant challenges in accessing health care. A 2022 study found that just 41% of physicians considered themselves able to provide patients with disabilities a similar quality of care to others.

Disability advocates have pressed for years to get training on the needs of this population added to medical school curriculum requirements, but to date, those efforts have been unsuccessful. Last year, however, the presidents of the American Medical Association and the American Dental Association committed to work on expanding disability training for medical and dental students. Federal officials also recently announced \$8 million in awards to 18 medical training programs to improve care of those with physical or intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as individuals with limited English proficiency.

<https://www.disabilitycoop.com/2023/11/06/more-medical-schools-expected-to-train-doctors-on-idd/30619/>



# Early Steps Workshops



## A Family Orientation Webinar

**Date: January 24, 2024**  
**Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

As a parent/caregiver of a child currently receiving services from EarlySteps, I would like to invite you to a parent orientation workshop to help you and your child get the most out of your experience from the services provided.

These topics and more will be covered:

- What is EarlySteps?
- What are my roles and responsibilities?
- What are my rights as a parent?
- What is an IFSP and how can I be more involved in the planning process?

### Link to Register:

<https://tinyurl.com/ESfamilyjan2424>



## Early Steps Transition Webinar

**Date: January 24, 2024**  
**Time: 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm**

Join us to get more Information about Early Steps Transition.

China Guillory-  
Community Outreach Specialist will walk you through the process of Transition from Early Steps.



Guest Speaker  
**Mylinda Elliott**  
IDEA Transition  
For 3 year Old's



### Link to Register:

<https://tinyurl.com/EStransitionjan2424>

For More Information call China at:  
(337) 436-2570 ♦ 1-800-894-6558  
[info@fhfswla.org](mailto:info@fhfswla.org)







## CARL THE COLLECTOR

PBS Kids announces CARL THE COLLECTOR, its first series centering on autistic characters. PBS Kids has announced a new animated series that will feature a main character who is on the autism spectrum. The show, CARL THE COLLECTOR, will celebrate inclusion, empathy, and community. The show will premiere next Fall on PBS Kids.

[Learn more about CARL THE COLLECTOR](#)



FREE WEBINAR

### Hitting the High Points An Overview of the Individualized Education Program

**TUESDAY**  
**JANUARY 16, 2024**  
**12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

#### PRESENTERS

Sharon Blackmon,  
FHF of GNO  
Wallace Johnson &  
Mylinda Elliott,  
FHF of SWLA

#### REGISTER NOW

<https://tinyurl.com/HighPointsJan16>



 **Louisiana**  
Changing Lives Every Day

 **Families Helping Families**  
Supporting All Abilities



*Believe*  
**you CAN**  
and  
*you're*  
**halfway**  
*there.*





## 2nd Annual 2024 JDP Special Olympics Young Athletes Fun Day

Participants: Pre-K to 2nd grade JDP students



### Young Athletes

Locomotor & Manipulative Skills and  
Teamwork Activities, plus much more.



Jeff Davis Parish  
**Special Olympics**  
Louisiana



# 2024

**Date: January 26, 2024**

**Events: 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.**

**Location:**

**Jennings High School Gymnasium**  
**2310 N. Sherman Street**  
**Jennings, LA 70546**

For more information contact **Jeremy J. Fuselier**, Supervisor | Department of Special Services, 337.824.3522



## Community Mardi Gras Dance

January 25, 2024

6:00 – 8:30 pm

Lake Charles Civic Center  
Exhibition Hall



For more information please call  
337-475-3100

Food provided

### From A Day in Our Shoes:

Can IEPs be Emailed? And 11 Other IEP Email FAQs.

<https://adayinourshoes.com/iep-email-best-practices/>





 FREE WEBINAR

# Youth Health Transition

## Essentials: What, Why, and How



**WEDNESDAY**

**JANUARY 24, 2024**

**10:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

**PRESENTER**

**Patti Barovechio,  
Bureau of Family  
Health**

**REGISTER NOW**

[https://tinyurl.com  
/YHTJan24](https://tinyurl.com/YHTJan24)



## Anxiety: Why it's Different from Stress

### At a Glance

- Anxiety is not uncommon among children with learning and attention issues.
- There's a difference between anxiety and stress.
- There are steps you can take to help your child manage anxiety.

There's a math test tomorrow and 14-year-old Katherine should be studying. Instead she's in bed. "I'm not taking the test! What happens if people see I can't do it? What if I fail again?" she cries to her mom.

Anxiety is a sense of fear and worry. And it's easy to understand why Katherine and other children with learning and attention issues are more likely to have anxiety than other children. Many have to work harder to keep up with their classmates. Other kids may bully them. Kids with learning and attention issues may not have the coping skills or maturity to handle these difficulties.

"When anxiety stops your child from functioning or enjoying life, it's probably time to find help." But anxiety can be managed. The key is noticing the signs and providing the tools your child needs to keep worry in check.







Read on to learn how anxiety is different from stress—and what might cause anxiety in kids with learning and attention issues. You'll also learn when to get help for your child's anxiety.

### **Anxiety vs. Stress**

Stress and anxiety are closely related but are not the same thing.

Stress is a natural and normal response to a challenge. Our heart pumps faster and our palms sweat as we get ready to act.

Stress can make us feel nervous, angry, frustrated—even anxious.

Stress can have a positive effect. For example it can “pump up” a child to study for a test.

Stress can also be overwhelming. Feeling stress every day for a long time can take a toll on your body and mind.

Anxiety makes a kid feel worried and afraid. “What if?” is a common phrase for anxious kids.

The anxious feeling is often out of proportion to the real or imagined “threat” (for example, a child crying in terror because she's afraid to enter a birthday party).

Anxious children may expect that something bad will happen and not believe they'll be able to handle it. (That bee's going to sting me and I'm going to die!)

The bad feelings associated with anxiety can come from something specific, like algebra. Or anxiety can be a more general sense of uneasiness that affects much of everyday life.

### **Common Causes of Anxiety**

Just about everyone feels anxiety at some point. But kids with learning and attention issues may have extra reasons for feeling worried and afraid. These include:

**Anxiety about not being able to keep up:** Kindergarten is often when children with learning and attention issues first show signs of anxiety. They may notice they can't do what their friends can do.

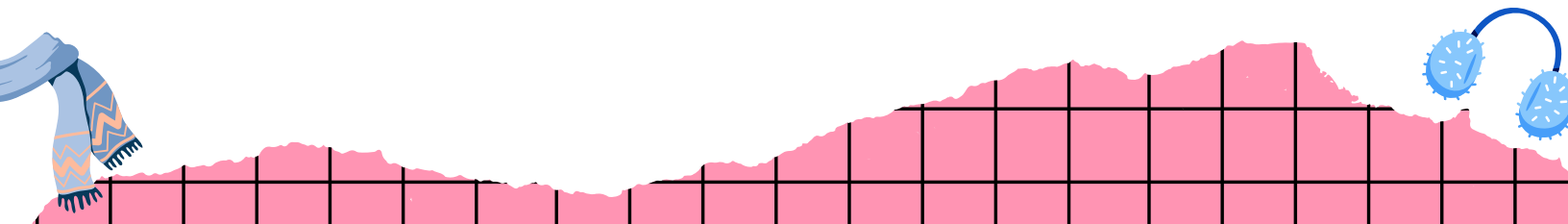
As they go through grade school, their anxiety may get worse if the skill gap widens between them and their classmates. Kids with anxiety issues may just generally be hard on themselves.

**Anxiety about feeling different:** Much of childhood is about fitting in. Children with learning and attention issues may worry that someone will notice if they get extra time on tests. They may fear someone will see them in the resource room. Teenagers may fear the other kids will find out they take medication or see a therapist. Children with social skills issues may want to be part of things but are afraid of being rejected.

**Anxiety about the future:** Teens with learning and attention issues may fear what's after high school. “If I can't pass a math test, how will I ever take an SAT?” Or they may worry they won't be able to live away from home. They may avoid dealing with these issues by not taking tests or refusing to talk about their plans after graduation.

### **When Anxiety Becomes an Issue**

When anxiety stops a child from enjoying life, that child may have an “anxiety disorder.” The most common forms of anxiety disorders include:



Generalized anxiety disorder: Your child may seem “anxious by nature.” She’s worried about anything and everything. She fears someone will see her counting on her fingers. She won’t go in the backyard because there’s a beehive next door. She may have nightmares or trouble sleeping.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD): People with OCD often follow unusual routines or rituals. They believe that doing this will stop bad things from happening. For example, your child might wash her hands every time she thinks about something she’s afraid of.

Panic disorder: Your child is often terrified when there’s no real danger. At these times, she may find her heart beats fast; she has chest pain and difficulty breathing and may feel nausea or even a fear that she’s dying. Your child worries about having another episode and may even change her behavior because she’s so fearful of having another panic attack.

- Separation anxiety disorder: Fear of separating from a parent is a natural part of childhood. It is considered a disorder if your child can’t get past this stage, continues to cling, and can’t separate easily from you at school or elsewhere.
- Social anxiety disorder: Your child may be fearful of social situations. If you force her to go on a playdate or to a party, she may cry or throw a tantrum. She may be very shy around strangers and avoid playing with classmates.
- Phobias: Your child may be extremely afraid of a particular thing, such as bees, the dark, or doctors. Her phobia may prevent her from getting involved in activities and cause her to scream or act out in other ways.

### When to Seek Help

When anxiety stops your child from functioning or enjoying life, it’s probably time to find help. Your school psychologist might suggest someone who specializes in helping children with learning and attention issues. The therapist can work with you and your child to manage the anxiety. He may also refer you to a physician if he thinks medication will help.

Children with learning and attention issues have reasons to feel anxious. That doesn’t mean their anxiety can’t be managed. Learn about signs of anxiety and stress so you can identify these feelings in your child. From there you can work with your child and possibly a therapist to keep her worries in check.

This article was taken from [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

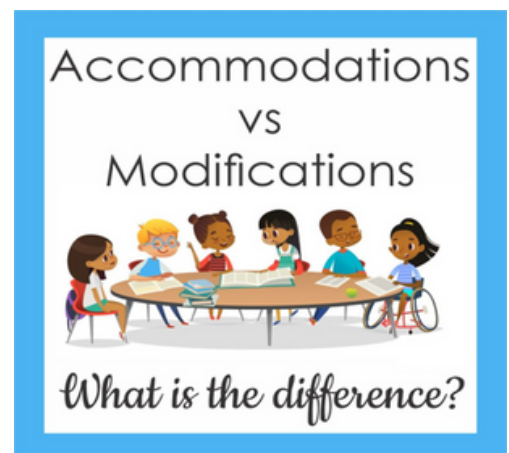


## Accommodations vs Modifications Webinar

Find out the difference by attending this webinar!

**Monday, February 5, 2024 from 1 PM to 2 PM**

Accommodations vs Modifications - Meeting after meeting, parents and teachers use the words “accommodation” and “modification” almost interchangeably when discussing IEPs and student needs. If understood and used correctly, these words can greatly impact the success of a child’s educational program. Get answers to these questions and more.



Link to Register: <https://tinyurl.com/AccomModFeb5>



***Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority  
Developmental Disabilities  
Division Regional Advisory  
Committee - R.A.C.  
is looking for new members***

**If you care about services for  
children and adults with  
developmental disabilities,  
then the RAC needs you!**

The RAC meets quarterly to provide input and advice in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and the allocation of resources to Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority.

Our mission is to provide public input and to ensure that quality services are provided to people with disabilities in our community.

To become involved, attend an upcoming meeting contact  
Debbie Bass for more information:  
[debbie.bass@imcalhsa.org](mailto:debbie.bass@imcalhsa.org)  
(337) 475-3100





## **Louisiana Family to Family Health Information Center (F2F HIC) - Empowering Families Through Knowledge and Support**

Welcome to the Family to Family Health Information Center (F2F HIC) of Louisiana. At the heart of our mission lies a profound commitment: to arm families with information, training, and resources so they can advocate for enhanced health services and outcomes for their children.

### **Who We Are & Where We're Located**

We proudly operate under the auspices of Bayou Land Families Helping Families, a key initiative of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council. Our center stands as a beacon of support for families with children or adults with special health care needs and professionals.

**Program Supervisor: Julie Folsie**

**Address: 286 Hwy. 3185, Thibodaux, LA 70301**

**Phone: (985) 447-4461**

**Email: [jfolsie@blfhf.org](mailto:jfolsie@blfhf.org)**

**Website: <http://www.blfhf.org/>**



### **Our Services and Support**

The Family to Family Health Information Center offers specialized services and support for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and their Families, spanning ages 0-26. Our offerings include:

- Empowering parents and transitioning youth with skills for proactive partnership with medical professionals.
- Facilitating families' navigation through health care challenges and financing complexities.
- Outreach through health fairs to raise awareness about community programs and services.
- Conducting training sessions on services, resources, and advocacy for superior health care services in our state.

### **Statewide Outreach, Localized Support**

Our collaboration extends beyond our immediate premises. Through our partnership with Families Helping Families Resource Centers across the state, we ensure that Louisiana's Family to Family Health Information Center reaches you right in your own backyard.

### **Your Information Specialists**

Our specialists, parents of children or youth with special health care needs, are not just professionals – they resonate with the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of families with special health care needs. Their lived experiences make them an invaluable resource for understanding and addressing your concerns.

### **A National Network of Support**

Our efforts are part of a larger network. Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2Fs) function as family-led organizations supporting families of children with special health care needs. This initiative receives robust support from the Family Voices through the Family Engagement and Leadership in Systems of Care grant, funded until 2028 by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal Child Health Bureau.



Furthermore, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) sponsors F2Fs not just in our state, but across the nation, encompassing every state, the District of Columbia, five US territories, and dedicated F2Fs serving American Indians and Alaska Natives. This cohesive network ensures that CYSHCN and their families receive comprehensive support, irrespective of their location.

**Connect with Us**

For more information, or to locate an Information Specialist in your region, please reach out to your local [Families Helping Families Center](#). We're here to guide, assist, and walk alongside you in your journey.



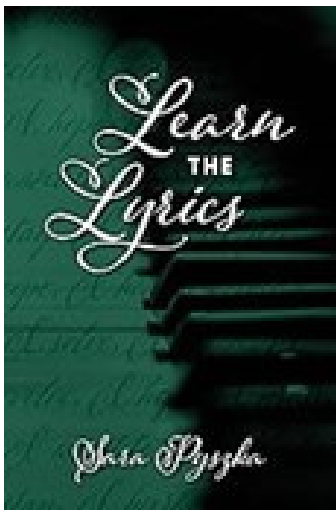
## The Self-Advocate's Corner

By Nicole Jones



I found a really good book that I have read by an author named Sara Pyszka. She is from Philadelphia Pennsylvania, and she also has a disability. She wrote a series called Just Be. The fourth book in the series is called [Learn the Lyrics](#).

The book is about when Brynn Evanson started her freshman year in college, and she didn't know what she wanted to major in, so she went to talk to her professor for guidance and advice. He encouraged her to try taking a music writing course, so he paired her with Ryan.



To find out what happened you may want to read the [book](#)!

Other books in the Just Be Series are:

Book 1 -- Dancing Daisies

Book 2 -- Switch the Song

Book 3 -- Mix the Music



She also wrote a metaphor called Inside My Outside which is about her life and how she struggled with hiring personal care attendant.



FHF  You



**Families Helping Families  
It's Who We Are!  
It's What We DO!**

**Riddle Answer: A joke!**

## Invest in Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana.

FHFSWLA is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit agency that relies on donations to meet the needs of our agency's mission and vision. By donating to FHFSWLA you are investing in the lives of

people with disabilities and their families. If passion paid, we would be the richest nonprofit in SWLA. Unfortunately, passion alone does not fully support our organization.

Please consider making a contribution so families who are touched by disability can be assured this one of a kind, family directed resource center is always here when they need us.

Contributions can be made to:  
Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana  
P O Box 1627  
Lake Charles, LA 70602

FHF is funded in part by a contract from the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.



## Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana

MAILING ADDRESS: P O BOX 1627, LAKE CHARLES, LA 70602  
OFFICE ADDRESS: 324 W. HALE ST., LAKE CHARLES, LA 70601  
(337) 436-2570 • 1-800-894-6558 • (337) 436-2578 FAX

EMAIL: [INFO@FHFSWLA.ORG](mailto:INFO@FHFSWLA.ORG)  
WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WWW.FHFSWLA.ORG](https://www.fhfswla.org)  
FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/fhfswla>

**Opinions contained herein do not necessarily represent those of the funding source, and no endorsement should be inferred.**