

# EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION

Parent Newsletter

FALL 2021-2022

Welcome to the **Fall Extra Special Edition Newsletter**. Each issue contains information for parents and caregivers for children in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs.

## Disability Awareness Weeks

The first two weeks of October of each year are Disability History and Awareness Weeks. This celebration was created by section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes. The law encourages schools to provide information about disability history and promote the awareness of the contributions of individuals with disabilities.

One of every five Americans is a person with a disability. A person may be born with a disability, may acquire a disability through an accident or illness, or may acquire a disability simply as a part of growing older. Despite the fact that disability is a natural part of life, people with disabilities have not always had access to equal opportunities. Not until 1975, with the passage of the Federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), did school-aged children with disabilities have a right to a free appropriate public education.

Florida started its first special education class in 1926 in Jacksonville. Since then, specially designed instruction and related services have expanded throughout Florida. Now, approximately 2,393,471 students identified as having a disability are participating in Florida's public education system. Many graduate and go on to postsecondary education or employment.

We are proud to participate in promoting awareness of disability history and the contributions of individuals with disabilities. For more information, please visit the FLDOE disability awareness web page or for tips and fun facts the FDLRS PAEC Disability History Awareness website at <http://www.paec.org/disabilityhistoryawareness>

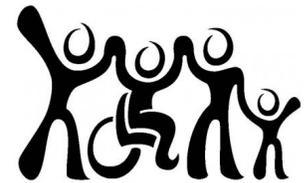
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**"There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits."** **Michael Phelps**



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# Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities

## Ask before you help

Just because someone has a disability, don't assume she needs help. If the setting is accessible, people with disabilities can usually get around fine. Adults with disabilities want to be treated as independent people. Offer assistance only if the person appears to need it. A person with a disability will oftentimes communicate when she needs help. And if she does want help, ask how before you act.

## Be sensitive about physical contact

Some people with disabilities depend on their arms for balance. Grabbing them, even if your intention is to assist, could knock them off balance. Avoid patting a person on the head or touching his wheelchair, scooter or cane. People with disabilities consider their equipment part of their personal space.

## Think before you speak

Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his companion, aide or sign language interpreter. Making small talk with a person who has a disability is great; just talk to him as you would with anyone else. Respect his privacy. If you ask about his disability, he may feel like you are treating him as a disability, not as a human being. However, many people with disabilities are comfortable with questions about their disability after getting to know someone. A simple "I don't feel comfortable sharing that" by the person with a disability can set the tone if it is not something that he/she is willing to share.

For more tips on interacting with people with disabilities please visit [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org) disability awareness page or go to [www.unitedspinal.org/publications](http://www.unitedspinal.org/publications)



## Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)

The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) offers free resources and support related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and other natural settings.

While FIN facilitators do not attend IEP meetings they can provide useful information about the following: effective inclusive practices, family-school collaboration and communication, opportunities for networking with other families, and ways to access local resources and support. For information about your child's educational program or Individual Education Plan (IEP), please contact your child's teacher or school administrator.

When families contact FIN for direct support and assistance, facilitators can provide families with a variety of information and resources and may, upon request, contact the district's exceptional student education (ESE) office or school to discuss concerns on behalf of the family. Family concerns and needs are always carefully considered as part of FIN's planning and problem-solving with schools and/or districts.

To assist in planning and problem-solving with schools, Florida Statute, § 1003.57, states in Section 1003.57(1)(f), F.S.: BPIE; "Once every 3 years, each school district and school shall complete a Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) assessment with a Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) facilitator and include the results of the BPIE assessment and all planned short-term and long-term improvement efforts in the school district's exceptional student education policies and procedures. BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district and school team levels."

The School BPIE is a school self-assessment process designed to identify priority needs, develop goals, plan school-wide improvement strategies, and organize internal and external resources to support the implementation of inclusive practices. The BPIE includes 34 indicators, aligned with the district level BPIE, that are categorized within the following three domains.

- Leadership and Decision Making
- Instruction and Student Achievement
- Communication and Collaboration

Under the leadership of a FIN facilitator or FIN-trained leader, the School BPIE indicators are reviewed and rated, according to the level of implementation of inclusive practices across the school. The team provides data and sources of evidence to support the rating of each indicator. Based on the final indicator ratings, and in conjunction with existing initiatives, priority goals are identified and short- and long-term improvement efforts are implemented.

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### How can I help my child be more active?

Article from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases

#### There are many ways you can help:

- As you work to develop a physical activity routine, *you can be a role model for your children*. If they see you being physically active and having fun, they might grow to like it and stick with it.
- Involve the whole family in activities like dancing or playing a favorite sport.
- Focus on fun. You can do a lot of walking during trips to the zoo or park.
- Include children in family activities like walking the dog, washing the car, or cleaning the house.
- Sign up your children for after-school programs or lessons in an activity or sport they enjoy, if they're available and you can afford it.
- Team up with your children to play sports or dance video games that get everyone moving.

Share tips with your children about how to be physically active throughout the day.

Consider using an interactive online tool to find ways to help your children get more physical activity.

#### Reduce inactive screen time

Sitting for hours at a time, while using computers, hand-held devices, music players, or TVs, may reduce your child's active playtime.

Pediatricians suggest limiting the time children use digital media outside of homework time. Between ages 2 and 5, allow your children no more than 1 hour of screen time. For children ages 6 and older, set consistent limits on media time. That will help you be sure they have enough time for physical activity, play, sleep, and other healthy behaviors.

#### Try these tips to reduce your child's screen time

- Do not use screen time to reward your child.
- Set up a family game night and turn off all the screens in your home.
- Eat meals together with no media use. Do not eat in front of a screen.
- Limit time in front of TV or other devices and remove them from your child's bedroom.
- Designate media-free places in your home, such as bedrooms.



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