



PARENTS AS PARTNERS

St. Johns County School District—ESE Dept.

Volume 3, Issue 2

December, 2013

ESE Parent Support Group— The Webster School

The Webster School held the first ESE Parent Night of the year on October 8th. The guest speakers for the meeting were a former Webster student, J.R. Lobinsky and his mother Kathy Lobinsky. J. R. completed high school at Pedro Menendez with a Special Diploma and has been successfully employed with Publix for a number of years. J.R. shared his struggles with school as a student identified on the autism spectrum and the successes he experienced as a result of the dedication

of his parents and teachers.

Mrs. Lobinsky talked about the importance of being an advocate



for your child and making sure you know what resources are available to assist. Parents had the opportunity to talk with Mrs. Lobinsky and J.R. after the meeting.

In addition to the guest speakers for the evening, a presentation was provided on Common Core Standards/FCAT 2.0, Access Points/ Alternative Assessment, and Diploma Options. The next ESE Parent Night will be on January 14(5:45pm - 7:00 pm) in the MKY Auditorium. This meeting will focus on available resources for students with disabilities and their families.



Gifted Parent Advisory Meetings

- *January 21, 2014—Durbin Creek Elementary School—3:30-4:30*
- *March 25, 2014—Ocean Palms Elementary School—5:30-6:30*
- *May 13, 2014—Julington Creek Elementary School—3:30—4:30*

ESE Parent Advisory Committee Meeting

40 Orange Street—3rd Floor Auditorium
February 27, 2014— 6:00 pm—8:00 pm

The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee is to identify barriers experienced by exceptional students and their families. This information is then shared with those who can effect changes (administration at schools and exceptional student education staff at the district level). A copy is also provided to those who attend the meeting. If you need special accommodations, please contact Jill Bullard (547-7672) one week prior to the meeting. The District contact for the Parent Advisory Committee is George Freeman (547-7704).





Enjoying The Holidays With An Autistic Child

Holidays are often filled with stress. It takes work to make a beautiful and fun holiday for yourself and those around you. There is a lot of pressure to make the holidays perfect and fun, and to enjoy yourself while you're doing it. This is a tall order in any situation, but when you add to that the stress of having a child with special needs for whom you also want the holidays to be perfect and fun, it can become more overwhelming than ever.

Everything needs readjusting in your family life these days, and of course you are left with the emotions of it all. It is on you to make warm experiences for your family and new traditions that will help them to feel good about these family years. It's a huge adjustment. It's important at this time to sit back for a few minutes and backtrack just a little. What is it about the holidays that you've always enjoyed? Special foods? Pretty decorations? Certain activities? The gifts? All of it? Whatever it is, start there.

Focus on a few things you know are important to make sure you have prepared around this time. Of course, some things may need modification so that it is possible to enjoy them with your child with special needs. For example, if there is a danger of them hurting themselves on fragile decorations you may have to put them higher up and out of reach, or get new ones that are not so fragile. Some special foods may not be served. These modifications often bring us disappointment but if the goal is a nice family holiday, it's important and we can adjust.

Make the demands on yourself realistic and don't try to do so much that you feel only frustration. Make realistic lists and work on things one at a time. Looking at a whole month of this holiday season is less overwhelming if you take it in small pieces. You may also have to lower your expectations of what you can really do, but at least what you do will be less stressful and make the holidays special.

Now for tackling the gifts. Again, you may have to step back and change your expectations. Think about your child and what will put a smile on his/her face. Maybe they can't handle the new games that every other kid is playing this year, or the current popular book series, or new sports equipment. But they may be thrilled with a cushy new ball, a big soft beanbag chair to flop on, a favorite food (within their dietary constraints), or even an hour away from all the noise and confusion to walk in brisk weather or slide in the playground. It's not what you hoped, but this part is not just about you. It's about how you can give everyone in your family some warm holiday experiences, and feel good about them and yourself in the process.

These may not be the holidays you once had, or dreamed of for your family. But you can still offer your family the love and warmth and smiles that the holiday glow that many of us carry within us is really all about.

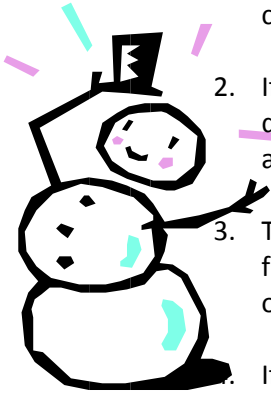
Read more: <http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/enjoying-holidays-autistic-child->

Robert Naseef, Ph.D., and Cindy Ariel, Ph.D., are the co-editors of "Voices from the Spectrum: Parents, Grandparents, Siblings, People With Autism, and Professionals Share Their Wisdom" (2006). On the web at www.alternativechoices.com.



FDLRS/CARD Tip of the Month— **Help with Homework**

Homework is a struggle for many families. Some of the difficulties children experience include completing homework in a timely manner, putting forth best effort, getting materials to and from school, and juggling afterschool activities. Parents often become frustrated with what appears to be their children's inability to complete homework independently and many battles ensue. Here are some suggestions that may help ease the homework hassles:



1. Start off with homework that you know your child can do easily before moving on to the more challenging assignments.
2. If your child is really struggling with the topic, give your child a break before he or she shuts down completely. For example, "Joey, you are really having a hard time with this one. How about we have a snack and then look at it together?"
3. Try approaching that topic in a different manner. For example, if your child is struggling with fractions, order pizza that night. Ask questions such as, "There are eight slices and dad just ate one slice. What fraction of the pizza did he eat? What fraction of the pizza remains?"
4. If your child is struggling because a reading assignment is too long or challenging, take turns reading it.
5. Homework should not be a task that takes hours to complete. Talk with your child's teacher regarding homework expectations and the amount of time it should take for your child to complete his or her homework. If your child is spending over the expected amount, consider stopping for the night and writing the teacher a note explaining the reason for incomplete homework. Let your child's teacher know where your child is struggling and how long homework is taking. This offers the opportunity for you and your child's teacher to work as a team and come

UF—JACKSONVILLE FDLRS/CARD SERVICES

Who We Serve:

- Individuals between the ages of 3 & 22 who have not graduated high school.
- Who are struggling in school and have complicated medical, behavioral, developmental, and/or social histories.
- And who reside in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns counties.

Services for Families:

- Comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment, which may include psychoeducational, emotional-behavioral, and/or developmental pediatric evaluations.
- Feedback sessions and a report detailing our findings.
- Assistance in planning for your child's educational and psychological needs.
- Trainings for parents covering a variety of topics.

Services for the Community:

- Training/consultations for educators, students, & other professionals.
- Educational consultation and support services: This can include collaboration with school personnel to facilitate school placement & provision of services.



**The UF-Jacksonville FDLRS program is funded by the Florida Department of Education. Our services are provided at no cost to families who qualify. To see if you qualify or to schedule an appointment, please call us at (904) 633-0770.*

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY - For Parents and Educators of Students with ASD and Related Disabilities through the UF/Jacksonville CARD

On January 11-13, 2014, the 21st Annual CARD Conference will be held in St Pete Beach, FL at The Tradewinds Resort. The conference will offer a series of breakout sessions and keynote presentations by experts in the field of autism and related disabilities. The purpose of the annual conference is to provide information on state-of-the-art practices in areas that promote quality community based life-styles for individuals with autism, deaf-blindness, and related disabilities. Conference participants will learn about current research findings and their implications as well as practical strategies related to communication and social interventions, transition to adulthood, positive behavior support, early intervention, and social and community inclusion.

For more information, visit the website: <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/CARDCONFERENCE/>
Early Registration is \$90 (CEUs available for an additional charge).

The University of Florida - Jacksonville, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities is offering several scholarships to parents and educators who would like to attend the 2014 Annual CARD Conference. Interested individuals should complete the attached application and follow the directions below. We are looking for individuals who can attend the conference and then bring back knowledge to share with others. We will plan a series of "lunch and learn" talks for the spring and summer at CARD. Scholarship recipients will be asked to attend at least one talk to share with others back home some information that they learned at the conference. Preference will be given to those who have not previously received a CARD scholarship.

Application Procedure

1. Complete the attached application.
2. Mail, fax, or email the completed application to the address listed below. **Please submit the application by December 6th.**
Fax (Attention: Jeannie Bowles): 904-633-0751
or Email to Jeannie Bowles at Jeannie.bowles@jax.ufl.edu
3. Scholarship Applicants will be notified via email or phone.
4. Applicants who have been awarded a scholarship will need to register for the conference and make their own travel and accommodation arrangements. Following the conference, you will need to submit your receipts and then will be reimbursed by the university for up to \$500 of your conference-related expenses. Unfortunately, we cannot provide funds prior to the event.

What does the scholarship include?

Reimbursement for CARD Conference registration fees (Including up to \$500 per family for conference and related expenses). (Unfortunately, we cannot provide funds prior to the event)

How do I submit?

Following the conference, submit the original receipts along with a memorandum summarizing the requested amounts to UF Jacksonville CARD; c/o Jeannie Bowles. This should include your name, mailing address, phone number, and Tax ID # or social security number (for UF tax purposes only).

Reimbursement will take approx. 6-8 weeks following submission

What to include in the submission?	Documentation of expenses (Original Receipts). Include a printout of the online registration screen
Conference registration fees	Proof of registration (your email confirmation) and proof of payment method (for example, copy of check or PayPal receipt)
Mileage calculated at .445 cents/mile	Using MapQuest.com print out directions from your home address to the conference (1500 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, Florida 32809) which includes the total mileage round trip. Please note: mileage between the conference center and hotel each day will not be reimbursed if staying at another hotel
Accommodations/Hotel	Copy of the hotel bill received at check out. If the occupants listed are more than one, please list family or others staying with you. Rates must be of equal or less than the host hotel and close to. Please note: resort fees (shiatsu massage, mud baths, etc) are not covered by the scholarship
Meals	For meals, no receipts are necessary. A daily per diem of \$36 (max amount allowed for each meal: Breakfast \$6, Lunch \$11, Dinner \$ 19) will be calculated afterwards. Again, no meal receipts are necessary.

**Parent/Educator Scholarship Application
Annual CARD Conference**

Your Name: _____

Your Child's Name (if parent): _____

Your Place of Employment: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

What do you hope to learn by attending the CARD conference?

Is there additional information that you would like to share with us?

(Please feel free to write on the back of the page)



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

November 5, 2013

Dear Parent:

November is Florida Parental Involvement in Education Month, and I want to share information with you about important changes to Florida's laws that empower you, as a parent, to play a greater role in your child's education, especially if your child receives Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services.

As a father and a grandfather, I know the positive impact of parents taking part in their children's education. That is why I signed Senate Bill 1108, which went into effect July 1, 2013. I am pleased that it will improve education for Florida students, especially those with exceptional needs.

Senate Bill 1108 strengthens the rights of students with disabilities and their parents. The core of the legislation empowers parents in the individualized educational plan (IEP) process. Some of the measures established by the legislation are described below:

- The law expands a parent's right to bring an adult of your choice to meetings with school officials about your child. You will be asked to sign a form indicating whether anyone with the school or district hindered this right.
- You now have more input regarding your child's placement in classes known as "access courses" that do not count toward a regular diploma. You also have more input into whether your child is enrolled in an ESE center school (also called "a separate day school"). Prior to either change, you must sign a consent form.
- If you have hired a certified professional (such as a behavior analyst, occupational therapist, or clinical social worker), you can now include that professional in your student's education. The law removes barriers to allow this collaboration at a time and location agreed upon by both the parents and the school.
- For children in very special circumstances or with physical conditions that cannot be accommodated for participation in statewide testing, the IEP team may request an extraordinary exemption from specified tests, such as standardized assessments and end of course exams. The exemption process takes time, so I encourage you to learn more and discuss this option with your child's IEP team.

These items are just a brief summary of how Senate Bill 1108 empowers you to be a part of your child's education. I encourage you to visit the Florida Department of Education's website and visit the Online Parent Community at www.fldoe.org/family to learn more.

Thank you for taking an active role in your child's education. Together, we can ensure that Florida schools prepare all students for the career or college of their dreams.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott".

Rick Scott
Governor

THE CAPITOL

@ItsWorkingFL

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399 • (850) 488-2272

www.FLGov.com



Tips for Parents:

- **Go to your child's IEP meetings.** An IEP meeting can be held without you there, and decisions about your child can be made without you!
- **Actively participate.** Get to know the team members and speak up! You know your child, so your input is critical!
- **Aim for a collaborative partnership.** The best results for the child are obtained when the IEP team is open and friendly.
- **Learn about your child's disability.** Understanding your child's diagnosis will help you to be better prepared at meetings.
- **Learn the process.** The paperwork is complicated, the law is complex, but don't let that scare you! You can learn about the law - and it's the law that drives the paperwork.
- **Ask questions.** IDEA clearly indicates that parents should understand and be a part of informed decision-making in each component of their child's IEP. If you don't understand - ASK!
- **Talk to other families.** Parents get their best information and support from other parents who have had similar experiences.
- **Contact your PTI.** Frustrated? Confused? Give us a call!



For information on the IEP or IFSP process, sign up to participate in a Central Florida Parent Center workshop presentation!



**Central Florida
Parent Center**

(888) 61-AWARE

Pinellas: (727) 789-2400 www.CFLparents.org





Save the Date
Free Event for Parents



TOOLS FOR SUCCESS FAMILY CONFERENCE

19th Annual Conference for and about families of
children with Special Needs ages birth to 22.

Thursday, January 30, 2014

Where: University of North Florida, Adam W. Herbert University Center
12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224

From: 8:00 am to 3:15 pm

For more information call FDLRS/Crown 904-346-4601 ext 119



Kristi Yamaguchi - Kristine Tsuya "Kristi" Yamaguchi (Kristi Hedican) (born July 12, 1971) is an American figure skater and the 1992 Olympic Champion in women's singles. Yamaguchi also won two World Figure Skating Championships in 1991 and 1992 and a U.S. Figure Skating Championships in 1992. She won two national titles in 1989 and 1990 and one junior world title in 1988 as a pairs skater with Rudy Galindo. In December 2005, she was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. Yamaguchi began skating as a child, as physical therapy for her club feet.





Upcoming Events

December 7 - AMC Theaters/Regency 24 - A sensory film showing of "Frozen 2-D." The theater provides a special opportunity for families to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. The auditoriums have their lights up, the sound turned down and audience members are invited to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing! Movie starts at 10am.

December 14 - Bowling Buddies - Join Inclusion Solution at Beach Bowl on Beach Boulevard for 4 lanes of fun! Educators and therapists are on hand to facilitate social interaction. This is a great activity for children and teens with Autism, and the parents enjoy connecting with other families. Meet Mary and her team at 12:30 pm. Register in advance by emailing inclusionsolution@gmail.com.

January 11, 2014—Bowling Buddies - Join Inclusion Solution at Beach Bowl on Beach Boulevard for 4 lanes of fun! Educators and therapists are on hand to facilitate social interaction. This is a great activity for children and teens with Autism, and the parents enjoy connecting with other families. Meet Mary and her team at 12:30 pm. Register in advance by emailing inclusionsolution@gmail.com.

January 17-19, 2014— 21st Annual CARD Conference in Orlando, FL at the Florida Hotel and Conference Center. Keynote presentations and breakout sessions by experts in the field of Autism and related disabilities.

January 21, 2014—Gifted Parent Advisory Meeting, Durbin Creek Elementary School, 3:30-4:30.

January 30, 2014—Tools for Success Family Conference, Jacksonville (see previous page for more information).

February 1-17, 2014—HEAL Open For Spring Grant Applications. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to submit grant applications for Summer Camps, Recreational Activities and Sport Leagues for Summer 2014. Grant applications and more information is available on HEAL's website.

February 8, 2014—Bowling Buddies - Join Inclusion Solution at Beach Bowl on Beach Boulevard for 4 lanes of fun! Educators and therapists are on hand to facilitate social interaction. This is a great activity for children and teens with Autism, and the parents enjoy connecting with other families. Meet Mary and her team at 12:30 pm. Register in advance by emailing inclusionsolution@gmail.com.

February 14, 2014—A Night to Remember at Christ's Church designed for anyone ages 13 and older with developmental and/or physical impairments. This party includes Red Carpet Entrance, Free Portraits, Hair and Makeup for the Girls, Shoe Shines for the Guys, and Limo Rides. Register online by January 10th to participate or volunteer. Registration is limited so sign up now!

February 27, 2014—ESE Parent Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:00-8:00, 40 Orange Street.

March 8, 2014—Bowling Buddies - Join Inclusion Solution at Beach Bowl on Beach Boulevard for 4 lanes of fun! Educators and therapists are on hand to facilitate social interaction. This is a great activity for children and teens with Autism, and the parents enjoy connecting with other families. Meet Mary and her team at 12:30 pm. Register in advance by emailing inclusionsolution@gmail.com.

March 22, 2014—Peer to Pier Fishing - Fishing off the Jacksonville Beach Pier. To Register: Mary Erickson-Verdi at inclusionsolution@gmail.com or (904) 994-1005.

March 25, 2014—Gifted Parent Advisory Meeting, Ocean Palms Elementary School, 5:30-6:30.

April 12, 2014—Bowling Buddies - Join Inclusion Solution at Beach Bowl on Beach Boulevard for 4 lanes of fun! Educators and therapists are on hand to facilitate social interaction. This is a great activity for children and teens with Autism, and the parents enjoy connecting with other families. Meet Mary and her team at 12:30 pm. Register in advance by emailing inclusionsolution@gmail.com.

April 26, 2014—Peer to Pier Fishing - Fishing off the Jacksonville Beach Pier. To Register: Mary Erickson-Verdi at inclusionsolution@gmail.com or (904) 994-1005.

April 27, 2014—The HEAL Zoo Walk for Autism at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens! Mark your calendar now!

May 13, 2014—Gifted Parent Advisory Meeting—Julington Creek Elementary School—3:30—4:30.

September 2014—The Great Ponte Vedra Paddle! Save the date and start training now for this great event!

The Redirecting Children's Behavior Course

Course Content

The Redirecting Children's Behavior course presents non-violent strategies that foster appropriate behavior in children. The following topics are explored: assessing and building relationships, styles of interaction and results to expect, handling emotions during heat-of-the-moment exchange, diagnosing motivations that lead to misbehavior, appropriate redirection strategies, improving self-esteem, fine-tuning communication skills, and creating problem solvers.

Details

The Exceptional Student Education department of the St. Johns County School District is offering the course free of charge. The 15-hour course is divided into a series of five 3-hour classes (one night per week). Participants **must attend the first class** to be eligible for the remaining classes. The course will be taught at the Fullerwood Center auditorium (10 Hildreth Drive, St. Augustine FL 32084). Participants must arrange for child care on their own. Special accommodations must be arranged with Jill Bullard at 547-7672 the week before the first class session. Participants completing all 5 classes will receive a certificate from the International Network for Children and Families in collaboration with the St. Johns County School District's Exceptional Student Education Program.

Registration

The course is open to school district staff and to the public. Seating is limited. To register, please contact Jill Bullard at jill.bullard@stjohns.k12.fl.us 547-7672. If you leave a voice message, be sure to spell your name and provide a phone number or email address. Seats will be held until 5:45p during the first session – and then made available to those on the waiting list.

Course Dates

Class 1.....	530p-830p, Tuesday, January 21, 2014
Class 2.....	530p-830p, Tuesday, January 28, 2014
Class 3.....	530p-830p, Tuesday, February 4, 2014
Class 4.....	530p-830p, Tuesday, February 11, 2014
Class 5.....	530p-830p, Tuesday, February 18, 2014

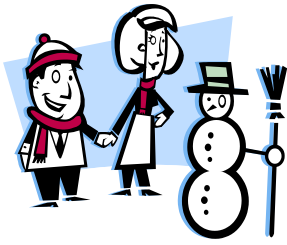


About The Publisher

The Redirecting Children's Behavior course is published and monitored by the International Network for Children and Families in Gainesville, Florida (Kathryn Kvols, President).

About The Instructor

The certified instructor for the course is George Freeman who holds a masters degree in psychology and is certified in the state of Florida as a behavior analyst. He currently serves as a Program Specialist for the St. Johns County School District. He has taught the Redirecting Children's Behavior course since 1999 and values its techniques and philosophy.



St. John’s County School District
Exceptional Student Education Department



Lisa Bell, Director
(904) 547-7672 (office)
(904) 547-7687 (fax)
belll@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Tina Kennon, ESE Coordinator
504, Hospital Homebound
OHI/OI, TBI,OT/PT
(904) 547-7546
kennont@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Carole Taylor, Program Specialist
SLD, Transition Services
(904) 547-7678
taylorc@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Nancy Elliott, Program Specialist
Pre-K
(904) 547-4886
elliottn@stjohns.k12.fl.us

George Freeman, Program Specialist
EBD, MHC
(904) 547-7704
george.freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Lisa Thacker, Program Specialist
ASD, InD
(904) 547-7530
lisa.thacker@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Helen DiMare, Program Specialist
Gifted Services
(904) 547-7692
helen.dimare@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Gina Fonseca, Program Specialist
Speech/Language, DHH, VI
(904) 547-7543
gina.fonseca@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Jill Bullard, Executive Secretary
(904) 547-7672 jill.bullard@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Sarah Coffin, Confidential Secretary
(904) 547-7712 sarah.coffin@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Mission Statement: To identify and meet the unique educational needs of exceptional students and to provide support and resources to enhance educational opportunities so they may become productive citizens.

ESE programs and services address the unique needs of students who are gifted in kindergarten through 12th grade and those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities from age three until they graduate with a regular diploma or until their 22nd birthday. ESE programs and services are designed to assist students in reaching their educational goals through the use of instructional and behavioral approaches which are research-based and exemplify best practices. Technology is used in many creative ways to meet student needs as well.

ESE services are available at all district schools for gifted students and students who have mild to moderate disabilities. Students with more significant disabilities are served in cluster programs at selected sites. Program support is provided to students, parents and school personnel by program specialists based at the district office. Students with disabilities who are not eligible for services through the ESE program, may be eligible for an accommodations plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY?

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. The next issue of the Parents as Partners Newsletter will be posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/ese.

If you would like to receive a copy via email, please email your email address to jill.bullard@stjohns.k12.fl.us and we will gladly add you to our Parent Newsletter Email List.