

Back To School
AUG 2018

ecac | exceptional children's
assistance center

Newsline



GEARING UP FOR BACK TO SCHOOL AS SUMMER ENDS

ECAC is here to help your child have the best school year possible! Have you noticed it too? The days are getting shorter, and the schedule is filling up. Summer is winding down.



Except for a few beachgoers getting in some last-minute sun, it's back to school, work, and normal life for the rest of us.

We hope that you had a wonderful summer, as we have here at ECAC. In June, we had a busy week hosting the Region 2 Technical Assistance Conference. We also brought on a new PTI Manager and held several exciting workshops across the state.

Now that August is here, we are looking ahead to the 2018-19 school year. We know that the end of summer can make some happy kids feel a little sad or worried. So in this newsletter, we are focusing on ways to help make it easier to go back to school.

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Ask ECAC: Tackling Transitions

Changing schools can be both an exciting and anxious change, for students and their families. Taking advantage of the last few weeks of summer to do some intentional preparation can help the first few weeks at a new school go more smoothly.

Is your child facing a major transition this year?

- Starting Preschool for the first time
- Entering Kindergarten
- Moving from Elementary to Middle School
- Beginning High School

It is not too late to take steps to make this transition as smooth as possible!

If your child is moving to a new school:

- Visit the new school to look at the classroom. Ask what a typical day looks like.
- Address any challenges or difficulties that your child might have in the new school.
- If your child is entering middle or high school, ask about required courses and any options that may exist. Some courses are taught at different levels of difficulty (e.g. Regular, Advanced or Honors).
- Think about the schedule and classes that will be best for your child. **Check the new class schedule carefully!** Ask for any needed changes right away. It is important to check course schedules each semester.

Communicate early with school staff:

In many schools, administrators and receptionists work all summer. For some children, it might be a good idea to talk to the Principal about the classroom and/or teacher style that will be a good fit for your child. The Principal can consider this information when making class assignments.

At home, you can help your child ease into the school routine by gradually shifting their daily schedule and bedtime. Most importantly, stay positive and help your child feel good about the upcoming school year!

Back to School Tips

A new school year is about to start and even if your child is staying at the same school there are probably some changes ahead.

1. Ask Questions

Try to find out what might be different for the coming year (e.g. class size, number of teachers/aides, daily schedule, curriculum, meal times, etc.). Does anything change how the school staff meets your child's needs?

2. Review your child's IEP, Section 504 Plan and/or Behavior Intervention Plan

If you think that changes may be needed, consider requesting a meeting to discuss this before school starts, or as soon as possible afterward. Double-check with your child's teacher to make sure critical accommodations and supports will be in place on the first day of school.

3. Update Health Care and Emergency Plans

Contact the school nurse well before the first day of school with any changes to your child's Individual Health Care or Emergency Plans. Make sure all health forms are current.

4. Check and connect with transportation

If your child has special transportation needs, make sure accommodations will begin on the first day of school. Check the route and estimated trip times. (Have your own back-up plan for the first few days of school, just in case.)

5. Connect with your child's teacher and therapists

Exchange contact information with your child's teacher. (A school Open House event *is not* a good time to have important discussions with teachers!)

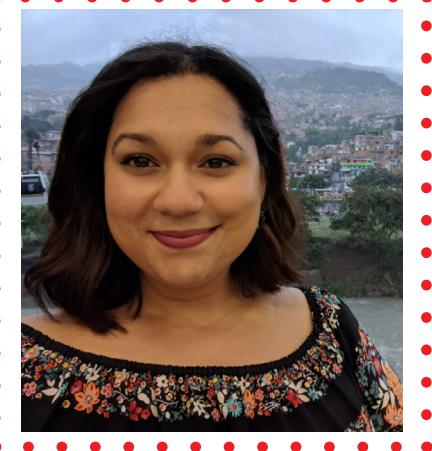
6. Talk to your child

Help your child communicate any questions or concerns she might have. If change is hard for your child, consider making a social story to introduce new routines and people.

7. Share important information about your child with school staff

Complete a document such as ECAC's [Painting the Big Picture](#) or [Student Snapshot](#) to share important information about your child with the staff who will be working with him/her this year. Both of these tools can be found on [ECAC's website](#)





Meet Our New PTI Manager!

ECAC welcomes Caché Owens to the team.

ECAC is pleased to introduce Caché Owens as the new Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) Manager.

Caché is very passionate about making sure families have the resources they need to navigate their children's school years and beyond. A parent herself to a child with special needs, Caché is looking forward to supporting other parents across the state. While Caché is a Wisconsin native, she has made North Carolina home during her five years here. In her free time, Caché enjoys traveling, photography, painting (poorly), and hiking.

ECAC is excited to have Caché on board! We have great confidence in her abilities to continue ECAC's work to improve the lives and education of ALL children.

Caché comes to ECAC with a background in community engagement, and research. She has worked on several community outreach programs, including affordable housing and adult education. Caché is also finishing a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Analysis at UNC Charlotte. Her research is community oriented and aims to empower people to create social change. Through this work, Caché has built many meaningful relationships across the Charlotte region.

Please join us in welcoming Caché. You may reach out to Caché directly via email at: cowens@ecacmail.org.

NC Earns Approval for Implementation of IDEA

The 2018 Determination letter is out!

It was recently announced that North Carolina met the requirements and purposes of IDEA. Only 13 other States shared this distinction! The [U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSERS\)](#) released its [2018 Determination Letter](#) that shows how well the U.S. and each State carried out the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) during the 2016 fiscal year. While there is still work to be done, it is clear progress is being made.



Teacher's Corner

It's easy to label negative behaviors as problems, especially when our time is stretched thin. These statements can help us pause and remember that our students are so much more complex than is often evident.

When Students...	It May Seem Like They're...	But They May Really Want to Tell Us...
Miss Assignments	Irresponsible	"No one at home speaks English, so I don't have help."
Fall Asleep in Class	Lazy	"Mom can't pick me up from the sitter until late."
Arrive Late to School	Careless	"I have three siblings I have to get ready for school."
Tap Pencil	Disrespectful	"I'm worried my parents can't pay rent."
Shout out Comments	Rude	"There's a new baby and no one pays attention to me."
Start Fights	Mean	"My grandpa has cancer and I'm angry that he's sick."
Not Paying Attention	Scatterbrained	"I'm hungry because I didn't have breakfast."
Not Participating	Defiant	"I'm self-conscious about what others might think."

Adapted from Aperture Education (2018)

Join us at the 68th Conference on Exceptional Children!

Come spend time with us as we celebrate and learn about all the exciting new work happening in North Carolina to achieve better outcomes for students with disabilities! **This annual event is one of the longest running of its type in the nation!**

Activities include:

- 90+ sessions to cover a broad range of topics
- A must-not-miss keynote speaker
- A school-based Enterprise Bazaar where students will showcase and market their own products
- Vendor exhibit full of amazing resources

ECAC will have a table there where you can meet some of our wonderful and dedicated staff. This conference is for parents/families, special educators, administrators, related service providers, regular education teachers...basically anyone interested in achieving improving the school experiences for students with disabilities. This event is sponsored by the **Exceptional Children's Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction**.

Details: November 14-16, 2018
Koury Convention Center, Sheraton Greensboro Hotel at Four Seasons

Registration will begin in August/September. Check the [conference webpage](#) for more details.



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Did You Know?

You can request an IEP meeting for your child at ANY time. You do not have to wait for a meeting to be called by your child's teacher or other school staff. Just because you agreed to one version of an IEP does not mean that you are stuck with it for any set period of time.

It is a good idea to put your request for an IEP meeting in writing so that you have documentation for your records should you need it later.

Upcoming Events

Please visit www.ecac-parentcenter.org to view a FULL LIST of events. We are adding new events all the time. Let us know if you'd like us to visit your neck of the woods!

AUGUST

8/7	Painting the Big Picture, Burnsville, NC
8/7	Talking to Parents & Making Referrals for Childcare Providers, Whiteville, NC
8/11	Parents as Collaborative Leaders (Spanish), Monroe, NC
8/13	Painting the Big Picture, Hendersonville, NC
8/16	Parents Rights in Special Education, Asheville, NC
8/21	What is ECAC?, Salisbury, NC
8/28	Parents Rights in Special Education, Waynesville, NC
8/31	Informed Effective Parents (Spanish), Charlotte, NC

You can also follow us on social media.



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English



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