

Quarterly Informer

July, August, and September 2023 Edition

Thanks to This is Home Fest!!



Pictured above: Leslie Q. Knox - FHF Vice Chair
Jay Ecker - Board Chair - This is Home Fest &
Susan Riehn - FHF Executive Director

Thanks to This is Home Fest for allowing FHF SWLA Staff & Board participate in their annual event. We had a great time working the Fest and seeing lots of our community friends and partners! Plus we raised \$11,000.00 to continue to provide information, support, training, coaching, and advocacy skills in our 5 parish area! HUGE shout out to our Volunteer Coordinator Extraordinaire - Leslie Q. Knox...we could have never done this without her leadership!!

FHFSWLA Board of Directors

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Vice Chair

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Leah Fuselier

Secretary

Tracy Clark

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Mona Timpa

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Who we Are ... What we Do!

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Education Support
Specialist

Mylynda 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/

Reading and Writing Strategies for Struggling Students

Reading and Writing Help for Struggling Students

Most of the students I have worked with seem to struggle the most with reading and writing skills. The struggle seems to overlap both areas. Students who have a difficult time reading don't have the confidence to write proficiently. They often will refuse to use words in their writing that they have trouble reading. My strategy to improve this skill is derived from a method called "Language Experience." I have used this extensively over the years. It allows students to feel confident and can be easily adapted by parents and teachers of any population.

Steps to This Strategy Are as Follows:

1. Ask the student to tell you something about themselves. What are some of their interests? Once the subject is chosen, start writing down what the student dictates to you. Start with one paragraph.
2. After the paragraph is written, read it back to the student. Use a pointer or strip of colored paper to follow along with the student.
3. Have the student read what has been written. Make sure they follow along visually as they read the selection.
4. Have the student copy what has been written. This can be done by hand writing, or it can be typed into a word processor. Control the font size and legibility.
5. Have the student read the writing he has completed and follow along visually.
6. Each successive session begins by reading the writings from the previous sessions. You and the student will be compiling a collection of their work.
7. With each session, the student's writing vocabulary expands, the student feels pride in his collection and his reading vocabulary improves as well.

You can direct the ideas written about using the student's interests. Art and music can be launched into writing activities. The best thing about this method is that it creates lasting pieces of writing as it builds a collection self-inspired work.

BY JILL GAROFALLOU

HAPPY 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY TO FHF SWLA!!!!

One year ago in July we moved into our new space!!



324 West Hale Street
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601



Hurricane season: Don't be scared, be prepared.

By Nyoka Robinson 633rd Civil Engineer Squadron

With the hurricane season fast approaching, it is important to prepare ahead of time. Although the season begins on June 1, 2017, and ends November 30, 2017, storms can occur outside of the projected season. Keeping track of all the terms concerning hurricanes and severe weather can be overwhelming, but it is very important to recognize the terminology. It is also important to know what actions or steps should be taken to prepare yourself and your family to mitigate the impact of a storm. It only takes one storm to seriously impact a life or community, and hurricanes are among nature's most powerful and destructive storms.

Hurricanes can range from category 1 to 5, based on the sustained wind speed. Hurricanes that reach category 3 or higher are considered severe, due to the potential damage and loss of life that might be associated with the storm. Hurricanes frequently bring high winds, tornadoes, and cause landslides; however, the most deadly and disastrous hazard is flooding. It is important for coastal residents to monitor tropical storm systems as they may create dangerous storm surges, which is one of the main factors for evacuations. As a result, it is critical for coastal residents to know their storm surge risk and designated evacuation routes. Flooding can also occur inland from a tropical storm system. The system can cause a flash flood in just a matter of minutes, and residents living inland should be just as knowledgeable and prepared about flooding as a coastal resident. For individuals who live inland, it is important to know where to go if an evacuation in the area is issued and make plans concerning where to go to find higher ground.

The best way to prepare yourself and your family for the potential impact of a hurricane is to act now, by developing a family emergency plan and building an emergency supply kit with items that will allow you and your family to ride out a hurricane for at least five days. Kits should include but are not limited to water, food, clothing, a first aid kit, toiletries, and a flashlight with additional batteries.

Members should also identify two or three out of town contacts and share family emergency plans with them.

After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having your own food, water and other **supplies** to last for several days. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. **Download a printable version** to take with you to the store. Once you take a look at the basic items consider what **unique needs** your family might have, such as supplies for pets or seniors.

earlySteps

Louisiana's early intervention system

Early Steps is looking for providers. Are you interested... To be a special instructor you have to have a bachelor's degree with certification in one of these, Non-categorical pre-school, early intervention, adapted PE with add-on in early intervention, or Pre-K through 3 with add-on in early intervention. If you know anyone with those certifications that would be interested in being an Early Steps provider please refer them to me. Most of our special instructors are currently employed by a school board and work for Early Steps in their off time for extra money. We also welcome retired teachers with the same certification that can work during the day instead of evenings and weekends. Please contact Patrick Juneau at 337-488-0749 or email Patrick.Juneau@LA.GOV



Save the Date:

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

The City of Lake Charles
Mayor's Commission On Disability &
Families Helping Families SWLA *present:*

'INVEST IN YOUR ABILITY- BUILD YOUR TOOL BOX'

We're back and ready to make our community better for individuals with disabilities!

This year's **Mayor's Commission on Disability Conference** will be held in the **Contraband Room** at the **Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601**. The conference will feature Bruce Hamilton of No Bad Days, resources from select agencies and entertainment!

Contact **Families Helping Families of SWLA** for more information.

337-436-2570 • info@fnfswla.org

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Lake Charles Civic Center Contraband Room
900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, LA 70601



LDH Launches 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Awareness Campaign During Mental Health Awareness Month



This May, observed annually as Mental Health Awareness Month, the Louisiana Department of Health is launching a campaign to raise awareness of the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#). The Lifeline is available 24/7 to anyone in mental health distress or who may be worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. 988 crisis counselors are trained to help reduce the intensity of a situation for the person seeking help and connect them to additional local resources, as needed, to support their wellbeing.

Devastating hurricanes, the opioid epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic have tested the mental health and wellness of Louisianans from all walks of life over the past several years. Too many of us are experiencing mental health-related distress without the support and care we need. According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics:

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the third leading cause of death for individuals ages 15-24.
- In 2021, 48,183 Americans died by suicide, including 689 in Louisiana.
- One death by suicide occurs every 11 minutes.

“Mental Health Awareness Month is an opportunity for us to recommit to raising awareness about the importance of mental health in the lives of all Louisianans,” said Gov. John Bel Edwards. “The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available to anyone in mental health distress. If you’re depressed, going through a hard time, thinking about suicide or just need to talk, 988 is for you. 988 is for all of us.”

As part of the 988 awareness campaign, LDH is launching an online [988 Dashboard](#) providing transparency on key metrics of crisis call data from Louisiana’s two 988 crisis centers. The dashboard, which will be updated monthly, contains metrics on accessibility, referral source, reason for the call, and some outcomes, but they do not contain historical summaries.

Demographic data is available for only about 20% of calls, as it is not always possible to collect data during a crisis call. Calls to 988 are confidential and any self-reported data is aggregated before sharing with the public. We hope that this will reassure callers that they can remain anonymous when calling 988.

According to the dashboard, among Louisiana callers self-reporting their information to 988:

- 59.4% are White and about 34.8% are Black.
- 60.6% are female and 38.9% are male.
- 32.2% are ages 25-40, 18.9% are ages 18-24 and 18.1% are ages 41-59.
- The most common referrals were for mental health, housing and financial assistance.
- Orleans, East Baton Rouge and Jefferson parishes had the highest volume of calls.

Starting this week, LDH will also launch public service announcements (PSAs) in English and Spanish on 75 radio stations across the state promoting the 988 Lifeline’s 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors.

“Together, we can help to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health treatment and services. We can do so by starting the conversation. Talk about it. And, remember: It’s OK to not be OK,” said Karen Stubbs, assistant secretary of the LDH Office of Behavioral Health.

“Your feelings are valid and you are not alone.”



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IMMEDIATE RESOURCES

Trained and compassionate individuals are available to support you during hurricane season, the pandemic and other illnesses responses or any emotional crisis. They will provide information and help to link you to confidential mental health and substance use services.

Office of Behavioral Health: Keep Calm Line

- 1-866-310-7977 (24/7)

Help Line

- 1-877-664-2248 (24/7)

Local Human Services Districts/Authorities

- <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/directory/category/321>

Louisiana 211

- Call 2-1-1
- <https://www.louisiana211.org>
- Free, 24/7 referral and information line that connects people to a wide range of health and human services

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text 9-8-8
- Español: Llame al 1-877-696-6775
- Deaf/HoH: Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988
- Veterans: Text 838255
- Chat available at 988lifeline.org.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

- <https://afsp.org/chapter/louisiana>

CrisisText Line

- Text HOME to 741741 (24/7)

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline

- Call 1-800-985-5990
- Text TALKWITHUS to 66746

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

11
**ONE DEATH BY
SUICIDE OCCURS
EVERY 11 MINUTES**

689
**LOUISIANA
HAD 689
SUICIDES IN
2021**

1 in 5
**ADULTS LIVE
WITH A MENTAL
HEALTH
CONDITION**

WHAT IS 988?

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a national network of more than 200 accredited local crisis call centers. 988 responds to calls, chats and texts to provide **24/7, free and confidential** emotional support to people experiencing suicidal crisis, emotional distress, substance use or mental health challenges across the United States.

- The 988 service is available in English and Spanish, with translation services in more than 250 languages. Text and chat are currently available in English.
- Individuals who are hard of hearing or blind can use their preferred TTY relay service or dial 711 then 1-800-273-8255.
- The chat feature is available through 988's website: <https://988lifeline.org/chat>
- People can also reach 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

HOW DOES 988 WORK IN LOUISIANA?

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) launched 988 in July 2022. LDH's Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) has contracted with two certified call centers to answer 988 calls 24/7 throughout the state:

- The Louisiana Association on Compulsive Gambling (LACG) in Bossier City answers calls in north, central and southwest Louisiana (area codes 318 and 337).
- VIA LINK in New Orleans answers calls in southeast Louisiana (area codes 504, 225 and 985).

HOW IS LDH PROMOTING 988?

LDH is launching a campaign to **raise awareness of 988 and reduce stigma surrounding mental health.**

- As part of that campaign, LDH is launching a **988 dashboard** that will **provide transparent access to key in-state metrics** including the volume of contacts by parish, overall broad demographics and the type of assistance individuals are requesting. It will be updated monthly.
- This campaign will also include PSAs on radio stations throughout Louisiana and partnerships with key stakeholders to help amplify messaging and awareness.

RESOURCES

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: www.988lifeline.org
- 988 FAQ: www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/faqs
- LDH 988 Dashboard (goes live May 2): www.ldh.la.gov/988 | www.vialink.org | www.helpforgambling.org

2023 Medicaid Updates

by Louisiana Navigators

Pink Letter

Medicaid has mailed pink letters to members. If you received your letter, great news! Medicaid has your correct mailing address. **If you have not received a letter, you need to update your information.**

Medicaid sends letters to members when it's time to renew or if Medicaid needs more information. If Louisiana Medicaid does not have your current information, you could miss important letters about your health insurance coverage and risk losing your health coverage even if you are eligible.

Update your information

You can update your information in the way that is easiest for you.

- 1 Log on to: MyMedicaid.la.gov
2. Email: MyMedicaid@la.gov
3. Or call Medicaid Customer service at 1-888-342-6207, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
4. If you need one on one assistance with updating your information, contact Navigators for a Healthy Louisiana for FREE assistance.

Call us at 1.800.435.2432

Email us at navigators@swlahec.com

Visit us at www.GetCoveredLA.org

Check your mail regularly over the next year for your redetermination letter.

Don't risk losing your coverage.

Did you receive a pink letter?



If not, you need to **update your contact info** with Louisiana Medicaid! Go to www.healthy.la.gov



NEW Medicaid Eligibility Income Levels for 2023 (as of March 1, 2023)			
Household Size	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1	\$387	\$1,677	\$20,124
2	\$523	\$2,268	\$27,216
3	\$660	\$2,859	\$34,308
4	\$796	\$3,450	\$41,400
5	\$933	\$4,042	\$48,504
6	\$1,069	\$4,633	\$55,596
7	\$1,206	\$5,224	\$62,688
8	\$1,342	\$5,815	\$69,780



*"Keep your eyes on the Stars,
and your feet on the
Ground"*
Theodore Roosevelt

Free Webinar

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION



**TUESDAY,
11TH JUL 2023
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

Presenters:

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

Register:

<https://tinyurl.com/IntroToSPEDJuly11>



FREE WEBINAR

**PARENTS
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
OPTIONS YOU HAVE IF YOU
DISAGREE WITH YOUR
CHILD'S SCHOOL?**



**MONDAY
24TH JUL 2023
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

Presenters:

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

Register:

<https://tinyurl.com/DisagreeJuly24>



IDEA TRANSITION
FOR 3 YEAR OLD'S

GUEST SPEAKER:
MYLINDA ELLIOT

earlySteps
Louisiana's early intervention system

★ EARLY STEPS ★
TRANSITION:
BUILDING BRIDGES

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023
1 PM - 2:30 PM

Link to register:
<https://tinyurl.com/Estwr711>

Join us to get more information
about Early Steps Transition.

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

For more information contact China at:
(337)436-2570 ♦ 1-800-894-6558
info@fhfswla.org



All-terrain chair now available for limited-mobility guests at Fontainebleau State Park

All-terrain track wheelchair is available for use at Fontainebleau State Park. The all-terrain, electric powered chair is specially designed to be used on designated park trails not suitable for conventional wheelchairs.

To reserve the chair and learn more, go to
<https://www.lastateparks.com/all-terrain-chair>

earlySteps

Louisiana's early intervention system

Learn the Ins and Outs of Early Steps Webinar

Wednesday, August 2, 2023
11 am - 12 pm

As a parent/caregiver of a child currently receiving services from EarlySteps, I would like to invite you to an EarlySteps Family Orientation Webinar 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 services are offered through 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?

Who do I contact if I have a concern?

Link to Register

<https://tinyurl.com/ESIOR8-2>



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



Center for Parent Information and Resources #BehaviorProblems

When children struggle with their behavior, it can hurt everyone in the family. This resource collection from the Child Mind Institute offers parents a comprehensive look at problem behavior. Also available in Spanish

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/behavior-problems/>



Why Should Parents Do an Early Steps Exit Evaluation

- play an essential role in
- paint a complete picture of your child and determine if additional assessments are needed.

During a child's time in EarlySteps from the referral to the child's exit at or before age 3, EarlySteps is committed to helping all children progress using a team-based approach which includes the family and all members of the child's EarlySteps team.

To accomplish this, we collect information about a child's development at several points:

At entry to the program by conducting an evaluation used to determine a child's eligibility and skills at entry,

At the annual evaluation,

And with a final assessment no more than 6 months before a child exits the program—part of the transition we discuss with parents at IFSP team meetings

We focus on 3 outcome areas for children:

Improving social relationships and interaction with others,
Gaining and using knowledge and skills to communicate, and
Using appropriate behavior to meet needs.

To measure a child's progress, we compare assessment results at entry and at exit in these 3 areas. We provide the parents with a 1-page summary.

When to do an Exit Evaluation

A FSC should request an Exit Evaluation because it is a requirement of Early Steps.

The time limit of authorization for an exit BDI-2 at transition is 15 days.

A child must have had at least 6 months of services from EarlySteps for a BDI-2 to be completed. If they have been in services for 6 months or is within six months of the child exiting, the annual BDI may be used for the exit data. When a child is exiting at age 3, an exit BDI must be scheduled and the BDI Evaluation Report completed PRIOR to the child's exit at age 3. This must be completed between the ages of 2 years, 9 months and 3 years and MUST be completed prior to case closure at the SPOE.

If you would like to Request an Evaluation Prior to Exit, please ask your FSC to schedule that appointment. You may also contact

Jessica McInnis with Share Care USA at

(337) 491-1008/

jmcinnis@sharecareusa.com

MENTAL HEALTH AND ME

SUMMER 2023

Make mental health a priority during your summer break!

KEEP YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AFLOAT THIS SUMMER!

- Create a personalized [Emotions Wheel.pdf](#) with strategies to help you manage challenging feelings
- Check-in with how you are feeling each day with this [Mental Health Check.pdf](#), or try this [Your Mind Grounded.pdf](#) worksheet to help you manage anxiety and stay calm in the present moment
- Stay connected! Identify who you can talk to if you need help or support over the break by completing these worksheets [Social Connection Worksheet.pdf](#) and [Who is a trusted adult?.pdf](#)



HELPFUL RESOURCES



VIALINK
LISTENING • UNDERSTANDING • CONNECTING

- **Crisis Teen Textline:** 833-TXT-TEEN
- **LA Parentline:** call 833-LA-CHILD or text 225-424-1533

Scan here to take Mental Health American's Youth Mental Health Test



LA MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

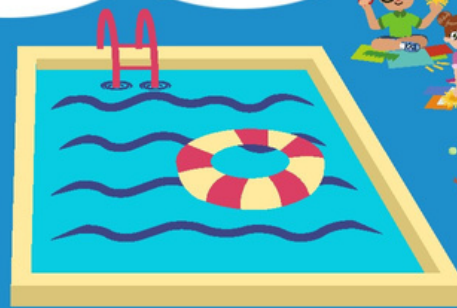
HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS



- School-aged kids do best with 9-12 hours of sleep each night, while teens need 8-10 hours.
- Develop a calming bedtime routine. Try reading a book or listening to calming music, and minimize screen time. Turn off lights and find a cozy blanket.
- Consistency is key. Keep bedtime routines when you can during the summer, and "practice" waking up for school in the weeks leading up to the first day so kids know what to expect.

KEEP ACTIVE!

You can check out your city or parish recreation department for information on summer camps, pool and gym hours, swim lessons, and weekly events and exercise classes.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

Explore your local state park! Visit lastateparks.com for park locations and program information.



Got your library card?

Many libraries offer summer programs and events for families. You can head to www.state.lib.la.us to find a library near you.





POW!



earlySteps

Louisiana's early intervention system




Potty Power:


EarlySteps Potty Training Webinar

Link to Register

<https://tinyurl.com/ESPTR920>



**Wednesday,
September 20, 2023
11 am - 12 pm**



China Guillory - EarlySteps Community Outreach Specialist will walk you through the process of Potty Training. Join us to learn Self-help skills and the parent's roles.

For more information contact China Guillory
337-436-2570 ♦ 1-800-894-6558
Email: info@fhfswla.org



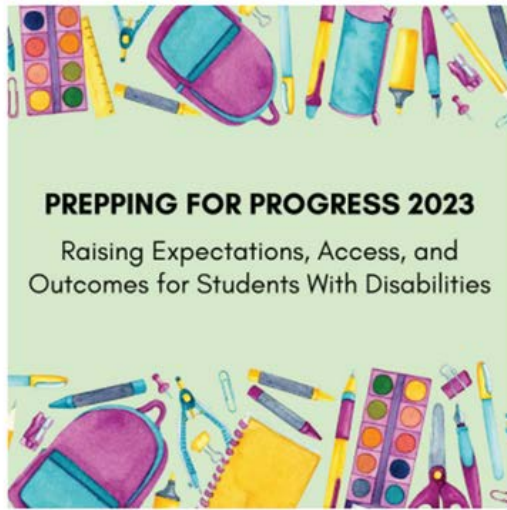
**Families
Helping
Families**
OF SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA
Supporting All Abilities



2023

Prepping Progress 3 Day Virtual Event

PROGRESS Center Virtual Event



August 2–4, 2023



3 Day Free Virtual Conference online August 2, to August 4, 2023. This conference will provide resources and strategies to help promote progress for students with disabilities.

Link to Register:

<https://progresscenter.regfox.com/prepping-for-progress-2023>

Link to Event Program:

https://promotingprogress.org/sites/default/files/progress-eventprogram-508_final.pdf



SSI Benefits Expected To Rise Next Year

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income checks are likely to grow again in 2024, according to a new analysis, though not by nearly as much as this year. A projection this month from The Senior Citizens League, a nonprofit that advocates for seniors, suggests that benefits will increase by around 3.1% starting in January.

By contrast, monthly payments from the Social Security Administration rose 8.7% this year, the most since 1981.

The increase is due to an automatic cost-of-living adjustment, known as COLA, which is triggered by inflation. The annual adjustment is tied to the Consumer Price Index for the third quarter, which will be announced this fall. The Senior Citizens League's report this month offers an estimate that's based on recent trends in the cost of goods.

Since 2000, the nonprofit found that COLA has increased benefits by 78%, rising an average of 3.4% each year. During that same time, however, the report indicates that the cost of goods has increased by an average of 6.2% annually.

More than 7 million people, including many with disabilities, receive SSI each month.

The maximum federal SSI benefit this year is \$914 per month for individuals and \$1,371 for couples, according to the Social Security Administration, though payments can be higher since some states kick in extra.

This article can be found at Disability Scoop

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2023/05/22/ssi-benefits-expected-to-rise-next-year/30393/>

Books For 3 yrs. Old's at Transition

The books listed below are about going to school or starting something new. These and other books may be found in your community library or bookstore.

Bernard Goes to School, by Joan Elizabeth Goodman

Billy and the Big New School, by Laurence Anholt

Busy at Day Care, by Patricia DeMuth

Emily's First Day of School, by Fran Schiller

First Day Jitters, by Julie Danneberg

Froggy Goes to School, by Jonathan London

Hello School, by Dee Lillegard

I'll Go To School If..., by Bo Flood

Little Cliff's First Day at School, by Clifton L. Taulbert

Little Monster Goes to School, by Alison Inches

Moses Goes to School, by Isaac Millman

Off to School, Baby Duck! by Amy Hest

Special People, Special Ways, by Arlene

Susan Laughs, by Jeanne Willis

Timothy Goes to School, by Rosemary Wells

Vera's First Day of School, by Vera Rosenberry



Helping Kids Cope with Parental Addiction

Parental drug use can have lasting effects on children who are exposed to substance misuse in the home. This can take a mental toll, emotional toll, and have effects on a child's behavior and development. Studies show that millions of children in the United States are estimated to live with at least one parent who has a drug or alcohol problem.

It also shows that growing up with an addicted parent can have lasting effects on children. For instance, they may affect a child physically, emotionally, mentally, and have effects on behavior into adulthood.

When a parent struggles with addiction, the whole family struggles. It takes effort to start conversations and answer children's questions. But caring adults can comfort and guide children through difficult moments. We will allow Elmo and Karli to help, click

here for more information:

<https://sesameworkshop.org/topics/parental-addiction/>

School Year, Summer and Child Care P-EBT Benefit Issuances are Approved

The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in coordination with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) to issue Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits to eligible children for the 2022-2023 school year (SY), child care and summer. Louisiana, one of just over half of the states authorized so far to issue P-EBT for the current school year, will begin disbursing payments to eligible households with children in grades K-12 in early May, with child care and summer benefit issuances following in late summer. This is the fourth year Louisiana has issued P-EBT benefits. Since 2020, DCFS has issued more than \$1.14 Billion in P-EBT benefits to more than 1.2 Million children.

Benefits are being issued in a tiered approach (see tiers in the table below) for SY P-EBT based on the number of days a child missed due to COVID per month at a rate of \$8.18 per day. Children who previously received P-EBT benefits will have SY 2022-23 and Summer P-EBT benefits issued to their existing P-EBT cards. A P-EBT card will be mailed to children who were not eligible for P-EBT benefits during the last round of issuances but are now eligible for SY 2023 and summer benefits. All Child Care P-EBT benefits will be issued to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) card of the eligible child's household.

Tier	Number of Days Absent	Benefit Amount
1	1-5	\$24.54 (3 days)
2	6-15	\$81.80 (10 days)
3	More than 15	\$147.24 (18 days)



***NOTE:** Before a school is eligible to issue P-EBT, the school must have at least one student with five (5) consecutive absences due to COVID-19.

For Summer P-EBT, a single lump sum payment of \$120 will be distributed around the end of the summer to each child who was eligible for P-EBT during the last month of SY 2022-23. In accordance with federal guidelines, children in child care, homeschool, and virtual schools that do not participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) will not qualify for Summer 2023 benefits.

"Worrying about how to feed your children is a burden that is all too real to many Louisiana families. P-EBT benefits go a long way to supporting families, and we're pleased to issue these benefits again this year, but we know it doesn't cover the entire food need. That's why we're advising parents and other neighbors to call 211 to find out about SNAP, WIC, food pantries and other resources that can really make a difference for families and their children," said DCFS Secretary Terri Ricks.

Eligibility

In most cases, there is no P-EBT application process for parents/guardians. Schools will report to DCFS which students meet the criteria for eligibility. Parents/guardians of eligible homeschooled and virtual school students must complete an application with their local public school or approved virtual school by Thursday, May 11, 2023. See additional eligibility and application requirements below.

K-12

A child in kindergarten through 12th grade is eligible for SY 2022-23 P-EBT benefits if two conditions are met:

- He or she has an approved application for free or reduced-price meals under the NSLP. This includes any student in a school that provides free meals to all students (under a special rule called "Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)"), and
- The child does not receive free or reduced-price meals at the school because the school is closed or has been operating with reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days in the current school year. Once the minimum 5 consecutive day threshold is met for a school, children at that school are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits for closures, reductions in hours or quarantines/absences due to COVID-19.

Homeschool/Virtual School

A student who has applied and been approved by the Louisiana Department of Education to attend a Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) Approved Home Study Program or who is attending a non-NSLP-participating virtual school is eligible for SY 2022-23 P-EBT benefits if the child meets all three of these requirements:

- The child previously attended an NSLP-participating school but withdrew after the start of the COVID health emergency due to concerns about COVID, or the child enrolled in kindergarten as a virtual or homeschool student in school year 2020-2021 or later,
- The child is not attending an NSLP-participating school due to concerns about COVID, and
- The child would have received free or reduced-price meals at their NSLP school if not for their virtual or homeschooled status.

In addition to the eligibility requirements above, parents/guardians of eligible homeschooled and virtual students must complete an application for P-EBT by Thursday, May 11, 2023. Virtual school students will apply with their BESE-approved virtual school. Homeschooled students will apply with their local public school. Homeschooled and virtual school students must provide proof of income eligibility for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the name of the child's previous NSLP-participating school. Homeschooled students must also provide a copy of their BESE-Approved Home Study approval letter. The school will validate the student's previous enrollment using prior school enrollment records.

Child Care

A child under the age of 6 who is enrolled in a covered childcare facility is eligible for P-EBT if:

- The child is a member of a household that is enrolled in SNAP in the benefit month,
- The child is enrolled in a covered childcare facility (Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, USDA deems all children under the age of 6 to be enrolled in a covered childcare facility), and
- During a public health emergency designation, the child's childcare facility is closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days, resulting in the child's inability to attend the facility; or, one or more schools in the area of the facility, or in the area of the child's residence, is closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours.

P-EBT benefits may be used to purchase SNAP-eligible food items at stores that accept EBT cards. The benefits are available for 9 months from the issue date or from the last purchase and are non-transferable.

Receiving P-EBT benefits will not affect a student's or the family's immigration status, as the public charge rule does not apply to P-EBT funds.

For more information about P-EBT eligibility and how to use P-EBT benefits, visit

www.dcfs.la.gov/page/pebt-louisiana.

Our Power As Parents of Children with Disabilities in the Legislature



As a parent of a child with a disability, I understand the huge importance of advocating for our loved ones in the legislature. While we look for a more inclusive society, systemic advocacy plays a critical role.

As parents, we have a unique perspective on the challenges and triumphs of raising a child with a disability. By sharing our personal experiences with lawmakers, we have the power to raise awareness and promote understanding. Through our stories, we can dispel misconceptions, break down barriers, and foster empathy, enabling legislators to make more informed decisions that positively impact the lives of our children and the disability community as a whole.

Our involvement in systemic advocacy allows us to directly influence policies and legislation that shape the lives of our children with disabilities. By actively collaborating with lawmakers, we can shed light on crucial issues such as inclusive education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and social support. Our voices all together hold the power to help shape legislative priorities, giving the concerns and needs of our children the attention they deserve.

Legislation is one of the biggest pieces needed for making supportive frameworks that help individuals with disabilities to thrive. As parents engaging in advocacy, we can actively push for laws and funding that prioritize inclusive education, employment, services, and equal opportunities.

By advocating for increased funding for disability-related services and support programs, we can work towards building a world where our children have the necessary resources to flourish and achieve their full potential.

Systemic advocacy provides us with the chance to connect with other parents, organizations, and advocates who share our goals. Through working together, we can make our voices stronger and create lasting change. By joining forces, we can establish networks, support groups, and community organizations that provide places for sharing resources, knowledge, and strategies. Together, we strengthen the advocacy movement, make it stronger, and create a support system for parents and individuals with disabilities alike.

As parents of children with disabilities, our role in legislative advocacy is huge.

By sharing our personal story, influencing policies, and building supportive frameworks, we have the power to shape a more inclusive society. Through working together and the formation of networks, we strengthen the advocacy movement and enhance its impact. Our dedication ensures that the rights and needs of our children and people with disabilities are upheld, paving the way for a future where inclusion and equality prevail.

A Effective Time Management Strategies for Students with Learning Disabilities

Myllinda Elliott

Time management is a crucial skill for all students, but it holds particular significance for students with learning disabilities (LD). Managing time effectively can help these students overcome challenges and achieve academic success. One key aspect of time management for students with LD is developing a structured routine. Creating a daily schedule that includes dedicated time slots for studying, completing assignments, and taking breaks can provide a sense of structure and organization. Additionally, students with LD can benefit from breaking tasks into smaller, manageable steps and setting realistic goals to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

Another important strategy for effective time management is the use of assistive technology. Students with LD can utilize various technological tools to enhance their productivity and organization. For instance, digital calendars, reminder apps, and task management software can help students stay on top of deadlines and manage their time efficiently. Similarly, text-to-speech software and voice recognition tools can assist with reading and writing tasks, enabling students to complete assignments more efficiently. By harnessing the power of technology, students with LD can optimize their time and focus on their strengths.

Lastly, effective time management for students with LD involves self-advocacy and seeking support when needed. It is essential for these students to communicate their needs to teachers, peers, and support staff. By engaging in open dialogue, students can access accommodations that can aid in managing their time effectively, such as extended deadlines or alternative testing arrangements. Additionally, seeking support from learning specialists, tutors, or academic coaches can provide valuable guidance and strategies tailored to their specific learning needs. By proactively advocating for themselves and utilizing available resources, students with LD can maximize their productivity and achieve their academic goals.

In conclusion, time management is a critical skill for students with learning disabilities. By implementing structured routines, utilizing assistive technology, and seeking support, these students can overcome challenges and optimize their time. Developing effective time management strategies empowers students with LD to take control of their academic journey, improve their organizational skills, and ultimately achieve success in their educational pursuits.

In part from Time Management for Kids With LD by Leslie Josel

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2 Person Scramble - Friday, October 6, 2023 - Mallard Golf Course
\$250 Per 2 person Team More info: info@fhfswla.org

The Urgent Call for Respect: Ending the Use of the R-Word and Promoting Inclusivity for Individuals with Disabilities

By: Julie Folse

The R-word, a term commonly used without much thought to its deeper implications, holds immense hurt for the disabled community and should be completely abandoned in all contexts. Serving as a euphemism for "retard" and "retarded," words that are widely recognized as offensive and disrespectful when used to demean individuals with intellectual disabilities, this derogatory language extends its harm to people, places, and things by drawing inappropriate comparisons. It is crucial to understand the unkind, distressing, and discriminatory nature of using the R-word and to actively work towards its eradication. Despite ongoing initiatives like the R-Word Campaign led by the Special Olympics, which seek to curtail its usage, the word "retarded" continues to be casually employed as an insult or a means to belittle those deemed foolish. Even if one refrains from uttering it personally, chances are they are acquainted with someone who does. The responsibility falls on us to dismantle the stigma surrounding intellectual disabilities and put an end to the perpetuation of this harmful language.

Origins and Evolution of the R-Word:

The R-word, derived from "retard" and "retarded," was initially introduced in the 1960s as a neutral medical term by the American Association on Mental Retardation. Its purpose was to describe individuals with intellectual impairments in a clinical context, replacing previously offensive terms. However, over time, the word was adopted as an insult and used to demean and belittle others, particularly individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Harmful Consequences:

The casual use of the R-word perpetuates a culture of disrespect, exclusion, and discrimination. By equating intellectual disabilities with derogatory language, we reinforce harmful stereotypes and undermine the inherent value and worth of individuals with disabilities. This not only affects their self-esteem but also hinders their inclusion in society and exacerbates the challenges they already face.

Creating Change: The Movement to End the R-Word:

Thankfully, a growing movement has emerged to raise awareness about the harm caused by the R-word and to promote its eradication. Advocacy groups, such as the Special Olympics, have initiated powerful campaigns, like "Spread the Word to End the Word," urging individuals to take a pledge to stop using the R-word. These efforts aim to educate and empower people to replace hurtful language with respectful and inclusive alternatives.

The Role of Media and Education:

Media, as a powerful influencer, must assume responsibility in promoting inclusivity and refraining from using the R-word for comedic effect. Comedians and filmmakers should strive to entertain without resorting to mocking disabilities or perpetuating harmful stereotypes. By setting a higher standard and creating content that fosters understanding and acceptance, media can contribute positively to societal change. Moreover, education plays a vital role in combating the use of the R-word. Parents, teachers, and caregivers have a responsibility to teach children and young adults about the importance of respectful language and the impact hurtful words can have on others. By instilling empathy, compassion, and inclusivity from an early age, we can help create a more inclusive and accepting society.

Conclusion:

The use of the R-word as a slur is not only disrespectful but also perpetuates exclusion and discrimination towards individuals with intellectual disabilities. As a society, we must acknowledge the harm caused by this language and commit to eliminating it from our vocabulary. By embracing respectful and inclusive language, we can foster a more compassionate and accepting world for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. Let us stand together and spread the

**SPREAD THE WORD
TO END THE WORD.**



Printable Back-to-School Downloads

By [The Understood Team](#)

Submitted By: Beryl Cook

Going back to school and adjusting to new routines can be tricky for kids with learning and attention issues—and for you. But having the right tools can make the transition easier. Use these back-to-school downloads to start the school year off right.

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/printable-back-to-school-downloads>

Self-Advocacy Corner by Nicole Jones



On Monday, June 19, 2023, I went to the People First of Louisiana Annual Meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The guest speaker was Russell Lehmann. He is an award-winning and internationally recognized motivational speaker, poet, author, and advocate. One of the books he wrote is called, "[On the Outside Looking In: My Life on the Autism Spectrum.](#)"

Mr. Lehmann talked about how it is important to include individuals with disabilities in all parts of life.

Here are some of the things he shared about Inclusion. The opposite of inclusion or exclusion leads to Isolation. Isolation is not a healthy thing for individuals with disabilities because it can make a person have low self-esteem and low self-confidence about themselves.

He shared what Inclusion is. Like when you are feeling valued, loved, have a sense of belonging, respected, and being allowed to participate in what is going on.

Mr. Lehmann discussed accommodations and how accommodations are used to assist people with disabilities in helping them with their independence and the setting boundaries for what you want in life. Boundaries, he said, can be used to help you stay safe and to help you take care of yourself.

Russell Lehmann said he was influenced by poetry. He said poetry was a huge part of helping him be successful. He mentioned words of poetry can help you change from negative to positive and it can also help you see things differently and help others to see you differently. I really enjoyed the training.

For more information about Russell Lehmann visit his website at: <https://russsl.co/>



Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference



In celebration of 33rd Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) will host its annual fully virtual conference July 24th-27th, 2023!

Registration to the conference gives access to all sessions with one link. Conference attendees can choose which sessions they want to attend and join in on the zoom link.

Register for the conference at <https://www.bit.ly/GODAconf23>.



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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.

Riddle Answer: Pencil lead.



Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana

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