

## Educational Issues

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It's back to school time again. While you are buying uniforms and supplies, parents of students with disabilities are also worried about new teachers, new students and new schedules. Will the teacher like my child, will they be patient and kind and take the time to get to know my child's ticks and impulses; how will the other student's treat my child – while they make fun of his yellow socks or his excessive focus on roller coasters. These are just a few of the concerns that parents who have special children worry about this time of the year. It can be hard for these students and their families to go back to school. To the families, we salute you and all that you do to ensure that your children make a smooth transition into this school year. To the students, we send you hugs and high fives and words of encouragement. To the teachers, students and strangers who are about to have a huge impact on these student's lives and their families we encourage you to be patient and kind and embrace any differences as interesting and wonderful rather than scary and strange.

To parents who have children with disabilities, one suggestion is to introduce your child to the teacher in a one page cheat sheet. Most individualized education plans (IEPs) or 504 plans necessarily identify the deficits of the student. We suggest creating a one page – easy to read – cheat sheet about your child. It should include a recent picture, all of their strengths, what they like, topics of interest and what works to deescalate or otherwise calm your child. Identifying known triggers and goals for the school year can also be helpful. Do not forget to include your best contact information so that the teacher knows how to reach you. Ask the teacher to provide you with positive feedback. This will hopefully remind the teacher to look for the positive every day and you can celebrate those positive experiences with your child when they come home from school. Need help, DIG is here.

DIG is offering a new service this year of educational consultation. DIG is providing flat fee consultations for anything from creating the one page cheat sheet, to helping you prepare for a meeting with the school. DIG is also available to review your paperwork and advise you on how to increase your matrix score or ensure that your child is receiving the correct level of support and services they are entitled.

Good luck everyone and let's make 2018-2019 a school year to remember.