

EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION

Parent Newsletter

Fall 2018-2019

Welcome to the fall *Extra Special Edition Newsletter* for 2018-2019. Each issue contains information for parents and caregivers regarding children in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program in our district.

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*“Love the life you live.
Live the life you love”*

-Bob Marley

Disability Awareness

Disability Etiquette- Etiquette for Interacting with People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are people first! The disability is something that they have to deal with every day, but it is not the most important thing about them. Like everyone, they have goals and dreams. Like everyone, they want to be loved, respected, and productive. Over the past few decades changes in policies, laws and attitudes have made it possible for people with disabilities to become more integrated into mainstream society. It is not unusual to encounter persons with disabilities in school, in the workplace or in a social setting.

When those without disabilities encounter those with disabilities in a positive, appropriate manner, life is easier for everyone involved. Society improves as we all come to understand one another better as similar human beings, all with struggles to overcome and all with something to offer.

As in other social situations, etiquette, or good manners, helps people know what to do. This document was designed to let people know some of the etiquette to follow when meeting people with disabilities.

Adapted from “Disability Etiquette,” from the United Spinal Association,
<http://unitedspinal.org/disability-etiquette/#Introduction>

Special Ed Connection

Are you interested in finding practical guidance, strategies, and tools that would help you better help your child benefit the most from special education services? Would you like to stay informed and up to date on changes in special education law, or trends in exceptional student education?

The Florida Department of Education is proud to provide access to Special Ed Connection® **at no cost to families of students with disabilities who are enrolled in special education programs.** To request access to this valuable resource please email Parent Services at beth.johnson@paec.org. If you do not have access to the web, please call 850-638-6131 x 2310.



Veterans Day



Veterans Day is a U.S. legal holiday dedicated to American veterans of all wars. Veterans Day occurs on November 11th. In 1918, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, was declared between the Allied nations and Germany in World War I, then known as “the Great War.” Commemorated in many countries as Armistice Day the following year, November 11th became a federal holiday in the United States in 1938. In the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War, Armistice Day became known as Veterans Day.

In November 1919, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day.

Red poppies became a symbol of World War I from their appearance in the beloved poem “In Flanders Fields” by John McCrae. In 1922, the Veterans of Foreign Wars made the poppy the official memorial flower to represent United States veterans. Red poppies are still worn on Veterans Day, and money is still collected from the sale of poppies to assist veterans returning from war and to aid their families. So, on Veterans Day, and also on Memorial Day in May, wear a red poppy in honor of all those who have served.

On June 4, 1926, Congress passed a resolution that the “recurring anniversary of November 11, 1918 should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations,” and that the president should issue an annual proclamation calling for the observance of Armistice Day.

FROM ARMISTICE DAY TO VETERANS DAY

American effort during World War II saw the greatest mobilization of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force in the nation’s history (more than 16 million people); some 5.7 million more served in the Korean War.

In 1954, after lobbying efforts by veterans’ service organizations, the 83rd U.S. Congress amended the 1938 act that had made Armistice Day a holiday, striking the word “Armistice” in favor of “Veterans.” President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the legislation on June 1, 1954. From then on, November 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

In the United States, an official wreath-laying ceremony is held each Veterans Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, while parades and other celebrations are held in states around the country.

Veterans Day is not to be confused with Memorial Day—a common misunderstanding according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Memorial Day (the fourth Monday in May) honors American service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle, while Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.

Conversation Starters

Encourage your child to discuss his/her day at school. Ask questions like these to gain insight into your child's social life at school:

- ◆ "Who did you sit with at lunch today?"
- ◆ "What did you do at recess?"
- ◆ "What was the best part of the day?"
- ◆ "What was the worst part of the day?"
- ◆ "Who are the new kids in your class. What are they like?"
- ◆ "How have things changed between you and (friend's name) now that you're not in the same class?"
- ◆ "When I was your age, we had the meanest kid in our class. He was such a bully. Do you have anyone like that in your class?"
- ◆ "I've been hearing a lot in the news about cyberbullying. Is that happening at your school?"



Help prevent Cyberbullying

Protect Your Child From Cyberbullying

Technology poses unique challenges for school-age children and their parents. Bullying has become more common since kids can use computers and cell phones to pick on classmates. And children no longer take a break from socializing when they're home from school, says certified parenting educator Marty Wolner. "There is no cooling-off period, so a child's drama and issues extend from school to home," he says.

Taking these precautions can help protect your child from cyberbullying.

- ◆ **Set limits** - Establish times throughout the day when your children must unplug from computers and cell phones. Most important, model the same behavior. Avoid checking your smart phone for work emails during dinner and connect with your family.
- ◆ **Establish random check-ins** - When your child sets up a social networking account, be sure to get the password and let her know you'll be checking her online activity from time to time.
- ◆ **Encourage your child to video chat with friends** - If your child only communicates via instant message or text, you have no way of observing these interactions. If you're in the same room when your child video chats, you can see the friend and observe how they interact. Just make sure he uses a computer in an open space of the house.
- ◆ **Agree on consequences** - Let your children know that Internet access and phone service are privileges and can be revoked if they violate your trust. Make sure your kids understand what you expect from them and how you will handle any problems that arise.

FIN 7 Back-To-School Tips for Parents: Start the Year Off Right

1. Build Alliances – Now is the time to nurture alliances with teachers, support staff, parents, students, and others who impact you and your child. Call or send a thank you note to those who provided “bright spots” during the previous year.
2. Review Your Child’s IEP – Read through the IEP to refresh your memory. Talk over the learning goals with your child, especially those old enough to advocate for themselves. Make sure each classroom teacher working with your child has a copy and understands the IEP’s intent. An IEP’s strength lies in the parents’ and teachers’ understanding of it and active participation in implementing it.
3. Create a “What Works” Portfolio- The portfolio should contain positive descriptions of your child. Include a profile describing your child’s strengths, interests, favorite activities, and learning priorities for the year. Include tips about physical assistance or communication with your child if these are needs. Describe behavioral supports that work or ways to structure situations to avoid behavior challenges. Describe classroom arrangements that help support your child i.e. seating and positioning needs, noise-level tolerance, climate comfort levels, etc. Include samples of your child’s work and describe any accommodations or modifications that were made to the original assignment. Share names of students who are friends with your child and give tips on facilitating connections with other students.
4. Request a Meeting – Schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher(s) to share insights and information about your child. Begin building a positive relationship with them and establish yourself as an active team member in your child’s education. This is a great time to review your child’s IEP and “What Works” portfolio. End the meeting with plans for on-going communication which will reinforce your desire to be involved.
5. Visit the Classroom – Make a presentation to your child’s classmates. This is a great way to begin developing positive connections between other students and your child. There are many great books to read to the class that speak about differences and disabilities in a positive way. Explain how your family views your child’s disability and what makes your child unique. Answer questions honestly and address any fears. Let them know what they can do to be a friend and to support your child. Remind them we are all more alike than different.
6. Stay Involved – You can help ensure your child’s success by being involved throughout the entire school year. Consider joining PTA/PTO, School Improvement Team, volunteering (in the classroom, lunchroom, library, computer lab, with special events, etc.). The more active you are, the more impact you can have on your child’s school, the people who work there, and the education your child is receiving.
7. Continue Your Own Education – It is essential that you develop skills to help your child create a rich and meaningful life. Consider learning how to support your child’s developmental and educational needs and how to advocate for your child. The Florida Inclusion Network offers many resources to assist parents. Visit the FIN website at www.FloridainclusionNetwork.com or contact your FIN Facilitators, Caren Prichard and Emily McCann, at 850-638-6131 x 2206 or email: caren.prichard@paec.org or emily.mccann@paec.org.



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