Families Rocked by Heart Wrenching Stories of Child Restraint and Seclusion in Illinois Schools

On November 19, 2019, two news media outlets, ProPublica Illinois and the Chicago Tribune, published the explosive story of their collaborative investigation of more than 100 schools in Illinois where students were subjected to physical restraints and seclusion and isolation for misbehavior. The story is hard to read, especially for families who did not even know their children had experienced such trauma. During the investigation, the Tribune/Propublica reporters examined 20,000 incidents of isolated timeout from September 2017 to December 2018. They found that students were put in isolation every day for reasons that violated the law, including as punishment or to force compliance.

The day after the investigation published, Illinois officials announced an immediate ban on secluding students alone, in locked rooms. Gov. J.B. Pritzker called the practice “appalling” and said: “Isolated seclusion will end now; it traumatizes children, does lasting damage to the most vulnerable and violates the most deeply held values of my administration and the State of Illinois.” State schools Superintendent Carmen Ayala said that isolated timeout and physical restraint had been “misused and overused to a shocking extent.” “The data and stories from students and parents are appalling, inexcusable and deeply saddening,” she said. “The Governor’s Office has also filed state complaints on behalf of the students whose cases we are aware of,” Ayala said. “We welcome any other reports of cases where this abuse has occurred. We encourage any parents, guardians, students, educators, or any other individuals who have knowledge of abuses of time out and physical restraint in any educational entity to come forward.”

Kevin Rubenstein, president of the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education said, “As advocates of children we must address these facts: Some of our schools have staff that are poorly trained; other schools have staff that are not sure how to support students with challenging behavior.” He named several of the children whose experiences were detailed in the investigative report and said that they “deserved better”.

State Rep. Jonathan Carroll, D-Northbrook, wrote a compelling blog about his own experience in isolated timeouts when he was a child and told how he begged his parents to remove him from that school. Rep. Carroll filed an Illinois bill that would ban seclusion at schools entirely; while Illinois U.S. Senator Dick Durbin said he supports national legislation to end seclusion, which he called a “medieval practice”. U.S. Rep. Don Beyer, D-Virginia, said he plans to reintroduce legislation that stalled last year—the Keeping All Students Safe Act—that would prohibit seclusion and limit the use of physical restraint in all public schools that receive federal funds. Rep. Beyer said the stories reported from Illinois were sadly similar to those in Virginia and from across the country and that he has confidence that this will be the law in our country in a short to medium time period.
To be clear, in Illinois, up until now, it was legal for school employees to seclude students in a separate space, in isolated timeout, if the students posed a safety threat to themselves or others. Yet, for decades, that law has been violated when schools used isolated timeouts for students who simply refused to follow directions, used profanity, or didn’t complete work. In more than a third of the incidents of isolated timeouts revealed in the investigative reporting, school workers documented no safety reasons for the seclusions.

The Tribune/ProPublica story, entitled “The Quiet Rooms’ includes interviews with parents and students who experienced and were traumatized by isolated timeouts. Their stories are compelling and heart breaking. Thanks to their courage in speaking out and for the diligent work of the investigative reporters, things will finally change in Illinois and hopefully in the nation. Undoubtedly, there is a need for therapeutic interventions and emergency procedures for students who act out upon others or attempt to harm themselves but new regulations will assure that they are not locked alone in a room nor physically restrained in positions that restrict their breathing.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has filed proposed permanent rules for time out and restraint that protect the safety of all students and staff in Illinois schools. The proposed rules will permanently ban prone restraints, which are not necessary to safely de-escalate crisis situations.

The public will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback on the proposed permanent rules before they are finalized in spring 2020. The first opportunity for public comment begins now and extends until Feb. 4. The emergency rules that are currently in effect will expire on April 17.

“I sincerely thank all of the advocates, especially in the special education community, for their thoughtful partnership in ISBE's development of the proposed permanent rules. I also deeply appreciate our educators, who do one of the hardest and most important jobs in the world," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. “Our schools and students are now safer as a result of this collaboration and swift action. Students should not have had to go through the horrific trauma they experienced for Illinois to implement safer policies to protect them. The new data collection for all instances of time out and restraint, in conjunction with the new protections in rule, will help prevent the inexcusable treatment they experienced from happening to another Illinois student."

The emergency rulemaking that has been in effect since Nov. 20 made Illinois the fifth state in the nation to ban isolated seclusion. The proposed permanent rules will maintain this ban and further detail the health and safety requirements for instances of time out, which may occur only in an unlocked space with a trained adult in the room. The rules will require that a student in time out must have reasonable access to food, medication, and toileting facilities and that the adult supervising the time out must assess every 15 minutes whether the student has ceased presenting dangerous behavior.

The proposed permanent rules clarify that these restrictions on time out do not pertain to student-initiated breaks; sensory breaks; brief removals to the hallway; or to appropriate disciplinary measures, such as in-school suspensions and detentions.

The proposed permanent rules will ban supine restraints, except in emergency situations when less restrictive interventions have been tried and not succeeded in stopping the imminent danger to students or staff. The rules will require that a trained adult who is not involved in the physical holding of the student observe the student during the entire incident of supine restraint. The rules also will require an additional layer of review by a psychologist, social worker, nurse, or behavior specialist if a student is restrained in a supine position in at least two separate instances within a 30-school day period.

The proposed permanent rules mandate that physical restraints must not impair a student’s ability to breathe or communicate normally or be used with students who have medical or psychological limitations that contraindicate their use. Any restraint must end immediately when the threat of imminent serious physical harm ends.
Public comment on the proposed permanent rules may be submitted to ISBE via email at rules@isbe.net, by phone, by physical mail, or to anyone in the agency. Ex parte requires any employee who receives an oral or written comment on rulemaking that is open for public comment to submit the conversation to ISBE's rules coordinator.

You can read the proposed rules here: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/23-1RG-P.pdf

Following are links to the full report from the Chicago Tribune and ProPublica as well as related stories:

https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-students-school-seclusion-rooms-state-board-education-meeting-isbe
https://www.propublica.org/article/gages-lake-school-illinois-students-seclusion-restraint
https://www.propublica.org/article/illinois-school-seclusions-reader-responses

Consumer Stipend Funds Are Still Available!

The ARC of Illinois, through a grant from the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities, administers the Consumer Stipend Program and distributes consumer stipend funds to enable people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their family members to attend conferences of their choice that are directly related to intellectual and/or developmental disability issues.

Consumer Stipend Application

Who can apply?

- Illinois resident
- A person with an intellectual and/or developmental disability
- Family members of a person with an intellectual and/or developmental disability
- A guardian/foster parent of a person with an intellectual and/or developmental disability

What can I apply for?

- Conference must be directly related to developmental disabilities
- In-state or out-of-state conference for training or educational seminar

What can I use the funds for?

- Conference registration
- Child care
- Respite Care
- Meals
- Personal Attendant
- Hotel
- Transportation

How much can I apply for?

- $400 per person per calendar year
- $700 per family per calendar year

Any questions? Call 815-464-1832 x1024

The application form must be completed and returned at least 30 days prior to the event to The Arc of Illinois with a copy of the conference brochure and a completed registration form. For an application and more information click here. Completed applications can be submitted online or faxed to 815-464-5292.
From ‘Justice for Jenny’ to ‘Justice for All’: Burton Blatt Institute Redefines ’Supported Decision Making’

December 6, 2019
Source: Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University

Think about all the decisions you make in your life. From where you work, to what you eat, to whom you associate with, to where you live, to politicians you vote for—human lives are ruled by myriad decisions that people, for the most part, make for themselves. Now, imagine someone else making those important life decisions for you. How would it feel to not be in the driver’s seat of your own life? Would it make you feel out of control, anxious or even helpless?

Fortunately, most people do not have to experience those feelings in their everyday lives; however, individuals with disabilities are not as lucky. Guardianship, in which the individual with a disability loses his or her decision making rights to another person, has been written in law for hundreds of years, dating back to Ancient Rome. Sadly, this practice has become the norm for people with disabilities as society assumes that they cannot make their own choices. Now, a Syracuse University disability rights research organization is actively working to remediate this issue.

Headquartered at the Syracuse University College of Law, the mission of the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) is to better the civic, economic and social participation of people with disabilities. Named for the former dean of the University’s School of Education and a pioneering disability rights scholar, BBI also has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Lexington, Kentucky and Atlanta, Georgia.

BBI Senior Director for Law and Policy Jonathan Martinis leads the Institute’s supported decision making research and policy initiatives. A disability rights attorney, Martinis has represented and advocated for people with disabilities for more than 20 years. He joined BBI following his work on the nationally acclaimed “Justice for Jenny” case (Ross, et al. v. Hatch).

During the case, Martinis represented Jenny Hatch, helping her secure her decision making rights. The case was the first trial to declare that a person with disabilities has the right to engage in supported decision making, rather than face unnecessary guardianship. This celebrated decision helped solidify that “an individual’s right to choose how to live and the government’s progress in providing the help needed to integrate even those with the most profound needs into the community” is a right guaranteed by law.

Since representing Jenny Hatch, Martinis has presented to and trained thousands of individuals on supported decision making, emphasizing how important awareness and action is for the issue. “When people with disabilities are making their own decisions, they’re more likely to be employed, healthier and independent,” Martinis says. “When we take away those choices, research shows that their lives get worse.” After all, Martinis continues, decision making rights in the United States go back to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, which exhort that everyone deserves an equal chance.

Looking toward the future, Martinis says he and the BBI will continue advocating for people with disabilities to create a better tomorrow for this population. “People with disabilities are people and rights are rights,” he says. Part of that advocacy involves decreasing the stigma surrounding supported decision making, and Martinis does just that in his new book, written in collaboration with BBI Chairman and University Professor Peter Blanck. Supported Decision Making: From Justice for Jenny to Justice for All (2019) aims to raise awareness among individuals without disabilities and educate those with disabilities about getting support, education and employment and earning a living.

Between the new book and his work at the Institute, Martinis knows that the BBI will continue to make a positive impact on the disabled community and create change around the world. “The phrase ‘supported decision making’ shouldn’t exist,” Martinis says. “Instead, it should just be ‘people making decisions.’” With the path that the BBI is on now, that hope is likely to be realized.

Related information:
ADA Live! Episode 75: Supported Decision-Making: From Justice for Jenny to Justice for All! - Captioned Podcast with Transcript | Resources List

Link: Go to website for News Source
https://news.syr.edu/blog/2019/12/05/from-justice-for-jenny-to-justice-for-all-burton-blatt-institute-redefines-supported-decision-making/
New Legislation Requires Sex

Education for People with Disabilities Receiving Residential Services

HB3299 amends the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code to require persons admitted to a developmental disability facility and receiving habilitation to have access to sex education, related resources, and treatment planning. The expectation is this access will support individuals’ rights to sexual health and healthy sexual practices as well as the right to be free from sexual exploitation and abuse. The Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities will be responsible for approving course materials in sex education that meet nine different criteria described in the statute.

Course material and instruction in sex education shall:

1. be appropriate to the developmental disability of the recipient;
2. present identity as a part of mature adulthood;
3. replicate evidence-based programs or substantially incorporate elements of evidence-based programs;
4. place substantial emphasis on the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and diseases and shall stress that abstinence is the ensured method of avoiding unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and diseases, including HIV/AIDS;
5. include a discussion of the possible emotional and psychological consequences of sexual intercourse and the consequences of unwanted pregnancy;
6. stress that sexually transmitted infections and diseases are serious possible health hazards of unwanted pregnancy;
7. provide information on the use or effectiveness of condoms in preventing pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections and diseases;
8. teach recipients to avoid behavior that could be interpreted as unwanted sexual advances, and how to reject unwanted sexual advances; and
9. explain signs of possible dangers from potential predators.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Human Rights Authority a division of Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission are leading a workgroup that is developing guidance for state operated and community agencies throughout the State. In addition to the workgroup, two sub-committees are looking at curricula and the process for approval.

They expect there may not be one training resource that covers all the criteria. Rather, they anticipate one outcome to be a list of resources and website links that will ensure organizations have a robust toolbox for assessment and education. In addition to offering resources that a provider can adopt, they believe that many providers may already have developed training materials for assessment and education of the individuals served.

The effective date for this law is January 1, 2020; however, there is not an expectation that it be fully implemented at that time. If you have any questions, ideas, or comments please contact Teresa Parks (Teresa.Parks@illinois.gov) or Kathy Ward (Kathy.Ward@Illinois.gov).
Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation Strengthening Pipeline of Paraprofessionals in Illinois Schools

Governor JB Pritzker signed legislation this month to strengthen the pipeline of paraprofessionals serving students in schools across the state. “Paraprofessionals play a vital role in classrooms and in our children’s lives, particularly for students with special needs,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “This new law ensures that qualified aides get the opportunity to support our hard-working teachers and help our kids reach their potential, as we work to address teaching shortages across the state.”

The new law reinstates the opportunity for individuals who hold a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent to become licensed after passing a paraprofessional competency test. Many paraprofessionals serve as aides to special education students. The legislation also makes various changes to address teacher licensure.

“As we work to build a robust teacher workforce in Illinois, this bill ensures a merit-based route to licensure for paraprofessionals who are looking to advance their careers,” said Sen. Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill), the Senate sponsor of the measure. “Thank you to ISBE for working with us to see this legislation through.”

“I want to thank Governor Pritzker for signing SB 10. School districts throughout the state are facing a teacher shortage that’s impacting their ability to adequately staff classrooms,” said House Assistant Majority Leader and House sponsor Fred Crespo (D-Hoffman Estates). “With the passage of SB 10, districts will now have another tool to increase the number of paraprofessionals to assist in the classrooms.”

Senate Bill 10 takes effect immediately.

December is National Inclusive Schools Month

At the Inclusion Lab, a resource site of Brookes Publishing Company, it’s a tradition to celebrate Inclusive Schools Week with some practical inclusion tips from the experts. This year they have put together an 8-question Q&A, excerpted and adapted from some popular inclusion guides. Leading experts like Paula Kluth, Cheryl Jorgensen, and Julie Causton answer some of the most frequently asked questions about inclusive education. You can check out the blog for answers to the following questions:

- Can my school choose whether or not to offer inclusion?
- I’m concerned about the effect that students with more significant disabilities will have on my other students. Do they draw resources and attention away from the rest of my class?
- How do I meet the number of minutes for special education services on the IEPs unless I pull students out?
- I understand the benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities, but how do typically developing children benefit from inclusion?
- I do a lot of large-group lectures, worksheets, and paper-and-pencil tests. Am I wrong in thinking that a student with disabilities wouldn’t get a lot out of being in a class like mine?
- I’m worried about the possibility of students with disabilities being ostracized or left out by their peers. What can I do to encourage friendships and social connections in an inclusive classroom?
- What concrete actions can administrators take to improve their inclusive schooling model?
- I’m a new teacher in an inclusive classroom, and I’m feeling overwhelmed. What are the first things I should focus on to get on the right track?

Find the answers to these questions and pose your own questions in the comment section to get answers from the inclusion experts at this link: https://blog.brookespublishing.com/for-inclusive-schools-week-8-need-to-know-inclusion-questions-answered-by-our-experts/?
7 go-to apps for students with special education needs

Laura Ascione, Managing Editor, Content Services, for eSchool News, recommends seven go-to apps as technology tools to engage and elevate learning for students with disabilities. These apps may help students with dyslexia, autism, anxiety, speech and language needs, and those who need assistance learning social skills. The following apps are available in the App store:

1. **Model Me Going Places**: This visual tool helps students learn to navigate challenging locations in the school and community. Each location contains a photo slideshow of children modeling appropriate behavior.

2. **The Social Express II**: The Social Express is engaging, educational curriculum for children and young adults with social learning challenges. The curriculum is designed to teach users how to think about and manage social situations, helping them to develop meaningful social relationships and succeed in life.

3. **Positive Penguins**: This app is a resilience-building app for children. The app has a 5-minute guided meditation for children to learn to sit, relax and let go of the thoughts as they come into their heads. It also offers a strategy for children to understand that an event or situation happened that created an emotion in them—this emotion is not right or wrong, but rather it is information. Once they understand this and can examine the thoughts or stories they are telling themselves, they can pinpoint solutions to solve the problematic thoughts.

4. **See. Touch. Learn.**: This visual instruction app for students with autism and special needs allows parents and educators to replace flash cards with the 4,400 pictures and 2,200 exercises developed by professionals. Users can create custom lessons using the starter library, or purchase any of 50 individual libraries.

5. **Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame**: This resource app helps children learn skills such as problem solving, self-control, planning, and task persistence. Users laugh and learn as they help a Sesame Street monster friend calm down and solve everyday challenges.

6. **Articulation Station**: Created by a certified Speech-Language Pathologist, Articulation Station helps children learn to speak and pronounce their sounds more clearly. High-quality images represent target words to be practiced with the assistance of a Speech-Language Pathologist, teacher or parent.

7. **Worry Box**: Students with anxiety can use the worry cognitive diary to help determine how to cope with the worry. If it’s controllable, they can list the steps you can take to manage the worry. If it’s not controllable, they can select from a list of coping statements to help think about it differently.

Help Children and Teens Deal with Bullying

Parents, caregivers, siblings, and mentors play an important role in helping children and teens deal with bullying and cyberbullying. Sometimes it’s not clear what children’s and teen’s moods relate to. Changes in a child’s behavior and mood can stem from any number of things. But there are things parents, caregivers, siblings, and mentors can do to determine if a child might be dealing with bullying and to help them to address it. All of the following resources are available at [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).

Share video tips from teens on:

- What to do if you bullied someone
- What to do if you see bullying happen
- Teasing and bullying are different
- What to do when no adult is around
- What to do if you've been bullied
- What to do if you are cyberbullied

“I felt overwhelmed and powerless as to the decisions the school was making for my granddaughter. Mrs. Potter listened and gave me information. I now have the knowledge and confidence to be an active member in my granddaughter’s IEP meetings as well as the decisions that affect her education.”

-A Grandparent
New Resources from Khan Academy

This holiday season, give the gift of learning with Khan Academy Kids, the free educational program for children ages two to six.

They’ve added winter-themed reading and math activities, coloring pages, and more to the robust Khan Academy Kids curriculum. Download Khan Academy Kids now for free to see the new winter content and explore their library of thousands of other activities that delve deep into topics ranging from reading and math to social emotional development. If you have young learners in your life, Khan Academy hopes you’ll enjoy the new winter content with them.

Hurry—this new winter content is only available for a limited time!

Know other parents who might be interested in Khan Academy Kids? Share this information with them! Plus, they’ll be celebrating learning all winter long with educational books and giveaways. Follow @khanacademykids on Instagram for hands-on learning ideas, plus a chance to win free books for you and a friend!

Happy holidays to you and your family,

The Khan Academy Kids team

What does the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse offer to families?

Funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse (EIC) has many resources (e.g., books, eBooks, CDs and DVDs) that can help Illinois families of children with disabilities. There are two main collections:

The Early Childhood collection offers resources for families and professionals concerned about the growth and development of young children.

The IDHS Autism Taskforce Collection contains a variety of resources related to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families. All resources are available to anyone (parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, etc.) living in Illinois.

Within the EIC, we have several resources to help families. Such resources include:

-A video tour of the library itself: https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/library/library-tour/

-Resource guides which include brief information about a variety of topics including technology, autism, sleep habits, feeding and nutrition: https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/guides/

-Individual stories from families of children who received early intervention: https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/stories/

-A directory providing you with referral services to relevant early intervention agencies: https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/directory/

-A quarterly newsletter with information about early intervention and access to resources: https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/newsletter/

-Tipsheets about relevant topics including: assessment, communication, feelings, behavior and sensory activities: https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/einotes/

If you want an item (e.g., books, eBooks, CDs and DVDs), please contact EIC. They will send the item to you free-of-charge. When you are done with the item, you can drop it off at your local library.

To contact the EIC, call us at: 217-333-1386 or 877-275-3227 or via email at: illinois-eic@illinois.edu.
STAR NET Region I, III, & IV Mom's Retreat coming soon!

If you’re a Mom of a child between the ages of 0 – 8 years old with special needs, you won’t want to miss our 5th Annual Mom’s Retreat coming up on March 20 – 22, 2020!

Our Mom’s Retreat is held at beautiful Pine Manor Estates in Carbondale, IL, where you will find plenty of rest, relaxation, and support from other Moms who are raising a child with special needs. All of your meals, lodging, crafts, games, resources, and professional development are included for the low cost of $75. The Mom’s Retreat offers not only a place for rest, relaxation, and learning, but also an environment for Mom’s to network with other Moms who are on the same journey offering ideas, support, and encouragement to one another. Lasting memories and friendships have been made at our Mom’s Retreats.

Registration is currently open! Please fill out the attached registration form and mail it along with payment to StarNet or visit our family page on our website at starnetiv.org. Feel free to contact Sheri Kraus at (618) 825-3969 or skraus@sccroe50.org if you have any questions. We hope to see you at the next retreat!

STAR NET Regions I, III & IV invite you to relax, refresh & rejuvenate at the Fifth Annual...

Mom’s Retreat
Welcoming Moms of Children with Special Needs

March 20 - 22, 2020
Pine Manor Estates
26 Pine Lake Drive, Carbondale, IL 62901

This retreat is designed for moms of children with special needs ages birth to eight. Relax, refresh and rejuvenate with other moms who share common experiences raising children with special needs. There will be opportunities to get information, network, relax, enjoy activities, and simply have some peace and quiet on your own. There is a $75 fee to cover retreat expenses.

The Retreat begins Friday, March 20th at 5:00 p.m. and concludes on Sunday, March 22nd at 11:30 a.m.

Mom’s Retreat Registration

Complete this registration form and mail with your check of $75.00 (made payable to St. Clair County Regional Office of Education) to:
Sheri Kraus, c/o STAR NET, 1000 S. Illinois St., Belleville, IL 62220

If you have any questions, need financial assistance, an interpreter or any other accommodations, please contact Sheri Kraus at skraus@sccroe50.org or 618-825-3969 and we will do our best to assist you. *Registration fee is non-refundable for Moms who have children ages birth through 8.

Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip ______
County ________________________________
Email ________________________________
Phone (H) __________________ (C) ________________
Age of child with disability ________________________________
Diagnosis ________________________________
Special Request (allergies, adaptations, etc.) ________________________________
Most rooms have two queen beds or a king bed. If you would like to request a roommate, we will do our best to put you in the same room.
Roommate Request ________________________________

Deadline to register is February 28, 2020
Parents are always looking for new resources for our own learning, as well as to share with others. It is especially important to have resources to share regarding the importance of inclusion. Sometimes, it is to support our communication with the professionals who support our child and family. Other times, it is to share information with family members or friends who have questions.

In Illinois, we have a few resources that were developed right here in our state. First, we have the Inclusion brochure from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The brochure has an overview of the law, a definition of inclusion, and information about early childhood programs. It also talks about the benefits and defining features of inclusion. This brochure is available in English, Spanish, Urdu, Arabic, Polish and French. Please visit the Early CHOICES website to download a copy. Or send us an email (inclusion@eclre.org), and we can send you copies.

Second, we have the Illinois Vision Statement for Early Childhood Inclusion. It is endorsed by ISBE, Early CHOICES, Head Start, the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood Education, and the Department of Child and Family Services. This vision statement could be shared at a meeting with your child’s program to raise awareness of our state’s commitment to early childhood inclusion.

And, third, Early CHOICES is using social media to spread the word about inclusion and highlight important information about what makes inclusion work. Follow us @earlychoicesorg on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to connect, and to share posts about inclusion with the people in your life.

Free Resources to Help Families Understand and Monitor Development

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign often adds new resources to support developmental monitoring. In addition to print materials, there are online resources, including the Milestone Tracker App which is available for multiple platforms in English and Spanish. The Milestones in Action Library provides videos and photos of each developmental milestone to assist families with identification. Don’t miss the new board book for one-year old development, Baby’s Busy Day/Una dia ocupado del bebe: Tener un año es divertido! Order free print materials or access online resources at https://www.cdc.gov/ncbdd/actearly/index.html
Many advocates for inclusive education for all students with disabilities have lamented the reality that the continuum of services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, often hinders the actual placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The continuum of options from separate self-contained special education classrooms to full time membership in grade-level classrooms with supportive services, all within a single school building requires the splitting of school resources to meet those options and everything in between. In the book, Your Students, My Students, Our Students; Rethinking Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms, the authors, all stellar experts on teaching and learning, discuss this problem and advocate for fundamental changes in both special and general education practices.

The four authors have a combined 100 years of experience in schools, working toward creating equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students. Their expertise is real, evidence-based and backed by years of research findings. The book contains stories of real teachers and real students, from the authors’ experiences. The book is about transforming school practices and organization to improve the learning lives of every student. They describe how students with disabilities are served in most schools and how that can and should be different. Each chapter describes the aspects of education that need to change by presenting the challenges and offering solutions.

They begin by addressing disability as part of the human experience. Instead of marginalizing people with disabilities by segregating them, the authors envision disability as just one dimension of a person’s identity, supported in welcoming and inclusive environments. In example, they compare special education in the U.S. with special education in Italy. In the U.S., 10-15 percent of students in a typical school receive special education services through an individualized education program (IEP). By contrast, in Italy only 2-3 percent of students are identified as having a disability for which they need specialized supports. The large category of U.S. students, identified as having learning disabilities, are not considered to have disabilities in Italy, but are part a broader scope of “normal” and receive appropriate accommodations without needing a label to receive such support. Very few special education classrooms exist in Italian schools. The authors describe how the presence of students with learning needs are expected in general education classrooms, and “pullout” services are rare. They also point out that in the U.S., paraprofessionals are often relied on to provide instruction to students with disabilities in contrast with Italian schools where general education teachers are prepared to teach all of their students.

This book illustrates how to establish a culture of equity and inclusion in all of our schools, and reimagines special education structures. There is strong emphasis on leveraging the strengths of all educators through collaboration and co-teaching. It also describes an entirely different way of conducting the IEP process that honors student and family aspirations as the starting process, way before any goals are developed. It calls for radical change backed up by proven success stories. If only the book would be read by educational leaders intent on school reform and educator preparation and by lawmakers with the power to reimagine special education structures.

This book is available for loan from the Family Matters Lending Library.
Family Matters would benefit if you would go to smile.amazon.com/ch/20-5808691 when you shop amazon rather than just going to the general amazon.com website. Once you type in that URL, you will get to the amazon.com site and everything will be exactly the same as if you just went to Amazon.com (you will have the same data stored there about your address and credit card, etc.), and Family Matters will get a donation from Amazon based on a tiny percentage of your purchases. We never see WHO used it, we just get a small quarterly deposit in our bank account from Amazon. It is an easy way for you to donate to us without committing extra funds. Thanks in advance for using: smile.amazon.com/ch/20-5808691.

Family Matters PTIC’s Hours of Operation During the School Year

Monday and Wednesday  8:00 AM to 6:30 PM
Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Call: 866-436-7842

Upcoming Opportunities

Register at: http://www.fmptic.org/events/trainings

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Family Matters’ Board of Directors

If you have an interest in serving as a Board member, please visit our website and complete an application.

www.fmptic.org/sites/default/files/prospective%20board%20member%20questionnaire2.pdf

We welcome parents that fulfill demographic needs including geographical locations; parent representation of disability types; representation of age ranges, gender, and diversity; related professional interests; and volunteer experiences.
Recent Archived Webinars You May Have Missed

Our webinars are available any time of day as archived recordings on our website. Learn beneficial information as your schedule allows. Just visit [www.fmptic.org/recordings/family-matters-recordings](http://www.fmptic.org/recordings/family-matters-recordings) and choose a topic of interest. Click on the event you plan to watch, submit basic registration data (name, email, etc.), and the webinar will begin.

Visit our website today to watch an archived webinar you may have missed! You will find the following webinars and many more.

ARCHIVED WEBINARS include:

- **30 Min Msg - Last Year of High School (What to Know about the Summary of Performance)**
  Presenter: Nancy Mader

- **30 Min Msg - Student Progress**
  Presenter: Karrie Potter

- **30 Minute Message - Paraprofessionals - Who Are They and What Do They Do?**
  Presenter: Karrie Potter

- **30 Min Msg - Programs of the ARC of Illinois - How They Can Help?**
  Presenter: Deb Fornoff

New Items Available From Our Lending Library

- **Restore the Respect - How to Mediate School Conflicts and Keep Students Learning**
  Guidebook on mediating conflicts between students and between adults in schools.

- **Designing Positive Behavior Support Plans**
  Reference for teachers and parents on understanding, designing, and evaluating positive behavior support plans for students with developmental disabilities who require comprehensive behavioral supports.

- **Behavior Solutions for the Inclusive Classroom**
  Illuminates causes of behaviors and provides solutions that accommodate learning differences and sustain a positive learning environment.

- **More Behavior Solutions IN and BEYOND the Inclusive Classroom**
  Addresses and solves problematic behaviors in hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, and auditoriums.

- **The Teacher’s Pocket Guide for Effective Classroom Management**
  Guidance for teachers implementing tiered systems of support for behaviors.

Explore our library!

Go to [www.fmptic.org/library](http://www.fmptic.org/library) to borrow these items free of cost!
1. **True.** When an individual with disabilities has a legal guardian, it can limit their ability to make decisions and express self-determination. The Supported Decision-Making model aims to maximize an individual’s potential for autonomy and relationships. Under this model, the individual chooses someone they trust to be a supporter who would help them interpret information, weigh options and communicate the individual’s decisions in identified areas of needed support.

2. **False.** Obtaining guardianship over an individual with disabilities does require a decision from a judge in a court of law. Supported Decision-Making, however, is a less intrusive option that does not require a judicial decision. Instead, the individual with disabilities identifies a trusted supporter who they would like to help them make important decisions and then a written agreement is developed that defines the parameters of assistance based on the individual’s unique needs and preferences while still ensuring that decisions are made by the individual. The agreement would be signed by both the individual and the supporter, plus two witnesses, and could be revoked at any time by either the individual with disabilities or the supporter.

3. **True.** The Supported Decision-Making agreement would define the types of decisions the individual needs assistance with and those might include decisions such as living in a group home or living in their own apartment or house. It might also include decisions about getting married or living with a partner. Other decisions might include finding a job, getting financial aide, or choosing to have surgery for a medical issue. Under a Supported Decision-Making agreement, in those situations the supporter would be available to assist in presenting resources for the individual to consider, helping focus a team, communicating information, and assisting with both questions and the individual’s decision.

4. **False.** Ten states and the District of Columbia already have Supported Decision-Making statues in place, but Illinois is not one of them. Multiple states have pilot projects and task forces relating to supported decision-making. The Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission intends to initiate a legislative proposal on Supported Decision-Making in the spring of 2020. They are in the process of finalizing legislation and the proposed language. The Guardianship and Advocacy Commission has created a Fact Sheet to explain the purpose of the Supported Decision-Making process. The fact sheet explains that Supported Decision-Making will not eliminate guardianships for individuals with disabilities who lack decisional capacity as determined by the courts. Instead, it is an option to consider that can enhance family and community relationships and increase self-determination for individuals with disabilities who do have capacity for making a range of decisions.

For a copy of the fact sheet or for more information about how to advocate for supported decision-making legislation in Illinois, contact the IL Guardianship and Advocacy Commission at 866-274-8023 or visit the National Center for Supported Decision-Making website at the following link: [http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/](http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/).