

# EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION

Parent Newsletter

Spring 2014-2015

Welcome to **Edition 3** of the *Extra Special Edition* for the school year 2014-2015, the newsletter for exceptional parents of Calhoun County. Each issue contains information for parents who have children in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program in our district.

## PLEASE COMPLETE THE EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE) PARENT SURVEY

The survey is online from February 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015. The survey is open to all parents of children with an individual educational plan (IEP) receiving ESE services from preschool age through grade 12. This survey is not intended for parents of students receiving only gifted services through an educational plan (EP). The online survey is in English and Spanish, Haitian Creole paper surveys are available upon request. Visit <http://www.ESEsurvey.com> to complete the survey.



### In This Issue

- ESE Parent Survey
- Parent Involvement Website
- McKay Scholarship
- Family Fun Reading Activities
- Family Network on Disabilities
- Family Café

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT WEBSITE EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION IN FLORIDA

### Feeling lost? We can help!

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources (FDLRS) is pleased to announce the launch of the new **Parent Involvement Website**.

The site is designed specifically to assist parents as they navigate the exceptional student education (ESE) process, from Pre-K through transition to college and/or career. This helpful site provides valuable information and resources related to ESE services and students with disabilities.

On the site you'll find success stories; information geared to various grade levels; contact lists for school districts, parent centers, and related agencies; a glossary of terms; and more!

[www.forparents.florida-es.e.org](http://www.forparents.florida-es.e.org)

Questions? Please contact  
Aimee Mallini at FDOE  
850-245-0916  
[aimee.mallini@fldoe.org](mailto:aimee.mallini@fldoe.org)



### Success Stories Glossary Resources

- Pre-K
- K-12
- High School
- After School



*"You're off to Great  
Places!*

*Today is your day!*

*Your mountain is  
waiting.*

*So...get on your way!*

*- Dr. Seuss*



Exceptional Student  
Education  
Calhoun County  
School Board  
20448 NW Pennington  
Avenue  
Blountstown,  
Florida 32424  
850-674-8734  
[www.calhounflschools.org](http://www.calhounflschools.org)

# EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION

## McKay Scholarship

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We would like to inform you that your child **may** be eligible to participate in the John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program, commonly known as the McKay Scholarship Program. This program was created to provide educational options to parents of students with disabilities. Currently, more than 30,000 Florida students are participating in this program.

By participating in the McKay Scholarship Program, your student may be able to attend a different public school in your district, attend a public school in an adjacent district, or receive a scholarship to attend a participating private school.

To be eligible for the McKay Scholarship Program, a student must apply for the program prior to withdrawing from public school. The student must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or 504 Accommodation Plan issued under s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (with duration of more than six months), and

- Have been enrolled and reported for funding in a Florida public school for the school year prior to applying for a scholarship (Grades K-12); or
- Have been a pre-kindergarten student who was enrolled and reported for funding in a Florida public school during the school year prior to applying for a scholarship; or
- Have received specialized instructional services under the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program from an approved provider pursuant to s. 1002.66 during the previous school year; or
- Have attended the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind during the preceding school year's student membership surveys (Grades K-12).

To find out if your student is eligible, you may apply for the McKay Scholarship Program on the School Choice website at [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org). Select the **McKay Scholarships** link, then **Parents**, and then the link titled **Apply for a McKay Scholarship**.

To learn more about your child's educational options, please contact your school district's Parental Choice Office at 850-674-8734. You may also contact the Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice Information Hotline at 1-800-447-1636, or visit the School Choice website at [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org) and click the **McKay Scholarships** link.

In order for a student to be eligible for the program, intent to participate in the McKay Scholarship Program must be filed on the School Choice website prior to withdrawing from public school.

The deadline to apply for the first payment period of the 2015-16 school year is July 1, 2015.

Please note this letter serves to notify you that your child may be eligible to participate in the McKay Scholarship Program.

**This letter does not guarantee your student's eligibility.**



## Family Fun Reading Activities

### Activities for families to do at home, while traveling or just about anywhere!

#### Travel Activities:

- Take along a map & let child use a highlighter to mark your route as you travel. Ask what city/town is next. Are you going North, South, East or West?
- Play games like finding a sign beginning with each letter of the alphabet (in ABC order) or counting how many of certain types of cars/trucks are seen, etc.
- Prior to leaving have child write to the Chamber of Commerce in the city of your destination asking for brochures.

#### Newspaper/Magazine Activities:

- Clip out an interesting story and cut the paragraphs apart. Ask your child to read the paragraphs and put them in the right order.
- Pictures fascinate children of all ages. Cut out pictures and ask your child to tell you about them and list adjectives to describe each picture.

#### Books:

- Look for books at garage sales!
- Swap books with family members.
- Get a library card and visit the library often. Ask about story time and other events provided by the library staff.

#### Fun in the Sun:

- Lie on the ground and describe the shapes of clouds.
- Let children "paint" letters, numerals, their name & other words on the warm sidewalk using a clean paintbrush dipped in water. Watch as it disappears.
- Gather items and a pail of water. Collect some items that will sink and some that will float. Have children guess whether each item will sink or float. Drop each item in the pail of water to see if it sinks or floats. Record all guesses and results.
- Have children write in the sand with a stick. Let them write words and sentences as well.

#### Fun in the Kitchen:

- Let them eat shapes! Cut bread into different shapes – rectangles, triangles, squares, circles. Make at least two of each shape. Ask child to match the shapes. Count all shapes.
- Teach classification skills using dinnerware. Ask child to match and stack dishes of similar sizes and shapes. Also have child sort silverware.
- Find a simple recipe your child will enjoy. Make a shopping list together. Look for ingredients on hand together then take your child to the store and "find" all ingredients you need. Help child read recipe and make food. Enjoy!

#### Reading:

- Make an alphabet poster with your child. Print the letters in large type and let your child draw pictures and label each picture. Teach proper use of capital and lower case letters.
- Record child reading a book and replay it so they can listen to themselves. For young children that cannot read words, have them "read" the pictures.
- Have a time each evening that all family members sit together and read. (With the TV off)
- Label furniture and other items in your home using index cards and help child read the words.
- Hold up cards one at a time and have child say the letter name and the sound. Ask child to tell you a word that begins with the sound. For example the d sound for letter "d" and child might tell you dog begins with the "d" sound.

#### Writing:

- Provide many writing materials! Crayons, pencils, colored pencils, pens, markers, chalk, paper, etc.
- Write and act out your own play or puppet show. Puppets are fun to make from socks or gloves with yarn and markers. Puppets encourage children to participate. Videotape if possible.
- Have your child make their own storybook. Ask them to illustrate the book. Younger children can dictate their story and older children can write their own. Let creativity rule!
- Have child write letters to family members.
- Let young children write in shaving cream or sand. Help them make letters and words with play dough or clay.

#### Just for Fun:

- Hide a treat and write directions for finding the treat or draw a map for the child to follow to find the treat.
- Turn this into a treasure hunt by having them go to several different places and getting clues at each stop before finding the treat.

#### Music and Games:

- Teach your child songs, like Row, Row, Row Your Boat and poems like Wee Willie Winkie, or Little Miss Muffet.
- Teach many nursery rhymes to say and sing.
- Give child tongue twisters to learn then have them write their own.

These sites are provided as a resource, please review all websites for content prior to use to determine appropriateness for intended educational use.

Just Read Florida!- [www.justreadflorida.com](http://www.justreadflorida.com)

Just Read Families!- [www.justreadfamilies.org](http://www.justreadfamilies.org)

## Family Network On Disabilities

Family Network on Disabilities (FND) is proud to announce the launch of our refurbished website at [www.fndusa.org](http://www.fndusa.org). We've put a lot of effort into making things easier to find and navigate, updating the format, and adding new features – all to make the site more helpful to persons with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work with them.



The look and feel of the site is all brand new. We've given it a complete overhaul and made FNDUSA.org a fun and interactive online experience for all families. No matter what you may need on disability-related topics or what language you may speak, FNDUSA.org should have resources for your family. With the click of a button, the entire site translates from English into Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Russian.

Please take a look at our extensive resource library, both national and Florida-specific, as well as our project pages with information on how we are working in your community and how we can serve your family or organization.

Visit our new Media Library. There you'll find such things as sound banks with common sounds that you might encounter in common daily settings. We've added this tool to help with social preparation. It's accessible on the go from mobile devices. Look at our social story bank, which helps parents and self-advocates experience social situations. Like our sound bank, our social stories are accessible on mobile devices on the go.

Check out our many free workshops at FND University. Follow us on our social media pages with a couple of simple clicks from the website. We look forward to you joining our family at [FNDUSA.org](http://FNDUSA.org).



## Family Cafe

The 17th Annual Family Café featuring...  
The Governor's Summit on Disabilities, Exhibitors, Outdoor Adaptive Sports Demonstration, Employment Expo. and 160+ Breakout Sessions



The 17th Annual Family Cafe is set for June 5-7, 2015 at the Caribe Royale in Orlando, Florida. This three-day event provides a venue for people with disabilities and their families to learn about available services, connect with policy makers and network with each other. It features dozens of breakout sessions, a full Exhibit Hall, a series of Keynotes and multiple opportunities to interact with other families informally.

There is **no registration fee for individuals with disabilities** and their family members or caregivers. Professionals are required to pay a \$150 registration fee. Please register on the website at [www.familycafe.net](http://www.familycafe.net)

Limited Financial Assistance is available to cover the cost of your hotel stay at the Caribe Royale. **To apply for assistance, simply check the "Financial Assistance" box on the registration form.** Recipients will be selected through a lottery process, with all applicants being notified of their status by May 1.

**Rooms in The Family Cafe block at the Caribe Royale are available at the special event rate of \$109 per night.** To make a reservation, call the Caribe Royale at 407/238-8000. Make sure to mention The Annual Family Cafe to secure the special rate.

If you prefer to register by fax or mail, you can also download the brochure from the website at [www.familycafe.net](http://www.familycafe.net).



PRINTED BY FDLRS/PAEC  
FLORIDA DIAGNOSTIC AND LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM

Panhandle Area Educational Consortium  
753 West Boulevard Chipley, FL 32428  
(850) 638-6131 ~ (877) 873-7232 ~ Fax: (850) 638-6142  
website: [www.paec.org](http://www.paec.org)

Serving Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Walton, and Washington counties



"The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System is funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Division of Public Schools and Community Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B; IDEA Part B, Preschool; and State General Revenue funds."