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# Newsletter

January 2016 - July 2016



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Please like and share our facebook, twitter and pinterest page! We are looking forward to sharing important information, upcoming event, and future trainings.



## Hidden Logo Contest

For those of you who are receiving your first newsletter or for those who have forgotten about the contest, here are the rules. Hidden somewhere within the pages is the Families Helping Families house logo. All you have to do is find the little house and call or send an email telling us where you found the logo. The one in the masthead at the top of this page is NOT IT!! Two (2) weeks after we mail the newsletter, we'll draw from all the entries. The winner will receive a WalMart gift card and will be acknowledged in the next publication. So good luck and good reading!

The winner of the hidden logo was Shakria King.

## Families Helping Families Has A New Director

By: Deanne Groves

Stacey Guidry is a woman in love. Her eyes sparkle, she has a constant smile and she is excited when she talks. But she is not in love with just one person. No, Guidry has fallen in love with her new job and the people that have come along with it.

Stacey Guidry is the new director of Families Helping Families of Northeast LA, located in Monroe. She was selected for the position after the former director, Aliscia Banks, retired. Guidry began her voyage of love in July of this year, however, she feels her life journey has been preparing her for this role for a long time.

Her personal journey has included her two sons that she loves very much. Her oldest, Jordan, age 22, serves our country in the U.S. Air Force.

Seventeen years ago, Guidry gave birth to her second son, Luke. As a young mother, Guidry felt that Luke had some differences. Though she addressed those differences the best she could, she felt lonely in supporting Luke. She did her best as Luke grew but felt that her individual efforts were still not sufficient.

Guidry's professional journey led her to work in the nonprofit arena for many years. Helping those in need was richly satisfying for her. As someone who grew up in poverty, she had firsthand experience about living without life's necessities.

Even as she felt she was accomplishing a lot of good, Guidry felt restless and wondered if there was a larger purpose in her life. That is, until she began her labor of love at Families Helping Families. She now feels she has finally found the place she was meant to be. Luke has voiced to her that he has been training her for this new position since he was born. Families Helping Families is a small nonprofit family directed resource center whose mission is to provide information and referral, education and training and peer to peer support to individuals with disabilities and their families.

The organization's vision is to strengthen, support, and empower individuals and their families while promoting home and community inclusion.

As the Families Helping Families director, Guidry has had her heart opened to the happiness that can exist within a family who has a member with a disability. Her determination to make a difference and offer support to families so that they do not feel the solitude she felt is what gets her going every day. She has met many self-advocates and family members who have shown her that, while life may not be perfect every day, every day can contain many joy filled moments. She receives daily inspiration from those she serves, and that inspiration relieves the stress when the challenging times of directing a nonprofit service organization occur.

Guidry has been warmly welcomed by her board, the staff, and most importantly, the families and individuals who rely on Families Helping Families. While she was a bit nervous replacing an experienced administrator like Banks, she is not trying to fill those shoes. Guidry is creating a new set of footprints relying on a great experienced staff to help her, as needed, to walk the path of putting her consumers first. She has her feet on the ground loving the walk through mountains, valleys, over rocks and boulders to assist others who find themselves needing the organization.

Guidry appreciates the past work that Aliscia Banks accomplished during her tenure with Families Helping Families. But she is excited about taking the organization into a new future. A priority for her is helping the community embrace and more willingly accept persons with disabilities. While society, as a whole, is more accepting, she feels more can be done to educate ordinary citizens about what to expect when meeting a person who seems a bit different. Guidry wants persons to engage and include persons with disabilities as it can enhance everyone's life experiences. Guidry also wants to encourage families to include their loved ones in their particular community and neighborhood. She feels in sheltering her son, she may have ended up isolating him from interactions with others who could appreciate and love him as she does.

Guidry also wants to create more awareness of Families Helping Families, making the organization more visible to the community. She does not want another parent or family to feel the loneliness that she felt earlier in her life. She wants to reach all corners of Northeast Louisiana to make Families Helping Families a very well-known resource.

If you want to support Guidry in her goals at Families Helping Families, consider a gift in the form of a donation. The organization is small and depends upon donations to help create supports and services for needs and activities for persons with disabilities.

And if you are a family or individual who is looking for support and encouragement, contact FHF. You will be loved without reservation.

You can contact Guidry at [sguidry@fhfnela.org](mailto:sguidry@fhfnela.org) or call her at 318-361-0487/1-800-300-1320. Visit the Families Helping Families website at <http://fhfnela.org>.

## **I Am the Disabled Child**

Inspirational Motivational Stories

### **I am the child who cannot talk.**

You often pity me. I see it in your eyes. You wonder how much I am aware of...I see that as well. I am aware of much...whether you are happy or sad or fearful, patient or impatient, full of love and desire, or if you are just doing your duty by me. I marvel at your frustration, knowing mine to be far greater, for I cannot express myself nor my needs as you do. You cannot conceive my isolation, so complete it is at times. I do not gift you with clever conversation, cute remarks to be laughed over and repeated. I do not give you answers to your everyday questions, responses over my well-being, sharing my needs, or comments about the world around me. I do not give you rewards as defined by the world's standards...great strides in development that you can credit yourself. I do not give you understanding as you know it. What I give you is so much more valuable...I give you instead opportunities.

Opportunities to discover the depth of your character, not mine; the depth of your love, your commitment, your patience, your abilities; the opportunity to explore your spirit more deeply than you imagined possible. I drive you further than you ever go on your own, working harder, seeking answers to your many questions, creating questions with no answers.

## **I am the child who cannot walk.**

The world sometimes seems to pass me by. You see the longing in my eyes to get out of this chair, to run and play like other children. There is much you take for granted. I want the toys on the top shelf. I need to go to the bathroom... oh...I've dropped my spoon again. I am dependent on you in these ways. My gift to you is to make you aware of your great fortune, your healthy back and legs, your ability to do for yourself. Sometimes people appear not to notice me; I always notice them. I feel not so much envy as desire, desire to stand upright, to put one foot in front of the other, to be independent. I give you awareness.

## **I am the child who is mentally impaired.**

I don't learn easily, if you judge me by the world's measuring stick. What I do know is infinite joy in the simple things. I am not burdened as you are with the strifes and conflicts of a more complicated life. My gift to you is to grant you the freedom to enjoy things as a child, to teach you how much your arms around me mean, to give you love. I give you the gift of simplicity.

## **I am the disabled child.**

I am your teacher. If you allow me, I will teach you what is really important in life.

I will give you and teach you unconditional love.  
I give to you my innocent trust, my dependency upon you.  
I teach you of respect for others and their uniqueness.  
I teach you about the sanctity of life.

I teach you about how very precious this life is  
and about not taking things for granted.

I teach you about forgetting your own needs  
and desires and dreams.

I teach you giving.

Most of all, I teach you hope and faith.

**I Am The Disabled Child.**  
- Unknown

## **Fight the Flu!**

**December 6-12th is National Influenza Vaccination Week. If you haven't gotten your flu vaccine yet, now's the time! An annual flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent this serious illness.**

This season, National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) takes place from December 6-12th, 2015. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established NIVW in 2005 to highlight the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the holiday season and beyond. All around the country, NIVW events including press briefings and media interviews, health fairs, traditional and digital flu vaccine promotions, and educational opportunities will emphasize the importance of flu vaccination.

**Vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu!**



As long as flu viruses are spreading and causing illness, vaccination can still provide protection against the flu. Flu activity typically peaks in February in the United States, and the season can last as late as May. While there's still time to benefit from a flu vaccine, the sooner you get vaccinated, the more likely you are to be protected against the flu when activity picks up in your community. View the [map](#) with a weekly update on flu activity within the U.S.

## Who Needs a Flu Vaccine?

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu viruses. A flu vaccine offers the best protection against this serious disease. Once vaccinated, it takes about 2 weeks for the body's immune response to fully kick in.

Have you gotten your flu vaccine? It's not too late! It's National Influenza Vaccination Week.

## Are You at High Risk?

There are certain people who are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications that can lead to hospitalization or even death. Pneumonia and bronchitis are two examples of flu-related complications. Those at high risk include:

- [Pregnant women](#)
- [Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old](#)
- [People 65 years of age and older](#)
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease)

If you are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications, you should get vaccinated. Those who live with or care for you should also be vaccinated to help protect you.

A full list of people at high risk of serious complications from flu because of age or other medical conditions is available at the [CDC Flu website](#).

In addition, there are other people for whom vaccination is especially important:

- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
  - Health care workers
  - Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
  - Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

## Some Children Need 2 Doses of Flu Vaccine

NIVW serves as a reminder to parents, guardians and caregivers of children that some children 6 months through 8 years of age need two doses of influenza vaccine to be fully protected this season. Children in this age group who are getting vaccinated for the first time will need two doses of vaccine, spaced at least 28 days apart. Some children who have received influenza vaccine in prior seasons will also need two doses. Your child's doctor or other health care professional can tell you if your child needs two doses.

## The Flu Vaccine-You've Got Choices!

There are several [flu vaccine options](#) for the 2015-2016 flu season.

Traditional flu vaccines made to protect against three different flu viruses (called "trivalent" vaccines) are available. In addition, flu vaccines made to protect against four different flu viruses (called "quadrivalent" vaccines) also are available. CDC does not recommend one flu vaccine over another. Vaccination should not be delayed, even if an option is not available. The important thing is to get a flu vaccine every year.

The trivalent flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses and an influenza B virus. The following trivalent flu vaccines are available:

- [Standard dose trivalent shots](#) that are manufactured using virus grown in eggs. These are approved for people ages 6 months and older. There are different brands of this type of vaccine, and each is approved for different ages. However, there is a brand that is approved for children as young as 6 months old and up. Most flu shots are given with a needle. One flu vaccine can be given with a [jet injector](#) , for persons aged 18 through 64 years.
- A standard dose [trivalent shot containing virus grown in cell culture](#), which is approved for people 18 and older.
- A standard dose [trivalent shot that is egg-free](#), approved for people 18 and older.
- A [high-dose trivalent shot](#), approved for people 65 and older.
- A standard dose [intradermal trivalent shot](#), which is injected into the skin instead of the muscle and uses a much smaller needle than the regular flu shot, approved for people 18 through 64 years of age.

The quadrivalent flu vaccine protects against two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses. The following quadrivalent flu vaccines are available:

- A [standard dose quadrivalent shot](#).
- A [standard dose quadrivalent flu vaccine, given as a nasal spray](#) , approved for people 2 through 49 years of age

(\*"Healthy" in this instance refers to children 2 years through 8 years old who do not have an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to influenza complications.)

In addition to your doctor's office, there are various locations in your community where flu vaccine is available, like your pharmacy, grocery store or local health department. Use the [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) to find flu vaccine locations near you.

If you're not sure or have questions about which vaccine to get, talk with your doctor or health care professional. For a complete list of who should and should not get vaccinated, visit [Guidelines for Flu Vaccination](#).

Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines. Once vaccinated, you can enjoy this holiday season knowing that you have taken the single best step to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu.

Get vaccinated today, and help spread the word by taking a flu vaccination selfie photo or video, tagging your post with #VaxWithMe, and then post on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and/or YouTube. All selfies appropriately tagged will be displayed on CDC's [interactive #VaxWithMe timeline](#).



### **New from Region 8 LaCan Leader Henry Bateman**

Hello. My name is Henry Bateman. I'm the new LaCAN Leader for Region 8. I began my duties about 6 months ago and look forward to meeting more of our LaCAN members as time goes on.

I've served on the board of Families Helping Families for many years and enjoy working in collaboration with the staff at the center.

Briefly, here is what LaCAN does: Links lawmakers, self-advocates, and families to make a difference for individuals with disabilities. LaCAN is a statewide grassroots network of individuals, families and advocates who have worked together since 1988 advocating for a service system that supports individuals with disabilities to live in their own homes rather than having to be segregated from their communities in a facility to receive support. Specifically, they have advocated for implementation of Louisiana's Community and Family Support System Plan.

Regional LaCAN teams include family members, individuals with disabilities, advocates and professionals. These members are notified by email or phone when communication with state agency officials, legislators or the Governor is necessary. LaCAN provides information and support to individuals wishing to effectively advocate for the expansion and improvement of individual and family supports and services for people with disabilities and their families through email updates, regional workshops, regional team leaders, and personal contact.

Children, regardless of the severity of their disability, need families and enduring relationships with adults in a nurturing home environment. As with all children, children with developmental disabilities need families and family relationships to develop to their fullest potential.

Adults with developmental disabilities should be afforded the opportunity to make decisions for themselves and to live in typical homes and communities where they can exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens.

For more information on LaCAN please contact me at:

Henry Bateman  
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Monroe, LA 71203  
318-361-0487

[www.laddc.org](http://www.laddc.org)

[lacanregion8@yahoo.com](mailto:lacanregion8@yahoo.com)

[lacanregion8@fhfnela.org](mailto:lacanregion8@fhfnela.org)

Please contact me if you would like to join LaCAN. There is no cost or fee to join. I look forward to meeting you!

## 6 Secrets Special Needs Moms Know but Won't Tell You

By: Suzanne Perryman

I am a special needs mom. And I have secrets. Things I don't talk about and stuff that other moms don't know or may have forgotten along the way.

**1. Special needs moms are lonely.** I yearn for more time with friends and family. Authentically, I have a positive attitude and most often you see me smiling. I may even look like I have this SuperMom thing down, am super busy and have enough help, but I am lonely. Being a special needs mom doesn't leave me the time to nurture and maintain the relationships I really need. I could get super detailed here about the hands-on caring for my child (Do you remember when your kids were toddlers? That hovering thing you had to do? It's that plus some.) The plus-some includes spreading my mom love around to my other child and my husband, who on a daily basis are put on hold, waiting for my attention. I don't have much time to call or email my friends and even family — and if they don't call or email me, well then I feel massive guilt about the time that has passed. More negative stuff that I pile on my shoulders. Getting out is tough. I really miss the days when I had playgroups with other moms, open-house style, dropping in and drinking coffee at a friend's kitchen table with my child playing nearby.

**2. Special needs moms have to work extra hard to preserve their marriages.** This goes with counter-balancing the high stress of special needs parenting and directly combats the sky-high divorce rates for special needs families. I put extra pressure on my husband; he is my best friend and sometimes I expect unrealistic BFF behavior from him at the end of the day (see #1). He is my hero — supportive, patient and loving — and my kids would be totally lost without him. The success of our marriage will affect the health of our children. My husband

and I haven't spent a night away from our kids for six years; we "date night" out of the house every few months for a two-hour sushi date. Our marriage is a priority so we steal our moments when we can.

**3. Special needs moms are not easily offended.** Despite what our social media status updates say, we are vulnerable and life messes with us daily. So really, ask what you want to ask, and it's OK to start with, "I don't really know how to say this, how to ask you..." I am especially touched when someone cares enough to ask me how my child is feeling or how to include my child in a social gathering, meal or other event. I'm happy to collaborate on what will work for both of us.

**4. Special needs moms worry about dying.** We worry about our kids getting sick and dying, we worry about our husbands dying and leaving us alone, but most of all, we worry a lot under the surface and especially about being around to care for our child. We watch people we know grieve the loss of their children and try not to think about it. On the upside — we live life fully and don't take it for granted.

**5. Special needs moms are fluent in the transforming body language of touch.** This is the first language we learn, and sometimes the language *our* kids know best. This therapeutic natural language can relax, redirect and heal. This should be the first language "spoken" in every home.

**6. Special needs moms know to savor the gift of a child saying, " I love you."** For the longest time I wasn't sure if my daughter, Zoe, would ever speak the words. As a newborn, it was her sighs of contentment, as I held her against my breast, that told me how much she loved me. When she was a baby, it was that peaceful calm that came over her when I carried her in my arms. The first time she found her words, she was already a little girl, and every time she spoke them, I cried. She is 10 now, and her words are even more tender and wise. I leaned into her at bedtime the other night. As her hand reached up, caressing my cheek, she whispered, " I love you, Mom, for taking such good care of me."



## New from Region 8 EarlySteps

Hello Everyone,

My name is Keirston Norman and I am the Community Outreach Specialist for EarlySteps. I am honored to be part of the program that was a blessing to my family. I have two young children who have also been through the EarlySteps program. My commitment is to provide the best service possible to the families of Region 8. It is my goal to be visible and available throughout the communities so families will always have access to someone who cares about their situation. I look forward to meeting and serving your family's needs.

For more information on EarlySteps contact me at:

Keirston S Norman  
5200 Northeast Rd.  
Monroe, LA 71203  
318-361-0487  
knorman@fhfnela.org

## EarlySteps Book Drive

In October 2015, the Epsilon State Delta Kappa Gamma members chose EarlySteps as their 2015 Epsilon State Project. The members had a "Buggies of Books for Babies!" drive and collected 336 board books for the Region 8 EarlySteps! EarlySteps was chosen as the state project because the Epsilon State DKG members "understand the importance of books in the lives of young children."

Every child's service plan must contain strategies for developing pre-literacy and language skills. The strategies include the encouragement of book handling behaviors, attention to pictures in a book, pointing to pictures, interaction, etc. The EarlySteps Intake Service Coordinators, Family Support Coordinators and providers are delivering the books to the families that we serve as an encouragement to parents to "enhance their child's development".

Tracy Crump  
EarlySteps Region 8 Regional Coordinator



**Department of Health and Hospitals**  
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

**EarlySteps Program is RECRUITING !! RECRUITING!!!**

Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech Therapists to provide services to families in the following Region 8 parishes:  
Caldwell, East & West Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Richland, Tensas & Union

We are in great need of Special Instructors for Children with Sensory Impairments – visually and hearing impaired



For more information contact:  
Tracy Crump  
(318) 361-7237  
Tracy.crump@la.gov  
www.earlysteps.dhh.la.gov

**earlySteps**  
Louisiana's early intervention system

## News from Region 8 Children's Special Health Services



Recently, the staff, patients, and families at CSHS Region 8 have been gleaming from some very important information that was shared by one their community partners, the ULM Kitty Degree School of Nursing. On Wednesday, November, 18, ULM Kitty Degree School of Nursing Semester 5 student nurses visited CSHS and assessed patients and their family members on their knowledge and awareness of the importance of "Emergency/Disaster Preparedness." The student nurses educated the Clinic attendees on the importance of thinking in terms of emergency and disaster preparedness. The nurses also encouraged families to make their own disaster preparedness kits. An example of a disaster kit was prepared by the student nurses and shown to the patients and their families. It included items that would last, at least, 72 hours in the event of a disaster. Such items as clothing, water, canned foods. Flashlights/batteries, can openers, and medications filled the homemade emergency preparedness kit. An emergency preparedness board was displayed in the patient waiting area where the event took place. Other topics, such as recent and current health threats, like influenza and Ebola epidemics, were taught. The importance of having an emergency communication and family location plan was stressed by the student nurses. Fun quizzes were given to the Clinic attendees and they were rewarded with healthy snacks for their participation. The student nurses said, "Disasters can strike suddenly and can not only be frightening for adults but, can also be traumatic for children, if they are unprepared." Crayons and coloring books, designed for children to learn about disasters like fires, floods, and tornadoes, were provided for the younger Clinic attendees. The patients and their families enjoyed the presentation and gave the ULM student nurses and their instructors rave reviews.

The staff of Children's Special Health Services would like to thank the ladies of the Vera Jordan Circle at First United Methodist Church of West Monroe for 17 years of faithful service to children and families! These women have prepared sandwiches and other snacks for our monthly Cardiology Clinic, which is often a lengthy visit for many of the families. We honor your service, and your presence will be missed!!

# Communicating With and About People with Disabilities

About 50 million Americans report having a disability. Most Americans will experience a disability some time during the course of their lives. Disabilities can affect people in different ways, even when one person has the same type of disability as another person. Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.

## People First Language

People first language is used to speak appropriately and respectfully about an individual with a disability. People first language emphasizes the person first not the disability. For example, when referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first by using phrases such as: "a person who ...", "a person with ..." or, "person who has..."

Here are suggestions on how to communicate with and about people with disabilities.

People First Language	Language to Avoid
Person with a disability	The disabled, handicapped
Person without a disability	Normal person, healthy person
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	Retarded, slow, simple, moronic, defective or retarded, afflicted, special person
Person with an emotional or behavioral disability, person with a mental health or a psychiatric disability	Insane, crazy, psycho, maniac, nuts
Person who is hard of hearing	Hearing impaired, suffers a hearing loss
Person who is deaf	Deaf and dumb, mute
Person who is blind/visually impaired	The blind
Person who has a communication disorder, is unable to speak, or uses a device to speak	Mute, dumb
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, spastic
Person with epilepsy or seizure disorder	Epileptic
Person with multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by MS
Person with cerebral palsy	CP victim
Accessible parking or bathrooms	Handicapped parking or bathroom
Person of short stature	Midget
Person with Down syndrome	Mongoloid
Person who is successful, productive	Has overcome his/her disability, is courageous

For more information about disability and health, visit [www.cdc.gov/disabilities](http://www.cdc.gov/disabilities)

# No Child Left Behind Comes to an End with the Passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act

In the News blog post by [Andrew M.I. Lee](#)  
Dec 10, 2015

After 13 years and much debate, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has come to an end.

A new law called the "Every Student Succeeds Act" was enacted on December 10. It replaces NCLB and eliminates some of its most controversial provisions.

The Every Student Succeeds Act responds to some of the key criticisms of NCLB. One is that NCLB relied too much on standardized tests. Another is that schools faced harsh penalties when all of their students weren't on track to reach proficiency on state tests.

At the same time, the new law keeps some aspects of No Child Left Behind. For example, states are still required to report on the progress of traditionally underserved kids. This includes kids in [special education](#).

The new law is over 1,000 pages. But here are some of the most important things to know:

**State Authority:** Under the new law, the job of holding schools accountable largely shifts from the federal government to the states. But the federal government still provides a broad framework. Each state must set goals for its schools and evaluate how they're doing. States also have to create a plan for improving schools that are struggling or that have a specific group of students who are underperforming.

**Annual Testing:** States still have to test students in reading and math once a year in grades 3 through 8, as well as once in high school. Students with [IEPs](#) and [504 plans](#) will continue to get accommodations on those tests. And only 1 percent of all students can be given "alternate" tests.

**Accountability:** Under the new law, states may now consider more than just student test scores when evaluating schools. In fact, they must come up with at least one other measure. Other measures might include things like school safety and access to advanced coursework. But student performance is still the most important measure under the law.

**Reporting:** States have to continue to publicly report test results and other measures of student achievement and school success by "subgroups" of students. That includes students in special education, minorities, those in poverty and those learning English.

**Proficiency Targets:** From now on, states are required to set their own proficiency targets. They will also come up with a system of penalties for not meeting them. But the federal government will no longer require states to bring all kids to the proficient level on state tests. States also won't have to meet federal targets for raising test scores. These changes will eliminate the harsh federal penalties schools faced under NCLB.

**Comprehensive Literacy Center:** The new law calls for the creation of a national center that focuses on reading issues for kids with disabilities. That includes dyslexia. The center will be a clearinghouse for information for parents and teachers.

**Literacy Education Grant Program:** The law authorizes Congress to give up to \$160 million in literacy grants to states and schools. The grants will fund instruction on key reading skills, such as [phonological awareness](#) and [decoding](#).

**Opt-Out:** Opt-out is when parents decide not to have their child take a standardized test. The new law doesn't create a federal opt-out option for parents. But it also doesn't stop states from having their own opt-out laws if parents don't want their children to take state tests.

With the new law, states will have a bigger role in holding schools accountable. You can find out about your state's laws and policies through your state's [Parent Training and Information Center](#).

# 6 Tips to Make Sure Your Child's 504 Plan Is Being Followed

By Kristin Stanberry

Your child's 504 plan has been set in motion. Is the school delivering what it promised? Use these tips to monitor the situation throughout the year.

## 1 of 6

Know who's providing your child's services.

The 504 plan should state not only what special services your child will receive but also the name of the person is responsible for it. Try casually asking your child, "Have you worked with Mr. Jones this week?" Your child's answer may tell you a little—or a lot—about how well the 504 plan is being followed.

## 2 of 6

Watch, listen and read between the lines.

Keep an eye on your child's homework, graded assignments and test scores. Do you see signs of your child's accommodations being used? If so, is he making progress? Jot down any concerns you have. Does your child seem to feel confident or discouraged about school? He may tell you outright. But often what tells us the most is what kids *don't* say.

## 3 of 6

Make sure your child understands the services.

Help your child understand the services outlined in his 504 plan. Describe the services in concrete terms that match his maturity level. It might be as simple as asking if he's taking all his tests in a quiet room. Or it may be more complex, such as asking about a certain assistive technology tool. Either way, you might get information while planting the seeds of self-advocacy.

## 4 of 6

Ask about the 504 plan at parent-teacher conferences.

The parent-teacher conference is a good time to get a handle on your child's progress. Ask the teacher if she's following your child's 504 plan. Share any concerns based on what you're seeing at home. Ask her honest opinion about what she thinks is and isn't working in the 504 plan. Make notes to refer to when you meet with your child's team.

## 5 of 6

Contact the principal about your 504 plan concerns.

If you think the school isn't providing all of the services and supports in your child's 504 plan, don't wait until next year's meeting to speak up. Be proactive and contact the school principal. Give him a chance to clear up any misunderstandings and correct any problems. If corrective action is required, make sure it happens. Be friendly but firm.

## 6 of 6

Request a special team meeting.

If you take the steps above but aren't satisfied with the results, you can request a special meeting. Bringing the team together may be the best way to get answers to your concerns about your child's 504 plan. You'll either get the reassurance you need—or get your child's 504 plan back on track.

## A Drawing for Teacher or Para

Do you have a special education teacher or para that's made a difference in your child's life a teacher that goes above and beyond if so email their name & school to [info@fhfnela.org](mailto:info@fhfnela.org) . They will be put in a drawing for a teacher prize package & gift certificate.

# LEGISLATIVE SETBACKS 2016 ROUNDTABLE

# Save the Date

TAKE YOUR SEAT AT THE TABLE

Thursday, February 4, 2016

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

La. Delta Community College  
7500 Millhaven Rd. Room 108  
Monroe, LA 71203

RSVP to Henry Bateman  
318-343-5702 or 318-361-0487  
lacanregion8@yahoo.com



Louisiana Developmental  
Disabilities Council



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