

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Volume 7, Issue 3

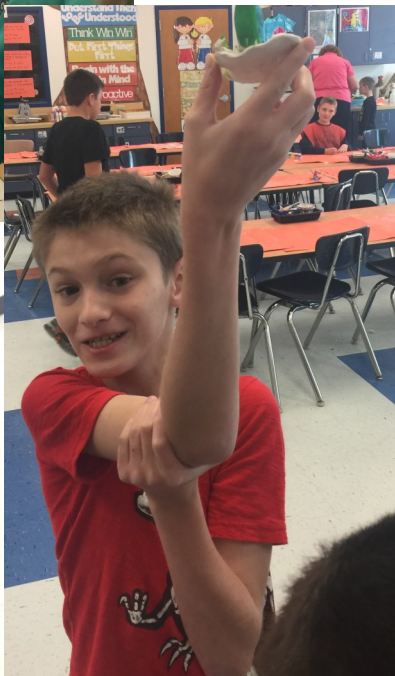
Winter, 2018

St. Johns County School District



Wards Creek Elementary's Silly Ceramic Snails

Mrs. Baker's class just completed work on their Silly Ceramic Snails! Students exercised their skills following step by step instructions, manipulating the clay using fine motor techniques, and expressing their individuality when painting the snails. As you can see, they are super proud of their finished work.



*Contributed By: Kevin Klein,
Assistant Principal, Wards Creek
Elementary*



Important Dates:

Feb. 6th, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

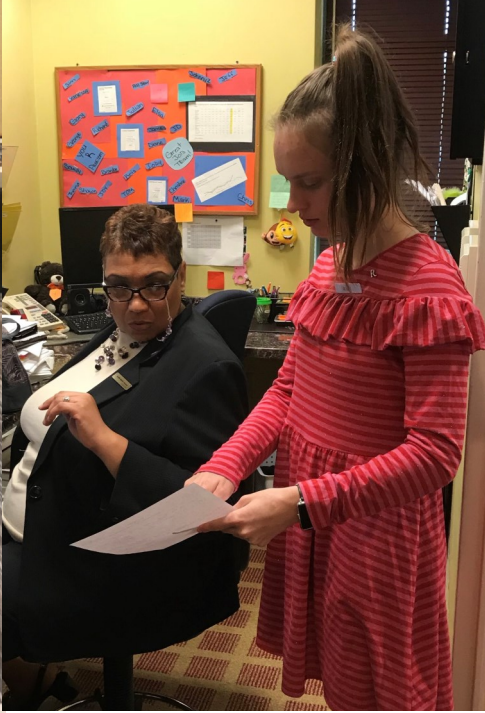
Parent Advisory Committee Mtg
Fullerwood Center, 10 Hildreth Dr

Feb. 15th, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Gifted Parent Advisory Committee Meeting
Bartram Trail High School

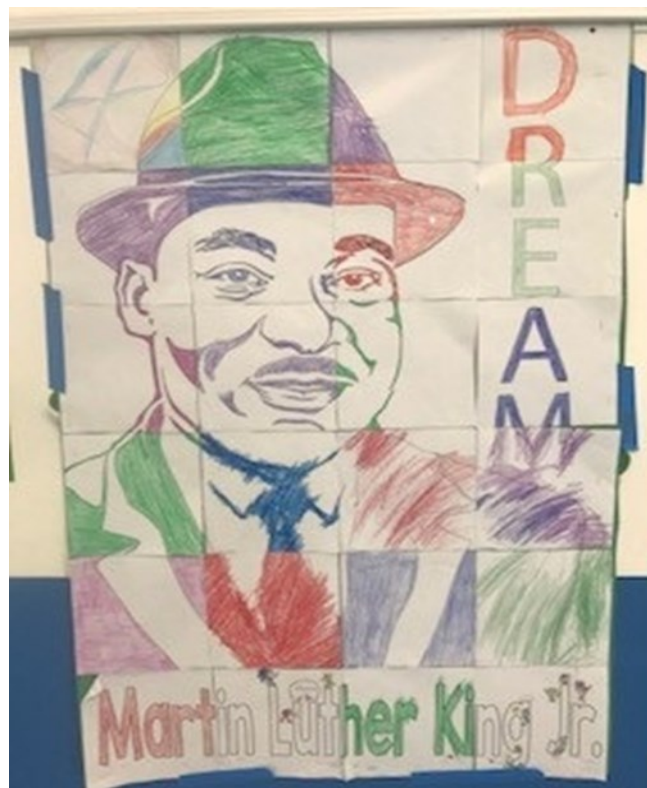
Project SEARCH at Renaissance World Golf Village Resort

Project SEARCH interns are in their second internship rotation at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort. All of the interns were invited to the Renaissance staff holiday party. They were recognized for their hard work and given an award. The third round of Employment Planning Meetings was held January 17th-19th. We are so proud of our Project SEARCH interns.



Contributed By: Byron Pennington Jr., Project SEARCH Instructor, SJCSJ, Renaissance World Golf Village Resort





Pacetti Bay Middle School Classroom

I say to you today, my friends, though, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Martin Luther King, Jr.

Last week, our special Wildcats learned about the amazing Martin Luther King, Jr. and his contributions to our United States. They listened to his famous speech, quoted above, and read about his life's work. After much exploration, they worked collaboratively to create this mural which is proudly displayed outside the classroom.

We continue to support his dream that when faced with adversity and challenges, the best thing we can do is learn how to work together to give our students every educational advantage possible. Thank you Dr. King for continuing to make an impact on our students today.

Contributed By: Twila Powers, Assistant Principal, Pacetti Bay Middle School

Creekside High School Presents The Nutcracker Winter Play



Some of the students at Creekside High School participated in the Nutcracker Winter Play. Mrs. Presnell's students collaborated with Mrs. Fixel's drama class one day per week to learn their roles as soldiers, mice, trees and flowers. The big performance was on Thursday night, December 14th and the students did an EXCEPTIONAL job!



Contributed By: Mrs. Kaley Presnell, ESE Teacher, Creekside High School



St. Augustine High School's Career Prep Class



St. Augustine High School's Career Prep class worked all year to make beautiful handmade items to sell in a Holiday Bazaar. They did an amazing job and were very proud of their wares. When the Bazaar was open, the students had jobs re-stocking, talking to visitors, taking money, making change, and preparing custom gift bags for visitors to put their purchases in.

Contributed By: Lynne Tiner, ESE Teacher, St. Augustine High School



My Child's Plan Isn't Working. Now What?



Are you concerned your child's education plan isn't working?

Sometimes programs need to be adjusted to help your child make better progress.



Here are some steps you can take:

1 Define what “not working” means to you.

It is important to pinpoint what you are worried about. Maybe your child is still frustrated with or having trouble with his homework. Perhaps you expected things to get easier sooner or that his grades would have improved. Or maybe you haven't heard anything from the IEP team, and that concerns you.

2 Track your child's progress.

Your child's school should keep you updated on your child's progress, but you may want to keep track on your own, too. What you see at home may be different from what the school is seeing, and that's important information. You can download an IEP goal tracker form to help you stay on top of your child's IEP goals and the progress he is making. You can also download a communication log to keep track of your interactions with the school and the IEP team. (These documents are key pieces of an IEP binder. If you don't have an IEP binder, find out how to make one at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/how-to-organize-your-childs-iep-binder>)

3 Consider how long your child's IEP has been in place.

If your child's IEP has only been in place for a few weeks, it may be too soon to see progress. That doesn't mean you shouldn't continue to keep track of your concerns. It just means it may be too early to have any definitive data to see if your child's accommodations, services and supports are having a positive impact.

Contributed By: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/my-child-iep-doesnt-seem-to-be-working-now-what?>



4**Talk with your child's teacher or case manager.**

Schedule a time to talk with your child's teacher or IEP case manager or send an email outlining what you're worried about. They may have some insights and stories about what is happening in the classroom. Or perhaps they can show you work samples that will put you at ease. They may also be able to provide you with some ways you can support the IEP at home. And your input and unique perspective can help them evaluate whether the plan is working as intended.

5**Call an IEP meeting.**

If after talking to the teacher and case manager you're still worried your child's IEP isn't working, request an IEP meeting. You can request an IEP meeting at any time by contacting the case manager. The case manager's contact information should be at the top of the IEP form. (To keep all your school contact information in one place, you can download a contact list form at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/working-with-childs-teacher/download-contact-list-for-who-to-call-at-your-childs-school>.) In this case, you can ask for a program review meeting. This means you're indicating that you have concerns about the plan and want to look at it again. Bring any notes or work samples you have that support your worries. (Find out what else to bring to an IEP meeting at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/what-to-bring-to-an-iep-meeting>.) At the meeting, talk to the team about what you're observing and the questions you have. For more ideas, refer to this list of questions to ask before and during an IEP meeting at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/>.

6**Talk about adjusting the accommodations.**

When the team meets, review and talk about how your child's accommodations are working. Sometimes the accommodations that a team decides on don't work as well in practice as it seemed like they would. And sometimes kids don't like to use them because it makes them feel different or singled out. Talk with each teacher about what the accommodations look like in practice in the classroom and if your child is using them. Ask if there are things that aren't working and if there are suggestions for other accommodations that might work better.

7**Revisit your child's goals.**

Your child's IEP is supposed to be standards-based. That means the goals are aligned with the academic standards for your state. But to make sure he's getting the most out of the IEP, goals should also be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Time-bound.

The team should make sure the goals are SMART and being worked on in a way that best supports your child's learning. Maybe your child needs more of a multisensory approach to learning. Or maybe he hasn't mastered other skills that he/she needs to move forward. Learn more about how to know if your child's accommodations are working at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/how-will-i-know-if-the-accommodations-in-my-childs-iep-are-working>. And take a look at what to do if you don't think the teacher is following your child's IEP at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/the-teacher-isnt-following-my-childs-iep-what-can-i-do>.

504**1****Define what "not working" means to you.**

The first step is to identify why you think the 504 plan isn't working. Maybe you expected your child to improve in certain areas or have higher grades because of the 504 plan. Maybe you're concerned that there is a snag or mix-up with your child's services and supports. You might think she needs different accommodations or more help than the school currently provides.



2

Consider how long your child's 504 plan has been in place.

Think about how long your child has had her 504 plan. If it was just put in place, it may take time for you child to see the benefits. In the meantime, you can observe your child and note any concerns. On the other hand, if your child's 504 plan hasn't been updated recently, it may be time to do so.

3

Confirm that the 504 plan is being followed.

It's important to check that your child's plan is being followed. Look at your child's assignments for signs that she's using the accommodations in the 504 plan. Ask her about how the accommodations are working in a specific class, to get a sense of whether she's using them. If you're concerned about a particular accommodation, you can email the teacher to ask about it. For tips on how to make sure a 504 plan is being followed, see <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/6-tips-to-make-sure-your-childs-504-plan-is-being-followed>.

4

Track our child's progress.

Next, it may help to look at your child's progress in school. There's no requirement for a 504 plan to track progress. However, most schools monitor how kids are doing academically through report cards, test scores and other assessments. You have a right to see these educational records. It may also help to keep track of any communications you have with the school about progress. Learn more about that at <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/understanding-childs-challenges/observing-taking-notes/7-steps-for-requesting-your-childs-school-records>. Under federal education law, schools must aim to get all kids to meet state academic standards. That includes kids with learning and attention issues. Check your child's report cards and other records to see how well she's meeting these standards.

5

Talk with your child's teacher or 504 plan coordinator.

Schedule a time to talk about your concerns with the teacher. You can also reach out to the school's 504 plan coordinator, whose contact information should be on your child's plan or in the school directory. (Download a contact list form at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/working-with-childs-teacher/download-contact-list-for-who-to-call-at-your-childs-school> to keep all this contact information in one place. You can also keep track of contact information and other details about your child's plan in this sample 504 plan <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/sample-504-plan>.) Both the teacher and the coordinator may have information that answers your concerns. They may also suggest ways you can support the 504 plan at home. Your input can help them evaluate whether the plan is working as intended, or if it needs to be revisited.

6

Ask for a meeting with the school principal or 504 plan team.

If you still have concerns, you can take them to a higher level-the school principal or the 504 plan team. Unlike with an IEP, you don't have a legal right to call (or even attend) 504 plan meetings. But you can always ask to talk, and often the school will agree. Bring any notes or samples of your child's school work that support your concerns. Make a list of questions you want to ask. Check out more suggestions for how to make the most of 504 plan meetings at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/7-tips-for-a-successful-504-meeting>.

7

Talk about adjusting the accommodations.

As you work with the school, review and talk about how well your child's accommodations and services are working. Sometimes the accommodations in the plan don't work as well in practice as everyone thought they would. Perhaps an accommodation is too hard for your child to use. Or maybe your child feels embarrassed about using it. Similarly, if your child's 504 plan includes services, they might need to be adjusted. You can suggest different accommodations that may better suit your child. Often these kinds of changes can be achieved through informal negotiation. If informal negotiation doesn't work, though, learn about other options for resolving 504 plan disputes at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/dispute-resolution/5-options-for-resolving-a-504-plan-dispute>.

8

Consider an IEP.

If it doesn't seem like any changes to the 504 plan will help, it may be time to consider special education through an IEP. You can ask for a free evaluation for special education at any time. Just keep in mind that not every child qualifies. Read about whether kids with ADHD may be eligible for an IEP at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights-are-kids-with-adhd-covered-under-idea>. Learn more about the difference between IEPs and 504 plans at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>. And see steps to take if you child is denied special education services at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/if-denied-services/10-steps-to-take-if-your-child-is-denied-services>.

Upcoming Events

CARD Parent Book Club– The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year Old Boy with Autism by Naoki Higashida- February 3, 8:30 A.M., Join us for a discussion inspired by the book of the month. The reading material and discussion will be appropriate for parents and caregivers of individuals with Autism and related disabilities. This group will take place on the first Saturday of each month. RSVP online by clicking <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/card-parent-book-club-tickets-39056628427>
Location: Panera Bread Jacksonville- 9810 Baymeadows Rd., Jax, 32256. For more information contact audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu.

Microsoft Gaming Party- February 10, 9:00 A.M.-10:00 A.M., Join us for a Gaming Party at the Microsoft Store at the St. Johns Town Center. Xbox One consoles will be set up in the theater space for gaming. While the children are gaming, the parents have a breakout session on internet safety and parental controls. 40 spots available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Register online by clicking <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/microsoft-store-gaming-party-tickets-22917527943>.

CARD/FDLRS Satellite Clinic– St. Johns County (St. Augustine High School)- February 12, 9:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M., The UF-Jacksonville Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) and the UF-Jacksonville Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System Multi-Disciplinary Center (FLDRS-MDC) offer clinics to outlying counties in order to more effectively serve their constituents. Sign up for a consultative appointment with clinicians who specialize in child psychology, behavior therapy, academic interventions, Autism Screeners, Transition, and more. Appointments are at no cost to the family. Location: St. Johns County (St. Augustine HS). To schedule an appointment, please contact chanel.baldwin@jax.ufl.edu, (904)633-0816.

Microsoft Gaming Party- March 10, 9:00 A.M.-10:00 A.M., Join us for a Gaming Party at the Microsoft Store at the St. Johns Town Center. Xbox One consoles will be set up in the theater space for gaming. While the children are gaming, the parents have a breakout session on internet safety and parental controls. 40 spots available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Register online by clicking <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/microsoft-store-gaming-party-tickets-22917527943>.

Sibshops- Brothers and sisters, ages 8 - 13, of kids with developmental disabilities in St. Johns County now have a program that's just for them called Sibshops. They'll have a chance to meet other kids whose brothers and sisters have special needs and talk about the good and not-so-good parts of having a sibling with a disability. Most important, they'll have fun! If you have a sibling who may be either too young or too old for this age group, please contact candice.rosenberg@jax.ufl.edu. If there is enough interest, we may be able to create a new group. This program is at no cost to your family. Registration is required.

Kiddin' Around: Social Skills Lessons for the Elementary-Aged Student- Sign up for CARD-Jacksonville's newest social skills group for elementary-aged children. Kiddin' Around offers valuable lessons in interacting with others. Group members will learn and practice skills like: Initiating & Terminating Play, Conversation, Behavior Regulation, Understanding Cues, Waiting your Turn. Includes a complete Social Skills Inventory and Interview. Available free of charge for all registered CARD-Jacksonville constituents. For more information contact chelsea.pierce@jax.ufl.edu or call (904) 633-0769.

Game Groups for Adolescents & Young Adults- Group Goals: Sustaining attention, waiting, turn taking, conversation, problem solving, behavior regulation, understanding cues, and interest-based leisure skill development. Includes a complete Social Skills Inventory and Interview. Available free of charge for all registered CARD-Jacksonville constituents. Includes a complete social skills inventory and interview. Please bring a preferred board game or card game and a snack. For more information contact chelsea.pierce@jax.ufl.edu or call (904) 633-0769.



Most notable for his role as Harry Potter, Daniel Radcliffe has lived with a mild case of dyspraxia for his entire life. Dyspraxia is a common neurological disorder that affects motor skill development, meaning that at 25 years old and the star of one of the largest franchises in movie history, Radcliffe still has trouble tying his shoelaces. In an interview regarding his Broadway debut, he once jokingly stated 'I sometimes think, Why, oh why, has Velcro not taken off?'





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Exceptional Student Education Department

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CHARACTER COUNTS!



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Mission Statement: To identify and meet the unique educational needs of exceptional students and to provide support and resources to enhance educational opportunities so they become productive citizens.

ESE programs and services address the unique needs of students who are gifted in kindergarten through 12th grade and those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities from age three until they graduate with a regular diploma or until their 22nd birthday. ESE programs and services are designed to assist students in reaching their educational goals through the use of instructional and behavioral approaches which are research-based and exemplify best practices. Technology is used in many creative ways to meet student needs as well.

ESE services are available at all district schools for gifted students and students who have mild to moderate disabilities. PreK students with disabilities and students with more significant disabilities are served in cluster programs at selected sites. Program support is provided to students, parents and school personnel by program specialists based at the district office. Students with disabilities who are not eligible for services through the ESE program may be eligible for an accommodations plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY?

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. The next issue of the Parents As Partners Newsletter will be posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/dept/academicservices/e.se.

