

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Volume 10, Issue 2

St. Johns County School District

As we approach the holiday season please consider the Conscious Discipline tools below to help organize family schedules and enjoy family time.



Choice Tools for Managing Complex Schedules

Navigate common scheduling challenges and frustrations using the Home Schedule Breakdown and Home Choice Board included in this resource. You'll increase safety, cooperation, confidence and success in your home.

Sometimes children feel overwhelmed or frustrated by a full daily schedule or tasks they aren't thrilled about undertaking. This printable contains two tools to help children navigate a variety of daily scheduling challenges, including schoolwork. These tools scaffold children's emerging executive skills, and help increase predictability (safety), cooperation, confidence and success.

This printable, developed by educator and coach Katie Ahearn, includes two full-page templates and activity cards to cut out. The cards can be used interchangeably with both full-page templates, and each template has a specific function.

HOW TO USE

The Home Schedule Breakdown helps divvy up the full day's schedule into bite-sized pieces. It is organized into a simple "first" and "then" chronology. Sometimes a full day's schedule feels overwhelming. A child who struggles with a 15-item schedule of things he must accomplish will find relief in having portions of his schedule broken into a manageable first/then structure.

Sometimes children struggle with doing a certain activity. These children will benefit from using the first/then structure to show what they will do after the difficult task. If social studies is a challenge, you would place "Social Studies" in the "first" position and a more enjoyable activity like "free play" in the "then" position. Knowing that the difficult task has a

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finite end and that a more enjoyable activity will follow helps reduce stress and increase compliance. When using this structure, it is imperative that you state the first/then chronology matter-of-factly so the second activity isn't perceived as a reward or bribe. Rewards and bribes prevent the development of intrinsic motivation and reduce access to the "thinking brain" Executive State.

Sometimes a child might have a hard time waiting to do a certain activity. A child who often wants snacks, for example, will benefit from seeing that first he will complete his schoolwork, and then he can have snack time. Similarly, if getting dressed is a challenge because a child wants to rush in to watch morning cartoons, you would place "get dressed" in the first position and "T.V." in the second position.

The Home Choice Board reduces power struggles by offering two positive choices to children. Two positive choices zero kids in on tasks they *can* do. To use the Home Choice Board, first think of two activities that would be acceptable. Put one activity in each box. The child will then choose which activity to conduct. If it is learning time, you might put Social Studies in one box and Writing in the other. Eliciting a choice fosters an optimal learning state and allows children to exert some control over their learning time, which instills a sense of responsibility and ownership in the endeavor.

Stronger together. You can use these boards together in order to maximize children's success in reaching their goals. First, present the child with two positive choices via the Home Choice Board. Then move to the Home Schedule breakdown, placing the child's choice in the "First" position. Let's say a child needs to practice writing and sight words. You would put the "writing" and "sight words" choices on the Home Choice Board and say, "You can do writing or you can do sight words first. Which is better for you?" Once the child chooses—let's say he chooses "sight words"—you would then move over to the Home Schedule Breakdown, putting the child's choice in the first position and the non-choice in the second position. "You chose sight words! First, you will do your sight words. Then, you will practice your writing."

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[Click here](#) for the Home Schedule Breakdown and Home Choice Board printables.

If you have any questions please contact Roxie Heist at Roxie.Heist@stjohns.k12.fl.us



Family Cell Phone Agreement and Cell Phone Parking Lot

Use the Family Cell Phone Agreement and Cell Phone Parking Lot to limit digital distractions, creating valuable quality time and connection for your family.

Cell phones offer many benefits, but they can also distract us from connections and face-to-face conversations with our family members. Connection is a key component of behavior, willingness, emotional health, and even optimal brain development. Naturally, limiting this resource results in problems for our families and our society.

Restore connection during mealtimes, family nights and other special family times by using the Family Cell Phone Agreement and Cell Phone Parking Lot pages included in this document. Print and laminate each page, then place the agreement and parking lot on a shelf or small table.

Talk to your family about the importance of meaningful connection, and ask for their willingness to set aside cell phones and connect during family times. Remember that the ingredients of connection include eye contact, touch, presence and playfulness. With your cell phones safely parked, focus on incorporating these ingredients to make your family time meaningful and restorative.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Start a family conversation ritual before each meal with a conversation starter like the following:

- Share one way you were helpful today.
- Share two positive things that happened today.
- Share one OOPS you have made and how you would do it differently next time.
- Share a strength of yours. When do you feel successful?
- Share one thing you want to celebrate today.
- Share two things you are grateful for today.

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[Click here](#) for the Family Cell Phone Agreement and Cell Phone Parking Lot printables.

If you have any questions please contact Roxie Heist at Roxie.Heist@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Helpful SJCS D Information

COVID-19 Dashboard

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/blog/covid-19-dashboard/>

The St. Johns County School District will provide a weekly update on the number of students and employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 as well as the number of students and employees currently quarantined at home due to close contact to a case.



Distant Learning

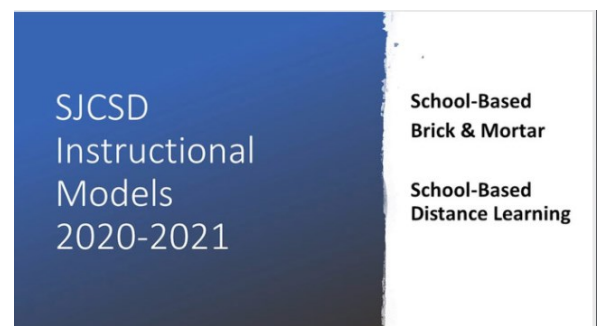
<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/online-learning/>

Parents are invited to watch the following two presentations to find out what school-based distance learning looks like for [elementary students](#) and [secondary students](#).

Instructional Models 2020-2021 Presentation

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/blog/instructional-models/>

Learn about the two instructional models which will be provided during the 2020-2021 school year: school-based brick & mortar and school-based distance learning.





Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Johns County provides children with a 1-to-1 mentor at local participating elementary or middle schools. For one hour each week, a Big Brother or Big Sister works with the child to provide academic, social or emotional support. Eligible children must be between the ages of 6-12 and must be willing and able to meet one-on-one with a mentor in the school setting.

For more information, please visit our website at www.bbbsstjohns.org or call Enrollment & Match Coordinator, Kit Caruso, at 904-829-9986, ext. 2.





STAFF Spotlight

Avery Greene is a devoted educator and lifelong learner with over two decades of experience in exceptional student education across various U.S. school districts ranging from Virginia to Hawaii. She currently serves as an Exceptional Student Education Program Specialist for the following programs in St Johns County School District: Parent Advisory Committee, Hospital Homebound, Visually Impaired, and Extended School Year. The focus of her work centers on improving results for students with disabilities and their families. Avery received her M.Ed. in Special Education from The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia and her M.S. in Education Administration from Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia. She has had the opportunity to assist in providing leadership, planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of school, district, and statewide special education programs via a variety of positions extending from special education teacher to special education dean and student services coordinator to the monitoring and compliance office at the state level. Although Avery and her husband reside in St. Augustine, they enjoy traveling to destinations with mountains, as she is an avid hiker and is always searching for the next summit.

*NOTE: Avery's next endeavor is to expand the District's ESE Parent Advisory Committee. If you are the parent of a student with a disability and have an interest in participating, please reach out to her at Avery.Greene@stjohns.k12.fl.us.





THE ESE PARENT ADVISORY,
ST JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

WELCOMES

STEPHEN FURNARI
FLORIDA ATTORNEY
FOUNDER OF WWW.GUARDIANPROJECT.US/

FOR A DISCUSSION ON:
**HOW TO BEST PROTECT YOUR
CHILD WHEN HE OR SHE
TURNS 18**

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- WHY YOU NEED TO CONSIDER GUARDIANSHIP IF YOUR CHILD HAS A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY
- 8 ALTERNATIVES TO GUARDIANSHIP PARENTS USE IN FLORIDA
- THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF GUARDIANSHIP AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only) 904-420-0831

Phone Conference ID: 931 910 524#

**ESE PARENT
ADVISORY**

**ST JOHNS COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**EXCEPTIONAL
STUDENT
EDUCATION**

**STEPHEN FURNARI,
FLORIDA ATTORNEY**

JANUARY 5, 2021

**This meeting will
be held via
Microsoft Teams
platform**

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

2020/2021 PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FUTURE WebEx MEETING TOPICS and DATES:

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is composed of parents, educators, administrators, business representatives, and other interested community members concerned with the education of exceptional students.

The purpose of the committee is to provide information to parents and input to district staff regarding our ongoing effort to continuously improve services for exceptional students.

All 2020/2021 meetings will be held via WebEx virtual platform.
A link to join these meetings will be emailed one month prior to meeting date.

Topic: GUARDIANSHIP: HOW TO BEST PROTECT YOUR CHILD WHEN HE OR SHE TURNS 18

Presenter: Stephen Furnari, Florida Attorney, Founder of GuardianProject.US

Date/Time: 01/05/2021 from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

**Topic: ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD):
DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA, SYMPTOMS, & STRATEGIES**

Presenter: Lisa D. Bailey, Ph.D.

Date/Time: 02/02/2021 from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Topic: ANXIETY: DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA, SYMPTOMS, & STRATEGIES

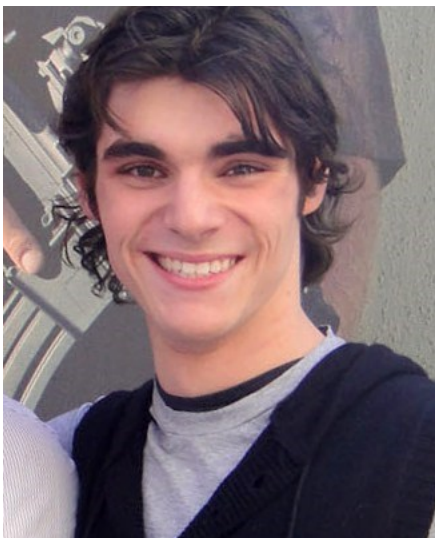
Presenter: Sarah Dew-Reeves, Ph.D.

Date/Time: 03/02/2021 from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Topic: SOLUTIONS TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESS

Presenters: Dr. Thomas Romero and Dr. Lexie Romero

Date/Time: 04/06/2021 from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm



[R.J. Mitte](#) was launched into fame by his role as Walter Jr.—who also has cerebral palsy—on AMC’s critically acclaimed series *Breaking Bad*. This gave him a platform to raise awareness about CP, an opportunity he has enthusiastically embraced. He tours the country speaking about his experiences, and is a spokesperson for the Inclusion in the Arts and Media of Performers with Disabilities (I AM PWD), as well as for actors with disabilities in the Screen Actors Guild.

<https://101mobility.com/blog/celebrities-with-disabilities/>



****New** Sibshops-Sibstop**

November 18, begins at 3:00 PM, When a child is diagnosed with a developmental disability, the entire family is affected. Sibshops are engaging and interactive workshops that offer support and guidance, while allowing siblings to share the challenges and celebrate the joys of having a brother or sister with a special need (cognitive, medical, developmental and/or learning disability). We have found that youth open up most about being a sib when they are comfortable, and reinforced for their honesty. For these reasons, Sibshops are a "kids only" zone. (Moms & dads, that means no peeking around the corner during Sibshop) Audience: Kids ages 8-13, who have a sibling with a special need. These events are at no cost to the individual or families registered with the UF Jacksonville CARD and/or FDLRS-MDC. Click [here](#) to register online for this event. For more information contact: audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu.

Brooks Pediatric – Brooks Children’s Choir



Now through December 16th, various times.

Two groups for ages K-2nd grade and grades 3-8. No auditions or experience required to join. This group targets socialization and participation through song and movement in a fun, noncompetitive environment. Participants will show off their singing, movement, listening and engagement skills with their peers. Choir participants will work towards an end of the year recital. This is a virtual class. All classes are held through Zoom meetings.

Click <https://files.constantcontact.com/0b11d7af701/97fca717-126d-4585-a300-3c626bdefd6a.pdf> for a flyer.



“It’s the repetition of affirmations that leads to a belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.”

-Muhammad Ali



Events



Strategies to Support Success in Virtual Learning Environments

We are offering a four-part series for caregivers on strategies to support success in the virtual learning environment. The series will consist of one-hour sessions on the following topics: – Creating your home learning station: This session will discuss strategies for arranging the environment to support your child's learning. – Addressing attention and motivation – How to get your child to attend to online learning: This session will explain strategies for increasing your child's attention to online learning tasks. In addition, attendees will learn how to motivate their children to work on all types of learning tasks within a virtual environment. – IEP & Distance Learning Plans: This session will address individualized education program services and supports in the online environment. Attendees will learn about requesting and accessing services and supports. – Parent Self-care strategies: This presentation will discuss an overview of caregiver mental health and stress. Attendees will also learn some wellness exercises and positive parenting strategies.

[Register Now](#)



WEEKLY

Parent Support Group

The purpose of these meetings is for parents to have some time to relax, talk, and share about our children and experiences. Please come join us! Please contact Margie Garlin if you are interested in attending. Weekly ONLINE meetings on alternating Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings

[Email Margie Garlin for details](#)

MONTHLY

UF CARD Orientation

Join us ONLINE via Zoom to: Learn about CARD's purpose and how our staff may help you on your journey to better understanding autism and related disabilities through education and support; Receive information and tools to help you get started on your next steps; and Meet other families to build and strengthen your support network. Orientation is usually held on the second Friday of the month at 10:30AM.

[Email Alissa Yax for details](#)





Counseling Services

Counseling can take place in office, in school, in home, via telehealth, or in the St. John's County. Specialized therapeutic treatment includes Infant Mental Health Counseling, Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Play Therapy.

Targeted Case Management (TCM)

Targeted Case Managers work with children and families to assess their needs and help make referrals to community resources. To qualify, a child must have Medicaid, be age 0 to 17, and have 1) Behavioral or emotional difficulties at home and/or school; OR 2) A diagnosis that is not a developmental challenge; OR 3) Destructive behaviors that may cause self-harm or harm to others.

Care Coordination: Care Coordinators target youth who are frequently admitting to local Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs). This program works with the family unit to address behavioral and emotional difficulties in all settings for higher need youth.



Our Vision

A world where children realize their full potential

Our Mission

Building bridges to success for children

Our Common Bond

Caring, Integrity, Respect, Commitment, Leadership, Excellence



For more information or to make a referral contact us at:
904-510-6504 or

Buckner.Clinical@chsfl.org



SJCSD Receives a Generous Donation from Lend an Ear!

Two years ago, the SJCSD Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) program began a relationship with Lend an Ear (LEA), a local non-profit driven to provide the gift of hearing within our community. Hearing aids are extremely expensive, running into multiple thousands of dollars and are often not covered by insurance. Last school year, Lend an Ear donated refurbished hearing aids as loaners and back-ups for students in need. In addition, they donated ample batteries for the hearing aids.

Lend an Ear also had a hearing aid event in Palatka in December which donated brand new hearing aids to adults in our community. The SJCSD DHH team was able to participate and help with the final fittings of the hearing aids for 40 adults with hearing loss! It was a truly awe inspiring experience to see some of our community member hear for the first time in years. Though the pandemic has delayed further hearing aid drives planned for our community and surrounding counties, Lend an Ear is dedicated to keep on giving.

Last month, Lend an Ear, again surprised us with a large donation of new hearing aids (blue tooth enabled) and multiple F.M. microphones. The total donation would retail for over \$76,000! This has enabled us to have back up equipment and send school hearing aids home for students who had no personal hearing aids. What a gift to our department and our students.

Thank you Lend an Ear!





Program Specialists

Lynn Adkins (904) 547-7697 (office)

Lynn.Adkins@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Specific Learning Disabilities, Learning Strategies, Other Health Impaired, FSA/EOC Waivers

Helen DiMare, (904) 547-7692 (office)

Helen.Dimare@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Gifted Services

George Freeman, (904) 547-770 (office)

George.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Emotional Behavioral Disorders, Mental Health Counseling, Behavior Specialists, Private Instructional Personnel

Avery Greene, (904) 547-7557 (office)

Avery.Greene@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Hospital Homebound, Orthopedically Impaired, Traumatic Brain Injured, Visually Impaired, Virtual School, Surrogate Parents, Parent Advisory Meetings

Leigh Ann Hale, (904) 547-7678 (office)

LeighAnn.Hale@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Transition, Intellectual Disabilities, Alternate Assessment, Diploma Options/Deferrals

Sonia Howley, (904) 547-7543 (office)

Sonia.Howley@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Speech/Language Impaired, Deaf Hard of Hearing

Kristen Logan, (904) 547-7709 (office)

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Curriculum

Jennifer Sparks, (904) 547-7580 (office)

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Elementary Curriculum

Lisa Thacker, (904) 547-7530 (office)

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Autism Spectrum Disorders, Access Points Curriculum

St. Johns County School District **Exceptional Student Education Department**

Lisa Bell, Director

Lisa.Bell@stjohns.k12.fl.us

(904) 547-7672 (office)

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Tina Powell, Assistant Director

Tina.Powell@stjohns.k12.fl.us

(904) 547-7546 (office)

OT/PT, Assistive Tech, 504, McKay Scholarships

CHARACTER COUNTS!



Jill Sumner, Executive Secretary

(904) 547-7672 Jill.Sumner@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Carlyn Whitty, Confidential Staff Secretary

(904) 547-7712 Carlyn.Whitty@stjohns.k12.fl.us

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.

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. *Parents As Partners Newsletters* are posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at:

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ese/>