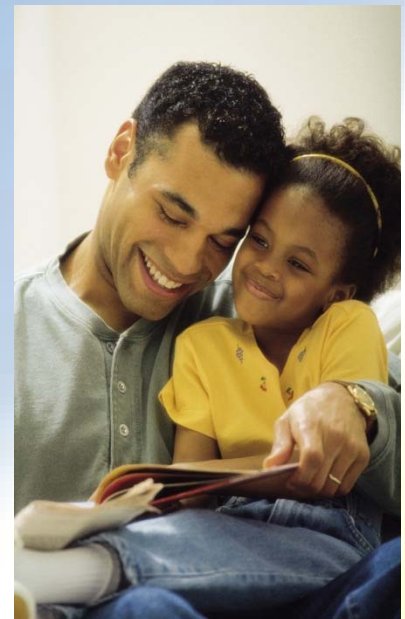




Arlington Public Schools

*Strengthening Family and Community Engagement*

*Family* Special Education  
Resource and  
Information  
GUIDE



*National School Public Relations Association's  
Chesapeake Chapter 2012  
Communications Contest  
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE*



## Translation/Interpreters

If you are interested in learning more about special education and prefer to speak in Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Mongolian, Russian, Spanish or another language, please contact the Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC) at 703-228-7239.

Arlington Public Schools has interpreters available by telephone, and we will be happy to assist you.

Si quiere saber más acerca de Educación Especial y prefiere hablar con alguien ya sea en español, amhárico, árabe, mongol, o bengalí, por favor, contacte el Centro de Recursos para Padres, al 703.228.7239. Las Escuelas Públicas de Arlington cuentan con intérpretes disponibles por teléfono, y con gusto le ayudaremos.

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إن كنت ترغب في معرفة المزيد عن التعليم الخاص باللغات (الأمهارية ، العربية ، البنغالية ، المنغولية والإسبانية) الرجاء الإتصال على مركز موارد الآباء للتعليم الخاص على هذا الرقم: 703.228.7239 هنالك خدمة للترجمة الفورية بالهاتفون لمدارس أرلنجتون العامة ، وسنكون سعداء لمساعدتكم.

আপনি নিশ্চল নলক্ষা স্পর্শকে (আমরানরক,আরী,িাাংা,মাংশ ানয়াি গ্রিঃ স্প্যািীল ভায়া) আশরা জািশে আগ্রী শি,অুগ্র কশর 703.228.7239 িশ্বর স্পস্প্লা এডুশকলি পযাশরন্ট নরশাে স্পন্টাশর স্পযা াশযা করি। আনোংটি পানি ক স্কু-এ স্পটন শ াশি স্প াভাী পাওয়া যায় গ্রিঃ আমরা আপিশক আশের াশে ায়ো করি।

Ta Tусгай Боловсролын талаархи дэлгэрэнгүй (Амхар, Араб, Беангли, Монгол, Испани хэлүүд дээр) мэдээлэл авах сонирхолтой бол 703.228.7239 тоот утсаар Тусгай Боловсролын Эцэг Эхчүүдийн Мэдээллийн Төв (Special Education Parent Resource Center)- тэй холбогдоно уу. Арлингтоны Улсын Сургуулиас утсаар хэлмэрч авах үйлчилгээ үзүүлдэг ба бид танд туслахад баяртай байх болно.



Special Education  
*Family* Resource and  
Information

G U I D E



Arlington Public Schools  
Department of Student Services and Special Education  
Office of Special Education  
1426 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent  
Dr. Brenda Wilks, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services  
Mr. Paul Jamelske, Director, Office of Special Education

Revised – May, 2017

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This *Special Education Family Resource and Information Guide* was developed collaboratively by parents and Arlington Public Schools (APS) staff members, with assistance from Virginia Commonwealth University's Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE) during the 2011-12 academic year, and updated in August, 2016.

As you navigate the APS special education system, we offer you our support, and hope this guide assists you to: become an active member of your child's educational team, organize information about your child, work collaboratively with your school, access the variety of resources that are available to support you and your child, and make the best possible decisions on your child's behalf.



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## Acknowledgements

The **2011-2012 Arlington VCU-ACE Team** members, listed below and identified by positions held during the initial publication of this guide, worked to implement a grant from the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. Their commitment, collaboration, and expertise are reflected in this guide and in the variety of initiatives currently underway to improve educational services for students with disabilities who are certain to benefit from this work.

M. Alexandra Arriaga, *Parent*  
Dr. Lauren Bonnet, *Speech Pathologist*  
Donna Budway, *Parent*  
Steven Celmer, *VCU-ACE Technical Assistance Associate*  
Dr. Julie Crawford, *Director, Office of Special Education*  
Laura DePatch, *Autism Specialist*  
Erin Donohue, *Autism Specialist*  
Kathleen Donovan, *PRC Coordinator*  
Deborah Hammer, *Autism Specialist*

Susan Holland, *Director of Counseling*  
Joyce Kelly, *Transition Coordinator*  
Maureen Nesselrode, *Assistant Principal*  
Dr. Lisa Piehota, *Principal*  
Elaine Porter, *Special Education Coordinator*  
Janet Quantrille, *Supervisor of Special Programs*  
Carolyn Thiell, *Special Education Coordinator*  
Dr. Terrig Thomas, *Parent*  
Beth Zivic, *Special Education Teacher*

Special thanks to **Alexandra Arriaga** (*Parent*) and **Kathleen Donovan** (*Special Education Parent Resource Center Coordinator*), for having written and edited materials in this publication and for their overall work in the production of this guide. Their collaboration is an example of the positive outcomes that are possible through strong family/school partnerships.

Thanks also to *Emma Parral*, Parent Resource Center Administrative Assistant, for her technical support; Jim Long, APS Print Shop Supervisor, for his guidance, expertise and support; Dr. Regina Arriaga and Ms. Stella Martinez for support with Spanish language translation; Vickie Barr for review and updates; and the many *Arlington parents and staff* who helped in the preparation of this guide; and Karen Shimkus and the APS PEP (Program for Employment Preparedness) for production assistance.

The 2016 reprinting of this Guide was made possible by a generous grant from the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Student Services. We are grateful to the VDOE's Hank Millward, Gloria Dalton, and Tracy Lee for their support of this project.



## What is My Role as a Parent/Guardian?

Parents are valued members of children's educational teams. You are an expert on your child. You know your child's history, strengths and needs. You are the constant member of your child's educational team. Some of the roles you play:

***Parent as Advocate:*** You know your child best and are an important member of your child's educational team. Ask who should be your main point of contact at the school, and ask how to contribute constructively to support your child at school. Use what you know about your child and what you learn about services and options to make the best possible recommendations and decisions. As a parent, you see your child in many different situations - at home, on the playground, around the neighborhood and in many other settings. You know how your child acts in new situations, reacts to adults and other children, and makes needs and wants known. All of this information is relevant and will help other team members learn about your child's strengths and needs.

***Parent as Teacher:*** You are a constant teacher for your child and know your child's educational history. You can share your experience and ideas with school staff and discuss what your child does at home and what works for you and your child. You can also reinforce lessons taught at school by helping your child practice skills when you are at home and elsewhere. By encouraging good communication, you can help create opportunities to teach/reinforce key lessons across settings, inside and outside of school.

***Parent as Partner:*** Identify your child's needs and discuss your expectations, hopes, and dreams with the team. Share your input and advice with the team, be a clear communicator, and solicit and seek the advice of your team when needed. Offer your thoughts about the level of involvement and collaboration you prefer and discuss the best way to partner constructively with school-based team members.

***Parent as Narrator:*** Be sure new programs and service providers have up-to-date records. Always request and save copies of all reports and documents about your child, organize the data chronologically in files, notebooks, flash drives or other technology storage systems, and keep track of the services your child receives during his/her lifetime. This information helps determine the services your child will receive at school and may become necessary to access adult services once your child transitions from a school setting to adulthood.





**SPECIAL EDUCATION:  
PREPARING FOR  
KEY MEETINGS  
AND  
TRANSITIONS**





**Arlington Public Schools**  
**Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC)**  
**Syphax Academic Center at Sequoia Plaza**  
**2110 Washington Boulevard, Suite 158**  
**Arlington, VA 22204**  
**[www.apsva.us/prc](http://www.apsva.us/prc)**  
**703-228-7239**

The purpose of the PRC is to provide information and support to families of children with disabilities as they work with school staff to identify and meet their child's unique educational needs. The staff members at the PRC welcome all families to contact them to learn more about their child's disability, the special education process, advocacy, and how families can collaborate with school staff on behalf of their children. Through use of language interpreters, PRC staff members have the ability communicate with families who prefer to speak in languages other than English. The PRC also has parent liaisons who serve as school-based points of contacts to support and connect families with others in the community.



The PRC provides:

- Free parent education sessions on disability and parenting topics throughout the school year
- Lending library with materials relating to disabilities, parenting, and general and special education
- Informational website at [www.apsva.us/prc](http://www.apsva.us/prc)
- Individual family meetings and consultations to provide assistance and support
- E-news updates through APS School Talk (subscribe at [www.apsva.us](http://www.apsva.us))
- Support in connecting with community support groups and list-servs
- Information and referrals
- Assistance navigating the special education process and collaborating with school staff members

The PRC is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:00pm. Evening and Saturday hours are available by appointment. Families are welcome to drop in to browse the library at any time. However, if you wish to meet with a PRC Coordinator, it is best to schedule an appointment in advance, if possible. The PRC follows the Arlington Public Schools inclement weather policy, so, if schools are closed due to inclement weather, the PRC will also be closed. To learn more about the PRC, obtain directions and parking information, contact a PRC Coordinator, or schedule an appointment, please visit us at [www.apsva.us/prc](http://www.apsva.us/prc).





## The Special Education Process

The Virginia Department of Education published the *Parent's Guide to Special Education* in 2010 to help families understand their rights and responsibilities, their children's rights, and schools' responsibilities in meeting the special needs of children.

The guide includes a description of the special education process, and what is required of you and Arlington Public Schools during each step of the process. Families are encouraged to review the guide prior to attending special education meetings.

This guide highlights each step of the special education process, but additional, detailed information can be found in the VDOE *Parent's Guide to Special Education*.

The VDOE *Parent's Guide* is available online:

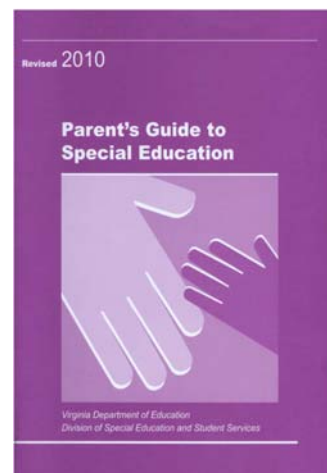
English: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/parents/parents\\_guide.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide.pdf)

Spanish: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/parents/parents\\_guide\\_spanish.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide_spanish.pdf)

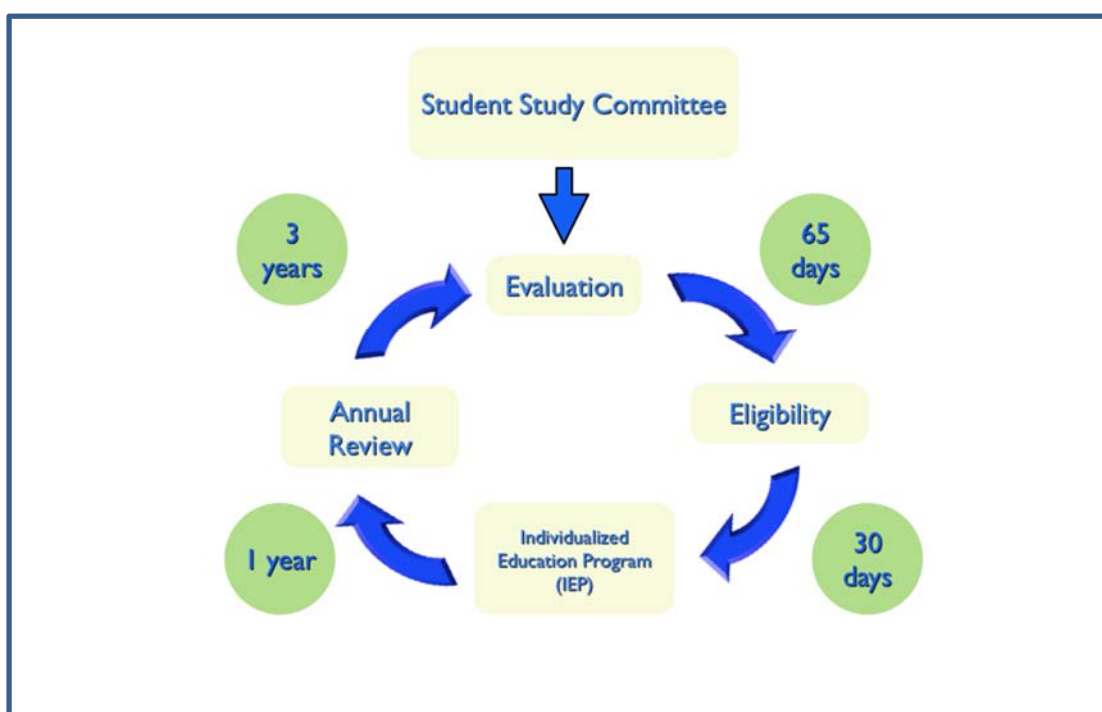
e-PUB for mobile text readers: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/parents/parents\\_guide.epub](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide.epub)

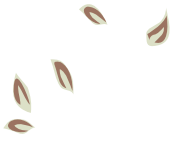
Additional VDOE parent resources and information pertaining to special education is available at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/families/index.shtml>

Finally, Virginia's Special Education Parent Connection provides a wealth of information for families at: <https://vafamilysped.org/>



## The Special Education Cycle





# Student Study Committee Meetings

# Student Study Committee (SSC) Meeting

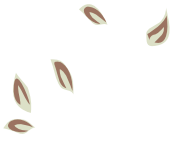
Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Student Study Committee At A Glance</b></p>	<p><b>What is the Student Study Committee (SSC)?</b> The SSC is a team assembled to assess the concerns and needs of any student referred.</p> <p><b>Who are members of the SSC?</b> Parent/Guardian, and generally a Principal/Assistant Principal or designee, Classroom Teacher, and/or others invited by school and/or family.</p> <p><b>What is discussed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person who has referred the child will share concerns.</li> <li>• All important information regarding your child will be reviewed.</li> <li>• Any available medical information provided is considered.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is determined?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team may recommend strategies and/or interventions to be tried in your child's classroom(s).</li> <li>• The team may refer the child for evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. If the team recommends an evaluation, and you agree and provide consent, your child must be tested by qualified personnel (persons who hold the required license from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) or other appropriate state or national agency) in all areas related to the suspected disability. These may include, if appropriate: health, vision, hearing; social and emotional status; general intelligence; academic performance; communicative status; motor abilities; and adaptive behavior. Recommended assessment components may include: Socio-cultural, Psychological, Educational, Teacher Narrative, and others, as needed, such as Speech/Language, and/or Occupational Therapy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tips for Preparing</b> <i>Your school values your contributions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take time to reflect on your child's strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Seek your child's input as appropriate.</li> <li>• Compile and submit any private reports you wish to share.</li> <li>• Consider your family's priorities and desired outcomes for this meeting. Use the Talking Points section (below) to help organize your thoughts.</li> <li>• Note any questions you want to remember to ask during the meeting on the Questions section (below).</li> <li>• Contact the Parent Resource Center (PRC) to learn more about the process, and, if possible, register for the PRC's "Introduction to Special Education" session.</li> <li>• Let your school know if you will be bringing someone with you to the meeting so that the school can adequately prepare space and materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>My Role as a Parent or Guardian</b> <i>You are an equal and valuable member of the educational team.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in discussion at the meeting.</li> <li>• Be comfortable sharing your input, thoughts and any concerns you may have.</li> <li>• Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: If an evaluation is recommended, your consent is required before the evaluation can be conducted.</i></p>

Talking Points

Questions



# Eligibility Committee Meetings

# Eligibility Committee Meeting

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Eligibility Committee At A Glance</b></p>	<p><b>What is the Eligibility Committee?</b> The Eligibility Committee is a team assembled to determine whether your child has a disability and is in need of special education and related services.</p> <p><b>Who are typically members of the Eligibility Committee?</b> Parent/Guardian, Principal/Assistant Principal or designee, Classroom Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Special Education Coordinator (SEC), School Nurse, School Psychologist, School Social Worker, related service providers, and/or others invited by school and/or family.</p> <p><b>What is discussed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each team member (including parent/guardian) will summarize their evaluation and input.</li> <li>• The team will review and carefully consider information from a variety of sources, including parent input, teacher recommendations, and evaluations that have been completed and presented.</li> <li>• The team will discuss whether the evaluations and information indicate that your child meets the criteria as a “child with a disability, who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services”.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is determined?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team will work toward consensus and determine whether your child meets the eligibility criteria as a “child with a disability, who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services”.</li> <li>• Each team member will state whether they agree or disagree with the eligibility determination.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tips for Preparing</b> <i>Your school values your contributions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review your procedural safeguards.</li> <li>• Reflect on your child's strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Review the Virginia Department of Education's definitions of “children with disabilities” (in this section). This is the criteria the Eligibility Committee is required to use for identification.</li> <li>• Consider your family's priorities and desired outcomes for this meeting. Use the Talking Points section (on reverse) to help organize your thoughts.</li> <li>• Note any questions you want to remember to ask in the Questions Section on reverse.</li> <li>• Compile any private reports (i.e. evaluations, medical reports) you wish to share, and submit them in advance of the meeting, if possible.</li> <li>• The eligibility packet with assessment components is available at least two days prior to the eligibility meeting. Confirm plans for receiving the packet with your school's special education administrative assistant* at least two weeks prior to the meeting. <i>*Families with children being evaluated through the Child Find program should call Child Find at 703.228.2700.</i></li> <li>• Schedule time to carefully review eligibility packet with assessment components.</li> <li>• Inform your school if you will be inviting others to the eligibility meeting so the school can prepare for adequate space and materials.</li> <li>• Attend the Parent Resource Center (PRC)'s <i>Introduction to Special Education</i> course, or contact the PRC to learn more about the process.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See Reverse</i></p>



**My Role as a Parent or Guardian**

*You are an equal and valuable member of the educational team*

- Actively participate in discussion at the meeting.
- Be comfortable sharing your input, thoughts and any concerns you may have.
- Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.
- Consider and express whether you agree with the eligibility determination.
- If you have concerns about the outcome of the meeting, you can ask the team about next steps, which may include options for resolving disagreements. You can also contact the PRC for additional information.

*Note: Your consent is required for your child to be found eligible, and before any changes in the identification of your child's disability.*

**Talking Points**

**Questions**

# Children with Disabilities in Virginia

## *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia* Virginia Department of Education

**"Child with a disability"** means a child evaluated in accordance with the provisions of this chapter as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disability (referred to in this part as "emotional disability"), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. This also includes developmental delay if the local educational agency recognizes this category as a disability in accordance with 8VAC20-81-80 M 3.

**"Autism"** means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in this definition are satisfied.

**"Deaf-blindness"** means simultaneous hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

**"Developmental delay"** means a disability affecting a child ages two by September 30 through six, 1. Who is experiencing developmental delays, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development, or who has an established physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay;  
2. The delay(s) is not primarily a result of cultural factors, environmental or economic disadvantage, or limited English proficiency; and  
3. The presence of one or more documented characteristics of the delay has an adverse effect on educational performance and makes it necessary for the student to have specially designed instruction to access and make progress in the general educational activities for this age group.

**"Emotional disability"** means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

1. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
  2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
  3. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
  4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
  5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- Emotional disability includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disability.

**"Hearing impairment"** means an impairment in hearing in one or both ears, with or without amplification, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.



**"Intellectual disability"** means the definition formerly known as "mental retardation" and means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**"Multiple disabilities"** means simultaneous impairments (such as intellectual disability with blindness, intellectual disability with orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

**"Orthopedic impairment"** means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

**"Other health impairment"** means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia and Tourette syndrome that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**"Specific learning disability"** means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disabilities; of emotional disabilities; of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

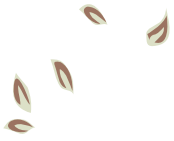
Dyslexia is distinguished from other learning disabilities due to its weakness occurring at the phonological level. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

**"Speech or language impairment"** means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, expressive or receptive language impairment, or voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**"Traumatic brain injury"** means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

**"Visual Impairment"** means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.





# IEP Meetings and Placement Decisions

# Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting At A Glance</b></p>	<p><b>What is the Individualized Education Program?</b> The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document designed to meet your child's unique needs.</p> <p><b>Who are typically members of the IEP Team?</b> Parent/Guardian, Principal/Assistant Principal or designee, Classroom Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Related Service Providers, your child, if appropriate, and/or others invited by school and/or family.</p> <p><b>What is discussed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your child's strengths and weaknesses, and present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFPs).</li> <li>• Your child's academic, developmental and functional needs.</li> <li>• How your child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum.</li> <li>• Behavior interventions and strategies, if needed.</li> <li>• Communication needs.</li> <li>• Home-school communication.</li> <li>• For students ages 14 and older, your child's post-secondary goals related to training, education, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills (additional information in Transition section).</li> <li>• All factors involved in providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for your child, including your child's need for Extended School Year (ESY) services and assistive technology.</li> <li>• Provision of services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).</li> </ul> <p><b>What is determined?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable annual goals and the need for short-term objectives.</li> <li>• Participation in state, division and/or alternate assessments, and anticipated diploma outcomes.</li> <li>• How progress toward annual goals will be measured.</li> <li>• When you will receive progress reports.</li> <li>• Frequency, duration, and location of special education and related services to be provided.</li> <li>• Transition services (required for children 14 years and older), including course of study, instruction, related services and community experiences, based on your child's needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tips for Preparing</b> <i>Your school values your contributions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on your child's strengths and educational needs.</li> <li>• Seek your child's input.</li> <li>• Consider your short and long term goals for your child.</li> <li>• Think about supports you think your child may need at school.</li> <li>• Share relevant information, input and suggestions with the IEP Team in advance of the meeting, if possible.</li> <li>• Request draft IEP materials (draft PLAAFPs and draft goals are usually sent home by the school at least two days prior to the meeting) and current IEP, if applicable.</li> <li>• Schedule time to review draft materials, report cards, and IEP progress notes; and prepare for the meeting.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Tips for Preparing</b> <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider your family's priorities and desired outcomes for this meeting. Use the Talking Points section (on reverse) to help organize your thoughts.</li> <li>• Learn about the Virginia guidelines for participation in state assessments (which may impact diploma options) on VDOE's website at <a href="http://www.vdoe.virginia.gov">www.vdoe.virginia.gov</a>.</li> <li>• Learn about Virginia Diploma Options at: <a href="http://www.apsva.us/prc/diplomas/">www.apsva.us/prc/diplomas/</a></li> <li>• Note any questions you want to remember to ask during the meeting on the Questions section on reverse.</li> <li>• Attend the Parent Resource Center (PRC)'s "Becoming an Active Member of Your Child's IEP Team" training.</li> <li>• Contact the PRC to discuss how you can prepare for this meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>My Role as a Parent or Guardian</b> <i>You are an equal and valuable member of the educational team.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in discussion at the meeting.</li> <li>• Be comfortable sharing your input, thoughts and any concerns.</li> <li>• Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.</li> <li>• If you agree with the final draft, you will be asked to provide consent for the IEP to be implemented.</li> <li>• If you wish to review the IEP before providing consent, you may review the final draft and return it to the school signed after the meeting. (Be advised, until you provide written consent, the school is unable to initiate the special education and related services specified in the new IEP.)</li> <li>• At the end of the meeting, if the team has not reached consensus on the IEP, or if you disagree with the final draft, a follow-up IEP meeting will be scheduled.</li> </ul> <p>Note: <i>Your consent is required for implementation of an initial IEP, and for any changes to your child's IEP. You have the right to revoke your consent for your child to continue to receive special education and related services at any time.</i></p>
<p><b>Talking Points</b></p>	<p><b>Questions</b></p>



## Student's Placement and Services

Arlington Public Schools (APS) provides a continuum of services from ages 2 through 22 for students with disabilities, pre-kindergarten through high school, who are found eligible to receive special education services. It is important to be mindful that special education refers to *services* as opposed to *places*. For example, special education services may be provided directly in general (regular) education classes ("push-in" services), and/or in special education settings ("pull-out" services). Based on their unique and individual learning needs, some students may spend the majority of the school day in general education settings, while others spend the majority of the school day in a special education setting. In many instances, students with disabilities receive a combination of push in and pull out services.

### Placement Decisions

You are a critical member of the IEP team that determines your child's placement, and your consent is required for this decision. Therefore, families are encouraged to become familiar with APS' continuum of services. Every student must be provided a ***Free Appropriate Public Education*** (FAPE) in the ***Least Restrictive Environment***.

The first consideration in determining placement is the services and supports your child needs. The next consideration that the team is required by federal law to address is that your child is educated in the ***Least Restrictive Environment*** (LRE). The LRE means that children are educated in general education settings with typically developing peers to the greatest extent possible, and are removed from those settings only when needed to meet the child's unique learning needs. Usually, every effort is made to provide services in the child's local neighborhood school if appropriate services are available, and the majority of students with disabilities within APS will receive special education services in their home schools.

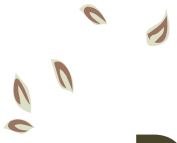
### Continuum of Placement and Service Possibilities

As children's learning needs are different, every public elementary, middle and high school in Arlington offers a continuum of services for special education and related services. In order to meet the specialized needs of some students with disabilities, APS also offers specialized countywide programs, and placement at the Stratford Program and the Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP), secondary programs for students with disabilities. Placement into countywide programs is a carefully considered IEP team decision, since such programs represent a more restrictive placement. Inclusion opportunities and experiences with non-disabled peers are expected for all students, regardless of placement. Infrequently, IEP teams may determine that students require homebound instruction or placement in a more restrictive environment such as a private school setting to meet their needs. APS also provides Service Plans to students with disabilities who are parentally placed at private schools located in Arlington.

Extensive information about APS Special Education, including services and countywide programs, can be found at: <https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of/>

You are encouraged to contact the Parent Resource Center (PRC) to learn more about special education and the continuum of services, and connect with parent liaisons in Arlington schools.





# Reevaluation Planning Meetings

# Reevaluation Planning Meeting

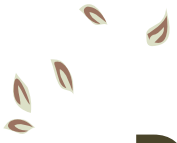
Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Reevaluation Planning Meeting At A Glance</b></p>	<p><b>What is the Reevaluation Planning Meeting?</b></p> <p>The Reevaluation Planning Meeting is an opportunity for educational teams to review assessments, available data and/or new assessments/information about a student.</p> <p>At least every three years, the school must conduct a reevaluation to determine whether your child is still a "child with a disability"*. A Reevaluation Planning Meeting will take place before this required reevaluation of students with disabilities. The Reevaluation Planning Meeting is an opportunity to discuss whether additional evaluations are needed and plan for specific assessments to be conducted if the team (including parents) determines a need for assessments to determine continuing eligibility and parents provide consent for new assessments.</p> <p>A Reevaluation Planning Meeting may also be requested more frequently than every three years at the request of IEP team member(s), including parents, for additional purposes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing new information/reports, and/or</li> <li>• determining a student's current educational needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Who usually attends the Reevaluation Planning Meeting?</b></p> <p>Parent/Guardian, Principal/Assistant Principal/or designee, Classroom Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Related Service Providers, Special Education Coordinator (SEC), your child, if appropriate, and/or others invited by school and/or family.</p> <p><b>What is discussed?</b></p> <p>The team will review existing information and data about your child, and determine what additional data, if any, are needed to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether your child continues to be "a child with a disability"* who requires special education and related services; and/or</li> <li>• the present educational needs of your child; and/or</li> <li>• your child's present level of academic achievement and related developmental needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is determined?</b></p> <p>What, if any, assessments and/or data may be needed to determine whether your child is still a child with a disability*; and/or whether any additions or modifications to special education and related services are needed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See Reverse</i></p>
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\* Note: The Virginia Department of Education definition of "children with disabilities" is provided in the Eligibility section of this guide.

<p><b>Tips for Preparing</b>  <i>Your school values your contributions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on your child’s strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Review IEP progress reports, report cards, and/or other recent assessments.</li> <li>• Prepare and submit any private reports you wish to share.</li> <li>• Consider whether you think additional assessments are needed to determine eligibility or your child’s educational needs.</li> <li>• If you feel additional assessments are needed, note which assessments you believe are needed, and be prepared to discuss the need(s).</li> <li>• Consider your family’s priorities and desired outcomes for this meeting. Use the Talking Points section (below) to help organize your thoughts.</li> <li>• Note any questions you want to remember to ask at the meeting in the Questions section (below).</li> <li>• Contact the PRC to discuss how you can prepare for this meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>My Role as a Parent or Guardian</b>  <i>You are an equal and valuable member of the educational team.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in discussion at the meeting.</li> <li>• Be comfortable sharing your input, thoughts and any concerns.</li> <li>• Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Be aware that your consent is required for the school to conduct additional assessments. However, the school may proceed with assessments if the school has taken reasonable steps to obtain your consent and you have not responded.</i></p>
<p><b>Talking Points</b></p>	<p><b>Questions</b></p>



# Reevaluation Meetings

# Reevaluation Meeting

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Reevaluation Meeting At A Glance</b></p>	<p><b>What is the Reevaluation Meeting?</b> At least every three years, the school must reevaluate your child to determine whether your child is still a child with a disability who is in need of special education and/or related services. In advance of the Reevaluation Meeting, a Reevaluation Planning Meeting will be held to decide whether additional assessments (testing, observations and other information) are needed to determine continued eligibility.</p> <p><b>Who usually attends the Reevaluation Meeting?</b> Parent/Guardian, Principal/Assistant Principal/or designee, Classroom Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Related Service Providers, Special Education Coordinator (SEC), your child, if appropriate, and/or others invited by school and/or family.</p> <p><b>What is discussed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team will review existing information and all evaluations that may have been completed.</li> <li>• The team will discuss whether your child continues to meet the criteria as a "child with a disability that affects his/her educational performance".</li> <li>• Team members will state whether they agree or disagree with the eligibility determination.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is determined?</b> The team will determine whether your child continues to meet the criteria as a "child with a disability, who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services".</p>
<p><b>Tips for Preparing</b> <i>Your school values your contributions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on your child's strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Review IEP progress reports, report cards, and/or other recent assessments.</li> <li>• Consider your family's priorities and desired outcomes for this meeting. Use the "Talking Points" section below to help organize your thoughts.</li> <li>• Contact the PRC to discuss how you can prepare for this meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>My Role as a Parent or Guardian</b> <i>You are an equal and valuable member of the educational team.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in the meeting.</li> <li>• Be comfortable sharing your thoughts, input, and any concerns you may have.</li> <li>• Ask questions and seek clarification as needed.</li> <li>• Schedule/request an IEP meeting if needed.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: <i>Your consent is required for the school to determine eligibility, make any changes to your child's eligibility, and/or terminate eligibility.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See reverse</i></p>



Talking Points	Questions



Team

Collaboration

# Family/School Engagement and Collaboration

We know from experience and research that parent/guardian engagement is a strong indicator of a student's success at school. You are your child's advocate and the constant member of your child's educational team. In order to be an effective member of the team, here are a few suggestions for building positive and collaborative partnerships:

**Acknowledge mutual goals:** Your team shares the important goal of ensuring that your child receives an appropriate educational program. It's important to work together toward this goal.

**Be prepared:** Review the resources in this guide to organize your thoughts and input, prepare for special education meetings, and know your rights and responsibilities. Share information. Provide copies of relevant private reports or examples of your child's skills, strengths and weaknesses to help inform the team of your child's educational needs. Feel comfortable seeking advice or ideas from the Parent Resource Center (PRC), your child's school team, and other parents.

**Communicate Effectively:** Collaborative teams are developed when, motivated by shared goals, teammates respect and value one another, acknowledge each team member's contributions, and accept different perspectives and opinions. Team members are encouraged to utilize active listening skills, ask questions and seek clarification when needed, and communicate openly and directly. Here are some examples of "bridges" to communication:

- That's an interesting idea. Can you tell me more about it?
- So, it sounds to me as if...
- I'm interested in your thoughts on...
- Can you walk me through what this would look like at school?
- I don't clearly understand. Could you explain this idea further?
- If I'm understanding you correctly, your position is...
- I'd like to try and explain our family's thoughts on...
- What might some alternatives be?
- It would help our family to have time to reflect on what we've discussed about our child today.
- I'd love to hear from...
- If we are unsure about this decision right now, what would next steps be?
- Thank you for your willingness to discuss this further.

**Express Appreciation:** Acknowledge the contributions of your teammates, and reflect on what is working well. Send unprompted notes to ensure staff are aware of your observations of growth in your child.

**Keep the Focus on the Student:** In working together, it is important to be mindful of the team's shared mutual goal... positive outcomes for your child. Keeping the conversation focused and targeted toward the child will lead to productive meetings and outcomes. Be solution-oriented. If your team cannot reach consensus, agree to respectfully disagree, and inquire about next steps. You can contact the PRC for information, and VDOE has a guide to support teams in resolving disagreements at: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/resolving\\_disputes/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/resolving_disputes/)

**Celebrate Accomplishments:** Your child's success is gratifying to all team members. Although it is important to focus on where your child may need continuing support, be sure to reflect on and note growth, development and new accomplishments during team meetings.





# Parent Keys to Success In the Parent-School Partnership

## Parents As School Partners

When individuals or groups join together to work toward a common goal, a partnership is formed. Successfully reaching the goal requires mutual cooperation and a sharing of responsibilities. While carried out in different ways, the principles used to satisfy personal and business partnerships are much the same.

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. When your child enters school, you and the school become partners in what you both hope will be a profitable, long-term enterprise.

In this important venture, the common goal is the successful development and education of your child. Years of research show that the more families are actively involved in the education of their children, the more successful the child will be in school and in life. In the parent-school partnership, there is little opportunity for choice in the selection of partners. Partners can, however, choose to think and act in ways that will promote a positive partnership. A productive parent-school partnership will pay big dividends for its primary beneficiary—your child.

## Partnership Essentials

### Good Communication

- Introduce yourself to your child's teachers, principal, and other school staff. An open house or other "back-to-school" event is a great time to make a brief, personal contact. Simply shaking hands and saying, "Hi, I'm Jamie's mom, I'm looking forward to working in partnership with you this year," can set a positive tone for future communication.
- Since miscommunication often occurs as a result of poor timing, it's important to know when it's an appropriate time to talk with staff. As a general rule, whenever students are present, school staff should not divert their attention to parents for more than a minute or two. If a personal meeting is desired, schedule a time to meet. If you are communicating by phone, keep in mind that teachers usually must limit their time to check their voice mail. Teachers usually return or accept calls during their assigned "prep time." If you have an urgent need, ask the school secretary to write down your message and have it delivered directly to the teacher.
- Find out the best method for communicating with school staff. Some individuals will prefer phone calls, others will respond best to e-mail or written notes.
- The purpose of the communication should determine the method. For example, although e-mail can be an effective and efficient method of communication, it can also be easily misinterpreted. Try to keep your e-mail communications very brief and factual. Feelings are best communicated verbally, in person or by phone.
- Provide the school with the best times and methods to communicate with you. Update contact information whenever there is a change. Respond as quickly and completely as possible to school contacts.
- Check your child's backpack daily for notes, newsletters, or other communications from the school. Find out how to access the school and school district websites, and check regularly for current information.
- If English is a second language for you, ask for information to be provided in your native language.
- Share information about any circumstances at home that may affect your child's performance or behavior in school. For example, the birth of a new sibling, a parent's illness, or the death of

PARENT   
LEADERSHIP

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a close relative may temporarily affect your child's ability to concentrate. If the teacher has been made aware of the situation, they may be able to postpone an important test, adjust homework assignments, or provide additional support at school.

- Important information should be communicated in writing.
- When upset or confused, rather than making statements of accusations, ask questions. Resist making snap judgments based on what is possibly limited information. Ask school staff to explain things using words you understand.
- Remember that our tone of voice, facial expression, and body language often speak louder than our words.
- Be a good listener. Give your full and complete attention. Try not to interrupt. Don't begin formulating your response while the other person is still talking.
- Label opinions as opinions. If someone states an opinion as fact, rather than arguing, ask for the data (factual information) to support it.
- Use "we" language as much as possible. The education of your child is a team effort. "You" language can cause the person being addressed to feel defensive, rather than cooperative.

### **Honesty, Accountability and Trust**

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- Give and expect complete and accurate information.
- Keep your commitments. Put school conference and meeting dates on your calendar and check it frequently. If you can't make a meeting, call ahead of time to reschedule.
- Keep confidential information confidential. When school staff trusts you with information, honor that trust by using the information appropriately.
- Complete trust is developed over time. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Act as if they are on your team unless they prove otherwise.

### **Respect**

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- Treat others with the same level of consideration and respect you desire and expect from them.
- Keep in mind that your child will adopt your view of their school and teachers. How your child feels about their school and teachers will directly affect their educational progress.
- As a member and partner in the school community, respect the variety of needs and concerns of other students and staff members, even while advocating for your own child's individual needs.

### **Mutual Participation**

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- As a parent, your most important contribution to the parent-school partnership is what you do outside of school to help prepare your child for school and to reinforce their learning.
- Find a way to contribute to your child's classroom or the school community based on what you like to do, what you do well, and the time you have available. For example, if you have a camera and enjoy taking photographs, volunteer to take photos at a school event. If you are a born organizer, serve on a committee to plan a classroom party.
- Take advantage of opportunities to help with school-wide events. Volunteering gives you the chance to meet other parents, students and staff members, and to feel included in the school community. You will be sending a strong message about the value you place on school, while setting a good example for your child.
- Communicate your desire to make a contribution, even when you are not able to physically participate. If your work schedule makes it difficult to volunteer during school hours, offer to make reminder calls from home, cut out nametags, or work on other projects that can be done at home and sent back into school with your child.
- Consider serving on a school site council, parent involvement committee, or other school or district advisory committee. Parent input is essential at a decision-making and policy level. Parent members are needed to express the needs, interests and concerns of families. The perspective of families who have a child with a disability is often underrepresented and particularly needed. Ask your principal how members apply for positions. Since most meetings are open to the public, you can attend as a visitor before deciding if it's an opportunity you wish to pursue.

### **Acknowledgement of Each Partner's Contributions**

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- Let people know when they are doing a good job. A child's homemade card with a short note from you can be a great encourager and motivator for a teacher, nurse, or other staff person. It takes only a minute or two to leave a short e-mail or voicemail message expressing appreciation. It can be especially effective to send a positive message to the staff person's supervisor.

### **Second Chances and Fresh Starts**

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- When mistakes are made, try to resolve them quickly and completely. Then wipe the slate clean and move forward. The goal is to direct the energy and effort in this partnership toward the successful education of your child.
- Try to approach each new school year as an opportunity

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for a fresh start for all involved, regardless of past issues or conflicts.

## Partnership Challenges

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### Different Expectations, Perspectives, and Opinions

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- o It's been said of the marriage partnership, that if both people are the same, then one of them isn't necessary! The very differences that make a partnership so challenging, may also be the strength of the relationship. Children and their needs are complex and benefit from being looked at and addressed in more than one way.
- o Partnerships are established based upon what each person brings to the table. In the parent-school partnership, you as the parent are the expert on your child. Each school staff partner has his or her own particular area of educational expertise and experience. Each can learn from the other how to better meet the developmental and educational needs of the child.

### Unequal Knowledge or Power

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- o While parents have more knowledge about their child, they are often at a disadvantage when it comes to knowledge about the educational system in general, and special education in particular. It's important for parents to understand their rights and responsibilities, and how the system works. Ask for and read the school district and/or local school parent handbook. A free handbook on rights and responsibilities for parents of children with disabilities, *Parents Can Be the Key*, is available from PACER Center, as well as many other parent-friendly materials and resources.

### Misunderstanding of Roles and Responsibilities

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- o Difficulties in partnerships can often be traced to a misunderstanding about what each partner's role is, and who is responsible for various tasks. Ask questions to learn which staff persons have the authority to make decisions about various issues. Find out what the "chain

of command" is, and try to address your questions or concerns to the most appropriate person.

- o In the case of special education, no one person has the authority to make decisions about the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Decisions must be agreed upon by the IEP team, which includes the parent.

### Conflict

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- o Make it your aim to disagree without being disagreeable. Separate the person from the problem. In most cases, you and your child will have an ongoing relationship with the school long after the conflict is past. It is in your child's best interest to preserve the relationship, even when there is sharp disagreement.
- o Keep adult issues between adults. Children never benefit from being included in the conflict, and may feel its negative effects long after the conflict has passed.
- o If you have persistent and ongoing conflict with a particular staff person and you are unable to successfully resolve the issue with them directly, ask to speak with their immediate supervisor.
- o Rather than focusing all the energy and discussion on defining and dissecting the problem, focus on possible remedies or solutions.
- o When there is a disagreement on how to approach an area of concern, be willing to try something new on a trial basis. Make sure there's a plan in place to collect information during the trial period to determine whether or not the new plan should be continued. When handled well and resolved correctly, conflict may ultimately lead to positive outcomes for your child.

While working in partnership may be challenging, it can also be rewarding. Partners gain new perspectives and may learn new skills. Through mutual cooperation and the sharing of responsibilities, the parent-school partnership can accomplish its ultimate goal of enabling your child to succeed in learning and in life.



# Communication in the Special Education Process

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Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and other school meetings are crucial parts of a child's educational program. A parent's responsibility extends beyond giving consent and accepting explanations. Asking questions, bringing up issues to discuss, gathering information, and clarifying points are all part of the parent's role.

Parents can bring someone else to the special education meetings. All participants are working together to benefit the child. The parent is a very important member of the team.

Effective communication is two-way, generating the understanding and support the professionals and the parents all need to make effective decisions about the child's educational program. To foster meaningful communication, parents can:

- Make sure the focus stays on the child.
- Be prepared. Know in advance the important points to discuss and questions to ask. Write them down and check them off as they are addressed.
- Listen. Listening will help you gather information about your child and help you understand other viewpoints.

- State your issues clearly. Communicate in an honest and direct manner.
- Ask questions. Asking questions can be an effective way of clarifying a point and keeping the line of communication open.
- Comments and questions should be directed to the person who can best address or answer them.
- Restate your concerns if you are not heard the first time.
- Be confident. A parent never has to feel guilty or embarrassed asking questions or assertively pursuing the appropriate services for the child. It is your role and your right.
- Work together. Remember that neither you nor the professionals have all the answers. Work together as a team to find solutions. Everyone at the meeting has the same goal — to provide an appropriate educational program for the child.

The key to effective communication is preparation and willingness to be actively involved in planning the child's educational program.





# Key Contacts

# Our Team

Parent(s)/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Member	Name	Email	Phone
Case Carrier/Monitor/ Special Education Teacher(s)			
Special Education Assistant(s)/ Paraprofessional(s)			
General Education Teacher(s)			
Speech and Language Pathologist			
School Counselor			
Occupational Therapist			
Transition Coordinator (secondary)			
Specialists (Autism, Audiology, Vision, Hearing, Behavior, Assistive Technology, etc.)			
Principal/Assistant Principal/Designee			
Special Education Coordinator (SEC)			
Nurse/Clinic Assistant			
School Psychologist			
School Social Worker			







# Transitions

# Key Transitions and How to Prepare

Throughout childhood and adolescence, all children experience many transitions. Transitions occur each year as a child moves from one grade to another, and also occur when children move from one school or program to another.

We know that transitions sometimes cause uncertainty and stress for students and families. Planned transitions allow for smooth movement from one program, grade and/or school to another. As you prepare for transitions, be proactive, work closely with your child's educational team to identify what supports your child will need as he/she transitions to a new environment, and educate yourself about program options.

Each year, Arlington Public Schools (APS) hosts Kindergarten, Middle School, High School and College Information Nights. These large gatherings are designed to provide information about school options and programs for all families. In addition to APS Information Nights, the professionals at the Parent Resource Center (PRC) offer sessions and information for various transitions related specifically to children with disabilities, and are pleased to help connect families with resources and parent liaisons to inform decision-making during transition processes.

Every elementary, middle and high school in Arlington offers a continuum of services for students with disabilities, and there are also specialized countywide programs available from Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) through age 22. To learn more about APS' special education programs, please visit: <https://www.apsva.us/countywide-programs/>

Specific transitions that are predictable for families to prepare for include:

## Early Childhood to Pre-K

In Arlington, children may transition from early intervention services (often referred to as the Parent Infant Education (PIE) Program) and enter the public school Child Find system for Pre- K if they are:

- 2 years old by September 30th of the upcoming school year, and
- found eligible for special education services by Arlington Public Schools and/or another public school system in the United States.

Children are no longer eligible for (PIE) early intervention services once they turn 3 years old. APS offers a continuum of programs and services for students found eligible for special education. Most elementary schools have a Pre-K special education program (among a variety available in the continuum), and the majority of students in need of a Pre-K program attend their neighborhood elementary school. However, from time to time, another placement may be recommended by the IEP team. The staff at the PRC can answer questions and offer information to help families make informed decisions about placement and services as part of their child's IEP team.



## Pre-K to Kindergarten

Most children transition into Kindergarten programs the year they turn 5 by September 30<sup>th</sup>, although some parents elect to have their children wait until the year they turn 6 by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Once your child is found eligible for special education, you and other members of the IEP team will work together to determine the appropriate placement for your child based on his/her unique learning needs. Families should attend PRC workshops about transitioning to Kindergarten, and may also choose to visit elementary schools during Open Houses for prospective families. The PRC staff can help answer questions to help families prepare for this transition.

## Elementary to Middle School (Rising Sixth Graders)

In Arlington, elementary schools include Pre-K through Grade 5. Rising sixth graders will attend one of Arlington's middle schools. As your child approaches fifth grade, your IEP team will begin discussing your child's needs in middle school and planning for your child's transition. Families are encouraged to attend Middle School Information Night to learn about Arlington's middle schools and programs, and should contact the PRC for information and support.

## Middle School to High School (Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Graders)

Arlington's high schools encompass Grades 9 through 12, with the exception of the Stratford Program and the HB-Woodlawn Program, which include Grades 6 through 12. Toward the end of middle school, the IEP team will begin planning for your student's transition to high school. Parents may also contact the PRC for additional information and support.

## Age 14

The Virginia Department of Education *Regulations Governing Special Education* indicate that before your child enters secondary (high) school, but no later than the first IEP to be in effect when your child reaches age 14 (or younger, if the IEP team decides that it is appropriate), your child's IEP must include:

- Post-secondary goals related to training, education, employment, and, if appropriate, the student's independent living skills; and
- Transition services, including courses of study, and activities such as instruction, related services, and community experiences.

## Age of Majority

At least one year before your child reaches the age of majority (18), the IEP must include a statement that you and your child have been informed of the rights that will transfer from you to your child at age 18. You may, however, make arrangements to continue to make educational decisions for your adult child through guardianship procedures, a power of attorney, or certification. For additional information, refer to:

[www.doe.virginia.gov/special-ed/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special-ed/index.shtml)

- Students with disabilities may continue to receive special education until they receive a standard or advanced studies diploma, and/or reach the age of 22. (*Students who have not yet earned a standard or advanced studies diploma, and become 22 after September 30 remain eligible to receive services for that school year.*) Many students remain at their neighborhood schools or, based on IEP Team decisions, may also receive services in a county-wide program such as the Stratford Program or the



Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP). The Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP) is a community based class for supported work experience, supported travel training, and independent living training located at the Arlington Career Center.

### **Beyond High School to College or Vocation**

Planning for the post-secondary transition begins several years prior to this transition. Through the IEP process, families, students and staff begin to discuss post-secondary goals based on age-appropriate assessments, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests. IEP teams also discuss diploma options. Each Arlington high school has a Transition Coordinator to support this process. Transition Coordinators provide technical assistance and support to IEP teams. Contact your school or the PRC to learn how to access your school's Transition Coordinator, and sign up for one of the PRC's Post-Secondary Transition workshops. Also, please refer to information on the APS Transition Services webpage at:

<http://www.apsva.us/page/20922>

### **How can families prepare for Transitions?**

- Contact the Parent Resource Center (PRC) to learn about steps students and families can take to prepare for smooth transitions.
- Subscribe to APS School Talk to receive notices about parent education opportunities and APS Information Nights (Select APS School Talk at [www.apsva.us/](http://www.apsva.us/) - be sure to select Parent Academy and Special Education/Parent Resource Center as preferences). The PRC offers several parent education sessions on transitions. Sign up to attend.
- Visit the APS website and search the "School Options" page for information on school options, countywide programs, and school transfer options at: <https://www.apsva.us/school-options/>
- Early in the year, begin conversations with your child's IEP Team. Make lists of questions your family has and seek input about your child's needs during the transition. From time to time, IEP teams may consider alternative programs for students with disabilities. Information on countywide special education programs can be found at: <https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of-countywide-programs>
- Review APS' *Virginia Diploma Options and Possible Outcomes* (included in this guide).
- Visit Virginia's *I'm Determined* Project's website at [www.imdetermined.org](http://www.imdetermined.org)
- Families of students seeking postsecondary educational experiences can learn more about college supports and programs for students with disabilities at [www.going-to-college.org](http://www.going-to-college.org) and [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)
- Learn more about person-centered planning at: [http://www.personcenteredpractices.org/launch\\_vpbs.html](http://www.personcenteredpractices.org/launch_vpbs.html)



- Attend APS Information Nights, School Open Houses, PRC Transition Sessions, and “Future Quest” (a free, regional, biennial career and college forum for students with disabilities, parents and professionals). To learn more about Future Quest, visit <http://futurequest.gmu.edu/>.







## Fast Fact (April 2010)

### Secondary Transition: Why it is important to plan early.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) 2004 defines secondary transition as a coordinated set of activities designed to be within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic achievement and functional performance to facilitate movement from school to post-school activities. The purpose of transition planning for youth at age 14 and 16 is similar; good planning should address academic achievement and functional performance that will facilitate movement from school to post-school activities such as postsecondary education, career and technical education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

Local educational agencies (LEAs) should begin no later than the first individualized education program (IEP) to be in effect when the student is 14 because high school diploma options and courses of study discussions beginning earlier than the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will enable the student to access high school courses needed for graduation. When the IEP team members discuss diploma options, they should refer to the graduation requirements in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*. At both ages, 14 and 16, planning is based upon age appropriate transition assessments that outline the student's individual needs, strengths, preferences, and interests. Transition assessments may include observations, interviews, inventories, situational assessments, formal and informal assessments, as well as academic assessments. Transition services include activities needed to assist the student in reaching postsecondary goals and courses of study to support postsecondary goals. Transition activities may include instruction, related services, community experience, employment and other adult living objectives, daily living skills, functional vocational evaluation. A discussion should take place with the student and parents, and others as needed, to determine the postsecondary goals or post-school vision for the student. Postsecondary goals are measurable and must be based on age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, when necessary. Additionally, the goals are based on the student's needs, while considering the strengths, preferences and interests. As the IEP is updated annually, changes can be noted as the student gets older. At age 16, or earlier if appropriate, interagency responsibilities and linkages must be addressed in the IEP.

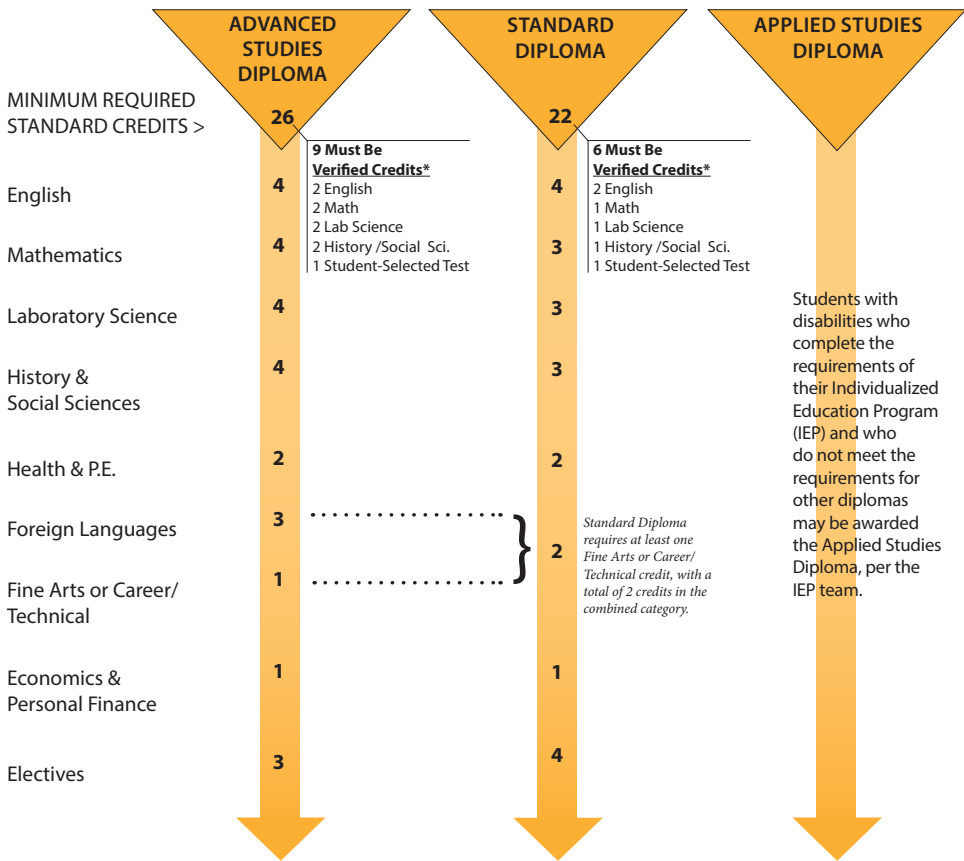
A summary of performance should be given to a student when they exit the secondary program. A summary, which will help the student make the transition to postsecondary settings includes:

- Academic achievement- what the youth knows such as literacy, numeracy, consumer, personal finance, and learning skills; reasoning, communication, processing, including the accommodations, supports and modifications required, etc.;
- Functional performance- behavior across different environments such as how the youth interacts with peers at school, in the community, at work; self-care, mobility, self-determination, safety, executive functioning skills, including the accommodations and supports required, etc.;
- Supports- Accommodations, modifications, assistive technology or other supports that students might need to be successful in postsecondary environments; and
- Next Steps- Recommendations for attaining postsecondary goals such as attend college orientation, meet with Department of Rehabilitative Services, meet with Disability Services Counselor at community college, keep a file of current disability documentation, complete employment applications, etc.

#### For more information:

Virginia Department of Education Web site: [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov) or contact Division of Special Education and Student Services at 804-225-2932, 1-800-422-2083, Text users dial 711 (Virginia Relay)

# Virginia Diploma Options and Possible Outcomes



- Vocational, Technical & Trade School
- Community College
- 4 Year College/University
- Military Service (Must Take ASVAB)
- Apprenticeships
- Gap Year Program
- Service Learning Program
- Professional Internships
- Adult Education

- APS Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP)
- Adult Education
- Community College
- Vocational/Career Training
- Apprenticeships
- Military Service (Must Take ASVAB)
- Gap Year Program
- Service Learning Program

Adult Service Agency Support, if eligible

**EMPLOYMENT**

\*A verified credit is based on successful completion of the course and achievement of a passing score on the SOL test. For more information, see Definitions.

## STANDARD DIPLOMA COURSE REQUIREMENTS (8 VAC 20-131-50.B)

Discipline Area	Standard Credits: effective with first- time ninth graders in 2011-2012 and beyond	Verified Credits: effective for first- time ninth graders in 2003-2004 and beyond
<b>English</b>	4	Must earn passing score on <b>both</b> SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English 11 Reading</li> <li>• English 11 Writing</li> </ul>
<b>Mathematics</b> Select <b>at least two</b> different courses from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra Functions and Data Analysis, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II.	3	Must earn passing score on <b>one</b> of the following SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra 1</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> </ul>
<b>Laboratory Science</b> Select courses from <b>at least two</b> different science disciplines: Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics.	3	Must earn passing score on <b>one</b> of the following SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth Science</li> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> </ul>
<b>History &amp; Social Sciences</b> Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include: <b>Both</b> U.S./Virginia History and U.S./Virginia Government – <b>plus one</b> course in either World History or World Geography or both.	3	Must earn passing score on <b>one</b> of the following SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World History to 1500 AD</li> <li>• World History after 1500 AD</li> <li>• World Geography</li> <li>• U.S./Virginia History</li> </ul>
<b>Health &amp; Physical Education</b>	2	
<b>Foreign Language, Fine Arts or Career &amp; Technical Education</b> Credits earned for this requirement shall include <b>one</b> credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education.	2	
<b>Economics and Personal Finance</b>	1	
<b>Electives</b> Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include <b>at least two sequential electives</b> .	4	
<b>Student Selected Test</b> A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in: Computer Science, Technology, Career/ Technical Education, Economics, or other areas.		Choose <b>one</b> additional SOL from any discipline area listed above, except English.
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>

**Note:** Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014, a student must also:

- Earn a board-approved career and technical education credential, and
- Successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing.

## ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA COURSE REQUIREMENTS (8 VAC 20-131-50.C)

Discipline Area	Standard Credits: effective with first- time ninth graders in 2011-2012 and beyond	Verified Credits: effective for ninth graders in 2000-2001 and beyond
<b>English</b>	4	Must earn passing score on <b>both</b> SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English 11 Reading</li> <li>• English 11 Writing</li> </ul>
<b>Mathematics</b> Select <b>at least three</b> different courses from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II.	4	Must earn passing score on <b>two</b> of the following SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra 1</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> </ul>
<b>Laboratory Science</b> Select courses from <b>at least three</b> different science disciplines: Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.	4	Must earn passing score on <b>two</b> of the following SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth Science</li> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> </ul>
<b>History &amp; Social Sciences</b> Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include: <b>Both</b> U.S./Virginia History and U.S./Virginia Government – <b>plus two</b> courses in either World History or World Geography or both.	4	Must earn passing score on <b>two</b> of the following SOLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World History to 1500 AD</li> <li>• World History after 1500 AD</li> <li>• World Geography</li> <li>• U.S./Virginia History</li> </ul>
<b>Health &amp; Physical Education</b>	2	
<b>Foreign Language</b> Courses to meet this requirement include: <b>Three</b> years of a single language. <b>OR</b> <b>Two</b> years each of two different languages.	3	
<b>Fine Arts or Career &amp; Technical Education</b>	1	
<b>Economics and Personal Finance</b>	1	
<b>Electives</b>	3	
<b>Student Selected Test</b> A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in: Computer Science, Technology, Career/ Technical Education, Economics, or other areas.		Choose <b>one</b> additional SOL from any discipline area listed above, except English.
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>

**Note:** Beginning with students entering ninth grade for the first time in 2013-2014, a student must successfully complete one virtual course, which may be non-credit bearing.

## DEFINITIONS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Age of Eligibility

The “age of eligibility” means all eligible children with disabilities who have not graduated with a standard or advanced studies high school diploma who, because of such disabilities, are in need of special education and related services, and whose second birthday falls on or before September 30, and who have not reached their 22nd birthday on or before September 30 (2-21, inclusive) in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

### Age of Majority

The “age of majority” means the age when the procedural safeguards and other rights afforded to the parent or parents of a student with a disability transfer to the student. In Virginia the age of majority is 18. Notification of the age of majority must be given at least one year prior to the student’s eighteenth birthday.

### Standard vs. Verified Credits

A standard credit is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction and successful completion of the requirements of the course.

A verified credit is based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, successful completion of the requirements of the course, and achievement of a passing score on the end-of-course SOL test or additional test for that course as approved by the Board of Education. The passing score is 400.

### Standard Diploma with Credit Accommodation

Credit accommodations provide alternatives for students with disabilities in earning the standard and verified credits required to graduate with a Standard Diploma.

Credit accommodations are:

- Assessments used to verify credits
- Locally awarded verified credits in core content areas
- Alternate course offerings to meet the standard credit requirements

These shall be determined by the student’s IEP team, including the student when appropriate, at any point after the student’s eighth-grade year.

A student must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Have a current IEP with standards-based content goals or a 504 plan.
- Have a disability that precludes him/her from achieving and progressing commensurate with grade level expectations, but is learning grade level content.
- Need significant instructional supports to access grade level SOL content and to show progress.
- Based on multiple objective measures of past performance, the student might not be expected to achieve the required standard and verified units of credit within the standard time frame.

**Note:** Students receiving accommodations must still earn the 22 standard credits and six verified credits required to graduate with a standard diploma.

Credit accommodations are **not** available for the Advanced Studies Diploma.

The Modified Standard Diploma will not be an option for students with disabilities who enter the ninth grade for the first time beginning in 2013-2014. Credit accommodations allow students with disabilities who previously would have pursued a Modified Standard Diploma to earn a Standard Diploma.

### Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment means a student is concurrently taking courses at both high school and college levels. Dual enrollment courses are geared toward high school juniors and seniors, although some sophomores may be eligible based on grades, recommendations and test scores. Dual enrollment students must demonstrate English and Math readiness, show strong attendance and exhibit mature behavior. Some of the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) courses may fulfill Virginia high school graduation requirements if the student has prior written approval of the high school principal, or for home schooled students, the approval of the appropriate authority. In some cases, NVCC has existing dual enrollment arrangements with local public schools whereby the college credits earned may be applied toward a high school diploma while also receiving college credit.

Reasons to dual enroll:

- Course is not offered at your school
- You want to get a head start in college
- You want to learn a career skill

### Arlington Career Center Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP)

The Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP) is a multi-tiered program that utilizes a dynamic and targeted approach to meet needed transitional preparation of students with disabilities who have completed the majority of their academic program. Students aged 18-21 gain authentic experiences and learning opportunities relevant to current business trends that provide them with skills that lead to an increased likelihood of sustained employment in today’s market. Along with actual job training skills, relevant technological and social skills are emphasized.

The program is designed for students to receive internship/apprenticeship experiences and may lead to trade certifications, licenses, college credit, networking connections, and/or employment directly upon graduation. Referrals should be made to PEP during the student’s final year of participation in high school classes. Student participation is individualized according to needs, and if appropriate for the student, Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses may simultaneously be taken.

### Adult Service Agency

Some adults may require support from one or more adult service agencies upon leaving the school system. The eligibility requirements and types of support vary greatly between agencies. Typically, students and families are connected to prospective agencies, when appropriate, prior to leaving high school.

*For more information, please visit our website:  
Academic Planning – [www.apsva.us/academicplanning](http://www.apsva.us/academicplanning)  
Transition Services – [www.apsva.us/transitionservices](http://www.apsva.us/transitionservices)*



# MY CHILD



# Introducing My Child to Your School

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Academic Year:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Consider attaching a photo of your child.)*

*You may choose to complete this description of your child and share it with the Student Study Committee, IEP Team, or with your child's new teacher(s) or therapist(s).*

A bit about my child . . . *(birth order, personality, any information you'd like to provide):*

Three words that best describe my child:

My child's strengths include:

My child's challenges or areas of difficulty include:

My dreams for my child: *(Describe your vision for your child's future.)*

The supports I think my child needs to achieve his/her potential include:

My child makes his/her needs and wants known by: *(using sounds, words, or gestures?)*



How well does your child understand what others are saying?

My child usually reacts to other children and adults by:

My child's favorite activities are:

My child's favorite foods are:

The most important thing I want other team members to know about my child is:

My biggest desires for and concerns about my child at school are:

I'd also like you to know . . .

The best way to contact/ communicate with me is:





# My Best Day: *I'm New to Your Class, Let Me Introduce Myself*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Consider attaching a photo of yourself.)*

*You may choose to complete this description of yourself and share it with your new teacher(s) or therapist(s).*

Three words that best describe me are . . .

If I were to have my best day ever at school, it would be . . . (describe what you like and what makes you happy)

Some things I like a lot include . . .

Some things I am especially proud of are . . .

Some things that I don't like or want to avoid . . .

I have a difficult time when . . .



My favorite activities are . . .

My favorite foods are . . .

But do not ask me to eat . . . because I (dislike or am allergic to) . . .

A bit about my home life . . . (describe your place in the family, personality, likes and dislikes)

Really good ways to communicate with me . . .

The most important thing I want others to know about me is . . .





# *STUDENT'S RECORDS*



## Keeping Records

You know your child best and are a crucial member of your child's educational team. You know your child's personal history, and his/her strengths and needs. You know your child's educational, medical, and special services history. All of this information may be relevant to help others learn about and better understand your child, and to help your child's educational team determine appropriate services and resources.

Many families find it important to establish a personal "record-keeping system" to maintain up-to-date educational, medical, and special services information.

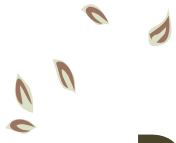
Families have shared these key pointers:

- Always request and save **copies** of all reports and documents about your child (medical, educational, service assessments, etc.)
- Organize the data **chronologically**
- Use **files, notebooks**, and/or **electronic storage** to store reports and records
- **Keep track** of the services your child receives during his/her lifetime, including name, dates of service, type of service, and contact information

The information is important to keep track of for your child. If you feel the information is appropriate to share with your child's educational team, then you will be more readily able to access or recall the relevant information and data.

In addition to helping determine the services your child will receive at school, this information may become necessary to access adult services once your child transitions from a school setting to adulthood.





Background  
Information  
About My Child

This form was prepared and offered by a family that seeks to share a helpful tool with other families. This form is designed for your personal use to help keep track of your child's important records. If you feel the information is appropriate to share with your child's educational team, then this form may make it easier for you to access or recall the relevant information and data.

## Summary of Assessments/Diagnostic Testing

Date	Specific Tests Administered	Specialist/Facility; Contact Information	Key Findings/Diagnosis/Results

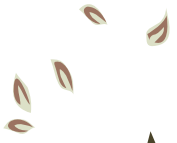


This form was prepared and offered by a family that seeks to share a helpful tool with other families. This form is designed for your personal use to help keep track of your child's important records. If you feel the information is appropriate to share with your child's educational team, then this form may make it easier for you to access or recall the relevant information and data.

## Summary of Services and Therapies

Specialist's Name and Phone/Email	Services Provided, Frequency, Dates





# Medical Information



This form was prepared and offered by a family that seeks to share a helpful tool with other families. This form is designed for your personal use to help keep track of your child's important records. If you feel the information is appropriate to share with your child's educational team, then this form may make it easier for you to access or recall the relevant information and data.

## Medications, Illness, & Medical Appointments

Illness/Symptoms/Concerns and Dates	Name & Address of Doctor or Facility where Seen/Treated	Medication Prescribed, Dose, Dates, Why Prescribed	Reactions/Side Effects



This form was prepared and offered by a family that seeks to share a helpful tool with other families. This form is designed for your personal use to help keep track of your child's important records. If you feel the information is appropriate to share with your child's educational team, then this form may make it easier for you to access or recall the relevant information and data.

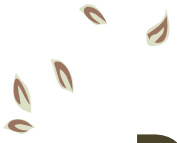
## Future Medical Appointments & Questions

Appointment Date	Why and with Whom	Questions/Comments





# School Evaluations



# Progress Reports



# Past IEPs



# Private Reports



# *RESOURCES*



# Arlington Public Schools Resources

## **Arlington Public Schools Special Education Services**

<https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of/>  
703-228-6040

Arlington Public Schools Office of Special Education provides support for students with disabilities (ages 2 to 22), parents, principals, and school staff in the evaluation, identification, placement, instruction, and transitional services. APS provides a continuum of services for students with disabilities, preschool through high school, found eligible to receive special education services. The steps to identifying a student as eligible for special education services is a carefully managed process guided by State and Federal regulations.

## **Arlington Public Schools Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC)**

<https://www.apsva.us/prc>  
703-228-7239

The PRC's purpose is to provide Arlington parents the support and information they need as they work with the school system to identify and meet their child's unique learning needs. The PRC offers support and assistance, a lending library, a parent newsletter, parent education workshops and classes, a Super Sibs Club for siblings of children with disabilities, and serves as an information and referral source for families and staff members. Language interpretation is available. The PRC partners with Arlington SEPTA to identify parents to serve as Special Education Parent Liaisons in each building. Liaisons serve as points of contact and conduits of information between the PRC, SEPTA, school PTAs and families of children with disabilities.

## **Arlington Public Schools Child Find Program**

<https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of/child-find/>  
703-228-2700

Children with suspected delays in the areas of cognition, communication, hearing, vision, social-emotional skills, and/or motor skills are referred to a student study committee to determine whether the child requires assessment for consideration of eligibility for special education services.

## **Arlington Public Schools Teenage Parenting Programs**

<https://www.apsva.us/school-overviews/teenage-parenting-program/>  
703-228-8700

The mission of these programs is to provide leadership for collaborative, comprehensive services for pregnant and parenting teenagers in Arlington County. The programs offer support group meetings, information, resources, and recreational events.

## **Arlington Public Schools - School Board**

[www.apsva.us/schoolboard](http://www.apsva.us/schoolboard)  
703-228-3456

The School Board is composed of five members who serve overlapping four-year terms. Regular School Board meetings are generally held the first and third Thursday of the month in the Board Room of the Education Center, 1426 N. Quincy Street. Board meetings are broadcast live on Verizon Channel 70 and FIOS channel 41 and rerun the following Friday at 9:00 p.m. and the following Monday at 7:30 p.m. Citizens may also download the broadcast from the web site during the meetings. The School Board holds open office hours on Mondays from 5:00 p.m. to

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*This list of programs, offices, organizations, and opportunities is provided for information purposes only and should not be interpreted to represent or imply an endorsement from Arlington Public Schools or Arlington County.*





7:00 p.m. on days that school is in session. Citizens are welcome to meet with a Board member on a walk-in basis during these times and to call the School Board office for more information.

## Arlington Public Schools Committees/Associations

### **Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC)**

<https://www.gpsva.us/special-education-advisory-committee/>

The ASEAC is established by the State of Virginia, to advise APS of the unmet needs in the education of children with disabilities and to assist in the formulation and development of plans for improving performance of children with disabilities. ASEAC is a parent-led committee that meets monthly and offers an official forum for families to raise concerns, engage officials, collaborate, and advocate on behalf of students with disabilities.

### **Arlington Special Education Parent Teacher Association (Arlington SEPTA)**

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

The Arlington SEPTA formed in 2010 to support, strengthen and promote the welfare of children with special needs and Arlington's special education programs. SEPTA membership is not specific to any one school but instead serves all schools in Arlington. Members include families, students, caregivers, school staff, administrators, friends and community members interested in supporting students with special needs. The Arlington SEPTA organizes events such as a sensory friendly movie screening, educational activities, and social gatherings, and raises money to support educational initiatives including offering small grants for teachers and to bring leading experts with cutting edge methodologies for presentations in Arlington.

## Key Publications and Materials

*Parent's Guide to Special Education*, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Division of Special Education and Student Services, Revised 2010

[www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/parents/parents\\_guide.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide.pdf)

*Securing a Future for Your Child with a Disability: A Parent's Guide to Adult Services in Alexandria City and Arlington and Fairfax Counties*, The Arc of Northern Virginia, November 2010,

<https://thearcnova.org/content/uploads/sites/6/2015/08/SECURING-March2015Update.pdf>

*Special Education Family Resource and Information Binder*, Arlington Public Schools 2012, Revised 2016

[www.gpsva.us/prc/family\\_resource\\_guide/](http://www.gpsva.us/prc/family_resource_guide/)

**Training/Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC)** provides materials, free online training modules, and technical assistance designed to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). [www.ttaonline.org](http://www.ttaonline.org)

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Arlington Public Schools Special Education Family Resource and Information Guide, August 2016



*Your Family's Special Education Rights – Virginia Procedural Safeguards Notice*, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/regulations/state/procedural\\_safeguards/english\\_procedural\\_safeguards.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/procedural_safeguards/english_procedural_safeguards.pdf)

Autism Speaks' *100 Day Kit* and *Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Tool Kit* offer newly diagnosed families tools to make the best possible use of the 100 days following their child's diagnosis of autism or AS/HFA. [www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/100-day-kit](http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/100-day-kit)

*Autism Spectrum Disorders and the Transition to Adulthood*, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Office of Special Education and Student Services, October 2010 [www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/disabilities/autism/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/autism/)

*Guidelines for Educating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Office of Special Education and Student Services, October 2010 [www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/disabilities/autism/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/autism/)

*Models of Best Practices in the Education of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Office of Special Education and Student Services, May 2011 [www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/disabilities/autism/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/autism/)

The **Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE)** is funded by the Virginia Department of Education and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). VCU-ACE offers training modules for schools and families, and an online Lending Library in partnership with the VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention. [www.vcuautismcenter.org](http://www.vcuautismcenter.org)

## Arlington County Programs and Offices

### **Arlington County Behavior Intervention Service (BIS)** 703-228-1539

The mission of this program is to prevent the need for a more restrictive program or out-of-home placement for children requiring behavior management services. Specialists educate and train the parent or care provider on behavioral management techniques that address behaviors of concern such as self-injurious behavior, aggression, non-compliance and tantrums.

### **Arlington County Behavioral Healthcare** <https://health.arlingtonva.us/behavioral-healthcare/> 703-228-3000

A range of programs and services are available to help Arlington residents overcome or better manage their mental health and substance abuse issues, including Emergency Services, Adult Mental Health and Crisis Intervention.

### **Arlington County Child Care Office** <https://family.arlingtonva.us/child-care/> 703-228-1685

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This office offers many services to help parents/guardians support their children. It prepares a directory of Early Childhood Programs and Home Day Care Providers that are licensed annually under Chapter 52 of the Arlington County Code, "Child Care Centers, Preschools, Nursery Schools, Parent's Day Out Programs, and Cooperative Playgroup Programs".

### **Arlington County Community Services Board (ACCSB)**

<https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/community-services-board/>

703-228-4871

The Arlington County Community Services Board (ACCSB) consists of community members appointed to oversee services provided by the Department of Human Services to persons challenged by mental health, intellectual disabilities and substance abuse. The ACCSB provides the principal forum for residents and consumers of services to review, comment on and influence the direction of those services. The ACCSB acts as an advocate, educator, community organizer and community planner for services.

### **Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Therapeutic Recreation (TR)**

<https://parks.arlingtonva.us/therapeutic-recreation/>

703-228-4740

Arlington County provides specialized services for individuals with disabilities of all ages as they can be at an increased risk of physical, social or intellectual barriers. Specialized services include social clubs, family-centered programming, camps, adapted classes, and leisure education. Everyone is welcome to participate in the County's general recreation programs. The TR Office provides inclusion support for individuals with disabilities in workshops, camps and classes to ensure reasonable accommodations are made in all DPR and contracted programs.

### **Arlington County Families**

<https://family.arlingtonva.us/arlingtonfamilies-com/>

703-228-1550

Arlington Families provides parents and caregivers resources about what's happening for families in Arlington, Virginia. Visit the website to find a playground, meet other parents in a workshop, learn about school options, discover something fun to do over the weekend, or get connected to practical parenting tips and ideas. Information is organized by age group.

### **Arlington County Intellectual & Developmental Disability Services**

<https://aging-disability.arlingtonva.us/programs/dev-disability/>

703-228-1700

Arlington County offers assistance to residents age 3 and older and adults with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Developmental Disabilities and their families with finding and using community services. Services may include support coordination to access appropriate services; residential services for individuals 18 years and older to maximize independence; and employment, habilitation and transportation to enable adults to prepare for and engage in meaningful employment and/or training to increase functional skills and self-sufficiency. Services are contingent on funding availability and eligibility criteria.

### **Arlington County Parenting Resources**

<https://family.arlingtonva.us/early-childhoodparent-resources/>

703-228-1551

This program provides families with tools, strategies and skills to help provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for children. The program offers classes, workshops, an online program,

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and information and referral services for other Arlington County and Northern Virginia resources in English and Spanish.

#### **Arlington County Parent-Infant Education (PIE) Program**

<https://health.arlingtonva.us/public-health/health-clinics-services/parent-infant-education-program-pie/>

703-228-1630

The goal of the PIE program is to reduce the impact of developmental delays and disabilities on the growth and development of infants and toddlers, birth to 2 years of age, by helping families to work effectively with their child and by providing early intervention services.

#### **Arlington County Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

<https://health.arlingtonva.us/public-health/health-clinics-services/women-infants-children-wic-program/>

703-228-1260

This federally funded program has as its goals the prevention of nutritional deficiencies and the support of optimum growth and development among the persons served. The program provides a combination of direct nutritional supplements, nutrition education, and access to health care and social services for medically indigent pregnant, breast-feeding, and postpartum women; their infants; and their children up to the age of five years.

#### **Arlington County Project Family**

<https://family.arlingtonva.us/project-family/>

703-228-1549

Project Family is a free early childhood and parenting program offering weekly pre-natal, infant and early childhood classes for families with children from birth through five years of age. Classes are interactive and easily accessible at sites throughout Arlington County. Project Family focuses on the whole child and teaches parents activities to promote the child's physical, language, cognitive, and social-emotional development, emphasizing the importance of routines and learning through play. Classes are culturally sensitive, provide support and networking opportunities, and familiarize parents with best practices related to child development, health, safety and nutrition. Classes are offered in Spanish, English, and bilingually.

#### **Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families (APCYF)**

<https://apcyf.arlingtonva.us/>

703-228-1667

The APCYF's mission is to improve the health, wellbeing, and safety of children, youth, and families in Arlington through researching young people's needs, advocating for improved policies and programs to meet those needs, and engaging all members of our community as part of the solution.

## **Arlington Support Groups and Networks**

#### **Arlington ADHD Support Group and Listserv**

The Arlington ADHD Support Group is for parents/guardians of children with ADHD/ADD to share information and resources, experience, and advice. Parents/guardians share experiences, discuss techniques that have helped children, and exchange ideas. Meetings are held

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occasionally but most interaction is via the listserv. To join the listserv, contact Nadine Asef-Sargent at [nadine.asef@gmail.com](mailto:nadine.asef@gmail.com).

### **Arlington Autism Dads Group**

This is a group for dads of children with autism who seek to share information, experiences, and support. Contact Dan Marx at [autismdadsgroup@gmail.com](mailto:autismdadsgroup@gmail.com) or [dwmarx@gmail.com](mailto:dwmarx@gmail.com)

### **Arlington Autism Group (AAG) and Listserv**

The AAG is a family support group and autism information list serve. The group shares articles and research, distributes event notices, and supports advocacy work in Arlington County as well as social events throughout the year, with occasional coffees, lunches, and an annual summer potluck at Madison Manor Park. Contact Donna Budway at [donnabudway@aol.com](mailto:donnabudway@aol.com)

### **Arlington Inclusion Task Force**

The parent-led Arlington Inclusion Task Force was created in June 2014 to increase opportunities for the authentic and supported inclusion of students with disabilities within Arlington Public Schools (APS). Contact Tauna Szymanski at [arlingtoninclusion@gmail.com](mailto:arlingtoninclusion@gmail.com)

### **Arlington Reading Group**

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ArlingtonReading/info>

This is a support group for parents of students with reading challenges in Arlington Public Schools. The group is also open to Arlington Public Schools teachers and administration. Members support each other through advice and information sharing in their efforts to help children read and to gain the resources and support they need both from the school and outside the system

### **Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC)**

<https://www.gpsva.us/special-education-advisory-committee/>

The ASEAC is established by the State of Virginia, to advise APS of the unmet needs in the education of children with disabilities and to assist in the formulation and development of plans for improving performance of children with disabilities. ASEAC is a parent-led committee that meets monthly and offers an official forum for families to raise concerns engage officials, and collaborates on advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities.

### **Arlington Special Education Parent Teacher Association (Arlington SEPTA) and Listserv**

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

The Arlington SEPTA formed in 2010 to support, strengthen and promote the welfare of children with special needs and Arlington's special education programs. SEPTA membership is not specific to any one school but instead serves all schools in Arlington. Members include families, students, caregivers, school staff, administrators, friends and community members interested in supporting students with special needs. The Arlington SEPTA organizes events such as a sensory friendly movie screenings, educational activities, and social gatherings; and raises money to support educational initiatives including offering small grants for teachers, and bringing leading experts with cutting edge methodologies to Arlington.

### **Asperger Syndrome Information and Support (ASIS) Group and Listserv**

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ArlingtonASIS/info>

ASIS is an online discussion group for parents, grandparents, and caregivers of children with Asperger's Syndrome, high functioning autism, or non-verbal learning disabilities in Northern Virginia. Over 150 families with children ranging from ages 3 - 30 years old are part of this group.

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### **Mothers of North Arlington (MONA) – Special Moms Support Group and Listserv**

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

This group offers parents a chance to meet and exchange advice, concerns and support. Although the group is formed from North Arlington, family members from throughout the region are welcome. The group shares information on the listserv and meets on the first Friday morning of every month usually at 9am. Contact Katherine Harris at [harriskath@gmail.com](mailto:harriskath@gmail.com)

### **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**

NAMI provides a variety of cost-free support groups and classes for parents and other caregivers who are concerned about a child, teen, young adult or other loved one struggling with mental health conditions. These include:

- Support Group for Parents with School Age Children (Pre-K through Grade 12). This Support Group meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month from 7:00pm-8:30pm at Cherrydale Baptist Church, 3910 Lorcom Lane, Arlington. For more information contact Michelle Best at [mczero@yahoo.com](mailto:mczero@yahoo.com)
- Support Group for Parents of Children, Teens and Young Adults. This Support Group meets the third Sunday of each month from 1:00pm-2:30 pm at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 5533 N. 16th St, Arlington. For more information contact Naomi Verdugo at [verdugo.naomi@gmail.com](mailto:verdugo.naomi@gmail.com) or 703-862-9588.
- Spanish Language Support Group. This Support Group meets the LAST Wednesday of each month from 7:00pm–9:00 pm at Merrifield Center, 8221 Willow Oaks Corporation Dr., Room #1-328, Fairfax, VA. To register and obtain more information, contact Rosita Kline, MSW, at 703-256-7021 or [r.arancibiakline45@gmail.com](mailto:r.arancibiakline45@gmail.com).

## **Northern Virginia Support Groups**

### **ACCESS Ministry of McLean Bible Church**

[http://mbctyson.org/pages/page.asp?page\\_id=84047](http://mbctyson.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=84047)

703-639-2000

ACCESS Ministry offers services for special needs families, including "Breakout Fridays" and "Breakaway Saturdays" (monthly respite), and a Parent to Parent Support Group. The annual Accessibility Summit is a disability conference for parents and professionals.

### **Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics**

[www.aanma.org](http://www.aanma.org), [info@aanma.org](mailto:info@aanma.org)

1-800-878-4403

This group provides support to patients and families living with asthma, allergies, food allergies and related conditions by answering questions by phone and e-mail, and offering information, resources, a newsletter, and a magazine. Many publications are available in Spanish.

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### **Asperger Adults of Greater Washington**

[www.aagw.net](http://www.aagw.net)

AAGW is a support and social group for adults 18 and over who live in the region and who have Asperger's, high-functioning autism, nonverbal learning disorder, semantic pragmatic disorder or PDD-NOS. The group meets monthly and members attending their first meeting may bring a family member or friend. Contact Mark at [info@aagw.net](mailto:info@aagw.net)

### **Autism Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV)**

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

703-495-8444

ASNV advocates for citizens of all ages with autism; provides support for families and caregivers; ensures access to education, vocational training, housing, transportation, recreation and other lifespan needs; aids in the collection and dissemination of information about autism; and fosters and reinforces awareness and respect for the rights of autistic adults, parents and siblings of people with autism. Contact [Info@asnv.org](mailto:Info@asnv.org), [assistant.director@asnv.org](mailto:assistant.director@asnv.org) or [director@asnv.org](mailto:director@asnv.org)

### **Brain Injury Services, Inc.**

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

703-451-8881

Brain Injury Services helps children and adults with a brain injury build the skills and confidence they need to lead a fulfilling and productive life.

### **Disability Scoop**

[www.disabilityscoop.com](http://www.disabilityscoop.com)

This website offers news and information relevant to the developmental disabilities community, including coverage of timely stories on Autism, Intellectual Disabilities, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome and more.

### **Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia (DSANV)**

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

The mission of this organization is to ensure that all individuals with Down Syndrome and their families receive the support necessary to participate in, contribute to and achieve fulfillment of life in their community.

### **Education, Information, and Events – Bi-Weekly Bulletin on Autism**

Local resident and founder of Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia compiles a twice weekly email digest that lists relevant news, articles, research, and events of interest to the autism community. This comprehensive digest is free. Contact [CampbellsServices@gmail.com](mailto:CampbellsServices@gmail.com)

### **Hearing Loss Support Group and Listserv**

[kidswithhearingloss-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:kidswithhearingloss-subscribe@yahogroups.com)

### **Jewish Social Services Agency**

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

JSSA offers a wide range of counseling, educational and career services, in-home support, hospice and nursing care and social services provided by a highly skilled and caring staff of mental health and nursing professionals. JSSA provides services and support for more than 25,000 individuals a year, from the very young to the very old. JSSA serves families of all religions.

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**National Capital Area: Asperger's/High-Functioning Autism Parent Support Groups**  
[aspergers\\_nca@hotmail.com](mailto:aspergers_nca@hotmail.com)

**Northern Virginia Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC)**  
[www.nvrc.org](http://www.nvrc.org), [info@nvrc.org](mailto:info@nvrc.org)

NVRC provides a wide range of services including presentations, coping skills classes, technology demonstrations, exhibits, a daily e-mail news service, private consultations, and much more.

**Northern Virginia Parents of Multiples (NVPOM)**  
[membership@nvpom.com](mailto:membership@nvpom.com)

This organization caters to parents of multiples. Membership benefits include monthly meeting, a monthly newsletter, new moms group, listserv, shared ideas and experiences, and more.

**Online Asperger Syndrome Information and Support (OASIS)**  
[www.aspergersyndrome.org](http://www.aspergersyndrome.org)

The OASIS center joined with MAAP Services for Autism and Asperger Syndrome to create a single resource for families, individuals, and medical professionals who deal with the challenges of Asperger Syndrome, Autism, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder / Not Otherwise Specified (PDD/NOS). The website provides information about therapies, schools, and related issues as well as links to other groups, publications, and resources for families, students and adults.

**Parents for Autistic Children's Education (PACE)**

Meets monthly at Fairfax Hospital's Education Conference Center.

Contact: [pace-tm@excite.com](mailto:pace-tm@excite.com)

**Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia (POAC-NOVA) and Listserv**  
[www.poac-nova.org](http://www.poac-nova.org), [president@poac-nova.org](mailto:president@poac-nova.org)

POAC-NOVA provides support to families of children with autism and professionals working with children with autism in Northern Virginia. The organization answers questions by phone and e-mail; offers monthly support group meetings, information and resources, and social events; has an active listserv; distributes a newsletter; and provides a variety of training opportunities for parents of children with autism across the spectrum.

**Proactive Parents Support Group**

This group is for families of children with all types of disability. The group meets monthly at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke, Virginia from 7-9 pm.

Contact: [troutmanbeth@yahoo.com](mailto:troutmanbeth@yahoo.com)

**Spina Bifida Association of the National Capital Area**  
[www.sbanca.org](http://www.sbanca.org)

This chapter serves individuals with spina bifida and their families living in Virginia and surrounding areas. Member services include monthly support groups, annual holiday party and fall picnic, free publications, SBAA and CPSBA newsletters, individual support and information, sibling support, family matching and emergency financial assistance on a case-by-case basis.

**Tender Hearts**

[www.tender-hearts.net](http://www.tender-hearts.net), [info@Tender-Hearts.net](mailto:info@Tender-Hearts.net)

Tender Hearts is a support group for families of children with congenital heart defects offering mutual support, hope, family events, speakers, resources, and fundraising opportunities for

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families in the Washington, D.C. metro area. The group offers a listserv, newsletter, parent matching program, and social events.

### **Virginia Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments**

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

This association provides support to families and caregivers caring for children from ages 0-21 who are blind or visually impaired. It offers support group meetings, information and resources, a resource center, social and recreational events, a newsletter, a family matching program, advocacy, workshops, and answers questions by phone and e-mail.

### **Virginia Smiles**

[www.virginia-smiles.org](http://www.virginia-smiles.org), [info@virginia-smiles.org](mailto:info@virginia-smiles.org)

This organization provides education, information, and emotional support to individuals born with a cleft lip and/or cleft palate and serves as a resource to providers in the medical community who treat those who were born with a cleft. It offers a newsletter, outreach seminars, a family-oriented video entitled A Beautiful Child and social events for parents and the medical community to network, including support group meetings, a summer picnic and a holiday party. It also offers a college scholarship to a high school senior in Virginia who was born with a cleft lip/cleft palate.

## **Advocacy/Classes/Training/Support**

### **The Arc of Northern Virginia**

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

703-208-1119

The Arc for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (The Arc) promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. The Arc frequently offers workshops on topics such as estate planning, Medicaid Waivers and adaptive communication. This organization provides support to individuals of all ages with developmental and intellectual disabilities and their families in Northern Virginia.

### **Arc of Virginia Family Involvement Project**

1-888-604-2677, ext. 103

This organization provides support to and advocacy for families of children receiving early intervention services in Virginia by answering questions by phone and e-mail and offering information, resources, and a listserv. Support is also available through a one-on-one parent-to-parent telephone matching program.

### **Autism Speaks**

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

Autism Speaks has grown into the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. The organization offers families many helpful resources (including their *100 Day Kit* and the *Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Kit*) and opportunities to organize and connect with others.

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### **Center for Adoption Support and Education (CASE)**

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

703-256-3820

CASE is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing support and education to everyone in the adoption community. CASE offers workshops and webinars for parents, professionals and educators.

### **Center for Parent Information and Resources**

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities. CPIR houses many of NICHCY's resources.

### **Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) of Northern Virginia**

<https://www.meetup.com/novachadd/>

703-641-5451

CHADD is a national non-profit, organization providing education, advocacy and support for individuals with AD/HD. CHADD publishes a variety of printed materials to keep members and professionals current on research advances, medications and treatments affecting individuals with AD/HD. These materials include Attention! Magazine, the CHADD Information and Resource Guide to AD/HD, News From CHADD, a free electronically mailed current events newsletter, and other publications of specific interest to educators, professionals and parents.

### **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

1-888-232-7733, TTY: 1-866-915-5000

The CEC is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents (twice exceptional). CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice. The CEC provides: professional development opportunities and resources; specialized information; journals and newsletters on new research findings, classroom practices, federal legislation, and policies; conventions and conferences; and special education publications.

### **The ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia**

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

The ENDependence Center is a community-based resource and advocacy center managed by and for people with disabilities ages 18 and above. ECVN promotes the independent living philosophy and equal access for all people with disabilities and seeks to empower people with physical, mental, cognitive and sensory disabilities to direct their own lives.

### **Formed Families Forward**

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

703-539-2904

Formed Families Forward is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting foster, kinship, and

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adoptive families of children and youth with disabilities and other special needs that serves families, educators and child welfare professionals in the Northern Virginia area.

### **Jewish Social Services Agency**

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

JSSA offers a range of counseling, educational and career services, in-home support, hospice and nursing care and social services provided by a highly skilled and caring staff of mental health and nursing professionals. JSSA provides services and support for more than 25,000 individuals a year, from the very young to the very old. The JSSA serves families of all religions.

### **Mary & Melissa Blog Radio Show**

[www.blogtalkradio.com/themaryandmelissashow](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/themaryandmelissashow), [www.facebook.com/mary\\_melissa](http://www.facebook.com/mary_melissa)

This call-in advocacy radio talk show airs nationwide. It is led by two mothers living in the Nation's Capital who share the hurdles of raising kids with disabilities/special needs and host a variety of experts and community leaders to discuss ways of supporting special students.

### **Northern Virginia Family Services - Multicultural Information and Referral Hotline**

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

703-385-3267, 571-748-2500

The NVFS offers multicultural mental health services to address the mental health needs of individuals for whom existing services are inaccessible due to income, language and/or cultural barriers. Clients include individuals from all cultural and ethnic groups whose mental health and stability is compromised as a result of trauma, poverty, chronic stress, and other challenges. Services address such issues as depression, anxiety, loss and trauma, and are offered in variety of modalities, such as individual, couples, group and family therapy.

### **Northern Virginia Cued Speech Association**

[www.nvcsa.org](http://www.nvcsa.org), [info@nvcsa.org](mailto:info@nvcsa.org)

This organization offers cued speech classes for adults and family oriented activities and camps for the hearing impaired.

### **Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) Center**

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

The mission of PACER Center is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. PACER Center was created by parents of children and youth with disabilities to help other parents and families facing similar challenges. PACER offers assistance to individual families, workshops, materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing a free and appropriate public education for all children.

### **Parent Education Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)**

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

703-923-0010 (Voice/TTY), 1-800-869-6782

PEATC's mission is to build positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life. Its special focus is on children with disabilities. It offers services and support for families and professionals; research-based information and training; and opportunities for strategic partnerships and advocacy for systemic improvement.

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### **Special Needs Kids Info**

[www.specialneedskidsinfo.com](http://www.specialneedskidsinfo.com)

This website provides resources to families with special needs children, birth to elementary school aged, who are new to the world of special education or whose children have been recently diagnosed, in Virginia and surrounding areas.

### **Training/Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC)**

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

Virginia T/TAC seeks to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of individuals with disabilities from birth to 22 years. T/TAC offers quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs, and free online training modules.

### **United States International Council on Disabilities**

[www.usicd.org](http://www.usicd.org), [info@usicd.org](mailto:info@usicd.org)

202-480-2332

The USICD promotes the rights and full participation of persons with disabilities through global engagement and United States foreign affairs. The membership of USICD has a vision of a world where the equal rights of persons with disabilities are protected and advanced, where the capacities and talents of persons with disabilities are celebrated and elevated, and where people with disabilities come together across borders as a global disability community.

### **Virginia Commonwealth University's Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE)**

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

The VCU-ACE program is funded by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). VCU-ACE believes in the right for persons with ASD to achieve their full potential and to live self-directed, fulfilling lives, and strives to accomplish this through the provision of training, technical assistance, collaboration on services and supports, and research. The mission is to build state-wide capacity to improve outcomes of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) by improving the knowledge, skills, and understanding of families, educators, and professionals who support someone with a spectrum disorder. VCU-ACE and APS are collaborating to increase understanding and proper implementation of evidence based practices for students with ASD across the age range and to offer direct modeling and coaching to classroom teachers, therapists, and paraprofessionals. VCU-ACE offers online training modules and information.

### **Wrightslaw**

[www.Wrightslaw.com](http://www.Wrightslaw.com)

The Wrightslaw website contains free articles on many special education topics and information about training opportunities.

## **Local Annual/Biennial Conference Opportunities**

### **Accessibility Summit**

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

Held annually in the spring at McLean Bible Church in Vienna, Virginia, this conference features workshops on a variety of special education topics with local and nationally recognized speakers. Workshops are divided into three tracks: Family & Caregiver, Church, and Community.

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### **CHADD National and Regional Conferences**

[www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org), [www.novachadd.org](http://www.novachadd.org)

CHADD offers an Education Conference on AD/HD for parents, adults with AD/HD, educators and mental health professionals.

### **Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Special Education Conference**

<https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>

FCPS features workshops on a variety of special education topics with presenters from FCPS and invited speakers.

### **FutureQuest**

<http://futurequest.gmu.edu/>

FutureQuest is a free, regional, biennial career and college forum for students with disabilities, parents and professionals.

### **Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders (ICDL) Conference**

[www.icdl.com](http://www.icdl.com)

The goal of the ICDL Annual conferences is to help parents and professionals integrate knowledge and competencies from different disciplines that will improve prevention, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of emotional and developmental disorders in infancy and childhood.

### **Organization for Autism Research**

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

The Organization for Autism Research is devoted to applied research in autism. Speakers from around the country report on ongoing research.

## **Resources for Military Families**

### **Autism Education, Information, and Events for Military Families – Bi-Monthly Bulletin**

Local resident and founder of Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia compiles a twice monthly email digest that lists relevant news, articles, research, and events of interest to military families within the autism community. This comprehensive digest is free.

Contact [CampbellsServices@gmail.com](mailto:CampbellsServices@gmail.com)

### **Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) – Henderson Hall**

[www.dcmilitary.com](http://www.dcmilitary.com)

703-614-7200

The Exceptional Family Member Program provides assistance to military families with special needs. An exceptional family member can be a child, spouse or a dependent parent who requires medical or educational services due to a physical, intellectual or emotional need. Examples of a special need include allergies, asthma, autism, attention deficit disorder, cerebral palsy, dyslexia and depression. Enrollment in EFMP is mandatory and structured to assign Marines to installations where their exceptional Family member can receive needed care. The EFMP manager provides assistance with medical and educational resources, advocacy, workshops,

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respite care and family support groups. An advocate for any age, the program also helps you with questions about your child's individual educational plan.

**Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) – Fort Belvoir**

[www.belvoir.armymwr.com](http://www.belvoir.armymwr.com)

703-805-4590

**Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) – Fort Myer**

703-696-3510, 703-696-1229

**Exceptional Family Member Program – United States Marine Corps**

[www.mccshh.com/efmp](http://www.mccshh.com/efmp)

**Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP)**

<http://wapave.org/programs/specialized-training-military-parents-stomp>, [pave@wapave.com](mailto:pave@wapave.com)

1-800-572-7368 and 1-253-565-2266 (can call collect)

STOMP is a federally funded Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center established to assist military families who have children with special education or health needs. It provides support to military families worldwide, including Active Duty, Reserve, and retired military. It offers support group meetings, information and resources, social and recreation events, a listserv, monthly newsletter, respite, workshops, and answers questions by phone and e-mail.

## Respite Care

### What is Respite Care?

One of the challenges of parenting a child with a disability is finding someone qualified to care for your child when you need a break, need a babysitter, or have an emergency. Respite care provides trained adults to temporarily care for your child in these situations. Many respite care providers will also care for typical siblings of children with disabilities. Many accept insurance, waivers, or will accept a sliding payment scale based on income.

- Access Ministries of McLean Bible Church, [www.mcleanbible.org](http://www.mcleanbible.org), 703-639-2000
- The ARC of Northern Virginia, [www.thearcofnova.org](http://www.thearcofnova.org), 703-208-1119
- Caring Communities, [www.caringcommunities.org](http://www.caringcommunities.org), 866-CARING-4 (866-227-4644)
- Eddie's Club, [www.eddiesclub.org](http://www.eddiesclub.org), 703-304-2330
- First American Home Health Care, 703-922-9555
- Jill's House, <http://jillshouse.org>, 703-639-5660
- Mary's Family, 540-364-4757
- Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS), [www.nvfs.org](http://www.nvfs.org), 571-748-2500

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# Waivers and SSI

# Virginia Waivers and Social Security

## Medicaid Waivers

Medicaid waivers were developed to encourage people with disabilities and the elderly to access services in their homes and communities, as opposed to institutions. Medicaid provides funding to eligible individuals, and, thus, permits states to “waive” certain requirements, (including the requirement that individuals live in institutions in order to receive Medicaid funding).

The process of learning about and applying for waivers is fairly complex, but it is important to know whether your child might be eligible for a waiver, and at what age waivers should be applied for. Families are encouraged to contact The Arc of Northern Virginia, which helps families navigate the complex disability service system. Access their web site at <http://www.thearcofnova.org> or by calling The Arc of Northern Virginia at 703-532-3214.

Virginia Medicaid Waivers include:

- Individual and Family Developmental Disabilities (IFDDS) Waiver (*often referred to as the “DD Waiver”*)
- Intellectual Disability Waiver (ID Waiver)
- Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) Waiver

Additional information can be found at the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) at <http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/>

## Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

### Birth to Age 18

Children from birth up to age 18 may be eligible for SSI benefits, if they have a “physical or mental condition(s) that very seriously limits his/her activities” that has lasted, or is expected to last at least one year, **and** meet income requirements.

### Age 18 and older

If your child was not eligible for SSI before his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday because you and your spouse had too much income or resources, he or she may become eligible for SSI at age 18.

To learn more about Social Security benefits for individuals with disabilities, visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov), or contact the Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs (vaACCSES) at [http://www.vaaccses.org/about\\_us](http://www.vaaccses.org/about_us).

