

# Quarterly Informer

October, November, and December 2025 Edition

## FHFSWLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair

Molly Morgan

### Vice Chair

Leslie Knox

### Treasurer

Bernadette Courville

### Secretary

Kimberlee Gazzolo

Mona Timpa

Howard Foreman

Leah Fuselier

Khaja Moinuddin

Rachel McClelland

### FHF SWLA

#### Mission:

Our mission is to enable and empower individuals with disabilities and their families by providing information, referral, education, training, peer support and advocacy skills.



## Advocacy: A Parent's Voice, A Caregiver's Strength

When you love someone with a disability, advocacy becomes part of your everyday life. Parents and caregivers are often the first and strongest voices for their loved ones—fighting for services, inclusion, and opportunities that others may take for granted.

But no one should have to walk this journey alone. That's where we come in. At Families Helping Families, we've been in your shoes. We know the challenges, the frustrations, and the victories that come with advocating for someone you love.

Our role is to walk beside you—to listen, to guide, and to connect you with the tools and resources you need to make your voice even stronger. Whether it's understanding your child's education rights, navigating healthcare, or finding community supports, we're here to help.

Because together, families are powerful. Together, we can open doors, remove barriers, and create a world where every person with a disability is valued and included.

We are Families Helping Families—standing with you, every step of the way.

What you do *today*  
impacts someone's  
*tomorrow*

## WHO WE ARE ... WHAT WE DO!

### Susan Riehn

Executive Director

### Cynthia Brown

Bookkeeper

### Wallace Johnson

Education Support Specialist

### Myllinda Elliott

Program Manager,  
LaCAN Leader &  
Senior Education  
Support Specialist

### Beryl Cook

Education Support Specialist

### Davelyn Patrick

Community  
Resource Specialist

### China Guillory

Early Childhood  
Disability Specialist

### Carla Chenier

ImCAL HSA DD  
Facilitator

### Nicole Jones

I&R/Clerical  
Assistant

See Page 22



## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

HAPPY  
Anniversary!

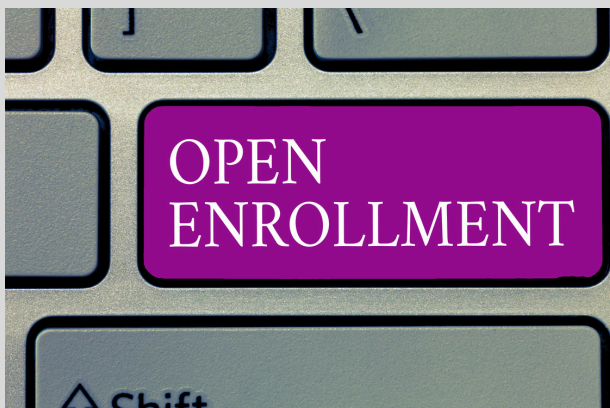


The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) commemorates its anniversary annually on **November 29th**, the date President Gerald Ford signed the original Education for All Handicapped Children Act into law in 1975. The upcoming 2025 celebration will mark the **50th anniversary** of this landmark legislation, which guarantees students with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a federal law ensuring that children with disabilities receive the services and support they need to thrive in the classroom and beyond.



## Louisiana Medicaid Members



NEED TO MAKE CHANGES TO  
YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH OR  
DENTAL PLAN? OPEN  
ENROLLMENT STARTS ON  
**OCTOBER 15** AND ENDS ON  
**DECEMBER 2**

## Uber sued by DOJ for alleged discrimination against disabled riders

The Department of Justice sued Uber on Thursday, alleging the ride-hailing giant discriminated against riders with disabilities, according to a filing.

“Despite the importance of its services to people with disabilities, Uber denies people with disabilities full and equal enjoyment of its services in several critical ways,” the complaint, filed in a federal court in San Francisco, reads.

The DOJ alleged that Uber and its drivers “routinely refuse to serve individuals with disabilities, including individuals who travel with service animals or who use stowable wheelchairs,” that the company imposes “impermissible surcharges by charging cleaning fees related to service animals and cancellation fees to riders they have unlawfully denied service.”

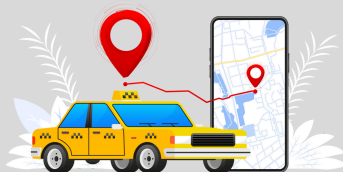
The complaint also alleged that drivers “insult and demean people with disabilities or ask them inappropriate questions.”

“We have a clear zero-tolerance policy for confirmed service denials, and we fundamentally disagree with the DOJ’s allegation,” the company said in a statement. The company said its Community Guidelines prohibit discrimination, and earlier this year announced a new feature to bolster the experience for riders with service animals, including a video for drivers to further explain the policy.

The DOJ accused Uber of refusing to “reasonably modify” its policies and practices to avoid discriminating against people with disabilities.

The federal government is seeking a jury trial and injunctive relief, monetary damages, and to charge Uber a civil fine for what it says are violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The ADA was passed and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990. According to the most recent available CDC data, “over 61 million U.S. adults, or 1 in 4, report having a disability.”



### HALLOWEEN COMMUNITY DANCE

**FRIDAY | OCT 10 | 6-8PM**



**LAKE CHARLES EVENT CENTER  
EXHIBITION HALL**

**Join the BOO-gie ~ don't ghost us!**

**Wear your best costume for the  
Halloween Costume Contest**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION 337-475-3100**



## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

In October 2025, we celebrate the **80th anniversary** of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), an annual recognition of the positive impact of people with disabilities in the American workforce. This yearly event began in 1945 as a weeklong national observance of the contributions of people with physical disabilities. In 1988, Congress designated the commemoration as NDEAM, which then evolved to acknowledge the importance of increasing opportunities for people with disabilities, including those with mental health conditions and other nonobvious disabilities, in the workforce. In 2001, ODEP was created and entrusted to administer NDEAM, including the selection and promotion of its annual theme.

HAPPY  
*Anniversary*

### Put The Phone Down, Pick Up the Conversations

The Louisiana Children's Trust Fund has launched a statewide #PutThePhoneDown campaign to address the growing problem of excessive cellphone use and its adverse effects on Louisiana's children. Governor Jeff Landry has proclaimed August as #PutThePhoneDownMonth, encouraging families, educators, and communities to reduce screen distractions and focus on meaningful, face-to-face connections.

Studies show that giving children screens as a distraction harms their language skills, emotional security, and social development. Educators across the state report rising classroom distractions, lower student engagement, and challenges in students' focus and relationships.

**Your voice matters more  
than your phone.**

**Every chat you share helps  
protect children, prevent abuse,  
and build a safer Louisiana.**

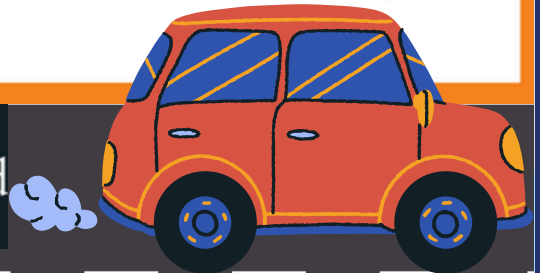


[www.louisianactf.org](http://www.louisianactf.org)  
**#putthephonedown**

### Questions to Spark a Great Ride:

- What's one thing you're really proud of this week?
- Who is someone you look up to, and what do you like about them?
- If we could go anywhere for a day, where would you choose?
- What's a problem you solved recently?
- What's one thing you'd like to learn to do?
- What's one way we can make someone's day better tomorrow?

**Safer roads. Stronger connections.  
Every conversation with your child build  
trust, confidence, and resilience.**







Early Steps would like to invite you to participate in the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and the Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC) to discuss early intervention strategies for the Louisiana and the Southwest Louisiana Region. All family members are invited to attend, including providers and other early intervention personnel. Our mission is to:  
Provide a way to participate in the SICC and RICC to represent regional issues.

**SICC WILL BE HELD  
ON:  
THURSDAY,  
OCTOBER 9, 2025  
1:00P-3:00P VIA ZOOM**



**RICC WILL BE HELD  
ON:  
CANCELED THIS  
QUARTER  
1:30P-3:30P VIA ZOOM**

For more info or to RSVP, contact China Guillory at  
(337) 436-2570 or email  
[cfguillory@fhfswla.org](mailto:cfguillory@fhfswla.org)

---

### International Day of Persons with Disabilities

International Day of Disabled Persons is the **3rd of December 2025**. First launched in 1992, the event has championed three decades of meaningful change for the disabled community. In 2025, the theme of International Day of Disabled Persons is Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future.



## Jolly Santa Wishlist

Families Helping Families is a nonprofit "one-stop shop" for individuals with disabilities and their families. We are holding our "Breakfast with Santa" on Saturday, December 13, 2025. We could use donations of small toys for children with disabilities to hand out as they see Santa.



## Save the Date: Breakfast with Santa!

**Saturday, December 13, 2025**

Watch for more information  
coming out soon on our website &  
facebook page!



## October is National Bullying Prevention Month\*

Yes, October is designated as National Bullying Prevention Month.

The month aims to educate people about bullying's devastating effects and encourage communities to unite to prevent it, with Unity Day on the third or fourth Wednesday of October being a signature event where people wear and share the color orange to show support. National Bullying Prevention Month is a campaign in the United States founded in 2006 by PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. The campaign is held during the month of October and unites communities nationwide to educate and raise awareness of bullying prevention. Initially held the first week in October, the event was expanded in 2010 to the entire month.



FHF will be closed  
Tuesday,  
**November 11, 2025**  
for Veterans Day



FHF office will be closed  
December 19, 2025 -  
January 5, 2026  
due to Christmas Break



## FALL Break!

**Allen Parish**

**October 20-21, 2025**

**Beauregard Parish**

**None**

**Calcasieu Parish**

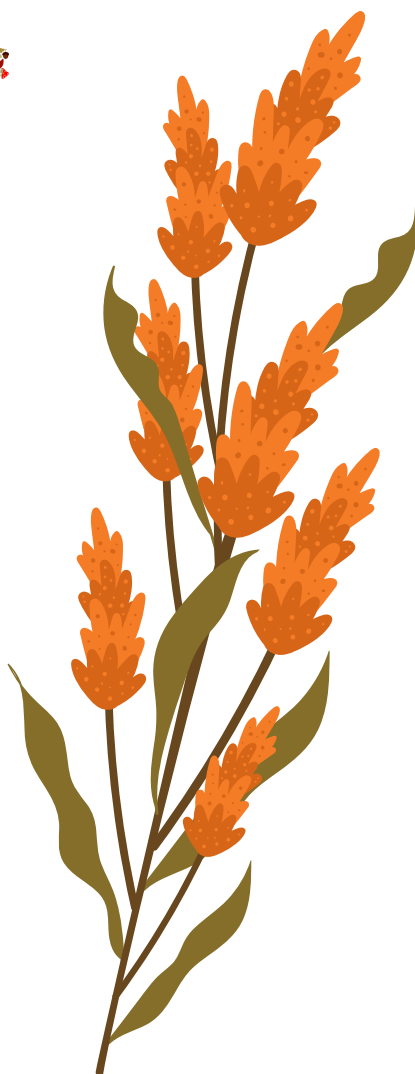
**October 13-14, 2025**

**Cameron Parish**

**None**

**Jeff Davis Parish**

**None**



## Thanksgiving Break!

**Allen Parish**

**November 24-28, 2025**

**Beauregard Parish**

**November 24-28, 2025**

**Calcasieu Parish**

**November 24-28, 2025**

**Cameron Parish**

**November 24-27, 2025**

**Jeff Davis Parish**

**November 24-28, 2025**



**REGISTER NOW**  
<https://tinyurl.com/101325Disagree>

## WHEN PARENTS AND SCHOOLS DISAGREE

This training session will delve into Louisiana's Special Education dispute resolution options and what to do when you disagree with the school regarding your child's special education services.

 **Karen Scallan, FHF of GNO**  
 **Wallace Johnson, Mylinda Elliott, FHF SWLA**  
 **Monday, October 13, 2025**  
 **1:00 PM - 2:00 PM**



FREE ZOOM WEBINAR

## NAVIGATING THE IEP PART 2 WEBINAR



**11 AM Monday, October 27, 2025**

Link to Register  
<https://tinyurl.com/NIP2-102725>

Join us for this webinar as we navigate the different sections of the IEP. In part 2 of a part 4 series, we will focus on the instructional plan, which includes the present level of performance, accommodations, and challenging academic functional goals for a student with a disability.



Scan Me



For More Information contact  
337-436-2570 • 1-800-894-6558  
[info@fhfswla.org](mailto:info@fhfswla.org) • [www.fhfswla.org](http://www.fhfswla.org)





**Audience:**

- Parents
- Caregivers
- Self-Advocates
- Professionals of Adults and School-Aged Children/Students with Disabilities

**Scan Me!**



# Louisiana Bullying Prevention Law Webinar

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

1:00 PM

 **Link to Register:**

<https://tinyurl.com/BullyingPrevention101525R>

 **In This Webinar, You Will:**

-  Learn to recognize what is and isn't bullying
-  Become knowledgeable about Louisiana Act 861 – Louisiana Bullying legislation
-  Increase your awareness of bullying prevention and learn how to help your child at school



For More Information Contact:

Phone: 337-436-2570 • Toll-Free: 1-800-894-6558



Website: [www.fhfwla.org](http://www.fhfwla.org)



Email: [info@fhfwla.org](mailto:info@fhfwla.org)

*Lunch & Learn*

## Section 504 Explained Webinar

**Register At:**

<https://tinyurl.com/Section-504-10172025>



Join us and Dr. Charlie Michel, guest speaker, for information on how Section 504 might help your child in school and to get tips you can use during your Section 504 meetings.

For more information, call or email Families Helping Families of SWLA  
337-436-2570  
[info@fhfwla.org](mailto:info@fhfwla.org)



**Friday,  
October 17  
12-2 PM**



### **Allen Parish**

**December 22- January 2, 2026**

### **Beauregard Parish**

**December 22- January 5, 2026**

### **Calcasieu Parish**

**December 22- January 5, 2026**

### **Cameron Parish**

**December 22- January 1, 2026**

### **Jeff Davis Parish**

**December 22- January 5, 2026**



**More No-Cost Opportunities to Learn!! ADDitude:**  
ADHD Science & Strategies

Live Webinar on October 7: The Hidden Complexities  
of Men with ADHD

Live Webinar October 16: "Adapting Cognitive  
Behavioral Therapy for ADHD and Neurodivergence"

You can find other recorded webinars on ADDitude's  
website.

### **Transfers of Programs in DCFS to LDH**

The Louisiana SNAP and Disability Determination Services (DDS) programs will officially transfer over from the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services to the authority of LDH on **October 1.**

Our mission is to make it easier for the state to deliver streamlined health and nutrition services, including SNAP, Medicaid, and WIC, to Louisianans in need. During this time of transition, there should be no break in service or disruption to benefits.

The SNAP Customer Service Hotline will remain the same. If you experience issues with SNAP or DDS, please contact our team at 1(888) 524-3578 or [LAHelpU.dcms@la.gov](mailto:LAHelpU.dcms@la.gov).



# Louisiana Medicaid Enrollment Options

## AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WEBINAR

Wednesday, October 22,  
2025 @ 11 AM



This webinar is for individuals who are insured by Medicaid. As a person with a disability there are things to consider when selecting your Managed Care Organization (MCO) and Dental Plan during the enrollment period. This webinar will give you information to help you make the most informed decision and provide you with Medicaid updates.

### Register At:

<https://tinyurl.com/OpenEnroll2026>



For More Information, Contact Davelyn at  
Families Helping Families of SWLA

(337) 436-2570 \* 1-800-894-6558 \* [info@fhfswla.org](mailto:info@fhfswla.org) \* [www.fhfswla.org](http://www.fhfswla.org)



## Louisiana Family-to-Family Health Information Center

Louisiana's Family-to-Family Health Information Center's (F2FHIC) mission is the commitment to arm families with information, training, and resources to effectively advocate for enhanced health services and outcomes for their children. Louisiana's F2FHIC is housed at Bayou Land Families Helping Families; however, our collaboration with the statewide network of Families Helping Families centers ensures that Louisiana's

Family to Family Health information reaches you right in your own backyard. Our specialists, parents of children or youth with special health care needs, are not just professionals – they resonate with the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of families with special health care needs. Their lived experiences make them an invaluable resource for understanding and addressing your concerns. The Family-to-Family Health Information Center offers specialized services and support for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and their Families, spanning ages 0-26. Our offerings include:

- Empowering parents and transitioning youth with skills for proactive partnership with medical professionals.
- Facilitating families' navigation through health care challenges and financing complexities.
- Outreach through health fairs to raise awareness about community programs and services.
- Conducting training sessions on services, resources, and advocacy for superior health care services in our state.

For more information, or to locate an Information Specialist in your region, please contact your local Families Helping Families center or:

Louisiana F2FHIC Program Supervisor: Trinity Cole

Address: 286 Hwy. 3185, Thibodaux, LA 70301

Phone: (985) 447-4461

Email: [tcollection@blfhf.org](mailto:tcollection@blfhf.org)

Website: <http://www.blfhf.org/>



| Region | FHF Center                                                              | Mailing Address                                    | Phone Number(s)              | Executive Director                                                                                 |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2      | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge</u></a> | 2356 Drusilla Ln.<br>Baton Rouge, LA 70809         | 225-216-7474<br>866-216-7474 | Dr. Marilyn Thornton<br><a href="mailto:mthornton@fhfgbr.org">mthornton@fhfgbr.org</a>             |
| 3      | <a href="#"><u>Bayou Land Families Helping Families</u></a>             | 286 Highway 3185<br>Thibodaux, LA 70301            | 985-447-4461<br>800-331-5570 | Jacki Pierce<br><a href="mailto:jpierce@blfhf.org">jpierce@blfhf.org</a>                           |
| 4      | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families of Acadiana</u></a>            | 100 Benman Rd.<br>Lafayette, LA 70506              | 337-964-3458<br>855-984-3458 | Nicole Flores<br><a href="mailto:nflores@fhfacadiana.org">nflores@fhfacadiana.org</a>              |
| 5      | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families of Southwest LA</u></a>        | P.O. Box 1627<br>Lake Charles, LA 70602            | 337-463-2570<br>800-894-6558 | Susan Riehn<br><a href="mailto:smriehn@fhswla.org">smriehn@fhswla.org</a>                          |
| 6      | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families at the Crossroads</u></a>      | 2840 Military Hwy., Ste. A<br>Pineville, LA 71360  | 318-641-7373<br>800-259-7200 | Jim Sprinkle<br><a href="mailto:Jamessprinkle152@bellsouth.net">Jamessprinkle152@bellsouth.net</a> |
| 7      | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families Region 7</u></a>               | 215 Bobbie St., Ste. 100<br>Bossier City, LA 71112 | 318-226-4541<br>877-226-4541 | Chanel Jackson<br><a href="mailto:cjackson@fhfregion7.com">cjackson@fhfregion7.com</a>             |
| 8      | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families of Northeast LA</u></a>        | 5200 Northeast Rd.<br>Monroe, LA 71203             | 318-361-0487<br>888-300-1320 | Stacey Guidry<br><a href="mailto:sguidry@fhfnela.org">sguidry@fhfnela.org</a>                      |
| 9      | <a href="#"><u>Northshore Families Helping Families</u></a>             | 108 Highland Park Plaza<br>Covington, LA 70433     | 985-875-0511<br>800-383-8700 | Karen Artus<br><a href="mailto:kartus@fhfnorthshore.org">kartus@fhfnorthshore.org</a>              |
| 10     | <a href="#"><u>Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans</u></a> | 700 Hickory Ave.<br>Harahan, LA 70123              | 504-888-9111<br>800-766-7736 | Laura Nata<br><a href="mailto:lsnata@fhfogno.org">lsnata@fhfogno.org</a>                           |



# How AI Can Help People with Disabilities

AI is all the rage nowadays, but it's also nothing new. Many kinds of AI – like Amazon's Alexa, self-driving cars, and even your Netflix recommendations – are already part of everyday life. However, new technology has expanded how we can use AI for disabilities. For example, experts believe that new generative AI for people with disabilities will help with work, communication, and accessibility.

The right kind of AI tool can make daily tasks easier. It may also help people with disabilities safely navigate their homes or the world around them.

## AI for People With Disabilities: What Does it Mean?

When we talk about AI for people with disabilities, we're referring to:

AI tools designed specifically for people with disabilities

Other AI tools that can help people with disabilities live independently

There are plenty of ways AI helps people with disabilities, but it most notably does things like:

- Enhances accessibility. Many AI tools remove barriers between people with disabilities and what they want or need to do. For instance, AI-powered speech recognition software can help people with limited mobility move around or control devices. Likewise, prosthetics and exoskeletons may use AI to be more intuitive and responsive.
- Supports communication. AI helps translate thoughts and feelings into words, even if the person using it communicates differently. Think of things like predictive text and language processing tools, which can generate speech from text or symbols.
- Offers personalized support. AI learning materials, monitoring software, and other options can adapt to a user's needs in real-time, delivering tailored assistance when it's needed most.

## How to Use AI for People With Disabilities: Tips & Examples

There are more ways people with disabilities can use AI to help make life easier than we could list. Experiment with the tools you can access and see what works for you. Below are some easy tips that can help you get started.

### 1. Use AI to plan and break things down

Keeping up with all that goes into independent daily life can be tiring. It can also be confusing. AI tools like ChatGPT can help by doing some of the thinking and organizing for you.

Try asking a chatbot to create a meal plan or grocery list. Or, try having it help you create a to-do list. Take a look at how ChatGPT guides us through creating a morning routine:

ChatGPT isn't the only AI tool that can do this. Another pick specifically designed for neurodivergent individuals is Goblin Tools, which is built on ChatGPT's AI model. It can help you break down a task's steps, simplify complex language, estimate how long it will take to complete a task, and more.

### 2. Use voice-activated devices as personal assistants

If your mobility is limited or you simply like controlling things from afar, try using voice-activated AI assistants like Amazon's Alexa or Siri. A few words are all it takes to control lights, appliances, locks, thermostats, etc.

### 3. Use AI to make reading, writing, and learning easier

Even if you're not a student, AI can help you understand things better and faster. For example, applications like Microsoft's Immersive Reader use AI to adjust text size, read text aloud, and provide visual aids when you're reading.

### 4. Use AI to monitor health changes

The AI in things like smartwatches helps you keep track of things like sleep data or your heart rate. This information can be passed on to healthcare providers or used to help you adjust your routines.

#### Top AI Tools for People With Disabilities

We're happy to report that there are too many AI tools for people with disabilities to show off at once. We like these options because they target several areas of need.

- ChatGPT: Uses AI to scan sources on the web and generate responses based on your request.
- Microsoft Seeing AI: Uses AI to describe people, text, and objects. This program can read printed text in real-time, identify currency, and recognize friends and their emotions. Use your phone to scan barcodes, read text, and more.
- Voiceitt: Designed for people with non-standard speech. Voiceitt uses AI to learn and adapt to your speech patterns so you can communicate easily.
- WheelMap: Uses AI to map and share information about wheelchair-accessible spaces.
- Predictable: Uses AI to predict text and phrases, which helps people with conditions like ALS or cerebral palsy communicate.

## Thanks to our Sponsors 17<sup>th</sup> Annual “Fore for Families” Golf Tournament



# RIDDLES

Riddle: People make me,  
save me, change me, raise  
me. What am I?



Answer is on  
the last page



## Equal Access to Child Care

Currently, children with disabilities are thriving alongside their nondisabled peers in childcare centers across the country that foster inclusion. A child with a disability must never be turned away from a child care center based on assumptions about the severity of the disability or how much assistance they may need. Inclusive programs fulfill the

ADA's promise to ensure equal access to child care programs for all children. The information below is intended to help ensure that your child care program fulfills this promise, too.

### About Child Care Centers

*Child care centers that must comply with the ADA include:*

- Privately run child care centers, including home day care
- Government-run centers
- Before and after school centers
- Summer centers

*They do not include:*

⊗ Programs run by religious organizations such as churches, mosques, and synagogues.

### Basic obligations

*Child care providers must:*

- Make an individualized assessment about whether they can meet the particular needs of a child with a disability.





## What do we mean by individualized assessment under the ADA?

- Make reasonable modifications to their policies and practices to allow for children with disabilities to participate. Here are examples of some common, reasonable modifications:

**Ex:** Change a toilet training policy to assist a child with Down syndrome who, due to her disability, requires assistance with going to the bathroom.

**Ex:** Change a discipline policy to ensure that a child with autism has equal access to the program with appropriate supports, such as training staff to aid the child in de-escalating behavior when the child acts out.

**Ex:** Change a medication policy so that a trained staff person may assist a child with diabetes in the administration of insulin or Glucagon, an emergency, life-saving medication for individuals with diabetes.

- Provide appropriate aids and services needed to effectively communicate with children or adults with disabilities.
- If a child care center is closing early due to bad weather, that may mean using different methods—not just calls but emails or text messages—to communicate with deaf or hard-of-hearing parents or guardians.
- If a child care center is using websites or parent portals to keep parents informed concerning their child's participation in the program, all such technology must be accessible to those with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities (for example, those who use screen readers).
- Make sure physical spaces are accessible. Remove architectural barriers that interfere with or prevent children from fully participating (or parents, guardians, or prospective customers with disabilities) if removing the barriers is readily achievable, meaning if it can be easily accomplished without much difficulty or expense.

For example, installing grab bars in toilet stalls or replacing playground pea gravel with ADA-compliant materials.

### *Child care providers must not:*

- ⊗ Exclude a child with a disability from their programs based on their disability, or separate that child from their nondisabled peers.

Example:

- A child care center cannot turn away or isolate a child because the child has intellectual disabilities.
- The center must instead take steps to integrate that child into every activity available to other children, including participation in extra-curricular activities and field trips.
- ⊗ Exclude children with disabilities from their programs unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or fundamentally alter the nature of the program.



# From Worry to Action:

Helping Your Child with  
Developmental Delays Succeed

THURSDAY,  
OCTOBER 30, 2025  
11 AM

Please join us for an informative webinar  
on recognizing the early signs of  
developmental delays, understanding the  
path forward, and feeling empowered to  
make a difference through therapy options  
and practical strategies for supporting  
your child's progress at home.

LINK TO REGISTER:  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/DD103025](https://tinyurl.com/DD103025)



Guest Speaker: Jenni Dees, LOTR  
Early Steps Facilitator

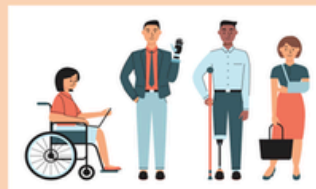
For More Information, call China Guillory at:  
(337) 436-2570 ♦ 1-800-894-6558  
[info@fhfswla.org](mailto:info@fhfswla.org)



## October 2025 Virtual Family Support Group For Parents & Caregivers

Hosted by Families Helping Families  
of Southwest Louisiana

 **Tuesday, October 21, 2025**  
 **12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**  
 **Zoom (link provided upon registration)**



Being part of a family with a member who has a disability can bring unique joys and challenges. This group offers a safe, supportive space where parents and caregivers can connect, share experiences, and encourage one another. Join us to talk about the stresses, celebrate the wins, and build friendships with others who truly understand.

 **Link to Register:** <https://tinyurl.com/VFSG102125>

Scan Me



For more information, call Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana at 337-436-2570

# **Caffeine Is Not a Good Alternative to ADHD Medication**

*Caffeine is not a reliable or effective replacement for stimulant medication. Here's why coffee, energy drinks, or chocolate should not be used to manage ADHD symptoms.*

Caffeine is the world's most common (and delicious) stimulant.

Unlike prescription stimulant medications such as amphetamine (brand name: Adderall) or methylphenidate (brand name: Ritalin), caffeine occurs naturally.

Coffee drinkers with ADHD may find that it improves focus, ramps up productivity, promotes wakefulness, and reduces ADHD symptoms.

But before you reach for that morning cup of joe, know this: People with ADHD should not use caffeine to manage their symptoms instead of prescribed stimulants. Here's why.

## **1. Caffeine Can't Compete**

ADHD stimulants provide reliable, steady symptom management; caffeine's punch is unpredictable. You know exactly how many milligrams of medication you are taking with a prescribed stimulant. Caffeine has a different chemical composition. So, even if you brew the same amount and brand of coffee each morning, the caffeine count in each cup may differ due to natural variations in the beans.

## **2. Caffeine's Impact Goes Beyond the Brain**

Prescription stimulants work specifically in the brain. Caffeine in beverages, on the other hand, travels throughout the body. While it improves energy and alertness, caffeine may also affect your kidneys and digestive system, causing diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting in some individuals. Caffeine can also increase your blood pressure and risk of a cardiac event. Other side effects can include impaired sleep, inflammation, anxiety, and headaches.

Caffeine affects people differently. One person can drink six cups of coffee daily and feel great because their fast metabolism quickly eliminates the caffeine from their body.

Another person may feel jittery and get a headache after one cup of coffee because their slower metabolism takes longer to break down caffeine.

If you feel energized and productive after drinking a caffeinated beverage but then crash afterward, don't keep drinking coffee every few hours to renew its benefits. Instead, talk to your doctor about trying a stimulant medication to address your ADHD symptoms.

Side effects may come from prescription stimulants, too, though patients work with their doctors to manage them through medication and dosage adjustments.

## **3. Caffeine Doesn't Mix Well with Meds**

Combining a stimulant medication with caffeine can trigger severe side effects. If you use caffeine to amplify the benefits of your ADHD medication, discuss this with your doctor. A change in dosage or medication may be appropriate.

Non-stimulant medications are less likely to interact with caffeine. However, stimulant medications are typically the first choice to treat ADHD symptoms because they work for about 80% of people with ADHD.



We live in a pro-caffeine culture. Coffee and energy drinks have become part of the teen lifestyle, but parents should never encourage their children to drink caffeinated beverages. Stimulant medications, along with sleep, exercise, and healthy eating, comprise a safer and more effective ADHD treatment plan.

### Caffeine Comparison

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between the ages of 12 and 18 consume no more than 100 mg of caffeine daily and advises against caffeine for children under 12. Adults should drink no more than 400 mg per day. This chart compares the caffeine content of popular beverages.



#### CAFFEINE COMPARISON

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between the ages of 12 and 18 consume no more than 100 mg of caffeine daily and advises against caffeine for children under 12. Adults should drink no more than 400 mg per day. This chart compares the caffeine content of popular beverages. *Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest*

#### CAFFEINE IN COMMON BEVERAGES

|                                                |        |                                                   |        |
|------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 16 oz. Starbucks Blonde Roast                  | 360 mg | 15.2 oz. Kevita Kombucha                          | 68 mg  |
| 16 oz. Starbucks Pike Place Roast              | 310 mg | 1 Bag, Lipton Black Tea                           | 55 mg  |
| 16 oz. Starbucks Dark Roast                    | 260 mg | 18 oz. Bai Wonderwater                            | 55 mg  |
| 14 oz. Dunkin' Coffee                          | 210 mg | 12 oz. Diet Coke                                  | 46 mg  |
| 16 oz. Starbucks Cold Brew                     | 205 mg | 1 Bag, Celestial Seasonings Green Tea             | 35 mg  |
| 16 oz. Panera Coffee                           | 189 mg | 16 oz. Starbucks Decaf Pike Place Roast           | 24 mg  |
| 16 oz. Starbucks Frappuccino                   | 195 mg | 16 oz. Dunkin' Decaf Coffee                       | 10 mg  |
| 16 oz. Dunkin' Cold Brew                       | 174 mg | 16 oz. Panera Chai Latte                          | 9 mg   |
| 15.5 oz. Yerba Madre Yerba Mate Enlighten Mint | 150 mg | 20 oz. Vitaminwater Focus Kiwi Strawberry         | 6 mg   |
| 16 oz. Starbucks Chai Latte                    | 95 mg  | 1 Packet, Swiss Miss Milk Chocolate Hot Cocoa Mix | 1-3 mg |
| 20 oz. Mountain Dew                            | 91 mg  | 1 Bag, Herbal Tea                                 | 0 mg   |

#### CAFFEINE IN ENERGY DRINKS

|                                                                 |        |                                                      |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 16 oz. Bang                                                     | 300 mg | 12 oz. Gatorade Fast Twitch Energy Drink             | 200 mg |
| 15 oz. Monster Java Triple Shot                                 | 300 mg | 16 oz. Full Throttle                                 | 160 mg |
| 16 oz. C4 Ultimate Energy                                       | 300 mg | 16 oz. Monster Energy Original                       | 160 mg |
| 16 oz. Celsius Essentials                                       | 270 mg | 16 oz. Rockstar Original                             | 160 mg |
| 1.9 oz. 5-Hour Energy (Extra Strength, Fan Fuel, or Gamer Shot) | 230 mg | 16 oz. NOS                                           | 160 mg |
| 16 oz. Prime Energy                                             | 200 mg | 12 oz. Zevia Zero Sugar Energy                       | 120 mg |
| 12 oz. Alani Nu                                                 | 200 mg | 1 Tablet, Nuun Energy                                | 80 mg  |
| 12 oz. C4 Energy                                                | 200 mg | 8 oz. V8 Plus Energy                                 | 80 mg  |
| 12 oz. Celsius                                                  | 200 mg | 8.4 oz. Red Bull (Regular, Sugar-Free, or Zero)      | 80 mg  |
|                                                                 |        | 11.5 oz. Phocus Naturally Energizing Sparkling Water | 75 mg  |





LOUISIANA COUNCIL'S ADVOCACY NETWORK

## Act 378: How Did We Get Waivers and Families Helping Families?

 Thursday, October 23, 2025

 10 AM



Register Here: <https://tinyurl.com/Act378-102325R>

Families raising children with disabilities once had no supports to keep their loved ones at home. Adults with developmental disabilities who wanted to live independently faced even greater challenges.

Over the past 30 years, our state has changed dramatically in how it supports families and individuals with disabilities. Join us as we explore the history of Act 378, the development of waivers, and the role of Families Helping Families in shaping today's services.



 For More Information Contact:  
Phone: 337-436-2570 • Toll-Free: 1-800-894-6558

 Website: [www.fhfsvla.org](http://www.fhfsvla.org)

 Email: [info@fhfsvla.org](mailto:info@fhfsvla.org)

**REGISTER**

*Here* 



# PAINTING WITH A PURPOSE

with Families Helping Families of SWLA at  
Painting with a Twist



*Add to your Holiday Decor While Giving Back*

Sunday, November 9  
2-4 PM

Make some art and support a  
good cause at the same time.

The cost to participate starts  
at \$39. A portion of your  
payment for this event will be  
donated to Families Helping  
Families SWLA.



**To Get Signed Up or  
For More Information:**  
[https://tinyurl.com/PW  
AP110925](https://tinyurl.com/PWAP110925)



**Painting with a Twist**  
2712 Country Club Road  
Lake Charles, LA 70605

For More Information,  
Contact  
**Families Helping Families of  
SWLA**  
337-436-2570  
800-894-6558  
or email us at  
[info@fhfswla.org](mailto:info@fhfswla.org)





FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES  
IT'S WHO WE ARE!  
IT'S WHAT WE DO!

HAPPY  
HOLIDAY

### Invest in Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana.

FHFSWLA is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit agency that relies on donations to meet the needs of our agency's mission and vision. By donating to FHFSWLA, you are investing in the lives of

people with disabilities and their families. If passion paid, we would be the richest nonprofit in SWLA. Unfortunately, passion alone does not fully support our organization.

Please consider contributing so families who are touched by disability can be assured that this is a kind, family. The directed resource center is always here when they need us.

Contributions can be made to:  
Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana  
P.O. Box 1627  
Lake Charles, LA 70602

FHF is funded in part by a contract  
from the Louisiana Developmental  
Disabilities Council.

Riddle Answer:  
Money.

### Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana

MAILING ADDRESS: P O BOX 1627, LAKE CHARLES, LA 70602

OFFICE ADDRESS: 324 W. HALE ST., LAKE CHARLES, LA 70601

(337) 436-2570 • 1-800-894-6558 • (337) 436-2578 FAX

EMAIL: [INFO@FHFSWLA.ORG](mailto:INFO@FHFSWLA.ORG)

WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WWW.FHFSWLA.ORG](https://www.fhfswla.org)

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/fhfswla>

Opinions contained herein do not necessarily represent those  
of the funding source, and no endorsement should be inferred.