

CARD NEWSLETTER

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The UF-JAX CARD program provides support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism spectrum disorders and related disabilities. Services are provided at no cost. The UF-JAX CARD program provides services to Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns counties.

Basic Information on the ESE Process

by Valerie Buckley, Psy.D.

Often Although learning is a process for all children throughout the year, this is often the time when parents hear that the progress of their child is not the same as the rest of their class. Parents may have suspected their child learned differently, but did not share those concerns with the teacher or was not heard when they

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Upcoming Events

- 4/10** **Connecting the Dots Conference**
- 4/11** **UF Spring Fling**
- 4/24** **Parent Support Group & Craft Group**

Keep up to date on events. Join the CARD Weekly Update Email Newsletter.

To sign up please email Anthony.Rhodes@jax.ufl.edu.



CARD's Mission

To educate and empower individuals and families throughout the lifespan by providing support, assistance, and awareness within the community; with the goal of optimizing the potential of all individuals with autism and related disabilities.

tried to share their concerns. One avenue for children who learn differently is the process of identifying whether or not they need specially designed instruction or other services so that they can be successful in the regular education setting with the supports they may need. In Florida, the identification step is considered to be an Eligibility Determination to decide if a student needs **Exceptional Student Education (ESE)** services. How is that determination made and what part do parents play in this process?

The following paragraphs present some information about the ESE process of identification through writing the **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**.

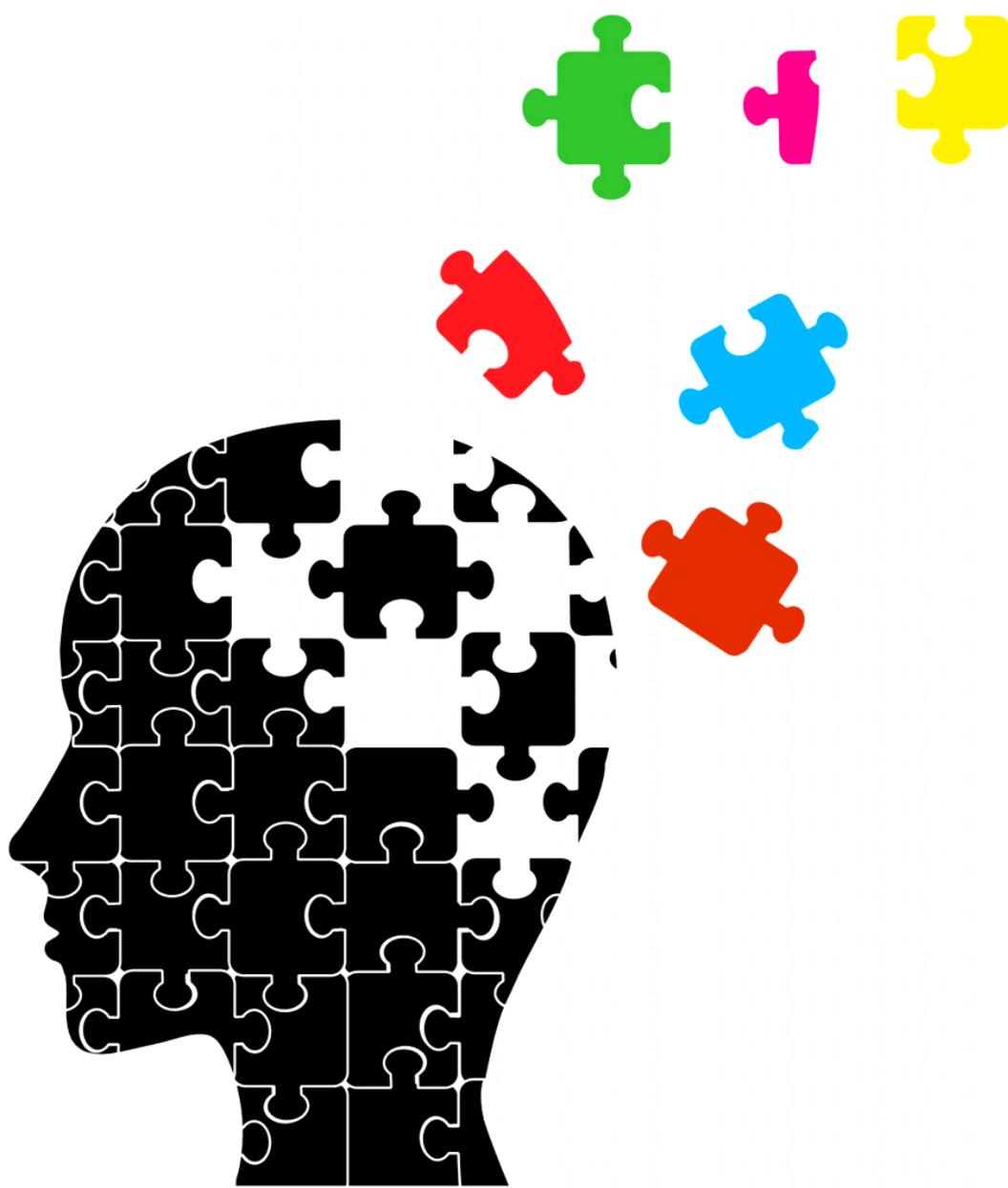
Teachers will keep a parent informed of the child's progress through a variety of means including homework, graded class work, progress reports, report cards and parent conferences. If a parent is concerned about their child's learning process, a first step would be to ask for a conference with the teacher to relay concerns to the teacher to open communication. This in itself may resolve the concern. However, if your child continues to struggle in the academic setting, you may wish to ask for what extra services are available at the school to assist your child. Sometimes teachers are available before or after school to tutor students, psychoeducational classes may be offered, or behavior plans may be implemented in the classroom. The official process of receiving interventions is called **Response to Intervention (RTI)** or **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)**. These are

both processes whereby academic skills or behaviors are taught in a systematic manner that includes data collection to monitor the student's progress. Parents should be aware of this process as it is occurring with their child and have access to the information.

The RTI or MTSS process is ongoing and the interventions are supposed to be supplemental to the everyday instruction taking place with your child. When the intervention works and the data indicates the child no longer needs the interventions, the process is ended. However, if the interventions do not work what else can occur in the school setting? Two specific avenues may be beneficial for your child. The first is to inquire about an evaluation for eligibility for a Section 504 Plan. Section 504 is a general education initiative following Civil Rights law that states a student with a disability should have the same access to instruction as a student without a disability. Perhaps your child is highly anxious and has a hard time concentrating in school, which impacts his performance in the classroom. If found eligible, a Section 504 Plan can be written that offers accommodations in the school setting. This is legally binding and must be followed by the teachers and school personnel assisting the child.

The second avenue that a parent may wish to request, if RTI and parent support does not improve the outcome of the child's learning, is the evaluation process to consider if Exceptional Student Education (ESE) is warranted. ESE services are defined by Federal and State law and

operationalized by each school district. Federal Law defines the concept of a **Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)** for all students and Child Find which demands that all districts identify school age children (3-22) who need ESE services. This is accomplished through the process of evaluation and team decisions of which a parent is always a part. During the team meeting, a school based team first meets with the parent to discuss the progress of the student including teacher information, the interventions that have been attempted, and identify any concerns that may need to be addressed in the formal evaluation. Formal evaluations are often completed by multiple people including, School



Psychologists, Speech Language Therapist/ Evaluators, Social Workers, and possibly Occupational or Physical Therapists. Parents are required to give consent for evaluations and have the choice to discontinue the evaluation process if so desired. After the evaluation is completed the results of the evaluation are shared with the team and an Eligibility Team reviews all available information to determine if the student meets the criteria for ESE. If the student is found to need ESE services and Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written that describes goals and objectives, where and

how those goals will be met, any special or related services offered, and any needed accommodations.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is another concept defined by ESE law that states a student with a disability must be instructed in an environment with students without disabilities to the furthest extent possible. Most students are instructed in the regular education class room where they will get supports from the general education teacher in the form of accommodations and possibly from an ESE teacher at various

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times throughout the day. The continuum of services suggests there are different settings in which a student can be served. One example is a resource setting where a student is pulled out of the classroom for a pre-determined amount of time and receives therapies or instruction in a small group setting, usually with other students with disabilities. The amount of time a student receives instruction in a general education class or other setting is outlined by the IEP.

IEP's are reviewed annually and can be reviewed any time during the year if a parent or teacher requests. Every three years a triennial evaluation takes place to consider if services continue to be warranted. This may be a review of a student's cumulative file, progress reports, report cards, and teacher statements. Other evaluation elements can be requested by the team if needed.

If a parent is unhappy with the services and cannot resolve this with the school based IEP Team, Federal Law defines **Due Process** which is a formalized procedure to address parent or school concerns about the IEP services or implementation that cannot be resolved otherwise.

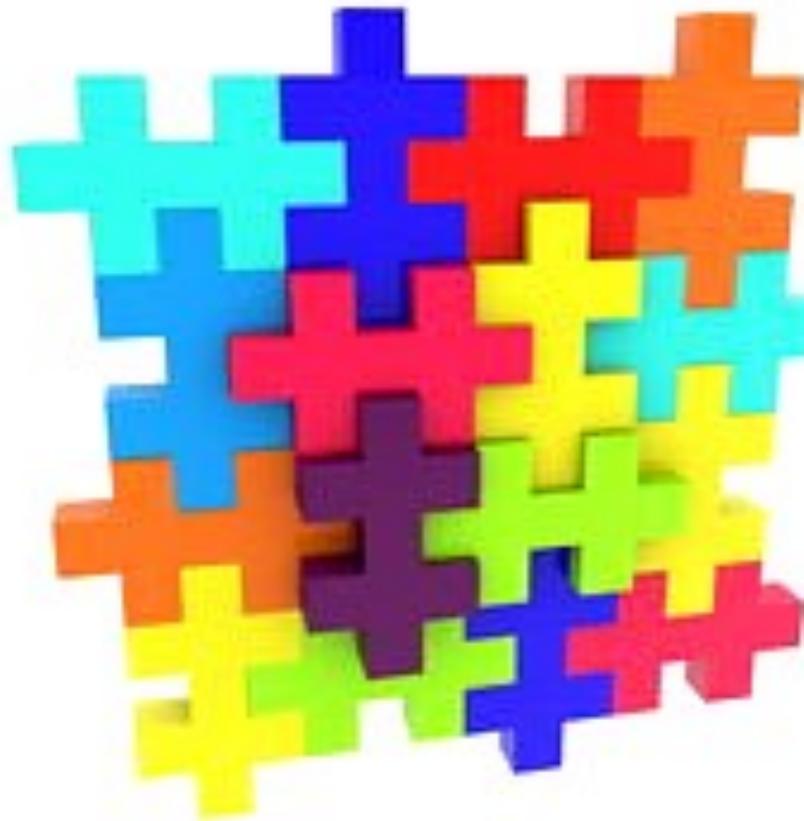
The ESE process is not what all students need. However, as a parent, it is one avenue to pursue when your child is not being successful in the school setting with the standard instructional techniques. Parent involvement in their student's education can vastly improve the outcome of a student's education. Be

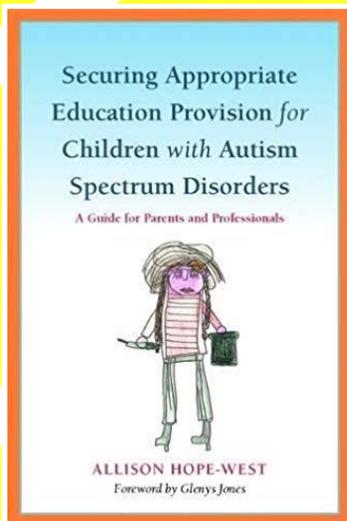
informed about what is available to you as parents are often a child's first advocate!

Further Information:

www.fndusa.org

<https://dcps.duvalschools.org/Page/9318>





Securing Appropriate Education Provision for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

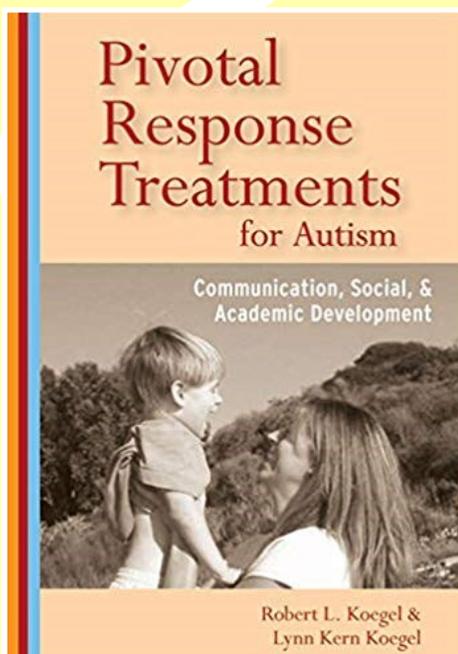
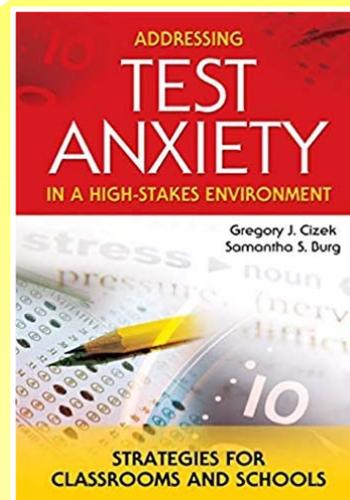
By Allison Hope-West

This book cuts through the jargon surrounding special educational needs (SEN), while explaining the implications of having, or not having, a diagnosis, how to obtain a Statement of SEN, how to find and secure an appropriate school, and how to work effectively with outside agencies. It provides explanations of the legal aspects of the process and the new guidelines for SEND tribunals.

Addressing Test Anxiety In A High-Stakes Environment

By Gregory J Cizek & Samantha S. Burg

This research-based guide offers recommendations for dealing with test anxiety, and includes suggestions on reducing its effects and identifying situations in which it can actually be helpful. It also includes straightforward explanations, practical suggestions based on current research findings, and reasonable recommendations for addressing test anxiety.



Pivotal Response Treatments for Autism

By Robert Koegel & Lynn Kern Koegel

Discover how to use natural learning opportunities to target and modify key behaviors in children with autism leading to positive effects on communication, behavior, and social skills. Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) is an empirically supported treatment for autism recognized by the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders and the National Standards Project. The product of 20 years of research from Robert and Lynn Koegel—co-founders of the renowned Autism Research Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara—this proven approach is now clearly presented in one accessible book.



An opportunity for quality social interactions with peers using board games and card games

Targeted Skills:

- Sustaining attention / Waiting / Turn Taking
- Conversation / Problem Solving
- Behavior Regulation / Understanding Cues
- Interest-based leisure skill development



Prerequisite Requirements:

- Teens must be between ages of 13-18 years and registered with CARD
- Please speak with your CARD point of contact in order to determine if your teen meets the prerequisite skills needed to partake in this group

***Please bring a preferred board or card game and a snack**

All group meetings are held at the UF Health Developmental Pediatric Center, 6271 St. Augustine Road, Suite 1, Jacksonville, FL 32217. CARD is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education. This grant funded program does not charge for its services.

For more information please contact Chelsea Pierce at (904) 633-0769 or via email at Chelsea.Pierce@jax.ufl.edu