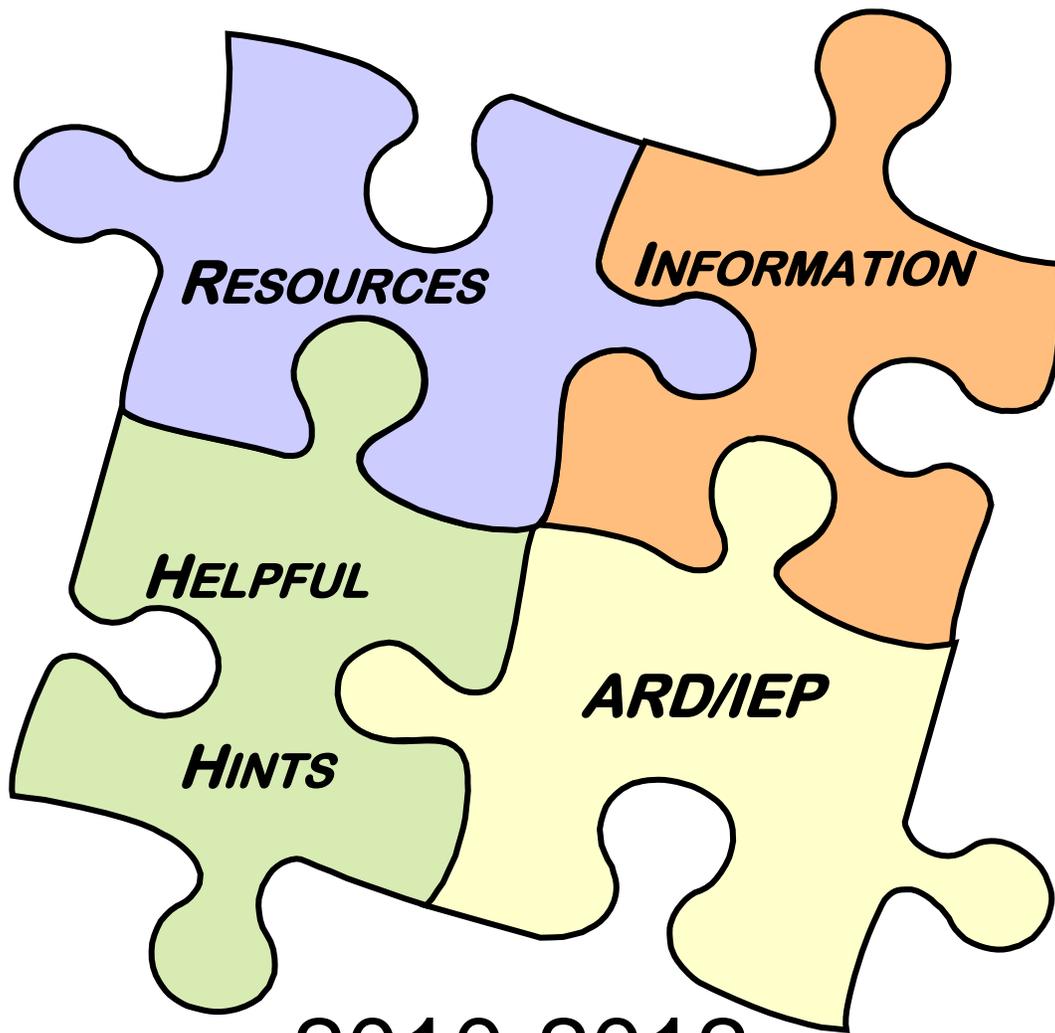


HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of Special Education Services

Information for Parents of Students with Autism



2010-2012

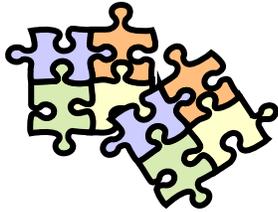


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ENCLOSURES

The Different Faces of Autism

Helpful Hints for Interactions with Individuals with Autism

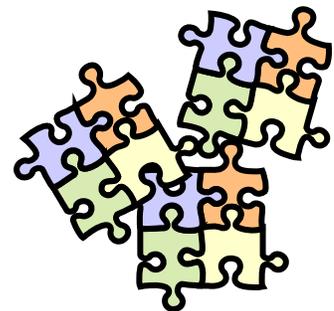
Dear Valued Community Member Card

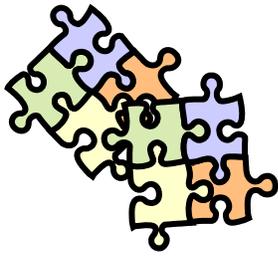
Form – Receipt for Autism Information Packet

Sample Picture Communication Sheets

- Basic Communication Pictures
- Basic Emotions Pictures
- Reinforcer Pictures

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Introduction

The Office of Special Education Services of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) is committed to meeting the needs of our children and families. This autism information packet for parents contains pertinent information regarding the continuum of services and resources available to children on the autism spectrum.

Although this packet provides numerous resources for parents to access outside of the school district, please do not hesitate to contact the following HISD staff:

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Sowmya Kumar, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education
Sharon Cole-Braxton, Director, ARD/IEP Services
Ardalia Idlebird, Director, Special Education Compliance
Faye Jones, Director, Special Education Programs
Patricia Boyd, Senior Manager, Hearing and Visually Impaired Programs
Michael Webb, Senior Manager, Child Study Evaluation Services

SCHOOL OFFICES

Elementary Schools

Samuel Sarabia, Chief Schools Officer
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Susan Pansmith, Senior Manager, Special Education Programs

Middle Schools

Dallas Dance, Chief Schools Officer
Toni Pompa-Rodriguez, Senior Manager, Special Education Programs

High Schools

Aaron Spence, Chief Schools Officer
Susan Hurta, Senior Manager, Special Education Programs

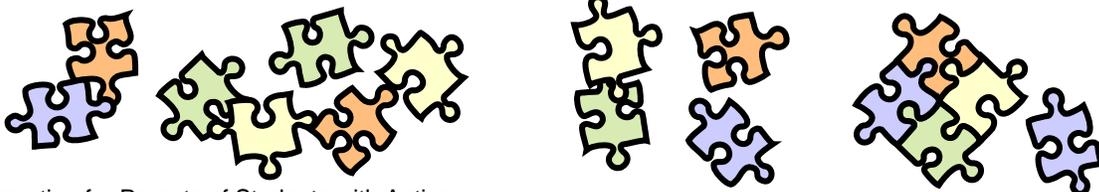
Alternative and Charter Schools

Aaron Spence, Chief Schools Officer
Holly Ortego, Manager, Special Education Programs

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

713-556-7025

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Autism: Community and Internet Resources

Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in parent support groups. Parent support groups provide emotional support for parents of children with autism as well as help to identify local resources, such as dentists, eye doctors, hair stylists and other practitioners who are sensitive to the needs of individuals with autism. Many of these organizations and support groups have special events, such as summer swim day and holiday parties for children with autism. Additionally, special education organizations sponsor speakers who may address topics such as insurance reimbursement for private treatments, current research, special education laws, and more. To obtain current and up-to-date information, ask to be added to the mailing lists of these support groups or organizations.

The following is a partial list of parent supports, community resources and internet resources currently available to parents of children with disabilities in the Greater Houston area.



Parent Supports and Community Resources



The ARC of Greater Houston – This organization provides services such as parent information regarding special education law, family fun nights, respite care, sibling support and advocacy. www.thearcofgreaterhouston.com

Autism Research Institute – This resource provides information to parents and professionals based on world-wide research. www.autismwebsite.com/ari/index.htm

Different Roads to Learning – This website sells products that meet the unique learning style and educational needs of the children in the Houston community. www.difflearn.com

Family to Family Network – This organization provides parents with one-on-one telephone support, general autism and referral information, as well as specific assistance regarding accessing sources for obtaining grants. www.familytofamilynetwork.org

Families for Early Autism Treatment (FEAT) – This organization and website provide information about autism and ABA treatment. The local chapter holds support group meetings for parents the 2nd Thursday of odd numbered months. Phone: 281-348-7067. www.feathouston.org or www.feat.com

Future Horizons – This website provides books, conferences, and other information on autism, Aspergers Syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). www.futurehorizons-autism.com

The Greater Houston Chapter of the Autism Society of America – This organization provides autism support group meetings in the Medical Center the 2nd Saturday of each month. Phone: 713-513-7575.

OASIS (On-line Aspergers Syndrome Information & Support) – This website provides users with access to information regarding Aspergers Syndrome. www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger

Team Project – This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Education in Washington, D.C., to serve parents of children with disabilities. Support services are provided in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Website: www.PartnersTX.org

The Texas Autism Advocacy – This organization provides support groups for parents and professionals on the first Tuesday night of the month in Tomball. Contact Michelle Guppy at 281-686-0103 or by email at michelleguppy@yahoo.com. Website: www.texasautismadvocacy.org

The Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of Autism Society of America – This organization sponsors support group meetings in the Clear Lake area on the second Tuesday of each month, except during December. Contact: Kim Lindquist at kimbo77571@yahoo.com. Website: www.asa-tgcc.org

The TxABA Autism Special Interest Group – This organization holds information meetings and mini-trainings for parents and professionals on the first Wednesday of each month at the University of Houston, Central Campus. Contact David Witcher by phone at 281-239-1127 or by email at david.witcher@texanamhmr.com.

The Texas Association for Behavior Analysts – This organization holds an annual autism conference for professionals and parents. The conference alternates between Dallas and Houston and is usually held the first weekend in March. Website: www.unt.edu/behv/txaba/.



Additional Internet Resources



www.autism.org or www.autism.com – These are websites for the *Center for the Study of Autism*, which provides information about autism and its basic characteristics.

www.autism-society.org – This website is an information and advocacy resource for autism-related issues and more.

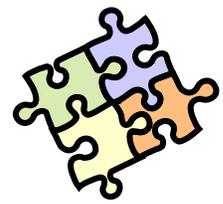
www.card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu – This is the website for the *Center for Autism and Related Disabilities*, which provides information regarding autism.

www.do2learn.com – This website, also known as Do to Learn Activities, teaches users how to utilize visuals to support positive behaviors for children with autism. There are free pictures to download for use at home or school.

www.nichcy.org – This is the website for the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, which provides information to parents of children with all types of disabilities. Free literature, newsletters and telephone support are available to parents in English and Spanish.

www.pecs.com –The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) website provides picture communication resources for schools and home.

www.teacch.com – The official program is titled Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication of Handicapped Children (TEACCH) and is known for its structured teaching methodology.



Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document that outlines a student's educational program. As the title implies, the educational program is tailored to the student's individual needs. A program that is appropriate for one student with autism may not be appropriate for another. The parent's role in developing the IEP, and the terms, definitions and components of the IEP are outlined below:



What is the parent's role in developing the IEP?

- Review the evaluation report before the meeting
- Confer with evaluation personnel or teacher(s) prior to the meeting
- Think about long term goals - list the goals
- Ask questions - seek to understand and serve as an equal partner



What are common terms and definitions used in developing the IEP?

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- Written program describing the provision of special education and related services
 - Describes what the student can already do and what he/she needs to learn during the upcoming school year.

Measurable Annual Goals

- A description of the expected outcome that is measurable for each area of instruction, including academic, social, behavioral, and physical skills that can be achieved within one year.

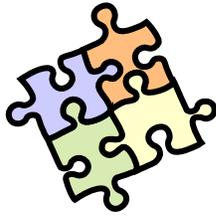
Short-Term Objectives/Benchmarks

- Steps a student must master in the process of reaching annual goals



What are the components of the IEP?

- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP)
- Measurable annual goals
- Short term objectives for students who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards (TAKS-Alternate) and other students as determined by the ARD/IEP Committee
- Statement of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and reported
- Description of special education and related services to include placement, schedule, frequency, and duration of these services
- Statement of needed program accommodations, modifications, and/or supplementary aids and services, including behavior and or autism supports
- Statement of how the student with a disability is assessed and any needed assessment accommodations
- Description of how the student with a disability will participate with non-disabled peers in general education
- Description of how the student will participate in state and local assessments such as TAKS and Stanford 10
- Additional components are described in the next section, ARD/IEP Supplement: Autism



ARD/IEP Supplement: Autism

The Autism Supplement facilitates ARD/IEP Committee discussion of peer reviewed research-based practices and strategies for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The ARD/IEP Committee reviews available data and determines which practices should be included in the student's IEP based on individual need. The following describes the focus of discussion for each of the eleven practices/strategies:



Extended Educational Programming

Progress data is reviewed to determine if the student is making:

- adequate progress in all critical areas, and has not shown significant regression after school breaks (*Extended School Year Services*)
- slow or minimal progress in one or more critical goal areas determining if the IEP can be met during the school day (*Extended Day Services*)



Daily Schedule Reflecting Minimal Unstructured Time

Behaviors are reviewed to determine if the student requires support or functions independently in unstructured settings and during transitions from one task or setting to another. Schedule supports may be identified and/or a sample daily schedule devised to reflect a minimal amount of unstructured time to support the student's daily functioning.



In-Home/Community Based Training (IH/CBT) or Viable Alternatives

Progress toward mastery of critical skills is reviewed to determine if the student needs assistance in acquiring and/or generalizing these skills to a variety of settings. Viable alternatives to in-home or community-based interventions are first considered and tried.



Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Strategies

Behavior data is reviewed to determine if the student exhibits behaviors that impede or are likely to impede educational progress. Intervention strategies may be identified as part of the student's FBA/BSP.



Futures Planning

Desired short and long-term outcomes and current skill levels are reviewed in all areas to determine IEP goals and objectives necessary to develop or increase independence in current and future environments. By age 14, and annually thereafter, the student's goals related to adult integrated living, employment, community, and educational environments are reviewed.



Parent/Family Training and Support

Progress toward critical skill areas and parent/family information are reviewed to determine if the student's parents and family need training and support to assist with helping the student to succeed in the home and community setting.



Staff to Student Grouping Ratio

Student participation in general and special education settings and the student's IEP goals/objectives are reviewed to determine the suitable staff to student ratios needed to achieve social/behavioral progress.



Communication Interventions

Receptive, expressive, and pragmatic communication skill levels are reviewed to determine if communication needs adversely affect the student's ability to function in the academic setting. Specific interventions and instructional strategies may be identified to support progress on communication skills across settings.



Social Skills Supports and Strategies

Social behavioral skills are reviewed to determine if the student can independently communicate and interact with others using limited or no supports. Specific supports or strategies may be identified to encourage effective interaction and communication with others.



Educator/Staff Support:

The IEP is reviewed to determine if the current teacher and support staff have the necessary knowledge and training to implement the techniques and strategies described in the IEP.



Teaching Strategies

Progress on IEP goals and objectives is reviewed to determine if the student is making adequate progress and if instructional strategies and accommodations used in the current instructional setting(s) are sufficient for the student to make continued progress.