

May 2021

Albemarle County Parent Resource Center is a local effort to link families, schools and communities together to better support children with disabilities in the school setting. The Albemarle County Parent Resource Center has a goal of fostering a positive relationship between parents and schools in an effort to assist parents with questions and planning, as well as through the provision of resources and training. The Parent Resource Center is being operated by Michael Armstrong for the 2020-2021 School Year.

The Parent Resource Center is located at Albemarle County Public Schools, Department of Special Education, 401 McIntire Rd., Room 323, Charlottesville, VA 22902. You can contact the Parent Resource Center at (434) 296-5885 or by email at SPEDHELP@k12albemarle.org.



Special Education Advisory Committee

Next meeting:

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

[Online Live Streaming](#)



The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is actively looking for parent representatives.

Interested in being a parent representative for your school?

[Apply Here!](#)

**Want more information?
Parent Resource Center
(434)296-5885**

ACPS Parent Resource Center: Year One

To be on the ground floor for the creation of the Parent Resource Center has been one of the most exhilarating experiences of my career. It has been an amazing first Year filled with accomplishments, firsts, and dreams of what the PRC can become. Two of the accomplishments that I'm most proud of are highlighted on page four of this newsletter... The creation of the Special Book Collection in collaboration with the Jefferson Madison Regional Library, has been a well received resource, and a first of its kind for this community. Also highlighted, is our ongoing effort to promote parental educational opportunities through our monthly platform, "Parent Resource Center Presents". In addition to these accomplishments, we've created a webpage devoted to the needs of the parents we serve, and we launched a monthly PRC Newsletter that interested parties can subscribe to.

Yes, much like a new parent, I am very proud of what the PRC has been able to accomplish during its first year, but I know that none of it would have been possible without the support we received from our parents and community partners. I'm excited about what the future holds, as we have plenty of new and exciting ideas for growing the PRC's capacity to serve - so stay tuned and keep sending us your ideas.

- Michael Armstrong, Parent Resource Center



DID YOU KNOW... The VDOE has a [Parent Ombudsman for Special Education](#) who acts as a source of information, aids in answering individuals' questions, and assists in the resolution of concerns and issues. School divisions, parents, and children benefit and build relationships when school divisions and parents work together to resolve problems, the Parent Ombudsman for Special Education serves to facilitate that process. Contact Information: Gloria Dalton, Parent Ombudsman (Ph: 804-371-7420) Email: SpecialEducationOmbudsman@doe.virginia.gov

Special Education Advisory Committee

Voices Needed: Parent Representatives

The Special Education Advisory Committee, or SEAC, is a group of parents of children with disabilities who volunteer to represent children enrolled in Albemarle County Public Schools. SEAC represents Albemarle County Public Schools by identifying and addressing the needs of children with disabilities in special education programs across the division.

Parent representatives on SEAC work with other parents to bring concerns to the attention of the Director of Special Education and to advise the School Board through the Superintendent about Special Education issues. SEAC meets throughout the school year, in consultation with the Director of Special Education.

SEAC is actively looking for parents to participate next year as parent representatives.

If you are interested in being a parent representative, or want to obtain more information, you can contact: **Albemarle County Public Schools Department of Special Education** by calling (434) 296-5885 or emailing to spedhelp@k12albemarle.org



“Back-to-School” for Parents of Children with Special Needs Starts... Now

A new school year means a new grade, new teachers, new goals, and maybe even a new school! In order to help you and your child with special needs be as successful as you can be, we’ve put together a list of eight helpful back-to-school tips that we hope will make the transition into a new school year a little easier for you and your child.

1. Organize all that paperwork: In the world of special education, there are lots of meetings, paperwork, and documentation to keep track of. Try to keep a family calendar of school events, special education meetings, conferences, etc. Setting up a binder or folder to keep your child's special education documentation, meeting notices, and IEPs in sequential order can also help you stay organized.

2. Start a communication log: Keeping track of all phone calls, e-mails, notes home, meetings, and conferences is important. Create a “communication log” for yourself in a notebook that is easily accessible. Be sure to note the dates, times, and nature of the communications you have.

3. Review your child’s current IEP: The IEP is the cornerstone of your child’s educational program, so it’s important that you have a clear understanding of it. Note when the IEP expires and if your child is up for reevaluation this year. Most importantly, be sure that this IEP still “fits” your child's needs! If you’re unsure, contact the school about holding an IEP review meeting.

4. Relieve back-to-school jitters: Just talking about the upcoming year and changes can help reduce some of that back-to-school anxiety! Talk to your child about exciting new classes, activities, and events that they can participate in during the new school year. If attending a new school, try to schedule a visit before the first day. With older students, it is sometimes helpful to explain the services and accommodations in their IEP so that they know what to expect when school begins.

5. Keep everyone informed: It's important that you and the school communicate early and often! If there is anything (concerns, changes, questions about the IEP) that you feel is important to share with the staff working with your child before school starts, or during the year, don't hesitate to contact them! The more proactive you are, the better the school staff will be able to meet your child's needs.

6. Establish before and after school routines: Discuss and plan the changes in you and your child’s daily routine that will happen once school starts. You can even begin practicing your new schedule, focusing on morning and evening routines, and begin implementing them well in advance of the first day of school.

7. Stay up-to-date on special education news: Being knowledgeable about your child’s IEP and their disability can help you become a better advocate for your child. Try to keep up-to-date on new special education legislation, news, and events. The more you know, the more prepared you will be to navigate the world of special education and successfully advocate for your child!

8. Attend school events: Take advantage of Open House, Back-to-School Night, and parent-teacher conferences to help you and your child get a feel for the school and meet the teachers, other staff, students, and families. Share the positives about working with your child, and let the teacher know about changes, events, or IEP concerns that should be considered for children in special education. (Story Re-Printed from Reading Rockets Publication, funded in part from USDOE)



Students with Disabilities Placed by Parents in Private or Homeschool Programs

The Individual Service Plan (ISP) vs. IEP

Not all children with disabilities eligible for special education have an Individual Education Plan. For parents who reside in Albemarle County who are homeschooling or any parent who has decided to enroll their special education eligible child in a private, parochial, or independent school located within Albemarle County their child is eligible for an Individual SERVICE Plan (ISP)... which is very different than an IEP.

In an ISP, services are defined through a process that includes meaningful consultation with representatives of the private schools within Albemarle County as well as current parents of children in homeschool programs served by Albemarle County Schools. Albemarle County Schools considers this input before making its final determination on the services to be provided to the students served through this process. Albemarle County determines (vs. an IEP Team) the services based on information from its consultation, analysis of the present student population to be served and their needs, best practices, and the limits of available funding. The plan is proposed each year to the Albemarle County School Board as part of the Department of Special Education's Annual Plan. Once approved, meetings are scheduled with parents to review the services offered to the child using the Individual Service Plan (ISP) document.



Funds for the services offered through the ISP for children enrolled by their parents in private or homeschool programs are calculated using a State mathematical formula. The resulting calculation determines the amount of funding, and can limit the services that can be offered.

If homeschool parents or private school staff suspect that a child has a disability that may require special education, and the child is enrolled in a private or homeschool program in Albemarle County, they are strongly encouraged to contact Albemarle County Schools (434) 296-5885 in order to address their concerns. In the case of a child already eligible for special education services that is not currently served through the ISP process, and are enrolled in private or homeschool programs in Albemarle County, families should consider contacting us to explore the special services that may be available.

2021-2022 Service Plans for Parentally Placed Students with Disabilities in Private or Homeschool Programs

During the 2021-2022 School year, the plan for students with disabilities unilaterally placed by their parents in private, parochial or are in homeschool programs located in Albemarle County, cannot exceed \$76,989.00. Individual Service Plans will include the following services:

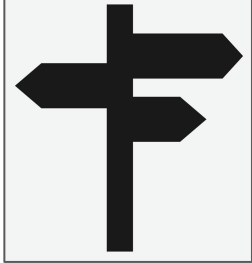
- A single certified special education teacher to provide indirect services (teacher / school consultation) to eligible students with an Individual Service Plan from September 2021, through May of 2022.
 - Approximately two days a week, with salary and benefits not to exceed \$44,000.
 - Consultation, staff development, and assistive technology will be made available to staff who serve students with a Individual Service Plan.
 - There is also an allocation for mileage for the consultation teacher.
- Speech and language services will be provided to twenty (20) students who will be chosen based on specific criteria.
 - These services may be provided through a "voucher" type system.
 - Parents and speech providers are required to agree with stipulations outlined in a memo of understanding.
 - Each "voucher" totals \$1500 for each child with an ISP who is determined by Albemarle County Schools to be an appropriate recipient of speech services using the process outlined below.

Speech Services - Determination Process

Students are first prioritized based on age. Elementary aged children are the first group selected. Then children with the following disabilities are chosen first for speech services in this specific order: children with Multiple Disabilities, Autism, Intellectual Disabilities and then Speech and Language Impairments. Then, the same process is used at middle and then the high school levels. Once all these students have been offered speech services, if there are any "vouchers" remaining, all other remaining students being served with an ISP are offered a voucher based on age where speech and language services are indicated as needed based on a records review by Albemarle County Public Schools.

Critical Decision Points for Families of Children with Disabilities

The [Critical Decision Points for Families of Children with Disabilities \(Word\) guide](#) was developed by the [Virginia Department of Education](#) in order to assist families of children with disabilities with understanding keys to their children's academic success, as well as decisions that they will have to make throughout their children's careers in public education. Information is provided that will assist parents with understanding not only what decisions will need to be made, but also when those decisions need to start being considered.



Five Critical Decision Points for Children with Disabilities training videos are listed below and can also be accessed on our (PRC) [Parent Education](#) web page as well as the [VADOE's YouTube channel](#).

[Critical Decision Points Session 1](#)

[Critical Decision Points Session 3](#)

[Critical Decision Points Session 2](#)

[Critical Decision Points Session 4](#)

[Critical Decision Points Session 5](#)

Parent Resource Center Special Book Collection

The Parent Resource Center's Special Book Collection is available free to all families at any of the Jefferson Madison Regional Library branches. The collection includes educational books for adults wanting to learn more about a specific disability, as well as titles for younger readers that promote inclusion and the celebration of diversity.



- The following link/catalog search takes you to directly to the list of all of the titles: <https://hestia.jmrl.org/findit/Tag/Home?lookfor=acps+parent+resource+center>
- You can sign up online for a free public library card and get instant access to all of JMRL's electronic resources and ebooks by using the following link: <https://hestia.jmrl.org/onlinecardregistration/>

PARENT RESOURCE CENTER PRESENTS...

Local sessions are presented by experts in our community, specially designed for Parents of children with disabilities. However, many of the topics are applicable to all parents, and as such, all are welcome.

Sessions for 2021-2022

We have plans for more sessions, on a variety of pertinent topics, during the 2021-2022 school year. Below is a list of upcoming session topics for 2021-2022.

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| • <i>Seclusion and Restraint</i> | • <i>Social Skills: Home Edition</i> |
| • <i>ABC's of Behavior</i> | • <i>Executive Functioning</i> |
| • <i>Positive Discipline: Home Edition</i> | • <i>Supporting Math at Home</i> |
| • <i>Transitions: Life Into Our Community</i> | • <i>College 101: For Families of a Student With Disabilities</i> |

If you have topics you'd like to see considered as part of our program, "Parent Resource Center Presents", please contact Mike Armstrong at (434) 296-5885 or by emailing us at spedhelp@k12albemarle.org.



Non-Discrimination Statement

Albemarle County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law in its programs and activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, and other designated youth groups.



Contact: (434) 296-5885



Email: SPEDHELP@k12albemarle.org



Website: <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-departments/special-education/prc>