



Questions & Answers

from

The 14th Annual Family Cafe

Featuring

The Annual Summit on Disabilities

June 15-17, 2012
The Hilton Orlando
Orlando, Florida



The
14th
Annual

family

Safe

Welcome to The Family Café Questions and Answers Book for 2012!

Navigating the service delivery system and finding the right resource has always been a challenge for persons with disabilities and their families. For fourteen years, The Family Café has been there to help. Since our founding in 1998, our mission has been to provide persons with disabilities and their families with information, training, support and opportunities to network with other families, professionals and public policy makers. The place where that mission has been realized is The Annual Family Café.

This year's 14th Annual Family Café, held June 15-17, 2012, brought together a wide array of resources and information, with over 160 breakout sessions, an expanded Exhibit Hall and a series of engaging keynote addresses. Many sessions were organized into "tracks" based on subject, with topics including advocacy, youth, employment, disaster preparedness, military families, adaptive recreation, children from birth through age five, financial planning and mental health. We were also able to expose attendees to the possibilities of outdoor recreation for persons with disabilities, thanks to the assistance of partners like the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association and their friends at Gatorland.

As always, The Annual Family Café included the Annual Summit on Disabilities, which provides a venue for families to engage in dialogue with state and national policy makers. This year, we were pleased to have Janice Lehrer-Stein of the National Council on Disability (NCD) and Kareem Dale, the Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy within the Office of Public Engagement at the White House on hand to speak with our attendees.

The Family Café exists to be a hub of information, and to create a space for dialogue, so once again in 2012 we provided a means for families to share comments and questions through our "Pink Card" process. Attendees completed Pink Cards, and The Family Café in turn obtained written responses from the relevant State Agencies. The end result is this year's edition of **The Family Café Questions and Answers Book**.

This book has been designed as a resource to address some of the most pressing concerns of Floridians with disabilities and their families. Although every family's situation is unique, The Family Café Questions and Answers Book can serve as a quick reference guide and a starting point for anyone seeking information. If you need to know more than you can find here, we encourage you to contact the relevant state agency, and to make your needs known, and your voice heard!

We hope you will join us for The 15th Annual Family Café, which will be held June 7-9, 2013, at the Hilton Orlando. Until then, feed your need for information with The Family Café Questions and Answers Book! And remember, we are always available online at FamilyCafe.net, as well as on Facebook at Facebook.com/TheFamilyCafeFL and on Twitter @TheFamilyCafe!

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The Family Café

Why don't we have as many people at this Café as we have had in the past?

Over the years, attendance at The Annual Family Café has fluctuated. Generally speaking attendance tends to be stronger in years when we have the most substantial funding for financial assistance. The more families we can afford to accommodate, the higher the attendance. That said, we are proud to report that The 14th Annual Conference in June of 2012 attracted 6,242 registered attendees.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all of your dedication and tireless efforts. Please keep truckin'! God Bless.

Thanks very much! It's our pleasure to provide individuals with disabilities and their families with information, training and networking opportunities.

How about inviting groups to present on "GMO's" and the regulations or lack thereof of FDA, relating to our food sources and onslaught of all these debilitating diseases?

Thanks for that suggestion. All of the presentations for The Annual Family Café are selected by The Family Café Planning Committee, which is made up of representatives of disability organizations and other stakeholders. They choose from the proposals that we receive. The Family Café accepts Presentation Proposals through the end of December. If you know of someone that would be able to present on GMOs and food safety issues, we would encourage you to ask them to submit a proposal. The Presentation Proposal form can be found at FamilyCafe.net.

Why don't we have kind of a "day care" for our "typical" children? We cannot attend the whole conference because they get bored easily. Thanks!

The main reason that The Family Café does not provide day care or Respite for either typical children or those with disabilities is expense. At one point we did provide Respite for children with disabilities on a limited basis, but that service was discontinued because it served a very small number of families at high cost. We realize that it can be a challenge to attend sessions while also taking care of your children's needs. Many families choose to have one adult take care of children, while another family member attends sessions. We make an effort to provide some entertainment for children, including arts and crafts, which can help you keep your kids entertained. That said, The Annual Family Café is a family event, and children of all ages are welcome.

Hotel was wonderful, staff was amazing. Would it be possible to have some food, drinks, or snacks available at the family dance on Saturday night?

Thanks for your compliments. Banquet services at hotels can be expensive, and that is the main reason that we don't have refreshments at the dance on Saturday evening. In a challenging funding environment, The Family Café is forced to make sometimes difficult decisions on what aspects of our event to fund. We place the greatest emphasis on providing accommodation for as many Financial Assistance recipients as we can afford. With the demand for assistance far out-pacing our ability to provide it, costs such as food and refreshments tend to be a lower priority.

Is there any way to work out little or no-cost tables somewhere for non-profits who support families? Perhaps even a breakout session on Sunday AM for a couple of hours, where we could set up a (free) table and share info with families.

The Family Café does offer low-cost options for organizations that would like to share information in our Exhibit Hall. For a cost of only \$500 per 5000 pieces, your organization can place printed information on the Take-Away Table in our highly trafficked exhibit area. This is a \$700 savings over the regular cost of a manned booth. Non-profit organizations are also welcome to submit a Presentation Proposal if they would like to share information on a given topic with Family Café attendees.

The conference was very good. I especially enjoyed Dr. Theo. The hotel was very nice.

Thanks very much for your compliments! We are happy to hear you enjoyed The Annual Family Café.

The conference was very informative.

Thanks very much for your compliments! We are happy to hear you enjoyed The Annual Family Café.

The conference was very enjoyable.

Thanks very much for your compliments! We are happy to hear you enjoyed The Annual Family Café.

This was my first time and it was very good.

Thanks very much for your compliment! We are happy to hear you enjoyed The Annual Family Café.

Are you politically biased? Whole Family Café was great—great information, great accommodations, nice to be among so many people with the same problems and situations we face. Thank you!

We are happy to hear that you enjoyed the sense of camaraderie at The Annual Family Café. To answer your question, The Family Café is a non-partisan organization that is in no way politically affiliated, and does not endorse candidates for public office. We do, however, encourage individuals with disabilities and their families to participate in the political process by learning about the issues, getting to know their elected officials, and most of all, by voting.

Where will the event be held next year? Hope Dr. Mane comes back—great speaker with helpful information.

The 15th Annual Family Café will be held at the same location as it was in 2011, the Hilton Orlando.

Can you check the date for next year's Family Café to not have it during Father's Day weekend?

The Family Café schedules its event years in advance, and must work with host locations to find open dates. Unfortunately, as the event takes place in June, it has coincided with Father's Day on occasion. You will be happy to learn that The 15th Annual Family Café will not be on Father's Day weekend in 2013.

How are Family Café venues picked? We really like Disney Resorts.

The Family Café works with a professional site selection company to find suitable properties, obtain bids and finalize contracts to host The Annual Family Café. The event took place at a Disney property for four consecutive years, between 2008 and 2011. It is possible that it could return to a Disney property in future, although no decisions have been made at this time.

What can I do to be heard in my community?

The Family Café encourages individuals with disabilities to be active, vocal advocates in their local communities. People that are interested in increasing their advocacy skills should consider becoming part of CAN, our Change Agent Network. This group of leaders works to make sure that the voice of individuals with disabilities and their families is heard in the policy making process. To learn more about CAN, visit the CAN website at cannow.org. We would also encourage you to introduce yourself to your elected officials, and to let them know about the challenges you face. The first step is letting them know that you are part of their constituency, and that you deserve to be heard. You can find your state legislators on myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

I was wondering if instead of doing a duck race at once, could you do it once every day?

Thanks for that suggestion. The duck race was co-hosted with our friends at the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association, and we are grateful to them for organizing it. At this point there has not been a discussion of hosting the duck race again in 2013. We will definitely take your suggestion into account when we begin planning FDOA's role in next year's event.

Is this always at the Hilton or was this year's event held here?

The Annual Family Café has been held at a number of locations in the Orlando area over the course of its 14 year history. The 15th Annual Family Café will once again be held at the Hilton Orlando. The event typically is held in the same location for two to three years, as most hotels prefer multi-year contracts. Its longest stay at a single location was at The Disney Coronado Springs Resort, which hosted four Annual Family Cafés between 2008 and 2011.

What can I do to be a voice in my community and be heard?

The Family Café encourages individuals with disabilities to be active, vocal advocates in their local communities. People that are interested in increasing their advocacy skills should consider becoming part of CAN, our Change Agent Network. This group of leaders works to make sure that the voice of individuals with disabilities and their families is heard in the policy making process. To learn more about CAN, visit the CAN website at cannow.org. We would also encourage you to introduce yourself to your elected officials, and to let them know about the challenges you face. The first step is letting them know that you are part of their constituency, and that you deserve to be heard. You can find your state legislators on myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

When is the next Family Café?

The 15th Annual Family Café will be held June 7-9, 2013 at the Hilton Orlando. We hope to see you there!

How many people attended this year's Family Café?

The 14th Annual Family Café attracted 6,242 registered attendees.

How do you plan a disabilities event where there is only one elevator to use to go to the Exhibit Hall and some sessions, thus making us late to what we want to hear?

Thanks for your concern. We do recognize that having our event on two floors presented a challenge for some attendees, and we did everything we could to make it as easy as possible to navigate the hotel. In addition to the elevator that was available in the public space, the hotel also gave us access to a second elevator in the staff only area. We will do our best to address all of the logistical issues at The 15th Annual Family Café in 2013.

Where will next year's event be held, and will it ever be at locations other than Orlando?

The 15th Annual Family Café will be held at the Hilton Orlando once again. Our event has always been held in the Orlando area, as it is centrally located for people throughout the state and also offers a variety of hotel properties that are large enough to host an event of the size of The Annual Family Café.

Are there any "local" Family Café chapters, to provide the BOD with info and circumstances, issues from the local level? If so, where/when do they meet?

The Family Café does not have local chapters, but we do have two programs that connect us with advocates in communities throughout the state. The Family Café operates a group of volunteer Delegates. These local leaders participate in leadership training, and keep The Family Café informed of issues that are emerging in their areas. To learn more about how to participate in the Delegate program, contact Lori Fahey at lfahey@familycafe.net. We also operate CAN, the Change Agent Network. This group focuses on public policy and advocacy work. You can learn more about CAN at cannow.org.

From where does the major funding for Family Café come?

The Annual Family Café is the result of funding from a number of public and private sources. Sponsors for The 14th Annual Family Café included WellCare, Amerigroup, AT&T, Disability Rights of Florida, Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Florida Division of Emergency Management, Florida Department of Health/Big Bend Health Council, Florida Department of Health, Children's Medical Services Network, and Publix Supermarket Charities.

Where does the funding come from to pay for the hotel rooms for those that get a scholarship to pay for the hotel? I want to thank them. It is very helpful.

Funding for our Financial Assistance program comes from our many private sponsors. Sponsors for The 14th Annual Family Café included WellCare, Amerigroup, AT&T, Disability Rights of Florida, and Publix Supermarket Charities.

Are you getting good results in attendance for the “Dad” sessions? It was nice to see so many men at this year’s event.

In recent years The Family Café Planning Committee has included several sessions designed for fathers of children with disabilities. We believe that all family members have a role to play, and we are proud to provide a space where fathers can network, share their experiences and support each other. We have been happy to see the positive response to these sessions, and we anticipate this topic remaining popular at future Annual Family Cafés.

I would like to see if we could put on a fashion show. We have enjoyed every year we have come. Thirteen years. Thank you.

We are happy to hear that you have enjoyed The Annual Family Café over so many years. We love to see old friends at the event! If you have an idea for something you would like to see included in The Annual Family Café, like the fashion show you suggested, please contact our Planning Committee by reaching out to Lori Fahey, President and CEO, at lfahey@familycafe.net or 888-309-CAFÉ (2233).

How can I volunteer?

If you would like to volunteer to help out at The Annual Family Café, you can note your interest in helping out on your Registration form. It includes the option for registrants to volunteer at the Registration Desk, as Room Monitors, as Language Interpreters or at Conference Bag Stuffing. If you are interested in becoming more involved with The Family Café year round, we would encourage you to become part of CAN, our Change Agent Network. This group is made up of leaders that want to be more engaged in advocacy work throughout the year. You can learn more about CAN at cannow.org.

I saw breakout sessions for some syndromes but not others. How were they decided upon?

It seems that you are referring to the disability roundtable sessions, which are hosted by The Family Café Delegates. This group of volunteer leaders connects The Family Café with communities throughout the state. They also lead roundtable sessions at The Annual Family Café. In 2012, there were roundtable sessions on Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Down Syndrome. These topics were selected based on the popularity of sessions on those topics in previous years, as well as the availability of Delegates to lead the sessions. If you have a suggestion about a roundtable topic that you would like to see included next year, please let us know, and we will share your thoughts with our Planning Committee.

This year's meeting selection was cleaner and cheaper than Disney. However, for disabled persons in wheelchairs, parking fees, parking lot across road and downhill from hotel, no shuttle service, meetings up and down, one or two small elevators (chairs, etc.), food outlets limited and expensive, access for loading or unloading chairs, no assistance available, purveyors confined to small tight areas—we have been to seven Cafés found them informative and enjoyable, until this year. You deserve with all your efforts many thank yous.

Thanks for your feedback. There are always challenges involved in moving the event to a new location, and we will do our best to work out all of the issues you mentioned for The 15th Annual Family Café.

Where was Special Kid's Dance?

Special Kids Dance has been part of several Annual Family Cafés, and we have been happy to have them on hand to share their talents. Unfortunately they were not able to make it to the event this time around. We will certainly invite them to participate in The 15th Annual Family Café. Hopefully they will be able to attend.

Does Family Café sponsor a day rally in Tallahassee to meet and greet our politicians to get more benefits for our children with disabilities instead of budget cuts? If not maybe it should be considered and we could do a fundraiser to bring everyone from all over the state at once.

The Family Café does not currently host a rally or a Legislative Day in Tallahassee. If it were to do so, the effort would likely be led by our Change Agent Network (CAN). This group of advocates works to make sure that the voice of individuals with disabilities and their families is heard in the policy making process, and the activities you described would fit well with their efforts. You can learn more about CAN and at cannow.org.

Where is next year's Family Café going to be held? This Hilton hotel is perfect. It would be nice if the parking fee could be donated to Family Café attendees. And if the Hilton could give lower prices for rooms; \$50 per night would be nice. A lot of people that can't get help to come would be better able to afford lower room prices. Most people are just on SSI or S.S. My family was able to come this year because of The Family Café otherwise we couldn't afford it. Thank you.

The 15th Annual Family Café will be held at the Hilton Orlando once again. We understand that attending our event can be a financial hardship, and we do everything we can to contain costs. The Family Café negotiates with host hotels to get the lowest rates possible. In the case of the Hilton Orlando, the parking garage is co-owned with another private company. The Hilton does waive 50% of the regular cost, which is their share of the parking related income. The room rate we have negotiated for 2013 is \$109/night.

Why do you all have a lot of sessions at the same time? And some of them are too close together. Why?

It is always a challenge to manage the logistics of planning for all of the sessions at The Annual Family Café, as well as the many other parts of the event. The Annual Family Café always includes sessions in seven time slots, with three on Friday and four on Saturday. We make an effort to place sessions on similar topics in different time slots, so that every topic is represented at each time. We also get some requests from presenters for specific presentation times and days, and we do our best to honor those. Please bear in mind that we publish the contact information for all presenters in the program, and we encourage you to contact the presenters for any sessions that you wanted to attend but were unable to.

Are you going to have Family Café here every year? I vote yes.

The 15th Annual Family Café is scheduled to take place at the Hilton Orlando once again. We have not chosen a location for 2014 and beyond.

Where are you having next year's Café?

The 15th Annual Family Café will be held at the Hilton Orlando once again, just as it was in 2012.

All Excellent! Thank you!

Thanks very much!

Please more info in Spanish.

Thank you for your request. The Family Café makes an effort to schedule at least one Spanish language session in each of its seven breakout session time slots. If you are aware of any individuals or organizations in your community that would be willing and able to make presentations in Spanish, please encourage them to submit a Presentation Proposal.

What does The Florida Youth Council do? Who can be part of it?

The Florida Youth Council (FYC) is a group of youth and emerging adults with disabilities. They work to promote disability awareness throughout the state, and empowerment and leadership among their peers. They host an Annual Youth Summit each August, where young people with disabilities come together for a day and a half of training, networking and empowerment. They FYC also promotes Disability History and Awareness Weeks each

October, and publishes and distributes its newsletter, *The Noodle*, throughout the year. FYC members are selected through an interview process, and represent communities throughout the state. To learn more about the FYC, visit their website at floridayouthcouncil.com, or contact Youth Advisor Alex Brown at abrown@familycafe.net.

What are some capacities one can volunteer in to be a more helpful member to The Family Café?

If you would like to volunteer to help out at The Annual Family Café, you can note your interest in helping out on your Registration form. It includes the option for registrants to volunteer at the Registration Desk, as Room Monitors, as Language Interpreters or at Conference Bag Stuffing. If you are interested in becoming more involved with The Family Café year round, we would encourage you to become part of CAN, our Change Agent Network. This group is made up of leaders that want to be more engaged in advocacy work throughout the year. You can learn more about CAN at cannow.org.

We found a lot of new information out. The expo was great. In the future, I would like maybe a lecture about JRA.

We are happy to hear that you got a lot out of the event, and our Exhibit Hall. In terms of a session on JRA (Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis), we would be willing to include a session on this topic. Our Planning Committee selects the sessions to be included from the Presentation Proposals we receive, so if you would like to see something on JRA next year, we encourage you to ask qualified individuals or organizations with knowledge of JRA to submit a proposal before the end of the year. The Presentation Proposal form is available on our website at FamilyCafe.net.

How do I join the Youth Care Council?

The Florida Youth Council (FYC) is a group of youth and emerging adults with disabilities. They work to promote disability awareness throughout the state, and empowerment and leadership among their peers. They host an Annual Youth Summit each August, where young people with disabilities come together for a day and a half of training, networking and empowerment. They FYC also promotes Disability History and Awareness Weeks each October, and publishes and distributes its newsletter, *The Noodle*, throughout the year. FYC members are selected through an interview process, and represent communities throughout the state. To learn more about the FYC, visit their website at floridayouthcouncil.com, or contact Youth Advisor Alex Brown at abrown@familycafe.net.

I like the location of the event. I want to say thank you to the Family Café for the financial help that made it possible for my family and me to attend.

Thanks for the positive feedback! We are happy to hear that you liked our new location, the Hilton Orlando. The 15th Annual Family Café will be held there as well. You are also

very welcome for the Financial Assistance you received. We do our best to make the resources we bring together at The Annual Family Café available to as many families as we can, and it's great to hear that our efforts are appreciated.

All the information I received will be put to good use.

Great! We hope that all of the information and resources we share at The Annual Family Café make a difference for the families that attend, so we're happy to hear that you plan on putting what you learned into action.

All the information was very well presented.

Thank you! We do our best to make sure The Annual Family Café is well organized, so families can take advantage of everything it has to offer. We're glad that our planning efforts resulted in a successful event.

All the information received was very good and very informative.

Thanks! We are happy to hear that you learned a lot at The Annual Family Café. We hope the information you obtained will make a positive difference for you and your family.

The Family Café was organized very well this year.

Thank you! We do our best to make sure The Annual Family Café is well organized, so families can take advantage of everything it has to offer. We're glad that our planning efforts resulted in a successful event.

Very informative.

Thanks! We are happy to hear that you learned a lot at The Annual Family Café. We hope the information you obtained will make a positive difference for you and your family.

More games for kids.

We realize that it can be a challenge to attend sessions while also taking care of your children's needs. Many families choose to have one adult take care of children, while another family member attends sessions. We make an effort to provide some entertainment for children, including arts and crafts, which can help you keep your kids entertained. That said, The Annual Family Café is a family event, and children of all ages are welcome.

They need more games for kids.

We realize that it can be a challenge to attend sessions while also taking care of your children's needs. Many families choose to have one adult take care of children, while another family member attends sessions. We make an effort to provide some entertainment for children, including arts and crafts, which can help you keep your kids entertained. That said, The Annual Family Café is a family event, and children of all ages are welcome.

More activities for kids, like games.

We realize that it can be a challenge to attend sessions while also taking care of your children's needs. Many families choose to have one adult take care of children, while another family member attends sessions. We make an effort to provide some entertainment for children, including arts and crafts, which can help you keep your kids entertained. That said, The Annual Family Café is a family event, and children of all ages are welcome.

Are they going to have a Lego Zone for next year?

At this point there is no plan to have a Lego Zone. If you would like Lego to participate in The Annual Family Café, we would encourage you to contact Legoland in Winter Haven and ask them to become a sponsor or participant. They are online at florida.legoland.com.

I would like to see more children activities. Do you think that's possible?

We realize that it can be a challenge to attend sessions while also taking care of your children's needs. Many families choose to have one adult take care of children, while another family member attends sessions. We make an effort to provide some entertainment for children, including arts and crafts, which can help you keep your kids entertained. That said, The Annual Family Café is a family event, and children of all ages are welcome.

Where is The Family Café going to be next year? Is there financial help for our autistic child?

The 15th Annual Family Café will be held at the Hilton Orlando once again. At this point in our annual cycle, we are raising funds to host the event. Although we don't yet know how many families we will be able to support, there will certainly be some amount of Financial Assistance available. Please remember to make your Financial Assistance request when you register.

Why were there no legislators or potential legislators present? This would be a chance for them to see the people whose lives they affect.

Each year The Family Café invites the Governor, members of the State Legislature, and the entire Florida congressional delegation to The Annual Family Café. Although none attended in 2012, two previous Governors and innumerable state Legislators have been at previous Annual Family Cafés. We were fortunate to have Janice Lehrer-Stein of the National Council on Disability (NCD) and Kareem Dale, the Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy within the Office of Public Engagement at the White House on hand to share a national policy perspective. There was also an assortment of State Agency representatives, including Agency for Persons with Disabilities Director Mike Hanson, in attendance. The Family Café will continue the practice of inviting elected officials to the event in 2013 and beyond.

For next year could we have a session for siblings to converse about their feelings, worries, and joys. Something for them alone?

Thank you for that suggestion. This issue has been discussed by our Planning Committee often, and we agree that siblings of children with disabilities would benefit from a session at The Annual Family Café. We encourage you to find someone in your community that would be willing to lead such a session and have them submit a Presentation Proposal to our Planning Committee before the end of the year. Perhaps you would like to submit a Proposal yourself?

Thank you Family Café for our Room.

You're welcome! We do our best to find funding for our Financial Assistance program, and we are happy that families like yours can attend our event as a result.

Is there any way you can help with fundraising groups by funding them? Or if not, do you know of a way? Example of fundraising group: A Group that gives disabled children an opportunity to do normal activities or sports such as baseball, soccer, swimming, dancing, etc. (Mainly for children who won't be in school anymore, like at the age of 21 or 22.)

That sounds like a promising idea. Unfortunately, The Family Café is itself a non-profit organization, and does not have the ability to raise funds for other groups. We encourage you to pursue your idea however. You may be able to find funding from private foundations or through grants. You may also be interested in becoming involved with the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association, as they organize many physical activities for individuals with disabilities that are similar to the ones you described in your example. You can find them online at FDOA.org.

Food is too expensive at the hotel. Maybe Family Café could rent a couple shuttles and charge \$5 round-trip to go to International Drive for cheaper food.

Thanks for that feedback. The Family Café negotiated a discount at all of the food venues at the Hilton Orlando, so attendees could save 15% by identifying themselves as Family Café participants. We do realize that the cost of meals can be a hardship for some families, and we work with the hotel to get the most affordable options we possibly can.

Why did they not have more exhibits based upon visually impaired?

The Family Café makes an effort to bring exhibitors of all kinds to The Annual Family Café. We also make space for State Agencies, including the Division of Blind Services, which participated in 2012. American Printing House for the Blind was also on hand. The Family Café will continue to seek out a variety of Exhibitors for next year's event, and we will do our best to represent as many disabilities as we can in our Exhibit Hall.

Very nice venue. Staff very helpful. Nice diversity of Presentations.

Thanks! We work hard to put on a quality event. We're glad you enjoyed it.

Are there any other events like this throughout the year? (Specifically related to autism?) Can they consider some activities during The Family Café event for kids/teenagers, e.g. rock climbing, game room?

The Family Café currently hosts only the single statewide event, The Annual Family Café, each June in Orlando. At this point there are no plans to host additional annual events. Thanks for your suggestion on adding activities for children and youth. Our partners at the Florida Disabled Outdoors Association have helped us out with a number of activities in the Exhibit Hall over the past several years, and we also provide some entertainment for children, including arts and crafts, which can help you keep your kids entertained.

Please consider running the same presentation in the same room for an entire morning or afternoon. Allow attendees the option of not having to decide between 2 presentations which would be helpful/useful. Larger players like SSA, DCF/Medicaid, APD, and VR are several suggestions.

It may also be advantageous for families to sign up for "Team Suggestions"—several large players in the state could be in a room and meet individually with a family to make suggestions.

Thanks for your suggestions. It can be difficult to fit all 160 presentations into the weekend at The Annual Family Café. There are certainly many families that have a hard time deciding what sessions to attend. We try to schedule similar sessions for different times, and make sure a variety of topics is addressed in each time slot. We have also held

particular sessions twice in past years, when the need to do so has arisen. If a presenter feels that their presentation should be available twice during the event, they can indicate that on their Presentation Proposal form, and we will do our best to accommodate the request.

There are multiple opportunities for families to talk to State Agencies at our event, and to share their suggestions. Each of the agencies you mentioned hosts at least one breakout session. Additionally, State Agency representatives are always on hand for the Annual Summit on Disabilities, and they have booths in the Exhibit Hall as well. That said, we will take your suggestion about hosting multiple agencies in one room to meet with families into consideration.

What happened to accessibility of getting in to room where sessions were held?

Thanks for your concern. We do recognize that having our event on two floors presented a challenge for some attendees, and we did everything we could to make it as easy as possible to navigate the hotel. In addition to the elevator that was available in the public space, the hotel also gave us access to a second elevator in the staff only area. If you experience any accessibility issues on-site at The Annual Family Café, please let one of us know!

What happened to the Relay services exhibit?

The Family Café invites Exhibitors from previous years to attend The Annual Family Café each year. We don't know why Florida Relay, which has participated in The Annual Family Café previously, chose not to attend. You can reach them online at www.ftri.org/floridarelay.

I think we need to move this conference back to the old location which is more convenient.

Thanks for that suggestion. Although The Annual Family Café was at the Disney Coronado Springs for four consecutive years, it has moved around the Orlando area over the course of its 14 year history. The 15th Annual Family Café will be held at the Hilton Orlando once again. A site has not been selected for 2014 at this time.

I would like information to access adopting a golden retriever service dog for our 11-year-old son with cerebral palsy. We have, throughout the years, made several attempts to acquire a service dog to no avail. Thank you!

We would suggest that you contact one of the groups that promotes the use of service dogs here in Florida. The presenter for the session on service dogs at The 14th Annual Family Café was Chris Tejcek of My Angel With Paws, Inc. You can reach Chris at (386)

490-4949 or chris@myangelwithpaws.org. You might also try contacting Service Dogs of Florida at 2012.servicedogsfl.org.

What is the best AAC app for the iPad?

Devices like tablet computers and smart phones are becoming more and more popular with individuals with disabilities, and in some cases have replaced certain assistive technology devices. The Family Café does not have the expertise to recommend particular iPad applications for assistive communication. We would encourage you to contact FFAST, the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, as they may be able to help you. You can reach them at faast.org or 1-888-788-9216.

The Agency for Health Care Administration

Do you realize insurance companies deny hard-working middle class families like mine the right to have disposable medical supplies as a covered benefit: (United Healthcare under Medicaid/Medicare)? My son has spina bifida and needs to catheterize four times a day. Our monthly out-of-pocket cost is \$500.00. Catheters are a covered Medicaid benefit for those on Medicaid. Would you want to re-use catheters? Help!

The Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) manages Florida Medicaid and oversees Medicaid health plans, including United Healthcare of Florida, Inc. (United). The Agency's Medicaid health plan contract with United requires that they cover medical supplies such as catheters in the same amount, duration, and scope as the Medicaid fee-for-service program. Health plans are prohibited from arbitrarily denying or reducing the amount, duration, or scope of a covered service when it has been determined medically necessary, regardless of the enrollee's diagnosis, type of illness or condition.

If you believe there has been an inappropriate denial, limitation or termination of a service or coverage, please see the member handbook from United for instructions on how to file an appeal with United or file a Medicaid Fair Hearing with the Department of Children and Families. The member services number for United is (888) 216-0015. An enrollee may seek a Medicaid Fair Hearing without having first exhausted the Health Plan's grievance and appeal process and they may do so within ninety (90) days of receipt of the Health Plan's notice of action. The address at DCF for the Medicaid Fair Hearing office is:

Office of Public Assistance Appeals Hearings
1317 Winewood Boulevard, Building 5, Room 203
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700.

Medicaid Area offices are available to help recipients navigate the Medicaid health care system through education, information and problem resolution. Contact information for the office that serves the area you live in is provided below

Why is it so hard to get vital medications on Medicaid with all the "prior authorization" approval requirements over and over? Every 6 months! My son has cystic fibrosis and this process of paper work, signatures, and denials only delays his meds! Isn't once enough?

We are sorry and it wasn't our intention that the prior authorization process inconvenience families. Most medications for the treatment of cystic fibrosis do not require prior authorization. The cystic fibrosis medications requiring prior authorization are the inhaled antibiotics, TOBI and Cayston. We require prior authorization because both medications are quite expensive and because many pulmonary physicians would like to use these inhaled antibiotics in non-CF patients. There are no clinical trial data to indicate that these inhaled antibiotics are effective in non-CF patients, and Florida Medicaid does not

reimburse for “off label” prescribing for this purpose. TOBI and Cayston are approved for 6 cycles of therapy because they are dosed 28 days on, and 28 days off. 6 cycles of therapy is enough medication for 1 year. We require an annual prior authorization to make sure that the inhaled antibiotics are cycled appropriately, and not used continuously. Requiring an annual prior authorization also ensures that patients are being seen regularly by their physicians.

Florida’s attitude toward the care of chronic pain and the use opiates is changing as a result of illegal drug use. We read articles of DEA arresting and rightly so, people missing or selling pain pills along with articles that the War on Drugs is hurting physicians and patients. Have you found that to be a problem with Florida’s Medicaid disability sector?

No, the Agency has implemented reasonable prescription limits and we have no reason to believe they are causing an adverse effect on Florida’s Medicaid recipients or physicians.

If a child shows great improvement using a walking device in therapy, how is it that this is denied through Medicaid due to a “cap” limit?

Florida Medicaid does not have cap limits on services for children. All medically necessary therapy services will be provided to eligible children under the age of 21. Medicaid does cover mobility devices, such as walkers, when prescribed by a medical professional. If you believe you were incorrectly denied a service, please contact your local area office.

Will Medicare pay for testing and evaluations for a 36-year-old who was last tested in school in the year 1991?

The State of Florida does not administer the Medicare program. For information on Medicare coverage, you may visit the following Web site: <http://www.cms.gov/> or call 1-800-Medicare.

In order for Florida Medicaid to reimburse for services, an individual must first receive eligibility through the Department of Children and Families. Please visit the following website to learn more about this process: <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/> or contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-866-762-2237.

For a Summary of Services covered by Florida Medicaid, please visit the following website: <http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/flmedicaid.shtml>.

For a list of Medicaid Area Offices in the state of Florida, please visit the following website: <http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/index.shtml#areas>.

eQ Solutions was contracted to review the services of therapy, nursing, and home healthcare assistants for children with medical (Medicaid) conditions. This

company is reducing the hours for children with seizures, feeding tubes, autism, etc. These children have working parents. eQ says that these services are for babysitting. No babysitter can care for children with medical conditions. (Not even after school care.) Thank you!

eQHealth Solutions, Inc. is the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration's contracted quality improvement organization (QIO) that processes prior authorization requests for the following fee-for-service Medicaid services:

- Inpatient Medical and Surgical Services;
- Home Health Services (Visits, Private Duty Nursing, Personal Care Services);
- Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care (PPEC) Services; and
- Therapy Services.

eQHealth reviews prior authorization requests submitted by Medicaid enrolled providers, and based upon the submitted documentation and information, makes a determination of medical necessity. This determination is made in accordance with Medicaid policy. Requests may be denied, approved, or partially approved; providers and recipients are notified of the decision. Recipients who disagree with eQHealth's decision may request a reconsideration of the determination or a fair hearing. The Florida Medicaid Summary of Services contains descriptions of the services offered by the Florida Medicaid program. For a Summary of Services, please visit the following website: <http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/flmedicaid.shtml>. Should you wish the Agency to look into this matter further, please contact your local Medicaid Area Office.

I am amazed in this great county how things can be legal that are so wrong. My husband and I have been hardworking, contributing members to society and our country. My husband spent 8 years in the Army. I was a Department of Defense teacher. My husband now is a manager of a Pharmacy. Our Medicaid/Medicare provider is United Healthcare, and they will not help with the cost of a wheelchair, even though he has spina bifida. Our son wears AFO leg braces and a TLSO body brace for scoliosis. He can walk but tires easily. He is 7-years-old and reads on grade level, yet by insurance standards cannot be given the equipment needed to be independent. Pushing him in a stroller is not right for him.

The Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) manages Florida Medicaid and oversees Medicaid health plans, including United Healthcare of Florida, Inc. (United). The Agency's Medicaid health plan contract with United requires that they cover durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs in the same amount, duration and scope as the Medicaid fee-for-service program. Health plans are prohibited from arbitrarily denying or reducing the amount, duration or scope of a covered service when it has been determined medically necessary, regardless of the enrollee's diagnosis, type of illness or condition.

If you believe there has been an inappropriate denial, limitation or termination of a service or coverage, please see the member handbook from United for instructions on how to file an appeal with United or file a Medicaid Fair Hearing with the Department of Children and Families. The member services number for United is (888) 216-0015. An enrollee may seek a Medicaid Fair Hearing without having first exhausted the Health Plan's

grievance and appeal process and they may do so within ninety (90) days of receipt of the Health Plan's notice of action. The address at DCF for the Medicaid Fair Hearing office is:

Office of Public Assistance Appeals Hearings
1317 Winewood Boulevard, Building 5, Room 203
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700.

Medicaid Area offices are available to help recipients navigate the Medicaid health care system through education, information and problem resolution.

Why is it so hard to get Kid Care for siblings of children with disabilities?

Applying for Florida KidCare should be easy. You can apply either online at www.floridakidcare.org or by calling 1-888-540-5437 to request an application be mailed to you. The Florida KidCare program has four parts: Medicaid, Children's Medical Services (CMS), MediKids and Florida Healthy Kids. Children with a family income too high to qualify for Medicaid will be enrolled in one of the other programs.

MediKids is for children ages 1 through 4 and Florida Healthy Kids is for children ages 5 through 18. CMS is for children with special health care needs. Children with family incomes under 200% of the Florida Poverty Level (FPL) can receive coverage and pay \$15 or \$20 a month per family. If the family income is over 200% FPL, the child can still participate, but the family would have to pay the full premium amount which is \$196 per month per child for MediKids and \$133 per month per child for Florida Healthy Kids. It is also possible, for many reasons, that one sibling will be eligible, while the other sibling is not eligible. If you feel that your children do not have the right health insurance coverage, please call the KidCare hotline at 1-888-540-5437.

Where can I get a trike for my 12-year-old daughter at an affordable price? One that accepts Medicaid? Does anyone know if Medicaid will pay for it if there are any special funds to help? Thank you.

Florida Medicaid does cover mobility devices when it is determined medically necessary, for recipients of all ages. Please contact your local Medicaid area office to find a medical equipment provider near you.

Why does Medicare refuse to pay for QEEG's done by PhD's when Board Certification is the same for MD's and PhD's? Is Medicare deciding scope of practice when it is state licensing that regulates it?

The State of Florida does not administer the Medicare program. For information on Medicare coverage, you may visit the following Web site: <http://medicare.gov>, or call 1-800-Medicare.

Florida Medicaid providers are enrolled according to statutory requirements. For additional information relating to Medicaid enrolled providers, please call our Bureau of Medicaid Contract Management at 850-412-3400.

Is there any way to make provider charge customary fees for products for children/adults with disabilities? Insurance doesn't cover everything and the cost of a stroller is now \$1800.00 – pretty pricey! What does Medicaid pay for in the stroller department?

Florida Medicaid covers medical strollers for children who cannot freely walk from room to room within the home. Our providers are reimbursed approximately \$1,300 for these types of specialty strollers.

Should you wish the Agency to look into this matter further, please contact your local Medicaid Area Office.

Please advise if there are additional benefits available for a 63-year-old with mental abilities of a 4-5-year-old whose parents are not both deceased? Medicare? Thank you!

The Agency for Health Care Administration is happy to assist you. You did not mention whether or not the 63-year-old person for whom you write is currently a Medicaid recipient. If this person is a Medicaid recipient, he or she would have access to various Medicaid services and potentially Medicaid waiver services for persons with developmental disabilities, depending upon the person's diagnosis.

If this person has not applied for Medicaid services, we would encourage the person to apply for Florida Medicaid benefits through the Department of Children and Families ACCESS program. If you have access to a computer, you may visit the ACCESS website and assist the person to apply online at: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access-florida-food-medical-assistance-cash>.

You may also connect with ACCESS via the central call center and mailing address as follows:

Customer Call Center: (866)762-2237
Mailing Address: ACCESS Central Mail Center
P.O. Box 1, Wildwood FL, 34785.

You may also assist this person to apply for the Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver via the internet by visiting: <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/>; or by contacting the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) by phone or mail as follows.

Telephone: (850) 488-4257
Toll-Free: 1-866-APD-CAREs or 1-866-273-2273.

Mailing Address: Agency for Persons with Disabilities
4030 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, FL 32399

For information regarding available Medicare coverage, you may assist the person by visiting the internet site at: <http://Medicare.gov> or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

What is the relationship with AHCA and Kid Care? I get confused on what entity runs the program.

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) is the lead state agency for the federal Title XXI-Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) Program. The State of Florida's CHIP Program is the Florida KidCare Program. The Program is structured utilizing the following four state agencies:

MediKids – Agency for Health Care Administration
Healthy Kids – Florida Healthy Kids Corporation
Children's Medical Services – Department of Health
Medicaid for Children (Title XIX) – Department of Children and Families

As one of the four partners of the Florida KidCare Program, the Agency is statutorily responsible for administering the "MediKids" insurance health care program for children ages 1 through 4. In addition to administering MediKids, the Agency is responsible for the management of the Florida KidCare program funding received from the federal government, reporting program accomplishments to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and complying with CHIP federal and state regulations as they relate to the Florida KidCare Program.

The Agency's MediKids staff oversees the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation contract enabling the distribution of state and federal Title XXI funds based on annual legislative appropriations. These funds are distributed to the Corporation through the Agency's budget and are specifically designated for contracting with the Corporation for the Healthy Kids Program and KidCare administration. Under this contract, the Corporation has the responsibility to perform a wide-range of administrative functions inclusive of enrollment services, application processing, data matches and transmitting, determining and renewal of Title XXI eligibility, providing customer services, administration of the call center, collecting premiums and the dispute resolution process.

The Agency also has interagency agreements with the Department of Health and the Department of Children and Families for the distribution of Title XXI funds for their respective programs.

I cannot wait until the Affordable Care Act is in law. Benefits will really assist my family. I hope Florida does not delay or fight the results of the Supreme Court.

We encourage you to apply for Medicaid benefits if you think they may help your family; however, eligibility in Florida is determined either by the Department of Children and

Families (DCF) or the Social Security Administration (SSA). DCF determines Medicaid eligibility for:

- Low income families with children
- Children only
- Pregnant women
- Non-citizens with medical emergencies
- Aged and/or disabled individuals **not** currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

The Social Security Administration determines eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI is a federal program which makes monthly payments to people who have low income and few resources and are age 65 or older, blind or disabled. Individuals in Florida determined eligible for SSI are automatically eligible for Florida Medicaid. The SSI beneficiary must meet certain federal disclosure requirements, such as information on any other insurance coverage, for their Medicaid eligibility to be activated.

For further information regarding eligibility, please contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-866-762-2237.

I am intrigued on why Florida would fight the expansion of the ACA if enacted by the Supreme Court. Families would get the vital health care they need. The government would assist in payments, the state would gain employment. Who cares if the Medicaid office grows . . . that does not mean a thing to my family if folks are working for the state. I just desperately need health care coverage that I can afford! That is what is important to me and my family. I do not understand the continued fight. It passed as law in Congress, now just let us as a state work to do the best for its citizens to conform to the law. Give us a voice.

With regard to the Affordable Care Act, the Governor has made it very clear that if the Affordable Care Act is not repealed before January 1, 2014, Florida will implement and comply with the required sections of the act.

The Agency is anticipating federal guidance regarding the impact of the Supreme Court decision on the various provisions of the Affordable Care Act. Once guidance is received, the Agency will work with the Governor's office and the Legislature to determine how best to move forward.

I have SSI, had Medicaid (Florida Gold Card) and now my prescriptions will not be filled and they say it's because I am 22 and I am on Medicare. What? When did this happen? I am confused? My parents are confused? Help!

It appears that your issue relates to Supplemental Security Income and Medicare eligibility. The Agency for Health Care Administration is the designated single state agency for Medicaid in Florida and is responsible for administering the program. We encourage you to apply for Medicaid benefits; however, eligibility in Florida is determined either by

the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Social Security Administration (SSA). DCF determines Medicaid eligibility for:

- Low income families with children
- Children only
- Pregnant women
- Non-citizens with medical emergencies
- Aged and/or disabled individuals **not** currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

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For further information regarding eligibility, please contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-866-762-2237.

All this fighting at the state level of services from AHCA and what does it get us? Are the services improving? Are they providing positive outcomes for families? If any of these are no, then we need to quit fighting the law and start a plan to serve the millions of families in Florida. It takes too much energy, money and what do we get? The Supreme Court will tell us to get to business and provide services or not. But the policymakers will continue to fight. Crazyess!!

The Governor has made it very clear that if the Affordable Care Act is not repealed before January 1, 2014, Florida will implement and comply with the required sections of the act.

The Agency is anticipating federal guidance regarding the impact of the Supreme Court decision on the various provisions of the Affordable Care Act. Once guidance is received, the Agency will work with the Governor's office and the Legislature to determine how best to move forward.

If the ACA is upheld will Florida finally start planning for the act and start working to provide quality care for families, or will we continue to show our behinds and fight? Who are we really fighting for? It seems we are fighting against our fellow citizens.

The Governor has made it very clear that if the Affordable Care Act is not repealed before January 1, 2014, Florida will implement and comply with the required sections of the act.

The Agency is anticipating federal guidance regarding the impact of the Supreme Court decision on the various provisions of the Affordable Care Act. Once guidance is received,

the Agency will work with the Governor’s office and the Legislature to determine how best to move forward.

Why doesn’t Medicaid allow for replacement wheelchairs? I was run down in a car accident. A car hit my wheelchair. Medicaid will not approve a new one and the person who hit me is old and does not have any insurance or resources. My old chair cost about 10K. Medicaid said that they already bought me one a year ago . . . this was an ACCIDENT. I was in the hospital for a few weeks recuperating. Now I am in a loaner chair that does not support me whatsoever. I need a good chair to maintain my health, especially after the accident. I broke my arms, etc. I am confined to the chair most of the day for every activity. Help!

Florida Medicaid does review requests for new equipment when a recipient’s current equipment was stolen or damaged by a car accident. We would need to obtain a completed police or insurance report that describes the specific medical equipment that was destroyed. The police or insurance report must be submitted with a prior authorization request for the new equipment by your wheelchair provider.

Should you wish the Agency to look into this matter further please contact your local Medicaid Area Office. Below is a chart that lists each Area Medicaid Office, what counties they serve and contact information for each.

Area Office and Area Office Manager	Counties in Area	Phone / Fax	Address
Area Office 1 Marshall Wallace	Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton	Phone 850-595-2300 Toll Free: 1-800-303-2422 Fax:850-595-5717	160 Governmental Center Room 510 Pensacola, FL 32502
Area Office 2A Earnie Brewer	Bay, Gulf, Franklin, Holmes, Jackson, Washington	Phone: 850-767-3400 Toll Free: 1-800-226-7690 Fax:850-747-5456	651 W. 14 th Street, Suite K Panama City, FL 32401
Area Office 2B Earnie Brewer	Calhoun, Gadsden, Jefferson, Liberty, Leon, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla	Phone:850-412-4002 Toll Free:1-800-248-2243 Fax Numbers: Provider Relations:850-921-0394 Consumer Relations: 850-921-6215	2727 Mahan Drive, MS #42 Tallahassee, FL 32308
Area Office 3A Marilynn Schlott	Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union	Phone:386-462-6200 Toll Free:1-800-803-3245 Fax:386-418-5370	14101 NW Hwy 441 Suite 600 Alachua, FL 32615

Area Office 3B Marilynn Schlott	Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter	Phone:352-840-5720 Toll Free:1-877-724- 2358 Fax:352-620-3076	2441 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475
Area Office 4 Lisa Broward	Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns, Volusia	Phone: 904-798- 4200 Toll Free: 1-800-273- 5880 Fax:904-353-2198	921 N. Davis St. Bldg. A Suite 160 Jacksonville, FL 32209
Area Office 5 Don Fuller	Pasco, Pinellas	Phone:727-552-1900 Toll Free:1-800-299- 4844 Fax:727-552-1216	525 Mirror Lake Drive, N Suite 510 St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Area Office 6 Sue McPhee	Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk	Phone:813-350-4800 Toll Free:1-800-226- 2316 Fax:813-673-4592	6800 N. Dale Mabry Hwy Suite 220 Tampa, FL 33614
Area Office 7 Judy Jacobs	Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Brevard	Phone:407-420-2500 Toll Free:1-877-254- 1055 Fax: 407-245-0847	400 W. Robinson St. Suite S 309 Orlando, FL 32801
Area Office 8 Dietra Cole	Charlotte, Collier, De Soto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Sarasota	Phone:239-335-1300 Toll Free:1-800-226- 6735 Fax:239-338-2642	2295 Victoria Ave. Suite 309 Fort Myers, FL 33901
Area Office 9 William Albury	Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, St. Lucie	Phone:561-712-4400 Toll Free:1-800-226- 5082 Fax:561-616-1545	1655 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. Suite 300 W. Palm Beach, FL 33401
Area Office 10 Rafael Copa	Broward	Phone:954-958-6500 Toll Free:1-866-875- 9131 Fax:954-202-3220	1400 W. Commercial Blvd. Suite 110 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
Area Office 11 Rhea Gray	Miami-Dade, Monroe	Phone:305-593-3000 Toll Free:1-800-953- 0555 Fax:305-499-2022	8333 Northwest 53rd Street, Suite 200 Doral, Florida 33166

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities

APD obviously needs more funds! More and more people are in need of services. You can only serve x amount of people from a pie. Sooner or later you need A BIGGER PIE! So here's an idea! Instead of arresting people for possession of misdemeanor amounts of marijuana, write them a ticket and all fine monies go to the APD—for client use only. No salary increases for anyone working for APD. These monies would only be used to restore clients back to a more tolerable level of services and for new clients. This is a great idea! Thanks.

APD provides waiver services for approximately 30,000 individuals through money allocated by the Florida Legislature. I encourage you to contact your local legislators with your concerns and ideas for APD's funding. You can find contact information for your local legislators at www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

We've been with the CDC+ since the beginning and what I can say is that it's been a blessing for our family. Being able to keep our loved one with a developmental disability home with us and getting support to help with his needs and care for and keep him safe, is priceless. As a single mom, I do it out of love; we don't ask for benefits or other things. All we need is that the support will be there when we need it most. If I may ask for one thing is that to pay the employees their full pay every pay period without withholding anything back to the next period as long as the consumer's ending balance after all payments is positive for the month. By working together, we can accomplish a lot. Thank you!

Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) consumers and representatives are responsible for spending in accordance with their authorized budgets. On May 1, 2012, the CDC+ program began pending payment for any claims submitted if the consumer has insufficient funds to cover those claims. If a submitted claim exceeds the consumer's available balance, that claim will be "held" until additional funds are available. Once held, a claim will be reviewed and processed in the next available scheduled payroll that includes sufficient funds in the account to cover the claims. Payroll occurs every two weeks.

All CDC+ consumers and representatives are instructed and required to reconcile their accounts each month. When reviewing the statements, it is very important to note that just like a bank account statement, the consumer monthly statements only reflect the activity occurring within the consumer account for that specific month. All activity, whether expenditure or deposit, made after the last statement date still must be accounted for by subtracting from or adding to the last statement ending balance. This is the only way to determine the current balance since these outstanding items have been made but not yet reflected on a CDC+ statement. While the consumer monthly statements may show a positive ending balance, there may be outstanding obligations which would increase or decrease the balance and must be accounted for—it is the responsibility of the Representative to manage the Medicaid funds and ensure that the monthly budget is not overspent. By reconciling each monthly statement and tracking expenditures between statements, consumers and representatives should be able to

determine their current balance and know if they have a sufficient balance to pay their providers each payroll.

What are respite care options for those who don't qualify for Medicaid? What is the "respite" pool I heard you talk about? How can I get in?

For individuals on the wait list, the options for respite vary statewide. The Arc of Florida was awarded state funding during the last legislative session to provide a limited amount of respite to individuals with developmental disabilities who are not being served by the waiver. Additionally, various community resources around the state may be available.

The "respite pool" is a mechanism through which a portion of the approved respite services for persons on the waiver is set aside until it is actually needed by the person for whom it was approved. It is not an open pool from which anyone may request services.

Please contact your local APD office or a local Arc to inquire about respite care funding sources that may be available in your area. APD contact information can be found online at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

How can we find out if we are moving on the waiting list on medical waiver?

If you would like to know the date you were placed on the waiting list, please contact your local APD office.

Waiver needs to be federal as opposed to state.

The waiver is jointly funded by the federal government and the Florida state government.

With government spending what it is, why are there continual cuts in our services?

APD serves nearly 30,000 individuals through money allocated by the Florida Legislature. In accordance with state law, APD must stay within its appropriated budget. I encourage you to contact your local legislators with your concerns for APD's funding. You can find contact information for your local legislators at www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

Why do we not recycle equipment? APD/AHCA could save a bundle.

APD and AHCA do not own equipment used by clients. Equipment is obtained by the consumer or consumer's insurance plan. Equipment can be recycled (depending on the equipment in question) if the consumer chooses to donate the equipment to APD or another organization that has equipment loan programs.

Med Waiver—please no more cutting. Try to cut other funding.

APD funds waiver services for approximately 30,000 individuals through money allocated by the Florida Legislature. In accordance with state law, APD must stay within its appropriated budget. The Legislature increased waiver funding this year, while making large cuts to APD administration.

What are the resources available to people not yet on the Medicaid Waiver but on the waiting list?

Support Coordination is provided by state employees while an individual is on the waiting list. Upon request from an individual or their legal guardian, each state support coordinator provides assistance by referrals to other potential resources or through temporary emergency provision of services which is dependent upon the availability of general revenue funds allocated to the APD local office. To contact your local office, please visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/region/> to view the contact information for our local offices throughout the state.

What’s going on with the waiting list? How long? I need help. Please help me with my son.

Currently there are approximately 21,000 individuals on the waiting list for services. APD’s services are funded by money allocated by the Florida Legislature. As funds become available, the agency will enroll individuals from the waiting list. If you feel your situation is a crisis, please contact your local APD office and request that a Crisis Identification Tool be completed. A crisis situation is defined as the individual being a danger to self or others, homeless, or their caregiver is unable to provide care.

Contact information for APD offices throughout the state can be found at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Why can’t we get rid of Administrative Law Judges for Due Process hearings and go to hearing offices and a 2-tier system with a State Review officer? We need this because we have less than 5% win rate for children.

APD strives to make its decisions regarding individuals’ eligibility or service needs fairly and correctly. The purpose of the Medicaid fair hearings is to give clients a right to review an agency decision when an individual believes that the agency made an error in its decision affecting Medicaid services. APD works to avoid any unnecessary hearings and will modify its original decision when it is appropriate; for example, when it is brought to our attention that new information or documentation exists that may not have been available for the original determination. Such a re-examination of its decision helps to insure that the agency has not erred in its determination.

Administrative Law Judges no longer conduct APD fair hearings. In 2010, the Florida Legislature moved APD's Medicaid fair hearings back to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This is the forum where all Florida Medicaid hearings are conducted. DCF conducts hearings for the Agency for Healthcare Administration, Department of Health, DCF, and APD as well. These hearings were briefly conducted at the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) by Administrative Law Judges as the result of a court appeal finding that when APD was first created as an agency, the Legislature did not specifically provide a new exemption from having the fair hearings heard at DOAH. APD fair hearings were held at DOAH until the Legislature amended the law to have DCF conduct the fair hearing cases. The law is shown below:

393.125Hearing rights.—

(1)REVIEW OF AGENCY DECISIONS.—

(a)For Medicaid programs administered by the agency, any developmental services applicant or client, or his or her parent, guardian advocate, or authorized representative, may request a hearing in accordance with federal law and rules applicable to Medicaid cases and has the right to request an administrative hearing pursuant to ss. 120.569 and 120.57. These hearings shall be provided by the Department of Children and Family Services pursuant to s. 409.285 and shall follow procedures consistent with federal law and rules applicable to Medicaid cases.

Do you have any idea when the freeze will be lifted on the Med Waiver? My child is in need of positional seating and we have been unable to get funding.

The agency serves nearly 30,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities. State law requires that APD develop a plan to keep waiver spending within our appropriated budget. The agency reviews all requests for services to ensure that the waiver is the funding of last resort and that the individual is receiving services to ensure health, safety and welfare. If you feel your situation needs further review, please contact your local APD office and request that a Crisis Identification Tool be completed. Contact information for APD offices throughout the state can be found at <http://apdcare.org/region/>.

With developmental disabilities is there improvement over time? As in, my daughter is 50% developmentally delayed. Will she ever be only 25% developmentally delayed?

The terms 'developmental disability' and 'developmental delay' have two different meanings. Florida State Statutes chapter 393 defines a developmental disability as a disability caused by retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, spina bifida, or Prader-Willi syndrome. These disabilities must be evident before age 18 and are expected to continue indefinitely.

A developmental delay, on the other hand, refers to a child from birth through age two with a diagnosed physical or mental condition known to have a high probability of resulting in developmental delay or disability. A developmental delay may not always

result in a lifelong disability. This definition can be found in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03026, F.A.C..

Why is Med Waiver such a pain to deal with? You can't see a provider when you need to and the services you are qualified for are getting cut. No fair!

The APD Medicaid Waiver serves approximately 30,000 Floridians. We provide services for these individuals with money appropriated to APD by the Florida Legislature. It is APD's goal to serve as many individuals as possible while staying within our budget, which is required by law. Your Waiver Support Coordinator can assist you in finding providers that offer the services you need and scheduling those appointments. If you are unhappy with your current providers, you can contact the local office at any time to address these concerns.

How do you find a lawyer that helps with disability issues that is not outrageously expensive?

I would encourage you to contact Disability Rights Florida, a statewide protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in the state of Florida. The office can be reached at (800) 342-0823. To learn more information about services they do and do not provide you can visit their website at <http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/>.

How do you get back money in the CDC+ budget? We went from \$1067 to \$490 a month—most was tied into respite, but now that we are learning all that money can be used for, we would really like some back.

In order to obtain the funds tied to Respite service in the consumer's CDC+ monthly budget, the consumer/representative must request the Respite Pool funds via the Respite Pool Request Form (your consultant is familiar with this form). Once you complete the form and submit to your area for approval, the funds are added to the consumer's waiver cost plan. When the funds are authorized in the waiver cost plan a new budget calculation worksheet is developed, indicating the new monthly budget or adding temporary funds in the Short Term Expenditure (or One Time Expenditure, if applicable) section of the budget. At that time, the consumer/representative will develop a Purchasing Plan change, within established timeframes and following current procedures, to request the new line item be added to the consumer's Purchasing Plan. Once the Purchasing Plan change is approved and entered in the system, the consumer/representative can begin self-directing the authorized funds.

If additional information is needed, please feel free to call our Toll Free Customer Service line at 1-866-761-7043.

What can we do to move on the waiting list?

Each year, the number of individuals who can be added to the waiver is contingent on the funding appropriated to APD by the Florida Legislature. As funding becomes available, the agency will enroll individuals from the waiting list. I encourage you to contact your local legislators with your concerns and ideas for APD's funding. If you feel your situation is a crisis, please contact your local APD office and request that a Crisis Identification Tool be completed. A crisis situation is defined as the individual being a danger to self or others, homeless, or their caregiver is unable to provide care. Contact information for APD offices throughout the state can be found at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Will CDC get 8% back on iBudget?

The Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) program is an approved 1915j Medicaid State Plan Option that includes the current discount rate. This is required in order to continue to demonstrate cost neutrality of the CDC+ program. The iBudget implementation continues the current practice of the 8% discount of the waiver services for enrollment in the Consumer Directed Care Plus program.

How will iBudget affect CDC+?

The CDC+ budget will be derived from the iBudget allocation amount once it is established. If you are currently on CDC+ you will continue to manage your CDC+ budget the same way you do now.

PCA under 21. Why changing from Med Waiver to Medicaid?

The Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver is a payer of last resort. Effective July 1, 2011, the Medicaid Waiver no longer provides personal care for children under 21 years of age since that service is now provided by the Medicaid State Plan, operated by the Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration. The Medicaid State Plan offers a number of services to children that should be used before requesting services through a waiver.

This year was very different for me. On May 24, 2012, my daughter passed away unexpectedly. She was 28-years-old with cerebral palsy. She was the joy in my life and although she had many physical limitations, she was blessed to be very social, bright, and beautiful, had good speech, and was very encouraging to others, and never complained. I truly enjoyed Julie Beckett's presentation. I was in awe of the challenges she and her daughter faced. She has inspired me to continue advocating for persons with disabilities and their families. I am currently a provider, so the iBudget session was very informative. However, I was feeling for the parents that have had their family members on the wait list so long. I don't think people were intended to be on the wait list for so long when the wait list was created. For many families, coming to the Café is the only place they can hear from all the agencies that provide services, etc.

Also, meeting with other families and sharing experiences is one of the most valuable sources of information we can share.

This year I was a recipient of the hotel accommodations. Thank you so much for that. I applaud the Family Café for all you do to make this world (and Florida) a better place for persons with disabilities and their families. See you next year.

We offer our sincere condolences on the loss of your daughter this year. We appreciate that you are still a strong advocate for other individuals with disabilities and their families. iBudget is intended to offer more financial stability in the waiver system. If additional waiver funding is appropriated by the Florida Legislature, the agency will be able to assist more individuals on the waiting list.

How could you possibly think that when determining the individual budgets that the iBudget Allocation Formula produces, that age and living setting hold more weight than the QSI Assessment results? If the QSI is truly completed by the people most knowledgeable of the consumer, along with the consumer, when possible, then the QSI is so much more individualized to consumer needs to target a cost plan that serves the consumer.

If it costs more for consumers to live in group homes, etc., then why aren't we supporting the families more to have consumers live at home with services that cost less. Family income should not be a deciding factor, either.

iBudget considers all the factors you mentioned above (age, living situation, and QSI) when determining the amount of money that can be approved to assist individuals in meeting their needs, especially those involving health and safety.

Some of our clients want to have more independence by living outside of their family's home. APD's mission is to support persons with developmental disabilities in living, learning, and working in their communities.

What number on Med Wavier waiting list?

If you are interested in knowing the date you were placed on the waiver waiting list please contact your local office. Please visit us online at <http://apd.myflorida.com/region/> to view the contact information for our offices throughout the state.

Would like to suggest to APD: train support coordinators to do QSI assessments at support plan time and reduce funds that are paid to QSI assessors.

The agency was given funding by the Florida Legislature to fund 75 staff members for the purpose of conducting the Questionnaire for Situational Information (QSI). It is important to keep the Waiver Support Coordinators free of the inherent conflict of interest that may happen if they were given the additional responsibility of assessing individuals on their

caseload. Some individuals who are assessed may, if not satisfied with the results of the assessment, request a new WSC. The agency maintains the training and certification of QSI staff and ensures that these staff members maintain their reliability for conducting the assessment. The WSC plays a critical role in informing the agency of any changes to the individual's circumstances so that accurate information can be maintained.

Will the new iBudget change the services my son receives? Also, will it affect his funding? I heard that budgets will decrease. I'm a single parent and need the services so that I can maintain employment. Thank you.

iBudget gives individuals more control, choice, and flexibility over their services. Available services will be the same or very similar. In fact, customers who have been in the Tier 4 will have more services to choose from. APD will determine your new iBudget after considering the person's age, living situation (whether you live with family, in your own home, or in a group home) and the kind of support that you need according to the agency approved assessment, the Questionnaire for Situational Information (QSI). To learn more about iBudget please visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/>.

What is the status of the iBudget? Whether or not it goes into effect, is there still going to be a division among the various services (PCA, companion, In-home support, etc.), or will we be able to use our discretion as to how to use our budget as we see fit, regardless of the hours?

iBudget is being rolled out in six waves, and has already been implemented in several areas. It will be completely implemented by July 2013. Support coordination is a mandatory service, but beyond that the plan can be built to meet the specific health and safety needs of the individual. Please visit <http://apd.myflorida.com/ibudget/docs/services.pdf> to view more information on the new service groups. If you have any other questions concerning iBudget you can contact your waiver support coordinator or your local APD office.

As an independent adult with a physical disability not living in my family home and needing to work to financially support myself, I constantly worry about losing my Med Waiver coverage. I want to live with as few outside supports as possible, and I would have no problem paying for my own in-home supports if it were within my means to do so, but one would have to have a very high income in order to do that. My question is, definitively, how much in income and assets can a person have before they face losing Med Waiver coverage? I ask because I've heard many different answers to this question.

APD recognizes that not everyone is aware of the special rules that are in place that allow people with disabilities to earn more money, build assets, and still maintain certain benefits. FBIRN is a network of state agency staff that is trained to facilitate people with disabilities to connect with the "right person" (federal and state workers who are certified to provide benefits assistance). Please contact the Employment Liaison at your local office

to be connected with an FBIRN member in your area. Contact information for our local offices can be found online at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Why does it take so long to get on Med Waiver? Not just about budget cuts, but because my child is not in “crisis mode,” he is continually pushed back. I don’t understand!

Each year, the number of individuals who can be added to the waiver is contingent on the funding appropriated to APD by the Florida Legislature. As funding becomes available, the agency will enroll individuals from the waiting list. Currently there are approximately 21,000 individuals on the waiting list.

What services are available for physically disabled adults that fall in the gap, non-DD, non-Medicaid, for simple, in-home supports? I am on the wait list for APD services now.

As defined in Florida State Statute chapter 393, APD is funded to serve Floridians with developmental disabilities including Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, autism, and intellectual disabilities. However, APD does have a database (formerly known as the Clearinghouse on Disability Information) with information on agencies and non-profits throughout the state that may be able to provide services to individuals with specific needs. APD can be reached at 1-866-273-2273 or by email at apd_info@apd.state.fl.us.

How can I move out of my parents’ house with no money or services available to me? Group home options from the waiver?

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offers employment opportunities and training to all individuals with physical or mental disabilities. This option is available to you even if you are not on APD’s Medicaid Waiver. To learn more about applying for supported employment visit VR’s website at <http://www.rehabworks.org/> or contact their office at 1-800-451-4327.

If you are currently on APD’s waiver please contact your waiver support coordinator to assist you in finding a group home in your area.

Tell me about APD family services.

APD provides health and safety services directly to the individual on the APD Medicaid Waiver. The one family service APD provides is respite care. Please contact your local APD office to discuss respite options that may be available to your family. You can visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/region/> to view the contact information for our local office throughout the state.

What are available resources for the disabled that are on the waiting list for the Medicaid Waiver? Help!

Support Coordination is provided by state employees while an individual is on the waiting list. Upon request from an individual or their legal guardian, each state support coordinator provides assistance by referrals to other potential resources or through temporary emergency provision of services which is dependent upon the availability of general revenue funds allocated to the APD local office. To contact your local office, please visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/region/> to view the contact information for our local offices throughout the state.

I whole-heartedly agree with the attitude that “we are more alike than different” and need combined efforts. There is limited funding, duplication of services. I wonder how that meeting went. Why not combine all agencies under the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Why do they not represent those disabled by mental illness, Tourette’s, etc.? Every individual has the same goal—quality of life. By not dividing money and getting rid of multiple directors, adding more staff and the agency obtaining a streamlined standard of service, making all available money to be used directly by the consumer. The world is changing—attitudes and systems must change.

In October 2004, APD became an agency separate from the Department of Children and Families. Prior to this our agency existed as the Developmental Disabilities Program within the Department of Children and Families. Our agency, as defined in Florida State Statutes chapter 393, is specifically tasked with serving the needs of Floridians with Developmental Disabilities. Our agency currently serves 30,000 Floridians with Developmental Disabilities, and has a waiting list of approximately 21,000 individuals.

I am a young woman who has cared for and seen the needs of family members with disabilities and special needs. How can I and my family help? I am on the wait list now for APD services.

I would encourage you to contact and join your local Family Care Council. This would be an excellent forum for you to share your experiences and offer assistance and support to other families who also have loved ones on the waiting list. It is also a great way to be involved and up-to-date on information concerning the waiting list and APD Medicaid Waiver. To learn more information about your local FCC please contact the FCC Community Liaison.

Why does it take so long for med Waiver? Why do some people get more than others on Medicaid Waiver program?

Each year, the number of individuals who can be added to the waiver is contingent on the funding appropriated to APD by the Florida Legislature. As funding becomes available, the agency will enroll individuals from the waiting list.

APD is eliminating the current tier waiver system and implementing the iBudget waiver system to provide more flexibility for waiver enrollees and to help stabilize the funding for the waiver program. By July 2013 iBudget will be completely implemented throughout the state of Florida. iBudget will give each individual the flexibility to choose the services that they need most. Waiver services are based on the individual needs of our customers. Some customers require more services to meet their health and safety needs and therefore receive a larger budget.

Are there any social activities for DD adults?

The local Family Care Council is a great resource to connect you with social activities in the community. You can contact the local APD office and speak with the FCC Liaison at (863) 413-3360 for more information.

What services are available from APD for a 36-year-old DD male who is not labeled "autistic," "Down Syndrome," "cerebral palsy," or other specific label? He's a combination—some autistic tendencies, some CP characteristics. He cannot get full Medicaid because he has no label, yet I cannot work and leave him home alone too long. So financially, we are not doing well. He receives Medicare, but we have to pay the 20%.

As defined in Florida State Statute chapter 393, APD is funded to serve Floridians with developmental disabilities including Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, autism, and intellectual disabilities. If an individual has a developmental disability before the age of 18, they may qualify for APD services. To discuss eligibility please contact the local APD office that serves his county of residence. You can visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/region/> to view the contact information for our offices throughout the state.

Why aren't the parents/guardians and consumers part of the iBudget team when deciding funding for the consumer? It should NOT be solely made on paperwork and no input from consumers and caregivers.

The Questionnaire for Situational Information (QSI) is used in the process of determining a consumer's budget for iBudget. The QSI is an assessment performed by APD employees as a face-to-face interview with the consumer and the family or guardian and anyone else the consumer would like to include. Additional interviews are performed with the person's caregivers, health care personnel, and support coordinator to ensure the resulting support plan meets individual needs. In addition to the QSI, APD also considers the consumer's age and living situation (whether you live with your family, in your own home, or in a group home).

Why doesn't the iBudget team meet with Florida legislators to ask for stimulus money to fund the needs of the disabled? Additional funds would both increase employment and entice better qualified people to help the disabled population. The government is giving foreign countries our money, but "charity begins at home."

iBudget is a way for APD to better manage the waiver system, while giving customers more flexibility when choosing necessary services. iBudget is part of the overall solution to serving people with developmental disabilities and creating more financial stability in the waiver system so that additional funding appropriated by the Legislature may fund individuals currently waiting for waiver services. I encourage you to contact your local legislators with your concerns and ideas for APD's funding. You can find contact information for your local legislators at www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

More on the iBudget and how it will affect all.

iBudget is designed to give individuals more self-direction and to be a simpler system in terms of review and approval of services. It is also part of the overall solution to serving people with developmental disabilities fairly. An individual's needs will be met by blending individual and family resources, community services, services provided under the Medicaid State Plan, and other state programs. iBudget will also help reduce paperwork for waiver support coordinators and allow them more time to find additional resources to meet individuals' needs.

For more information on iBudget please visit <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/>.

Please advise APD to go ahead and reimburse the CDC+ families with the 8% that was promised two years ago.

The Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) program is an approved 1915j Medicaid State Plan Option that includes the current discount rate. This is required in order to continue to demonstrate cost neutrality of the CDC+ program. The iBudget implementation continues the current practice of the 8% discount of the waiver services for enrollment in the Consumer Directed Care Plus program.

I come from Miami. I'm a representative for families in Dade, Broward, and Monroe. I receive any calls from families who have children over 21-years-old. There aren't any places that will accept children (even with the waiver) who have minimum behavioral issues. If there's one minor incident, they will call the parents and expel the child. Thank you!

Our agency has a number of APD-licensed homes within the South Florida area which are willing and able to serve individuals with behavioral issues. The quickest way to access

information about such homes is by contacting the Residential Planning Coordinators within those local APD offices. For Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, please call (305) 349-1478. For Broward County, please call (954) 467-4218. If you wish to express concerns about specific group homes, our local staff is also prepared to investigate such matters (in order to ensure that such homes remain in compliance with all applicable licensing standards).

When does iBudget start?

iBudget will be introduced throughout the state in six waves. As of July 2012 customers in areas 1, 2, 4, 12, and 13 have been transitioned to iBudget. The upcoming waves will occur as follows:

Wave 3: (Areas 3, 7, 14, 15) – October 1, 2012

Wave 4: (Areas 8, 23) – January 1, 2013

Wave 5: (Areas 9, 10) – April 1, 2013

Wave 6: (Areas 11 and CDC+) – July 1, 2013

For more information on iBudget please visit <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/>.

Why does it take so long to get agreed services on the Medicaid Waiver program?

APD's top priorities are the health and safety of the individuals served by the APD Medicaid Waiver and on the waiting list. To ensure APD can provide services to as many people as possible, the agency reviews each service request to ensure there are no other resources available for the individual. If you feel you or your loved one is in a crisis situation and needs additional services, please contact your local APD office. The contact information for our local offices can be found at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Once you or your loved one is placed on the APD Medicaid Waiver, you will work with your Waiver Support Coordinator (WSC) to find providers that fit your individual needs. In some cases this can take some time depending on the providers in the area, the type of services needed, providers' availability, etc. If you or your loved one is not satisfied with your WSC you can contact the local office at any time and request a new WSC.

My son has the Cystic Fibrosis waiver, and we and others have been waiting one year to get services! We keep getting told there are no providers.

The Adult Cystic Fibrosis Medicaid Waiver Program is administered by the Florida Department of Health. Questions about the services and wait list for this program can best be answered by contacting the Florida Department of Health's Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program at (866) 875-5660.

Who is on the task force for the iBudget? How can we get the contact information to talk to each person?

APD does not have a task force for iBudget. It was created with a group of APD employees, APD customers, families, waiver support coordinators, providers and advocates. If you would like to learn more information about iBudget please contact your local office or visit the iBudget website at <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/>. Contact information for our local offices can be found by visiting our website at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Is 22Q Deletion Syndrome recognized as a disability in the state of Florida?

22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome does not specifically appear in Florida Statutes. Because there is a broad range of symptoms, you can contact your local APD office and discuss eligibility requirements for APD Medicaid Waiver services. Contact information for our local offices can be found at <http://apdcares.org/region/>. For more information on community resources, events, research, etc. on 22q11.2 syndrome please visit <http://22q.org/>.

If I heard this correctly at the Summit, the Agency has an extremely large wait list of over 20,000; yet Vocational Rehabilitation serves more individuals than your agency does and they manage not to have a wait list. I was very surprised to learn that they serve more folks than APD. And I always thought they were inefficient.

APD and Vocational Rehabilitation offer very different types of services. Vocational Rehabilitation's focus is on helping people with disabilities prepare for, gain, or retain employment. APD provides a broader range of long term (often lifelong) services of which employment is one component. Each year, the number of individuals who can be added to the waiver is contingent on the funding appropriated to APD by the Florida State Legislature. As funding becomes available, the agency will enroll individuals from the waiting list.

It seems like the APD does not really know how much funding they have, and it has providers stealing or mismanaging funds and that it cannot be stopped. There are a ton of people who are waiting for care and we cannot deliver it to them. Our budgeting is adequate but the Agency's accountability is lacking.

If you suspect a provider of Medicaid fraud please contact one of the following agencies:

- Agency for Healthcare Administration, Medicaid Program Integrity at 1-888-419-3456
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Office of the Inspector General at 1-866-273-2273

Before making a report, try to gather as much information as possible including:

- The name of the provider you suspect of committing fraud

- The customer's Medicaid ID number
- The date of the service you question
- The amount of money involved
- A description of the suspected fraudulent acts

When are we starting the iBudget?

iBudget will be introduced throughout the state in six waves. As of July 2012 customers in areas 1, 2, 4, 12, and 13 have been transitioned to iBudget. The upcoming waves will occur as follows:

Wave 3: (Areas 3, 7, 14, 15) – October 1, 2012

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Wave 6: (Areas 11 and CDC+) – July 1, 2013

For more information on iBudget please visit <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/>.

Service coordinators are not needed by everyone. This part of the program should be optional.

Waiver Support Coordinators help clients arrange and receive the services they need. They also help clients and family members review their cost plans. If you would like to change waiver support coordinators you may do so by contacting your local office. Please visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/region/> to view the contact information for our offices throughout the state.

When I turn 22 I lose all my Medicaid and I will be on a wait list. My future needs cannot be met while I am on a wait list. I can go to college, I just need supports. My family should not have to relocate so I can go to school. Or if I stay home, they should not have to quit their jobs so I can go to college. Messed up man!

One of the best resources available to you for assistance with college and employment is Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). This program is available to you even while you are on the waiting list for APD services. For more information you can visit VR online at <http://www.rehabworks.org/> or you can contact their office by phone at 1-800-451-4327. You can always contact our local APD offices to inquire more specifically about your personal situation. Visit us online at <http://apdcares.org/region/> to view the contact information for APD offices throughout the state.

Everyone is talking about employment. I know I heard that the unemployment rate for people like me is twice as high as for the regular population. Does the

state support some type of plan to promote hiring individuals like me within the state agency? Can I come work for you Mr. Hansen?

APD currently supports more than 5,000 people with disabilities in maintaining employment. Services are provided to individuals on the Medicaid Waiver and those on the waiting list. Supported employment is paid for through two state programs: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and APD. VR assists with the initial job match and on-the-job training. APD assists with ongoing supports while the person is working. To learn more about applying for supported employment visit VR's website at <http://www.rehabworks.org/> or contact their office at 1-800-451-4327.

Our lives change so dramatically and our needs alter so much with age and situations that it is hard to live within a budget. Is the system equipped to hold some money aside for emergency situations, such as hospitalization and caregiver death?

We are implementing iBudget which is replacing the current tier system. With iBudget you will have more control, choice, and flexibility with your services. As your health and safety needs change, you will be able to adjust your services accordingly. If the person's situation changes with the caregiver, the agency will reevaluate the iBudget allocation to be sure health and safety needs are met.

If you feel your situation becomes a crisis, please contact your local APD office and request that a Crisis Identification Tool be completed. A crisis situation is defined as the individual being a danger to self or others, homeless, or their caregiver is unable to provide care. Contact information for APD offices throughout the state can be found at <http://apdcares.org/region/>.

Why can't we fix the transportation issues? In order to get to the doctor or therapy appointment made, I need transportation. Yet no one will support payment of it.

Transportation continues to be a challenge and concern for many Floridians, especially for those residing in rural areas. If you are a transportation disadvantaged individual due to a physical or mental disability, your age or income status, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged may be able to assist you in accessing transportation in your area. You can contact the Commission at 1-800-983-2435 or online at www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd.

You may also want to contact your local County Commission about transportation resources in your area.

The iBudget seems interesting. When will it be implemented?

iBudget will be introduced throughout the state in six waves. As of July 2012 customers in areas 1, 2, 4, 12, and 13 have been transitioned to iBudget. The upcoming waves will occur as follows:

Wave 3: (Areas 3, 7, 14, 15) – October 1, 2012

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Wave 5: (Areas 9, 10) – April 1, 2013

Wave 6: (Areas 11 and CDC+) – July 1, 2013

For more information on iBudget please visit <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/>.

Tell me more about the Family Care Councils. We do not have one in our area. Well, we did, but they are not functioning. So where does one go for family support?

Family Care Council (FCC) is located in each service area of APD. FCC advises APD in developing a plan for the delivery of family support services within the local area, and to monitor implementation and effectiveness of the services and supports provided under the plan. To learn more about FCC you can visit them online at www.FCCFlorida.org or you can call them at 1-800-470-8101.

Funding is always slashed! I may not know how the budget is spent, but I do know that cutting services to make a budget does not seem realistic. I want to tell you that if I never had to access a service and my daughter could be off all supports and services, I would be happy and walk away in a heartbeat. This is not our chosen path. We need the services to allow her to thrive and survive as a family. I am grateful for her every day. I do not have to be grateful for services. They should be there for us all to access. Having to access services is not our chosen lifestyle. Again, if we could walk away we would. No one likes to constantly complete forms, discuss things with numerous doctors, and spend extra time with every day-to-day task. This is not fun; this is our life. Help us! Director Hansen it is up to you! We are counting on you . . . you can expect us to. You are the Director!

APD serves nearly 30,000 individuals through our Medicaid Waiver. Each year the number of individuals who can be added to the waiver is contingent on the funding appropriated to APD by the Florida Legislature. As funding becomes available, the agency will enroll individuals from the waiting list. Currently there are approximately 21,000 individuals on the waiting list. I encourage you to contact your local legislators to discuss your concerns with APD's funding. The contact information for your local legislators can be found at www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

Department of Children and Families

How do I get mental health services for my 4-year-old autistic child without a pediatrician that does not want to write prescriptions for testing or his behaviors?

You can contact your insurance carrier for a referral or you could contact your local community mental health center. For a listing of local resources, go to <http://www.myflfamilies.com/local-resources>.

I heard that there were going to be huge cuts to the mental health program for children. I hope not, because the expenses of providers in getting treatment are so high. The medications are high also. Why are we allowing the companies to charge so much? Why are we allowing the cut in services? We need the services!

Budgets for all programs, including mental health, go before the legislature for approval. During hard economic times the legislature must make difficult decisions. Although mental health funding has remained consistent over the past 6 years, there was a 3% cut in community mental health funding for this fiscal year. To avoid closing programs and services, the cut was spread across the state so that impact is minimal.

Why is it so hard to get KidCare for siblings of children with disabilities?

To apply for KidCare you can complete an application online at www.floridakidcare.org or call 1-888-540-5437. KidCare workers will accept children into the program based upon individual eligibility which is described on the website.

Why can't a parent receive benefits (food stamps and unemployment) if they are unable to work due to circumstances with their disabled child?

Food assistance and unemployment assistance are available to those who meet the requirements for these programs. You can go to your local ACCESS office or online at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access-florida-food-medical-assistance-cash> to view eligibility and apply. Families who are unable to work due to caring for a disabled child can complete a "NEED FOR CARE" form and have it signed by their doctor to exempt them from the required work registration classes to receive TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). To get this form go to your local ACCESS office.

Reemployment Assistance provides temporary financial assistance to help qualified workers through the transition period to a new job. If getting back to work is your goal, contact the One-Stop Career Center in your area for assistance in locating job opportunities and training. Florida provides free reemployment services and assistance to unemployed workers, recent graduates and those entering the job market for the first

time. The website is linked to many local, state and national employment databases. To search for work please go to: <http://www.employflorida.com/>.

When will police throughout Florida get appropriate training on how to appropriately act with mentally ill population and stop bullying people who are mentally ill?

Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is an effective police response training program designed for first responders who handle crisis calls involving people with mental illnesses including those with co-occurring substance use disorders. Currently, over half of Florida counties have received training.

The Florida CIT Coalition meets quarterly to work on expansion of the CIT model, share experiences, network and develop strategies for improving their programs and ensuring sustainability of CIT in Florida. For more information contact Michele Remolde, Chief at Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, phone number- 904-630-1206 or go to <http://floridacit.org/>

Is there a list of low cost housing and services for those who have a mental health issue and are disabled? I am on so many waiting lists.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation provides an affordable rental housing locator, designed for people who are trying to find available affordable housing options. This website is the primary source for available affordable housing. Consumers can search for properties by address, number of bedrooms, rent amount, Section 8 acceptance, and a variety of other features. The site connects people to other housing resources through website links and provides helpful tools for renters, such as an affordability calculator, rental checklist and renter rights and responsibilities information. In order to search for properties, click on www.FloridaHousingSearch.org, or call toll-free 877-428-8844. Florida Housing was created by the Florida Legislature to help our fellow Floridians obtain safe, decent affordable housing that might otherwise be unavailable to them.

I heard today that the Mental Health Services were being cut. Please let me know. I need services.

Budgets for all programs, including mental health, go before the legislature for approval. During hard economic times the legislature must make difficult decisions. Although mental health funding has remained consistent over the past 6 years, there was a 3% cut in funding for this fiscal year. To avoid closing programs and services, the cut was spread across the state so that impact is minimal.

One would think that with the Governor having siblings who receive services in his past, he would be kinder to the people of Florida and give them the needed services. I am just saying!

The Governor is sensitive to the needs of individuals with mental illnesses and has been responsive to the request from citizens to minimize the budget cuts to mental health services.

How can we adopt children with special health care needs? I think they would fit in fine at our house. Our children have grown or are about grown and we have room in our house and heart.

Explore Adoption is a statewide adoption initiative aimed at promoting the benefits of public adoption and urging families to consider creating or expanding their families by adopting a child who is older, has a medical condition, or is a part of a sibling group. Through public education, expanded partnerships, and social media, *Explore Adoption* invites Floridians to find out more about the children immediately available for adoption right in their home state. The initiative puts a new face on public adoption by telling many stories of families who have enriched their lives by adopting Florida's children. For more information contact Youth and Family Alternative Inc. Adoption Case Management Coordinator, Kimberly Siple. Her phone number is 352-253-5625. Their website is WWW.YFAINC.ORG

How do I apply for food stamps? This economy is killing our family. My husband was laid-off, I have four kids to feed and my job pays too low of a wage to maintain this family. How do I know if I qualify? No one answers the phone when I call and I do not have a computer that I can use at home.

Families that need help with their food, financial or medical needs may apply for assistance:

- From any computer with an internet connection at <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida>.
- At one of the Department of Children and Families ACCESS Florida community partners. A listing of community partners can be found online at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/access/CPSLookup/search.aspx>.

Do you ever have youth groups for leadership with the mental health population? After all we are the FUTURE! Scared yet?

Yes. Youth M.O.V.E. <http://www.youthmovenational.org/> is a youth led organization committed to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of individuals who have experience in various systems including mental health, juvenile justice, education and child welfare. Youth SHINE <http://www.floridayouthshine.org/> is another youth advisory board for children who have aged out of the foster care system to advise specifically on child welfare issues. In addition, the Department of Children and Families' Mental Health office has active youth as part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant Planning Council http://floridamentalhealth.org/block_grant_reports.html as well as the System of Care

initiative planning team. For more information about the System of Care initiative, email Ute Gazioch at ute_gazioch@dcf.state.fl.us.

Tell me more about the System of Care grant opportunity that Florida is applying for. Good luck!

A system of care is a spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth with or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and addresses their cultural and linguistic needs, in order to help them to function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life. Currently, Florida has a grant with the Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) to plan for a statewide expansion of the system of care. Over the past year the Children's Mental Health Statewide Stakeholders have met to discuss expansion of the system of care and develop a strategic plan for expansion. In September, the planning grant will be completed and the state will work hard to implement the strategic plan over the following years. A major component to our system of care is family and youth involvement and we welcome anyone interested. For more information please contact Ute Gazioch, System of Care Director at 850-717-4322 or email at ute_gazioch@dcf.state.fl.us

Department of Education

Does the school system in Tallahassee (the state level) have a role in emergency management procedures? I know our school is a shelter in our home county, but it is an old school and I wonder how effective it would be in a real crisis. I wonder if it is up to code? What is the code?

Potential locations for shelters are identified at the local level by local emergency management officials, usually in conjunction with the American Red Cross, although some Florida county shelters are not managed by the American Red Cross. The Florida Division of Emergency Management Infrastructure Section consists of an Engineering Unit which provides technical assistance to county governments with locating, identifying, and retrofitting hurricane shelters. They inspect and determine if a shelter meets the American Red Cross 4496 Standard for Hurricane Evacuation Shelters prior to the facility being utilized as such. For more information on shelters in your county you can contact your local emergency management department. A link to all of Florida's local emergency management departments can be found at http://www.floridadisaster.org/fl_county_em.asp.

Why doesn't Florida honor my son's individual educational plan (IEP) from another state? Why do we have to start all over again in meeting and writing a new plan? His diagnosis did not change, nor did his educational need for services. This is time consuming and costly. Should I be worried about denial of much needed supports to enhance his educational goals?

When a student who has an IEP that was in effect in another state enrolls in a Florida school district, the new school district – in consultation with the parent – must provide services **comparable** to those in the student's IEP from the previous school district, until the new school district does the following:

- Conducts an initial evaluation **or determines that evaluation is not necessary;** and
- Develops and implements a new IEP or EP, if appropriate

This is required by federal regulation 34 CFR §300.323(e) and (f) and State Board of Education rule Rule 6A-6.0334(1) and (2), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) The process does require time; however, comparable services are being provided from the time of the transfer.

If a principal listens only to the teachers when there is conflict, instead of listening to the students or the parents, what are our rights? Someone suggested I go to the local press and news stations to get changes made.

Parents and school districts are encouraged to work together to resolve issues regarding a student's exceptional education needs. When concerns or disagreements regarding a student's exceptional educational needs arise, it is helpful for the parent to immediately

Speak with the student's teacher, guidance counselor, staffing specialist, or school principal.

If the parent is still unable to resolve the concerns they may contact the district's ESE office. Many school districts have procedures in place to assist families in resolving disputes, and every district has a parent liaison to help parents of students with disabilities. You can find out who this person is in your district and their contact information at <http://data.fldoe.org/ease/contacts/>.

In addition, parents may contact the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services to discuss administrative remedies, which include mediation, state complaints, or due process hearings.

The teachers are my lifeline with my son. He requires quite a bit of daily care, and his behaviors need constant monitoring. He is a great kid, though. Please do not withhold their salary because our kids cannot pass the FCAT or other standardized tests. They are trying, and we are happy with the daily progress we see.

Teachers are evaluated on more than just an FCAT or other standardized score. When evaluating a teacher, a value-added model is used to assess a teacher's impact on learning. This is done by accounting for differing levels of proficiency and possibly differing characteristics of the students who are assigned to a teacher. This model begins by establishing an expected growth for each student. The expectancy is based on historical data each year, and represents typical growth patterns seen among similar students who have earned similar test scores over the past two years. This value-added model takes into account many factors and applies a weighted score for the teacher's total evaluation score. This levels the playing field for teachers who serve and educate students with disabilities.

They told me at my individual educational plan meeting that I can get occupational therapy (OT) and speech therapy for my daughter; however, the principal says they do not have to the staff to perform the needed service. How can I make this work?

If the IEP team determined that Speech and OT services are needed, and this is documented on the IEP, you could begin by sharing the IEP with the school administrator. The IEP is a legal document, and services must be provided as documented to ensure that a student with a disability receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If the school administrator continues to state that the school does not have the staff, your next step would be to request a meeting with the district Exceptional Education Director or their designee. We recommend that you inform the school administrator that you are going to request this meeting. An excellent resource for parents is *Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans*, which can be accessed online at <http://www.fldoe.org/ease/pdf/QualityIEPs.pdf>. An additional resource, which you should receive at least once during the school year, is the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards for*

Parents of Students with Disabilities, which provides information about your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It can be accessed online at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/procedural.pdf>. These rights, or procedural safeguards, provide you with the opportunity to ensure that you are a partner with the school in making educational decisions for your child.

Why don't the school systems offer basic life and social skills training as a basic academic class? Why are we so concerned with standardized testing, but not with actual life skills or basic educational skills being developed? Our kids may not be "teachable" for standardized testing, but we can assist them in their growth and development.

Core academic subjects are defined as English, Foreign Languages, Language Arts, Mathematics, Music, Reading, Science, Social Studies, Art/Visual Arts, and Drama/Theatre courses. IDEA requires that students with disabilities have access to, be involved in, and make progress in the general academic curriculum in the least restrictive environment. When students need specialized instruction in life and social skills, they can be scheduled in special skills courses. Some examples of special skills courses are Unique Skills, Learning Strategies, and Social and Personal Skills, among others. Unique Skills is designed to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. A wide variety of skills are taught in this course, from preparing food, to taking public transportation, to the care and cleaning of one's clothes. Students can take these courses for multiple credits at all levels. In addition to life skills, there are also career and technical education (CTE) courses that are specific to the needs of students with disabilities. A combination of academic, life, and career education skills ensures that students with disabilities grow and develop into productive members of society. Although these courses don't meet the definition of academic, they are widely used in public schools and count as elective credit towards both a standard and special diploma.

Why aren't colleges required to provide the support services that the student received in local community schools? Life would be such an easier transition for the student and family.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a college may not discriminate on the basis of disability. However, students who transition into postsecondary institutions must self-advocate and self-identify with the disabilities office at the college if accommodations and services are requested.

School districts must provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to qualified students with disabilities. However, postsecondary institutions are not required to provide FAPE. On the other hand, postsecondary institutions are required to provide appropriate academic adjustments, as necessary, to ensure that it does not discriminate based on disability. (*Source: OCR Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities, September 2011*)

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a postsecondary student with a disability who is in need of auxiliary aids and services is obligated to provide notice of the nature of the disabling condition to the college and assist in identifying appropriate and effective auxiliary aids. In elementary and secondary schools, teachers and school specialists may have arranged support services for students with disabilities; however, in postsecondary education, the students themselves must identify the need for an auxiliary aid and give adequate notice of the need. The student's notification should be provided to the appropriate representative of the college who, depending upon the nature and scope of the request, could be the college's Section 504 or ADA coordinator. (*Source: OCR Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities – Revised, September 1998*)

School bullying seems to have reached an epidemic level. What is the school doing to prevent this occurrence?

Although we are certainly hearing about bullying incidents almost daily in the media, the research shows that in reality bullying is not occurring more today than it has in the past. It is more likely that due to Florida's bullying law (s. 1006.147, F.S.) and the requirements for school districts to have a policy prohibiting bullying and harassment, everyone is becoming more aware of what bullying behaviors are and the overall consensus is that these behaviors are not acceptable. With an understanding of what is expected of the adults on their campuses, schools are addressing these behaviors by educating everyone on their campuses (educators, parents, and students) about what bullying is (and what it is not), how we address it, how we report it, and what things we can put in place to prevent it from occurring. The goal is to build positive school climates where all students feel supported and respected.

With all the school bullying on television and in the papers, has the DOE done anything to assist both the students and administration in training on how to defuse or alter this terrible pattern? Do you have a training component that is mandatory for all?

Bullying has grown into a big problem at schools and teachers do not know how to deal. Have you ever trained all three groups – parents, teachers and students, together, and discussed the issues around bullying? I think it would be wonderful to hear about it.

The DOE has provided schools and district contacts with a number of resources via our website at <http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/bullying.asp>. Additionally, as often as possible and mostly upon request by the district, staff from DOE's Office of Safe Schools engage school administrators and other district personnel in training and/or workshops to clarify and further educate on the expectations and responsibilities of all adults in the district. Florida's bullying law (s. 1006.147, F.S.) does require instruction for all students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and school volunteers on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying or harassment. However, due to local control, there is no mandatory/uniform training for all throughout the state.

Why is bullying still happening in schools? And the bully-er is given out-of-school suspension and the person being attacked is being asked to be home schooled. Home school equals alienation, not a solution. The one who is bullied suffers the most.

The circumstances surrounding each bullying incident differ greatly, and for this reason there isn't a "one-size-fits-all" formula for how to address them. Florida is a local control state. This means that the responsibility of operating, controlling, and supervising the public schools lies with the district school board and school superintendent. For this reason, questions regarding specific discipline of students should be directed to the local superintendent and/or staff designated with overseeing bullying issues.

School bullying continues in the middle schools. It is scary, and someone is going to really get hurt here.

Research in the area of bullying has shown that these behaviors tend to peak during the middle school years. Unfortunately, this is also the time when students are growing and maturing, and sometimes, their bodies do so more rapidly than their brains. When society adds to this "developmental soup," the use of or access to technology (cell phones, computers, etc.), the potential for misuse and inappropriate communication is elevated. It is incumbent upon parents/guardians and educators/school staff alike to be prepared to address negative behaviors among students in a way that fosters appropriate responses and use of technology.

My friend's daughter is having stomach problems and has been going to Nemours and Baptist Hospital to diagnose the problem. As she has been absent so many days, the school is either going to suspend her or force her to home school. Her solution would be home school, but that would alienate the child and the teachers refuse to give her work at home.

We recommend that the parent(s) request a meeting with the District 504 Coordinator to discuss Section 504 eligibility and development of a Section 504 Plan to address the student's health condition and whether the student is entitled to a reasonable modification of the attendance policy. The parents may contact the District Section 504 Office. We also recommend the parents review the Section 504 Frequently Asked Questions at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/504bro.pdf> and <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>.

How do you get someone to hear you during your own IEP meeting? Everyone talks over me, the student!

Florida State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.02028 (3)(c)7., F.A.C., requires that IEP teams consider the student's strengths, preferences, and interests. Additionally, IEP

teams must begin the process of identifying the transition services needs of students with disabilities – to include consideration of the student’s need for instruction or the provision of information in the area of self-determination – to assist the student to be able to actively and effectively participate in IEP team meetings and self-advocate, beginning no later than age 14. Therefore, you may wish to inform your teacher prior to the IEP team meeting that you would like the opportunity to self-advocate during your meeting by expressing your strengths, preferences, and interests. You might also wish to bring an IEP team meeting “help sheet” with you to the meeting that includes important information such as your postsecondary goals; your strengths, preferences, and interests; your needs; and any other information you feel the team needs to know about you.

There is a website developed just for students and families called FYI Transition. You may link to that website at <http://fyitransition.org/> and find an array of resources. You may also want to learn more about the Florida Youth Leadership Forum. This is a leadership training opportunity for students with disabilities that is held each summer. For more information, go to <http://www.abletrust.org/yif/>.

Why don't we include students with special needs in our school's sporting events? I know some kids can do the sports and are really good! Our teams would benefit. They don't have a medical reason not to, just our principal says "NO." This, to me, stinks! Could it be illegal also? Please check into this for us. Everyone needs physical activity. I mean really?!

Why aren't there more recreational activities in the schools and community that are geared towards people with disabilities? Let them participate.

What about PE offerings for students in ESE or who have physical or mental impairments? It is too easy to get excused. They need the exercise and the socialization also.

Local school systems have a responsibility to ensure that the provision of all non-academic and extracurricular services and activities to all eligible students is made available in the least restrictive environment appropriate to the needs of the student according to provisions of Rule 6D-3.007(1), F.A.C., Non-Academic and Extracurricular Services and Activities.

Section 6D-3.007(2), F.S., further defines that responsibility to include providing or arranging for the provision of activities such as recess periods, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the school, referrals to agencies which provide assistance to handicapped personnel, etc. Also, the school shall ensure that each student participates with non-handicapped students in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student.

Check with your local school administration, as well as district administration, for further assistance in making sure that those opportunities are being provided in the school environment. Another activity provided by many districts is the opportunity for students to

participate in the Special Olympics. This may be an avenue for extracurricular activity. To investigate further, go to <http://specialolympics2012games.com/>.

There are also community groups that offer activities for persons with disabilities. You can check with your community to see what services are offered. Some suggestions may be found at www.fdoa.org. This is the website for the Florida Disabled Outdoor Association, and you will find a listing of recreational services for every county in Florida and the services they provide.

Most of all, continue to advocate for the involvement and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

How do parents go about trying to fight the school district when they have denied nursing care for their son, who is 21-years-old, even though he was receiving nursing services prior to 21-years-old by Florida Medicaid? I have contacted Disability Rights Florida, and have spoken to one of their attorneys and have sent them paperwork.

School districts are required to provide notice to parents explaining any evaluation and placement decisions that affect their children and explain the parents' right to review educational records and appeal any decision regarding evaluation and placement. For further assistance, we suggest the parents schedule a meeting with the District Student Services Director. A list of these directors and their contact information is available at <http://data.fldoe.org/ese/contacts/>.

Why are parents of special education children not informed about the differences in a regular diploma and a special education diploma?

Rules 6A-6.03028(3)(h)8. and 6A-1.09961(2)(a), F.A.C., require that beginning in the eighth grade, or during the school year in which the student turns 14, it must be documented on the IEP whether the student is pursuing a course of study leading to a standard diploma or a special diploma. Prior to this meeting, districts are encouraged to provide parents and students with information about diploma options. They are also encouraged to share information about the education and employment opportunities that are affected by the type of diploma they choose. Many districts notify parents of these implications in writing. Project 10, a discretionary project of the Bureau of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services, has produced a document entitled *Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Families*. You may access this document at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/Transition.pdf>. Information about the impact of the diploma choice is provided on page 22. Since this is a very important decision, districts are strongly encouraged to share this information, as well as the document entitled *Diploma Decisions for Students with Disabilities: What Parents Need to Know*, with parents prior to the meeting in which diploma options are discussed. This document can be accessed at <http://www.cpt.fsu.edu/ese/pdf/diploma.pdf>.

What needs to happen to get an independent national standardized system in place to grade the school districts and individual schools so parents can look at these ratings to enable decision-making when relocating to an area? This should reflect how many students have utilized scholarships such as McKay and Step Up For Students to leave the system because their child's needs are not being met.

While the Florida Department of Education does not endorse any particular resource, there are organizations that provide evaluations of schools across the country based on parent input. One example of this is the Great Schools website, which can be found at <http://www.greatschools.org/>.

How do we get consequences put in place for the school systems that lose the battle in litigation through due process? As it is, schools deny services and parents have to fight for what is their right, already earned, and the only consequences are paid by the state DOE or a public university that has to provide continued education, etc. They never pay for their own discriminations and only parents who have money can fight.

When an administrative law judge reaches a ruling or orders that a district complete certain actions, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services monitors the district's completion of the corrective action to ensure that the district completes the corrective action as required. The verification of the completion of any corrective action is based upon a review of documentation submitted by the school district. The Bureau and the Florida Department of Education are held accountable for the timely correction of noncompliance by the federal Office of Special Education Programs and work to ensure that school districts complete any required actions. Parents who wish to file due process can do so *pro se*, or represent themselves, without incurring the cost of legal representation. More information regarding this type of representation can be located at the State of Florida Division of Administrative Hearing's website at <http://www.doah.state.fl.us/ALJ/RepYourself.pdf>.

I need help balancing my own life when all my time every day is taken by the caregiver role. I would like to understand "unique curriculum." Also, I will need to understand my rights when I want to keep my child in an elementary school with his functional skill classroom and stay out of the underperforming middle school.

Being the caregiver of a child with a disability can be both rewarding and challenging. You may want to seek out a group of individuals to become a support for you as you try to balance the different tasks that come with this important role that you have been given.

One group you may want to contact is the Family Network on Disabilities at <http://www.fndfl.org>. They offer supports that may assist you with some of the difficulties you are experiencing and offer some services that you need. There are also many other organizations available that address specific disabilities. You can find these organizations

accommodations and services may be provided.

What happens when the students turn 22 with no services? TV? Loneliness? Depression?

There are a number of postsecondary options for students with disabilities that vary based on their disability, strengths, needs, and preferences. Examples include supported employment, customized employment, career and technical education, and college or university programs. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and service providers such as The Arc or Goodwill also offer an array of services and supports. If you are aware of specific young adults who are not getting services post-school, we would be glad to have a Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services staff member discuss potential options and resources.

Why don't the schools insist that the students get involved with their own IEP meetings? Heck, we do not even demand that parents get involved. A shame.

Florida State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(c)7., F.A.C., requires that IEP teams consider the student's strengths, preferences, and interests. Additionally, IEP teams must begin the process of identifying the transition services needs of students with disabilities, to include consideration of the student's need for instruction or the provision of information in the area of self-determination to assist the student to be able to actively and effectively participate in IEP team meetings and self-advocate, beginning no later than age 14 (Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(h)9., F.A.C.). Many Florida school districts provide training to students on how to take a more active role in their IEP meetings. If this is not happening in your school district, you may wish to suggest that teachers consider self-directed IEP and/or self-determination training.

The only real time my child has with other kids at school is waiting for the bus in the morning. Why don't we encourage all kids to get along at school, regardless of their ability?

All students should be encouraged to get along with other students of all abilities. Schools should provide instruction for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and with other children, both with and without disabilities, in as many ways possible. The intention of special education is not to isolate or exclude children with disabilities, but to provide the support and services that children need, the extent of which should be based on each individual child. In fact, trend data from 2001 to the present shows a direct relationship between rising achievement of students with disabilities and the time they spend included in general education environments. There are many social benefits for students with disabilities (and students without disabilities) educated in inclusive environments, as well. You are encouraged to discuss your concerns about your child's LRE with the IEP team and work with the team to determine ways for your child to spend time with other peers.

As a youth who worked hard to pass the Disability History and Awareness Weeks legislation, I wonder why the DOE has not tried to enforce or strengthen the language of the law. In my own school, I had to fight just to get the importance of those two weeks in October recognized.

The Department of Education is pleased to both celebrate and promote Disability History and Awareness Weeks. The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services has created a web page at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/history.asp> that provides general information regarding disability history and awareness, as well as specific activities that districts, schools, and classrooms can use to participate in the weeks and use year round to teach this important subject.

The Department's role related to proposed legislation is to provide data and information for the legislature to make an informed decision and implement legislation signed into law by the Governor.

What does the Division of Blind Services (DBS) do for school-age students? I tried to look them up on the website and found a not-too-user- friendly site.

The Division of Blind Services provides service to children through the Children's Program. This program serves children who are blind or visually impaired from five years of age through transition to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The Children's Program supplements services already offered by the school system to support the child's learning and ability to function independently. Each District Office has a Children's Specialist that works closely with each child, their parents or guardian, and family members to provide services that foster independence.

The DBS web page at <http://dbs.myflorida.com> provides a brief overview of DBS, our programs, services offered, and much more. The page is screen reader accessible, therefore navigational. The Division welcomes any and all suggestions and encourages you to contact us with those suggestions via email at Communications@dbs.fldoe.org.

Why does the school in each district level start and end at different times? When I was young, they all started and ended on the same day and date throughout Florida. What happened?

State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.019, F.A.C., allows district school boards the authority to set their own calendars. According to current Florida statute, (s.1001.42(4)(f), F.S.), the opening date for schools may not be earlier than 14 days before Labor Day each year. However, according to Section 1003.621, F.S., districts that are currently designated by the State Board of Education as Academically High-Performing School Districts have the authority to waive the start-date requirement.

What happened to the Race to the Top grant that the state applied for? I thought we were awarded it?

Florida was awarded a Race to the Top grant in 2010. You may access information about Florida's implementation of Race to the Top at <http://www.fldoe.org/arra/Racetothetop.asp>.

Why can't my son go to his neighborhood school with his brothers and sisters? Why a special school? You know there are no special places for him at home or in the neighborhood. Why create a false sense of reality?

Florida encourages districts to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and with typical peers to the extent possible. The IEP team should determine the LRE for students on an individual basis. Some districts cluster services for certain students with disabilities to ensure that students receive the intensive, individualized instruction that they may need. Districts should also look for ways to allow students with disabilities to interact and spend time with typical peers to the greatest extent possible. Research has shown that students with disabilities in inclusive environments perform better on reading and math achievement tests. You are encouraged to work with your child's IEP team, representatives of the neighborhood school, and your district ESE office to determine if services and supports can be provided to your son at your neighborhood school.

The McKay scholarship has changed over the years. Why?

The McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program, originally created in 1999, provides scholarships for eligible students with disabilities to attend an eligible public or private school of their choice. Students with disabilities include K–12 students who are documented as having an intellectual disability; a speech or language impairment; a hearing impairment, including deafness; a visual impairment, including blindness; a dual sensory impairment; an emotional or behavioral disability; a specific learning disability, including but not limited to dyslexia, dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; a traumatic brain injury; a developmental delay; or autism spectrum disorder.

Since the inception of the McKay Scholarship Program, changes have been made to provide greater opportunities for students with special needs and to strengthen the foundation of accountability for private schools that choose to participate in the scholarship program. Examples of the changes for students include allowing students with 504 Accommodation Plans to participate in the program and providing a path to eligibility for students that have received special education services in pre-kindergarten programs. Changes were also made requiring a detailed private school compliance process – including health and safety documentation, ethics policy, and financial soundness information – in order for private schools to receive McKay Scholarship funding. The legislature has also provided the Department of Education statutory authority to remove non-compliant private schools from participation in the McKay Scholarship Program.

More information on the McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program is available at <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/McKay/>.

We need more opportunities like The Family Café at the local school level. Each school area should host a training for parents, by parents. Does the school offer any parent training online?

Schools and school districts offer a variety of programs and services for parents, which may include online training or other resources. Parents should contact their school and/or district or visit their websites for more information.

The Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Parent Services provides information, training, and support to families and districts in order to promote effective parent participation in the education of children who are exceptional and/or have special needs.

Parent services include assistance in the development of family friendly programs, training and support for services for children with disabilities, and the support of partnerships between schools and parents to support student achievement. For more information on parent services in your area, go to <http://www.fdlrs.org/parentservices.html>.

I home-school my children and will continue to do so until they go to high school. My one child needs so much more attention, and this is the only way she can learn a bit. We would like her to become independent after we leave this earth, but the skills we need to get her there are lacking. Can you teach some of these in school for those students you know will never accomplish the necessary steps to achieve independence?

Many children with disabilities need extra attention to succeed in school, which can be provided through small group instruction, extra one-on-one time with a teacher, or through teaching of very specific skills that the individual child needs to succeed (IEP goals). Should you ever consider public school, you could have your child evaluated to determine the necessary services and supports that could be offered.

In addition to academic skills, schools have the responsibility of teaching students the skills they need to succeed in life. In exceptional student education, Florida offers courses for this purpose called special skills courses. One of the courses, entitled Unique Skills, is designed to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. A wide variety of skills are taught in this course, like storing and preparing food, taking public transportation, personal hygiene, and self-advocacy skills. Exact course requirements are determined by each child's unique needs on listed on their IEPs. Students can take these courses for multiple credits at all levels. In addition to life skills, there are also career and technical education courses that are specific to the needs of students with disabilities. A combination of these academic, life, and career education skills ensures that all students grow into productive members of society.

How can I order materials from the Clearinghouse?

What used to be called the Clearinghouse is now called the BEESS Resource and Information Center, or the BRIC. A list of Florida developed materials is available at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pubxhome.asp>. All items can be viewed online or downloaded, and parents can order one complimentary copy of publications marked with a red asterisk by emailing BRIC@fldoe.org. We make every effort to have parent publications available in hard copy in English, and many are also available in Spanish and Haitian Creole.

We hear about the violence in the classrooms against teachers, students, etc. How do we go about stopping this craziness? Schools used to be a safe haven for all.

We are fortunate in Florida to have a law that addresses the safety and protections for both our students and our school personnel. Florida's bullying law (s. 1006.147, F.S.) specifically states that bullying and/or harassment is prohibited of any student or employee of a public K-12 educational institution. To truly combat the issues you've raised, it takes a collaborative effort on the part of the school and the community, including parents, to establish environments where these types of behaviors are not accepted towards anyone.

The budgets were slashed last year and now reinstated. I checked our numbers nationally and we do not fare well against some of the other states. Do we really know how much we spend on the ESE programs in the schools?

All school districts submit data on how funds were expended during each school year. An examination of the state-level cost report (report 1) shows that total program costs for exceptional education in 2010-11 were \$5,611,536,989. This figure includes all federal, state, and local funds expended during the 2010-11 school year. Anyone can view cost reports for the state or individual districts by going to <http://public2.fldoe.org/TransparencyReports/CostReportSelectionPage.aspx>.

Do the school boards answer to the State Department of Education?

The laws of Florida govern the roles and responsibilities of school boards.

I would like my son to go to college, but he needs supports. In high school, they were provided. At the university level, they do not provide any outside accommodations. We need someone to assist inside the classrooms and in the dorm rooms. Are there any resources for him besides our family relocating to the university with him?

There is extensive information available on postsecondary transition at the website of Project 10, a discretionary project funded by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (<http://www.project10.info>). Based on your concerns, your son might

benefit from a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). TPSID is defined as “a degree, certificate, or non-degree program that is—offered by an institution of higher education; designed to support students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of higher education in order to prepare for gainful employment; and includes an advising and curriculum structure.” Florida was the recipient of a TPSID grant issued by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education in 2010. The Florida Consortium is comprised of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, the University of North Florida, and Lynn University. The Florida Consortium is currently engaged in expanding opportunities, including model TPSID programs. Many of these programs offer supports beyond reasonable accommodations (e.g., academic, social, independent living mentors, and assistants). Additional information can be found on the Florida Consortium’s website at <http://fltpsid.info>.

Does the state school system provide any leadership training for students with disabilities? Our old site we just moved from offered clubs for leadership training for ESE kids, and trainings for them and for their parents.

Leadership skills are often developed through extracurricular activities. Local school systems have a responsibility to assure that the provision of all non-academic and extracurricular services and activities to all eligible students is made available in the least restrictive environment appropriate to the needs of the student, according to provisions of Rule 6D-3.007(1), F.A.C., Non-Academic and Extracurricular Services and Activities.

In addition to school activities, The Florida Youth Council, an organization of youth and emerging leaders with disabilities between the ages of 15 and 30 from communities across the state of Florida, offers a variety of programs. Information can be found on their website at <http://www.floridayouthcouncil.com>.

The lottery dollars are up in the millions recently, so why don’t we see more funding in the schools? How does this work?

In 1987, the Florida Legislature enacted the Florida Public Education Lottery Act for the purpose of supporting improvements in public education using the proceeds from lottery games. Proceeds from the lottery are deposited in the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. These funds are then given to public schools, the Florida College system, and universities. Funds given to a school district must be made available to each public school in the district for enhancing school performance in accordance with the school improvement plan. The funds are given to schools based on the number of students enrolled, with a total of \$9,944,862 distributed in 2010–11. The money may be spent only on programs or projects selected by the school advisory council or a parent advisory council. Each school district must report to the public quarterly on how the funds are spent.

Department of Health

If the Supreme Court rules that the ACA stands, then what changes will my family, who receives CMS services, see?

The United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of most of the Affordable Care Act. Children's Medical Services policies and coverage are not expected to change because of the Affordable Care Act.

How do I get services for my 4-year-old child with autism without the CMS nurse or clinic? They do not want to write a prescription for an outside tester or evaluation. I want him to have a second opinion.

If your child is enrolled in Children's Medical Services, please discuss options for treatment, evaluation, and testing with your Children's Medical Services Nurse Care Coordinator. The Nurse Care Coordinator may also provide you with information about support groups to help parents cope with having a child who is showing signs of or diagnosed with autism.

Your child's doctor can assist you with ordering necessary evaluations; however, there is no one simple test to diagnose autism. The symptoms of autism vary from person to person. There is also a difference in services covered by different insurance companies, including Medicaid.

The following websites/organizations might be helpful:

<http://www.autism-society.org/> or call 1 (800) 328-8476

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/> or call 1 (888) 288-4762

Is there a place where parents can go and find information about new diagnoses? When we were told about our daughter it took us a couple of years just to find out about the basics. We now receive CMS services.

Websites such as WebMD and others can provide helpful information about illnesses and conditions, but it is important to get as much information as possible from your child's physician. Often writing down questions prior to a doctor's visit can be helpful.

The Children's Medical Services (CMS) Nurse Care Coordinator will also assist you with information and resources related to your child's medical condition. If you are unsure of how to contact your daughter's CMS Nurse Care Coordinator, you can find the information on line at the CMS website: http://www.cms-kids.com/home/contact/area_offices.html

I would like to learn more about the side effects of medications associated with JRA and ADHD. I also would like to learn more about herbal medicines. Are

herbal medicines approved by CMS and the DOH? How do I know if an herbal medicine has been approved? Is buying meds off the internet safe and successful?

It is helpful to discuss the side effects of medications with your doctor or pharmacist. You might also find useful information from the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation website: <http://www.arthritis.org/juvenile-arthritis.php>, or call toll-free: 1 (800) 672-0882.

There are also support groups and resources for clients and family members affected by ADHD. Please contact the Children's Medical Services Area Office.

Insurance companies, Medicaid, and CMS do not generally cover supplements and herbal products. It is very important to discuss the use of any supplements or herbal products with your physician prior to use.

Please visit: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ProtectYourself/default.htm> to obtain information about online purchase of medicines. If a pharmacy is legitimate and licensed, and a person has a valid prescription for the medication, buying medicines online is sometimes an option. Pharmacies who sell prescription drugs online without a prescription are usually not legitimate and sometimes these purchases are not legal. In addition, the drugs sold might also not contain the correct ingredients and could cause illness.

I have a child who receives CMS services and I need to get a trike for her. She is 12. Does CMS pay or can they help me get a trike at an affordable price? Do they know anyone, or does Medicaid pay if there are special funds to help? Thank you

The Children's Medical Services Nurse Care Coordinator will help you determine what services and types of equipment Medicaid covers.

If you are unsure of how to contact your daughter's CMS Nurse Care Coordinator, you can find the information on line http://www.cms-kids.com/home/contact/area_offices.html

You may also call the Children's Medical Services Central Office at 1 (850) 245-4200 and someone will provide you with contact information for the Children's Medical Services Area Office where you live.

Florida Centers for Independent Living also assist people with disabilities and mobility issues with finding services and might assist with obtaining equipment not covered by Medicaid or insurance. You can locate the Center for Independent Living in your area at the website: <http://floridacils.org/> or call 1 (866) 575-6004 toll-free.

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology also provides equipment and assistance. To contact FFAST, call 1 (888) 788-9216 or visit the website <http://www.faast.org/>.

I heard the Governor was going to shut down the TB hospital in South Florida. How do you feel about this? What if there is an outbreak? Are we at risk for his risky actions?

The Florida Legislature mandated the closure of A.G. Holley Hospital through passage of House Bill 1263, referenced in Chapter 2012-184, Laws of Florida, Section 82, which was signed by Governor Scott April 27, 2012- <http://laws.flrules.org/2012/184>. As of July 2, 2012, all 36 patients were successfully discharged from the hospital to appropriate settings to ensure treatment to cure. Of the 36, four patients completed their therapy prior to July 2, 2012, and were discharged from the program. One non-infectious patient was returned to the Florida Department of Corrections, 17 patients were admitted to the Jackson Memorial Hospital and 14 patients were discharged to their local community. All of the 14 patients discharged to the community are non-infectious and currently being provided Directly Observed Therapy by the county health department.

The Florida Department of Health has contracted with Shands Jacksonville Medical Center, Inc. and Jackson Memorial Hospital to treat Florida's complex TB patients to cure.

The general public is not at a significant risk, as development of TB disease requires more than casual contact. It requires prolonged, direct exposure to individuals who are carrying the disease and are actively coughing and sneezing. People with TB disease are most likely to spread the germs to people they spend time with every day, such as family members or co-workers. A person with Latent TB cannot spread TB. If you live or work with someone who displays symptoms of TB (cough for more than three weeks, night sweats, unexplained weight loss, unexplained fever) encourage that person to see their primary care doctor.

I am angered that the hotels have won, that swimming pools in public places that need to put lifts into their pools for the special needs community are fighting this cause. Come on, the law is quite simple law. How can we continue to fall to pressure of the companies? When will we just do the right thing?

The federal government has extended the deadline for hotel and guesthouse owners to make pools accessible for people with disabilities to January 31, 2013. As this deadline approaches, we hope more hotels and resorts will comply with this law to help people with disabilities enjoy accessible pools.

There used to be ton of commercials about not smoking or doing drugs for teens and such. Now with these very potent drugs and "bath salts" we need to get the message out to the teens again about these bad drugs. I live in Miami and the drug scene is on the rise. And I believe it all begins with smoking and drinking of these underage kids.

Thank you for your concern regarding teen alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use. The Department of Health has several initiatives to raise awareness and decrease teen

smoking and tobacco use rates. Please visit Tobacco Free Florida at <http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/>.

The Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse Program Office works with the Office of Drug Control to develop strategies to reduce substance abuse. The Substance Abuse Program's Prevention Team uses the Substance Abuse Response Center (SARC) to help communities change conditions that contribute to illegal, illicit and problem alcohol and substance abuse. You can find out about local events, prevention activities, and other services on the website: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/local-resources>.

Where can I go to find out more about the issues of having a spinal cord injury? Years ago the program used to be here. I have friends in the military that sure could use some support.

The Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program (BSCIP) administered by the Department of Health assists people with brain or spinal cord injuries. The program provides direct case management and assists clients with accessing resources, including support groups, equipment, and rehabilitation services. You can contact the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program by calling (866) 875-5660 or find information on the website: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/demo/BrainSC/index.html>.

The Florida Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center is another resource for people living with spinal cord injuries. You can call 1 (866) 313-2940 or go to the website: <http://fscirc.com>.

Operation Homefront is another resource for veterans in Florida. The contact phone number is 1 (888) 390-0843. The Website address for Florida is <http://www.operationhomefront.net/florida/default.aspx>.

The birth to three program sure did a nice job by working with families this weekend. I appreciate all the help that the Early Steps Programs did to work with us families. I have been going to our local office for the last 18 months as they work with my family and my son. He has just been diagnosed with a syndrome that will be part of life forever. We have a long road and they have been very helpful. Thank you all!

Thank you so much for providing feedback about the Early Steps program. We are pleased that the program has helped you and appreciate your kind comments. We will share this with the local office.

Please tell me more about the services the DOH provides.

The mission of the Florida Department of Health is to protect and promote the health of all residents and visitors in the state through organized state and community efforts, including cooperative agreements with counties. The Department of Health oversees the

operation of local county health departments, and the Children's Medical Services program including twenty-two Children's Medical Services local offices.

The Department also provides emergency response for public health emergencies arising from natural disasters related to the weather or other events, outbreaks of contagious illnesses, and other disaster related preparedness. The Department of Health also maintains vital statistics records including birth and death records.

To learn more about the Department of Health and public health services please visit the Florida Department of Health Website <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/> or call (850) 245-4444.

How can I get a copy of my son's birth certificate?

Contact the Vital Statistics Office where your son was born. If your son was born in Florida, you can find the contact number and address of the Vital Statistics Office at http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Planning_eval/Vital_Statistics/County_Phone_List.pdf.

Division of Emergency Management

With all the serious weather concerns, do you think we will have an active hurricane season?

The 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Season ends Nov. 30. Predictions forecast a near-normal season and three weeks before the close of the season, 19 tropical systems have formed in the Atlantic. Florida was impacted by four storms – Tropical Storm Beryl, Tropical Storm Debby, Hurricane Isaac and Hurricane Sandy.

The Rip currents at the beach have been harsh so far this summer. Why so many?

Rip currents form when waves break near the shoreline, which causes water to pile up between the waves and the beach. These waves are generally caused by winds pointing toward the shore, but they can also travel long distances and originate from tropical or other disturbances.

I got a PLAN! Thank you for assisting in getting me to start to think about a disaster and what to do. It is hurricane season and I am new to Florida.

You're welcome!

I really believe that we need to do better with community outreach. The presenter was correct . . . we need to know our neighbors and neighborhoods better and prepare. Thank you!

The Florida Division of Emergency Management's Office of External Affairs is working to increase awareness of Division initiatives through community outreach and enhanced public education campaign. With FDEM staff attending local events and outreach opportunities, as well as contacting all elementary schools in Florida to promote KidsGetAPlan.com, the Division's community outreach is growing.

With the wildfires out west, the drought in the central US . . . are we going to be in for some wild weather this season? It is so unpredictable.

It impossible to determine exactly what type of "wild" weather we will be seeing, but the Climate Prediction Center has forecast that we will see borderline neutral or weak El Niño conditions this winter. As a result, the Climate Prediction Center is indicating that the State of Florida will have an equal chance of seeing above, average, or below normal rain chances. This ties into the possibility of severe weather because the more chances for precipitation we have, the higher the chance for severe weather to occur.

In addition, the Florida Peninsula will likely see below normal temperatures while the Panhandle and big Bend will generally experience temperatures near climatology. Despite this forecast, there is not enough information to determine whether or not Florida will see abnormal temperatures on any particular day.

Although Florida is not forecast to enter a long-term drought within the next three months, it is entering wildfire season. Florida has already seen conditions lead to elevated fire dangers and red flag warnings. These conditions will likely continue throughout the season.

Are you under the direction of the Homeland Security Office at the federal level?

The Florida Division of Emergency Management is a division of the Executive Office of the Governor. The Division works closely with the US Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency on a regular basis.

What type of services can you provide for a family who has a child with severe disabilities, on a ventilator, pump, and totally technology dependent? I can never be prepared enough, but if there is an emergency we have to call an ambulance. That's it. She cannot go to a shelter. Can the family go with her to the hospital if needed? We do not want to separate our family.

Many services are available for families with individuals who have special needs. County emergency management agencies in Florida have registries for individuals who will require special accommodations for evacuation and special needs shelters that are more attentive to the medical needs of evacuees. Contact your local emergency management agency to see what services are available in your area for your child and family.

I am on the Special Needs Registry and have been on it for years. Should I reconnect with them? Every time there was a change in my son's care we just let them know. But it has been years and our care needs have sustained. But in case of an emergency situation, do they still have me on the registry?

It is good practice to confirm your information each year on the special needs registry. Contact your county emergency management agency to ensure your family's information is retained and correct each year.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

How are agencies (like Goodwill) audited for Vocational Rehabilitation clients? Once final payment is made and all was good with the job contact, my daughter was fired for taking a coke out of the refrigerator. Seems wrong to me.

VR maintains a two-tiered system for monitoring all VR contracts to determine whether the terms and conditions of the contract have been met and what corrective action, if any should be taken. I would encourage you to discuss this situation with your daughter's VR counselor or your counselor's supervisor for assistance in finding new employment. You may also wish to contact the VR Ombudsman's Office at our toll free telephone number 1-800-515-3691 (Voice/TDD). The VR Ombudsman will assist you in resolving your daughter's customer service needs.

I was very surprised to hear that VR serves more clients than the Agency for Persons with Disabilities during the year. Amazing! Keep up the good work.

Thanks so much, we're glad to hear from you!

During the Summit, the lady who spoke did an excellent job! Last year I remember the guy did not know the program at all, and fought with the audience. It was an embarrassment to VR, but this year she did a great job! Gold star!

You are referring to Lucy Mohs, VR's Public Affairs Director. She comes to us with a wealth of knowledge about the needs of people with disabilities both personally and professionally and speaks from the heart. We are glad you enjoyed her presentation and will make sure she sees your comments.

How come it takes so long for my VR worker to get back to me? She is never in the office, or if she is she is never available for me to talk to her. You should have a policy on how long they can go without talking to/getting back to the client. Maybe then my calls would be answered.

We are sorry to hear you are having problems with your counselor. You may ask to speak to your counselor's supervisor or contact the VR Ombudsman's Office at our toll free telephone number 1-800-515-3691 (Voice/TDD). The VR Ombudsman will assist you in resolving your customer service needs.

How can you say that someone is not able to work, and VR denies those services? How can you say that? Do you have a crystal ball? If the desire is there, then they can work. We just need to find the best supports.

We at VR like to think of ourselves as the jobs agency for persons with disabilities. Our mission is to assist all of our customers in finding meaningful, competitive employment in integrated community settings. This includes providing the supports needed to help customers become active, wage-earning members of the workforce. We are sorry to hear you are having problems accessing the services that you need to go to work. If you, or someone you know who is a VR customer, are having problems getting the services needed to go to work, you may ask to speak to your counselor's supervisor or contact the VR Ombudsman's Office at our toll free telephone number 1-800-515-3691 (Voice/TDD). The VR Ombudsman will assist you in resolving your customer service needs.

How do I change my VR counselor? She is mean!

We are sorry to hear you are having problems with your counselor. You may ask to speak to your counselor's supervisor or contact the VR Ombudsman's Office at our toll free telephone number 1-800-515-3691 (Voice/TDD). The VR Ombudsman will assist you in resolving your customer service needs.

If a student gets a degree, and then a college education, but they are still not employed, can VR assist them to get more of a specialized degree that will help them in getting employed? The disability factor is a real turn-off to potential employers, and sometimes an advanced degree would help with employment. Thoughts?

You would need to speak to your VR counselor to determine whether obtaining further education would truly assist you in meeting your employment goals. It may be a matter of working with a job placement specialist who can help find suitable employment for you.

If you serve so many in our community, then why doesn't anyone talk about VR when the student is in high school? I never heard of VR while I was in school. You should be part of the transition planning process for all students. The schools should make it mandatory to have you as part of the "team."

VR conducts regular outreach with schools, families, student and local partners to raise community awareness. VR provides every school district with our transition brochures so that they may share information with students and families about VR services beginning at age 14. Not every student requires VR services.

The first Transition Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team is required to identify if agency (VR) services are needed and when an agency should be invited. The school district then has to obtain permission from the parent or age of majority student (age 18 or older) so that VR Transition Staff may attend. Unfortunately, there are not enough VR Transition Staff to attend every student's IEP meeting even if they were invited. That is why it is important that VR attends only those meetings for students that will need VR services. Please visit www.RehabWorks.org to access helpful VR and transition information. At our site you will find VR Transition Brochures, Links to other Transition Sites and answers to

Frequently Asked Questions under the School to Work Transition Program link found on the right hand side of the home page.

Where can I find you on the internet? I never heard of VR before. Sounds like a great program. Love the federal match also. Thank you!

Visit VR online at www.RehabWorks.org or call our toll free telephone number 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information regarding eligibility and for a local office near you.

Does VR help with modifications to my vehicle or housing needs, like my home?

You may be eligible for services provided by the VR if you have a qualifying disability and employment as a goal. Services may include home/vehicle modifications, if appropriate. All services provided are individualized and must be necessary for you to go to work. Visit us on line at www.RehabWorks.org or call 1-800451-4237 (Voice/TDD) for further information.

Do you have qualifications to apply for VR services?

VR is a federal-state program that works with people who have physical or mental disabilities to prepare for, gain or retain employment. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers.

You may be eligible for VR services if you have a goal to become employed and meet the following criteria:

- Your physical or mental disability interferes with your ability to become employed.
- VR's help is necessary for you to prepare for, gain or retain employment.

If you receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for your disability, you are presumed eligible for VR services if you intend to become employed.

For further information, visit us on line at www.RehabWorks.org or call our toll free telephone number 1-800-451-4237 (Voice/TDD).



The 14th Annual Family Café Report Card

Attendees at the 14th Annual Family Café were given the opportunity to grade their experience on the following scale:

A=Excellent **B**=Very Good **C**=OK **D**=Not So Good **E**=Poor

The table below displays average grades for 2012, along with grades from the five previous years.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
I would give the Annual Family Café Location a...	B	B	A-	A-	A	A-
I would rate the hotel's accessibility a...	C+	B	A-	A	A-	B+
I would give the organization of the Annual Family Café a...	B	B	A-	A	A	B+
I would rate the choices for breakout sessions and their ability to meet the needs of different interests a...	B	A-	A-	A	B+	B+
Overall, I would give The 14 th Annual Family Café a...	B	B	A-	A	B+	A-

Attendees also had the opportunity to respond to a series of subjective questions about the event:

- As a result of attending The 14th Annual Family Café, I am able/will be able to...
- In general, the most helpful to me was...
- I thought we could have had more of...
- I thought we could have had less of...
- I am interested in finding out more about...
- I would like to suggest for future Annual Family Café events...

Here is a sample of their responses:

As a result of attending the 14th Annual Family Café, I am able/will be able to. . .

- Better help my special needs brother
- Get better understanding of strategies on how to improve my child's life
- Become more familiar with programs for disabled children like my brother
- Receive updated information on the latest assistive devices and programs for our son
- Get SSI help
- To take information back to family
- Take information to my job for display
- Understand other families have the same problems we have
- Advocate better for my child
- My son with cystic fibrosis was able to graduate high school this year with a regular diploma. We had many IEP meetings. The school did not help us at all. Because of the Family Café, I learned my IEP rights.
- Find better resources.
- I did not know about how to help my son and things. I did not know he could receive disability services.
- Help other families with special needs children and have resources and contacts for them.
- Stand more firm on IEP's
- Be a better advocate for my child!
- Better prepare my grandchildren for effective learning and have a better understanding of their issues.
- Help my brother with his son and navigate school better for my daughter.
- Consider companion dog for my child
- Start awareness of abuse training now
- Plan a budget
- Find apps for the I-pad that suit my needs
- Advocate for my child
- Trust and guardianship questions I came with answered
- Help with resume writing, interview properly
- Gain a greater sense of the needs of families with children with special needs.
- Network and collaborate with other agencies serving the disabled community
- Advocate for my son and great nephew better
- Continue helping other families
- Continue to advocate for my child after being inspired and rejuvenated
- Meet and greet new people each year
- Continue to advocate for my child
- Help my son with multiple disabilities have the best life ever
- Be a larger part of the community and not feel so isolated
- Share information with other parents
- Be re-energized
- Find the resources I need
- to give advice to them
- Start my children's financial future
- Be prepared for a disaster

In general, the most helpful to me was. . . .

- Lectures and vendors
- Just being here in general meeting so many people, discussing different things with them
- The information about the services, I did enjoy it
- The social aspect
- The Youth Council session "Surviving College".
- Autism information
- Good people
- All the presentations that were available
- Autism information
- My developmental disability class was awesome and the sexual health class was very helpful too.
- The sessions about writing transitional IEP and transitioning for independent living as well as the special needs financial planning and the sessions on Autism
- The youth workshop where I could ask questions
- The special needs financial transition workshop
- No cost to have a micro enterprise table
- Variety of information in the exhibitor hall
- The early wishes early steps session. My son played for 2 hours.
- The classes and being able to talk with other parents
- Breakout sessions
- The exhibits
- Sex education, exhibits
- Being able to a Q&A with other parents, caregivers, and professionals
- The staff of Family Café
- Being able to talk to speakers
- Wide variety of topics and vendors/age groups
- Stress/ A-Z Marriage alone with disability related sex covered everyday issues
- Vendors
- Kid activities
- The support of meeting others in same situation
- Medicaid and waiver programs
- The seminars
- Hearing that our state and country are aware and active in the support of our population
- Meeting other families
- Meeting the Bureau Chief or Education
- Meeting people with different types of disabilities and how they cope with them
- Learning to reduce stress
- The staff here
- The exhibitor hall has so many exciting and great things to see and dedicated people to talk to
- The military sessions
- The Operation Military Kids because they have activities
- The seeing what was out there. How the families loved their special needs family

- School choice/McKay sessions
- Met a lot of people who are in similar situations. Feels like you are not alone
- Youth sessions
- Information about Florida Services (we are new to the state)

I thought we could have had more of. . . .

- Better sessions about Cerebral Palsy
- Affordable housing issues and accessible transportation.
- NCD comment issues
- Provider information
- Sessions for administrators and school spotlights
- Moderately amplified entertainment and always more vendors. You did a great job getting sponsors this year!
- Breakout sessions repeated 2 times each day
- Teaching sessions
- Bigger room for sexual health/sexual abuse. Could not attend with my wheelchair, people were standing out into the hallway
- Breakout sessions for adults with disabilities diagnosed late in life, TBI, Mental Health
- Interactive activities
- More structure in the round table discussion. It was kind of crazy in there. The CP one.
- Elevators from lobby to lower level exhibit area
- CP related breakouts
- Sensory things to do
- More meetings! Less on Friday and more Saturday. Should of started at 8 a.m. not 11 a.m. The yellow print in the book was hard to read. More maps.
- Spiritual seminars
- Directions labels where the classes are needed a map of the convention area and where each class is
- Dad stuff on both days
- Variety of activities at different times of the day
- Food
- Games and activities for hands on with kids
- Autism sessions
- Funding to get more people from group homes here
- Accessibility in the hotel rooms themselves
- Needed more time for dinner on Friday, as I did not get to see exhibitors as much but partially because I could not come until Friday afternoon but most shut down by 10:00 a.m. Sunday when I went back.
- Focus for dependents as they age out of school and options after that
- Workshop of siblings without disability
- Registration needs to held in HUGE ROOM away from hotel traffic
- Elevators, but the staff was wonderful about sharing their elevator
- The sessions at different times. A lot of the sessions ran into one another
- Could of had more people to direct us to the classes. It was confusing.

- Repeat sessions
- Government officials at meetings
- Transition after school where secondary school and working are not appropriate.
- Nutritional information
- Restaurants
- Better parking options
- Stress classes
- Entertainment for kids
- Family support for parents of disabled child
- Sessions on dyslexia
- Entertainment for kids
- Autism specific session
- Food!
- Snacks and drinks available at Saturday night dance
- Session on dyslexia and ADHD
- Sessions geared toward young adults and educating them
- Assistive technology (I-Pad, etc.) information
- Technology sessions, education sessions
- Governor, directly questioning him
- Handicapped parking spots on 3rd floor and more funding for new families and food for visitors
- The same session at different times (i.e.; if a session is scheduled from 2-3, have that session at 4-5) Couldn't attend some sessions I really wanted because they were at the same time

I thought we could use less of. . .

- Breaks
- Less time between sessions. Twenty minutes transitions it was too long. No dinner breaks Friday night between session and speaker
- Too many breakouts to choose from, combine some into one that were basically the same, for example IEP
- Projects/groups aimed or located in specific areas that we could not join such as county based groups and organizations
- Doors that was not automatic. Hard to navigate with wheelchair
- Cell phones. Every room needs a sign that says please turn off ringers and presenter s need to remind the audience. I cannot believe how a phone will ring; the person will answer and have a complete conversation during a presentation. So maybe we need a list of socially appropriate behaviors to every registrant that should include; cell phone courtesy, interrupting the speaker, whispering and talking, noisy candy and snacks. Maybe highlight the fact that others people have sensory issues and what may seem quiet to some is amplified to others.
- Repetitive sessions each year. Find new ones
- The repeated sessions
- Too much time in between sessions. 1/2hour is too long
- Informational workshops about what the organization would like to do
- The same booths

- Getting a little bit longer breakout sessions to get to the next one
- Hotel walking
- Autism. That's not for everybody
- Information on charges check out parking questions and other official things with registration, etc.
- Formal medical terminology
- Loud music in the hallways near and during sessions. I love music but it distracts leaders from their presentations. The Streeters especially
- Switched sessions. I know this is out of your hands, but none the less frustrating when planning to attend a session only to find out it's not there. Scrambling to find another one in a timely manner
- Vendors who did not have information to give out
- Color of the ink on the book was not as legible as previous conferences
- I thought there could be more time between sessions especially around lunchtime.
- Nothing
- Baby topics
- Noise very loud everywhere
- Running from one hall to the next
- Singularly partisan perspective from ballroom platform presenters
- Distance between rooms
- Too many sessions at same time
- Space
- Everything was good
- Noise and confusion
- Noise and confusions. Children activities very loud for a child with sensory issues
- Sessions specific to one area (county)

I am interested in finding more about. . .

- My disability
- Schools
- Issue that effect spina bifida – hydrocephalus – spasticity
- CAN
- Apps for I-Pad specifically for my child's needs
- Services where monies are available especially young adults job coaching, etc.
- Keeping SSI for a child that is under 16
- I missed the brain child tutoring and social group planning so I need more information on them
- Increasing services that have been cut in Med wavier program
- Thursday session in addition to Friday to Sunday Café
- Alternative medicines
- The NCD. How can I become a NCD member or help in my own community to report back to NCD
- Other people with disabilities
- Sibling issues
- Programs for children after they turn 22 years and what options are available
- IEP

- Cerebral Palsy
- Everything I am entitled to learning my rights, Asperger's, ADA, 504.
- Advocacy so I can continue to help others
- Interacting with others
- Housing options, employment options
- Having a better relationship with my sister
- Psychology and deletion syndromes
- Housing for my daughter
- ADD, ADHD
- Legal issues
- Autism
- Resources in Florida
- ABA behavior and Asperger's
- Behavioral services for children under 5
- The job expo and how to start my own business
- Autism.
- The Family Café
- Cerebral palsy all aspects and what kind of programs may be available
- How to get kids with and without disabilities together
- Care givers
- Accessing respite and crisis support for families facing multiple disabilities and the loss of one income to be a full time caregiver. Time between sessions to get to the room for diaper changes, etc.
- I-Budget
- State of legislation comments and issues
- Tourette syndrome support groups
- More information about VSA
- How to be a little more involved in helping The Family Café
- The Florida Youth Council
- Behavioral help from my grandson with Autism
- How can we get respite back for parents to attend more breakout sessions alone
- Special needs trusts
- Education
- Different disabilities
- Mild retardation
- Legal services for the disabled
- Dealing with an adult child. I just thought the journey was supposed to get easier not more frustrating
- Helping and joining The Family Café
- Special needs vacations
- Medicare benefits
- Disability benefits Medicaid waiver
- Social security and agencies that can help adults with home care
- Vision programs and teen transition
- How to apply correctly for SSI
- Making financial decisions for my son
- More on transition

I would like to suggest for future Annual Family Café events. . .

- Provide care for children 13 and under so parents can fully participate in the sessions.
- Better parking
- That the hotel give a larger discount on their food items, that way less people would want to leave the hotel to eat elsewhere
- More breakout sessions for providers
- A more accessible and friendly hotel. The parking was not accessible at all and not very friendly. It would be nice to have greater service for the families
- Affordable housing – Section 8 information. Home loans to people with disabilities at a low cost
- More “words” from the Governor’s office
- Larger print of the hotel map.
- Larger signs announcing class in rooms
- More mental health adult information.
- TBI and disability diagnosed later in life for adults. Not having at this hotel.
- Have everything on one floor especially if there are not lots of elevators for wheelchairs
- Last year was better getting around and the food was better. Too expensive for food plus allergy to food. We need better choices like last year for food.
- Use this hotel again! We loved it! Very reasonably priced
- A hotel that exhibits and breakouts are on the same level like Disney Coronado Springs
- Use this hotel again. . .the Hilton Orlando
- Cheaper food options
- Sunday fun all day
- A big pot luck
- More crafts
- Have food for sale outside the Friday Night Summit. I wanted to stay for all of it by my kids were starving
- Two dances
- Here again! This hotel staff is awesome!
- Autism sessions for me to learn more about autism
- More funding
- Consumer speakers
- The disability experience through the life cycle not just children
- Disability networking. The roundtable discussion group for autism was great. Informational sessions about health were very helpful
- Some of the conference cross with others, some of them should be repeated at difference times indifferent days. Snacks and beverages
- Financial help for scholarships
- A place with no parking fees
- Mainstream the registration area and don’t close it down. The breakout sessions started and the registration caused us all to be late.
- Bigger rooms for sensory and autism lectures they were filled to standing room
- More sessions for youth, some with make and take activities

- Have some mental health people also people to help explain the many meds all these children are taking.
- This is such a great event you could probably get a famous musician to come perform
- Maybe less classes at once or repeating some at more than one time. I find a lot of sessions really interesting but hard to choose just one when I would like to see all!
- Continue education and legislative updates
- Political powerful person we vote for who hopes to be re-elected attend to see exactly what parents with children and grandchildren like me with disabilities have to fight for and what seems to be taken away each budget year
- More hands on for young adults
- True stories of people with special needs
- Maps of the breakout rooms in the booklet larger, and on stands in the hallways
- Have all speakers respectfully ask attendees to hold questions and personal statements to the end. A lot of them were lost!
- Having snack and drinks available (even for purchase) at the family DJ night.
- Microphones needed in sessions to hear presenters
- Music in hallways too loud; unable to converse when needed
- Accountability for Family Café funded families to attend conference
- Choose hotel with fridge and microwaves and make sure the room TV's have the Disney Channel
- Bigger rooms for technology session. We were not able to attend I-apps sessions because room was full.
- More round table sessions instead of presentations
- More elected officials government officials attendance for sessions
- Benefits of specific therapies for children
- Disability savvy lawyers to answer questions
- A sensory rooms for the kids with integration issues so they can take some time away from the crowd but with other people rather than just their own hotel room. Also we need a way to deal with noisy children in the sessions. Doors should be closed to common areas for sessions
- Sibling sessions and activities just for siblings. I like going to new hotel each year.
- Get the Governor here!!
- A longer time span. I really enjoyed it! It upset me that so many great seminars were concurrent. It was hard to choose!

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