

Florida Inclusion Network

The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) collaborates with all districts and schools to provide customized services and supports ensuring all students with disabilities have the same educational, social, and future opportunities as their peers. In partnership with districts, FIN facilitates the implementation of inclusive best practices through:

- Data-driven, student-focused planning and problem-solving across districts and schools.
- Data-driven professional development and technical assistance to increase knowledge and skills of district and school personnel.
- Coaching and resources for district and school personnel to sustain inclusive best practices.
- Sharing information to build collaborative relationships between families, schools, and districts.

Our facilitators can provide information about effective inclusive practices, family-school collaboration and communication, opportunities for networking with other families, and ways to access local resources and support.



The *Supporting Parents Newsletter* was created and distributed by the **Florida Inclusion Network of Hillsborough County**



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Dear Families and Educators: Why Parent-Teacher Communication Is More Important Than Ever

By Kim Greene, MA

Dear Families and Educators,

As a parent, spouse of an educator, and former teacher myself, I could never have imagined a school year starting like this one. None of us could. We never expected masks to cover up smiles behind first-day-of-school photos. We never expected that schools would remain closed for so long and that our living rooms would become classrooms *again*.

It's not easy for any of us, as families, educators, and especially kids. Many of our kids who learn and think differently have especially struggled without the services or supports they're used to. Our communication as families and educators is more important than ever. That communication will be key to helping our kids thrive.

Understanding Each Other's Perspectives

As families, we've done our best to keep up with our kids' learning. Sometimes our best hasn't felt like enough. Or nearly enough. Some of our kids have been out of a school building for up to six months. They've missed out on important services that schools provide. They've missed their friends and teachers. They've been faced with complex questions about race at a time when injustice has been in the headlines.

We're worried about our kids' social-emotional well-being. We're worried about their physical health, especially if they're at

high risk of getting sick. We've had to make hard choices and find ways to juggle work and school. We're worried our kids will fall even further behind. And for some of us, we've found comfort in a "new normal" and are hesitant to return to the way things used to be.

As educators, we've done our best to keep our students learning. We haven't been prepared to teach this way. There was no class in college called "Teaching During a Pandemic 101." Our school districts scrambled to put together distance learning plans. And now, with little notice and limited training, we've been told to report to our classrooms or continue distance learning or a little bit of both.

We deeply miss our students. We're worried about our physical health, especially if we (or our family members) are at high risk. We may have struggled with our own mental health concerns, too. We've had to make hard decisions about returning to jobs we love or protecting ourselves and our families.

Sharing a Commitment to Communication

With this shared understanding, let's make a commitment to each other and to our kids.

As families, we will:

- [Share information about our kids](#) that teachers will want to know.
- Give tips about what worked—and didn't work—while our kids were learning at home.

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- Provide updates about what services or supports our kids missed and how it has impacted them.
- Share our concerns about the [COVID slide](#).
- Do our best to communicate openly, respectfully, and in a timely way, remembering that we may also be juggling jobs and other family responsibilities.

As educators, we will:

- [Ask questions](#) about our students and their families' concerns.
- Give tips about what's working—and not working—as we start the school year.
- Provide updates to families with IEPs and accommodations for distance learning.
- Share information that families might find useful, including resources for [distance learning](#), [health and safety challenges](#), and [mental health](#).
- Do our best to communicate openly, respectfully, and in a timely way, remembering that we have many students to catch up with or [families of our own](#).

To be sure, it will be a school year like none other. Together, we'll find our way in this new world with our kids at the center of it.

Source: https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/back-to-school/dear-families-and-educators-why-parent-teacher-communication-is-more? ul=1*vtn319*domain_userid*YW1wLVircFM3VmQycHdyazZJWUs3X1U0a3c.

About the Author: Kim Greene, MA is a managing editor at Understood. A former elementary teacher and a certified reading specialist, she has a passion for developing resources for educators.

[www.Understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

Assistive Technology That's Built Into Mobile Devices

Did you know that most smartphones and digital tablets have built-in [assistive technology](#) (AT) that can help with learning and thinking differences?

The range of AT features varies depending on the device's operating system. But iOS devices like iPhones, as well as Android devices like Samsung Galaxy phones, all have built-in AT tools. So do less common mobile devices, like Microsoft Windows phones. You don't need to buy special apps to use these built-in AT features.

For more information and to **read the entire article** click the following link:

 [Understood.org](http://www.understood.org) 



CEEDAR CENTER

Every Student Deserves an Equitable Opportunity to Succeed

CEEDAR stand for “Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform.” Our mission is to support students with disabilities in achieving college- and career-ready standards by building the capacity of state personnel preparation systems to prepare teachers and leaders to implement evidence-based practices within multi-tiered systems of support.

The CEEDAR Center has published a resource for parents entitled “Family Guide To At-Home Learning”. The guide contains practical strategies that work for helping children of all ages who may be struggling with an at-home learning task. Families may find these strategies useful when helping their children complete various reading, math, and/or behavioral tasks at home.

To use this guide, think about your child(ren) and which strategies may help them learn or practice a new task. Keep this guide close by as you help your child(ren) with their learning at home, and explore more resources at the links provided.

You can access this guide online by visiting the CEEDAR Center’s website at

<https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/>

Or you can simply click on the following link:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:aac8407e-89c4-47ed-929c-6b3b1d775269>

Finally, you can also access this guide, and more examples/tips, on your **Amazon Alexa** device by saying “**Alexa, enable Home Learning.**”

Podcast Series—Parent Wellbeing and Student Learning During School Closures

By Steve Barkley—Education Consultant

For the past 35 years, Steve has served as an educational consultant to school districts, teacher organizations, state departments of education, and colleges and universities nationally and internationally, facilitating the changes necessary for them to reach students and successfully prepare them for the 21st century. A prolific published author, his weekly blog, *Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud*, has evolved into a go-to resource for teachers and administrators all over the world.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on education, Steve started a new podcast group called *Parent Well-Being and Student Learning During School Closures*. The hope is that these podcasts can be used by parents to help support them in their new role with their children during this time.

Click the following LINK to access Steve Barkley’s Podcasts for Parents on his website <https://barkleypd.com/topics/podcasts/podcasts-for-parents/>



Florida Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support Project

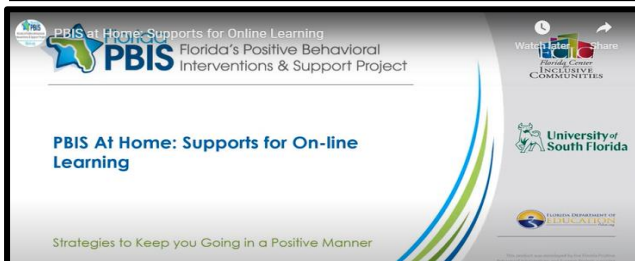
“Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an **evidence-based** / **three-tiered** framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day.” PBIS creates schools that support everyone – especially students with disabilities – for success. Their mission is to increase the capacity of Florida’s school districts to use team-based planning and problem solving to implement positive behavioral interventions and supports within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

PBIS provides training and technical assistance to districts in the development and implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports at the school-wide (Tier 1), classroom, targeted group (Tier 2), and individual student (Tier 3) levels.

PBIS has recently created a virtual resource for families in the form of a series of 4 videos. The focus of the video series is to support and assist families engaged in online eLearning.

To view the videos simply click on the images below and you will be redirected to their online location:

Video: PBIS At Home Supports



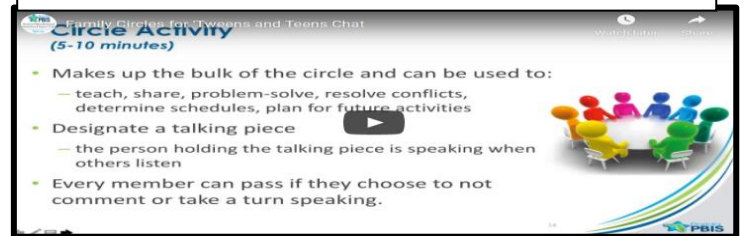
Video: Essential PBIS Practices for Families



Video: Thinking Positively as a Teen



Video: Family Circles for Teens



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