

6th Edition
Spring
2021

INFORMATION
FOR
LEARNING

Supporting Parents

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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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): What you need to know

By Andrew M.I. Lee, JD and Understood.org

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the main law for K–12 public education in the United States. It replaced [No Child Left Behind](#). Most schools might start seeing the impact of ESSA in the 2017–2018 school year. ESSA is a complex law. It affects all students in public schools. That includes the 1 in 5 kids with learning and thinking differences.

The purpose of ESSA

The main purpose of ESSA is to make sure public schools provide a quality education for all kids. ESSA [gives states more of a say](#) in how schools account for student achievement. This includes the achievement of disadvantaged students. These students fall into four key groups:

- Students in poverty
- Minorities
- Students who receive [special education](#) services
- Those with limited English language skills

Under ESSA, states get to decide the education plans for their schools within a framework provided by the federal government. The law also offers parents a chance to weigh in on these plans. This is important if your child gets special education services. You have the opportunity to make sure your child's needs are taken into account.

The plan must include a description of the following:

- Academic standards
- Annual testing
- School accountability

- Goals for academic achievement
- Plans for supporting and improving struggling schools
- State and local report cards

There are several more requirements for states and school districts, but these are the ones that most directly affect kids with learning and thinking differences. ESSA also provides funding for literacy programs and other grants that can help students succeed. And it encourages innovation in how schools teach kids.

The role parents can play in ESSA

ESSA requires states to let parents get involved in the accountability process for schools. Their input will help ensure that schools pay attention to kids in special education. ESSA requires states to include parents in the accountability process in two key areas:

State and local plans: Parents can weigh in on how their state and school district deal with goals for achievement, accountability, and struggling students.

State and school district report cards:

Parents have a say in the report cards their state and school district must develop to inform the public how schools are doing.

To read the entire article regarding ESSA by Andrew M.I. Lee, JD at understood.org, simply click the following link: [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\): What you need to know](#)



Communication Tips for Families of Children with Disabilities

Both parents and teachers play an important part in the education of a child. Parents are a child's first teacher. They teach needed life and academic skills while providing love and support that help with a child's healthy development. Teachers have an ability to inspire thought and creativity and when partnered with the foundational support parents provide, students are better prepared to have a positive school experience. Good two-way communication between families and schools is necessary for your child's success. Not surprisingly, research shows that the more parents and teachers share relevant information with each other, the better equipped both will be to help that child achieve academically.

The following are a few tips for parents on working and communicating positively with school staff:

Communicate Clearly

- Remind people of your child's strengths.
- Listen to others with an open mind and offering your ideas.
- Take a step-by-step approach to problems and offering your ideas for solutions. Express your understanding that things can change over time.
- Write down notes before, during, and after you meet with your child's individual educational plan (IEP) team members. Use concrete and specific examples when you share concerns.
- Ask questions to understand both sides of an issue. Get a second opinion from other teachers or the school administrator.

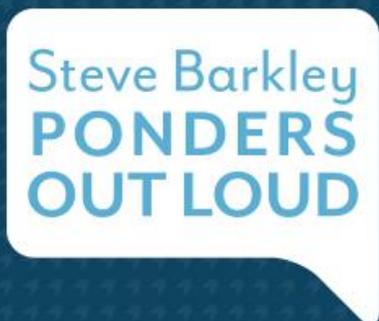
Make a Plan

- Contact your child's school as early as possible.
- Make special appointments to talk about specific concerns or problems.
- Agree upon a common system of communication, for example phone calls, email, etc.

Show Your Support and Willingness to be a Partner

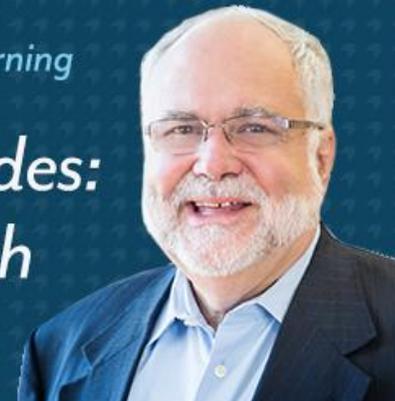
- Recognize the teacher's expertise.
- Participate in the School's Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) self-assessment process, family-school activities and/or committees.
- Send positive messages to staff. Let them know you care about their efforts to educate your child and want to build a positive relationship between school and home.
- Keep your child's behavior in perspective.

To view the full *Florida Inclusion Network* guide, click the following link: [Communication Tips](#)



Parent Wellbeing and Student Learning

*Talking About Grades:
Focusing on Growth*



Having a conversation with your child about a report card with lower than expected grades is never easy. Currently, more parents than ever are in this position with the impact of the COVID quarantine and virtual learning. Planning for these conversations can lead to the development of important life skills and mindsets as well as strengthened relationships. To listen to Steve Barkley's Podcast, click the following link:

[Podcast for Parents](#)



Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Parent Survey

Your opinion is extremely important to us! Each year the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) surveys parents of children with an individual educational plan (IEP) to determine how well each school is partnering with parents and promoting parent involvement in their child's education. All states must collect this data as part of their State Performance Plan, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

This survey provides valuable information that allows us to understand what we do successfully, and on practices, we may need to improve upon.

After reviewing last year's survey results, and in collaboration with Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Parent Services, we continue to provide opportunities for families and educators to work together as partners to enhance the learning experiences for all students as we Prepare Students for Life. Here are some areas we have been focusing on this year.

Continued support to Superintendent's Advisory Council subcommittees to recommend systemic strategies to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities. These subcommittees are comprised of parents, district staff and community members.

Providing parent training sessions in-person, virtually, and recorded, as well as upon request at individual schools and throughout the district. Bringing together community resources and organizations that support families with children with disabilities through Resource Fairs.

Sharing upcoming events, within the district and community, which support families in the areas of training, camps, special events, medical services and more on the FDLRS calendar.

Please know that your responses are confidential, and no personally identifiable information will be included in data or reports provided to the FLDOE or districts. Be on the lookout in your child's backpack, as all surveys were recently sent to your child's school. Each survey includes a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope for your convenience.

Each paper survey includes a Survey ID. You may elect to fill out the paper copy or you can complete the survey online at <http://www.esesurvey.com>.

If you have not received your survey or your student is an eLearner, please contact your child's case manager at their school or complete the survey online at <https://www.esesurvey.com/altlogin.php>.

We would like to encourage you to complete the survey before the deadline, May 31, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Valdes at (813) 837-7733 or email Debbie.valdes@sdhc.k12.fl.us.

Thank you for taking this opportunity to partner with us and for sharing your input.

Keeping Reading Going over a Break

Written by Susan Patterson, Read Theory Writer

Source: www.readtheory.org

Have you heard of the “summer slump”? Well, I’m going to call this our “spring slump”. It’s when students go on a break and they may not crack open a book or think about anything school-related. Summer of course is a little bit longer than spring break, but wouldn’t it be nice to have our students reading in some capacity during that week they are out? Here are some ideas to get your students reading.

- **Turn it into a challenge**
- **Read on the road**
- **Make it virtual**
- **Create crafts as incentives**
- **Teachers know best**

To read the entire article, please visit the **ReadTheory** website by clicking the following link:

[Entire Article](https://readtheory.org/lesson-plan-online-online-lesson-plans/)

<https://readtheory.org/lesson-plan-online-online-lesson-plans/>

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