

Oklahoma Parents Center

Winter 2013



Mission Statement

Oklahoma Parents Center is dedicated to the inclusion and **equality of children** and adults with disabilities. Our mission is to train, inform, educate, and **support parents**, families, professionals and consumers in **building partnerships** that **meet the needs** of children and youth with the full range of disabilities ages birth through twenty-six.



Did your kid get a new smartphone or tablet over the holidays?

(Or maybe you got a new device, and you're handing your old one down.)

If so, we've got the perfect list of apps to get them started.

Our editors have combed through thousands of apps and picked their top 10 recommendations for kids ages 2-17 for the iPad, iPhone, Android phone/tablet, and Kindle Fire.



Download Our Free App!



WANT INCLUSION?

By Nicole Eredics
www.theinclusiveclass.com

Nicole Eredics is an elementary teacher who has spent over 15 years teaching in inclusive classrooms. She is also a parent, advocate and frequent blogger. Nicole currently co-hosts [The Inclusive Class Podcast](#) on Fridays at 9 AM EST. In addition, she has developed and discovered many valuable resources for parents, teachers and schools that she shares on her blog, [The Inclusive Class](#), on Twitter at [@Inclusive_Class](#) and on Facebook at [The Inclusive Class](#).

Inclusive education is the inclusion of all students in the general education classroom regardless of ability or special needs. It is regarded as an ideal learning environment for all students, who learn that diversity and differences are a natural part of our world. Unfortunately, there are many schools and communities today that use a model of education that excludes and isolates children with special needs and/or learning challenges. Thus, inclusive education becomes asked about, advocated for, negotiated or worse yet, denied.

Parents who want their children to receive an inclusive education in schools that do not practice inclusion, need to be well prepared before approaching the school with their request. They cannot assume that teachers and administrators have all the information and if they do, the correct information. And, families also need to keep in mind that schools are guided by the direction of the school district. So, even if a school would like to become more inclusive, funding and support from the district may not be available. In any case, inclusion is worth asking for.

Here are some strategies that families can use to prepare themselves before approaching a school to request a more inclusive environment for their child:



The Inclusive Class

Get to Know Inclusion - turning on the computer and googling "inclusion" will result in dozens of articles that explain inclusive education. Some very reliable information however, comes from sites such as the [Inclusive Schools Network](#), [Wrightslaw](#), and the [National Center on Inclusive Education](#). Not only will these sites offer accurate information, but will list many other resources that you can access. Knowing as much as you can about inclusion will help you dispel any myths your school might have and answer questions that arise. In addition, you can find information about inclusion from your local library, disability awareness groups and the US Department of Education.

Get to Know Supporters - try to find other supporters of inclusion in your community. Perhaps there is another school that is already inclusive or there is a parent group that advocates for inclusion. They might already have the information you are looking for or hand-outs to give to administrators. A parent group can offer advice and tips for meeting with schools. Building a network of inclusion supporters is valuable and vital to your goals.

Get to Know the Teacher/Paraprofessional - take the time to know your child's teacher and/or paraprofessional. Both can offer insight and information about the school administration and resources available. Volunteering in the classroom is often a informal way of establishing positive, working relationships with those who work closest with your child.

Preparation and planning before you meet with your child's school to discuss inclusion is an important job that shouldn't be left undone. Just as you would prepare for an interview or study for a test, you will be better equipped to discuss the rights and needs of your child.



Helping Individuals with Autism Have a Happy Holiday Season

While many anticipate the holiday season, families of people on the autism spectrum also understand the special challenges that may occur when schedules are disrupted and routines are broken. Here are some helpful tips to lessen the stress of the holiday season.

The following tips were developed with input from the Autism Society, the Indiana Resource Center for Autism, Easter Seals Crossroads, the Sonya Ansari Center for Autism at Logan and the Indiana Autism Leadership Network.

- **Preparation is crucial for many individuals.** If your son or daughter has a tendency to become anxious when anticipating an event, you may want to adjust how many days in advance you prepare him or her. Preparation can occur in various ways by using a calendar and marking the dates of various holiday events, or by creating a story that highlights what will happen at a given event.
- **If a person with autism has difficulty with change, you may want to gradually decorate the house.** For example, on the first day, put up the Christmas tree, then on the next day, decorate the tree and so on. Engage them as much as possible in this process.
- **Teach them how to leave a situation and/or how to access support when an event becomes overwhelming.** Have a space set aside for the child as his/her calm space. The individual should be taught ahead of time that they should go to their space when feeling overwhelmed. For those who are not at that level of self-management, develop a signal or cue for them to show when they are getting anxious.
- **If you are traveling for the holidays, make sure you have their favorite foods, books or toys available.** Having familiar items readily available can help to calm stressful situations. If you are flying for the first time, it may be helpful to bring the individual to the airport in advance and help him/her to become accustomed to airports and planes.
- **Prepare a photo album in advance of the relatives and other guests who will be visiting during the holidays.** Allow the person with autism access to these photos at all times and also go through the photo album with him/her while talking briefly about each family member.
- **Practice opening gifts, taking turns and waiting for others, and giving gifts.** Role play scenarios with your child in preparation for him/her getting a gift they do not want.
- **Prepare family members for strategies to use to minimize anxiety or behavioral incidents.** Help them to understand if the person with autism prefers to be hugged or not, needs calm discussions or provide other suggestions that will facilitate a smoother holiday season.
- **Above all, know your loved one with autism.** Know how much noise and other sensory input they can take. Know their level of anxiety and the amount of preparation it may take. Know their fears and those things that will make the season more enjoyable for them.

Bye Bye Germs...Hello Healthy Kids!

Hand washing is easy to do and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of many types of infection and illness in all settings—from your home and workplace to child care facilities and hospitals. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community.

When should you wash your hands?

- * Before, during, and after preparing food.
- * Before eating food.
- * Before and after caring for someone who is sick.
- * Before and after treating a cut or wound.
- * After using the toilet.
- * After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- * After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- * After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- * After touching garbage.

What is the right way to wash your hands?

- * Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- * Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- * Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- * Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.
- * Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Try the song below:

Sing to the tune of "If Your Happy and You Know It"



www.cdc.gov

We washy washy clean, scrub scrub
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub
It's fun to wash your hands and I know you'll understand
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

We start with washing palm to palm
Between each finger let us rub
Now the back of the hands, it's such a simple plan
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

Clean the base of the thumbs one by one
Then the back of the fingers this is fun!
Don't forget your fingernails, it's about details
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

Now move on to the wrists, let us rub
I think we're nearly done, so now what
Just rinse the soap away, dry our hands and we're ok
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

So we washy washy clean, scrub scrub
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub
It's fun to wash your hands and I know you'll understand
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

OK-AHEAD

offers scholarship money to Oklahoma students with disabilities in post-secondary education. Applications must be postmarked on or before March 1 of the award year. Scholarships can be applied at any Oklahoma technology center, or any two-year or four-year college or university. **Three \$500 scholarships** are awarded annually. Scholarship applications must be received from November 1 to March 1 for the subsequent academic year. Scholarship information is available online at <http://www.ok-ahead.org/scholar.html>

Please encourage your students to apply for the Oklahoma Association on Higher Education and Disability Scholarship! "An opportunity missed is an opportunity lost."

Applications are due by March 1, 2014. OKAHEAD scholarship information online at <http://www.ok-ahead.org/scholar.html>

Mail, email, or fax scholarship application to brenda.dawes@okstate.edu, 405-744-2487 (fax) or mailing address:

Brenda Dawes
Oklahoma ABLE Tech
OSU Department of Wellness
1514 W. Hall of Fame
Stillwater, OK 74078

There's still time!

Please contact **Brenda Dawes from Oklahoma ABLE Tech** for additional information, telephone number 405-744-2487 or email Brenda.dawes@okstate.edu.



**BARBARA BUSH FOUNDATION
FOR FAMILY LITERACY**

Source: <http://barbarabush.org/>

WHAT WE DO

We prepare children for school and help their parents improve their literacy skills by providing access to high-quality family literacy programs nationwide.

Our mission is to establish **literacy as a value in every home in America.** Our vision is to achieve 100% literacy in America.

We believe literacy is a right that provides equal opportunity to achieving the American dream, which every child deserves. If we help the nation's precious children get on the path to learning in the earliest years, even before they enter kindergarten, they are far more likely to succeed in school and life. We also believe in investing in low-literate parents who are unable to provide the stimulating learning environment that young children need to jumpstart their education.

WE HELP FAMILIES UNDERSTAND

- The child's first school is the **home**.
- The **parent** is the child's first teacher.
- The child's first subject is **reading**.

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy is focused on fulfilling its mission by providing low-income families across the nation with scholarships to learn together. We partner with a network of high-performing local family literacy programs that help both young children and their parents learn how to read and write. When families share a love of reading, children have a far greater chance to live more productive and healthier lives, graduate from high school and obtain a better job. Supporting family literacy programs is a win-win for parents and children where they acquire basic literacy skills that help them advance their education and provide greater opportunities to succeed.

ASK THE ADVOCATE

Q: How can we share information about our child with her new teachers this year? She does best when her teachers know her strengths and weaknesses immediately.

A: Schedule an IEP meeting with your child's teacher as soon as you can to strategize about your child. Communicating with the teacher now will more likely gain the attention your child needs to make the most of the school year.

Before the conference, clarify your concerns and what you wish to convey to her teacher . Write them down. Clarifying your objectives and expectations puts you in a much better position to share them with the teacher.

Work with the teacher to set academic, behavioral and social goals for your child. Make a plan to help her achieve these objectives. Involve everyone. Specify action steps not just for your child, but for parents and school personnel as well.

At the conclusion of the meeting, arrange to stay in touch with one another by phone, e-mail or both. Schedule a follow-up conference for October.

An excellent tool to help your teachers get to know your child is the Oklahoma Parents Center's "**Snapshot Introducing My Child**" This document is available free from the OPC and is available on our website.

Q: How can we help our 12-year-old get a good start in middle school this fall?

A: Adapt the same successful parenting techniques that helped your child transition from preschool to kindergarten or from day camp to a sleep-away camp. Discuss together all aspects of the transition. Review the facts, including the physical layout of the school, the variety of new students he will meet and the importance of establishing a relationship with each of his teachers. If possible, tour the school before opening day and practice finding classes. Arrange a backup plan if needed.

Help him anticipate changes and discuss ways to cope with new challenges. For example, because former elementary school friends will be scattered among classes with students from other schools, he must get involved with other social groups and develop new friends. Offer to help. Invite his new friends to your house, volunteer to drive, and help with school events.

Once school starts, make time to talk about your child's day. Discuss what he did with other children. Ask how specific children behaved and what he thinks about their behavior. Encourage him to cultivate friendships with students who appear to share similar interests and values. Discuss how expectations of his teachers differ and encourage him to check with each of them about how well he is meeting them. Explore whether your school has a parent portal, and learn to use it. We often suggest using an agenda to help keep track of assignments and responsibilities.

Listen to his feelings when he is frustrated or discouraged. Acknowledge his struggle, encourage his efforts and help him problem-solve challenging situations. Middle school is hard, but you can help make it a positive experience.



Colorful Snow Sculpture

Source Creative Connection for Kids

WHAT YOU NEED

- * SNOW
- * LIQUID FOOD COLORING
- * ICE SCOOP
- * MELON BALLER
- * TURKEY BASTER
- * RECTANGULAR CONTAINER
- * TRAYS
- * LAUNDRY SOAP LIDS



Creating colorful snow sculptures is amazingly easy, fun, creative, and full of learning!

With the snow we have been getting this winter, it is a good idea to use it as a learning tool for kids. Here is a creative and simple way.

WHAT CAN KIDS LEARN FROM SNOW SCULPTURE?

- Color theory, cause and effect, physics

WHAT WE DID

- We poured snow onto a tray and mixed water and food coloring.
- Then we squirted the food coloring and water mixture on the snow using the turkey baster.
- We packed snow into another container (a laundry detergent lid) and poured the colored water over it too. It was amazing to see how the colors swirled together and the formations that were made. The sunlight also made the color pop!
- The containers were turned over to create blocks or cylinders. We also used an ice cream scoop to make balls.
- You can use anything you find to make different shapes and sizes.

THE IMAGINATION IS THE ONLY LIMIT!

After playing, we took them back outside and crushed them.

OPC Calendar of Events

December:

12/17/13 OTISS Parent Meeting 5:30p *Hilldale*

January:

01/08/14 OPC Overview 10a *Shawnee*
01/09/14 Parent Support Group 6p *Holdenville*
01/09/14 Autism Center of Tulsa 10a *Tulsa*
01/15/14 OPC Overview 10a *Pauls Valley*
01/16/14 OTISS Parent Meeting 6p *Cherokee*
01/21/14 Basic Rights 6:30p *Duncan*
01/21/14 OTISS Parent Meeting 6:30p *Del City*
01/22/14 OPC Overview 10a *Anadarko*
01/30/14 OTTIS Parent Meeting 6p *Edmond*
01/31/14 OTTIS Parent Meeting 9:30a *Altus*

February:

02/11/14 Basic Rights 6:30p *Norman*
02/13/14 Autism Center of Tulsa 10a *Tulsa*

*Please check our website Calendar of Events
www.OklahomaParentsCenter.org/calendar
for a up-to-date list of all events at any
time!!!*

**Other trainings will be added as
entities set meeting dates and times.**

Toll Free: 877-553-4332 * Phone: 405-379-6015 * Fax: 405-379-2106
Main office hours are:
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Monday – Friday

PARENT SURVEY BROCHURES

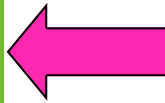
The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), Special Education Services (SES), in collaboration with the Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc. (OPC) annually collect information regarding SoonerStart/Early Intervention and schools' efforts to partner with parents for the provision of special education and related services. To do this, the OSDE-SES and OPC would like to invite you to complete the Parent Survey!

Answer: Take the Survey Online



Visit our
website
and follow

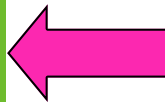
the Survey
Link



Answer: Have a copy mailed



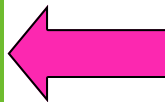
Call toll-free at
877-553-4332
and request a copy
be mailed to you.



Answer: Over the telephone



Call toll-free at
877-553-4332
to answer the
survey to the staff
at the OPC.



How
can
YOU
take
the
Survey?

SAVE THE DATE!!!

OKLAHOMA PARENTS CENTER'S 8th Annual Statewide Conference

**SHERATON
MIDWEST CITY
AT THE
REED CONFERENCE
CENTER**

In conjunction with
the Oklahoma State Department of
Education
Special Education Services

**THURSDAY,
MAY 29TH, 2014
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM
&
FRIDAY,
MAY 30TH, 2014
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

“Building Relationships...Creating Successful Change”

FEATURING: ART CERNOSIA

Donations Appreciated

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (hm) (____) (wk) (____) (cell) (____)

E-mail: _____

PLEASE MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

Parent

Relative

Foster Parent

Special Educator

Service Provider

Other

Birthdate/Sex of Child: _____ Primary Disability of Child: _____

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation of:

_____ \$5.00 _____ \$10.00 _____ \$20.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ Other: \$ _____

Your donation of any amount to the OPC is greatly appreciated!

You can also visit www.OklahomaParentsCenter.org to donate online!

Also please send me more information on the following: (Check all that apply)

____ I would like to schedule a workshop.

____ I would like individual assistance and information.

____ I would like more information about the parent training and information center.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!!!

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