EPRC announces growth with two new staff members and extended coverage in the panhandle

The Empowerment Parent Resource Center announces the addition of two new staff members, Stacey Paden and Rand Fernandez to assist parents in connecting with community resources. Both are parents of children with special needs. Stacey is a mom of two children on the Autism Spectrum. She has spent the last fourteen years asking questions and working to find the best resources for her own children. She brings to the table a heart of compassion and concern, not only for the children with special needs, but for their parents as well. Rand will help expand EPRC’s coverage in Niceville and Okaloosa county areas.

Rand is a father of three and is a board member with organizations that serve the special needs community such as Autism Spectrum on the Emerald Coast in Niceville and the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation in Destin. Rand believes through community outreach a rising tide will lift all ships. Jim Howard continues to serve EPRC as a Resource Specialist. Jim is the father of Ben who is on the spectrum. Jim has worked as a social worker serving people with mental health and developmental disabilities for over 25 years. EPRC strives to provide individual assistance to families with special needs.

EPRC and Friends for Autism Awareness connect

Empowerment Parent Resource Center teamed up with Friends for Autism Awareness for their August 13th meeting. EPRC staff presented to parents and caregivers connections to connect with area and state wide resources and lead a discussion about caring for the caregiver. Friends for Autism Awareness Support group meets the 2nd month at 6:30 p.m. at Great Gains Behavior Solutions in DeFuniak Springs. Everyone is welcome. We try to have babysitting services available at no charge to you. Please call and let us know if you require this service. For more information on future meetings call: 850-865-3596 or Email: FriendsForAutism3233@gmail.com

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Our Staff:

EPRC is dedicated to the dream of complete community inclusion for individuals with a disability. Please get in touch for any help or questions.

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With the start of the new school year parents often have questions about their child’s IEP. Some parents are unsure if their child needs an IEP and/or a 504 health plan. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) outlines how to best help a child learn. All IEP’s are based on a thorough assessment normally completed by school system personnel.

A 504 health plan identifies and “levels the playing field” for students with medical needs. These can range from needs like taking medicine at school at a specific time, to needing special access due to problems walking and getting around the school. For children with a seizure disorder, a 504 plan can help outline what to do in an emergency. The 504 plan can also address other medical concerns such as a severe allergic reaction.

If we can help educate you or family members on the IEP process or 504 plans please contact us for a phone consultation. We will be glad to review the IEP and discuss a 504 plan at no charge to you or your family.

**Please Contact us in any of the following ways**

**Needs assessment link:**
https://surveys.complexsystemsinnovations.com/s3/EPRC-Needs-Assessment

EPRC is a program of Project Empower of NW Florida. Visit our website at:

Www.projectempowernwfl.org

By Phone
850-444-8554

Email
eprc.nwfl@gmail.com
Community connections

EPRC highlights the ASEC for our families in Okaloosa County.

ASEC: The mission of the Autism Spectrum on the Emerald Coast (ASEC) is to serve as the leading voice and resource of the local autism community. We are the area’s leader in raising community awareness while providing support for individuals with autism and their families through outreach opportunities, educational programming and providing inclusion opportunities within schools and the community. ASEC is organized exclusively for charitable & educational purposes, more specifically to ensure that all individuals affected by autism will be provided a network of opportunities to become fully accepted, included, and actively participating members of our community, through family support, education, advocacy and public awareness.

The ASEC Annual Membership fee is $50 per family. Monies help support family programs throughout the year. Some scholarships are available.

Below is a list of Member’s Benefits offered to families at this time.

Access to the Lending Library
Discounted Pricing at Family Events:
Emerald Coast Science Center (Feb 16)
Spring Fam Jam (April 27)
Big Kahunas (August 17)
Boogies Glass Bottom Boat (Oct. 12)
Zoo Adventure (November 9)
Member Exclusive Events:
Weekly Groups (Thursday evenings)
BBQ Party (June 8)
Breakfast with Santa (Dec 14)

For more information call 850-496-3062, Find them on Facebook or website at

Members of the ASEC pose for a group photo after the success of their Spring Jam held every year.

Useful printable sheets for back to school communications.

Going back to school and adjusting to new routines can be tricky for kids with learning and attention issues—and for you. But having the right tools can make the transition easier. Use these back-to-school downloads to start the school year off right.

By The Understood Team
https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/back-to-school/printable-back-to-school-downloads?fbclid=IwAR1Qj61cjo3tc1-LwPfRR7yMq5P8y4R9X1yY8kCrpy25vsM518MnuEmo
Project Empower and EPRC how we connect to community resources.

Destry LeBrun and Michael Collins discuss how Project Empower and the Empowerment Parent Resource Center offer families many different programs and resources. Connect to video here.  


Calling all Medicaid waiver recipients.

Parents, caregivers and individuals who are on the Medicaid Waiver through APD in the state of Florida. Please take the following survey to help the State choose and design future waiver programs. This is important. Let your voice be herd.

Attention, all individuals with a developmental disability and parents/guardians! The FDDC just released its I Budget Waiver Survey to gain valuable insights into waiver services and understand what services are critical for Floridians. Help us help you!

Take the survey here: https://bit.ly/2yt4zuy

Free technology for teachers and parents

Google now has great shortcuts for people with disabilities in the classroom and in real world. The website listed has recommendations for free technology to help teachers and students.

Check out this great resource.
5 Good Chrome Extensions for Teachers and Students

Parents of newly diagnosed kids

It is going to be okay. Your child is still the same child. Your love for them won’t ever change.

There will be days that are hard. Heartbreaking even. It’s okay to not be okay. Just don’t get stuck there. Your child needs you to be strong.

When you think you have it hard, remember, it’s harder for your child.

Find your tribe. Find those who support you and understand the path you’re walking.

Channel your emotions towards the fight. The fight for services, quality education, and quality of life.

Never give up.

ALWAYS have hope. Your child is going to teach you SO MUCH!
Improving Our Services

We need input from YOU, parents, to continue to grow and learn how to best respond to your needs!

Our EPRC team is available to assist parents in linking to agencies, parent groups and community resources as well as a huge network of information. Parents only need to make one call to learn about resources specific to their family.

Each year we ask that parents complete our needs assessment. The information is used to help us develop programs and locate resources that benefit people with disabilities living in our community.

Please take our needs assessment survey!

Click here for needs assessment
https://surveys.complexsystemsinnovations.com/s3/EPRC-Needs-Assessment

Contact Us

Empowerment Parent Resource Center.

Proudly serving Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties.

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