



Talbot County Public Schools Family Resource Center

2020 Newsletter

The Family Support & Resource Center is designed to offer support to families of children who receive special services in Talbot County. We also provide support and information to educators and community members. There are many different ways we offer support, such as: A listening ear, a referral to a person, resource or agency, parent IEP support, trainings, family activities and access to our Lending Library. For more information on any of these services, please contact Stacey Behrens at sbehrens@talbotschools.org.

It is my hope that families will feel **supported, informed and connected** through the **Family Support & Resource Center**. Please contact me with any questions or needs.



SECAC members needed!

Quarterly Special Education Citizen's Advisory (SECAC) Meetings

Members, TCPS families & community partners are always encouraged to attend our quarterly SECAC meetings. This is an opportunity to become a part of a committee that shapes the activities and events available to children with special needs. We plan fun social events, excellent seminars, webinars, training events, and help find funding for special needs activities in Talbot County. Currently there are four planned meetings to be held on Tuesdays: **September 22nd**, November 10th, February 9th and April 27th from 5:00 – 5:45. The September meeting will be held virtually on Zoom. Please call with general questions or to let us know if you'll be attending.

Some upcoming events that SECAC will be providing are as follows: Multiple Parent Trainings, Family Events & Our Annual Autism Conference.

Please RSVP to Stacey Behrens at sbehrens@talbotschools.org in order to join us for the upcoming SECAC meeting on September 22nd from 5:00-5:45! There will be a Basic Sign Language Training afterwards. This training will be geared towards Infants and Toddlers families as well as families with children in elementary school.

SECAC PRESENTS BASIC SIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING Virtual Learning Opportunity!

**BASIC SIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING BY GWYNN GIBBONS, TEACHER OF THE DEAF
AND HARD OF HEARING**

*Would you like to try using sign language as a tool to help your **infants, toddlers or elementary** student increase his or her ability to communicate?*

- We will talk about ways to incorporate signing into your daily routine.
- We will focus on signs to get you started and provide information about resources to keep you learning.

There are numerous benefits for you and your child!

Tuesday, September 22nd from 6-6:45 on Zoom. Be sure to RSVP!

Teaching Social Skills at Home

How kids can learn and grow during social distancing

While some children who had [social skills struggles](#) before the coronavirus crisis are now finding it easier to communicate with their friends remotely, others are struggling to connect. Regardless of which category your child falls into, you may be worried that social distancing will set them back. If you're stuck at home, how can you help your child maintain and build upon the social skills they'll need to interact successfully with peers — in person or virtually?

Use modeling to focus on social skills

Try consciously modeling a few of the most important social skills, many of which will naturally occur with everyone cooped up together.

- Taking turns. Patiently waiting your turn to speak is a struggle for many children during in-person conversations, and it's even more challenging over video chat. "Right now, you could practice purposeful turn taking with everyone in the home," says [Michelle Kaplan, LCSW](#), a clinical social worker at the Child Mind Institute. "For younger kids, you can take turns being in charge of who selects what you'll build or how you'll play with the dolls, and for older kids you can practice taking turns selecting games and topics of conversation."
- Seeing things from someone else's perspective. Tell your child how you made decisions during your day and what motivated your behavior so they can practice taking on your perspective. When possible, explain how you took someone else's perspective, too. "For example, instead of saying, 'I had a good day today,' explain that you noticed an employee was feeling down," says Dr. Lee. "Tell your child that you tried to take her perspective and thought about how difficult it must be for her to work with three kids at home. So, you discussed it with her and decided to change her hours."
- Being flexible. Lee recommends talking through your choices and actions to help your child understand how to tolerate their feelings and be flexible. For example, you might say: "I've been really upset and stressed today, and I think the news is what triggered me. So, I'm not going to read or watch the news for the rest of the night. Instead, I'm going to play a game or read a book to distract myself."

Encourage connection

Even though your child can't see their peers in person right now, you can still encourage them to check in with friends and family via video chat, text or playing online games. Especially if your child tends to [experience social anxiety](#), a little regular practice connecting with others can go a long way.

After a virtual playdate or chat with relatives, check in with your child. How did the interaction go? What did they enjoy? What was challenging? What could they do differently next time? Don't worry if you and your family don't have a lot of time or energy for this kind of practice right now — even a quick conversation can be a helpful learning experience for your child.

Gio Miller - To read the full article, please go to: <https://childmind.org/article/teaching-social-skills-at-home/>

TCPS LENDING LIBRARY

Feel free to call, email or arrange a visit to check out any books that you may be interested in reading. There will be a check out form as well as a two-week limit for all books. There are some great books that

are appropriate for children of all ages, teaching staff and parents. Please take advantage of this great opportunity! Listed below are some of the popular social story books that have been recently added to the library.

Now I Get It Series

By: Jean Aviram

Social Skills Stories

- Reading and comprehension
- Respect, negotiation and cooperation
- Appropriate behavior

Appropriate for Middle/High

Books included in this set:

1. Social Rules / Having A Conversation
2. Classroom Behavior / On the School Bus
3. Dealing with Bullies / Stranger Danger
4. Making Mistakes / Making Responsible Choices
5. Talking on the Telephone / Responding Appropriately
6. Sometimes I Have to Wait / Showing Appreciation

Appropriate for Elementary/Middle

Books included in this set:

1. Saying “Excuse Me”/ Please and Thank You
2. Getting Angry / Sharing
3. Answering Questions / Saying “Hi” and “Bye”
4. Talking about my day / When things change
5. Getting ready for school / Getting ready for bed
6. I don’t understand / Getting Help, Giving Help
7. Playing with a Friend / Winning and Losing

Some additional books that are already located in our Library address the following topics: Acceptance, ADHD, Advocacy, Asperger Syndrome, Autism, Behavior & Mental Health, Collaboration, Down Syndrome, Inclusion and Differentiating Instruction, Language Development, Law, Books about puberty for young women and young men with autism, Siblings, Sign Language and Social Skills. If you are interested in one of the above topics, we have a book for you!

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RESOURCE WEBSITES

Most of these websites now offer free resources, literature and/or virtual trainings on many different topics.

Parent's Place - <https://www.ppmmd.org/resources/>

Pathfinders for Autism – <https://pathfindersforautism.org/>

The ARC – <https://www.thearccc.org/>

Talbot County Free Library - <http://www.tcfl.org/>

Kinera Foundation - <https://www.kinera.org/>

TALBOT COUNTY CARES PROGRAM

The Talbot County CARES Individual Assistance Program offers emergency financial assistance for Talbot County residents who are out of work or whose income has been reduced because of the COVID-19 public health emergency. CARES assistance can help with rent, mortgage or other housing costs, utilities, and other emergency needs, and payments are made directly to the landlord, mortgage company, utility company or other vendor.

Attached is some information on the program, in both English and Spanish, and an application for assistance. Applications may also be downloaded from the Talbotcovid19.org website (click on Individual Assistance Grant under the Resources tab).

Additional information on the CARES Individual Assistance Program may be obtained by calling 410.820.4347.

[Application CARES Individual Assistance Application Final3 \(4\).pdf](#)

[Talbot Co CARES Individual Assistance \(4\).pdf](#)

[Talbot Co CARES Individual Assistance Spanish.pdf](#)