

THE EXCEPTIONAL EXPRESS

Winter 2025 Newsletter



**HOLMES DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD**
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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SUCCESS SUPPORT

- How to Celebrate Your Child's Small Wins:

Featuring a research study by
The Journal of Educational Research.

- Strategies for Effective Communication
Between Caregivers and Teachers:

4 Ways Parents and Caregivers Can Support their
Child's Educational Experience.

Awareness Article: Supporting Siblings of Children with Disabilities

- Debunking Myths and Highlighting Truths
of Family Dynamics.
- Four suggestions for supporting the sibling
of a child with disabilities.



Florida Diagnostic & Learning
— RESOURCES SYSTEM —

This issue:

Using Assistive
Technology to Support
Your Child's Learning

Exceptional
Encouragement

Resource Highlight

AT-HOME TIPS:

4 Recommendations
for Creating a
Sensory-Friendly
Home

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Using Assistive Technology to Support Your Child's Learning

Sometimes, “assistive technology” prompts the thought of electronic devices. But another great example of assistive technology is the use of visual aids, which can be helpful to maintain structure, routine, and encourage communication in the home.

Here is what a visual aid schedule might look like for your child:



Exceptional Encouragement

- Practice Patience with Yourself:

Parenting can feel overwhelming at times, especially when there are additional challenges. It's okay to feel frustrated but be kind to yourself. No parent is perfect, and taking care of your own mental health is just as important as caring for your child.

- Focus on Strengths:

All children have strengths, and finding those in your child will help build their confidence and self-esteem. Whether it's a talent for drawing, a love of music, or an ability to connect with animals, fostering their interests can provide joy and a sense of accomplishment.

- Set Realistic Expectations:

While it's important to push for growth, setting realistic and attainable goals can help prevent feelings of disappointment for both you and your child. Progress is not always linear, and there will be setbacks, but that's okay.

Resource Highlight

The Out-of-Sync Child"
by Carol Stock
Kranowitz:

This book provides insight into Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), which can often accompany learning disabilities. It offers strategies to support children who experience sensory challenges.

The Out-of-Sync Child

Recognizing and Coping with
Sensory Processing Differences

"The Out-of-Sync Child has become the parents' bible to [SPD]."
—The New York Times

Carol Stock Kranowitz, MA

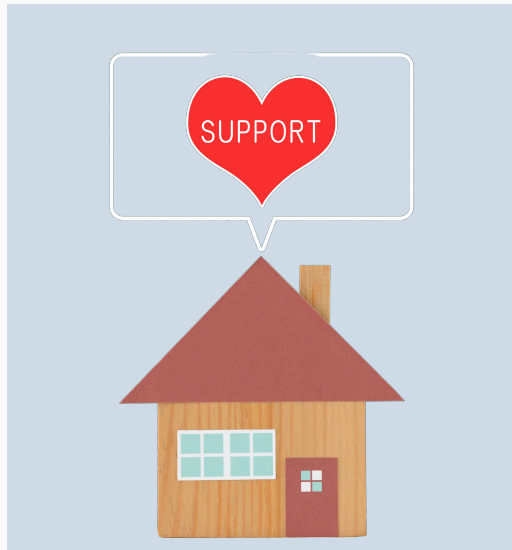
Preface by Lucy Jane Miller, PhD, OTR

Success Support

Research shows that when parents are engaged in their children's schooling, it can encourage positive educational and health behaviors in both children and adolescents. Studies highlight a strong link between parental involvement and improved educational outcomes.

Epstein J, Sheldon S.
Present and accounted for: improving student attendance through family and community involvement.
The Journal of Educational Research 2002;95(5):308-318.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CAREGIVERS AND TEACHERS



Listen Actively:

When talking to teachers, take time to listen to their insights about your child's experience at school. They may observe different aspects of your child's behavior or learning style that can inform strategies at home.

Prepare Ahead of Time:

Whether it's a meeting, phone call, or email, come prepared with specific questions or concerns. Write down any observations you've had about your child's progress, behavior, or emotional well-being that you want to address.

Focus on Key Points:

Make sure to prioritize the most important issues or achievements. Teachers and caregivers both appreciate clear communication that cuts to the heart of the matter.

Work Together:

Ask for their recommendations on strategies to use at home, and share what has worked for you in your child's routine. Collaboration strengthens the support system your child needs.

HOW TO CELEBRATE YOUR CHILD'S SMALL WINS

- **Write It Down:**

Sometimes kids forget what they've achieved or don't realize how far they've come. Writing down the win, whether it's a task they've mastered or a moment they've overcome a challenge, and reviewing it together can be a huge confidence booster.

- **Incorporate a Reward System:**

For some children, having a tangible reward can motivate them and make the celebration feel extra special. The reward doesn't always have to be material—it could be an extra 10 minutes of playtime or a special privilege they enjoy.

- **Find the good:**

Every progress, no matter how small it seems, is a victory. Focus on the little achievements and acknowledge them, whether it's learning a new skill, mastering a task or simply having a good day.



AT-HOME TIPS:

Include Movement Areas:

Sensory-seeking children may benefit from spaces where they can move and burn off excess energy. A small trampoline, rocking chair, or balance beam (painter's tape is great for this!) can offer the necessary movement without causing chaos.

Designate Quiet Areas:

Set aside a specific area in your home where your child (or family members) can retreat to when feeling overwhelmed.

This can be a cozy corner with soft seating, calming colors, and minimal distractions.

Control the Visual Clutter:

A cluttered environment can be overwhelming. Keep spaces tidy and organized when possible, using shelves, baskets, or storage bins to limit visual chaos. Avoid too many bright or conflicting colors in one space.

Tactile Exploration:

Incorporate objects like textured mats, pillows, or tunnels that encourage sensory exploration in a controlled way.

Awareness Article: Supporting Siblings of Children with Disabilities

Quality Time:

Ensure that the sibling has one-on-one time with parents or caregivers. This can help them feel valued and not defined by their role in the family dynamic.

Highlight Strengths:

Emphasize how their unique experiences can lead to personal growth, such as patience, resilience, and empathy.

Celebrate Milestones:

Recognize the sibling's achievements, no matter how small, so they feel seen and appreciated by the family.

Raise Awareness with Others:

Help ensure that the wider community (teachers, friends, extended family) is also educated, so the sibling feels supported in social situations.

MYTH:

Siblings of children with disabilities are used to the situation and don't need support.

REALITY:

Siblings of children with disabilities can benefit from support just as much as the child with the disability. These siblings may need to process their own emotions, learn how to communicate their feelings, and receive guidance on navigating the challenges they face. Support groups, counseling, and family therapy can be helpful resources for siblings as they grow.

TRUTH:

Siblings of children with disabilities face a variety of challenges, but they also have opportunities for growth, empathy, and resilience. By recognizing the unique needs of all children in the family, parents and caregivers can help ensure that both the child with a disability and their siblings thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. How learning disabilities affect a child's siblings.