

# Webinar Series



Health Literacy  
**Solutions Center**





# Creating Easy-to-Understand Multimedia Tool for Parents of Kids with Disabilities

**Julie McKinney, MS**

**Exceptional Lives, Inc.**



## Welcome to the Webinar

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- **Connect to audio** using your computer speakers
- **All attendees will be muted** during the webinar
- **Ask questions** using the Q&A found in the bottom of your screen
- **Technical difficulties?** Email [support@healthliteracysolutions.org](mailto:support@healthliteracysolutions.org) for assistance
- **The webinar will be recorded and posted** in the Health Literacy Solutions Center webinar archives

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**Following the webinar, you will receive an email containing a link to a brief online evaluation.** If you requested CEUs when you registered, you must submit an evaluation in order to receive your certificate.



## About the Speaker

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### Julie McKinney, MS

Julie McKinney is a health literacy specialist with over 25 years of experience in the field, with a focus on creating plain language materials, forming partnerships, and sharing resources. She has moderated the Health Literacy Discussion List for 19 years. Julie now also works with Exceptional Lives, Inc. She develops and writes easy-to-read tools to help parents of children with disabilities navigate complex processes and get the benefits, services and support they need.





# ExceptionalLives

*Resources and support for families caring for children with disabilities*

## **Creating Easy-to-Understand Multimedia Tools for Parents of Kids with Disabilities: A Continuous Improvement Journey**

[www.exceptionallives.org](http://www.exceptionallives.org)



# Who we are



[Who We Are](#)

[Topics & Guides](#)

[Resource Directory](#)

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Are you caring for a child with a disability?  
**We're here for you.**

Select Age or Stage



Select Topic



Select Location



Recursos en Español



Exceptional Lives encourages and guides families and providers caring for children with disabilities by offering information, advocacy and skill-building tools, and connections to other caregivers.

We support family resiliency through clear, compassionate guidance grounded in our own personal experience.

Support

# What we do



## Learn more about services for your child and how to get them

Get step-by-step support on how to navigate processes and services for children with disabilities in Louisiana.

[Learn More](#)



## Find local providers and services

Search by ZIP code to find local programs, providers, and resources to meet your child's needs.

[Start your search](#)

[en español](#)



## Perspectives 4 Parents

We get you. Our Perspectives 4 Parents Blog offers support and tips from parents, professionals, and the experts - our kids.

[Read more](#)

[en español](#)



## Connect with other families on social media.

Find your people on our feeds, pages, and groups.

[Learn more](#)



# We're here for you!



# Exceptional Lives Goals

We want our site to be:



Easy to understand



Easy to use



Findable by people searching online



Respectful and inclusive to all



# Process of continual improvement

## Areas to keep improving:

- Ease of understanding
- Ease of finding what you need quickly
- Multimedia preferences
- Accessibility
- Keep up with changing language
- Addressing racial equity



# Initial Version of Web-based Resources

## Interactive software to personalize the information

- Decision-tree software to personalize the guides
- Wrote guides about applying to SSI, Special Education and Guardianship
- Complicated info, not in plain language



# Decision-tree Software

Interactive design, leads to personalized guidance:

- People answer questions: they engage with the site
- Answers let us personalized the information: they only get what is relevant to them

How old is your child?

Under 3

3-5 years old (or over 5 but not yet in kindergarten)

Over 5 and enrolled in school





16% Complete

 Introduction: What you'll find in this Guide

 Identify your concerns and talk to your child's teacher

 About special education

 Learn about the different levels of support: IEP vs 504 Plan

 Learn about what kinds of services your child may get

 Learn about how to qualify for services

 Preview the steps to getting special education services

 The evaluation: seeing if your child qualifies

 Get a referral for evaluation (also called parent approval or 1503 evaluation)

 Make sure the school evaluates all areas of concern

 Give consent and prepare for the evaluation

 Have the eligibility meeting and find out if your child qualifies

 Know what to do if you disagree with the school's decision

 Get advice and support from local and state organizations

 Change your answer to see what progress you've made

Welcome to the Special Education Guide!

## Introduction: What you'll find in this Guide

When your child struggles in school, it can be stressful and emotional. It's okay to feel this way! Fortunately, there are steps you can take to get help and meet your child's needs.

Even if your child is not yet in school, you can get services to help them prepare. They can get special education services from age 3 to 22.

### This Guide will help you through the whole process!

#### First we will explain:

- What kinds of support the school system can offer
- How to see what your child qualifies for



#### Then we will walk you through these steps:



1. Connect with the right people in your school system
2. Identify and explain your child's strengths and challenges
3. Get the evaluation to see what support your child needs

#### If your child qualifies for an Individualized Education Program (IEP), we'll show you how to:

- Prepare for the meetings with the IEP team
- Work with the team to fill out the IEP form
- Make sure you create the best plan for your child
- Find support so you can speak up for your child's needs
- Monitor your child's services

We can't guarantee that your child will qualify for services. But we can help you find out, and then show you what to do next.

[← Back](#)

TRACK MY

[Next >](#)

# Why change?

- Too hard to understand
- Need more feedback



# 1st Improvement Phase

## Plain language and health literate design:

- Hired health literacy specialist
- Plain language writing and design
- More graphics
- Voice: empathy, compassion, “we”

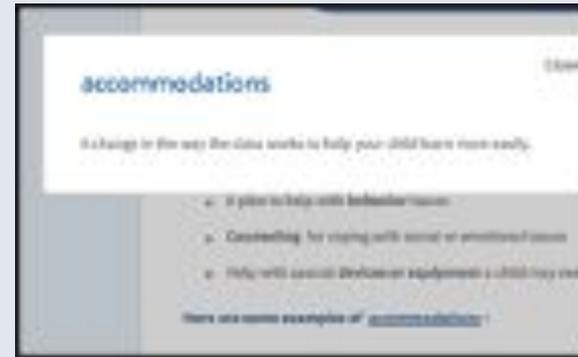
## Know our audience and getting feedback:

- Focus groups and interviews in all phases of development
- Reviews from parents and experts from systems (education, health, ect.)



# Making it easier with tech and HL

- Plain language and design
- Help with new terminology and navigation
- Small chunks of “need-to-know” facts and action steps
- Forms and sample letters ready to download
- Tested with intended audience



**Here's what you can do:**

1. **Identify your areas of concern.**  
What aspects of the school day is your child having trouble with?
2. **Talk to your child's teacher or principal about your concerns.**

*Click on the box below to learn more:*

[More about Autism](#)

**Downloads**

 [More about ASD.pdf](#)



# How we get feedback:

## Input at all phases of development:

- Assessing needs
- Choosing topics
- Testing drafts
- Continuously evaluating and updating final product



# Why change?

## Feedback from families:

- Want to see all info, not just the paths they chose
- Wanted quick answers to questions

## Hard to find on Google:

- Text in software not picked up by search engines
- Pages too small to attract searchers



# 2nd Improvement Phase

## New platform:

- All info is there
- Use menu to find what you need
- Added FAQs

## Better SEO:

- More keywords picked up by search engines

### **SEO: Search Engine Optimization**

Using keywords commonly searched online, and designing web pages to use Google's algorithms to get seen more



Type your question here...

**Transition To Adulthood** ▾

**Intro to Transition Guide - start here!** ▾

[Transition to Adulthood - Introduction](#)

[Overview: What Happens In High School](#) >

[FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions about Transition](#) >

[Glossary of Transition Terms](#) >

[What Can I Do To Make Sure My Child Gets The Right Support At School](#) >

**What The School Can Do To Support My Child's Disability Needs** ▾

[Summary: Help With Transition Planning](#)

[Communicate Clearly With You](#)

[Follow The IEP](#)

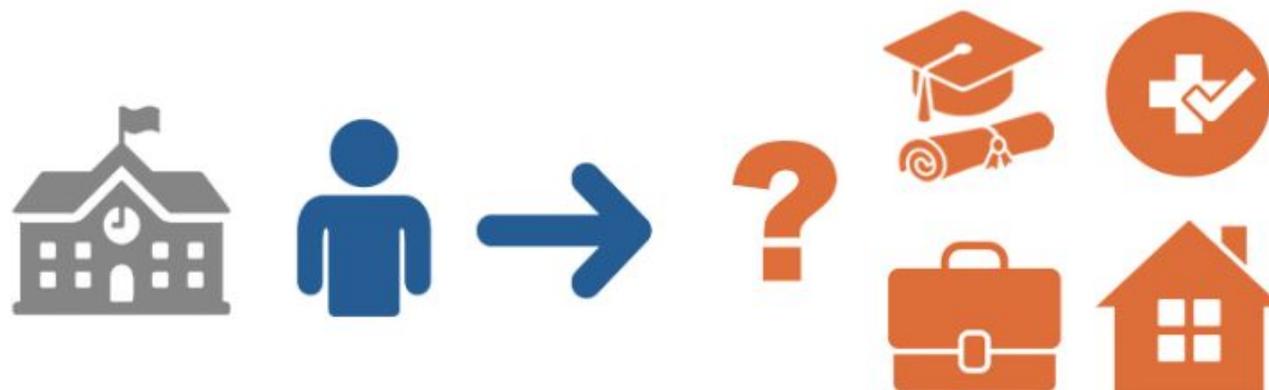
[Help You Create A Transition Plan](#)

[Follow The Strategies For Success Guidebook](#)

[What if my child does not have an IEP?](#) >

## Transition to Adulthood - Introduction

When we say "Transition", we're talking about how a child or young adult moves from school-based services to life after school.



**Transition** can be scary for the kids and parents. But the important thing is to **be ready ahead of time, and to know what kind of support you can get.**

# Why change?

## People using tech differently:

- More mobile phone use
- Social media: pictures and short videos
- Need for faster response time
- SEO even more important

## Feedback from families:

- They want more voices from families and social connections
- They want a variety of formats: video, audio



# 3rd Improvement Phase

## More multimedia content:

- Podcasts
- Short videos with captions

## More family voices:

- Families & Stories video interviews
- Guest blogs

## More family input:

- Family Feedback Team
- Regular surveys

## More social media presence:

- Hired social media manager
- Videos, graphics, tidbits



# New podcast

## Just Needs

parenting children with disabilities



Episode 39: What kinds of programs can support my child as they become an adult?

## Just Needs

parenting children with disabilities



Episode 3:  
6 Things Not to Say to  
Children with Disabilities

## Just Needs

parenting children with disabilities



Episode 5: What is sensory processing? And can it help explain my child's behavior?

# Family involvement

Are you caring for a child with a disability?

Join Exceptional Lives' Family Feedback Team!

Answer surveys, join discussion groups, and recruit other families.

Commitment is 2 hours per month.

Participants will be paid for their time.

Learn more and apply:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FamilyFeedbackTeam>



**Exceptional Lives**

Resources and support for families caring for children with disabilities

## We're looking for you.

### Families & Stories

Families and Stories is a series of interviews that feature families caring for children with disabilities. In each interview, families tell us about their joys and struggles. Parents, caregivers, and children share stories about their individual experiences. Caring for children with disabilities can feel isolating, so it's important the families we serve understand they are seen and they are heard. We appreciate the families who have shared their stories with us.

We have videos that relate to the following ages & stages in your family's journey:

I Think My Child's Different

Early Childhood (0-3)

School Age (0-18+) & Special Education

Transition to Adulthood

[www.exceptionallives.org/families-stories-children-disabilities](http://www.exceptionallives.org/families-stories-children-disabilities)

# 1 Quick Question videos



Accommodations

Exceptional Lives

ExceptionalLives  
Disability Information for Families

Special Ed Terms 2 Know:  
Accommodations

www.exceptionallives.org

00:45

Video player controls: play, progress bar, volume, settings, full screen, and share.



My child is aging out of early intervention but still needs services. What's next? with Gwen Crawford Angelos

Exceptional Lives

My child is aging out of early intervention but still needs services. What's next?

Gwen Crawford Angelos, M.Ed., J.S.B. to participate in their online webinar series.

# Animated glossary videos



# Why Change?

## Still need better SEO:

- People search differently
- Platform not conducive to SEO improvement
- Still not reaching enough families
- People like to go directly to the answer

## Still hard to find info:

- More diverse content >> harder to organize
- Not organized by topic

*Search tools are an extension of how users process information, so we have to serve content in a way that is friendly to them.*

~ Nell Quest Curran



# 4th Improvement Phase

## SEO and Accessibility:

- UI/UX and SEO expertise
- Optimized for mobile
- Images and page design
- Intuitive navigation, easy for screen readers (and others)
- Speed
- More Spanish content

## Organization:

- Hub and spoke model
- Sorted by topic
- Crosslinks

**UI: User Interface** - buttons, icons, etc. on page

**UX: User Experience** - whole interaction on site



## Keyword Optimization Plan

<b>Category</b>	Autism
<b>URL (200 char max)</b>	/support-autistic-child-home
<b>Title (200 char max)</b>	How to support your autistic child at home
<b>Meta title (100 char max)</b>	How to support your autistic child at home   Exceptional Lives
<b>Meta description (140 char max)</b>	Wondering how to support an autistic child at home? Learn some ways to <a href="#">adapt their environment</a> and nurture their emotional health.
<b>Target keyword</b>	how to support an autistic child at home
<b>Image description</b> <i>object-action-context</i>	 <p>A mom has quiet time with her autistic child at home in a sensory tent</p>

## Hub and Spoke Model



# Balance of Keyword Optimization and Plain Language

Long keywords and dated language:

**“How to support a child with autism at home”**

- Awkward to put into text several times
- Grammar may be off
- Terms don't reflect current trends: “autistic child”



## Accessible links

We'll describe some common habits and behavior challenges of a child with autism and how to address them. The first thing to know is that you're not alone! These challenges are common, and many parents have found creative ways to ease the things easier. [Learn more.](#)



We'll describe some common habits and behavior challenges of a child with autism and how to address them. The first thing to know is that you're not alone! These challenges are common, and many parents have found creative ways to ease the things easier. [Read more about supporting your child at home.](#)

## Spanish Blogs and Resource Directory

Bienvenido a Perspectives 4 Parents (perspectivas para padres)

Consejos y apoyo por padres y cuidadores

Entradas de Exceptional Lives más recientes

 5 tips para familias para ayudar a alumnos con discapacidad a prepararse para exámenes  
Apr 19, 2023  
¿Tu hijo con discapacidad se estresa por los exámenes? Aquí están 5 tips para ayudarlo a prepararse.  
[Read More →](#)

 Encontrar sentido a un diagnóstico de autismo  
Apr 12, 2023  
Cuando mi hijo fue diagnosticado, tuvo tiempo para encontrar sentido al autismo. Pero aquí está lo bueno que aprendí por sorpresa.  
[Read More →](#)

Search

Categorías

Ver categorías

Temas del blog

Beneficios del gobierno y recursos financieros

5 Cosas que deberías saber antes de hacer declaraciones de impuestos para personas con discapacidades

Beneficios SSI: ¿Califica mi hijo discapacitado?

Servicios para niños con discapacidad (y sus familias).



# Racial Equity and Inclusiveness

## Why change?

- Too white
- Real issues of racial equity to address in disability world
- Changing terms and expectations in disability

**DEIA: Diversity, Equity,  
Inclusion & Accessibility**

## Improvements:

- Diversified Board and staff
- Continuous **DEIA** training
- Amplifying Black and brown voices
- **DEIA** goals baked into strategic plan
- Create content with racial equity lens
- Reviews by Black and autistic advocates:

***Nothing about us without us***





**ExceptionalLives**

*Resources and support for families caring for children with disabilities*

Real Talk About Disabilities:  
Issues Faced by Families of Color  
Creating a Support System - Helping your Family  
and Community Understand Autism

Presented by Exceptional Lives with

**Donyelle Clark-Kennedy, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA**





**My child is aging out of early intervention but still needs services. What's next? with Gwen Crawford Angelos**

Exceptional Lives



**My child is aging out of early intervention but still needs services. What's next?**

Gwen Crawford Angelos to participate in their online webinar series.

## Meet Maurice & Maurice Jr.: Autism is not the end of the world

Support for Parents, Early Childhood (0-3), Autism, Video March 22, 2023 · Sydni Raymond



# Continuous Improvement

Lots of work...but worth it!



What questions do you have?

Thank you!!

[julie.mckinney@exceptionallives.org](mailto:julie.mckinney@exceptionallives.org)

