



# THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

## IFSP Digest

December 2020/January 2021

IFSP provides a monthly news digest to highlight resources, events, and trainings that may be of interest to people with disabilities and their families. We distribute the digest electronically via the IFSP Listserv.

As we expand our shared resources, we invite you to share information that you think would be of interest to others.

You can share your newsletter subscription recommendations with us at [ifspcom@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:ifspcom@dbhds.virginia.gov).

To join the IFSP Listserv, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/IFSPlistserv>.

### Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Office of Integrated Health

DBHDS's Office of Integrated Health distributes health and safety alerts that emphasize the unique needs of people with developmental disabilities.

#### *December 2020 Newsletter Highlights*

- **Diabetes During the Holidays:** Overindulging in food during the holiday season is normal, but it is important to take extra precautions if you have diabetes. Get tips on how to manage your carbs while you celebrate.
- **Wellness Corner:** Social wellness means maintaining positive relationships with others. Practicing social wellness can benefit your overall health: Having

a healthy social life can help you live longer and better, mentally and physically.

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/OIHDec2020>

### *January 2021 Newsletter Highlights*

- **Sepsis:** Sepsis is a dangerous condition that occurs when the body's response to an infection damages its own tissues. This could result in septic shock, organ failure, and death. Learn the many symptoms of sepsis and what you should do if you think you or someone you know has it.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine Information:** Get answers to frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, and learn what you can expect after making your vaccine appointment at Walgreens and CVS locations.

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/OIHJan2021>

## Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Office of Community Quality Improvement

DBHDS's Office of Community Quality Improvement seeks to refine the quality of care to individuals with developmental disabilities by standardizing, improving, and monitoring the quality of services in state facilities and community programs.

### *Recruitment Announcement*

- **Regional Quality Councils Needed:** The Office of Community Quality Improvement is recruiting for Regional Quality Councils (RQCs)! RQCs review state and regional data about the quality of developmental disability services. They also identify possible trends, begin regional quality improvement projects, and provide input during quarterly virtual meetings. Ideal RQC candidates are people who are receiving waiver services or who are on the waiver waiting list; their family members may also apply.

To access the recruitment flyer, please visit:  
<https://tinyurl.com/RQCRecruitmentJan2021>

## The Arc of Northern Shenandoah Valley

The Arc is a nonprofit organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### *Resources Announcement*

- **New Resource Alert: Cover Sheets:** Filling out forms and keeping track of important dates for your children can be overwhelming! The Arc of Northern Shenandoah Valley is sharing cover sheets to help parents manage information relating to services and supports. Each cover sheet includes space to take notes and list contacts.

To access the cover sheets, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/new-resource-alert-info>

## Engadget

Engadget is a technology blog network that offers news and reviews of gadgets and consumer electronics.

### *Blog Highlight*

- **Accessibility in Tech Improved in 2020, but More Must Be Done:** The tech industry has improved its efforts to increase inclusivity and accessibility for consumers. For example, many tech companies have made improvements to video conferencing platforms. Features such as captions and sign language interpreters allow more accessibility to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Find out how some of the most popular tech companies and social media platforms scored on accessibility in 2020.

To access the blog post, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/engadget-accessibility-2020>

## Office of Head Start

The Office of Head Start is a federal school readiness program that provides support to low-income children and their families. The program distributes grant funding to agencies, organizations, governments, and school systems that provide Head Start services in local communities across the country. The Office of Head Start helps children succeed by focusing on early learning, health, and family well-being.

### *Bulletin Highlight*

- **Resources for Supporting and Understanding Trauma During COVID-19:** View a variety of tools to help you identify trauma in children and adults. These resources and webinars provide guidance on how to deal with stress and how to practice self-care during the pandemic.

To access the bulletin, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/OHSResourcesDec2020>

## National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI provides advocacy, education, support, and public awareness to individuals and families affected by mental illness.

### *Newsletter Highlights*

- **How to Help Your Child Manage Depression from Coronavirus Isolation:** Children and teens are more likely to experience depression as a result of isolation during the pandemic. As a parent, you might not know if your child is experiencing depression. Find out the warning signs and how to help your child cope.
- **Talking to Your Kids About Psychiatric Medications:** Parents and teens sometimes disagree on whether medications are necessary for mental health issues. Dr. Emily Kline, a specialist in adolescent mental illness, recommends motivational interviewing (MI) to get through these challenging conversations. MI is a technique that allows a person to make their own decisions.
- **The Waiting Room:** A guest blogger writes about supporting her sister, who is dealing with mental illness. She admits the journey is lonely because their immediate family chooses to be absent, but she is committed to being present for her sister.
- **The Mental Health of the Modern Dad:** New research links the mental health of fathers with the quality of their co-parenting relationships. The role of the father has evolved over time, and some dads are struggling to cope with these new demands. They are trying to find balance, often completing tasks once reserved for mothers.
- **Clinging to Hope During My Son's Battle with Addiction:** A guest blogger writes about her experiences as a single mother supporting her son throughout his attention deficit disorder, depression, and drug addiction. She was surprised to discover a lack of resources available to teens fighting depression and addiction in our healthcare system.

To access the item, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/NAMIDec2020>

The Center for Family Involvement (CFI) at Virginia Commonwealth University partners with many organizations to help families become advocates, mentors, and leaders for people with developmental disabilities.

### *Blog Highlight*

- **15 Ways to Get Through the Darkest of Winters:** Between cold temperatures, short days, lockdowns, and social distancing, it might be difficult to spark creativity and connection this winter. CFI shares some ideas on how to get inspired and make the most of the season.

**To access the blog post, please visit:**

<https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.org/2020/12/18/15-ways-to-get-through-the-darkest-of-winters/>

## **ADDitude**

ADDitude is a resource for families and adults living with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. It is also a resource for the professionals who work with them.

### *Newsletter Highlights*

- **Like the Teen You Love:** Adolescence can be an especially challenging time for teens who have ADHD – and their parents. Get tips from a teen coach on how to have a better relationship with your teenager! Changing your communication style and practicing a hands-off approach can have a positive impact on your relationship.
- **Free ADHD Resources for College Students:** A video series and digital course is available to college students who are struggling to manage their medication prescriptions for ADHD. These resources focus on healthy and responsible medication use. Establishing disciplined medication habits now will better prepare your college student for adulthood.
- **Encouraging Teens to Set and Crush Goals:** Do you struggle to motivate your teen with ADHD? If so, learn how to encourage them! Creating rewards, asking questions, and working together are a few things you can do to begin.
- **My Dream College Criteria:** Parents of adolescents with ADHD should explore six important criteria to choose the right college. Look for a school that support your future college student’s learning needs – a good student accessibility office and academic coaching are just as critical as finding the right major and extracurricular activities!

- **“My Teen’s Screen Time is Bananas!”**: Along with cell phones and other devices, virtual learning is causing children to have more screen time than in the past. Read four brief tips on how to limit your teen’s exposure.

To access the item, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/AdditudeDecember2020>

## Child Mind Institute

Child Mind Institute is a nonprofit organization that strives to transform the lives of children, families, and communities affected by mental health history and learning disabilities.

### *Blog Highlight*

- **Helping Kids Understand the Riots at the Capitol**: How can parents talk to their children about what happened in Washington, D.C. on January 6? Like most important conversations, it is helpful to think about using an age-appropriate approach. This blog post shares some tips for talking with your young children, school-age children, and teens.

To access the blog post, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/ChildMindBlogJan2021>

## Disability Scoop

Disability Scoop is a source for developmental disability news. It covers topics such as autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome.

### *Newsletter Highlights*

- **CDC Adds Down Syndrome to COVID-19 “Increased List”**: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now includes Down syndrome as a condition that is high risk for COVID-19. Disability advocates want states to prioritize the COVID-19 vaccination for individuals with developmental disabilities; however, only 10 states have done so. Other high-risk conditions include cancer, obesity, and pregnancy.
- **Newborn Screening May Contain Autism Clues**: Hospitals usually give newborns a routine test to check their hearing. According to a study published in the *Autism Research* journal, this hearing test has the potential to detect whether an infant is on the autism spectrum. Knowing this information at such an early age of the child’s life is important because this is the time when interventions can have the most impact.

- **Feds Say Institution Experimented on Residents with Intellectual Disabilities:** The Iowa Department of Human Services and staff members at the Glenwood Resource Center are under investigation for abusing and experimenting on its residents. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), these acts violate the residents' 14th Amendment rights because staff members performed these acts without residents' knowledge or consent. The DOJ is also determining whether Glenwood has violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Airlines Crack Down on Service Animals:** American Airlines now requires passengers traveling with a service animal to fill out a federal form in advance. Only service animals can travel on planes; support animals and other pets are no longer allowed on flights. Pets that have permission on flights must also meet strict requirements.

To access the newsletter, please visit:

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/emailers/ds210108.html>

### Association of University Centers on Disabilities

AUCD is an organization that supports a network of university-based interdisciplinary programs. The organization envisions a future in which all people, including those living with developmental and other disabilities, are fully included, participating members of their communities.

#### *Survey Announcement*

- **Health Care Video Project:** Take part in a brief survey from AUCD to improve your experience of going to the doctor. Your responses will help educate health care providers on how they can create a more positive experience for you and your loved ones. Please complete the survey by February 5, 2021.

To access the survey, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/AUCDSurvey2021>

### The Arc of Northern Virginia

The Arc is a nonprofit organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

#### *Resources Announcement*

- **Military Benefits, Retirement, and Financial Planning:** Are you an active-duty, reservist, veteran, or military retiree? If so, The Arc of Northern Virginia

welcomes you to join a free virtual event on financial planning. You must register to attend this event.

To access the event page, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/ArcNOVAFinPlanning>

## University of Virginia Supporting Transformative Autism Research Initiative (STAR)

The University of Virginia's STAR initiative focuses on research and interventions to improve the lives of people with autism.

### Highlights

- **Voices of Autism:** If you or a family member has firsthand experience with autism, STAR wants to hear from you! They need participants for the *Voices of Autism* section of their monthly newsletter. You'll have the opportunity to give feedback and attend focus groups.
- **UVA Student Disability Access Center:** Get tips on transitioning high school students on the autism spectrum into the workforce. Debbie Berkeley, Associate Director of the Student Disability Access Center, answers questions and offers advice to parents.
- **Research Opportunity:** If your child is experiencing behavioral challenges and you cannot get behavioral supports because of the pandemic, consider taking part in ECHO in Education: COVID-19 for Families. Project ECHO is a healthcare initiative that allows medical specialists and community providers to share information with each other through a series of virtual discussion sessions. The COVID-19 for Families virtual meetings will cover how caregivers can support their children and provide solutions on getting assistance.
- **Support Opportunity:** STAR is partnering with the Autism Society of Central Virginia to host a virtual support group for teen girls and women on the autism spectrum. This event is on February 3 and is free to attend.

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/STARJanuary2021>

## Eastern Virginia Medical School

EVMS is a public medical school located in Norfolk, Virginia. The school coordinates training through a number of medical centers in the Hampton Roads area.

### Event Announcement



- **11th Annual Insights into Autism:** Are you the parent of a child on the autism spectrum? You are invited to join the Annual Insights into Autism virtual event. Experts will provide guidance and strategies to families with autism on coping with changes surrounding COVID-19. This event is free to attend for parents!

To access the virtual event page, please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/InsightsAut2021Event>

## COVID-19 Resources and Tools

*The following links provide information and resources to families during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- Beyond My Battle: <https://www.beyondmybattle.org/emotional-etoolkit-intro>
- PathPoint Remote Learning Community Channel: <https://www.pathpoint.org/learning-center/>
- Khan Academy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/>
- Travel and Leisure: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts: <https://www.vmfa.museum/learn/>
- Center for Family Involvement (CFI): <https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/covid-19-information-toolkit-041020.pdf>
- Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2020/03/Faith-Leaders-Virtual-Meeting-Resources.pdf>
- Virginia Department of Social Services: <https://covid.virginia.gov/?fbclid=IwAR1b0aifg7vTXkbwZSgJpzZjAgLP89Y5C5doZ7sp-LG3NPP4hrZNZz6tyY4>
- Cover Virginia: [https://coverva.org/covid19/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://coverva.org/covid19/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)
- NAMI: <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals>
- SeniorNavigator: <https://seniornavigator.org/article/74200/important-covid-19-information-older-adults-caregivers-people-disabilities-and>

- disAbilityNavigator: <https://disabilitynavigator.org/article/74237/covid-19-resources-people-disabilities>
- Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM): <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/supporting-individuals-autism-through-uncertain-times>

**Be sure to like the Facebook pages below for additional information.**

- Center for Family Involvement (CFI): <https://www.facebook.com/CenterforFamilyInvolvement/>
- The Arc of Northern Virginia: <https://www.facebook.com/TheArcofNoVA/>
- Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services: <https://www.facebook.com/DBHDS/>
- Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC): <https://www.facebook.com/PEATCVA/>
- Camp Easterseals UCP: <https://www.facebook.com/campeastersealsucp/>
- Charlottesville Region Autism Action Group (CRAAG): <https://www.facebook.com/CRAAG1/>
- The Arc of Central Virginia: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Arc-of-Central-Virginia-149058858468400/>
- The Arc of Northern Shenandoah Valley: <https://www.facebook.com/arc.nsv/>
- Autism Grown Up: <https://www.facebook.com/autismgrownuptogether>
- National Autism Association: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalAutism/>
- NAMI Virginia: <https://www.facebook.com/NAMIVirginia1/>
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)s: <https://www.facebook.com/AUCDnetwork/>
- Autism Society of North Carolina: <https://www.facebook.com/AutismSocietyofNorthCarolina/>
- Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM): <https://www.facebook.com/AFIRMmodulesandresources/>
- Virginia Department of Education (VDOE): <https://www.facebook.com/VDOENews/>
- Disability Scoop: <https://www.facebook.com/disabilityscoop/>

- Virginia Rural Health Association:  
<https://www.facebook.com/VaRuralHealth/>
- Virginia State Parks: <https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaStateParks/>
- Remote Area Medical (RAM): <https://www.facebook.com/RAMUSA.ORG/>
- Ability Unlimited: <https://www.facebook.com/abilityunlimitedVA/>
- Able National Resource Center: <https://www.facebook.com/theABLENRC/>
- Moms in Motion: <https://www.facebook.com/MomsInMotionVA/>
- I'm Determined: <https://www.facebook.com/imdeterminedvdoe/>
- Journey of Hope 4 Autism:  
<https://www.facebook.com/JourneyOfHope4Autism/>
- Massachusetts General Hospital:  
[https://www.facebook.com/massgeneral/?brand\\_redir=1423512124455810](https://www.facebook.com/massgeneral/?brand_redir=1423512124455810)
- Mental Health America (MHA):  
<https://www.facebook.com/mentalhealthamerica/>
- American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD):  
<https://www.facebook.com/aahdus/>
- University of Delaware: <https://www.facebook.com/udelaware>
- Cover Virginia: <https://www.facebook.com/coverva/>
- Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond (DSAGR):  
<https://www.facebook.com/DSAGRRichmond>
- Beyond My Battle: <https://www.facebook.com/beyondmybattle>
- Virginia Family Network:  
<https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaFamilyNetwork>
- Care Connection for Children - Roanoke:  
<https://www.facebook.com/roanokecareconnection>
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities:  
<https://www.facebook.com/VABOARD>
- Sensory Friendly Solutions: <https://www.facebook.com/sensoryfriendly>
- Cooking Autism, Inc.: <https://www.facebook.com/cookingautism.org/>
- Engadget: <https://www.facebook.com/Engadget>
- Office of Head Start: <https://www.facebook.com/HeadStartgov>
- Eastern Virginia Medical School: <https://www.facebook.com/EVMSedu>



**Thank you for reading the IFSP Digest!**

IFSP is always looking for more newsletter recommendations! What organizations would you like to see featured? What should we subscribe to? Please send your suggestions to [ifspcom@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:ifspcom@dbhds.virginia.gov).

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Virginia Department of  
Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

