



THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

IFSP Digest

February 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.

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

We know that navigating the developmental disability system can be hard for families. Not sure where to start? Read our “IFSP: First Steps” guide to learn about the IFSP program at DBHDS, and other important resources, supports, and services offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia! Visit <https://tinyurl.com/IFSPFirstSteps>, or use your mobile device to scan the QR code on the right.



IFSP-Funding Program Update: At this time, there are no new updates on the FY 2021 [IFSP-Funding Program](#). All funding updates will be sent via this email listserv and posted on the [My Life, My Community](#) website. Click the link for the [most recent announcement](#) about IFSP-Funding.

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.

Newsletter Highlight

- **Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (NMS):** Learn common complications associated with NMS, as well as symptoms and treatment.

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/OIHFeb2021>

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes health, keeping the world safe, and serving the vulnerable. The organization is responsible for international public health efforts.

COVID-19 Update

- **Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Weekly Epidemiological Update and Weekly Operational Update:** WHO shares the latest regional, national, and global statistics on COVID-19 cases and deaths, and other information related to the pandemic.

To access the report, please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/WHOweeklyupdateCOVID19>

Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a sports organization committed to empowering people with intellectual and physical disabilities to become physically fit, productive, and respected members of society through sports training and competition.

Story Highlight

- **The Continued Push for Inclusion: Black History Month 2021:** For over the past four decades, the U.S. has celebrated Black History Month every February to honor the achievements and contributions made by African Americans who often go unacknowledged. Watch videos to hear from Black Special Olympics athletes, youth leaders, and staff members as they discuss how their work aligns with social justice in the Black community.

To access the videos, please visit:

<https://www.specialolympics.org/stories/athletes/the-continued-push-for-inclusion-black-history-month-2021>

Coalition for Authorized Generics (CAG)

CAG promotes the awareness, quality, and value of Authorized Generics throughout the U.S. healthcare system. CAG advocates for policies, processes, and standards that support the availability and accessibility of authorized generic medicines to patients.

Resource Announcement

- **Product Finder:** Authorized Generic medications are generic versions of brand-name medications. Unlike Authorized Generics, generic medications are not authorized by brand name manufacturers. People who need medication might find Authorized Generics to be a cost-effective alternative, and a closer option to brand name medicines. Use this helpful tool to learn the Authorized Generic names of brand-name medications.

To access the tool, please visit:

<https://www.authorizedgenericmedicines.org/product-finder>

University of Virginia Supporting Transformative Autism Research Initiative

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

Newsletter Highlights

- **Voices of Autism: Building Relationships with Brendan Oakes:** Watch STAR's conversation with Brendan Oakes, an adult with autism and a Charlottesville native. Brendan gives advice on how to develop and maintain friendships. He discusses the importance of accepting others who may be different from you, where to go to meet new people, and how to stay connected with others. If you or a family member enjoyed hearing from Brendan, consider contacting STAR to be featured in *Voices of Autism!*
- **How Do the Brains of Children with ASD and Their Parents Communicate During Social Activities?:** UVA neuroscience researcher and educator Tanya

Evans, Ph.D. talks about the results of her study on parent-child brain synchrony. The purpose of the study is to understand the social development of children on the autism spectrum by how they interact with their parents. UVA is currently looking for children aged 6 to 11 years old who are with or without autism, and one parent to participate in the study.

- **IEP Services During COVID-19:** Is your child receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP)? STAR wants to hear from you in an online survey! The purpose of the survey is to understand how the pandemic has affected the way students receive special education services.

To access the newsletter, please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/STARFeb2021Newsletter>

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

- **"My Child Hates School — Help!":** School can cause frustration in children with ADHD because the way they learn is different from their peers without ADHD. Teachers and parents can help by meeting children where they are, and by focusing on their strengths. Get five more tips to help your child enjoy learning.
- **Help for Kids Who Act... Then Think:** Some students with ADHD talk over others or blurt out answers in the classroom. This is due to their difficulty with neurological self-regulation, which is the brain's inability to control behavior and emotions. Learn how you can help students manage these impulses. Solutions such as posting a list of rules and adding incentives can help to make a difference!
- **Understanding Dysgraphia:** Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder that affects a person's writing and fine motor skills. Dysgraphia is a learning disability that can be common in people with ADHD. Get information on the symptoms, causes, and treatment for this disorder.
- **"How Can Anyone Do All This Reading?":** Some students with ADHD find it challenging to keep up with the amount of reading required in college.

Discover how to be strategic in your reading approach! Also, find out if your university offers special accommodations, such as text-to-speech software or free apps.

- **When Screen Time Invades Homework Time:** Cell phones are a major distraction for kids when it comes to getting their homework done. Find out how to keep young ones focused and on task to get their assignments completed.

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/AdditudeFebruary2021>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The CDC is a federal agency that strives to protect the health of Americans.

Resource Announcement

- **American Heart Month 2021:** In honor of American Heart Month, the CDC created three toolkits on hypertension. These toolkits help bring awareness to cardiovascular health and high blood pressure. Hypertension is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Learn how to control hypertension with these helpful resources.

To access the resources, please visit:

https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/american_heart_month.htm

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)

PEATC is a parent information and training center serving families and professionals of children with disabilities in Virginia.

Newsletter Highlights

- **Featured Video: Developmental Screenings:** Do you have questions about your child's development? Watch PEATC's informational video on what a developmental screening is, why it is important, and what questions to expect during a screening.
- **New Resource for Families:** The National Training and Technical Assistance Center for Child, Youth & Family Mental Health (NTTAC) is launching a new mental health website! Check out NTTAC's mental health resource library and their mental health trainings for families.

- **Upcoming Workshops and Training Opportunities:** Is your family a military family? Register for PEATC's March workshops for military-connected families on special education, autism, Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), and IEPs!

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/PEATCFeb2021>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

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

Blog Highlight

- **Understanding the Symptoms of BPD:** A guest blogger and mental health professional writes that the symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) are often stigmatized. This stigmatization can lead to inaccurate diagnoses and inaccessible treatments. She also writes that some individuals with BPD have experienced some form of abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment sometimes even as early as childhood, and shares how these experiences and symptom management strategies have shaped her own life with BPD.

To access the blog post, please visit: <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/February-2021/Understanding-the-Symptoms-of-BPD>

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.

Newsletter Highlights

- **Dating During the Pandemic:** The lack of social interaction during COVID-19 creates challenges for adolescents who are starting to date and maintain relationships. Clinical psychologists provide expert advice on how parents can be supportive to their teenagers.
- **How to Talk to Your Kids About Sexting:** Help your child understand the dangers associated with sexting. Sharing provocative pictures and messages

could result in a criminal record, and shared images could get into the hands of the wrong person.

- **Teens and Romantic Relationships:** Teenagers don't always show it, but they value their parents' guidance when it comes to dating! Your advice can help them navigate this experience. Start by sharing this helpful list of dating do's and don'ts.
- **Tips for Communicating with Your Teen:** The teenage years can be a tough stage for both parents and teens. This is a time that teens want to express their own independence, and sometimes this means pulling away from their parents. But parents can learn to support teens by practicing skills such as listening and showing trust.
- **How to Talk to Kids About Sex and Consent:** Educate your children about consent by encouraging them to set and respect boundaries. Prepping kids with this knowledge early on can help them understand consent in the context of sex once they are older.

To access the newsletter, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/ChildMindFeb2021>

COVID-19 Resources and Tools

COVID-19 Information and Resources: While IFSP has done our best to share information on COVID-19 resources, this information is not a substitute for medical advice. Stay up to date and visit <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>.

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

- SeniorNavigator: <https://seniornavigator.org/article/74200/important-covid-19-information-older-adults-caregivers-and-families>
- disAbilityNavigator: <https://disabilitynavigator.org/article/74237/covid-19-resources-people-disabilities>
- Center for Family Involvement (CFI): https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/covid-19-information_toolkit_041020.pdf
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities: <https://www.vaboard.org/>
- NAMI: <http://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals>

- Mental Health America: <https://mhanational.org/covid19/>
- Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM): <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/supporting-individuals-autism-through-uncertain-times>
- 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/>
- Cover Virginia: <https://coverva.org/covid19/>
- PathPoint Remote Learning Community Channel: <https://www.pathpoint.org/learning-center>
- Conscious Discipline: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/covid19/>
- Khan Academy: <https://www.khanacademy.org>
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts: <https://www.vmfa.museum/learn/>
- Travel and Leisure: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

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.

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- Eastern: <https://www.facebook.com/IFSPeasternregion/>

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Virginia Department of
Behavioral Health &
Developmental Services

