



*A CONFERENCE FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
AND THE PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH THEM*

Saturday, November 2, 2024
Hylton High School
14051 Spriggs Road
Woodbridge, VA 22193
8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

REGISTRATION FEES:

The charge per person for the conference is \$25.00 for self-advocates and full-time students, \$60.00 for parents, and \$60.00 for professionals. This includes registration, a continental breakfast, and a box lunch. Special early bird registration is \$20.00 for self-advocates and full-time students, \$45.00 for parents, and \$45.00 for professionals. **You must register online by October 1, 2024** to qualify for the special rate. Scholarships are available for childcare as well as the conference. For more information, please email jrussell@arcgpw.org. A half-day attendance option is available again this year; \$30.00 per person includes continental breakfast, the keynote speaker, and a choice of workshop in Session I. Childcare costs remain the same.

ONLINE REGISTRATION:

Online registration is available at www.arcgpw.org if you are paying via credit card or have a promotional code. By registering online, you will only make one selection for each workshop session; if a workshop is full, you will be unable to make that selection. You will receive an email confirmation. Please contact jrussell@arcgpw.org with questions.

Please indicate on the registration form any special needs you may require. **Requests for Spanish or other foreign language or sign language interpreters should be made by October 1, 2024. After this date, accommodations cannot be guaranteed. We are unable to accommodate special diet requests.** If you require a special diet, we recommend you bring your own food.

CHILDCARE:

Childcare will be available at the conference site; however, space is limited to 60 children. A waiting list will be maintained once the maximum number of 60 is reached. There will be a \$15.00 per child charge for the day. We cannot provide childcare for children who require total one-on-one attention.

If you need to cancel childcare, please do so as early as possible so another child may have your placement.

No lunch or snacks will be provided, so pack and clearly label your child's food. Juice and water will be provided. **Do not include peanut butter or other nut products in your child's lunch due to food allergies of some of the children attending.**

EXHIBITORS/VENDORS:

There will be exhibitor/vendor booths at the conference. Some will have items for sale. Bring cash or a checkbook for potential purchases. Not all vendors accept credit cards.

ART EXHIBIT:

Works of art created by individuals with disabilities will be on display during the conference in the **Enclosed Dining Area**. These works were crafted during **Art with Ms. Apryl** classes hosted by The Arc of Greater Prince William's Recreation Program. Some of the items will be for sale.



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SCHEDULE

<i>8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.</i>	Registration - Continental Breakfast - Exhibits
<i>9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.</i>	Welcome and Introduction Karen L. Smith, Executive Director The Arc of Greater Prince William/INSIGHT, Inc. Keynote Address Joe La Belle “Artificial Intelligence and Special Education”
<i>11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.</i>	Session I: Concurrent Workshop Sessions
<i>12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.</i>	Lunch - Exhibits - Networking
<i>1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</i>	Session II: Concurrent Workshop Sessions

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Joe La Belle

“ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION”

In this presentation, Joe La Belle will explore how to utilize Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) in Special Education, advocacy, and supporting the disability community. He will discuss practical approaches to using A.I. to advance work in the disability community. Joe La Belle is a pioneering figure at the intersection of A.I. and education, serving as the Director of Programs Impact at Family Network on Disabilities in Florida. He oversees four key programs and lends his expertise to OSEP-funded Technical Assistance Centers, enhancing support for students with disabilities through technology. Notably, Mr. La Belle has played a crucial role in advocating for A.I.'s role in education, engaging with the Secretary of Education, presenting to the U.S. Department of Education staff, and sharing insights nationwide. His efforts focus on how A.I. can personalize learning and increase accessibility. In addition to his professional achievements, Mr. La Belle is a celebrated speaker and coach, drawing on his personal experiences with ADHD and learning disabilities to inspire change and advocate for inclusive educational practices.



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SESSION I WORKSHOPS

1. Finding Resilience at the Intersection of Disability and Trauma

Kelly Henderson, Ph. D.

Many individuals with disabilities also experience individual and systemic stressors that may be traumatizing and dysregulating. This workshop will present video and print resources for families and professionals. Participants will receive tools for understanding and addressing the crossroads of trauma and disability and for boosting resilience in the face of adversity. Kelly Henderson, Executive Director of Formed Families Forward, is a former teacher of students with emotional and behavioral disorders and has worked in national/federal special education policy and research settings. Dr. Henderson's family is formed in part through foster care and adoption.

2. Legal Matters in Special Needs Planning

Michael Toobin

Michael Toobin has been practicing law in Virginia since 1974 with an emphasis on estate planning, special needs issues, and probate. In this presentation, Mr. Toobin will discuss two important legal issues: special needs trusts and guardianship. He will explain how the special needs trust is an integral part of a complete family estate plan, the pros and cons of guardianship, and the legal process to obtain guardianship.

3. Helping Kids (and Parents) Manage Their Anger

James Crist, Ph.D.

Dr. James Crist will address reasons why kids get angry and why they have trouble managing their emotions, the three components of anger, misperceptions about anger, how biology affects anger, how psychiatric problems can complicate controlling anger, the role of parents, the Love and Logic perspective, and how to help your kids manage their anger without losing your cool as well. Dr. Crist is the Clinical Director of the Child and Family Counseling Center in Woodbridge, VA, and the author of nine self-help books for kids and teens. His tenth book, which will be published in 2025, is for parents on how to effectively parent angry children.

4. Self-Determination: The Family Perspective

Nickie Brandenburger & Youth Leaders

Nickie Brandenburger is Family Specialist for Virginia's *I'm Determined* team as well as Co-Director of the Center for Family Involvement at Virginia Commonwealth University's Partnership for People with Disabilities. Family members are an important part of students' success no matter their age. During this session, there will be an overview of the *I'm Determined* project and attendees will have a chance to hear from youth leaders on how their family's support has helped them become more self-determined.

5. SPIRIT Club: Accessible Fitness for All

SPIRIT Club

Learn how the SPIRIT Club makes fitness accessible for all and join in a fun workout. Bring your energy, water, and some SPIRIT and have fun with fitness! SPIRIT Club, founded in 2011, offers supportive fitness programs that are universally designed to support people of ALL abilities. The club puts a focus on functional fitness and movements that are used in our daily lives with their own spin to make the workouts fun and engaging for members and supporters. The Club offers both personal/partner training and group classes, in-person (select locations), and virtually (everywhere).

6. Exploring the Benefits of Visual Art

Apryl Boersma

Apryl Boersma has experience both as a school art teacher (4-12) and as a children's book illustrator. She currently has the joy of teaching art to young children and adults with special needs while being a mother of three including an adult son (AJ) with Williams Syndrome. Ms. Boersma will discuss ways art can benefit those with special needs, including methods caregivers or teachers can support the creative process. These techniques will be put into practice as participants create a work of art.

7. Virginia's Medicaid Waivers: What Every Family Needs to Know

Lucy Cantrell

Virginia Medicaid Waivers offer a range of supports and services to children and adults with disabilities and their families. They pay for help in the home and community: medical assistance, crisis intervention, employment, family support, and more. A key aspect of waivers is that they do not consider parent or household income when determining eligibility. Lucy Cantrell will provide an overview of Waiver programs including eligibility, application process, waiver services, and recent legislative changes. Working for many years in the disability field, currently at The Arc of Virginia, Ms. Cantrell equips people with disabilities and their families to have the information, resources, and advocacy skills to solve problems and access what they need to live "A Life Like Yours." The Arc of Virginia is the state's leading developmental disability organization.

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SESSION I, CONTINUED

8. *Turning 18 in Virginia: What Individuals with Disabilities Need to Consider*

Kendra Wormley

An 18-year-old is legally considered an adult in Virginia and can make his/her own legal, financial, medical, and educational decisions. For some individuals with disabilities, this will not be an issue, but others may need support. This workshop will share basic information about things that need to be considered as your loved one turns 18. Kendra Wormley is a native of Newport News, VA, with a degree from the VCU School of Education in Therapeutic Recreation. For more than 15 years, she has worked with families, professionals, and organizations to provide supports for students and adults with developmental disabilities to increase their independence and improve opportunities to actively participate in their community.

9. *Helping Your Child with At-Home Work*

Tracy Lee

Tracy Lee is currently the Coordinator of Family Engagement for the Department of Special Populations at the Virginia Department of Education. Additionally, she has been a teacher, a licensed preschool director, a product developer, the co-author of a best-selling parenting book (*1-2-3 Magic for Kids*), and a speaker on parenting and education-related topics nationwide. This session will provide parents with concrete strategies for assisting their child with learning study strategies and completing at-home work.

10. *Parent Partnerships*

Jennifer Ruckner, MS CCC-SLP

How do you get the most out of your therapeutic experience? Parent partnerships are the key. Intervention isn't found behind the four walls of the therapy room. Come learn more about how therapists and parents team up to form a therapeutic alliance. Jennifer Ruckner, MS CCC-SLP is the owner of Tots To Teens Therapy Services, Inc. In 2008, she and co-founder, Patti Minicucci, created Tots To Teens Therapy Services to provide speech and language resources in an interdisciplinary approach to the families of Northern Virginia.

11. *The Perfect Storm: ADHD, Autism, and Sensory Processing*

Dr. Scott Stachelek & Dr. Jesse Ventoso

Drs. Scott & Jesse are pediatric and health experts trained specifically in sensory processing struggles. The main premise of *The Perfect Storm* is to educate parents about different causative factors that can lead to their child's struggle in the ADHD, ADD, and Autism world. Different factors - including maternal stress, birth trauma, and how that stress snowballs - is an eye-opening experience for parents across the globe because it is the first time where all of these pieces are finally put together.

12. *Ending the Silence about Mental Health*

Dr. Brandynicole Brooks

Dr. Brandynicole Brooks is a licensed clinical social worker with eighteen years of experience providing trauma-informed crisis intervention, service coordination, and counseling/therapeutic support to vulnerable populations. She is the Training Program Administrator for the Washington, DC, Child and Family Services Agency and an adjunct professor of social work at the University of the District of Columbia. Learn early intervention strategies for potential mental health concerns in youth: warning signs, facts and statistics, how to talk with your child, and how to work with medical professionals and school staff. Hear the story of a young adult in recovery from a mental health condition.

13. *Driving Progress with SMART Goals: A Workshop for Empowering Educators and Parents*

Samantha Thomas & Amy Wall

Unlock the full potential of IEPs in this hands-on workshop where SMART goals meet real-world application. Perfect for both parents and educators, this session will equip you with the skills to write goals that are not only effective but also actionable. The presenters will show you how to critically assess existing goals, advocate for necessary changes, and ensure every goal is aligned with the individual needs of your student. With interactive exercises and expert insights, you'll leave empowered to drive meaningful progress in your student's educational journey. Don't miss this opportunity to turn goals into growth! Amy Wall and Samantha Thomas are the co-founders of Be the Light Education, an organization dedicated to empowering parents and educators to enhance their skills in special education through collaboration, presentations, and consultation.

14. *Moms Sharing with Other Moms*

Susan Clarke, Karen Darley, & Heather Trammell

Calling all moms! Join a panel of experienced moms for positive sharing on parenting our children with developmental/intellectual disabilities. All ages, all stages are welcome! Susan Clarke is a member of the Circle of Support Conference Committee, recently retired from PWC Early Intervention, and the parent of Nicholas, a recent graduate. Karen Darley is an editor and published writer. In addition, she is an advocate for her young adult daughter, Sydney, who has a cognitive/medical disability. Heather Trammell is the parent of two young adults (one with Down syndrome and one on the autism spectrum). She has served as the Director of Family Support for the Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia since 2003. Parenting and supporting parents is her jam!



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SESSION II WORKSHOPS

15. Who Let the ANTS Out? Managing Anxiety and Negative Thoughts

Sonia Hinds

Sonia Hinds is an advanced practice nurse psychotherapist and registered play therapist supervisor. She has provided therapy to children and families for over 30 years in southern Maryland. Anxiety will be discussed in addition to negative self-talk as cognitive distortion. What to say to the ANTs (automatic negative thoughts) to take away their power will be discussed and practiced.

16. Introduction to ABLEnow

Angie Kelly

More independence, greater financial security and a better quality of life – that's the future ABLEnow is building. Join us for an information session to discover the advantages of ABLE accounts and the national ABLEnow program. Answers to these questions, and more, will be provided: What are ABLE accounts? Who is eligible? How can I use the money in an ABLE account? What are the features and benefits of ABLEnow? How can I learn more and open an account? Angie Kelley is a representative from ABLEnow, a national ABLE savings program offered by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

17. Sensory Processing: Understanding Sensory Systems to Provide a Foundation for Learning

**Jennifer Faherty, MS, OTR/L &
Dr. Bernadette Spoth, OTD**

Jennifer Faherty, MS, OTR/L is a Clinical Manager at Pediatric Achievements, and has been a pediatric occupational therapist for 9 years. She specializes in sensory processing, trauma-informed care, child mental health, feeding therapy, and adolescent/adult therapy services. She has been a speaker at numerous conferences and workshops, and is on the Board of Advisors for the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Northern Virginia Community College. Dr. Bernadette Spoth, OTD is a pediatric occupational therapist at Pediatric Achievements who has advanced clinical knowledge and experience in sensory processing, feeding therapy, and executive functions. She is currently in the process of getting academic research published in a professional journal. Ms. Faherty and Dr. Spoth will describe all 8 sensory systems in the body along with activities that can help children engage each system, which is a foundation for learning. They will also discuss "red flags" that might indicate when a child is not processing sensory information well enough to interact within their environment.

18. Parenting with Purpose: Techniques for Taking Control of Your Time

Erin Clemens

This workshop will talk about various strategies to manage time as a busy parent. Erin Clemens will cover how to better delegate, how to banish distractions, ways to prioritize and organize tasks, why self-care should be a priority, and how to take control of your time. "I don't have time" is no longer an excuse, and attendees will feel empowered to better control how they are choosing to use their time. Erin Clemens is a pediatric occupational therapist and the founder and CEO of Pediatric Achievements. She has spent the past 2 decades assuming various roles, titles, and responsibilities which have all required effective time management and organizational strategies. She presents to groups and coaches individuals on how to live with purpose, create goals and reach them, delegate, perform time audits, and aim for the most efficient use of time in order to truly enjoy life!

19. Understanding the Dynamics of Cyberbullying Technology and Our Youth

Tina Norris

Tina Norris is the Family Engagement Specialist at PEATC. She specializes in family engagement, bullying prevention, and self-care and wellness. Tina is a certified Bullying Prevention Specialist, Healing Centered Engagement Practitioner, and ACT Raising Safe Kids Violence Prevention Facilitator. She is a member of NAFSCE, the International Bullying Prevention Association, and served on the OSEP Parent Center Equity Workgroup. Technology has amplified cyberbullying, with individuals with disabilities being most vulnerable. This interactive workshop will cover the types of cyberbullying, warning signs, and motivations behind it. Ms. Norris will also provide tips and strategies for addressing cyberbullying, especially when it involves individuals with disabilities.

***DON'T FORGET EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION:
BY OCTOBER 1, 2024 THE REGISTRATION
FEE IS \$20 FOR SELF-ADVOCATES & FULL-
TIME STUDENTS AND \$45 FOR PARENTS &
PROFESSIONALS!***



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SESSION II, CONTINUED

20. The Power of Data

Melissa Lebling

The power of data will help family members learn about the importance of data and how to participate in important data discussions that impact children with disabilities and their families. Learn about *Look! Think! Act!*, a strategy for using data when solving problems, making recommendations or decisions, or identifying next steps when working with the Early Intervention or IEP team. Melissa Lebling is the Family Support and Outreach Specialist for Formed Families Forward, and is a mother to seven children, 4 adopted through foster care. Ms. Lebling has years of experience in early childhood education and is passionate about working with educators and parents to help them understand the complexity of children, their behaviors, and how to meet them where they are.

21. AAC and Me: Communication and Body Autonomy

Kristin Molloy

Kristin Molloy is a pediatric Speech Language Pathologist who has been working in the field for 15 years. She has experience working in the settings of Early Intervention, private practice, public schools, and teletherapy. Ms. Molloy is passionate about empowering clients, caregivers, and fellow therapists. The presentation will cover how to implement a client- and family-centered approach to Alternative and Augmentative Communication while respecting both communication autonomy and body autonomy. Who should use AAC? What is AAC? When and Where to use AAC? will be addressed. Why and how to implement an approach that respects body and communication autonomy will be presented.

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22. Tools in the Capacity Toolkit

Jennifer Crane

Knowing what legal documents you need, when to use them, and how to get them is crucial for all persons. When it comes to matters of capacity, it is imperative to understand what your options are. This workshop will analyze powers of attorney, guardianship proceedings, and other related documents so the attendee understands their purpose, acquisition, limitations, interplay with other documents, and so much more. Jenn Crane is a trusts and estates attorney with Odin Feldman Pittleman who focuses her practice on special needs and elder law. She entered into private practice in 2007. In 2022, Ms. Crane was awarded the Accredited Estate Planner Designation (AEP®) by The National Association of Estate Planners and Councils, and in 2023, she was named a Qualified Master Counselor in the field of Trusts and Estates by the Virginia Law Foundation/Virginia CLE. Ms. Crane teaches at both the undergraduate and law school levels. When she isn't working, her favorite place is with her husband, five children, and the greatest dogs on the planet, no matter where that place is.

23. The Perfect Storm: ADHD, Autism, and Sensory Processing

Dr. Scott Stachelek & Dr. Jesse Ventoso

Drs. Scott and Jesse are pediatric and health experts trained specifically in sensory processing struggles. The main premise of The Perfect Storm is to educate parents about different causative factors that can lead to their child's struggle in the ADHD, ADD, and Autism world. Different factors - including maternal stress, birth trauma, and how that stress snowballs - is an eye-opening experience for parents across the globe because it is the first time where all of these pieces are finally put together.

24. Autism and Sleep

Ashley Walters

Basic information on why sleep is an issue with children who have autism will be provided in this session, including some strategies to help children with autism sleep better. Ashley Walters went through this journey with her son's sleep issues from infancy until he was two years old. It motivated her to help others when there was no other help to be found.



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SESSION II, CONTINUED

25. *Understanding the Impact of Prenatal Exposure to Alcohol and Other Drugs*

Stacia Stribling & Kelly Henderson

Stacia Stribling is the Deputy Director and Kelly Henderson is the Executive Director of Formed Families Forward, a family led non-profit that supports foster, adoptive, and kinship families raising youth and young adults with specialized needs. This workshop will describe the symptoms seen in children prenatally exposed to alcohol and other drugs. Considering the resulting challenges these children encounter through the lens of a brain-based disability, the presenters will discuss approaches and ideas for how to best support them at home and in school.

26. *The Power of Music in our Circle of Support*

Mary Shapiro

Come and let yourself play in this hands-on workshop! Participants will explore the power of music to bridge gaps and bring people together by sharing stories, singing our hearts out, and co-creating a song. No experience necessary - all experience levels welcome (in all ways). Discover how music can create connections and leave with new skills, a new song that reflects our Circle of Support, and a kazoo. After over 30 years of professional experience as a performer, songwriter, and educator, *Mary Shapiro Music* became *Sounds of Hope Live*. "SOHL is more about the power of music (and less about me)," Mary says. "SOHL grew out of witnessing the power of music in my parents' journeys with dementia and depression." SOHL loves serving people with special needs and creating inter-generational connections with music lessons, personalized song writing, and the power of live therapeutic music at your home, business, or hospital bed.

27. *Know your Rights: Medicaid Service Denials & Appeals*

John Cimino

This workshop will cover the rights of Medicaid members when their Medicaid services are denied, reduced, or revoked. We will discuss the right to adequate notice and to a meaningful opportunity to appeal. While the workshop will focus on DD Waiver services, it will be broadly applicable to all Medicaid denials and appeals. John Cimino is an attorney and disability policy professional. He frequently advises individuals and families on matters related to Medicaid member rights and represents Medicaid members in fair hearing appeals.

28. *A Parent's Guide to Building Friendships for Your Loved Ones*

Joy Ocetnik & Rashawn Webster

Joy Ocetnik is the Director of Support Services for The Arc of Greater Prince William. She has been with The Arc for 30 years. At The Arc for 14 years, Rashawn Webster is currently the Recreation Inclusion Coordinator. This dynamic duo has presented locally and statewide on the benefits of recreation and how it can improve the physical and mental well-being of individuals with ID/DD.

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**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS YEAR'S
CIRCLE OF SUPPORT CONFERENCE.
TELL US HOW WE CAN IMPROVE IN THE FUTURE.
HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
JRUSSELL@ARCGPW.ORG**