

Teaching Kindness to Children who are Neurodiverse

National Random Acts of Kindness Day on February 17 is a perfect opportunity to explore kindness ideals in a fun and positive way. Parents and caregivers play a powerful role by modeling kindness every day. Small actions, such as using kind words, helping others, or praising gentle efforts show children how kindness looks and feels. Activities such as sharing toys, comforting others, helping a sibling, making cards, or helping work on community projects provide safe ways for children to practice kindness and build confidence. These small acts can create ripples that reach far beyond home and school. Kindness is a skill that grows through modeling, practice, and encouragement. Children who are neurodiverse are sometimes underestimated because their challenges affect how they communicate or respond socially. Some children may need extra support, such as clear examples, repetition, or structured activities, but with patience and empathy, they can thrive. Tools like social stories are great for teaching why kindness matters and how actions affect others. Simple stories about sharing, helping, or including friends can spark meaningful conversations. All children can benefit from these tools and supports when learning how to be kind.

Upcoming FEC Events



Special Education Navigation Training: Join us on Wednesday, February 18th

Join us for an IEP Deeper Dive . Learn about your top 10 IEP rights!

Zoom sessions: 9:30 AM–10:30 AM or 6:00 PM–7:00 PM.

Parent/Caregiver Support Group: Join us on Wednesday, February 25th

Join other parents/caregivers of neurodiverse children to offer mutual support.

Zoom sessions: 9:30 AM–10:30 AM or 6:00 PM–7:00 PM.

Email fec@changingtidesfs.org for Zoom links to the training or support group.

Teaching More Than Academics: SEL for Every Learner

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process that helps students build important life skills such as understanding their emotions, managing stress, building relationships, and making responsible choices—skills that are especially important for students with disabilities. SEL provides and teaches supportive tools that help students cope, self-regulate, and ask for help when needed. In special education, academic challenges can sometimes lead to frustration, anxiety, or low self-confidence; SEL helps students build positive self-images, strengthen relationships with peers and teachers, and learn strategies such as calming breaths, recognizing emotions, and using affirmations. SEL goals may be included in a student’s IEP under social-emotional or behavioral goals and sometimes will be connected to a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). While SEL does not replace mental health services, it plays a key role in helping students feel supported, build resilience, and succeed in school and in everyday life.

SPECIAL EDUCATION
acronyms and terms

SEL helps people understand and manage emotions, build relationships, make responsible choices, and succeed in school, work, and life.

Visit our FEC Resource Padlet for a variety of information on Special Education, Parenting, Early Start, plus Local and Virtual Events and Training Resources. Check in often to stay up to date!

Click or Scan for FEC Resource Padlet



Phone (707) 444-8293



Betty Kwan Chinn Homeless Foundation

Community Spotlight

This month, we're excited to spotlight the **Betty Chinn Foundation**, a wonderful local organization founded in 2018. Since the 1980s, long before there was a foundation, Betty Chinn has been providing compassionate support and services to thousands of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Humboldt County. Services include but are not limited to transitional housing, case management, career coaching, stabilization services, after-school care, wellness courses, and referrals to community resources. Families can participate in the **Children & Family Services After School Program**, which gives kids in grades K-5 a safe place to learn and have fun. The program includes homework support, meals, field trips, and enriching activities. Best of all, no referral, prior authorization, or payment is required, and language assistance is available upon request. For more information on how to sign up for services, please contact (707) 407-3833 Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm or send email to~ bchinn@bettychinn.org

Parenting Tip ~ Self-Care Is Essential

Now that the holidays are over, it is a great time to do some self-care. Parenting a child with special needs can be exhausting, so caring for yourself is essential. *Here are 5 quick self-care tips:*

- 1. Lean on Your Supports-** Connect with other parents and accept help when offered. Ask for specific support-like a quick errand or childcare for an hour. The Family Empowerment Center offers a Parent Support group every 3rd Wednesday of the month.
- 2. Take Micro-Breaks** - Use small pockets of time when you can find them to do some deep breathing exercises or to have a quiet cup of coffee/tea to reset and reduce stress.
- 3. Use Respite Care** - Trained respite providers can give you short-term relief so you can rest, recharge, or attend your own appointments. Changing Tides offers a respite program, but the Redwood Coast Regional Center must refer clients. Contact your RCRC service coordinator at (707) 445-0893 for more information.
- 4. Stay Mindful of Your Needs** - Notice your triggers—like lack of sleep or sensory overload—and use mindfulness tools from the Mayo Clinic to help you stay grounded. [Click here for tools](#)
- 5. Prioritize Basic Health-** Maintain consistent bedtime, eat well, and aim for at least 15- minutes of daily movement, like walking, to support your energy.

We Value Your Feedback!



Please Click or Scan the Code to visit our FEC Virtual Suggestion Board and let us know what you would like to see more of at the Family Empowerment Center for Disabilities

Not on our mailing list?
Join by sending a request to
FEC@changingtidesfs.org

Bilingual Spanish Services Available
Community Resource and Referrals
Contact us for more information about our services!

Local Events for Kids & Families

FREE~ Humboldt Repair Cafe~ February 8th, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, Arcata Community Center ~ 321 Dr MLK Jr. Prkwy, Arcata. Free repairs for items like electronics, clothing, and bikes. Help keep things out of landfills.

FREE- No Spoilers Book Club~ February 11th, 4:00-4:45 PM, Arcata Library~500 7th St. Arcata. Open to kids 7-12. Come with your book recommendations and do book-themed crafts and activities.

FREE - Family Arts Day~ February 14th, (Every 2nd Saturday) 2:00-4:00 PM, Morris Graves Museum of Art. 636 F Street, Corner of 7th & F Streets, Eureka. Hands on workshops. Go make some art! Fun for the whole family.

FREE ~ “Discovery Museum Sensory Night” in partnership with Humboldt Autism Alliance (Every 4th Tuesday of the month) from 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM~ 612 G St. Eureka. Please call (707) 443-9694 or click here to [SIGN UP](#).