

April 2026

# FEC Family Empowerment Center for Disabilities NEWSLETTER



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and it reminds us all of the importance of continuing to support families and students in special education. At the Changing Tides Family Empowerment Center for Disabilities, we support families as they navigate the special education system. We can help you understand your child’s IEP or 504 plan, organize important paperwork, explain your rights under the special education laws, prepare for meetings, and even attend with you as a supportive second set of ears. We provide monthly training on special education, a monthly Parent/Caregiver Support group, and one-on-one support by appointment. We want to help you feel confident in advocating for your child. Our services are free to all Humboldt County residents who reach out, no referral required. Whether you’re just getting started or already have a plan in place, we’re here to support you. At the heart of our work is the belief that when families feel informed, supported, and heard, children are better able to succeed.



## Upcoming FEC Events



**Special Education Navigation Training:** Join us on Zoom on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> for an IEP basics class, which is an overview of IEPs. Sessions are: 9:30 AM–10:30 AM or 6:00 PM–7:00 PM.

**Parent/Caregiver Support Group:** Join us on Zoom on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> to share understanding, encouragement, and support with other parents and caregivers of neurodiverse children.

Sessions are: 9:30 AM–10:30 AM or 6:00 PM–7:00 PM.

Email [fec@changingtidesfs.org](mailto:fec@changingtidesfs.org) for Zoom links to the training or support group.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** is a lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that affects how a person communicates, interacts, and experiences the world. Because autism is a spectrum, each child is unique and may need different levels of support. Some children may face challenges with social communication, reading body language, making friends, or managing sensory sensitivities. At the same time, all autistic children have wonderful strengths, such as creativity, strong interests, and a unique way of thinking. At its heart, understanding autism means recognizing both the challenges and the strengths, so every child can be supported, valued, and allowed to thrive.

That is why Autism Awareness Month in April is so important.



Visit our Family Empowerment Center for Disabilities Resource Padlet for helpful information on Special Education, Parenting, Early Start services, training opportunities, and both local and virtual Events. Check back regularly to stay informed and up to date!



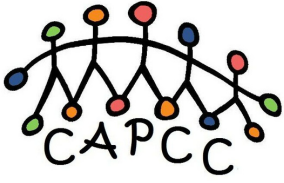
Click or Scan for FEC Resource Padlet

Open Monday-Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM  
Closed 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

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# Community Spotlight



The Humboldt Child Abuse Council began in 1978 and later became the nonprofit Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Humboldt County (CAPCC) in 1986. The council was formed with the purpose of bringing together private and public agencies, such as DHHS, CASA, HCOE, and Changing Tides Family Services, as well other organizations focused on the prevention of child abuse. Today, CAPCC plays an important role in strengthening families and helping keep children safe across our community. Moreover it supports parents and caregivers by offering education, resources, and connections to local services.

With April being Child Abuse Prevention Month, CAPCC brings together local agencies to support this cause with community events such as Pinwheels for Prevention, Wear Blue Day on April 10th, and the Children's Memorial Flag Raising on April 24th, which honors the young lives lost to violence and abuse. To find out more about CAPCC, visit: <https://capcchumboldt.org>



## Parenting Tip ~ 5 Tips for Helping Your Child Stay Safe Around Technology

In today's rapidly changing world, it can be challenging to keep up with new technology and ensure our children stay safe online. Here are some tips and resources to help you stay informed and take a proactive role in shaping the digital environment for you and your family.

- 1. Create a Family Plan:** Define reasonable, age-appropriate limits for screen time and establish them in writing. This allows clearer boundaries and expectations of screen time rules. Consistency is key!
- 2. Establish Tech-Free Zones and Times:** Keep devices out of bedrooms and ensure family mealtimes are screen-free. This allows for more adult supervision and family connection.
- 3. Model Healthy Habits:** Children mimic parents, so limit your own screen time and be mindful of your digital usage. Remember, "Do as I Do" always works better when teaching children.
- 4. Use Safety Settings and Controls:** Utilize apps, routers, and device settings to prevent access to inappropriate content and to manage privacy. Prevention is the goal here.
- 5. Know Their Digital World:** Understand and discuss the games, social media, and apps your children use, including their "friends". Prioritize educational or creative digital content over passive, mindless consumption. This makes for a better life balance for all.



### 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](mailto:FEC@changingtidesfs.org)

### Local Events for Kids & Families

**FREE ~ Bilingual Storytime ~ Friday, April 10th, 3:30-4:30 PM, Fortuna Library 753 14th St., Fortuna.** The sessions offer stories, songs, and fun in both Spanish and English, designed for children aged 2-6 and their caregivers.

**FREE ~ 4th Annual Family Nature Crafts "Mega-Palooza" ~ Saturday, April 18th, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, Arcata Community Center (Dining Room), 321 Dr. M.L.K. Jr Pkwy, Arcata.** Drop in craft activities, no reservation required.

**FREE ~ Mad River Market -Community Fair ~ Saturday, April 18th, 12:00-7:00 PM, Green Spiral Farm, 819 Mad River Rd, Arcata.** This event will have live music, a Kid's Zone, a plant sale, and over 30 craft vendors.

**FREE ~ Touch-a-Truck ~ Sunday, April 26th, 12:00-3:00 PM, Redway Elementary School, 344 Humboldt Ave, Redway.** A hands-on event where kids can explore various community, commercial and first responder vehicles with food and games.