

June 2026

FEC Family Empowerment Center for Disabilities NEWSLETTER



From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Evolution of Special Education

The story of special education is one of progress, moving from a time when children with disabilities were excluded from schools and communities to today’s focus on inclusion and belonging. Significant changes began in the mid-20th century through civil rights advocacy, growing research, and landmark legislation. One important example was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (now known as IDEA), which guaranteed access to public education in the least restrictive environment. Over time, advocacy by families and communities strengthened the recognition of every child’s right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Today, special education emphasizes individualized support, access to the general curriculum, and participation alongside peers. While challenges remain, special education continues to progress toward creating more inclusive and supportive schools for all children, reflecting the growing understanding that every child deserves equity, belonging, and the opportunity to learn and thrive.



Upcoming FEC Events



Special Education Navigation Training: Join us on Zoom on Wednesday, June 17th, to learn new ways to improve home-to-school communication with *The Communication Bridge - Teachers & Families*.

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, June 24th, to share, understand, encourage, and support each other as parents and caregivers of neurodiverse children.

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

In-person session with Trumpet Behavioral Health 12:00-1:00 PM

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

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to the tools and strategies that help students who have difficulty using spoken language to express themselves effectively. AAC can include picture boards, communication books, sign language, and speech-generating devices or apps. These tools help communicate wants, needs, thoughts, and feelings, supporting fuller participation at home, school, and in the community. AAC does not replace speech and may, when possible, support the development of natural speech. With consistent encouragement and support from families and educators, AAC can help build communication skills, confidence, and independence while strengthening the ability to connect with others.



Visit our Family Empowerment Center for Disabilities Resource Padlet for helpful information in English and Spanish 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

2249 Myrtle Avenue
Eureka, CA 95501

Phone (707) 444-8293
FEC@changingtidesfs.org
www.changingtidesfs.org

Community Spotlight



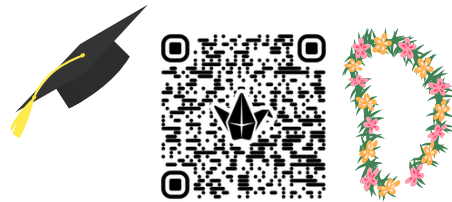
Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center (HCAR) is a private nonprofit founded in 1955 by parents who wanted something better for their children with developmental disabilities and an alternative to institutionalization. Today, HCAR works alongside people with disabilities and their families to connect them with opportunities to promote person-centered planning, community inclusion, family unity, and programs for learning, living, and employment. HCAR envisions a strong, healthy community where individuals and families can thrive, people with disabilities are empowered to shape their own futures, and culturally competent services are accessible regardless of economic status, disability, race, ethnicity, or family structure. For more information, please call (707) 443-7077 or visit <https://hcarcenter.org>

Parenting Tip ~ Helping Your Child Enjoy Nature

According to *Autism Parenting Magazine*, here are some simple **outdoor sensory activities** that can help to support regulation and communication.

- 1. Nature walks:** Can be calming and encourage observation and communication. These shared moments support language, attention, and regulation. Invite your child to notice:
 - Different textures in leaves, flowers, bark and grass
 - Bird and nature sounds
 - Colors, patterns, and shapes all around in nature
- 2. Gardening and Sensory Play:** Gardening offers gentle sensory experiences and opportunities for connection, while sensory play can help build calming routines and curiosity. Try:
 - Feeling the soil while planting
 - Smelling flowers and herbs
 - Watering plants or collecting leaves, rocks, or natural treasures
- 3. Outdoor storytelling sessions:** Reading or telling stories outside can encourage communication and creativity in a cozy and engaging way. Invite your child to:
 - Retell parts of the story
 - Act out favorite scenes
 - Use nature items in imaginative play

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

Local Events for Kids & Families

FREE ~ Friday Night Market ~ Every Friday through August 14th (except July 3rd) 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM, 2nd Street (between E & G Streets), Eureka. Showcasing local makers, food vendors, performance artists, live music and more!

FREE ~ Oyster Fest 2026 ~ Saturday June 13th, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Arcata Plaza, Arcata. There will be live music, food vendors, and local artisan shops.

FREE ~ Story Time at the Park ~ Wednesday, June 17th, 10:00 - 11:00 AM, Hammond Park, Eureka. Kids ages 2-6 with caregivers are encouraged but all ages are welcome to play, learn, sing and dance at preschool story time! Seating is outdoors on the grass, so bring a chair or picnic blanket.

FREE ~ The Fairy Festival ~ Saturday, June 28th, 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Arcata Plaza, Arcata. Showcasing local makers, food vendors, performance artists, live music and more!

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

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