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- Join our new campaign: No more Decision Day - Let's Make it Direction Day!

Ok, we know an education issue isn't the most obvious choice for April since we are already pretty much hunched over the starting blocks to summer in flip flops and zinc on our nose. However, April is the proud porter of Special Education Week, and education (including supports through middle and high

school, transition classes between ages 18-21, and a life full of learning after graduation) is the bedrock of the Planning for Adult Life philosophy. And so we celebrate this month with an article from the website, [Special Education Journey](#):



## **The Importance of Special Education Week**

Special Education Week holds a significance that extends well beyond the typical week-long observance. It's not just a celebration, but an acknowledgment and a reminder. This period serves to underscore the immense strides made in the field of special education and provide a clear perspective on the journey yet to traverse.

One critical aspect of Special Education Week is the reinforcement of the values embedded in the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA](#). It lends a platform to assert the fundamental rights and needs of all learners, corroborating the inclusive doctrine that every student, regardless of disability, holds an equal entitlement to quality education.

Special Education Week especially celebrates the diligent efforts made by special educators, therapists, counselors and furthermore, the parents who consistently advocate for their children's education rights. Over time, these agents have emerged not merely as instructors and supporters but as changemakers in the society, clearing myriad paths for special needs learners. Therefore, this week emphasizes applauding their tenacity and dedication, unearthing accomplishments that often seem invisible. Through workshops, campaigns, and interactive activities, Special Education Week strives to create an informed and empathetic atmosphere. It encourages the general public and policy makers to comprehend the prerequisites of a more inclusive and balanced education system. Besides, these events serve as the beacon for fellow educators and parents, imparting them with better strategies, tools and insights on meeting the unique needs of special needs students.

Finally, taking an active part in Special Education Week can strike a personal chord too. Your engagement might start as a minor step, yet it's capable of imposing a ripple effect of affirmative change. You'd witness the transformation unfolding right before your eyes – in your classroom, your community and possibly could even stretch beyond those boundaries to impact a wider radius. With every passing year, the essence of Special Education Week magnifies, simultaneously shedding light on the fundamental shift required to cultivate an environment where every learner thrives. Remember, we've all got a role to play. Let's leverage Special Education Week not just as a commemorative week, but to embolden our endeavors to promote inclusive education, every day.

Here's to good work (and good learning),

## Gaining Summer Employment and Understanding Workers' Rights

It's not just about the sunburn: summer jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities are upon us. And it can be stressful thinking about finding a place to settle during those long days and warm nights.

First, view Planning for Adult Life's short boot camp, "**Building a Foundation for Employment**" with tips on how to begin!

And then, of course, **Project HIRE** - The Arc of NJ's supported employment program designed to connect people with disabilities to integrated employment opportunities in their community - is a great place to explore. Here are some other resources for finding gigs from **Career One Stop**, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor...

### **Job seekers with disabilities have many job search resources.**

Job search help is available to all job seekers at approximately 2,000 American Job Centers located throughout the U.S. Services include free access to job banks, computers, resume writing tools and printers, networking groups and workshops, and more.

There are a number of job posting sites for job seekers with disabilities to explore, including:

- **Disabled Person** is a job board for people with disabilities
- **AbilityJOBS** is a job board for people with disabilities
- **Disability Solutions** is a non-profit that offers an online job board, free webinars, and other resources
- **Getting Hired** is a social networking and job search site for people with disabilities
- **Recruit Disability** is a no-fee job board connecting job seekers, employment programs, and employers
- **Think Beyond the Label Jobs Board**, job bank, blog and newsletter to support job seekers with disabilities to find meaningful work in their chosen field
- **Equal Opportunity Publications** is a career guidance and recruitment magazine for people with disabilities. Find articles, job postings, a list of companies now recruiting, and post your resume
- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN)** lists organizations that provide assistance to job seekers with disabilities

For tools and resources to help manage your finances through job search, employment, changing jobs, and more, visit [\*\*Secure Your Financial Future | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)\*\*](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor. For step-by-step guidance for your job search, visit [\*\*How-to Guide: Find a job now.\*\*](#)

And once you are employed, it's important to know your rights as a worker with disabilities! We turned to the ADA National Network for information.

Check out their advice by [clicking here!](#)

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And what better way to find work than to check out a **job fair**?  
See below to find out more about the Mount Holly Township School District  
job fair... (click image to enlarge)



Marcella Rende  
F.E.A.C.  
100 Wollner Drive  
Mount Holly, NJ 08060

Phone: 609-267-3600  
Fax: 609-702-0569

Website: [www.mtholly.k12.nj.us](http://www.mtholly.k12.nj.us)

#### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Mount Holly Township School District invites you to participate in our upcoming Community Job Fair & Financial Literacy Expo on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at Holbein School in Mount Holly. This family-centered initiative is aligned with our district's Strategic Plan to expand opportunity and strengthen community connections.

This event will connect motivated members of our community with local businesses, agencies, training programs, and organizations that can share career pathways, employment opportunities, and resources that support long-term economic mobility.

By participating, your organization will have the opportunity to:

- Connect with local job seekers, families, and potential clients
- Share information about career pathways, training programs, and employment opportunities
- Contribute to a community-wide effort to strengthen workforce readiness and economic mobility
- Build relationships with schools, families, and community partners

The event will also include a financial literacy component, helping families better understand how careers connect to income, benefits, and long-term financial well-being.

There is no cost to participate. We simply ask partners to engage attendees in conversation and share information about opportunities within your organization.

If you are interested in participating or would like additional details, please complete the registration form linked in the QR code

Thank you for helping strengthen opportunity and economic mobility in our community.



#### OUR VISION:

Every individual will achieve personal excellence in a safe, nurturing, and celebrated environment.

## The Planning for Adult Life College Fair is a wrap!

Thank you to all the amazing NJ colleges, trade schools, and, of course, families who attended.

(And thank you to [Uncle Guiseppe's of Tinton Falls](#) for the amazing sandwiches and salads!)

It was such a fun and informative night for all.

Can't wait to do it again next year!



## Now, let's get social!

Does your favorite student want to get out and meet people?  
 Make some friends and have some fun?  
 Check out these upcoming events for just that...  
 (And click on images to enlarge)

**BLUE LIGHT**  
**JOIN US FOR THE**  
**MUSIC MIXER.**

The Music Mixer is a free hands-on assessment for youth and adults of all skill levels and abilities. Hosted in Blue Light's professional recording studios in Mount Holly and Blackwood, NJ. Play your instruments, record vocals, write songs, groove with a track of your own... and maybe a new friend or two!

**play**

Pickup guitars, get behind the drums, write a song or the way, blow instruments, read sheet.

**record**

Lay down vocals in the booth, collaborate through a program which help you capture your sound.

**connect**

Meet other musicians, share your work, and groove once more at a private rehearsal.

**Reserve Your Seat**

Blackwood SATURDAY - MAY 15		Mt. Holly SATURDAY - JUNE 13	
SESSION 1 2-4 PM Ages 14 - 17 10 SEATS	SESSION 2 5-7 PM Ages 18 - 21 10 SEATS	SESSION 1 2-4 PM Ages 14 - 17 10 SEATS	SESSION 2 5-7 PM Ages 18 - 21 10 SEATS

Sign up at [signmagenius.com/sign/70cc648a8a8258a77ac7c-82353372-music](https://signmagenius.com/sign/70cc648a8a8258a77ac7c-82353372-music)  
 Questions? (609) 392-2887 | [blue@musicprogram.com](mailto:blue@musicprogram.com) | create, express, empower.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**Come Celebrate**  
**Disability Pride &**  
**The ADA Anniversary**  
**with NJSAP!**

**When** July 17, 2026  
 10am - 2pm

**Where** Pier Village Long Branch

**Come hand out resources, spread information, and have fun!**

Visit <https://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap> for more details!

**Event for Adults with Special Needs**

**ADULT SPECIAL NEEDS SOCIAL HOUR**

**Mix & Mingle**

Designed for adults (Ages 18 - 100) with cognitive or developmental disabilities and their parent/caregiver

Meets the second Tuesday of the month from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

**April 14**  
**May 12**  
**June 9**

Registration required and must be done in person by the caregiver/parent of attendee. Please visit the Library's Youth Services Department to register.

**MONROE TOWNSHIP LIBRARY**  
 4 Municipal Plaza  
 Monroe Township, New Jersey 08831 | 732-521-5000  
[www.monroetwpilibrary.org](http://www.monroetwpilibrary.org)

**Monroe Township Public Library**  
 4 Municipal Plaza  
 Monroe Township, New Jersey 08831 | 732-521-5000  
[www.monroetwpilibrary.org](http://www.monroetwpilibrary.org)

Love music?  
Want to meet new people?  
Join [Blue Light Music Program](#) for creative fun while making new friends!  
Click the image above to enlarge for more information, then click the button below to register!

On July 17, 2026 NJSAP (NJ Self-Advocacy Program) will set up a table at Pier Village in Long Branch, NJ. We are inviting advocates to come give out information on Disability Pride Month, The Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The table will be set up from 10am - 2pm.

Check out the adult special needs social hour at the Monroe Township Library. Designed for adults (and their parent/caregiver. Fun activities and games for all attending. Please visit or call the Library's Youth Services Department at 732-521-5000 x116 to register.

[Click here to register](#)

[Click here to learn more](#)

[Click here to learn more](#)

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And now a little bit about...  
Recognizing that learning is everywhere!

## THIS MONTH'S BLOG:

### **School, Job, Socializing - It's all an education**

By Jennifer Harrison

The late, great John Dewey - American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer (not the decimal-system mastermind we grizzled Gen-Xers heeded in high school) – once said, “Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.” And what does that mean? In a nutshell: just going through life it its own education.

To wit...

I’m not ashamed to admit it, but from the time my children started school, I instituted an annual Hooky Day. One arbitrary day every spring, I would drop off one of my daughters at school then luxuriously pootle past the other’s drop-off line before darting past the backpack-burdened masses and toward a clandestine adventure. Each year, each girl received her own, individualized day of unschooling to break the boredom of bookwork and excite their minds (and mom).

Some of the outings were the proverbial slam-dunk: leading my eye-shielded eight year old down the city sidewalk and depositing her beneath *Wicked's* Broadway marquee; maneuvering life-sized chess pieces as we laughed at Staten Island’s Children’s Museum; racing across Asbury Park’s shoreline. Some, not so much (I’m looking at you, Hoboken puppet show). But whatever the escapade and the reception it received, each managed to emerge as at least equally valuable as anything my kids could have done that day with number two pencil or notebook – these experiences illuminated, inspired, and

exposed the girls to something unexpected. In short, they were all learning experiences.

Understandably, this practice isn't always possible for parents; some jobs aren't structured to allow for spontaneous capers, money tends to get tight from time to time, and I've heard lore of administrators who like to pour punch on other people's bonfires (psssssss...). And that's ok. Because in reality, the play's not always the thing, despite Shakespeare's dictum – it's the ethos of the event that matters. Or, plainly, it doesn't really matter what you do, there's something to be gotten from everything.

When we are in school, we are directed to lessons, often told what to consume and how, and sometimes instructed as to how to process it all. And this is entirely utilitarian, indisputably productive.

Education: check.

At work, while we acclimate to our duties, there are always problem-solving opportunities, interactions with others, and the growth we experience by simply showing up every day with resolve. A day's work has undeniable merit for the mind.

Education: check (and paycheck!).

And out in the community, by moving among diverse populations, planning and pivoting in our approaches to making our way through the day, and occasionally taking delicious risks – whether by walking farther than we thought our legs could carry us or asking a stranger where to get the best cheesesteak in town (if you know, by the way, please contact me at

[helpdesk@planningforadulthood.org](mailto:helpdesk@planningforadulthood.org)...) – we widen our lives and grow our souls.

Education: you betcha.

It's all learning, after all, whether with IEP or simply OUT and (ab)OUT. The more we experience, the more we expand. So, in honor of Special Education Week, let's commit to making all of our education special, every indulgent moment of it.

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## UPCOMING WEBINARS:

**PLANNING FOR ADULT LIFE:** Wednesday, May 20, 7-8:00pm

**“Try and Make Me! Tips for Managing Children’s Behavior Using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at Home”**

In this workshop, the trainer will explore how you can provide proactive environmental, social, and behavioral supports at home to help set the stage for your child's behavioral success. You will learn strategies, gain new perspectives, ask questions, and deepen your understanding of why misbehavior occurs and how to provide the necessary support.

# Planning for Adult Life's MEET US IN THE MIDDLE WEBINAR SERIES

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month, 7pm

## May 20: "Try and Make Me! Tips for Managing Children's Behavior Using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at Home"



Join Michelle Lockwood, M.S., to learn to navigate the challenge of simply getting your child to do what you ask. In this workshop, the trainer will explore how you can provide proactive environmental, social, and behavioral supports at home to help set the stage for your child's behavioral success. You will learn strategies, gain new perspectives, ask questions, and deepen your understanding of why misbehavior occurs and how to provide the necessary support.



Register here!



[Click here to register](#)

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### CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY: Friday, May 22, 11:00am "Self-Advocacy Panel with the New Jersey Self Advocacy Program"

Join Erin Smithers, Director of the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project, and a panel of self-advocates for an empowering session on the importance of speaking up, getting involved, and making your voice heard. Erin will share an

overview of the NJ Self-Advocacy Project and how it supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in becoming confident self-advocates. Learn how taking an active role in your own life and in your community can lead to greater independence, stronger connections, and lasting impact. Whether you're just starting your advocacy journey or looking to take it to the next level, this session will inspire and inform.

[Click here to register](#)

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Celebrate the sun and show your support for your **Local County Chapters of The Arc** at these upcoming events! Click on each to learn the what's, where's, and when's for each...

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In a world that looks like this every May 1...



it can be tough to get excited about the future if college is not for you.  
That's why Planning for Adult Life is launching its new initiative:

## Forget Decision Day, it's all about **direction day!**

This May, we invite all of you to decorate your beds with things that excite YOU about YOUR future! Going to work? Taking the bus alone?  
Attending a new program or class?  
We want to see and hear about it!

Send photos to: [helpdesk@planningforadulthood.org](mailto:helpdesk@planningforadulthood.org) and we will feature your photo in our summer newsletters.

**Be loud and proud about what you are planning for the future -  
because everyone has a direction!**

[Click to send in your DIRECTION photo!](#)

The Arc of New Jersey | 985 Livingston Avenue | North Brunswick, NJ 08902 US

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