

DECEMBER 2024



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Holiday
Special*

- Academic activities during school breaks
- Survival tips for the holiday season
- Inclusive community events

Make learning fun during the holiday season!



The holiday break is a wonderful time for rest and rejuvenation, but it's also an excellent opportunity to keep your child engaged in learning. For students with Section 504 accommodations and Individualized Education Programs (IEP), maintaining a balance between relaxation and structured activities is especially important. In this issue, our DCSD Exceptional Education offices of School Psychology and Section 504 have gathered tips and resources to help your family survive and thrive during the holiday break.

Check out what your community has to offer:

- Library Reading Programs: Many libraries offer holiday-themed reading challenges.
- Museum Activities: Participate in virtual tours or workshops. Check out Holidays at the High Museum of Art at <https://high.org/kids-and-families/>
- Volunteer Opportunities: Help your child build life skills and empathy through community service. Check out some family volunteer projects at <https://atlantamom.com/family-lifestyle/family-volunteer-projects-for-the-holidays/>



Practice IEP Goals At Home

Create a Daily Routine

Children benefit from structure, even during holidays. A simple schedule might include:

- 30-60 minutes of learning activities like reading or practicing skills.
- Breaks for physical activity to support focus and energy.
- Creative or unstructured fun time for hobbies and relaxation.

Resource Highlight: Scholastic [*Learn at Home*](#) offers free, daily learning activities for all grade levels.

Ensure Accessibility and Accommodations

If your child requires accommodations, consider these tips:

- Use assistive tools like text-to-speech apps or audiobooks.
- Create visual schedules to break tasks into manageable steps.
- Incorporate frequent breaks to reduce overwhelm.



Leverage Technology for Fun Learning!

Interactive tools can help your child stay motivated

- **For Reading:**
 - o *Bookshare* provides free accessible eBooks.
 - o *Epic!* offers thousands of books with read-aloud features.
- **For Math Practice:**
 - o *Khan Academy* features video tutorials for all grade levels.
 - o *Prodigy Math Game* makes learning math fun through games.
- **For Organization & Focus:**
 - o Apps like *Time Timer* or *Google Keep* can help with time management and task planning.

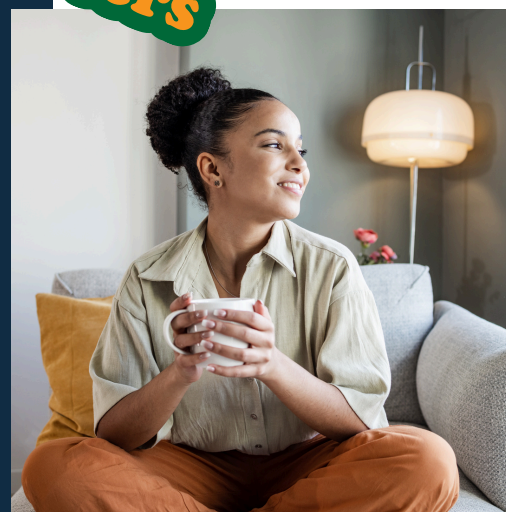
FOSTER EMOTIONAL WELLNESS:

The holidays can bring joy and stress!

Help your child manage emotions with these activities:

- **Journaling or Drawing:** Encourage reflection on holiday experiences.
- **Mindfulness Practices:** Use apps like *Calm Kids* or *Headspace* for guided meditation.
- **Gratitude Practices:** Write thank-you notes or discuss daily moments of gratitude

Mental health matters



Check out the **Holiday Survival Guide for families raising kids with disabilities** at <https://undivided.io/resources/holiday-survival-guide-for-families-raising-kids-with-disabilities-1344>



COMMUNITY
RESOURCES



Spotlight



Sensory Friendly Family Fun!

10 Sensory Friendly Programs and Places

https://www.atlantaparent.com/sensory_friendly_atlanta/

WHO DO I CONTACT?

School Support

Your child's **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER or CASEMANAGER:**

- Concerns involving: Academics (grades, curriculum, classwork, homework), student behavior, interactions, and social-emotional development in the classroom (social skills, regulating emotions, making friends)

Your school's **LEAD TEACHER for SPECIAL EDUCATION (LTSE):**

- Concerns involving: Initial Individualized Education Plans (IEP), re-evaluations, parental consent, IEP transportation issues, transferring IEP to a new school, case-manager/teacher communication issues

Your school **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL:**

- Concerns involving: Disciplinary actions, school safety, procedures and policies, inappropriate staff conduct, building maintenance, PTA, unresolved parent-teacher communication issues.

Your school **PRINCIPAL:**

- Concerns involving: All unresolved concerns brought to the Assistant Principal properly but were not addressed to satisfaction.

Department of Exceptional Education Support

Exceptional Education **Parent Mentor/Parent Liaison:**

- General questions on how to navigate the DCSD Department of Exceptional Education, Special Education, transitions, parent rights, learn district protocols and processes, find appropriate staff, get resources, education and support.

Department of Exceptional Education Leadership

Special Education Director:

- Concerns involving: All unresolved special education concerns and IEP related issues (implementation, meeting concerns, goals/objectives, progress monitoring, services) that have been previously communicated with the appropriate staff at your student's attendance school (see who to contact above first) but have not been addressed to satisfaction.

Senior Coordinator for School Psychology:

- Parents should reach out to the Senior Coordinator of School Psychology when there are unresolved concerns that have been appropriately shared with the local school principal or designee that involves psychological services, evaluations, or mental health support for a child.

Senior Coordinator for Section 504/Hospital Homebound:

- Parents should contact the Senior Coordinator of Section 504/HHB when their concerns involve ensuring that their child, who has a disability, is receiving appropriate accommodations and protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Concerns involving 504 plan development or eligibility, plan implementation or discrimination concerns may require District level support.

Executive Director of Exceptional Education:

- Parents should reach out to the Executive Director of Exceptional Education when there is a need for leadership-level intervention or advocacy to ensure their child receives appropriate and equitable educational services.

General Parent Support

The Ga. Dept. of Education **Special Education HELP DESK (404-656-3963):**

- General questions about Special Education and related services, statewide initiatives, rules, projects, outreach, processes, and support agencies for students with disabilities.

**All phone numbers and emails can be found on the DCSD website.*

Parent Mentors

Support. Advise. Educate.



What is a Parent Mentor?

Parent Mentors are parents of children with disabilities, hired by the District, to support other families in their county by providing resources and education to help parents of students with disabilities navigate special education services and supports. They support family engagement and work with special education directors and staff to increase parent participation in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and school programs and events.

Why should I contact the Parent Mentor?

- I need to talk to another parent that understands and will listen to my educational concerns.
- I need help locating resources that will help me support my child.
- I have questions about my child's education program and how to be engaged in the process.
- I am unsure what my child may need to graduate and options after high school.
- I worry that my child will struggle with transitions to new schools.
- I would like to know what family engagement activities, events and parent training's are available.

Contact your DeKalb County
Parent Mentors today!



SCAN
ME!