

Sharing Our Strategies:

Back to School Edition

As a new school year approaches, nerves often take center stage for many families who have children with special needs. Here are some tips and resources to help with the transition back to school, as well as educational opportunities for students and educators.



Is your student ready for school?

- Create before school/after school routines - use a checklist with pictures or words to help your child become as independent as possible in getting ready for school as well as after school. Use rewards for completing tasks to keep your child motivated. Here are a few examples of a visual schedule for a [morning routine](#). Come to our [Visual Schedule Workshop](#) on 9/24!
- Visit the classroom/school ahead of time. Show your child the important places and how to get there (locker, cafeteria, nurse, bathroom, gym).
- Let your child pick out some of the school supplies on the list and put them in his backpack.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and other important school personnel before school starts. If the school does an open house, check to see if you can go earlier in the day to avoid the big crowds and long lines.
- Get the e-mail address of each team member to begin regular communication. With permission, take pictures of each teacher.
- Create a social story (using the pictures) about going back to school. Use Word or try one of these [Social Story Apps](#)
- Pull together a one-to-three-page overview of what teachers and service providers should know about your family structure, your child's likes and dislikes, what sets her off and what calms her down. *For younger students, consider using the [All About Me](#) booklet.*
- Have your child or help your child create something they can share about their summer (using pictures and/or words). Share this with your child's team.
- *Keep the lines of communication open with e-mails, parent/teacher conferences and a [Daily Communication Log](#). Challenges can be dealt with proactively and success can be celebrated!*

Check out these other great tips from empoweringparents.com





Heading Back to School? Concerned about Academics?

Is your child heading back to school and are you wondering how to support their reading and math skills? Check out The Maren Fund's Learning Program classes. LP classes are parent-focused, evidence-based and designed to help you teach your child how to read and understand math. We offer once/month classes for kids with Down syndrome starting at age 2. Open the doors of reading for your child - join us!

Interested in classes for your teenager? We offer Maren Prep classes for kids in middle and high school. We have a variety of Maren Prep classes that are social in nature but include the continuing development of academics. Continue to support your child's academic development and build friendships at the same time - join us!

Registration closes August 17th so check out our classes, dates, times and locations today on our website - www.marenfund.org Our philosophy is that finances should not be an issue so don't let that stop you from checking us out. Have questions? Feel free to contact Julie Williams (julie@marenfund.org).

Want to help your child become more independent?

DSAGSL is hosting a "Make It and Take It" Visual Schedule Workshop on Monday, September 24th from 6:30pm-8:00pm. Learn about visual schedules and how to create one. DSAGSL will supply the materials for a variety of schedules and age ranges. RSVP/Questions to Christy@dsagsl.org. ([Click here to view the flyer](#))

Is your child starting middle school?

Here are [10 tips](#) to help prepare.

Check out these apps

from Dr. Sean Smith, specialist in instructive/assistive technology - [Inclusion Through Innovation](#)

Are you preparing for an IEP?

Review the [Top Ten Parental Rights in Special Education](#)

Check out Missouri Parent Training and Information classes: [MPACT Trainings](#)

In Illinois - Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center: www.fmptic.org/

Is a student with Down syndrome new to your child's school or grade level?

Consider scheduling a presentation about Down syndrome at your child's school. October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month or many schools have ability awareness weeks. Contact andi@dsagsl.org to learn more about our Community Ambassador presentations.

Do your child's teachers, administrators or support personnel want (or need) to learn more about educating and including students with Down syndrome?

Share information about the [Down Syndrome Education Specialist Program](#) This is a FREE, four-session program that was created to help build meaningful education for students with Down syndrome. Parents are welcome to attend as well. Another great resource to share with teachers, therapists or support personnel is [Supporting the Student with Down Syndrome in Your Classroom](#)

Are you interested in learning more?

The DSAGSL Lending Library has an excellent lending library with books on education, advocacy, inclusion, behavior and more. Search our catalog - library name: DSAGSL (no password) and check out any of our books for free!
<http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/signin.php>

You can also call our office at 314.961.2504 to speak to a staff person.