

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act

For many people with disabilities, the fear of losing critical public benefits, coupled with the high cost of support expenses, has limited them from building financial security.

Until recently, individuals receiving federal benefits have been restricted in the amount of money they can save, essentially keeping them in poverty and preventing them from planning for the future. With the Stephen Beck Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, signed into federal law by President Obama, these thresholds are no longer an obstacle.

In 2015 Governor Brown signed the California ABLE Act into law. CalABLE allows qualified individuals with disabilities and their families to open tax-free savings accounts without the worry of losing vital government assistance. The law establishes a board that will administer the CalABLE savings program.

The CalABLE program in California will open up life-improving opportunities for people with disabilities and their families in much the same way California's ScholarShare 529 plans formed educational opportunities for the state's students.

Contributions to an ABLE account, currently limited to \$14,000 per year, can be made by family, friends, or the beneficiary themselves. The account's earnings are allowed to accumulate tax-free, and the withdrawals, provided they are applied to qualifying disability expenses, are tax-free. To read more about CalABLE, you can download a fact sheet at: <http://treasurer.ca.gov/able/resources/factsheet.pdf>

You are invited to attend a free presentation on

California Achieving a Better Life Experience (CaABLE)

PRESENTER: CalABLE Board
Representative from the Office of the State Treasurer John Chiang

WHEN: Thursday, March 16, 2017

Where: Valley Mountain Regional Center-Cohen Board Room
702 N. Aurora St., Stockton, CA 95202

TIME: 10am-noon

WHO: Self Advocates, Parents, Service Coordinators, Service Agencies & VMRC Vendors wanting to learn more about CalABLE

**Reserve your seat by calling
SCDD/North Valley Hills Office at
209-473-6930, or email
dena.hernandez@scdd.ca.gov
by March 10, 2017**

Sponsored by:
The Office of the State Treasurer,
Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC),
Disability Rights California (DRC), Family
Resource Network (FRN), State Council
Developmental Disabilities-North Valley Hills
Office (SCDD-NVHO), Self Advocacy Council
(SAC 6) and Coalition Local Area Service
Providers (CLASP)

Family Resource Network Newsletter
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Printing 6,100 copies

EDITOR: Lisa Culley

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Family Resource Network Phone: 209-472-3674
5250 Claremont Ave., Suite 148 Fax: 209-472-3673
Stockton, CA 95207
Email: FRNfamilies@aol.com website: www.frcn.org



Sibshop is the recreational support group for **non-disabled siblings of children with special needs**, ages 7 through 14.

Meet other siblings who have the same kinds of issues. There are games, crafts, discussion activities, food and lots of fun! There is no cost to attend.

Saturday, March 11, 2017

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Stockton Covenant Church
1720 Oxford Way, Stockton, 95204**

Registration is required and must be submitted at least one week prior to event. Call 472-3674 or 800-847-3030 to request a registration packet.

Quotes from past Sibshop participants:

- *"I love having a place and special time just for me-with others who know what I'm going through"*
- *"I can't wait until the next Sibshop"*



Tony Anderson has been named the new Executive Director of Valley Mountain Regional Center

For the past 12 years, Mr. Anderson has served as executive director of The Arc of California, a statewide advocacy organization representing the interests of people with developmental disabilities, their families and program providers.

Mr. Anderson has spent 29 years working in the field of developmental services, across all levels of the regional center service delivery system, starting as a direct support professional, then a case manager at North Bay Regional Center and a service provider. Anderson later received a Governor's appointment to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities as deputy director of policy, planning and governmental relations where he worked on several major statewide initiatives. At The Arc of California, he helped provide strategic guidance and direction through some of the State's most difficult and challenging fiscal seasons.



Family Resource Network is happy to welcome Megan Beckhart as our new Program Coordinator. Megan is the parent of a daughter who has Down syndrome. Megan is active in The Brighterside of Down Syndrome (TBODS) and lives with her family in Stanislaus County. Welcome Megan!

Tikes and Tunes...Times 2!

Due to popular demand FRN will now offer its **Tikes and Tunes** music play group twice a month. Tikes and Tunes is for children ages birth to 36 months who are served through the Early Start program. Parents learn how they can use music to enhance their child's development. Both groups are led by Karen Sanchez, MBA MT-BC, Music Therapist. We'd love to have you join us, but space is limited so **be sure to register!** Registration forms are on FRN's website or you can email or call FRN to register. Tikes and Tunes meets at FRN's office, Sherwood Executive Center, 5250 Claremont Ave., Suite 148, Stockton.



Tikes and Tunes

A Musical Play Group for Infants and Toddlers in Early Start

When: The **first and third Tuesdays** of the month from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

No Musical Talent Required.



Don't forget to register!

And Don't Forget that FRN has **Toy Lending Libraries** for children in the Early Start program at FRN in **Stockton**, Valley Mountain Regional Center in **Modesto**, Tuolumne County Office of Education in **Sonora**, **and in Jackson at Argonaut High School**. Each library has different hours of operation. For info on the library near you contact:

Stockton: 209-472-3674

Modesto: 209-557-2144

Sonora: 209-536-2040

Jackson: 209-403-5955



Building Bridges-Transitioning Your Child from the Early Start Program

This workshop is for parents whose children are exiting the Early Start Program, and will focus on transition timelines, and give an overview of the relevant Special Education Laws and the rights of parents and their children with disabilities or learning differences, and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting process.

When: Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Presenter: FRN

Where: Sherwood Executive Center
5250 Claremont Ave., Stockton, CA

Time: 9:15 to 11:30am

REGISTRATION REQUIRED



First 5 California was created by voters under Proposition 10 in 1998 to recognize that children's health and education are a top priority, especially in the early years of development. The California First 5 website, as well as each county's First 5 websites, are full of great resources and local activities, events and resources for families with children 0-5 years old.

First 5 California:

<http://www.first5california.com/>

First 5 Amador County:

<http://www.first5amador.com/>

First 5 Calaveras County:

<http://firstfive.calaverasgov.us/First5Home.aspx>

First 5 San Joaquin County:

<http://www.sjckids.org/>

Stanislaus County Children & Families
Commission:

<http://stanprop10.org/>

Check FRN's website, www.frcn.org and click on "calendar" for updated information on trainings and events. Registration forms for FRN events are on the website.



16th Annual Autism Collaborative Forum

Tuesday, April 4, 2017

San Joaquin County Office of Education
Wentworth Education Center
Burwood Auditorium
2707 Transworld Dr., Stockton
8:30am-3:15pm

The keynote speakers for the day will be Sandra Lavon Weber and Erik N. Weber, and Tony Anderson. There will be multiple breakout sessions that will include discussion and application of Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs).

Registration fee will be \$20.00, which includes morning coffee/pastries and lunch.

For registration information contact
gbrodigandalton@sjcoe.net



30th Annual CHOICES Institute

Friday, April 7, 2017

30 Years of Choices

San Joaquin County Office of Education,
Stockton

For registration information, call 209-473-6950



Self-Determination

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is developing a new program called Self-Determination, that will let those served through the regional center have more control over selecting their services and supports in the community, if they wish. The program will be phased in slowly for three years as a pilot program with 2500 participants, then opened to everyone. If you would like more information on the program you can visit the DDS website: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/SDP/>, or speak to your VMRC Service Coordinator. If you are interested in participating in the program, your Service Coordinator can add you to the “I am interested list”, and you will need to attend a Self-Determination Informational Meeting. Service Coordinators will be providing information on the Self-Determination program at annual Individual Program Plan (IPP) meetings.



Transition Resource

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, has published a guide on transition titled: *A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities*, Washington, D.C., 2017. It can be found at the following link:

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/products/postsecondary-transition-guide-2017.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term



Donations to the Healing Hearts Society have been received by:

- ♥ Sue Allyn
- ♥ Kathy Barnes
- ♥ Vistica Family

Thank you for your support!

FRN has received donations from:

Ann Cirimele
Alicia Manzo
PEDS
The White Family



Thank you to our wonderful Volunteers:

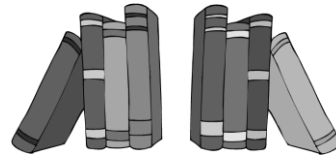
Bonny Barker
Cynthia Barker
Keith Barker
John Barrera
Dawn Bauleke
Ed Hendrickson
Emma Johnson
Lauren Linehan
Heather West

It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice. ~Author Unknown

And the Winners are...

Congratulations to the WINNERS of FRN's latest drawing:

- ♥ Louie & Allison Costa
- ♥ Rosaura Ode Garcia



FRN has about 2000 library resources for parents and professionals to borrow. There are books, dvds and cds.

Newest additions to the FRN library:

- Bringing Up Bebe
- The Bully Blockers (Standing up for Classmates with Autism)
- The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook
- Early Intervention Every Day!
- Early Intervention Teaming Handbook
- The Encyclopedia of Infant & Toddler Activities for Children Birth to Three
- Going Solo While Raising Children with Disabilities
- A Shelter in Our Car
- The Simple Guide to Child Trauma (What it is and How to Help)
- Social Emotional Tools (S.E.T) for Life

You don't need to come into FRN's office in order to use the library. We are happy to mail items to you. We just ask that you be responsible for returning the items to FRN. You can mail them to FRN, swing by the office or drop them off with the building receptionist. You may check out up to two resources for a period of three weeks.



Please note the FRN workshops take place at a variety of sites throughout the 5 county service area. Registration forms for all these events are posted on the calendar tab at www.frcn.org.

March 16-Writing An Effective IEP for Your Child with Special Needs •

Presenters: SCDD, NVH Office and FRN • **Lodi Library**, 201 West Locust St, Lodi, 6 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required.

March 23-Writing An Effective IEP for Your Child with Special Needs •

Presenters: SCDD, NVH Office and FRN • **Creative Support Alternatives**, 130 East St. Charles, San Andreas, 6 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required.

April 20-Writing An Effective IEP for Your Child with Special Needs •

Presenters: SCDD, NVH Office and FRN • **Jamestown Community Hall**, Jamestown, 6 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required.

April 26-Building Bridges- Transitioning Your Child from the Early Start Program •

Presenter: FRN • **FRN Office**, 5250 Claremont Ave., Stockton, 9:15–11:30am, FREE, registration required.

April 27-Writing An Effective IEP for Your Child with Special Needs •

Presenters: SCDD, NVH Office and FRN • **FRN Office**, 5250 Claremont Ave., Stockton, 6 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required.

Whole-Child Model Implementation Delayed

Implementation of the state's proposed Whole-Child Model for moving some CCS children into Medi-Cal managed care has been postponed until July 2018. Officials of the Department of the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) announced the change at the January 11 meeting of the CCS Advisory Group. Originally scheduled for July 2017, the transition has been delayed due to constraints in the newly proposed California budget and other factors. For ongoing information about the redesign, see the Whole-Child Model website at:

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/pages/CCSWholeChildModel.aspx>



Want to be In The Know?

The email list is a great way to receive up-to-the minute information on topics of interest to parents of children with special needs. Send your email address to FRNfamilies@aol.com to receive email updates. There is no fee to be on the email list and FRN does not share your email address with anyone, ever.

Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. ~Kofi Annan



Information on upcoming events:

Family Resource Network has the following seminars scheduled in the coming months. Registration is required for many of the events and registration forms are posted on FRN's website, www.frcn.org and click on Calendar or you can contact FRN staff at 209-472-3674 or 800-847-3030.

- **March 30, 2017 - Financial and Estate Planning for Families of Children with Special Needs** presented by Frank Quacinella, Merrill-Lynch and Mark Drobny, Attorney at Law, offered in collaboration with San Joaquin County Office of Education, SELPA, **Stockton**. Registration required.
- **May 18, 2017: Conservatorship for Your Adult Child with Special Needs** presented by Mark Drobny, Attorney at Law, offered in collaboration with San Joaquin County Office of Education, SELPA, **Stockton**. Registration required.



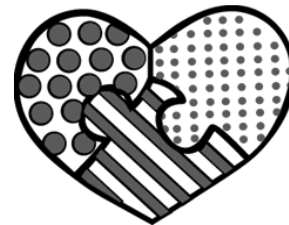
Everything that happens in your future is a direct result of what you do today.

— James Altucher



Family Resource Network has a Facebook page!

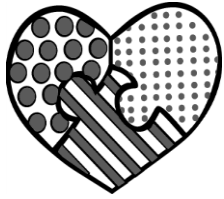
You'll find FRN listed as Family Resource Network – Stockton. You'll know it's FRN when you see the heart logo. FRN will post information on upcoming events and topics of interest. We hope you'll like us.



FRN Parent Scholarships Available

Family Resource Network has received an unrestricted grant of \$2,500 from the Stuart Foundation. FRN is using the funds to assist parents of special needs children within FRN's 5 county service area with registration fees to attend non-FRN conferences or workshops on topics related to children with special needs and their families.

This is a reimbursement scholarship which means that FRN reimburses the parent after the parent has attended the event. Parents wishing to access these scholarship funds should contact FRN **prior** to attending the event. FRN reserves the right to limit the number of scholarships for any specific event. Restrictions apply. For more information contact FRN staff.



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Information in this issue:

- ♥ **ABLE & CalABLE**
- ♥ **16th Annual Autism Collaborative Forum**
- ♥ **FRN workshops and information**
- ...and **MORE**

