



THE CENTER FOR
Exceptional
FAMILIES

Parent Centers...

- Created in 1975 through the disability movement (later known as IDEA).
- Funded by the US Department of Education. *Every* state and U.S. territory has a Parent Center (TCFEF is the only PTI in Arkansas).
- Serve families of children ages birth to 26 and works with all disabilities.
- Provide information about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to benefit individual's outcome.



Parent Centers Help Families



Understand

their children's disabilities and educational needs.

Educate and Encourage

families regarding their child's educational rights and responsibilities and encourage them to get involved in the processes.

Train

parents to advocate for their children and provide training for educational professionals on specific disabilities.

Connect

families to community resources.

Assist

in resolving problems between families and schools.

Teach

parents how to effectively communicate with their school and related service providers.

Promote

high expectations and endless possibilities.

The Center for Exceptional Families

- Funded in 2015 as the Parent Center of Arkansas
- Is a statewide organization
- Is a 501c3 nonprofit operating on federal dollars and private donations
- All services are provided FREE of charge



Board of Directors

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Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

To improve educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including students transitioning to adult life beyond high school.



Vision Statement

To work in collaboration with families and their local school districts to promote an innovative approach to special education services for individuals with disabilities.

Advocacy with heart

Grant Goals



- Provide
assistance to families of children with disabilities in accessing an appropriate education and resources for their child
- Create
opportunities for youth and young adults to become effective self-advocates.
- Increase
engagement between families and professional communities
- Conduct
outreach programs to underserved groups to increase their knowledge of programs and services available to them.

TCFEF Data



170

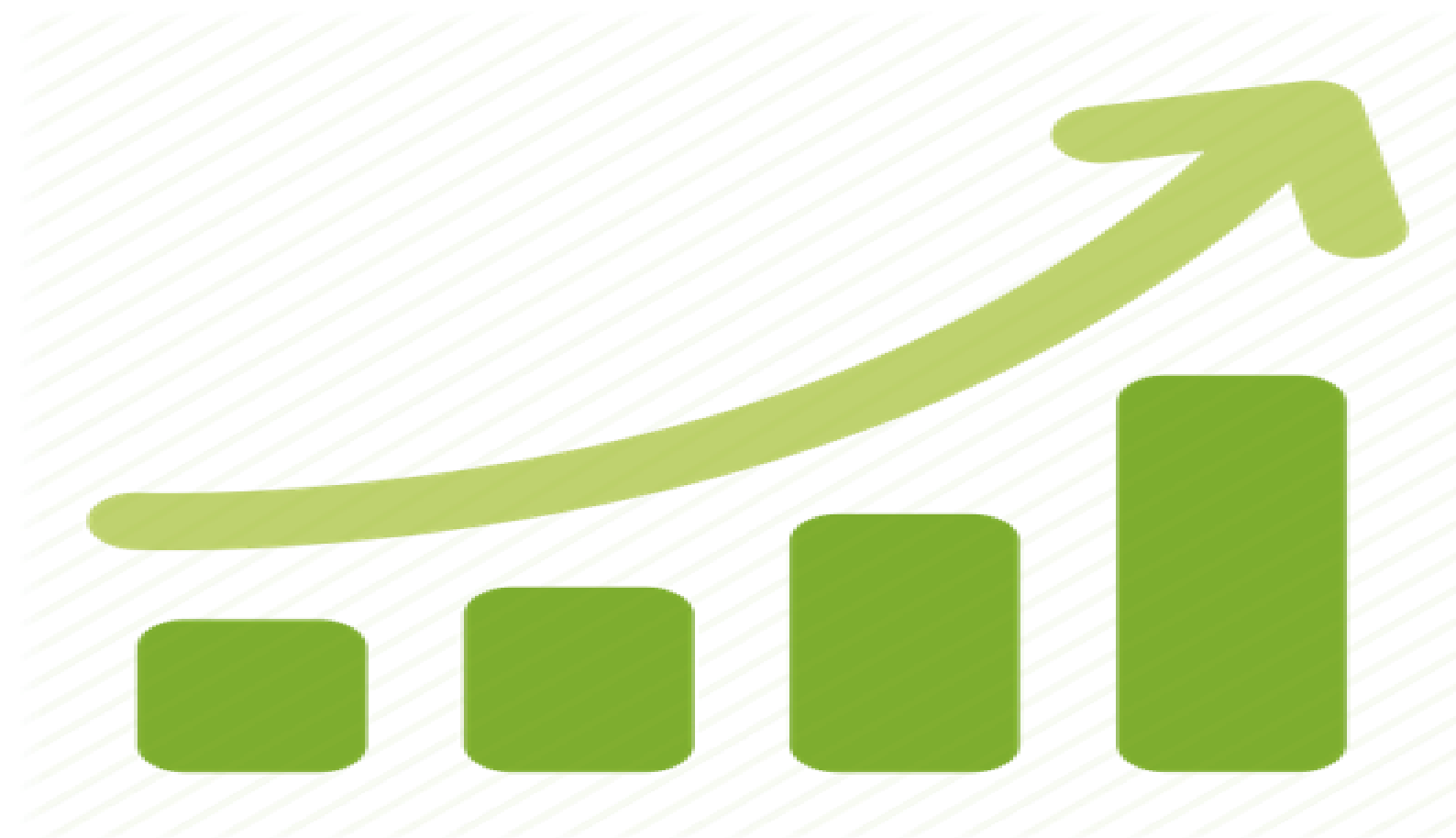
workshops conducted by TCFEF staff across the state

204

IEPs, IFSPs, FIEPs, 504s,
and meetings attended

2,902

phone calls received from
families and professionals



**Data collection: 2022-2024



Pit Stop Two - IEP

Understanding the IEP
FBA/BIP for IEP Students
Transition IEP (14+)
L.I.F.E. Series
13 Categories of Disability

The Road to Advocacy

No matter where you are in your journey, we have presentations that will help you stay on the road and reach your destination.



Pit Stop One - IEP & 504

Acronyms and Terms
Early Intervention (IFSP)
Effective Parent Advocacy
Transition to Kindergarten
Special Education Referral Process
504 vs IEPs

Our Trainings



Pit Stop Two - 504

Understanding 504 Plans
FBA/BIP for 504 Students
L.I.F.E. Series
504 Act Disability Defined



Pit Stop Three - IEP & 504

Inclusive Practices, Mental Health, Homebound, Puberty, Guardianship, Able Accounts, Special Needs Trust, Autism, Sensory Processing, and other disability specific presentations available

Workshop Comments

- “I love what TCFEF has to offer me both as a parent and a professional!”
- “I have and will continue to recommend TCFEF to people that have a need. I value the information and support I received from the Center.”
- “Our parent mentor is a valuable asset to our families! Always available to answer questions and respectfully help or find the answers.”
- “As a service provider I feel this workshop was not only beneficial to parents but also to service providers in providing families with the necessary resources to meet their needs.”

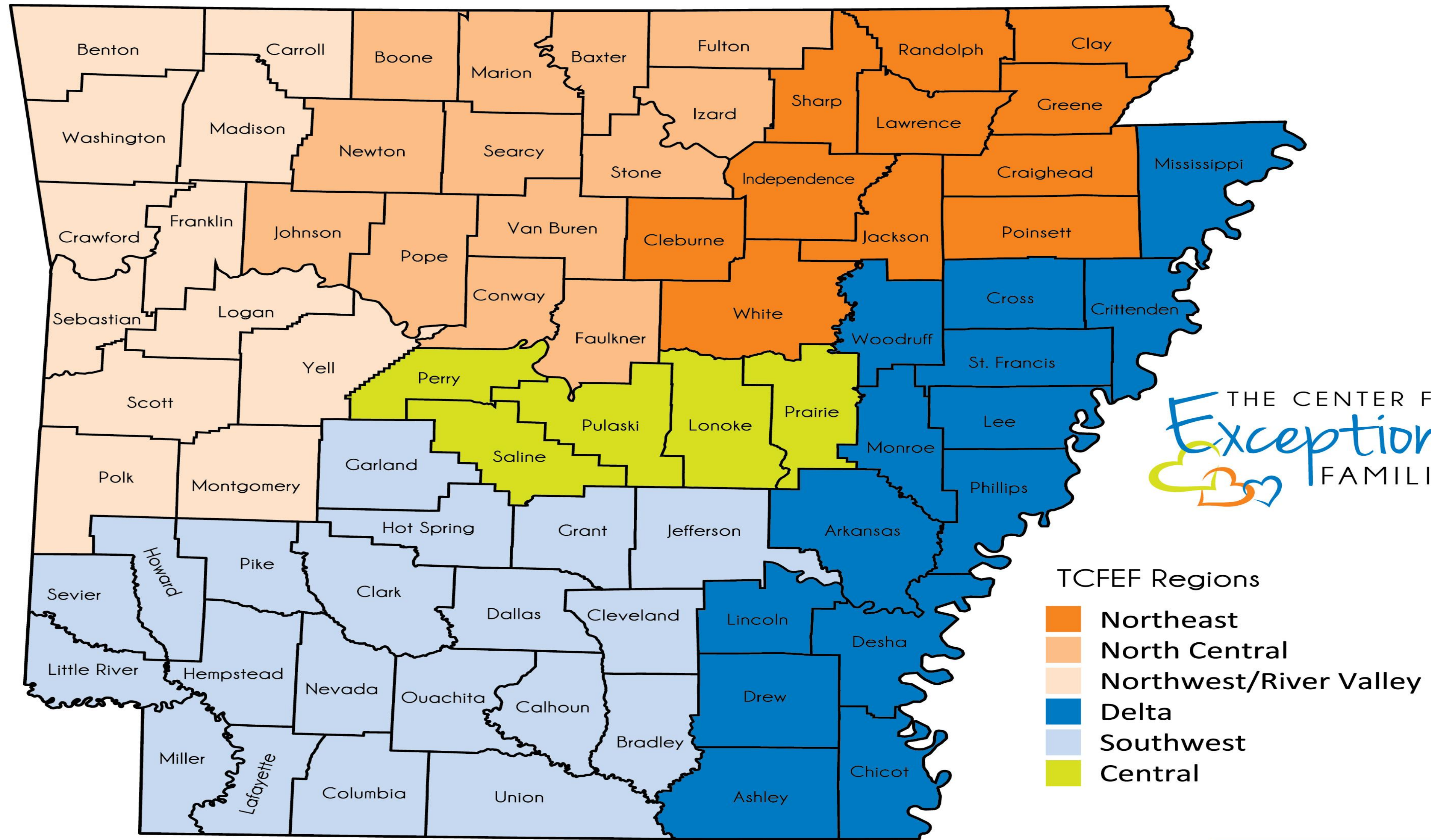


Shelby Knight



Executive Director

Shelby has more than 30 years of experience in the advocacy field working with families to insure the best possible outcomes for children and adults with disabilities. She is active on many boards and councils for children and adults with disabilities. Shelby makes her home in Jonesboro with her husband and an adult son with Autism.



- TCFEF Regions
- Northeast
 - North Central
 - Northwest/River Valley
 - Delta
 - Southwest
 - Central

<https://thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org>

Advocacy with *heart.*



Karen Lutrick **Central and Southwest Parent Mentor**

Karen Lutrick holds a B.A. in Psychology and has over 20 years of experience advocating for individuals with disabilities. Currently the TCFEF lead on a multi-state vocational rehabilitation grant, she empowers teens and adults with disabilities to learn, work, and live more independently. Karen lives in Pulaski County and has three adult children, including one with a disability.



Teresa Hendrix **Northeast Parent Mentor**

Teresa is a retired special educator with 35 years of experience as both a teacher and administrator. Her personal connection to a family member with a visual disability and her work with Arkansas Transition Services have added to her understanding of the challenges faced by families and students with disabilities. Teresa makes her home in Poinsett County.



Keith Watson **Delta Parent Mentor**

Keith Watson retired as a high school administrator from Wynne Public Schools after years of teaching, coaching, and administration at Trumann Public Schools. Now living in Craighead County with his wife of over 41 years, he enjoys time with their children and five grandchildren.



Tiffany Slone **Northwest and River Valley Parent Mentor**

Tiffany Slone has 16 years of experience in early childhood education and advocated for each student's success, influenced by her own learning difficulties and her son's sensory processing issues. She lives in Benton County and enjoys time with her two sons, mother, friends, dogs, and chickens.



Brandy Sandersfeld **North Central Parent Mentor**

Brandy holds a BA in International Studies and MS in Rehab Counseling. With nearly 20 years of experience in supportive employment and health equity, she advocates for inclusive environments, particularly for rural families. She lives in Baxter County with her husband and two children, one of whom has autism.



Candie Corona **Multi-National Outreach Coordinator**

Candie, originally from Fort Worth, Texas, now calls Faulkner County her home and holds a B.A. in Spanish from UCA, along with certifications as a Family Support Specialist and Education Interpreter. She has over a decade of experience in non-profits. Candie provides support and resources to Hispanic families who have children with disabilities.



Michele Lappin
Data Manager/Technology Support Coordinator

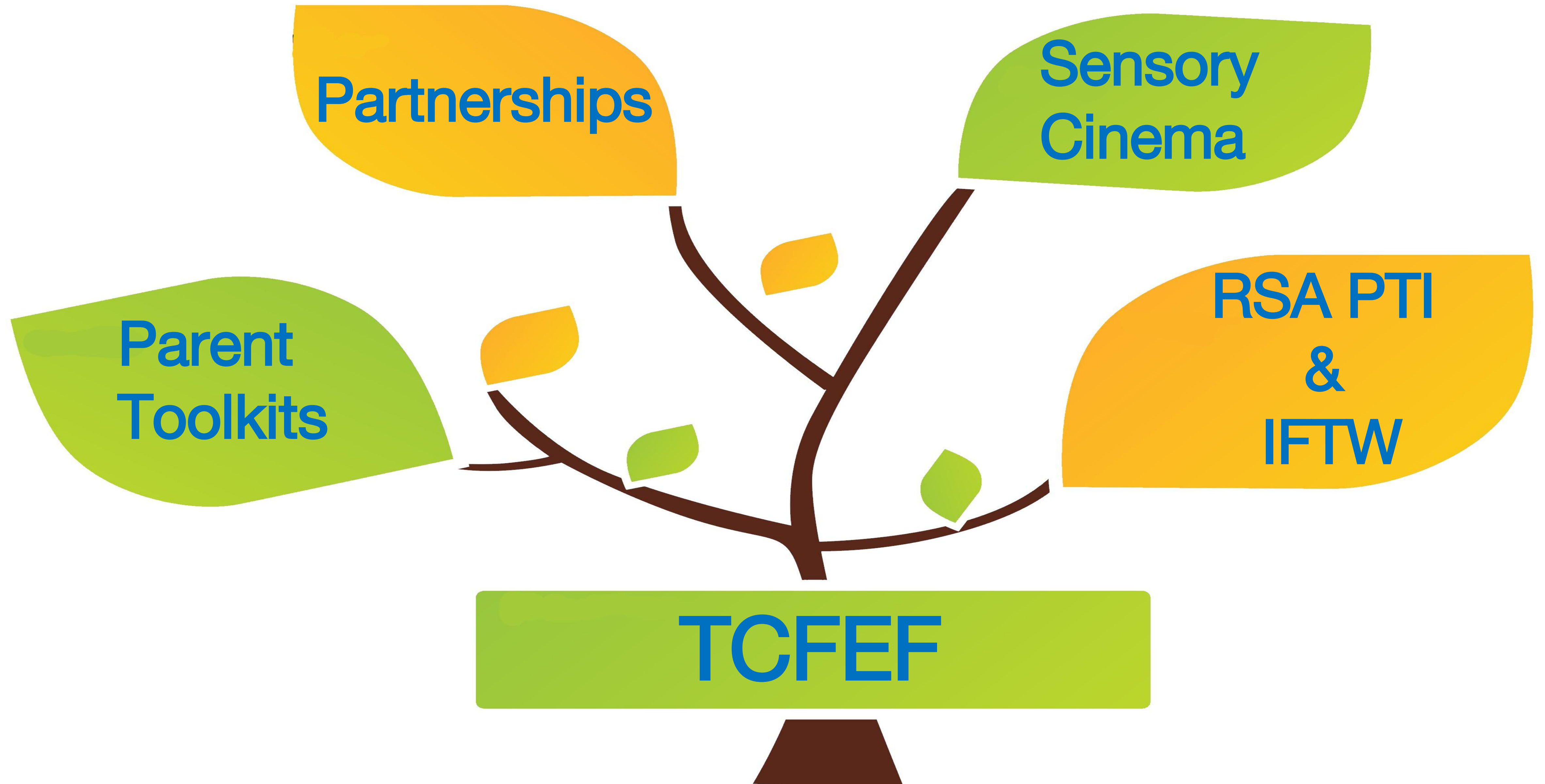
A native of Louisiana, Michele Lappin comes to TCFEF with years of experience in advocating for people with disabilities, in Louisiana legislative sessions. Michele is a wife and a mother of three children with varying disabilities including Autism living in White County. She has a B.A. in Education.



Jerrica Switzer
Administrative Assistant

Jerrica Switzer has a 6-year-old son who is on the Autism Spectrum. She is a native Arkansan from Randolph County. Jerrica is an active member of her local community and enjoys promoting TCFEF at fundraisers and local events.

Our Projects and Collaborations



Sensory Cinema

#wiggiewormswelcome



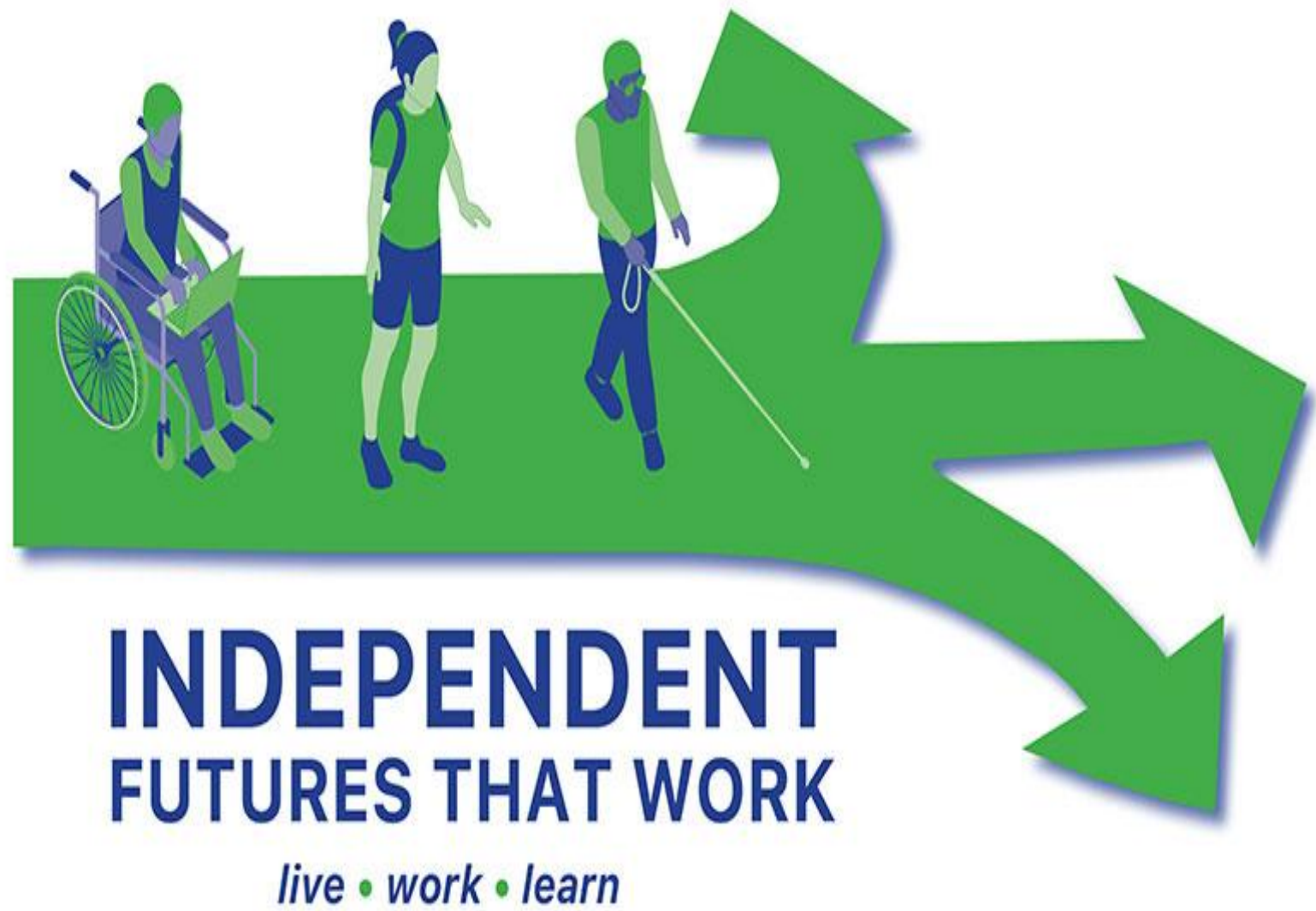
THE CENTER FOR
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sensory cinema
sensory friendly movie events
www.tcfef.org



Lights up! Sound down!

RSA PTI IFTW



Resources for Teen and Young Adults

Not secure | http://thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org/programs/youth-in-transition/

Gmail YouTube Maps PIX Arkansas - Google...

Po Box 16125 • Jonesboro, AR 72403
(870) 336-3012 • Toll Free (888) 360-9654
If you have used our services, please take our survey, [CLICK HERE](#)

THE CENTER FOR Exceptional FAMILIES

Our Team Resources Programs News & Events Calendar

Resources for Teen and Young Adults

Current Arkansas Resources

Independent Futures That Work Project

[Website](#)

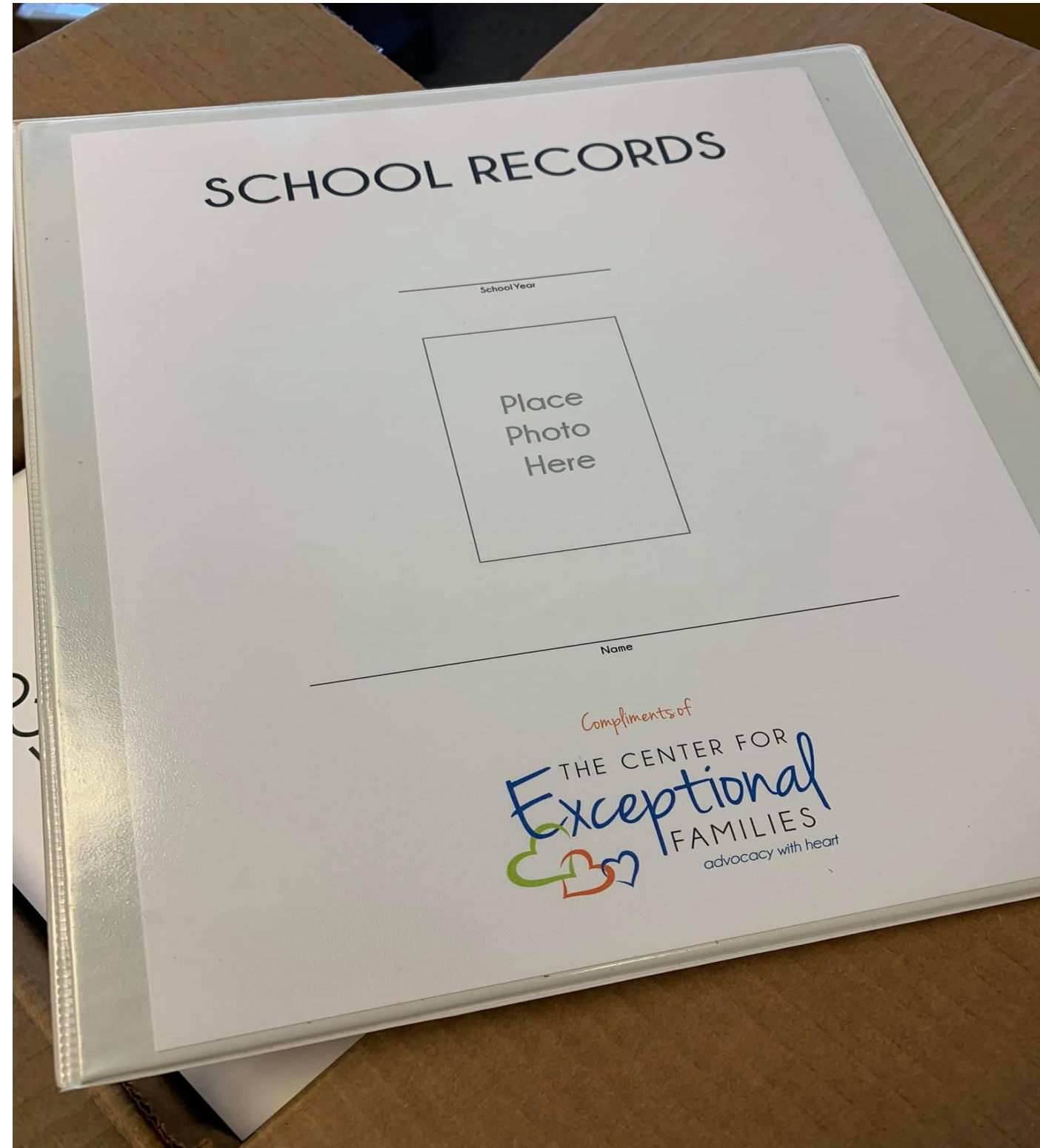
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IFTW Arkansas State Advisory Committee

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Parent Toolkit



In partnership with a growing number of organizations, TCFEF is now able to provide FREE parent toolkits that include a binder with tabs for keeping educational and medical records organized for student or child.



Ag For Autism

Contents

Tabs included with the toolkit:

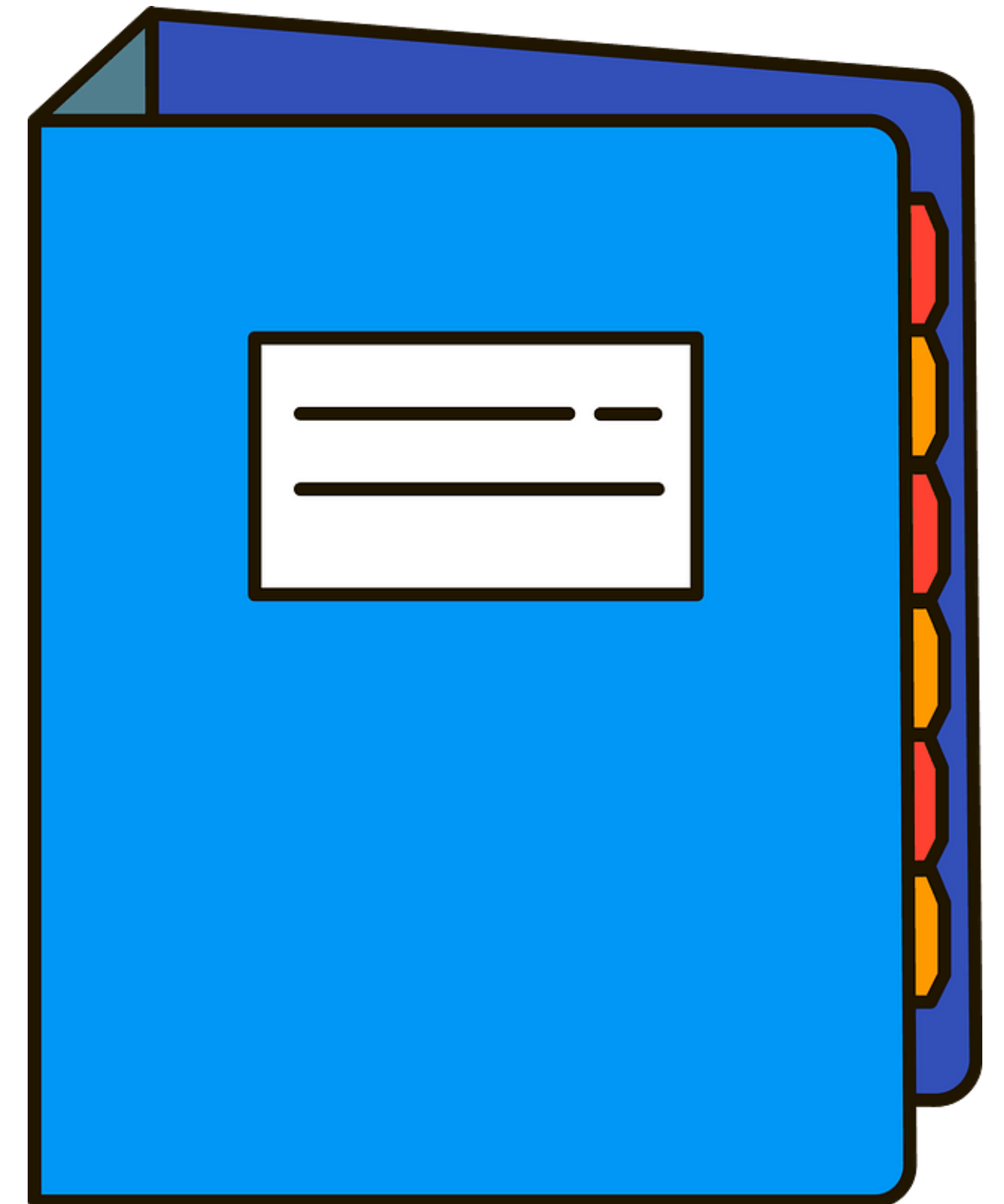
Communication Log, Conference Notes, Parent's Rights, Comprehensive Evaluations, IEP/504 Plans, Therapies, Behavior Plans, Progress Notes, Personal Growth

Also included:

Information about special education services and other resources

Recommendations:

Clean out the binder yearly and file old papers to make room for new paperwork!

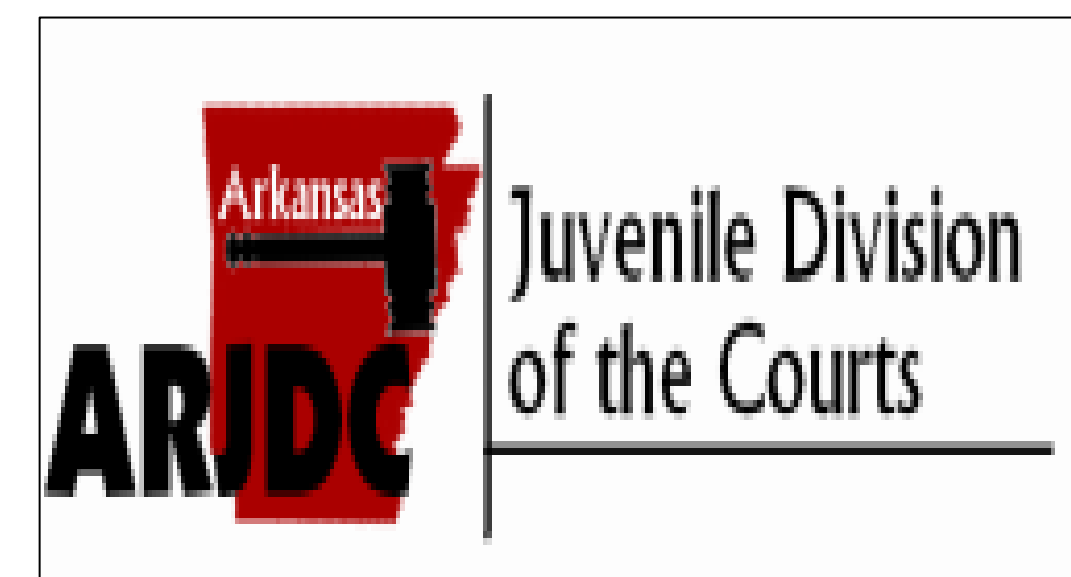
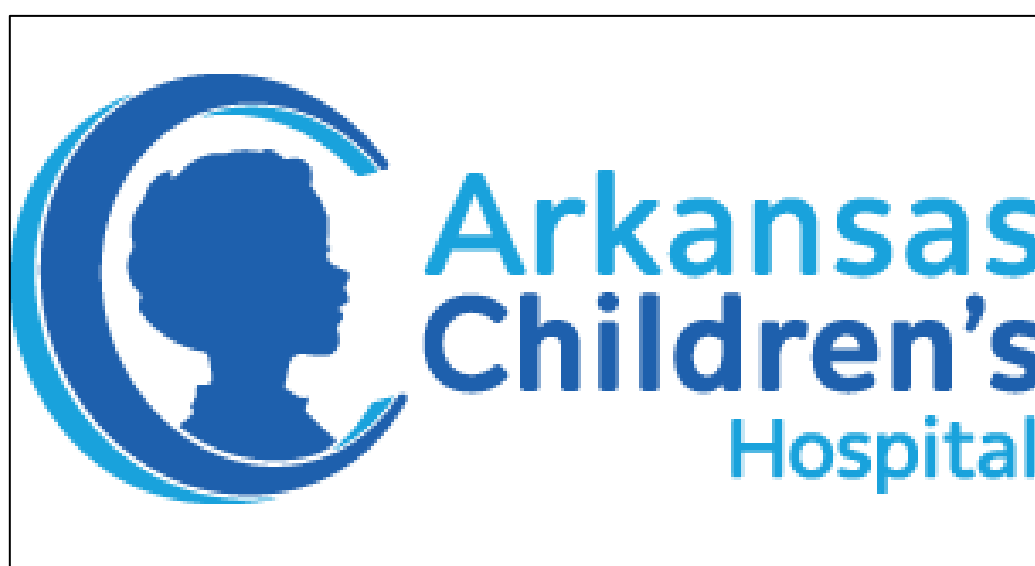
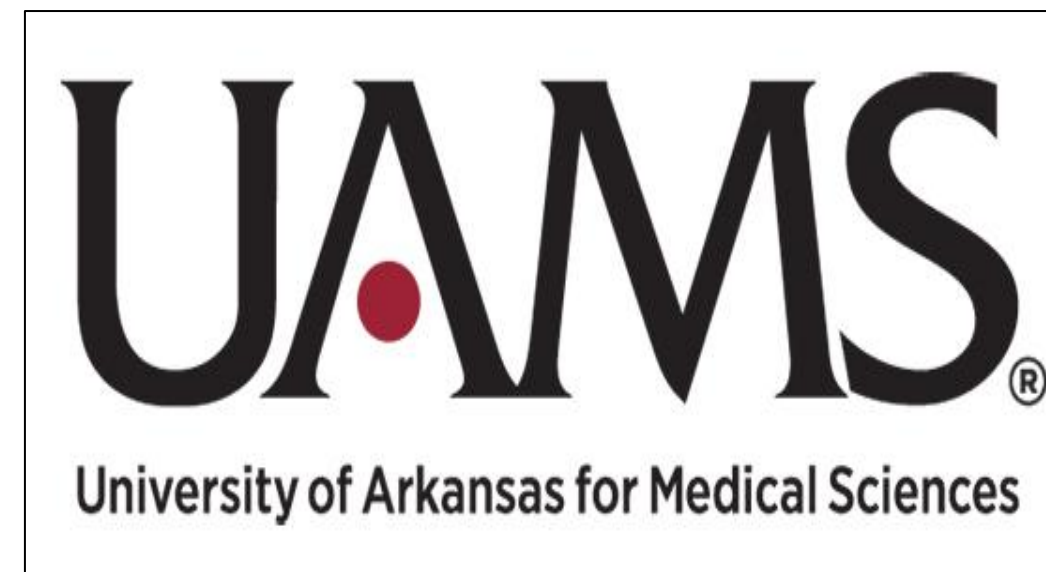


Toolkit Comments

- “Love this as a parent. As a SPED teacher, I wish I could get this for all my parents!”
- “Absolutely loved the toolkit! Very helpful and informative for navigating special ed.”
- “Thank you for the binder! A great tool to keep important papers together.”
- “The binder is very helpful and very appreciated. I have already transferred years of documentation to it.
- “Great resource!”



Partnerships



and many others!

More Resources

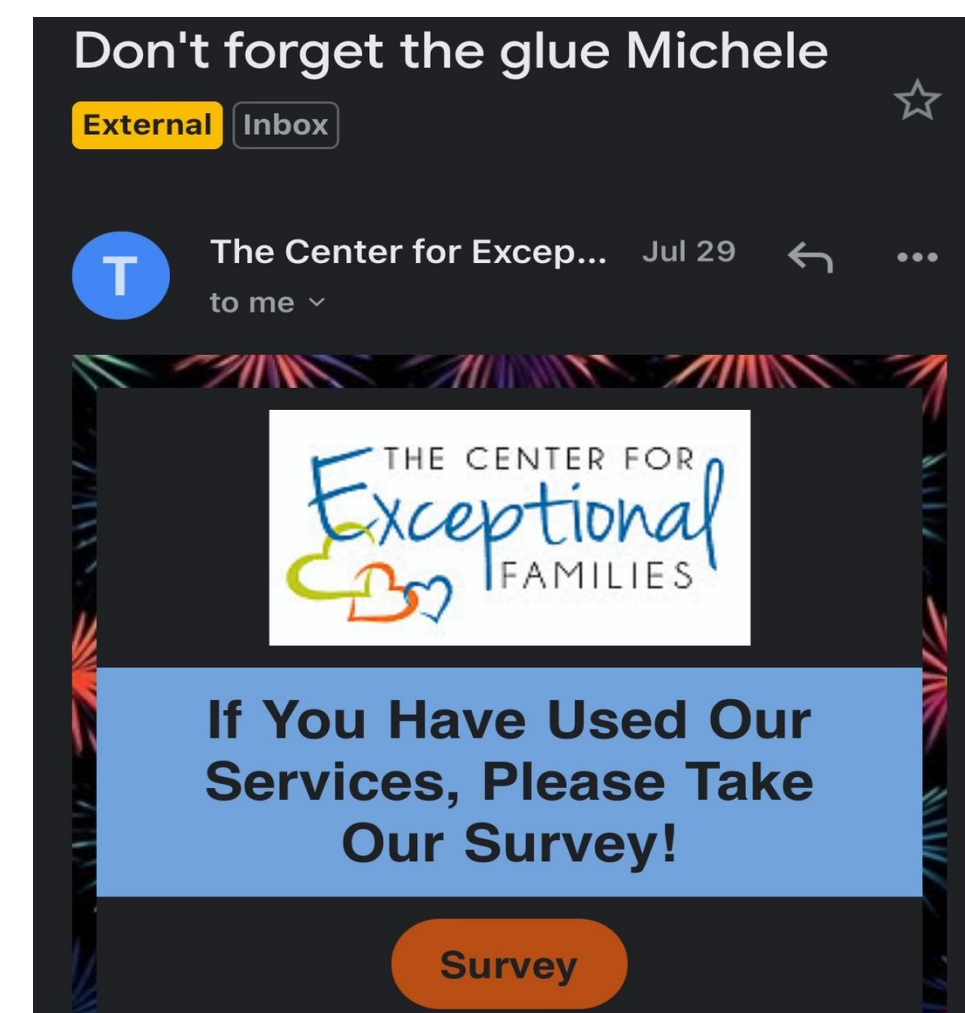
Youtube
Webinars,
Conferences,
Trainings, Tips, etc.



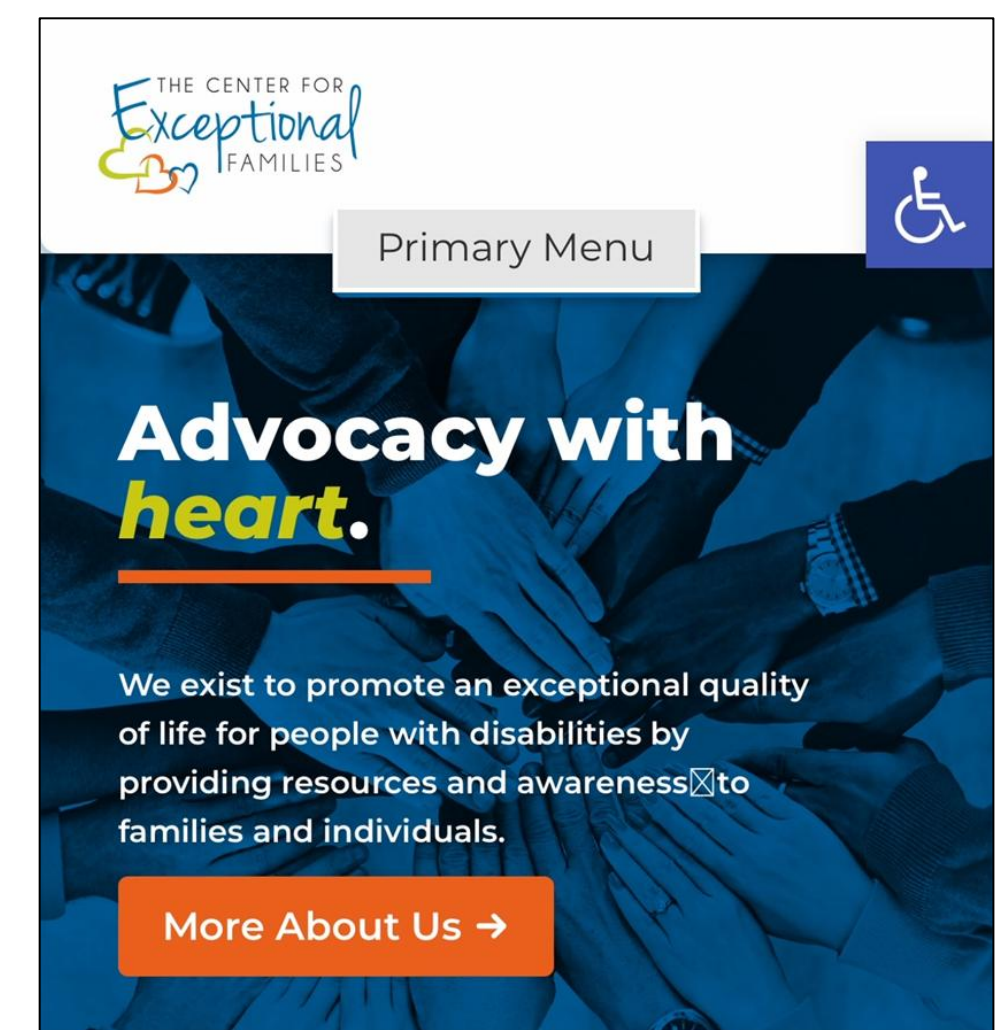
Social Media
Facebook, Instagram,
and TikTok



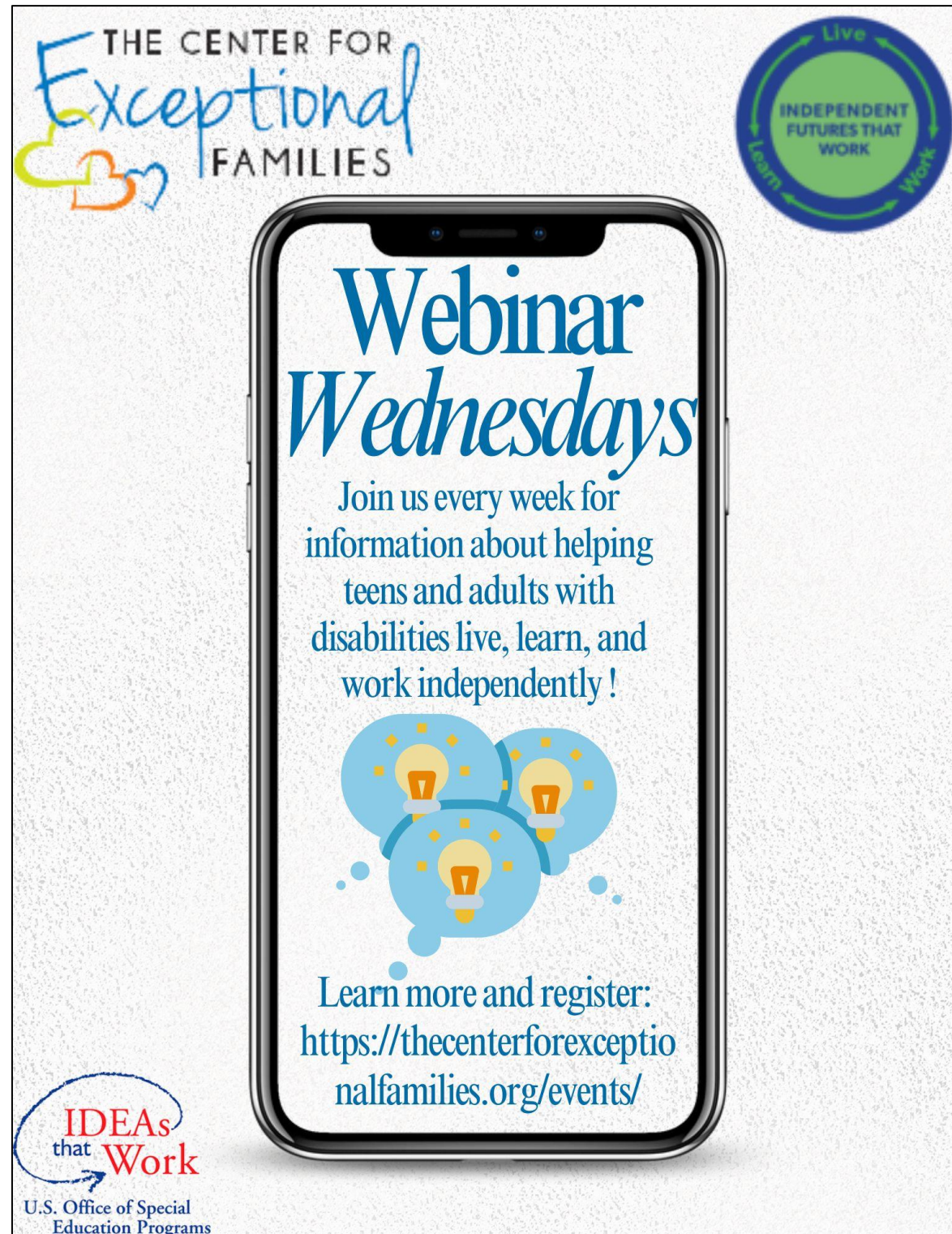
Email Newsletters
Includes news, school
info, resources, and
other disability related
information. TCFEF
also has a quarterly
newsletter for teens
and adults with
disabilities



Website
A hub of great
resources and
information for all
things disability related!



More Resources



THE CENTER FOR
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Live
INDEPENDENT
FUTURES THAT
WORK

Webinar Wednesdays

Join us every week for information about helping teens and adults with disabilities live, learn, and work independently!

Learn more and register:
<https://thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org/events/>

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs



THE CENTER FOR
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Facebook Live Webinars and Trainings!

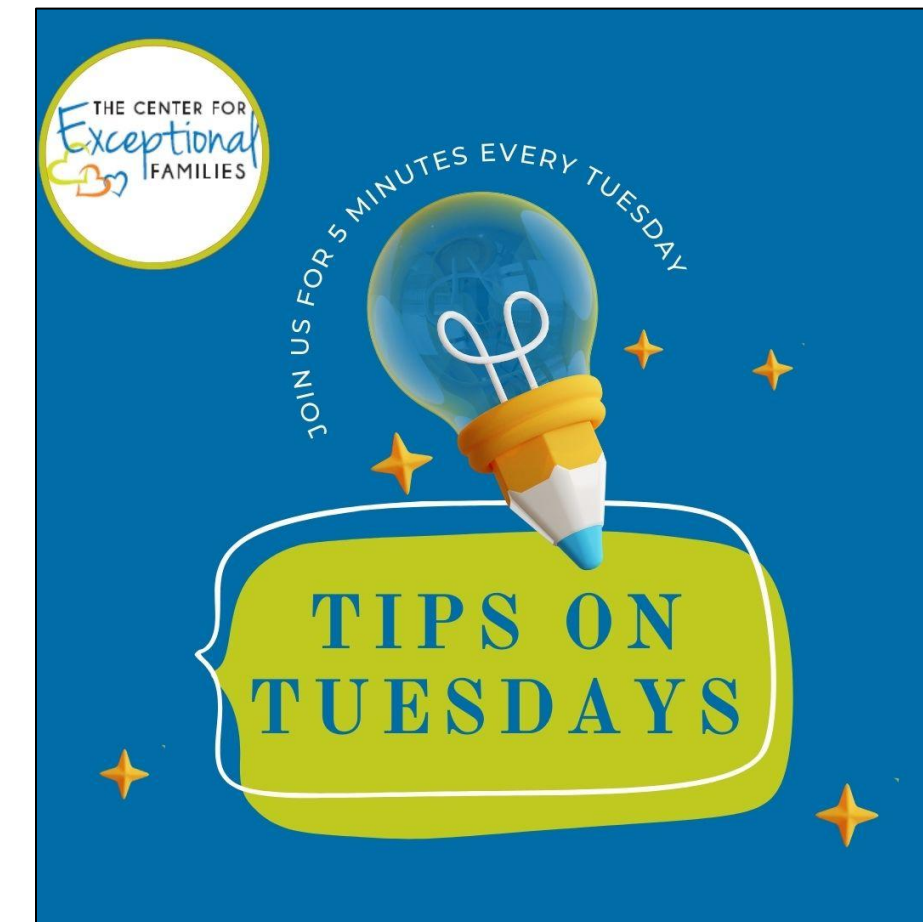
Join us for information about topics related to special education and disability. Bring your knowledge and questions!

12 SPECIAL NEEDS ESTATE PLANNING
Dec 12th, Thursday at 5:30pm

06 TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN
Mar 6th, Thursday at 6pm

01 SPECIAL NEEDS ESTATE PLANNING Q&A
Apr 1st, Tuesday at 5pm

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs



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JOIN US FOR 5 MINUTES EVERY TUESDAY

TIPS ON TUESDAYS

Other great TCFEF resources: Facebook Live Trainings, Webinar Wednesdays, and Tips on Tuesdays offer families training and support, whether they have 5 minutes or 50 minutes to spare!

Coming soon: Youth Hangouts for teens and adults with disabilities!



Online Hangout

for teens and young adults with disabilities

Contact Information

888-360-9654

www.tcfef.org



@exceptionalfamilies



Advocacy with Heart