"It's Who We Are... It's What We Do"

Assisting and strengthening individuals with disabilities and their families through a coordinated network of resources, services and supports.

*** PARISHES WE SERVE ***
Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion Parishes

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WORDS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Let me start off by saying WOW!
So far, 2019 has been full of business opportunities and collaborations.

As a result, my staff and I are able to provide more valuable information and resources to the families we serve.

We are also making sure our employees are introduced to the most current and up to date trainings so we are able to serve Acadiana better.

We strive to plant seeds of success and continue to blossom for all to see.

We are making things happen in Region 4. Wouldn't you like to be a part of our growth? If so, contact me and let’s work together to make Acadiana the best.

~Laci Polotzola
Hello members!!
I want to say thanks for all of you who have had the opportunity to participate in Legislative Visits and/or our Annual Legislative Roundtable! There are some legislators who have not yet made appointments, but I am contacting them and working my best to make those appointments. If you haven’t heard from me yet, be looking to hear from me with a visit for your personal legislators. If you know that we have not yet had a visit with your legislators and you have a personal relationship with them, would you please reach out to them and look into getting an appointment.
Legislative Session is soon going to be here – April 8th – so if you are interested in telling your story as it relates to our Agenda this year, please contact me.
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via phone or email: 504-909-5607 and/or jduplechine@thecanonadvocates.org

If you are interested in finding out more information about Families Helping Families of Acadiana and the services we provide, please call our office and we will be more than happy to schedule a meeting with you!
We are striving to educate EVERYONE in the community about the services we offer, as well as express the importance of inclusion and empowering individuals with disabilities.

Upcoming Events...
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE PEOPLE FIRST

PRESENTER: HARLON COWSAR

MONDAY, APRIL 22ND, 2019
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
LAFAYETTE MAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY
301 W. CONGRESS ST. LAFAYETTE LA 70501

RSVP AT HTTPS://PEOPLE_FIRST.EVENTBRITE.COM
PH: (337) 984-3458
Free Smoke Alarms and Alert Equipment for Lafayette Residents with a Hearing Impairment*

*Who is Eligible?
City of Lafayette Residents of all ages with a documented disability of:
  - deaf
  - hard of hearing
  - hearing impairment

To qualify, applicants must have a professional attest to their disability as part of their completed application.

How Do You Apply?
Submit your application online at: www.lafayettela.gov/FireDepartment
- or -
Complete the application found at your local fire department and send to Lafayette Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division by mail, fax, or email.
Program available while supplies last.

The LFD Fire Prevention Division has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to install smoke alarms and alert equipment in the homes of individuals with a hearing impairment.*

Program Features:
- Installation of smoke alarms and alert equipment in the home
- Equipment will include a bed shaker and very loud, low-frequency bedside alert signal; and, in some homes, a strobe light to alert individuals who are deaf in the event of a fire
- Help with planning a home fire drill
- Assistance with a home safety survey to prevent fires, burns, falls, and other common home injuries

Lafayette Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division
2100 Jefferson St. Bldg. B / Lafayette, LA 70501
Phone: 337-291-8704 Fax: 337-291-5531
Email: FireSafety@lafayettela.gov
APRIL 10th @ 6:00 PM
UL SOFTBALL GAME

MAY 1st @ 5:00 PM
COOKING CLASS

JUNE 5th @ 1:00 PM
EXERCISE CLASS

JULY 3rd @ 5:00 PM
RESTAURANT

AUGUST 4th @ 4:00 PM
BOWLING

SEPTEMBER 4TH @ 5:00 PM
RESTAURANT/UL FOOTBALL GAME

OCTOBER 2nd @ 5:00 PM
GAME NIGHT - BOARD GAMES

NOVEMBER 6th @ 5:00 PM
RESTAURANT

DECEMBER
CANCELED BECAUSE OF CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY'S

JANUARY
CANCELED BECAUSE OF NEW YEAR HOLIDAY

The Lagniappe Club offers an opportunity for adults with disabilities to get out and enjoy activities in their community.

The Affect Project
A social group for teens with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities. We have food, fun, and new friends! You can bring an old friend too!

Meet: Last Tuesday of every other month / Location & Time: TBA

For more Information:
Call: (337) 984-3458
Check out our Facebook Page: The Affect Project
Go to our Website: https://www.fhfacadiana.org
In The Community...

**PARENT**

**Support**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Overwhelmed?</th>
<th>Stressed?</th>
<th>Need to Vent?</th>
<th>Need Support?</th>
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Would you like someone to talk to about the joys and challenges of raising and/or caring for a child with special needs?

Would you like to learn information about advocacy and resources for you and your family?

Would you like to increase awareness and acceptance in your community?

If you answered yes to at least one of the questions, we invite you to attend our FHF of Acadiana Parent Support Group…

The last Tuesday of every other month
Location/Time TBA
For more information and/or to RSVP, please contact us:
337-984-3458
info@fhfacadiana.org

In The Community…
Former Families Helping Families employee and mom, Denay Hooks, has recently published her first book! The book is inspired by her daughter, Hannah, who has Rett Syndrome, as well as a need she saw for the discussion of inclusion with children.

_The Adventures of Bug and Boo - Under the Sea_ inspires fun and adventure for ALL children! It also comes with a FREE printable teacher’s guide so that it can be used in the classroom to aid in the discussion of inclusion and spreading kindness.

Come join Bug and Boo on their amazing adventure under the sea! Bug has Rett Syndrome and uses a wheelchair; but when her and her brother go on adventures her body has no limitations. They swim with guppies, find an old pirate ship, and still make it home by dinner.

**Order today!**

[www.theadventuresofbugandboo.com](http://www.theadventuresofbugandboo.com)

And follow us on Facebook!

A portion of every book sold goes to research to find a cure.
Mission Statement
The Louisiana Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council (LA-SICC) works in collaboration with the Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, in an advisory capacity, to design and oversee the implementation of a family-centered, community-based, comprehensive, interagency system for infants and toddlers (birth through two years of age) who are eligible for services.
Our goal is to advise and assist the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), as the Lead Agency, in the monitoring and evaluation of this system to ensure that families are supported and the potential of each child is maximized.

Overview
The legislation for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), calls for a comprehensive system of coordinated early intervention services. In Louisiana, this system is called Early Steps: Louisiana’s Early Intervention System. Early Steps is an interagency effort administered through LDH in conjunction with LA-SICC.

Experience has shown that families with young children with special needs frequently require a range of services which cannot be provided entirely by a single agency. Intervening with coordinated health, social, and educational services during the first three years of life increases developmental and educational gains for the child, improves family function, and reduces the costs of special care later in life.

In drafting the original legislation, Congress recognized the need for a group outside of the Lead Agency to “advise and assist” in the development of this comprehensive system of coordinated early intervention services. LA-SICC is required by statute to be appointed by the Governor and is an important participant in the development and implementation of such a system. LA-SICC is an independent board that operates within the Office of the Governor.

Click here for upcoming meetings of LA-SICC.

Purpose
Our purpose is to advise and assist LDH in the performance of its responsibilities as the Lead Agency, particularly in regard to the following:

- Identification of the sources of fiscal and other support for early intervention services
- Assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency
- Promotion of interagency agreements

LA-SICC also advises and assists LDH in the preparation of applications, the transition of infants and toddlers to preschool or other appropriate services, and the preparation and submission of an annual report to the governor. We also update federal authorities on the status of Early Steps: Louisiana’s Early Intervention System.

The mission of the Acadiana Area Human Services District (AAHSD) is to increase public awareness of and to provide access for individuals with behavioral health and developmental disabilities to integrated community based services while promoting wellness, recovery and independence through education and the choice of a broad range of programmatic and community resources. To this end, a comprehensive system of care is offered which provides research-based prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery support services to citizens of Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin and Vermilion parishes, directly and through community collaborations.

For More Information: 337-262-5610

What does the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council do?

The Council engages in **advocacy, systems change, and capacity building** activities that contribute to a coordinated, individual and family-centered, individual and family-directed
A comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life. 

To build capacity and effect systems change, Councils are charged with carrying out specific activities in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act:

- To Organize and Enlist Others to Influence
- To Empower

The Council has four committees to address the objectives in the Council’s Five Year Plan and functions of the Council.

- Executive Committee – takes immediate action when necessary, makes policy and other recommendations to the full Council, and evaluates the performance of the Executive Director.
- Self Determination/Community Inclusion Committee – monitors plan activities that fall under the areas of Community Supports and Advocacy and Leadership Development.
- Education/Employment Committee – monitors plan activities that fall under the areas of Education and Early Intervention, Employment, and Child Care.
- Act 378 Sub-Committee – oversees implementation of the Community and Family Support System.
- Ad Hoc Committees are appointed on an as-needed basis.

Click LEAP CONNECT GUIDE to review the guide developed by Louisiana Department of Education relevant to LEAP Connect.

We want parents to be fully prepared for the rest of the school year. We can help by arming them with as much knowledge as possible.

From the Louisiana Department of Education:

Resources for Parents of Students with Disabilities

Resources for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/students-with-disabilities/resources-to-support-students-with-significant-cognitive-disabilities.pdf?sfvrsn=8d739e1f_2

From Understood.org:
Partnering with Your Child’s School

Empowering Your Child
https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/empowering-your-child

From Wrightslaw:
Parental Protections
https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/protections.index.htm

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

A RESOURCE FOR LOUISIANA PARENTS ABOUT NEW STATE EDUCATION LAWS ENACTED IN 2018

ACT 696

Act 696 requires all school districts to create policies for allowing behavioral health service providers in schools during the school day by January 2019. Public schools shall not prohibit a behavioral health provider from providing behavioral health services to a student at school during school hours if the student’s parent or legal guardian requests such services from the provider. For more information visit

Louisiana Family to Family
Health Information Center
**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Get Moving!

One of the best gifts you can give your children for lifelong health and wellness is a love for being physically active. Set a good example for your kids and make physical activity a family affair:

- If the weather is nice, get out for a family walk after lunch or dinner. If it’s cold, bundle up in layers, but don’t let that stop you!
- Put on your favorite music with a happy beat and dance with your kids. You don’t have to be good enough to win a dance contest!
- Park a little farther away from the store when you go shopping.
- Walk up stairs instead of taking the elevator.
- Do jumping jacks during TV commercials.

For more ideas on easy ways to add more physical activity to your day—and some healthy eating tips, too—go to: [www.smallstep.gov/sm_steps/sm_steps_index.html](http://www.smallstep.gov/sm_steps/sm_steps_index.html)

**Three Kinds of Physical Activity:**

- Aerobic activities like bicycling, or sports such as soccer or football
- Muscle strengthening activities like push-ups and weight-lifting
- Bone strengthening activities like jumping rope and running

**Physical Activity is Important for Everybody—including Children with Special Health Care Needs or Disabilities!**

Here’s a link to a fact sheet from the National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) about physical activity challenges facing people with disabilities: [www.fitness.gov/nfsm/obesity-disabilities-factsheet2010-cdc.pdf](http://www.fitness.gov/nfsm/obesity-disabilities-factsheet2010-cdc.pdf)

**Hot Tips for Getting Started!**

Turn off the TV—and the Computer, Video Games, DVDs, etc.! One of the best ways to help your family be more active is to limit the amount of time everybody spends in front of a screen.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends NO TV time for kids under 2 years old, and no more than 2 hours a day for the rest of us. When you do watch TV, at least get up and dance during commercials!

For more ideas: [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)

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**UPCOMING WEBINARS**

April 25, 2019
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Who Needs a Surrogate Parent**
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) gives parents of children with
Disabilities an active role in planning their child’s educational programs and decision making. However, sometimes the parent is not available and IDEA allows for a surrogate parent to fill this very important role. This training will go over the children eligible for a surrogate parent, who can be a surrogate parent and most importantly, who cannot be a surrogate parent.

Co-Sponsor: FHF of Acadiana
Presenter: Jessica Rodrigue, FHF of GNO
Audience: Parents, Caregivers, and Professionals of School-Aged Children/Students.

To register, click on the link below. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Who Needs A Surrogate Parent
https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4720712888701567500

Children’s Special Health Services (CSHS)
The CSHS program is the principle public agency ensuring that children and youth who have special health care needs in Louisiana have access to health care services designed to minimize their disabilities and maximize their probabilities of enjoying independent and self-sufficient lives. Children and youth who have special health care needs are those who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that most children or youth require. Currently in Louisiana, there are more than 207,000 children and youth who have special health care needs. This is about 19 percent of all Louisiana children and youth.

For information: 337-262-5616 Ext. 123

Social Security Workshop
Our Social Security Benefits Workshop was a huge success. Thank you to our presenters from the Lafayette Social Security Office for providing us with valuable information. Thank you to Advocacy Center of Louisiana for being a vendor, and thank you to all of our guests.

Self Direction Workshop
This training went over the center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements which relate to new electric visit verification (EVV) requirements. To help those using SELF-DIRECTION WAIVER Services better understand web time entry.

Legislative Roundtable
Thank you to all who attended the 2019 Region 4 Legislative Roundtable this morning for great discussion. Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council provided our families with valuable information pertaining to the

Access videos:
www.fhfacadiana.org
www.facebook.com/fhfacadiana
It is with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of one of our valued employees, CSHS Parent Liaison, Ms. Rose Viltz. We are sad to see any of our employees go, but also wish Rose the greatest happiness and success in this new chapter of her life. On behalf of our families, thank you Rose for your many years of service!

Click here for Volunteer Form...

Volunteering can help you put existing skills to work and can bring you closer to your community.

If you would like to donate, please contact our office to make arrangements for delivery. If you are in need of medical supplies, please call our office for availability.

THANK YOU.... THANK YOU!

We would like to thank Jim Nobles with The Rock'n'Hope Show 2019 Advocacy Agenda. We were honored to have Ms. Phyllis Roy - Senator Gerald Boudreaux's Legislative Assistant in attendance as well.

Anatomy of an IEP
Increasing their knowledge about the Anatomy of an IEP.

Langnaipe Club
FHF of Acadiana The Lagniappe Club had a blast last night at Grub Burger Bar!!! We would like to thank Grub Burger for their wonderful service and for giving back to our organization!!

Behavior Management in the Home & at School

Thank you to Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge (FHFGBR) for teaming up with us to offer this workshop for our Families in Region 4! Also thank you Mrs. Bambi Polotzola for being our guest speaker and offering a little insight on your personal and professional experiences with Behavior Management!

Thanks to all the Vendors, Presenters and Attendees for making our events successful! If you've missed one of our trainings, workshops and/or events, please call our office for the current schedule.

Please visit our website for more event pictures

Here's How You Can Donate:

Paypal
and The Pearl for choosing our organization to donate proceeds too for their 2019 event!

THANK YOU!
GRUB Burger Bar & Grill
A percentage of it's sales went to Families Helping Families of Acadiana during this event.

Thank you...
We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the hard work that you put in during your time here. It is a pleasure to work with you, and we sincerely hope that your experiences at our agency are both engaging and insightful.

UL Intern
Claire Alleman

AROUND THE STATE....
Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs Newsletter January 2019

If you have any suggestions and/or recommendations, please feel free to email them to the link below?

info@fhfacadiana.org
In Loving Memory...

Kristopher Hebert

We lost a friend, an advocate and a man full of life. Kristopher was always there to lend a hand, an ear to listen and one to always find a way to help those less fortunate. Kristopher entertained so many with his loving spirit. We say, continue to entertain in our thoughts and dreams and your light will forever shine as the star you are.

Our office will be closed on April 19, 2019. We will resume regular business hours April 22, 2019 at 8 am.

From Our Family to Your’s

Have a Happy Easter!!!
Our agency helped over 3000 families in 2018.
We thrive to make sure every family that calls our office is top priority.
Our thorough and compassionate staff understands the issues that you face because our employees are either self advocates or is a family member of an individual with a disability.
Thank you for trusting us to help you and your family.

**MEET THE STAFF**

Laci Polotzola  
Executive Director

Annette Fruge'  
Information & Referral Specialist  
Administrative Assistant

Deborah Fontenot  
Community Outreach Specialist  
Early Steps

Chaney Guidry  
Information/Referral Specialist  
Adult Program Coordinator

Nicole Flores  
Education Liaison

Jamie Duplechine  
LaCAN Leader
Nicole Dejean  
Chair

Vernesa Roy  
Secretary

Micah Moscovis  
Member

Shana Boutte  
Member

Renee Carlson  
Member

Alvada Willis  
Member

Harlon Cowsar, II  
Member

Families Helping Families of Acadiana  
100 Benman Road