"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

WORDS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Summer Is Finally Here...
Not only are we trying to beat the heat, but our organization is on FIRE. My staff and I have been out in the community making connections and meeting new families.
We have made so much progress in helping not only the families we serve but our community as a whole.
Our employees and board members continue to attend training and staff development workshops to better serve our community.
We are honored to shine a little sunlight into the lives of our families that have already been through so much.
Wouldn’t you like to be someone’s sunlight? If you do, please contact our office to see how you can help our Region 4 families.

~Laci Polotzola
“Summer is here, let's look at the sunny side of everything.”

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Upcoming Events...
Pay your way

Contact: Chaney
(337) 458-5438

July 3rd // 5:00 PM

Lagniappe Club Lafayette
Goes to dinner at Deano's Pizza

RSVP at: https://tlclafayette-pizza.eventbrite.com
or (337) 458-5438
Webinar CoSponsor
FHF of Acadiana

Registration link
https://tinyurl.com/y6t8b4wf

Parents rave about our in-house publications, All About Me and My Portfolio and the usefulness in introducing their children to a variety of new service providers such as teachers, DSP’s, Therapists and more.

Join us for this webinar where we will provide you access to these publications, instructions on how to personalize them for your child, and things you need to think about including in your personalized publication. If you do not have access to a printer, email us your publication, and we’ll be happy to print them out for you.

How to Introduce Your Child to New Providers?

Tuesday 16th

JULY

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Audience: Parents, Caregivers, and Professionals of School-Aged Children/Students.

Changing Lives, Every Day
LACAN SUMMER FUN DAY
JULY 20, 2019
10AM - 12PM
ST. JULIEN PARK SPLASHPAD
701 St Nazaire Rd,
Broussard, LA 70518

Contact: Jamie Duplechione, Region 4 LaCAN Leader
(504) 909-5607 // jduplechione@lacanadvocates.org
RSVP AT https://lacan720.eventbrite.com
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 HOLIDAYS

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.
ST. LANDRY LAGNIAPPE CLUB

GOES TO THE MOVIES

The Lion King

St. Landry Abilities

Contact: Chaney
(337) 458-5438

St. Landry Cinema  1234 Heather Dr. Opelousas

SATURDAY, July 27th at 9:00 AM

RSVP at https://tlcs1-movienight.eventbrite.com

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

Educational Plans: IEP’s vs. 504 Plan

Tuesday
AUG 20th
11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Students with disabilities will usually qualify for either an IEP or a 504 Plan – but what is the difference and is one better than the other? This training will take you through the eligibility process of both plans, the laws that regulate both, the differences in the plans and parental rights.

Registration link: https://tinyurl.com/y6d3n92h

Webinar Co-Sponsor
Families Helping Families of Acadiana

Audience: Parents, Caregivers, and Professionals of School-Aged Children/Students.

Lactic
Changing Lives... Every Day
Hi, I'm Lillian! I'm sixteen years old and a tubie from south Louisiana. I've had a feeding tube for about eight years now. It allows me to be active and tubie pads allow me to be confident in my tube. And that's my goal here—to make quality products that help other tubies experience the same pride that I've been given. I hope you love my products as much as I loved making them for you!

To view my inventory go to: https://etsy.me/2Qp3bj8

Congratulations
Partners in Policymaking Graduates
from Acadiana

Partners in Policymaking is a national leadership training program for people with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities. It provides the most current knowledge about disability issues and develops the competencies necessary for effective advocacy to influence public policy at all levels of government.
Audrey was born in March of 2014. She was born without any complications, but through Newborn Screening, she was flagged for a rare disease called Methylmalonic Acidemia. Through genetic testing, we discovered she indeed had a form of MMA, called Cobalamin C, MMA-HCU. Without treatment, this disease degenerates the brain, eyes, and muscles. Treatments for this disease have come a long way in the last 10 years, and with correct and aggressive treatment we are hoping we keep it from progressing. Before diagnosis, we suspect Audrey suffered a metabolic stroke that caused cognitive impairment. In 5 short years, she has overcome so much. Audrey is an absolute joy to be around, and she lives life to the fullest. Our family never treated her as if she were “sick”. We have exposed her to as many experiences as possible with modifications when needed.

We have appreciated the assistance Families Helping Families of Acadiana has given to Audrey. They have guided us through the IEP process and helped us to know of different services available for Audrey. FHF of Acadiana even came to meetings as support and helped us with processing the information that was being presented to us. We have come up with solutions that have worked out wonderfully for her this school year. We are confident she can continue learning and growing with the right supports and modifications.

-Lindsay Mooney
SPOTLIGHT FRIDAY

On April 20, 2016 we were unexpectedly blessed with our second child, Jaxon Regan. I was admitted into the hospital four days prior, due to high blood pressure, and the doctors did everything they could to bring it down. On day four, Jax stopped moving and could not be stimulated during an ultrasound. Though we could still hear his little heart beating fiercely, he obviously needed to come out. The doctors and nurses worked so quickly and efficiently that within thirty minutes of that fateful ultrasound, we heard one tiny cry of life before the NICU staff needed to take over. Four days after birth, we were confronted with devastating news, Jaxon had suffered a bilateral grade four brain bleed during the night before his birth. Though his lungs and body were fine, his head circumference began to grow. We were confronted with the reality of hydrocephalus and his need for a temporary shunt. That ultimately turned into a permanent VP shunt before his release from the NICU three and a half months later. Jax is three years old now and in those three years he has overcome feeding issues and GERD (he has a feeding tube), infantile spasm seizures, and multiple surgeries and hospital stays. Today, he lives with epilepsy, cerebral palsy, development delays, and hydrocephalus, but God allows him to live happily and healthy, and for that we are grateful. We are incredibly blessed to have the doctors, nurses, and therapists that we have and Jax is thriving.

ALONG OUR JOURNEY A FRIEND OF MINE SUGGESTED FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES OF ACADIANA WHEN WE WERE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH MEDICAID. WE ARE SO GLAD WE REACHED OUT TO THEM. THEY ARE GENUINELY CONCERNED WITH OUR PROBLEMS AND HOW THEY CAN ASSIST US WITH THEM. THEY HAVE PROVIDED US WITH MEDICAL SUPPLIES, THEY HAVE EDUCATED ME IN MULTIPLE AREAS OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS’ UNIVERSE, AND WITHOUT THEIR ASSISTANCE, I TRULY THINK I WOULD HAVE LOST MY MIND. THEY ARE FRIENDS WHO LISTEN, CAN RELATE TO WHATEVER YOU HAVE GOING ON, AND EXHAUST EVERY OPTION TO HELP YOU IN ANY WAY THAT THEY CAN. THANK YOU FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES FOR BEING SO CARING, UNDERSTANDING, INFORMATIVE, AND INCREDIBLY HELPFUL ALONG THIS JOURNEY.

- Regina Regan

SPOTLIGHT FRIDAY

My daughter Julia Rose is 15 years old with Autism. I honestly can’t remember how I heard about Families Helping Families. All I can remember is, I was overwhelmed in the cloud of “What in the world do I do next?”. My daughter had an IEP through the school system for about 10 years. Then we moved out of state for a couple of years and returned back to LA about 2 years ago. Since we had moved out of state my daughter’s IEP had lapsed. When I realized this happened, I felt responsible for causing this issue and not knowing how to resolve it so my daughter could get the assistance she needed in the school system. When I did find Families Helping Families of Acadiana, I reached out and the Education Liaison took me under her wing. Not only did I feel befriended, but I felt like I had a strong advocate who knew her stuff! We set up a road map and I no longer felt lost and alone in the maze of navigating the school system and special education services. Nicole Flores is a great Liaison, she is always learning and passing information on to others. Although the FHF staff have their own families with special needs, they aren’t absorbed in their own world. I find everyone to be community focused and going the extra mile! I thank God for FHF and for Nicole!

- Christine Dzindzio
Louisiana Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council

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 Early Steps and their families. 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 services.
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*.

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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

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**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 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
- To Change Public Attitudes
- To Advocate and Influence
- To Demonstrate Innovation
- To Provide Training and Technical Assistance
- To Redesign the System
- To Remove Barriers
- To Educate Policy Makers
- To Educate the Public
To Develop & Support Coalitions
To Outreach

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.

Hello all!! Thank you, Region 4 advocates, for all your hard work and tireless efforts in advocacy throughout the 2019 Legislative Session. We always hear that “advocacy works” and as we look back on our success we recognize that it has been proven many times, especially this year. We will be having a Community Input Meeting on July 20, 2019 from 10 AM-12 PM at St. Julien Park and I want to encourage ALL of you to come out for an opportunity to hear all of the exciting news from this year’s session and to provide input on issues you would like to see placed on the DD Council’s Advocacy Agenda for year 2020. Childcare will be provided. Come out for a little education on effective advocacy, food, and fun!! Looking forward to seeing you all...

– Jamie Duplechine // 504-909-5607 // jduplechine@thecanonadvocates.org

As we enter the month of July, parents begin to realize we are in the middle of summer, and there are approximately six weeks until the start of the new school year.

The return to school can be overwhelming for kids AND their parents. Understood.org has a wonderful "Start School Strong: back-to-school guide to help parents navigate the path back to school. Click on the link below for a great step-by-step guide to prepare and plan for the upcoming school year:

CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE SITE
Emergency Preparedness for Children With Special Needs

Follow these steps to help you prepare for an emergency or disaster with your child’s special health care needs or disability in mind.

Create a Plan

The first step to creating an emergency plan is to sit down and talk with your family about different types of emergencies, how to prepare for them, and brainstorm ideas of how to care for your child with special needs during an emergency.

1. Assess your situation
Reflect and plan for your child’s needs if there was:

- Limited health care access and emergency rescue services
- A lack of transportation

2. Start Planning
- Plan for backup sources of heat, refrigeration, and electricity.
- You can use a Red Cross shelter for storing medicine, charging equipment and getting meals. You do not have to be staying in a shelter to use its resources.
- If your child depends on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location of more than one facility: find out the facility’s plans for emergencies and how your child will get treatment, medications, etc. Get their emergency contact numbers.
- Create and practice an escape plan for your home.
- Be sure there are clear exit paths for a child who uses mobility devices or has vision loss.
- Talk to your local police and fire departments to see if they have emergency services or plans for people with special needs.
- Smart 911 is a free service that allows families to create a safety profile for their household that includes any information they want 9-1-1 to have in the event of an emergency.
- Obtain a medical alert and/or identification bracelet for your child. Some organizations sell decals that can be put on the home or car to alert responders that there is a child with special needs (see example).
- Ask for the emergency plan at your child’s school or child care. Plan with them how your child will get the care they need in an emergency.

3. Create a support network
Create a network of family, neighbors or friends that can help you and your child.

- Tell them about your child’s special needs and share your emergency plan and where your emergency supplies are stored.
- Give a trusted member of your network a key to your home.
- Agree upon a system with your network to signal for help if phones, electricity and internet/networks are not working.
- Show others how to handle your child’s wheelchair or other equipment.
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 assist you.

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**Pack an Emergency Supply Kit**

In addition to supplies needed for a general disaster kit, you may need to add several things to the kit for your child with special needs.

**General Information and Supplies:**
- A current copy of your child’s Care Plan, including the In Case of Emergency Form.
- Current medical information and records stored on a CD, flash drive, or phone app (keep one paper copy in a waterproof bag).
- Batteries for hearing aids and communication devices.
- Special dietary foods and supplies.
- Items that calm or entertain your child.
- Identification to be carried by each child in case your family gets separated.

**Power Supplies:**
- A generator for back up power support (due to deadly fumes, never use a generator indoors).
- An AC adaptor for your car to charge small electrical equipment such as a nebulizer.
- Battery powered versions of medical equipment your child uses.
- Manual wheelchair or other non-electric equipment.
- Backup chargers a cell phones. This include a hand-cranked USB cell phone emergency charger, a solar charger, or a battery pack. Some weather radios have a built in hand crank charger.
- Backup chargers for a laptop or table could include a 12V USB adapter that plugs into a car, an inverter, or a battery jump pack with a USB port.

**Medical Supplies and Medications:**
- Talk with your child’s doctor about how to get an emergency supply of medicines. If your child takes medicine given by a clinic or hospital, talk with them about how to plan for a stoppage due to a disaster.
- Ask your pharmacist how long the medicine can last and storage needs of the medicines.
- Keep a two-week supply of medical care items such as needles, nasal cannulas, bandages, etc.

- Keep a cooler and chemical ice packs for storing medications that must be kept cold.
- Keep prescription information in your wallet, survival kit and car that includes the name, location and phone number of an out of town pharmacy.

**Other Helpful Tips:**
- Pack smaller “to go” kits for use in an evacuation. Store them in multiple places such as your car, at work and at school.
- Update supplies yearly, replace water every six months, and update emergency contact and medical forms as needed.
- If you can’t contact your doctor or pharmacy in a disaster, ask for help from emergency responders or staff at emergency shelters or service centers. You can get help in getting medication from a Red Cross shelter or by dialing 211 for the Washington State Information Network.

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**Emergency Preparedness Resource List**

**Special Needs Information**
- For children with special nutritional needs: Disaster Preparedness Checklist
- Keeping Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Safe During Emergencies and Disasters from Family Voices.
- Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities or Access and Functional Needs from Ready.gov
- For public health professional and health providers—training courses on Emergency Preparedness and Response for Vulnerable Populations from PERLC/Northwest Center for Public Health Practice.

**General Emergency Preparedness Information**
- American Red Cross
- https://cschn.org/resources-contacts/emergency-preparedness-for-children-with-special-needs/
- Louisiana Family to Family Health Information Center

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**Community OUTREACH**

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 assist you.

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**Children's Special Health Services (CSHS)**

The CSHS program is the principle public agency charged with ensuring that all children in Washington State have access to the healthcare they need. The CSHS program works to identify and coordinate the health needs of children with special health care needs, and to ensure that these needs are met through comprehensive, coordinated, and cost-effective services. The program is funded by the Washington State Department of Health and is managed by Family Voices of Washington.

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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 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

Who is the Family Support Coordinator?

- The Family Support Coordinator is a peer with first hand knowledge of raising a child or youth with special health care needs.
- Coordinates family workshops, skills and support groups for families based on their service needs
- Attends events in the community such as resource fairs and trainings; sits on relevant boards/committees, gathers information to share with families
- Keeps a flexible work schedule to meet the needs of the family
- Attends trainings to enhance their skills to work with families
- Maintains a Resource Directory

WE ALL HAVE A STORY TO TELL

SIP-N-CHAT

We are looking for families to share their stories.

If you would like to be interviewed and/or you would like more information, please contact our office.

Take a moment to watch our past videos on various rare disorders and...
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!

THANK YOU!
The Cajun Heartland State Fair
For letting Families Helping Families of Acadiana sell tickets as a fundraiser

Lagniappe Club
Attended UL Softball Game

FHF of Acadiana The Lagniappe Club had so much fun at the UL Ragin Cajun Softball game last night! Not only did they get to see a great victory, they also got to go on the field and meet the players as well as Miss University of Louisiana at Lafayette - Miss UL USA during the National Anthem and the first pitch of the game!
Thank you to the UL Ragin Cajuns for giving our self-advocates this wonderful opportunity!

People First Workshop
We Partnered with People First of Louisiana to educate Families and Professionals on the importance of People First Language

The Lagniappe Club Attends Cooking Class
If you have any suggestions and/or recommendations, please feel free to email them to the link below?

info@fhfacadiana.org

Here’s How You Can Donate:

Paypal
Website

FHF of Acadiana
The Lagniappe Club
cooked up a delicious
skillet lasagna tonight!
A huge THANK YOU to
Ms. TIFFANY WILLIAMS, Assistant
Area Nutrition Agent with the Lafayette
LSU AgCenter for giving us a
demonstration on the importance of
food safety and assisting us with
cooking our meals!

Keeping Baby Safe Workshop

We have partnered with
EarlySteps, Louisiana Department
of Health, and The Family Tree
Information, Education, &
Counseling Center to bring you a
FREE Educational workshop on
Keeping Babies Safe!

Lagniappe Club
Attended an Exercise Class

The Lagniappe Club had so much fun
last Wednesday at Unique Fitness.
They all made great new friends while
testing their strengths and overcoming
their weaknesses.
Thank you to Coach Damon
Vincent and his crew for offering our
members this opportunity!
We hope to see ya’ll again soon!!

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
Visit our Website

AROUND THE STATE....

Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs Calendar
CLICK HERE TO VIEW CALENDAR

2019 Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs Calendar

Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs Calendar
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2019 Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs Calendar
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.

Carencro High Interns:
Dylan Istre
Corey Willis
Chad Dupuis

OFFICE CLOSURES

Our office will be closed on
July 4, 2019
We will resume regular business hours July 5, 2019 at 8 am.

From Our Family to Yours

Have a Happy & SAFE Independence Day!!!
Our office will be closed on Monday September 2, 2019. We will resume regular business hours September 3, 2019 at 8 am.

From Our Family to Yours

Have a Happy Labor Day!!!

In Memory of Mr. Don Vallien

Our FHFOA Family would like to extend our deepest sympathy to Don Vallien’s wife, son and extended family. We had the pleasure of witnessing Don’s advocacy when he agreed to participate in one of our Sip-N-Chat informational videos where he was happy to speak about Sickle Cell Anemia. Don always showed his fierce sense of survival and was always ready to inform you and/or the community about Sickle Cell Awareness. Don, you are a true warrior and you will be missed.

Sincerely,
Families Helping Families of Acadiana Staff

Watch Mr. Vallien's Sip-N-Chat Video ->
MEET THE STAFF

Laci Polotzola
Executive Director

Annette Fruge'
Information & Referral Specialist
Family Support Coordinator

Deborah Fontenot
Community Outreach Specialist
Early Steps
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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chaney Guidry</td>
<td>Information/Referral Specialist</td>
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<td>Adult Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>Nicole Flores</td>
<td>Education Liaison</td>
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<td>Jamie Duplechaine</td>
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<td>Nicole Dejean</td>
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<td>Vernesa Roy</td>
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