



Scott County R-IV School District

Special Education Department Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 3: Spring 2026

Greetings from the special education department at Kelly Schools!

Our 2025-2026 Staff:

Special Education Teachers: Nicole Barney, Beth Borton, Shannel Bueltemann, Stephanie Kerr, Amanda Perry, Trienna Quillman, Kelly Sloan, and Daniel Weil

Speech-language Pathologists: Lana Atkins and Kelly Fisher

504 Coordinator/Process Coordinator: Kristina Vetter

Psychological Examiner: Carol Powel

Paraprofessionals: Darbe Backfisch, Janis Bruce, Casey Castaneda, Zoie Graham, Casey Irwin, Donna McMillan, Brooke Marriott, Sherry Menz, Malia Mitchem, Olivia Ourth, Gabriella Pletcher, Melissa Vanness, and Jessica Wilson.

Special Education Director: Amy Jansen

Transition Tips



DRIVE ABILITY

Drive Smart Summer Sessions

4 Days Per Week for 2 Weeks

**Session 1: June 1-12 12:00PM
to 4:00PM**

**Session 2: June 22-July 2
8:30AM to 12:30PM**

**Session 3: July 13-24
8:30AM to 12:30PM**

Location:

**755 South Kingshighway,
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703**

For Questions or to Enroll:

**Call: (573) 651-6464, Ute Smith (ext.
1213) or Bonnie Pickel (ext. 1112)**



**SEMO ALLIANCE for
DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE, INC.**



SADI.ORG



800-898-7234





Training Opportunities for Parents: <https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu/autism-training/parents-caregivers/>

Pre-Employment Transition Services

<https://cehd.missouri.edu/outreach/pre-employment-transition-services/>

Vocational Rehabilitation

Deciding where you want to go or what you want to do after high school can be confusing. Is working after graduation the right decision or should you go onto college or some other employment training?

VR helps students and youths with disabilities prepare for their future. We will work with you, your teachers, your parents, or other family members to plan for the next phase of your life. We want to help you achieve your employment goals and fulfill your dreams.

During High School – we can provide pre-employment transition services for you. Get help with career awareness, exploration, and preparation; work readiness skills training; self-advocacy training, including peer mentoring; guidance and counseling on career training and education; and work experiences.

After High School – we can help you with career exploration, guidance, and counseling; job search and placement, workplace accommodations, job coaching, on-the-job training, job retention skills training, and college or career training.

<https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation/youth-services>

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

3102 Blattner Drive, Suite 103

Cape Girardeau, MO 63703

Send Contact Questions to:

Karey Schaitel, counselor

Ph: 573-290-5788; Toll Free: 1-877-702-9883

Fax: 573-290-5921

Relay Missouri: 711

karey.schaitel@vr.dese.mo.gov

Resources for Families:

50 Great Websites for Parents of Children with Special Needs

The following are 50 Great Websites for Parents of Children with Special Needs. This list of resources is great for parents of children with special needs. The list contains links for associations, councils, centers, and societies. It also has links for conferences, financial aid and internships, and helpful websites, articles, and research. Blogs and Facebook pages are also on the list.

<https://www.ces-schools.net/50-great-websites-for-parents-of-children-with-special-needs/>

MPACT—a **FREE** parent advocacy group in the State of Missouri. Check out their website for more resources and more information.

<https://www.missouriparentsact.org>

To help parents better understand the terminology we use in our IEP meetings, here is a comparison of the differences among accommodations, adaptations, and

•An **accommodation** is the provision of adaptations and/or modifications to the learning environment that support students with disabilities.

A student who receives accommodations may or may not have an active individualized education program.



Accommodation

•An **adaptation** is when a student can complete the same test or assignment as other students in the class, but is provided with supports, such as changes in timing, setting, formatting, etc.

For example, a student who is blind may take the same test as the rest of the students but use a Braille version of the test and receive additional time to take the exam.



Adaption

•A **modification** is when the test or assignment is actually changed.

An example might be that a student only needs to complete half of the assignment or part of the test. It is no longer the same assignment or test that the other students are taking. Another example is when a student with multiple disabilities uses a calculator to complete math problems during a unit on addition and subtraction.



Modification

Source: *The Paraprofessional's Guide to Assisting Classroom Instruction -- 2nd Edition*

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TIPS FOR *more meaningful* CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR *middle schooler*

COMPILED BY Kelly Brophy, M.A., CCC-SLP

1 keep it simple during transitions

Most kids need time to rest and make the transition from school to home. Avoid asking challenging questions during these transitional times. It's far more difficult for anyone to thoughtfully recount the day during transitions or while multitasking (e.g., unloading a backpack, fixing a snack, etc.). Instead, keep your questions simple, and save the more challenging question for when you are home and settled together. For example, you might greet your child with, "I'm so happy to see you! I can't wait to hear about your day."

2 seize the moment

This may sound easy, but for many parents, it's not. And your middle schooler's schedule can get extremely busy too. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, 10 or 20 minutes per kid can be hard to find. Consistently giving your child this "special time" can help her feel secure as one of your highest priorities, and lay the groundwork for her to trust you with her thoughts and feelings. When children feel connected to their parents, they're more likely to open up and tell about lunchtime dynamics or how they really feel about school.

3 shape the environment

Create a calm, low-risk space to talk about the day. Sit down, face-to-face, and show your child you have time to listen. You can even share a snack. Try to reduce potential interruptions (e.g., texting or answering phone calls, etc.) that might make your child feel like she is competing for your full attention or that there's an audience of siblings.

4 model good active listening skills

Now more than ever, your child is expected to pay full attention when someone else is talking. Teachers, counselors, coaches, etc., want to make sure that what they say is understood. Demonstrate what good listening looks like, in addition to how it sounds. After your child is finished telling you something, repeat back part of what was said. Then follow-up with a related question: "I know you really studied for that humanities test, but still found it tough. Do you think you'll do anything different next time?" When you ask your child questions about what she's said, you're encouraging her to ask questions to show that she's been listening or when she hasn't quite heard or comprehended someone.

Parents often wonder how to get their kids to talk to them more about school. After all, there's so much that goes into getting your kids ready for school, you should at least be able to get more than a "fine" out of your kid(s) when you ask, "How was school?" ...right?

Drawing on techniques from speech & language therapy, I've pieced together the following tips that can be useful to facilitate more satisfying communication with your middle schooler.

5 ask better questions

If you ask your child a question that can be answered with one word, then you'll probably get a word-word response. Try the following to get and keep the conversation going:

- ▶ Specific open-ended questions encourage your child to describe how parts of the day were spent. Avoid asking, "How was school?" and try asking questions like: "What were the best and worst parts of your school day? Easiest and hardest?" This helps with recall and sequencing, two key skills that can be compromised when fatigue sets in at the end of a long day.
- ▶ Questions that have numbers will definitely get more than a one-word response. Try, "Who are three people that you talked to today?" or "Tell me two kids who have lockers near you." Factual questions are great for getting more details. For example, you might say, "I know your class size is bigger than it was last year, what's that like?"
- ▶ Questions that require visualization can be fun and give you insight into the classrooms your child spends her days in. You might ask, "If I walked into your _____ classroom, what would I see?"
- ▶ Opinion questions require your child to reflect on her thoughts, experiences, and emotions. Consider reading the next book she is assigned to read in ELA with your child. You may be surprised to find that your tween or teen still likes being read to! You can take turns reading. Then be critics together and replay the highlights. What did you each like or dislike about plot and the characters? You could ask if the characters are people she'd like to hang out with (or not) and why.
- ▶ Hypothetical questions help engage creativity and abstract thinking: "If you did today over, what would you do differently?"
- ▶ Forced choice questions are great if your child is struggling to communicate due to speech and language weaknesses or if he's just simply apprehensive to open-up. You might ask, "Which class did you like better, math or science?"

6 never give up

Many kids clam up around their parents during adolescence and may seem reluctant to communicate. Even if your child seems uninterested, try to talk together as much as possible. It takes ongoing practice for your child to be comfortable and used to speaking to familiar and unfamiliar people of all ages.

Remember:

"The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice."

-Peggy O'Mara

MINDFUL
speech

