



Families  
Raising  
Inspiring  
Educating  
Networking *for*  
Down  
Syndrome  
WEST FLORIDA

**FDSWF** is Non-profit 501c3, private operating foundation that was founded in 2007 by parents of children impacted by Down Syndrome. It has grown from a few families to well over 1,400 plus families in the Tampa Bay area and is the leading voice for Down Syndrome in the West Florida area. We proudly serve Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties.

## FDSWF MISSION

Our Mission is to provide up encompassing educational and support services to new parents and families. To empower individuals and help them to become more independent. To promote community integration and together celebrate the lives of people impacted by Down Syndrome.

## FDSWF GOALS

FDSWF Goals provide a foundation on which to meet the demands of the future.

- To provide accurate and up-to-date information to new and expectant parents.
- To change people's attitudes about Down syndrome and promote respect and esteem.
- To enable people with Down syndrome to speak up and be heard.
- To help individuals become a productive part of society.
- To provide financial and social service support.
- To train volunteers to represent and promote "best practice" programs in meeting the needs of all individuals with Down syndrome and their families.
- To create a community that embraces, supports, and inspires individuals with Down syndrome to live happy, healthy, full-filling lives.

## OUR VALUES

- We are **TRUSTWORTHY** in our daily responsibilities.
- We use **EMPATHY** in our interactions and **RESPECT** toward others in all that we do.
- We **COLLABORATE** and create **PARTNERSHIPS** within our community.
- We are **DEVOTED**, investing our time, effort and energy to our mission.



FDSWF has been awarded a 2018 Gold Seal of Transparency by GuideStar. GuideStar USA, Inc. is an information service specializing in reporting on U.S. nonprofit company's compliance and transparency. FDSWF IRS 990 Forms are posted on [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org) for your inspection. Tax EIN #651261646.

## FDSWF PROGRAMS & SERVICES

**FDSWF PARENT PACKETS PROGRAM** - FDSWF provides free FRIENDS Parent Packets and Down syndrome resource materials for new and expectant parents receiving a diagnosis of Down syndrome. Each packet includes the book "Babies with Down Syndrome, A New Parents Guide". FRIENDS Parent Packets are available in English and Spanish. They are distributed free of charge to:

- St. Joseph's Women's Hospital
- St. Joseph's Children's Hospital
- Brandon Hospital
- Tampa General Hospital
- Florida Hospital Tampa
- Medical Center of Trinity Hospital
- Mease Countryside Hospital
- All Children's Hospital

**PARENT LIAISON PROGRAM** – Upon request our Parent Liaisons offer peer to peer counseling and support for expectant parents, new parents, & grandparents. **Nosotros hablamos español.**

**FDSWF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM** - FDSWF provides financial support through our scholarships to help offset the costs of:

- Special Needs conferences – funds for special needs conferences and workshops.
- Recreational Programs – funds can be used for any type of recreational program.
- Educational programs – funds can be used for any type of education program.
- Medical Program – funds may be used for PT, OT, Speech.
- Hardship Fund – for families in need/crisis.
- College tuition for individuals with Down Syndrome.

You can apply for a FDSWF Scholarship on our website, [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org). Approval will be at the discretion of the FDSWF Board of Directors.

***FDSWF understands that a strong support system can make a great impact in the lives of parents raising a special needs child. We provide connections and support through our monthly Playgroups and Social Clubs.***

**BABY FRIENDS PROGRAM** – (birth to 5yrs) meets in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties at meet at We Rock the Spectrum and Lolo's Playplace.

**DREAM TWEENS PROGRAM** – (6-13yrs) meets for fun outings quarterly in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.

**TAMPA BAY TEENS PROGRAM** – (14-17yrs) we need a host volunteer. If you are interested, please contact us at [info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org).

**FRIENDS SOCIAL CLUB (FSC) PROGRAM** - Is available for *all* special needs adults and meets quarterly for various fun activities and monthly for the F.S.C. All Abilities Dance. The dance is held at Livingstone's Academy - 1649 Bloomingdale Ave. Valrico, Florida 33596. Dancers will enjoy making new friends, socializing, and enjoying great music and refreshments. For more information call Julie McKenna (631)335-8464.

**DADS** - Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome or D.A.D.S. is to assist and support, through fellowship and action, the fathers and families of individuals with Down syndrome. We are looking for a Dad to host, if you are interested please send an email to [info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org).

**FRIENDS DOWN SYNDROME ESPANOLA** - Bienvenido a la zona española de la Asociación FRIENDS Down Syndrome West Florida para el área de Pinellas, Tampa y Pasco. La misión de F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Down Syndrome West Florida proporcionará servicios educativos y de apoyo que abarquen a todas las familias afectadas por el Síndrome de Down; al tiempo que promueve la integración completa de la comunidad de las personas afectadas por el síndrome de Down. En esta área, queremos compartir los artículos y la información sobre el Síndrome de Down. Esperamos que esta sección te sea útil. Para obtener ayuda en español envíe un correo electrónico a [belinda@friendssupport.org](mailto:belinda@friendssupport.org).

**DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS, ADVOCACY, AND FAMILY FUN** - FDSWF hosts these events each year:

- March - World Down Syndrome Day Picnic
- July - Brandon 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade
- July- Down Syndrome Awareness Pinellas Picnic & Pool Party
- October- Buddy Walk at Raymond James Stadium
- October – Halloween Party
- December - Pinellas Christmas Parade
- December FDSWF Holiday & Cookie Swap Party.

### **FDSWF MEMBERSHIP**

Want to join FDSWF it's free and easy! Log onto our website and fill out our membership form. By joining our community, you will receive our newsletters and events emails. FDSWF is run by a dedicated group of volunteers made up of Down Syndrome parents, business and community leaders, and professionals. If you would like to participate on our board, volunteer to help with a function, become a parent liaison, or volunteer on a committee we'd love to have you! We have serve Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco Counties.

### **FDSWF FUNDRAISING - BUDDY WALK**

*October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month!* Every October, FDSWF together with the National Down Syndrome Society brings the FDSWF BUDDY WALK® to Raymond James Stadium to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness. The Buddy Walk also helps to raise funds for FDSWF so that we may continue to bring our current year-round programming, to develop new and exciting programs, and to enhance the position of our Down syndrome community in our area.

We welcome you to join us as we walk along with more than 2,500 families, friends, and professionals, who attend this event each year to raise awareness, acceptance, and advocate for individuals impacted by Down syndrome. For more information go to our website at [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org).

## **SPONSORS**

We Need You! Your company can reach a large audience in a fun and upbeat atmosphere while supporting the mission of FDSWF. There are many ways your business or organization can be a part of our community. For more information contact us at (813)245-2782 or [info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org).

## **DONATE TODAY!**

Your donations make all the difference in our community. FDSWF is funded by donations from individuals, employee giving, corporations, and fundraising events. Our largest fundraiser is our October Buddy Walk where families, friends, and the professionals who support them come together to advocate and support their loved ones. Your donations allow us to continue our current year-round programming, and to promote the value, acceptance, and inclusion of people impacted by Down Syndrome.

Your donations help to provide:

- Printed materials for our FRIENDS Parent Packets and Parent Liaisons program.
- Resource materials for our families impacted by Down syndrome.
- Funds to support our Playgroups, Friends Social club, and Dad's club activities.
- Printed materials for presentations to physicians and nurses.
- Scholarship Funds for our community.
- Funds support our community activities, picnics, and parties.
- Funds support our 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Christmas float.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

We are always in need of great volunteers who are hard-working, organized and who love interacting with our families. Thank you for your time, love, and support. Sign up on our website today, [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org).

## **MEETINGS & EVENTS**

Check our website calendar and Facebook Events for the dates and time of meetings and events, [www.friendssupport.org](http://www.friendssupport.org).

## **FACEBOOK PAGE**

Our public page is FRIENDS DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA – we also have a “closed page” just for our West Florida families.

## **FACEBOOK - FRIENDS DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA**

**TWITTER -** [https://twitter.com/Friends\\_DSWF](https://twitter.com/Friends_DSWF)

**FDSWF NEWSLETTER** - FDSWF Newsletter is published monthly and furnishes information on our programs, event's and connections.

## CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS & FDSWF OFFICERS

Ann Foyt – President	(813)245-2782	info@friendssupport.org
Liz Johnson – Vice President	(727)463-1707	liz@friendssupport.org
Jil Pettengil – Secretary	(727)688-7129	jill@friendssupport.org
Brenda Wando – Treasurer	(813)750-3949	brenda@friendssupport.org
Belinda Romero - Spanish Outreach	(813)233-6395	belinda@friendssupport.org
Kathy Boisseau - Playgroup Director	(603)438-2886	kathy@friendssupport.org
Sue Warady-Keene – Vendor Coordinator	(630)914-4114	swaradykeene@gmail.com

## ADVISORY BOARD COUNCIL

Laurie Ohall - Special Needs Attorney  
Julie Hirsch - FDSWF Photographer  
Natalie Killebrew – IT Specialist  
Paul Foyt – Volunteer  
Evan Johnson – Volunteer

*The purpose of the Advisory Council is to be available to advise the Board, Buddy Walk Committee, Development Committee, and the executive leadership with regards to fundraising initiatives, public relations and programming issues. The Advisory Council does not have any authority to govern FDSWF; such authority resides with the Executive board.*

## CONTACT US

**ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 677, Brandon FL 33509  
**PHONE:** (813) 245-2782 Hillsborough  
(727) 463-1707 Pinellas  
**WEBSITE:** [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org)



Melissa Riggio – DS Self Advocate

“Down syndrome is an intellectual disability that about 5,000 babies in the United States are born with each year. A person with Down syndrome has 47 chromosomes, microscopic structures that carry genetic information to determine almost everything about a person. Most people have only 46 chromosomes. It’s the extra chromosome that can cause certain physical characteristics (such as short stature and an upward slant to the eyes) and speech and developmental delays. Still, people with Down syndrome are a lot like you: They are unique people with strengths and talents.”

# Tampa Bay Resource List

## Alzheimer's/Down Syndrome Family Advocate

### Jadene S. Ransdell

Down syndrome/Alzheimer's Family Advocate

(727)543-4174 [ntgfamilyadvocate@gmail.com](mailto:ntgfamilyadvocate@gmail.com)

Aging with Down Syndrome – [nanadeenie.blogspot](http://nanadeenie.blogspot)

Down syndrome & Alzheimer's Dementia Capable Support – Facebook Group

## Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Suncoast Region

**(Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco)** (813) 233-4319; 1313 N. Tampa St. #515 Tampa FL 33602

[www.APDcares.org/resource](http://www.APDcares.org/resource) directory. APD works with local communities and private providers to support people who have developmental disabilities and their families in living, learning, and working in their communities. APD also aids in identifying the needs of people with developmental disabilities for supports and services so they can reach their full potential.

The agency also works to educate the public on disability issues and focuses attention on employment for people with disabilities. APD provides:

- Medicaid HCBS Waiver through iBudget Florida
- Placement in an intermediate care facility for those with developmental disabilities
- Supported employment services
- Supported living services
- Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+)
- IFS funding for non-waiver customer expenses

[http://411.myflorida.com/apps/411/tel411.public\\_411](http://411.myflorida.com/apps/411/tel411.public_411) (866)693-6748 to get phone numbers for Florida state agencies

[www.211tampabay.org](http://www.211tampabay.org) or call 2-1-1- to find out about help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more. 14155 58<sup>th</sup> St N Suite 211 Clearwater Florida 33760, Phone 727-210-4233

[www.rehabworks.org](http://www.rehabworks.org) or call 800-451-4327 for help getting or keeping a job.

## Bay Area Early Steps (birth to 3yrs)

<https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/services/west-central-early-steps>

Regional FRS : Paula B Keyser (727) 767-4403

All Children's Hospital Center for Child Development

480 7<sup>th</sup> Ave S St Petersburg, FL 33701

Email: [achearlysteps@jhmi.edu](mailto:achearlysteps@jhmi.edu)

## Best Buddies - Tampa Office

200 South Hoover Boulevard, Suite 191 Tampa, FL 33609 [florida@bestbuddies.org](mailto:florida@bestbuddies.org)

Phone: 813.254.9025 Fax: 813. 254.9085 Area Director – Shane Fletcher

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. DOWN SYNDROME WEST FLORIDA P.O. BOX 677 BRANDON FL 33509 (813) 245-2782  
[info@friendssupport.org](mailto:info@friendssupport.org) [www.fdswf.org](http://www.fdswf.org) FRIENDS SUPPORT, INC EIN#651261646

Services One to one friendships with a nondisabled peer for one year; activities for pairs and groups; Programs for middle, high school, college, citizens, and jobs. Supported Employment opportunities; e-Buddies online.

### **Buddy Cruise** - <http://www.buddycruise.org>; (877) 239-2789

Buddy Cruise Inc. serves families and friends of individuals with Down syndrome and developmental delay. We are a 501c3 non profit charity. It is our purpose to provide education and promote public awareness by arranging and conducting special events, namely cruises. These events will be a forum for prominent educational speakers addressing a wide range of Down syndrome and disability related topics. We encourage self- advocate sessions. Buddy Cruise, ideally, will set sail each October, National Down syndrome awareness month, to honor those who are touched by Down syndrome.

### **Bright Expectations**

Bright Expectations is Florida's site dedicated to helping our residents with unique abilities find support, resources, and inspiration. **Website:** <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/people-with-disabilities/bright-expectations/index.html>

### **Children's Medical Services** (727) 469-5800 [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov)

A collection of special programs for eligible children with special needs. We have a variety of services for expecting moms, newborn babies, infants and toddlers, school-aged children, adolescents and young adults. All of our services are provided by highly qualified physicians, nurses, social workers and other health care providers around the state. Through our family-centered programs, we make sure your child gets the care he or she needs.

### **Easter Seals – Tampa**

2403 E. Henry Ave; Tampa, FL 33610; Phone: (813)988-7633 Fax: (813)914-0403

Primary Contact: Chantel Stampfer

Offers Childcare, Early Intervention, Child development centers, Speech, PT, OT

Ages birth to school age. Cost: Florida child scholarships; private tuition; Medicaid/Medicare.

### **Easter Seals Southwest Florida**

Adult Day Training at Easter Seals Southwest Florida provides a variety of activities and social interactions, reflecting the needs and goals of adults with disabilities, including educational programs, recreational outings, community volunteering, working on service contracts, and creating art, guided by our art instructor. We create solutions and change lives. Website: [www.swfl.easterseals.com](http://www.swfl.easterseals.com)

### **FAAST Florida Alliance for Assistive Services** (866) 732-88734202 E. Fowler Ave, Tampa FL 33620

Improve the quality of life for all Floridians with disabilities through awareness activities that increase access to and acquisition of assistive services and technology. Hands on assistive technology, demonstrations, and trainings. Assistive device lending programs and no charge.

### **FITNESS AND EXERCISE**

**DANCING FOR DONATIONS** – (941)716-3647 Sara Battaglia; Our purpose is to offer an all-inclusive dance environment for kids and adults, while supporting the community through donations instead of charging for

the dance classes. Dancing for donations has openings for new dancers! Free classes in exchange for donations to charitable organizations.

**SPECIALLY FIT** – Specially Fit Foundation intends to spread the awareness that anyone can participate in exercise despite perceived limitations. Contact Specially Fit, Marky Oliver at 727-831-2829; [www.speciallyfitfoundation.com](http://www.speciallyfitfoundation.com).

**ME & U FITNESS ACADEMY** – Join Tina Tallman as she builds a community based children's fitness academy to help all children become fit through music, dance, and laughter. [www.meandusfitnessacademy.com](http://www.meandusfitnessacademy.com). Tina Tallman – (727)643-8794.

**TRADITIONAL TAEKWON-DO CENTER** is working with FRIENDS in creating of a Special Needs Martial Arts Program. Traditional Taekwondo Center has been in Tampa since 1997. They have Afternoon Program, Little Tiger program (ages 4-6), Evening programs for Adult and Children and Kimoodo classes (Korean Tai Chi). Please send an email to [taekwondotampa@gmail.com](mailto:taekwondotampa@gmail.com); 9250 N. 56th St, Temple Terrace Fl 33510, 813-988-3349.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS**

### **DREAMMS For Kids, Inc**

[www.dreamms.org](http://www.dreamms.org) Assistive technology for special needs children.  
Family Center on Technology and Disability [www.fctd.info](http://www.fctd.info)  
Information on assistive technology for special needs children.

### **FDLRS – Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System Gulfcoast Associate Center**

Home office address: 2929 County Rd 193 Clearwater, FL 33759  
Parent Liaison: Mary Massimo Manager: Kristen Redding  
Phone # (727) 793-2773 [www.pcsb.org/fdlrgulfcoast](http://www.pcsb.org/fdlrgulfcoast)

The Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education that provides diagnostic, instructional, and technology support services to district exceptional education programs and families of students with disabilities. FDLRS Gulfcoast is one of nineteen service centers statewide that directly serves Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando Counties

### **Pinellas County Schools – <https://www.pcsb.org/Page/848>**

**Pinellas County Schools ESE Parent Services:** Tracy McMannus, (727) 588-6062, email, [mcmannust@pcsb.org](mailto:mcmannust@pcsb.org).

The Pinellas County Schools Office of Exceptional Student Education strives to provide stakeholders with valuable information to promote highest student achievement for students with disabilities. Be involved by creating an ongoing line of communication with your student's educational providers. Each ESE student is assigned a classroom teacher and case manager. Your child's classroom teacher can give you the name of your child's case manager if needed. The case manager can provide information regarding your child's IEP, services providers, and progress, as well as assist the IEP team in monitoring student progress. Unresolved concerns can be addressed at an IEP meeting coordinated through the school-based case



manager. Ongoing concerns can be brought to the attention of the school-based administrator, ESE liaison, IDEA Team Leader, or the assigned area superintendent.

### **CEC Suncoast (Council for Exceptional Children)**

President: Julie Bush - [Bushju@pcsb.org](mailto:Bushju@pcsb.org)

### **Florida's Voice on Developmental Disabilities**

ARLENE LAKIN, ESQ.-President PO Box 24531 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307; (954) 975-5159

E-mail: [FVDDorg@aol.com](mailto:FVDDorg@aol.com); Website: [www.Floridasvoice.org](http://www.Floridasvoice.org)

A statewide independent advocacy and networking non-profit organization comprised of families and friends of persons with developmental disabilities. Our organization advocates a full array of services in the most cost effective manner possible - community programs, family home care, group homes, and larger centers (over six beds) for only the most severely developmentally disabled. Cost: \$25 family membership fee; \$15 for those with financial hardships

### **GiGi's Playhouse Tampa**

Down syndrome achievement centers; changing lives through free, results-driven programs for individuals of all ages, families and communities. GiGi's Playhouse is an inspirational and dedicated place for families to celebrate their child and benefit from free programs that unleash joy, confidence and continuous improvement. Nicki Rawlings, President; [nrawlings@gigisplayhouse.org](mailto:nrawlings@gigisplayhouse.org); 813-843-7629

### **Goodwill Industries**

727-523-1512/888-279-1988 The mission is accomplished through employment services, training programs and affordable housing. Headquartered in St. Petersburg, we provide services to people in 10 counties – Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, Polk, Hernando, Marion, Citrus, Sumter, Levy and Highlands counties.

### **Head Start/Early Head Start/Pinellas County**

(727) 547-5900 2210 Tall Pines Drive Suite 200 Largo, FL. 33771-5347

Head Start/Early Head Start assists children with all types of disabilities including but not limited to those with developmental, hearing, language, and visual disabilities as well as emotional, medical, mental, and social needs. Enrolled children with special needs are provided with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and/or Individual Family Support Plans (IFSP). Children with special needs are given the same opportunities to participate in the classroom as other children and if necessary, modifications may be made to make their experience a fun filled learning one. The Special Needs Advisory Committee meets quarterly to guide these efforts.

### **IEP Advocate**

Claudia Roberts Special Ed Advocate Phone # 512-784-2480  
701 S Howard Ave Ste 106-349  
Tampa Florida 33606

13) 245-2782  
1646

Mark Kamleiter – Special Education Law and Advocacy  
Phone # 727 323-2555  
Website : WWW.flspedlaw.com  
2509 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S  
St Petersburg Florida 32371

### **Jewish Community Centers and Federation-Pinellas**

13191 Starkey Rd Ste 8 Largo, Florida 33773 | jewishpinellas.org  
Phone # 727-530-3223

We work to strengthen family life, promote the health, education and welfare of our membership and our community. Family counseling, job skills for developmentally delayed.

### **McDonalds Training MTC**

(813) 870-1300 | Fax (813) 872-6010  
5420 W. Cypress Street; Tampa, Florida 33607-1706

Primary areas of service include educational, vocational and residential supports for persons with disabilities. MTC day services includes vocational skills training and life enrichment activities from computer lab and fine arts instruction to recreational outreaches for people with developmental disabilities. Additionally, MTC provides supported employment counseling and placement services for people with a wide variety of disabilities. Provide people in community living the opportunity and resources to lease their home or apartment, pay their own expenses, make their own decisions, and receive services that promote choice and self-sufficiency.

### **The Arc / Uparc Agency**

1501 N. Belcher Road, Suite 249 Clearwater, FL 33765 Phone: 727.799.3330

The Arc Tampa Bay has a long history of advocacy efforts in support of our mission. As a service provider for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for 58 years, The Arc Tampa Bay has been a key affiliate member of The Arc of Florida. Affiliate members have a voting seat on The Arc of Florida Board and are affiliated with The Arc of the United States. Thank you for your interest in our organization. We invite you to learn more about the history) of our organization and the services we provide in support of our mission.

### **Medicaid**

Pinellas County Health Human Services  
2189 Cleveland St Ste # 230 Clearwater Florida 33756  
<http://www.pinellascounty.org/humanservices/default.htm>

Medicaid is the medical assistance program that provides access to health care for low-income families and individuals. Medicaid assists people with disabilities with the cost of nursing facility care and other medical and long term care expenses.

## Medicaid Waiver Programs

800-342-0778 <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/demo/BrainSC/Medicaid/ACFHomepage.htm> The Home and Community Based Services Waiver, also called the HCBS/DD Waiver or "Big" Waiver, is one of Florida's Medicaid Waiver Programs that assists people who have disabilities. The HCBS/DD Medicaid waiver program helps cover the cost for things that regular Medicaid does not pay for.

The HCBS Waiver currently has 28 services<sup>[1]</sup> and there is a spending cap based on the individual's needs. However, services must be "medically necessary".

Individuals that meet the following criteria are eligible to receive services under the Home and Community Based Services Waiver:

- Be under 65 years of age
- Reside in a Diversion Project service area
- Be a Florida resident
- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified noncitizen
- File for any other benefits to which they may be entitled
- Disclose any rights to third party liability (i.e., health insurance)
- Meet the income limit of \$2022 for an individual or \$4044 for a couple
- Meet the asset limit of \$2000 for an individual or \$3000 for an eligible couple
- If your monthly income exceeds \$2022/month you still can benefit from Medicaid Diversion by setting up an income trust. This is a legal document and it must be done by an attorney<sup>[2]</sup>

In 2012 there was a waiting list of over 22,000 people for this waiver.<sup>[3]</sup> Some of the people on the waiting list receive services from the FSL waiver.

## Parent Support Center

727) 523-1130 2196 Main Street, Suite L, Dunedin FL 34698; This program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), is the Parent Training Information (PTI) center for the Central and Northeast of Florida, (Brevard, Citrus, De Soto, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Manatee, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Lucie, and Sumter). These PTI services help to ensure that parents of children with the full range of disabilities have the training and information they need to prepare their children for not only school, but to be able to lead productive, independent lives to the fullest extent possible.

**Largo Parks and Recreation** - <http://www.largo.com/departament/index.php?structureid=22>

Highland Recreation Complex  
Manager: Chip Potts  
400 Highland Ave Largo, Florida 33770  
Phone # 727-518-3016

Southwest Recreation Complex  
13120 Vonn Rd Largo, Florida 33774  
Phone# 727-518-3125

### **Adaptive Activities:**

Manager: Jessica Newsome Email: [Jnewsome@largo.com](mailto:Jnewsome@largo.com)

Program Supv: Megan Leavy Email: [Mleary@largo.com](mailto:Mleary@largo.com)

Through its facilities, cultural center, park system and sports complexes, the Recreation, Parks & Arts Department offers opportunities for individualized leisure pursuits, and passive enjoyment of the natural environment.

The department has been nationally accredited and named as "Agency of Excellence" by the State of Florida. Participating in recreational activities provides endless benefits including an increased life expectancy, decreased chance of obesity, increased family bonds, building self-esteem and personal growth.

### **Quest's Camp Thunderbird**

909 E. Welch Rd., Apopka, FL 32712. 407-889-8088. [campthunderbird@questinc.org](mailto:campthunderbird@questinc.org) Camp for persons with developmental disabilities. Quest, Inc. 1404 Tech Blvd., Tampa, FL 33619 813-630-4710. Housing, Adult Day Training, Camp Thunderbird. [www.questinc.org](http://www.questinc.org) Suncoast New Options. 9502 N. Florida Ave., Tampa, FL 33612 813-933-1476.

### **Pinellas Life- Group Homes**

<http://www.pinellaslife.com/group-homes/>

Deirdre Cavener, MCP

Founder and Owner of PinellasLife.com

### **Ridgeland Group Home, Inc.**

Carol Josephs (813) 810-6257

Adult Day Training center in Brandon Florida. Ridgeland Group Home and its staff are dedicated people striving to provide clients the opportunity for a meaningful life through various supports needed to improve their quality of life. We hope to accomplish this by exposing them to various experiences and, education that would enable them to achieve individual goals.

### **Royal Care Group Home**

813-623-6333 Licensed Standard & Behavior Focus homes and provide a variety of Supportive Residential & Community Based Services for adults in South Tampa, Brandon & Plant City. We currently serve males 18 + and adult females on a case by case basis. We are dedicated to providing quality supportive services in comfortable homes.

### **Sunrise Community of Hillsborough County**

2714 West Kirby Street Tampa, Florida 33614 Phone: (813) 830-7823 [hillsborough@sunrisegroup.org](mailto:hillsborough@sunrisegroup.org)

<http://www.sunrisegroup.org>. Group homes; Respite; adult training programs; Behavioral Analysis Services; Personal Assistance services; day services; and transportation.

## **Quest Training and Group Home**

1404 Tech Blvd. Tampa, FL 33619 [contact@questinc.org](mailto:contact@questinc.org) (813) 423.7700; Quest provides a variety of residential living options for people with disabilities, including group homes, intermediate care facilities and transitional and support environments. Quest's vocational program provides individuals with disabilities in the Orlando and Tampa areas the opportunity to apply job skills and gain meaningful employment through the Adult Day Training (ADT) and the Supported Employment programs.

## **Social Security**

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov); 1-800-772-1213 2340 Drew St, Clearwater, FL 33765 ; The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. Visit Apply For Disability Benefits – Child (Under Age 18) to find out how to apply.

## **Special Olympics**

Special Olympics Florida – Pinellas County 2235 N.E. Coachman Rd. Clearwater, FL 33765  
<http://specialolympicsflorida.org/pinellas/>  
David Haines County Director 727-669-1221 x2008  
Roger Edwards Area 6 Training Director 727-465-3422

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and competition to children and adults 8 years of age and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Cost is free, need a doctor's clearance on physical exam, sometimes provided free of charge.

**Suddenly Transportation** - <http://suddenlytransportation.com> ; (727) 452-4328; Serves Saint Petersburg, FL and nearby areas. We are a family owned & operated business in Pinellas County. We provide several types of safe and reliable private transportation services. Suddenly Transportation drivers are thoroughly background checked, licensed & insured. We own clean and comfortable 15 passenger vans, equipped with dash cams for added safety.

## **Sunshine Line Transportation**

Scott Clark Director P: 813-272-7272  
Reservation Hours Monday – Friday 8 AM - 5 PM

Provides door-to-door transportation and bus passes for elderly, low-income, and disabled persons who do not have or cannot afford their own transportation. Transportation is provided primarily to medical appointments and Aging Services day care and nutrition sites, but nonmedical trips are provided on a space-available basis. Sunshine Line does not provide Medicaid transportation.

**Fees & Eligibility-** Vehicles used for door-to-door service are wheelchair accessible. Fees are charged for some trips; the amount of the fee charged is based on client eligibility and funding source rules. Clients may call to be screened for eligibility and to make appointments for transportation or to request a bus pass.

## **PSTA**

3201 Scherer Drive St. Petersburg, FL 33716 <https://www.psta.net/programs/accessibility/>

Phone: 727-540-1800

InfoLine: 727-540-1900

Email: [cserv@psta.net](mailto:cserv@psta.net)

Agencies Federal Transportation Administration Michele Ogilvie 601 E. Kennedy Blvd, 18th floor, Tampa, FL 33602. Call: 813-272-5940 ext 317. Email: [ogilviem@plancom.org](mailto:ogilviem@plancom.org)

## **TSA**

855-787-2227 The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a toll free helpline designed to assist travelers with disabilities and medical conditions, prior to getting to the airport. It is available Monday through Friday 9am–9pm EST, excluding federal holidays, with questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint.

## **The USF Regional Genetics and Metabolism**

(813) 259-8772 2 Tampa General Circle, 2nd Floor Tampa, FL 33606; [Usf.edu/medicine/pediatrics](http://Usf.edu/medicine/pediatrics)

Established in 1977 to provide comprehensive medical management to individuals and families with a genetic condition. This includes an initial evaluation and examination, genetic testing as appropriate, genetic counseling and follow up as appropriate.

## **Van Dyke Church Special Needs Ministry**

17030 Lakeshore Rd., Lutz, FL 33558. [www.vandyke.org](http://www.vandyke.org) [jatkinson@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jatkinson@tampabay.rr.com).

Embrace Special Needs Respite Care [gharmon@vandyke.org](mailto:gharmon@vandyke.org) 813-968-3983 x 156.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Florida Department of Education**

1313 North Tampa Street, Suite 801 Tampa, FL 33602 Phone: (813) 233-3600

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federal-state program that helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers.

## **VSA Arts of Florida**

<http://www.vsafl.org> - Brings the arts into the lives of people with disabilities.

## FLORIDA SPECIAL NEEDS WEBSITES

Able Trust of Florida [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org)  
Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities [www.advocacycenter.org](http://www.advocacycenter.org)  
Best Buddies [bestbuddies.org](http://bestbuddies.org)  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org)  
Career Education for Students with Special Needs [www.myfloridaeducation.com](http://www.myfloridaeducation.com)  
Family Network on Disabilities, Inc (birth to 26) <http://fndfl.org>  
FL Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged [www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd)  
FL Department of Health [www.doh.state.fl.us/family](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family)  
FL Diagnostic and Learning Resource [www.paec.org/fdlrswb](http://www.paec.org/fdlrswb)  
Florida Developmental Disabilities Council [www.fddc.org](http://www.fddc.org)  
Florida Developmental Disabilities Resources [www.flddresources.org](http://www.flddresources.org)  
Florida's Voice on Developmental Disabilities [www.floridasvoice.org](http://www.floridasvoice.org)  
Florida Center for Inclusive Communities [flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu](http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu)  
Family Care Council [www.fccflorida.org](http://www.fccflorida.org)  
Hillsborough County's Head Start <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/headstart/>  
Job Accommodation Network [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)  
Kidcare [www.floridakidcare.org](http://www.floridakidcare.org)  
Learning Disabilities [www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)  
Macdonald Training Center [www.macdonaldcenter.org](http://www.macdonaldcenter.org)  
Medicaid [www.cms.gov/special](http://www.cms.gov/special)  
National Organization on Disability <http://www.nod.org/>  
Project Appleseed [www.projectappleseed.org](http://www.projectappleseed.org)  
The Pacer Center [www.pacer.org/index.asp](http://www.pacer.org/index.asp)  
Social Security [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)  
Shriner's Hospital for Children [www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org)  
State Agency for Workforce [www.floridajobs.org](http://www.floridajobs.org)  
School to Work Transitions [www.rehabworks.org](http://www.rehabworks.org)  
Special Olympics [specialolympicsflorida.org/Hillsborough](http://specialolympicsflorida.org/Hillsborough)  
Teaching Resources for FL Exceptional Student Education <http://www.cpt.fsu.edu/ese/>  
Tops Soccer [www.topsoccer.usa](http://www.topsoccer.usa)  
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program [www.doh.state.fl.us/family/wic](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/wic)

## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WEBSITES

ABLE Account [www.ablenrc.org](http://www.ablenrc.org).  
Administration on Developmental Disabilities [www.acf.dhh.gov](http://www.acf.dhh.gov)  
American Speech/Language/Hearing Assoc. [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)  
American Occupational Therapy Assoc. [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)  
ARC of United States [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)  
Council for Disability Rights [www.disabilityrights.org](http://www.disabilityrights.org)  
Dating for the Disabled [www.dating4disabled.com](http://www.dating4disabled.com)  
Down Syndrome Research Foundation [www.dsrf.org](http://www.dsrf.org)

3509 (813) 245-2782  
EIN#651261646

Family Network on Disabilities (birth to 26yrs) [www.fndfl.org](http://www.fndfl.org)  
Global Down Syndrome Foundations [info@globaldownsyndrome.org](mailto:info@globaldownsyndrome.org)  
IDEA [www.ideapartnershop.org](http://www.ideapartnershop.org)  
Learning Disabilities Association of America [info@ldaamerica.org](mailto:info@ldaamerica.org)  
March of Dimes [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)  
National Association for Down Syndrome [www.nads.org](http://www.nads.org)  
National Ataxia Foundations [www.ataxia.org](http://www.ataxia.org)  
National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities [www.nichcy.org/babies](http://www.nichcy.org/babies)  
National link for information about law [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)  
National Down Syndrome Congress [www.ndsccenter.org](http://www.ndsccenter.org)  
National Down Syndrome Society [www.ndss.org](http://www.ndss.org)  
National Organization on Disability [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org)  
National Resource for Parents [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)  
National Society of Genetic Counselors [www.nsgc.org](http://www.nsgc.org)  
National Info Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)  
Parent Support Network (PSN) Project [www.parentcenter.org](http://www.parentcenter.org)  
Social Security [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)  
Technical Assistance Alliance, Parent Centers [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)  
Technology for Children [www.kidsmartearlylearning.org](http://www.kidsmartearlylearning.org)  
Teens Against Bullying [www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org](http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org)  
Wrights law [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)  
Yes! Of American United, Inc. [www.yesunited.org](http://www.yesunited.org)

## EDUCATIONAL REFERENCES

Down Syndrome Books [www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com)  
Babies with Down Syndrome – A New Parents Guide by Karen Stray-Gunersen  
Medical and Surgical Care for Children with Down Syndrome by Philip Mattheis, M.D.

## SCHOOLS

**Pinellas County** - The ESE Resource Connection is a resource that provides families and persons with disabilities specific resource information, community events and opportunities. This webpage is located on the Pinellas County School Exceptional Student Education site at <http://www.pcsb.org/Page/16045>. There is an option for anyone interested to get automatic notifications of updates. The only action required is that interested persons subscribe to webpage content. The RSS feed that is located in the ESE Resource Connection page.

Anyone interested will need to go to the PCSB Exceptional Student Education Resource Connection page found at <http://www.pcsb.org/Page/16045> directly or 1Go to the Pinellas County School Board Home Page at <http://www.pcsb.org/Page/1>

- 1) Click on Departments & Divisions
- 2) Scroll down the page to Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and choose
- 3) Scroll down the short cut column to ESE Resource Connection and choose
- 4) Subscribe for the RSS feed (orange icon) for automatic notifications



## **Center Academy (2 locations)**

6710 86th Ave, Pinellas Park, FL 33782 (727) 541-5716

34054 US Hwy 19 N, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 (727) 781-2986 <http://centeracademy.com/>

Center Academy is a fully accredited, independent private school, family-operated since 1968, providing a college prep curriculum for students with learning disabilities in grades 4-12. Our staff and teachers are experienced with a range of learning disabilities and challenges, including dyslexia, ADHD, and autism spectrum / Asperger's, and our individual student assessment helps each student to set and reach his or her own personal educational goals. We also offer dual enrollment and summer programs for maximum enrichment, and accept McKay, Gardiner, FTC, Step Up, AAA and Georgia Special Needs Scholarships. If you are looking for a well-rounded educational experience that will give your child the support and motivation he or she needs to succeed, please contact us today to learn more.

**Classical Christian School For The Arts** 4981 78th Ave N, Pinellas Park, FL 33781 (727) 547-6820

<http://www.ccsa.us/>

Founded on faith-based principles and believing in the equality of all persons before God, Classical Christian School for the Arts is non-denominational and is committed to providing a Christian education for all students regardless of race, sex, or religious background. We believe the task of Christian Education is shared by the school, the church, and the home. We believe in the development of the whole child and seek to involve students individually and collectively in activities which allow them growth – intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual. We believe that the avenues to understanding and knowledge are diverse. We believe in a Christian liberal arts education, exposing students to various viewpoints under the guidance and interpretation of a Christian teacher who will relate the material to the level of understanding of the student. "Test all things; hold fast what is good." (I Thess. 5:21) We believe learning is a lifelong process. We believe in the importance of building genuine Christian maturity by stressing a reliance on God's love and grace and a conscientious pursuit of truth and excellence.

**Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf** 14088 Icot Blvd, Clearwater, FL 33760 (727) 539-7879

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

At Blossom, we believe that every child can learn. We also believe that any child can easily be left behind and because of this, we implement an extremely individualized course of study for each child. Our philosophy of combining the programming of Montessori with expertise in Deaf education creates the perfect environment for our students. Each child is treated as an individual and we strive to do everything it takes to advance every child to his or her maximum potential.

**Morning Star School** 4661 80th Ave N, Pinellas Park, FL 33781 (727) 544-6036

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

Morning Star Catholic School, a mission of the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg, recognizes the unique educational needs of students. The administration, faculty, staff, and parents work together to provide an ungraded academic curriculum in which students can achieve their potential academically, socially, and spiritually. MSSPP is dedicated to helping our students develop into educated, well-rounded, productive and successful members of society. We offer a caring, Christian learning environment where kids are able to succeed. The positive is accentuated to help our students recognize their potential. We understand that children with special education requirements need more care and attention than is often offered in a

(813) 245-2782  
261646

traditional school setting. These students necessitate individualized instruction from caring professionals who are trained to understand and meet each student's unique needs.

## **Tampa:**

**Focus Academy** info@focusacademytampa.org (813) 433-5558 The curriculum at Focus Academy is structured with dual purposes: academic achievement and social success. Many students are scholastically capable but are hindered by struggles in dealing with peers

**Morning Star Academy** – A mission of the Catholic Diocese. Children with special needs who have learning disabilities and developmental delays. 210 E Linebaugh Ave, Tampa, FL 33612; Phone: (813) 935-0232 or 4661 80<sup>th</sup> Ave. North, Pinellas Park FL 33781 (727)544-6036

**Livingstone Academy** 813-661-4200 - is an independent, non-profit, Private School that specializes in serving the unique needs of children with learning disabilities. Livingstone Academy serves students in grades 1-8; providing a continuum of services based on the individual requirements of each student. (Our Seffner campus serves students in grades 1st through 12th) We provide a positive learning environment for students with Specific Learning Disabilities, Autism, Asperger's, Down Syndrome, Speech and Language disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Emotional/Social disorders and Cognitive and/or Developmental delays. (813)404-1598; www.livingstoneschools.org.

**Pepin Academy** – 813-236-1755 Serves over 700 students between 3rd and 12th grade, and young adults 18 to 22 with specific learning disabilities. Approximately 80% of our students graduate with a standard high school diploma, and we provide individualized instruction, along with all the services your child needs to succeed and the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities. 3916 East Hillsborough Avenue, Tampa, FL 33610

**Special Needs School List** - For a list of special needs schools in your area log onto:  
<http://www.privateschoolreview.com/florida/special-education-private-schools>.

## **CHARITIES & CONFERENCES**

- Deliver The Dream - Offers an all-expense paid weekend retreat for families. Contact@deliverthedream.org
- Sunshine Foundation Dream Villages – Offers an all-expense paid family vacation in Orlando, Florida@sunshinefoundation.org.
- Family Café Conference – yearly conference for families with children who have disabilities. When you register, you can apply for assistance to cover the cost of the hotel room, [www.familycafe.net](http://www.familycafe.net)