

Homeschooling a Student in S. Florida with a Disability

Q: What is meant by “disability”?

A: Any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult to do certain activities. [Read here about specific disabilities.](#)

Q: Is a diagnosis necessary?

A: [Early intervention](#) is important for many disabilities.

Knowing what you’re dealing with helps you **choose curriculum, therapies,** and possibly **medications.**

Having a diagnosis helps you, the parent, have more **discernment** between whether a negative behavior is a moral or physical issue. (ie. Screaming due to sensory overload not disobedience.)

Q: Where do I go to get a diagnosis?

A: Talk to your **pediatrician.** Find someone who specializes in an [Educational Psychological Evaluation.](#) Once you have a diagnosis, the FES-UA scholarship will cover an Educational Psych Eval. which can range from \$1,000 (Nova where your child is assessed by a graduate student overseen by a professor, a process that can take 3-6 months) to over \$2,500 by a psychologist who may see your child over the course of 2-3 days, and have a report ready in two weeks.

Q: We have a diagnosis and I feel so alone. Where can I go to get support?

A: Find **other homeschool parents** who also have special needs kids. [Classical Conversations](#) communities usually work well for kids with special needs. **Facebook groups** can be very helpful. **CARD** has parent support groups, although they aren’t homeschool specific (see link below).

Q: My student struggles to write. How can I help him/her?

A: [Handwriting Without Tears](#) is used by occupational therapists for students with disabilities. There are also helpful devices and Apps on the market! [Kurzweil Assistive Technology](#) (link below), a [scribe pen](#), voice to text, Notability App (Scan documents and upload to an iPad or laptop where a student can type anywhere in the document. Great for dysgraphia.)

Q: How can I afford to pay for therapies and devices?

A: The FES-UA scholarship can help cover many of those costs. (See link below.)

Q: How do I make goals for my student if I don’t know what he/she will be capable of?

A: A child with a disability may or may not ever be fully independent, but they can still have a meaningful and fulfilling life. I may need to rethink my own future plans or find services for my child so that he/she can continue living a similar lifestyle when I’m gone.

Q: Where can you steer me to get more information?

A: We’ve collected links to websites that we have found helpful.

General Information about disabilities & homeschooling with disabilities

[Homeschool Legal Defense Association/Special Needs:](#) Articles, podcasts, and live help for HSLDA members about how to homeschool your special needs student. Topics include getting evaluations, choosing and adapting curriculum, integrating therapy, creating your own Student Education Plan (SEP/IEP), making a transcript, post-education opportunities.

[The CDC’s Learn the Signs Act Early program](#) promotes early identification by providing free resources, in English and Spanish, for monitoring children’s development.

[Florida Developmental Disability Council](#). Find downloads for Florida specific information for both developmental and intellectual disabilities from first steps to making plans for employment, decision making options after 18 , and housing for your adult child with disabilities.

[Vocational Rehabilitation](#): Student and youth programs available to help disabled young people find and keep meaningful work. Contact your local office.

[Book: Simply Classical: A Beautiful Education for any Child](#): Whether you homeschool classically or not, this book will inspire and encourage you with genuine hope for the parent of a child with special needs -- even those with serious challenges.

[ABLE Accounts](#): Tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified disability-related expenses (including education, housing and transportation). The funds contributed into these accounts, up to \$17,000 a year, will not negatively impact the person's eligibility for public benefits. The funds in these accounts don't replace benefits provided through private insurances, the [Medicaid](#) program, the [Medicaid Waiver](#), the [Supplemental Security Income program](#), the beneficiary's employment and other sources. *Instead*, the funds supplement these benefits.

Florida Scholarship for students with Unique Abilities

[Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities \(FES-UA\)](#): Florida scholarships for homeschooled special needs students. The FES-UA Scholarship is currently awarding Broward County students between \$9,000-\$10,000 that can be used with a direct provider or can be reimbursed to a parent/guardian for approved expenses for special needs students. It can cover curriculum, therapies not covered by insurance, and educational devices (laptop, iPad, reading devices). Students with a higher matrix could receive about double the standard amount.

The FES-UA Scholarship is available to students ages 3 to 22 with the following diagnoses: • Anaphylaxis • Autism spectrum disorder • Cerebral Palsy • Down syndrome • Emotional or a behavioral disability • Hearing impairment, including deafness • High-risk child • Hospital or homebound • Identification as dual sensory impaired • Intellectual disability (severe cognitive impairment) • Language impairment • Muscular dystrophy • Orthopedic impairment • Other health impairment • Phelan-McDermid syndrome • Prader-Willi syndrome • Rare diseases (defined by NORD) • Specific learning disability • Speech impairment • Spina bifida • Traumatic brain injury • Visual impairment, including blindness • Williams syndrome

[FES-UA Scholarship Amounts](#)

[FES-UA Handbook](#)

[Facebook Group: Florida FES-UA Scholarship Parents and Providers](#) : Search this group before posting, but look for recent posts. There have been significant changes to the scholarship every year.

Autism

[The Autism Society of America](#)'s response to the new numbers put out by CDC. 1:36 8 year olds are now diagnosed with autism.

[Autism society](#). Find links to digital resources and general info.

[Abilities Workshop: The Good, The Bad, and The Godly](#): On demand online Autism workshops.

- [AccessAbility](#): For the parent with a child who has a new autism diagnosis. 6 hours of video instruction. 4 workbooks \$39

- [DevelopAbility](#): All about developmental delays and what to do about them. 5.5 hours of video instruction, 3 workbooks. \$39
- [DreamAble](#): Is your 14-24 year old special needs student transitioning from high school to adulthood? What about guardianship? Living and Transportation options? College or not? 3 workbooks and on demand video instruction. \$39
- [LoveAble](#): **For families of special needs children who are in crisis. Free.**
- [Faithful & Able](#): Navigating a special needs program at your church. Training program starts at \$599

Handwriting Helps

[Handwriting Without Tears](#): A proven system for teaching handwriting, and used by Occupational Therapists.

[Kurzweil Education](#): Assistive Learning Technology. Expensive but used by colleges. Reimbursable with the FES-UA scholarship.

["Reaching the Reluctant Writer"](#) link to free video talk by Andrew Pudewa.

[National Institute for Learning Development](#): Find local therapists in the NILD directory for dyslexia, dyscalculia, auditory processing, dysgraphia, ADHD, and unusual processing.

Broward County Resources

[ARC Broward](#): Arc Broward is a nationally accredited, private, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization providing services to children and adults with autism, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities, as well as those with various life challenges. Contact them to find out what programs may be a good fit for your child. We were able to get our son into a summer internship program with 4 students and a job coach. Internships could be at Publix, Five Below, Chili's, an animal shelter, etc.

[UM NSU CARD](#): Autism resources for Miami and Broward Counties. Sign up for weekly newsletter, connect for individualized ideas. Parent support groups.

[Brighter Horizon Services](#): Catherine Vega is a homeschooling mom who is a Certified Exceptional Education teacher and Board Certified Behavior Analyst. She has over 25 years of experience helping children with behavioral, social, language and academic challenges. She can provide parent training, individual sessions, and social skills groups. She offers special rates for homeschooling families who access services during the school day. She is also a FES-UA scholarship provider.

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