

The WILL Center

Monthly News Letter for August 2021

The Center's News

Note from the Director:

Welcome to our newsletter.

Just when we thought it would be safe to get back out into the world, we are faced with a new challenge.

It's really very simple, my friends. Public health is a collective concern. We each need to do our part to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone.

- Get vaccinated.
- Wear your mask.
- Maintain social distancing.
- Be considerate of others

I hope no one would find that last one objectionable.

We can beat this if we listen to expert advice and look out for our neighbors.

On a very personal note, some of you know I have lost a considerable part of my hearing in the past few months. I hear well enough if there is no background noise and there aren't a couple people talking at once.

When occurs, I am unable to distinguish one sound from another.

And with hearing completely gone in one ear, I cannot tell where sound is coming from. I never imagined how important that was to my senses until it went away.

According to specialists, my hearing isn't coming back, and a hearing aid probably won't help.

My condition isn't visible to others. Some people get irritated with me. They assume I am ignoring them.

The reality is I didn't hear them and do hear them only in the right conditions.

It has been a valuable object lesson. Don't assume. That person next to you may have a disability you cannot see. And just because you can't see it doesn't mean it is any less a challenge for them.

Be respectful. That should be the common thread in everything we do.

Living with Low Vision

Low Vision Expo

The state-wide Indiana low vision expo returns Saturday September 11, 2021, in-person at the Indiana State Library located at 315 West Ohio Street Indianapolis, IN.

The Indiana Talking Book & Braille Library will be the organizer and host of this free event.

The event hours are 10 – 2:00 pm. There will be presentations on various topics pertaining to low vision. The WILL Center staff will present “Lighting Your Way to Independence” during the expo.

There will be various resources and vendors whom Taylor to the challenges of the sensory challenged.

For more information you can visit <https://www.in.gov/library/tbbl/indianavisionexpo/>

The Youth Transition Program

It's All in The Details

Imagine you have just witnessed the birth of your new baby boy or a girl. This is supposed to be one of the happiest times of your life as a parent. You have such high hopes for your child that he or she will go far and take on the world and find their place within it. They will go and obtain an education, find a job, and have their own family.

You find out from the doctor that your baby is almost 2 months premature. You then take your baby in for a routine checkup. You notice that your baby is not meeting appropriate

milestones. Your perfect little bundle of joy has just been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. For many parents finding out that their child has a disability is a shock.

Now what do you do? Do not lower your expectations. Disability or not, your child can still succeed. It is your job to be your child's voice and advocate. Take the opportunity to learn all you can about your child's specific disability. Learn about treatments and develop a plan. Join parent support groups and learn from other parents. Build a support system around yourself and your child. Get involved with your local Center of Independent Living. Look for other agencies that can help support you and your child as they age. The Bureau of Developmental Disability Services or the Agency on Aging are two examples. If your child's needs are significant, check to see if they qualify for a waiver. Waivers can help address complex medical needs and care.

Once your child is old enough, enroll them into school and request that they be evaluated for an Individualized Education Plan, (IEP). This is a legal document between the parent and the school regarding the special education and related services that will be needed to ensure that your child who has a disability will receive a free and appropriate public education. This will be provided at no cost to you in the least restrictive environment possible. The goal behind the IEP is to consider your child's unique needs to help prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. Parents play key role in the development and revision of the IEP. To learn about Special Education and your rights in Indiana consider reading *Navigating the Course: Finding Your Way Through Indiana's Special Education Rules*

Parents have the right to request an independent education evaluation be conducted for their child at no cost to them. This assessment will use a variety of testing and make suggestions based on the research to meet the unique needs of your child. You and the case conference committee can take all this information under advisement when developing your child's IEP. You can even have the evaluator present to answer questions.

Once your child turns 14, The school will start what is known as the transition IEP. The purpose of this IEP is to begin to implement strategies and goals to help to prepare you and your child to begin transitioning to adulthood. This means looking at colleges and universities, employment opportunities or giving your child skills to live independently. Many schools also have pre-employment training service programs available. These programs can teach your child how to function in a workplace environment. So, as part of the IEP make the case that your child needs to take part in this program.

Vocational rehabilitation services are a wonderful resource for students with disabilities. Their primary goal is to find and place people with disabilities into jobs. VRS has a wealth of information and resources at their disposal. This can include things such as work trial opportunities, employment consulting, job coaching and much more.

Please understand that plans can always change. Nothing must be set in stone. The above resources are here as a guideline. Parents and family members play a key role in the lives

of children with disabilities. It's up to you to assume your role as your child's advocate. The greatest gift you can give your child is an education.

Wheelchair Ramp Program

New Addition to our Ramp Program

Hi Everyone,

My name is William Caldero, the Ramps for Freedom Program Coordinator at The WILL Center. I want to share with you a new service that we are providing to our community. That service is the installation of "Low Rise Steps".

Low rise steps are an alternative to a ramp for those who are not wanting or in need of a ramp. The steps are designed specifically to your home, and they only have a rise of 4 inches in height. This is drastically lower than the stairs we encounter daily which run between 7 to 11 inches tall. In addition to the short step up we made the landing of the stairs 25 inches. This allows any person with a walker a good space to place their walker before taking that next step up.

With the addition to these stairs, The WILL Center Staff, and I hope to reach our goals of giving people with disabilities complete access to their homes.



The State Health Insurance Assistance Program

Ship News:

Medicare: Just a reminder that Medicare's open enrollment is approaching. It will begin on October 15th, 2021, and runs through December 7th, 2021. This is the time when you can change your Advantage Plan, change your drug plan, or drop your supplemental insurance and go back to your original Medicare. Medicare wants to ensure that you create an account by going to Medicare.gov. There is a step-by-step process to show you how to create your own account. When creating your account, please remember to write down your Username and password so that you may go back into your account at any time. If you do not have access to a computer but want help with finding a plan, changing a plan, or dropping a plan, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is listed below:

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