

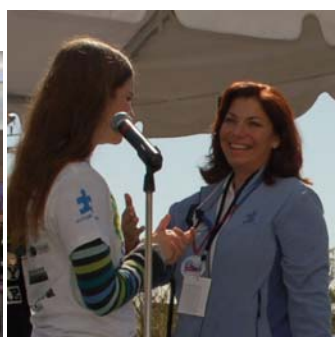


AUTISM Walk 2010



ESE Autism Walk Team 2010

FDLRS Booth at Autism Walk



Jaclyn Merens



Sue Alex and Joan Clark



Photos by Jim Dunlap

Inside this issue:

Child Find /Parent Services	2
Royal Palm School	4
HRD & PDA ESE	5
Grow to 5	6
National Teacher of Year	8
Sanchez Memorial Award	10
Vision Impaired	11

The Palm Beach County Walk Now for Autism Speaks Event on Sunday, April 7th at the Centennial Square in downtown West Palm Beach was a huge success due to the participation of numerous dedicated parents, students, and professionals in our community. It was a day filled with food, fun, new friends, and over 1100 walkers on 157 teams. Drinks and snacks were provided for walkers, a DJ kept the music going and community booths made available great resources and information for parents in the Resource area. Autism Speaks is dedicated to increasing awareness, research, advocacy and family services for all who struggle with autism spectrum disorders. If you would like to find out more about Autism Speaks, please contact Jaclyn Merens at 1-954-421-9997 or visit the website at www.autismspeaks.org.



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Marsha Kufel

Child Find

Dana Wilcox
Vicki McClellan
Susan Darr

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Julie Drewes

Parent Services

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Support Staff

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Emily Morales
Brenda Tanfield

Contact :

561-434-8971
561-434-8047 (fax)

On the web:

www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/ese/fdlrs.htm



Child Find



If you suspect that your child, or a child you know, may have a delay or disability in...

- *Speaking or Understanding*
- *Vision or Hearing*
- *Learning and Paying Attention*
- *Moving or Playing*
- *Getting Along with Other Children*
- *Self-Care Skills*

Child Find can provide screening and, if needed, further evaluation to find out if early intervention would help. These services are free to children birth to age 21 who are not enrolled in a school program (kindergarten to 12th grade).

**For more Information, please call Child Find at:
561-434-7337 ☎ 800-734-9707**

Parent Services - Need A PAL?

Parents As Liaisons (PALS) are parents of Palm Beach School District students with disabilities. The PALS have received special training in the following areas:

- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- State Law
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs/504 Plans)
- Mediation
- Classroom Strategies/Inclusion
- Advocacy
- Disability and Network Information

PALS encourage positive relationships between school and home.

**Need a PAL?
Call Orlean Buckingham 561-434-8393**

As parents of children with special needs, the PALS are uniquely able to assist parents and educators in a variety of ways. PALS encourage school-home relationships by facilitating positive proactive communication between families and educators.

The PALS are contracted consultants with the Department of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS).

PALS can answer questions about:

Your child's education
IEPs and other acronyms
District Policies and Procedures

PALS can provide:

Information on parenting the child with special needs
Information and guidance on how to access educational and community services
Referrals to community, state or federal resources

PALS can attend IEP/504 meetings:

Assisting parents
Assisting schools

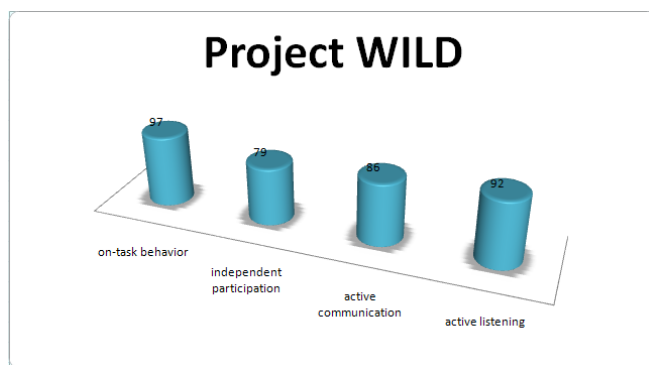
Project WILD (Wildlife in Learning Design) is a general education curriculum implemented throughout the United States to counteract the lack of children's interaction with nature. This tendency is more prevalent with exceptional students, who have minimal exposure to outdoor learning experiences. Surveys conducted by Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System (FDLRS Alpha) at Professional Development offerings revealed educators' concerns in three areas of science education: little exposure of their students to the outdoors; lack of an appropriate program to teach their students awareness and respect for the environment, and a comprehensive method of teaching science concepts measured on the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). Project WILD and Technology, therefore, used the basic principles of this general education science curriculum and adapted it for students with moderate/severe disabilities. In partnership with the Florida Department of Fish and Wildlife, Project WILD and Technology evolved into a technology accessible curriculum that reflects science content assessed on the Florida Alternate Assessment.

The modified version of Project WILD was implemented during the 08/09 school year. Seventy-five teachers attended workshops that focused on four areas of the environmental curriculum: Adaptations, Classification, Habitats, and Life Cycles. Each unit provided correlations to science, math, and language arts Access Points and contained a plethora of engaging outdoor and indoor activities. For the 09/10 School Year, skill acquisition will be assessed through a computer-based template devised to resemble the format of the FAA.

As a culminating activity to the Project WILD and Technology initiative, classrooms participated in a Science Fair. For the first time in Palm Beach County, children with Autism and intellectual disabilities engaged in science experiments as did their non-handicapped peers. The Palm Beach Council for Exceptional Children and the Project WILD K-12 Education Coordinator donated funds to cover some of the expenses incurred.

Of the 75 teachers attending Project WILD professional development, 67% provided data on implementation. Teachers used student work samples, observations, and informal assessments to determine impact on student performance. Since the template for the FAA had not been developed for the first year of Project WILD implementation, a correlation to the state assessment has not been made. Results of the data collection on the effectiveness of the Project WILD curriculum indicate the following:

- Improvement in on-task behavior: 97%
- Increased independent participation in cooperative learning activities: 79%
- Increased active communication within the context of the learning objective: 86%
- Increased active listening within the context of the learning objective (attention, engagement): 92%
- Below is a graph representing implementation data:



As one teacher noted, "Project WILD provides me with everything I need to actually keep my students interested in science. I have outdoor activities, cooking and craft projects, communication overlays, and computer activities. No wonder we're all wild about Project WILD!"

Plugged in and Ready to Go at Royal Palm School

Donna Marie Ott, Technology Teacher, Royal Palm School

Deborah Nelson, Music Teacher, Royal Palm School

After much anticipation, the K-12 section of the new Royal Palm School is here! It serves exceptional education students ages Pre-Kindergarten through 22 years old. So, what are some of the things that render our school unique? Here is a brief overview of what is “exclusively Royal Palm.”

The Sensory Lab

Now, some may think that there is very little to do with students with profound disabilities. On the contrary! Music is one of the things our students respond to. The Access Points for music have not been developed yet. We work with vibration and communication. We work on multisensory exposure for cause and effect. We have some fantastic equipment unlike anywhere in the world. Yes, some places may have one piece but not the whole suite. We have a Lightspace interactive floor, Oval Window’s vibroacoustic floor, and Soundbeam, a sonar switch to access music. We have a dedicated room that a local toy inventor has helped set up. All of this is in a beautiful new school building. The staff is working on using these in conjunction with IEP goals, OT/PT goals, music curriculum and academic Sunshine State Standards (SSS) through Access Points. The system is tied into our server so students may see, feel, and hear what they are working on.

The Computer Lab

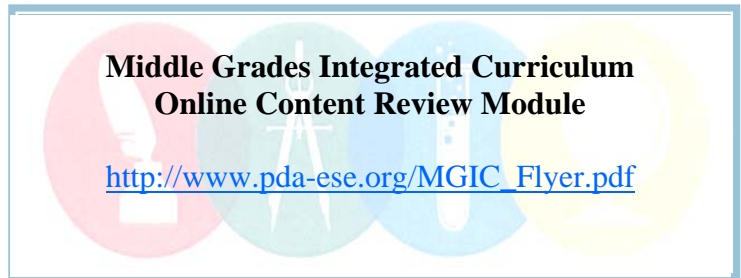
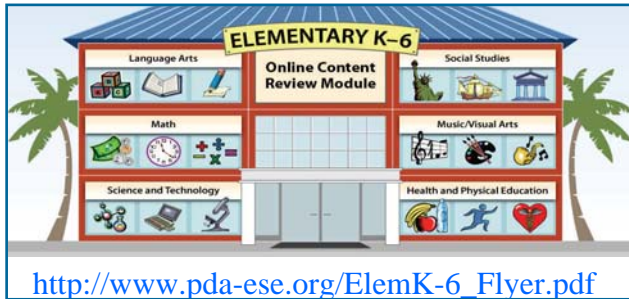
To increase student engagement, we combined the “standard technology package” for new school construction (ceiling mounted LCD projector and speaker system, microphones for voice amplification, integrated with a VCR/DVD player and document camera) with an interactive whiteboard. The interactive whiteboard interfaces with a computer to emulate a mouse when the surface of the board is touched. The computer’s desktop image is digitally projected onto the whiteboard, making a “super-sized” desktop, where students can easily view the computerized instructional content. Hitachi’s StarBoard was chosen for its ease of accessibility as well as the short-throw digital projection system. The boon of the StarBoard is that it uses a unique technology to detect the student’s finger touch or stylus. Anything can be used as a stylus; in fact, we have even used a feather. Pair this with the StarBoard’s short-throw digital projection system that prevents shadowing as a student approaches the board, and we have a technology winner!

Classroom Technology

All of the instructional areas at Royal Palm School are equipped with the “standard technology package.” In addition, we included cordless switch interfaces and switches, as well as a wireless presenter. The use of a wireless presenter allows the teacher to manipulate the mouse from any spot in the classroom. Students participate in switch-activated programs by using the cordless switches. What if the student’s condition prevents him from attending? Many of our students experience difficulties in attending due to low or high muscle tone, possibly resulting from a related neurological condition. Adaptive full body swings, vibrating chairs with specially chosen musical selections, bubble color towers and interactive sensory toys help normalize muscle tone to prepare a student for the maximum educational experience.

We hope you’ve enjoyed reading about our new technology as much as we enjoy seeing the benefit it provides to our students. However, the aforementioned is just a small fraction of what happens at our school. Royal Palm School houses an audiology suite, a cadre of experienced therapists, and teachers and staff who work together along with administration to meet the educational needs of our exceptional students.

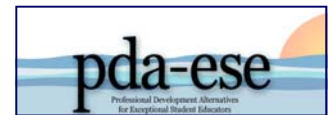
Professional Development Alternatives for Exceptional Student Educators



For a description of each module go to www.pda-ese.org and click on "Overview of Module." Registration is completed through Palm Beach County School District's Course Registration. For additional information or questions, email Julie Drewes at drewesj@palmbeach.k12.fl.us

PDA—ESE

- Assessment & Evaluation (60 points)
 - Foundations (60 points)
 - Instructional Practices (60 points)
 - Positive Behavior Supports (60 points)
 - Transition (60 points)
 - Language and Communication (60 points)
 - Interpersonal Interactions (30 points)
 - Differentiated Reading Instruction: Making it explicit (60 points)
- Meets Reading Endorsement Competencies 4 and 5



Wilson Reading System and Foundations Training in Palm Beach County

Over the last few years the Exceptional Student Education Department of Palm Beach School District has provided the Wilson Reading System Level 1, and Level II, and In-District Trainer opportunities for interested teachers. At the completion of the 2008-2009 school year Jennifer Pizzi, Carolyn Siew, and Bev Wolfe completed the rigorous practicum for Wilson Reading System In-District Trainer status and Foundations In-District Trainer status. Nine teachers have completed the Level 1 Wilson Reading Certification with several more projected to complete in the Fall. Over 1,000 teachers total have been trained in Wilson Reading System and Foundations.



By Janice Miller

“GROW TO 5” PLUGS INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TRAINING



The State Department of Education's (DOE) "GROW TO 5" series is proving to be a valuable adjunct to a local training program for child care workers attending classes for credit toward their A. S. degrees in Early Childhood Education at Palm Beach Community College (PBCC). With materials provided by the DOE through the local FDLRS/Alpha Associate Center, Palm Beach School District Program Planner Vesta Hetherington has incorporated "GROW TO 5" into her curriculum for the "Teaching Young Children With Special Needs" three credit hour class taught at PBCC. Students in her class recently developed projects focusing on different aspects of early childhood growth and development utilizing training modules developed for the "GROW TO 5" series.

She reports that the materials were enthusiastically received by her students, providing valuable focus to their work on their individual projects and thus increasing the learning value of the exercise.

"GROW TO 5" is a revised and updated version of Florida's popular series, the *Model of Interdisciplinary Training for Children with Handicaps (MITCH)*. Like *MITCH*, "GROW TO 5" was developed to assist Florida school districts to provide interdisciplinary training and resources to families, degreed and nondegreed early educators, and health care providers and other related service personnel who work with young children, including children with disabilities. However, while *MITCH* emphasized children ages birth to three years, "GROW TO 5" addresses the needs of children ages birth to five years.

The *MITCH* modules have been used extensively in Florida since 1990. In 1998, with the demand for information and training for educators of infants, toddlers and preschool children stronger than ever, the Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students (now the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services) began revising and updating the modules to carry them into the new century. Among the changes included in the content of the new "GROW TO 5" modules are:

- Emphasis on developmentally appropriate practice for all children rather than just those with disabilities
- More developmental information about children ages 3 to 5
- Updated technology applications
- Updated developmental and medical research bases
- Updated language and reference to current state and federal legislation
- Updated references and resources

The "GROW TO 5" series consists of 13 modules. The training manual for each module includes a complete script (divided into three one-hour segments which can be presented in one training or as three separate trainings), instructions for activities, a resource list, and the reproducible handouts (in both English and Spanish) that an instructor will need to present that module. For some modules, a videotape is available to supplement the written material. Each module can be used independently, and the modules may be presented in any order, since no module provides prerequisite material for another.



(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

The modules are:

- *Module A – The Education and Caregiving Environment: Planning an Effective Program*
- *Module B – Working Together: Communication Skills for Families, Early Childhood Educators, and Other Professionals*
- *Module C – Health Care: Infection Control, Medication Administration and Seizure Management*
- *Module D – Nutrition and Feeding Practices: What You Need to Know*
- *Module E – Intellectual Development: What You Can Do to Help*
- *Module F – Speech and Language Development: What You Can Do to Help*
- *Module G – Motor Development: What You Need to Know*
- *Module H – Social and Emotional Development: Building the Child’s Foundation*
- *Module I – Teaching Behavior Skills: Calm, Connect, Clarify*
- *Module J – Inclusion: Serving Children with Special Needs in Early Care and Education Settings*
- *Module K – Visual Impairment: What You Need to Know*
- *Module L – Family Functioning: Understanding Families and Helping Them Cope*
- *Module M – Transition Points: Helping Children and Families Move to a New Program*

Spanish translations of the handouts are included with each module.

The series also includes two separate booklets: *Welcome to the World: An Overview of Your Growing Child* may be used with *Modules A, E, F, G, H, I, J, and K* and is available in English, Spanish and Creole; *Nutrition for Children With Special Health Care Needs* accompanies *Module D* and is available in English and Spanish.

The printed “GROW TO 5” materials, including the booklets, may be reproduced for training purposes within the state of Florida. Instructors and training agencies may reproduce the booklets for participants or obtain copies through the FDLRS Alpha Associate Center at no charge, by contacting Dana Wilcox, FDLRS/Child Find, at 561-434-8299 (voice); 561-357-7644 (fax); or by email at wilcox@palmbeach.k12.fl.us. The complete set of “GROW TO 5” materials, including all the modules and booklets, is available on disk in PDF (Acrobat Reader) format, and can be requested in the same way.

These materials may also be requested directly from the Department of Education’s Clearinghouse Information Center, 325 W. Gaines Street, Room 628 Turlington Bldg., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. Telephone: 850-245-0477; Fax 850-245-0987, or by email: cicbiscs@fldoe.org.

Grow to 5 modules can be downloaded from the website:

<http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/ese/fdlrschildfindgrowtofive.htm>

Child Find web site:

<http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/ese/fdlrschildfind.htm>

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System



Gayle Zavala wins the Clarissa Hug National Teacher of the Year Award 2009

The Council for Exceptional Children, the largest international professional organization for special educators, works to improve the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. The Clarissa Hug National Teacher of the Year Award recognizes a CEC member who currently provides direct services to students with exceptionalities. The Clarissa Hug National Teacher of the Year is an outstanding member of the profession whose work exemplifies the best in special education teaching. His/her work reflects significant educational success for students, continued professional development, and the highest standards of educational quality. Palm Beach County CEC chapter #200 is proud to announce that our very own Gayle Zavala is the 2009 recipient of this prestigious national award. As a result, Gayle will receive both cash and gift certificates to use in her classroom, be the honored guest at the national CEC convention in March, be featured in a press release and *CEC Today*, represent CEC before members of Congress, and act as the national spokesperson for CEC in the media.

Gayle Solis Zavala believes strongly in collaboration between general and special education teachers. She also believes in involving parents in the education process and using meaningful activities to augment instruction. But above all, Zavala believes in literacy and its vital role in education. In her 24 years of teaching at Gove Elementary, a Title I school, Zavala has worked with a variety of students, further enhancing her big-picture perspective of special education. She regularly shares this knowledge at conferences and workshops. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and is state-certified in Reading, Speech Correction and Varying Exceptionalities. In addition to many other honors, she was one of twenty teachers chosen for the *USA Today* All-USA Teacher Team in 2007. Zavala is not only an advocate for the students with exceptionalities at Gove Elementary, but for those in Florida and beyond. She has served as a CEC Children and Youth Action Network Coordinator for four years, voicing the needs of special education at the local, state, and federal level. She is a member of CEC's Division on Developmental Disabilities and was Florida CEC's 2007 Teacher of the Year.

Zavala describes her own teaching experiences as "priceless" and her classroom as "a home away from home." Undoubtedly, her students, their parents, and her colleagues would say the same.

Florida



Problem Solving and

Response to Instruction/Intervention

Information for Parents – 2009

Ensuring a Strong Start, Promoting a Bright Future

WHAT IS RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION?

Parents want to see their child excel, and it can be very frustrating if a child falls behind in reading, math, writing, or other subjects, or if the child has difficulty getting along with others or making appropriate choices.

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a process that provides intervention and educational support to all students at increasing levels of intensity based on their individual needs. The goal is to prevent problems and intervene early so that students can be successful.

Visit <http://www.florida-rti.org/> for more information.

What can I expect with RtI?

- You will be informed and involved in planning and providing interventions for your child.
- You will see levels of support (academic and behavioral) that increase or decrease in intensity depending on your child's needs.
- You will receive frequent progress monitoring about how your child responds to the intervention provided.

WHAT DOES RTI LOOK LIKE?

The RtI process has three tiers that build upon one other. Each tier provides more intensive levels of support:

- **Tier I includes high quality instruction.** The school provides all students with access to high quality curriculum, instruction, and behavior supports in the general education classroom.
- **Tier II includes additional targeted, supplemental instruction/interventions.** The school provides interventions to small groups of students who need more support than they are receiving through Tier I.
- **Tier III includes intensive interventions.** The school develops and implements interventions to meet the individual needs of students.

Your child's progress is monitored and results are used to make decisions about additional instruction and intervention.

RtI Includes:

1. High quality, research-based instructional and behavior supports in general education
2. School-wide screening to determine which students need closer monitoring or additional interventions
3. Multiple tiers of increasingly intense, research-based interventions matched to the needs of student(s)
4. Use of collaborative problem solving to develop, implement, and monitor interventions
5. Continuous monitoring of student progress to determine if instruction/interventions are effective in meeting the needs of student(s)
6. Follow-up to ensure that the instruction/interventions were implemented as planned
7. Active parent involvement throughout the process of pursuing solutions that lead to increased success
8. Evaluation timeline requirements are followed unless both the parents and the school team agree to a time extension to learn more about what works for the student

Adapted from the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities

George J. Sanchez Memorial Award



Alyssa Liana Tome'-Esornell is a Spanish/English bilingual speech-language pathologist, employed by the Palm Beach County School District, and has taken her work way beyond her job description or the call of duty. As a speech/language therapist and diagnostician in the district's ChildFind program, which is designed to identify pre-kindergarten aged children who may have a disability, Mrs. Estornell has been a pioneer in the field of educating young children who are bilingual and are speech or language impaired.

She co-authored, with Jose Rafael Lozano-Rodriguez, The Palm Beach Spanish Communicator Screener. This groundbreaking instrument is the first Spanish screener of its kind that provides statistical pass/fail standardized scores for young children in order to determine if further evaluation is necessary and to reduce the over-identification of Hispanic children for formal communication evaluations. All monolingual speech-language pathologists in the School District have been trained by Mrs. Estornell on how to administer the screener, using a language facilitator. Much in demand, The Palm Beach Spanish Communicator Screener is available to the public at no cost at www.spanishscreener.com.

After successfully completing the screener project, Mrs. Estornell decided that bilingual children identified as speech and/or language impaired needed specialized instruction. To meet this need, she co-developed the Palm Beach County School District's first Spanish Immersion Speech-Language Prekindergarten Intervention Program, which provides children the opportunity to develop native language proficiency while overcoming communication impairments. The children in this program leave much better prepared for dual-language kindergarten. Mrs. Estornell collaborated with various school district departments to secure funding and materials for the program.

In addition, Mrs. Estornell initiated an annual "Parent Night", where families participated by bringing a typical meal of their native country; and the parents are given instruction in how to access literacy programs in their communities, how to implement therapeutic strategies in their home, and how to foster love of their own culture.

Clearly, Mrs. Estornell, a wife and mother of two young girls, has devoted much of her own time to developing the screener and the intervention program. She is an innovative and award-winning speech pathologist, and much more. Mrs. Estornell is a tireless advocate to Spanish-speaking students, for culturally and linguistically sensitive education, and for the Hispanic community.

Alyssa Estornell is making a difference.

EXCITING “CHALLENGE” FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY STUDENT

Olympic Heights Community High School junior, Helga Schreiber, represented Palm Beach County in the Rookie Category (students having less than one year of Braille reading experience) at the first annual South Florida Braille Challenge on January 23, 2009, where she took second place. The competition was held at the Broward County Lighthouse for the Blind. Helga was accompanied by her Orientation and Mobility teacher of six years, Teri Abrams and Olympic Heights staff member, Mary Perrault.

The competition not only allowed the participants to showcase their Braille reading and writing skills, but also gave them the opportunity to meet peers from Broward and Miami-Dade. The students who participated won gift certificates to local stores like Target and also to Braille bookstores. Students who participated in the high school category had the opportunity to qualify for an all-expenses paid trip to the National Braille Challenge in California.

This year’s challenge will be held on January 29, 2010, again in Broward County. Helga hopes to compete in the High School Division, where she will vie for the trip to the national competition.

Good Luck, Helga!

Palm Beach County is rooting for you.

By Terri Abrams



Child Find



FLORIDA DIAGNOSTIC AND LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM (FDLRS) CHILD FIND CONSUMER SURVEY



Please reply to the following questions regarding your experience with CHILD FIND:

1. Have you ever heard of Child Find before? Yes _____ No _____
2. Have you or your Center staff ever recommended to a parent that he/she contact Child Find? Yes _____ No _____
3. Have you or your Center staff ever:
 - (a) Referred a child directly to Child Find for screening/evaluation? Yes _____ No _____
 - (b) Spoken to the Child Find staff about a child? Yes _____ No _____
4. If you answered Yes to 3 (a) or (b):
 - (a) Was Child Find responsive and helpful regarding your concern? Yes _____ No _____
 - (b) If other community resources were needed instead of, or in addition to Child Find services, was Child Find helpful in providing additional resource information? Yes _____ No _____
5. In the past, have you ever given Child Find awareness information ("Bear and Balloons" brochure, printed flyers and magnets) to parents of children enrolled in your Center? Yes _____ No _____
6. Do you consider the Child Find awareness materials to be effective? Yes _____ No _____
7. Please rate Child Find as a service to the community on a scale of 1 to 5:
1 = ineffective 3 = average 5 = very helpful and effective

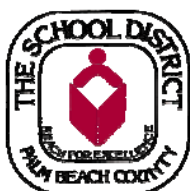
Circle your choice: 1 2 3 4 5

_____ I am not familiar with Child Find services.

Please provide any comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding the Child Find program:

Thank you for your participation. Please fax to Child Find at 561-357-7644 or return to:

FDLRS/Child Find
Exceptional Student Education
3378 Forest Hill Blvd., Suite A-203
West Palm Beach, FL 33406



The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System is funded by the State of Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B; IDEA Part B Preschool; and State General Revenue Funds.



Look for the FDLRS FOCUS on our website:
www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/ese/new_fdlrs_main.html