

Set the Stage for the Season: Advocacy & Tools for a Meaningful Holiday



Links to the tools
we'll be reviewing
←



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What is Charting the LifeCourse?

A way to **plan and organize your life** by thinking about your **goals, needs, and supports** at different stages — like childhood, adulthood, and aging.

It helps people (especially those with disabilities and their families) **see the “big picture”** of their lives and make choices that lead to a **good quality of life.**



What is the Life Trajectory Tool?

- Developed by the Charting the LifeCourse Nexus (LifeCourseTools.com), the Life Trajectory Tool helps families and individuals with Autism plan for their vision of a 'Good Life.'



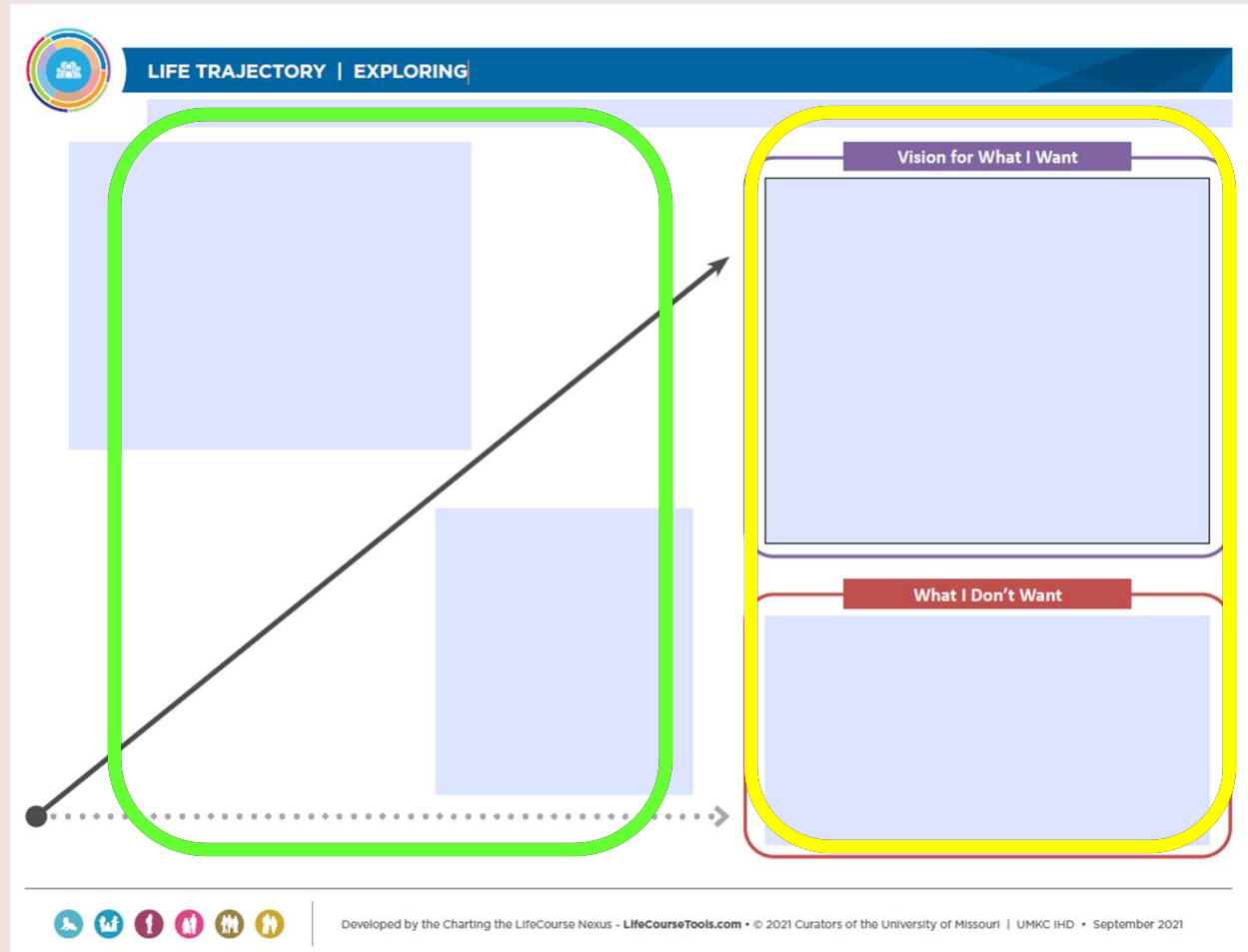
Purpose of the the Life Trajectory Tool

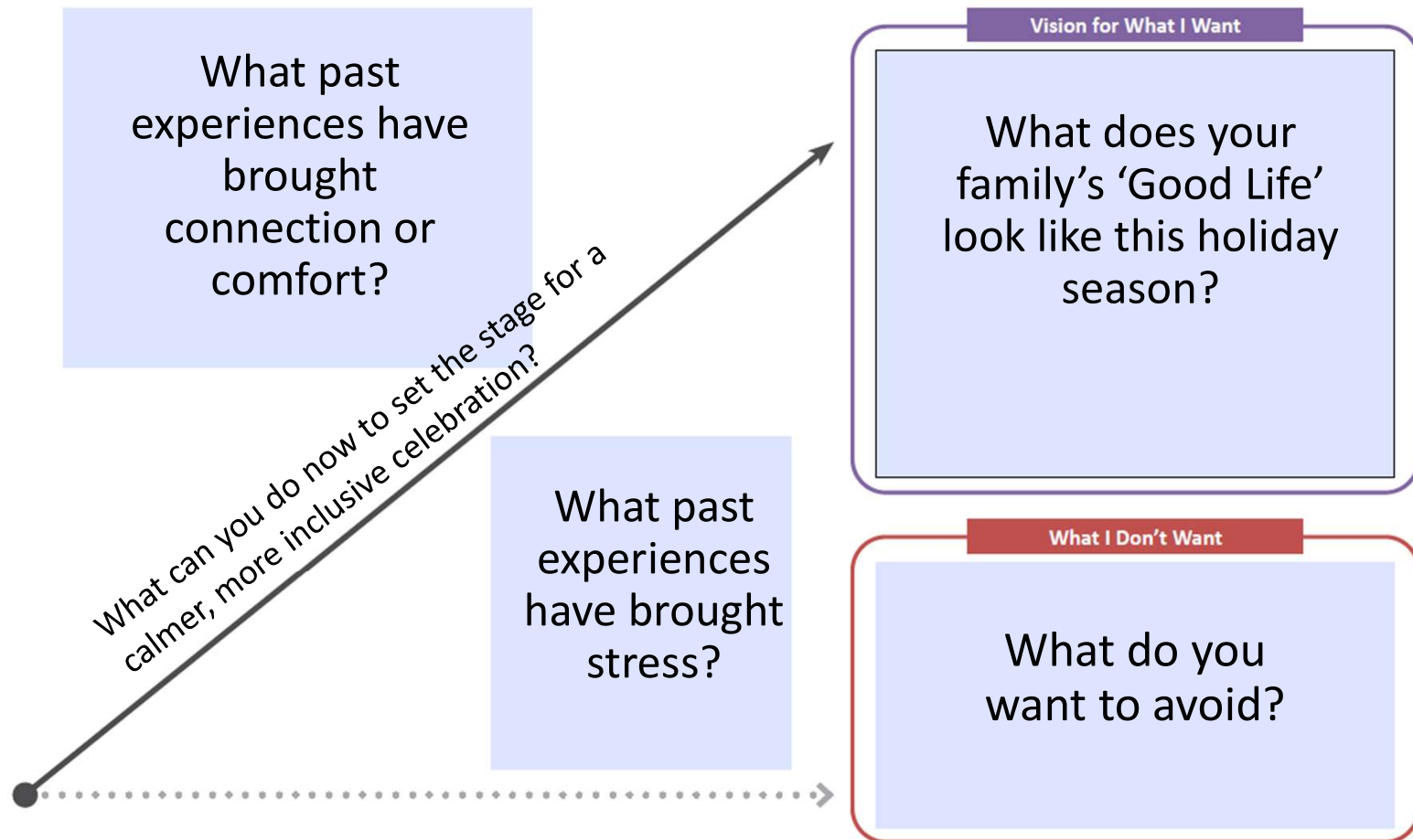
- How does the Trajectory Tool help individuals and families?



How the Tool is Organized

- The Trajectory is divided into two main sections:
 - Vision
 - Experiences
- This structure helps visualize how everyday experiences shape progress toward the desired vision.





The Trajectory in Action

- A conversation starter
- Helps communicate needs
- Encourages collaboration and shared understanding
- Visual for advocacy



Trajectory Example: Ethan's Story

How can Ethan and his family use the Life Trajectory Tool to prepare for the 2025 holidays?





What could help you towards your goal?

What could prevent you from reaching your goals?

Vision for What I Want

- Ethan helps cook and knows the plan.
- He enjoys family time with breaks.
- He shares his talents and feels confident.
- Family makes sure his needs are understood.

What I Don't Want



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What I Don't Want

- Sudden schedule changes.
- No quiet space or breaks.
- Ethan feels left out or overwhelmed.
- Parents feel stressed and can't relax.
- Relatives misunderstand Ethan's needs.



What could help you towards your goal?

2024 HOLIDAY SUCCESES

- Visual schedule helped Ethan feel calm and prepared.
- Meaningful jobs boosted his confidence and involvement.
- Quiet space made transitions smoother.

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- Surprises and schedule changes caused stress.
- Lack of communication created tension.

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Social stories, Sharing One Page Profile, Scheduling Breaks, Giving specific tasks that align with strengths

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Next Steps: Putting Your Trajectory Tool Into Action

Review Together

- Look over what matters most and what good days look like for **everyone**.

Share the Plan

- Share with family members, support staff, other caregivers.

Put Supports in Place

- Create social stories, quiet space, establish tasks for your individual

Reflect and Adjust

- Identify new experiences that can move your family toward your goals.

Review and update

- After events, talk about what went well and what could be improved.

The Wish List: An Advocacy & Communication Tool

- **Purpose:**
 - Helps caregivers express their own needs
- **Key Benefit**
 - Turns “What can I do to help?” into clear, actionable support



How to use the [Wish List](#)



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Key Takeaways

- *Strength-based* tools for planning and advocacy.
- Define what matters most – for individuals *and* caregivers.
- Use to reflect, plan, and communicate.
- Every family's journey is unique – your path shapes your “Good Life” vision



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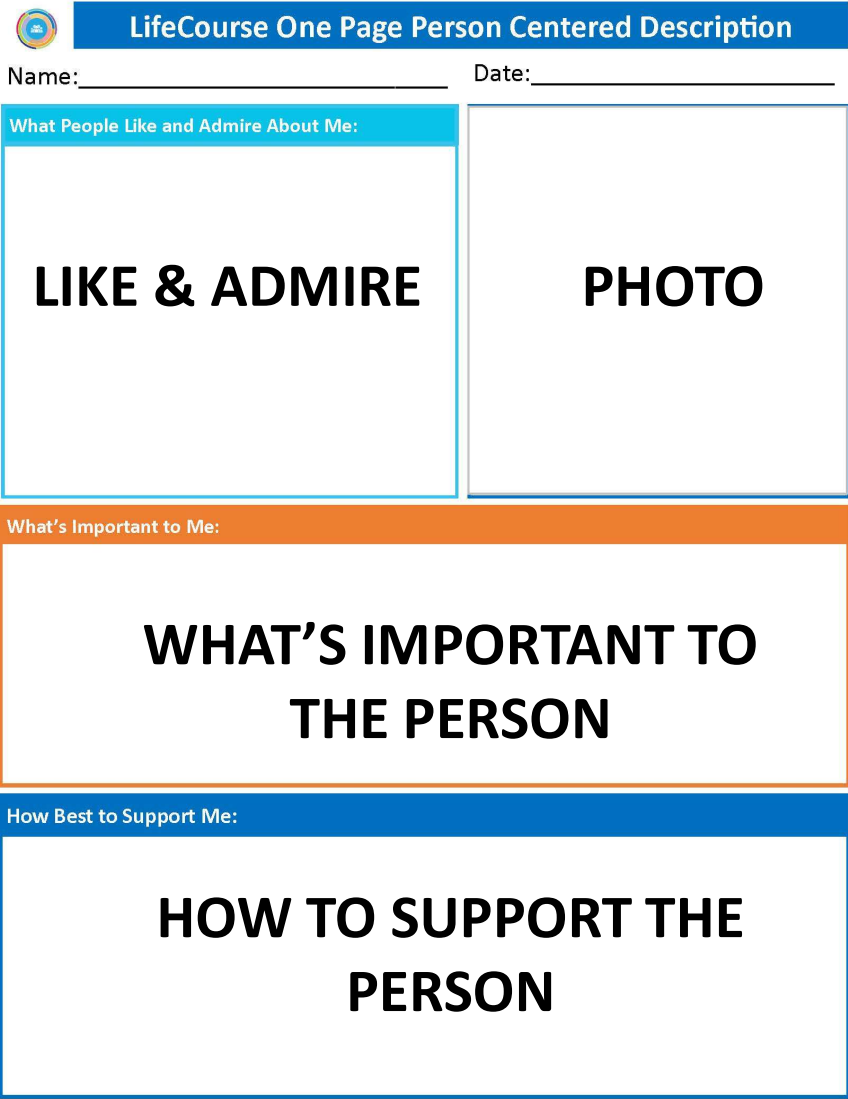


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One Page Profile and Social Story

One-Page Profile

- Purpose
 - Captures what matters most to a person in one page
- Components
 - What people like and admire about the person
 - What's important to the person
 - How best to support the person
- Benefits
 - Promotes person-centered thinking
 - Helps others understand the individual quickly and respectfully



The form is titled "LifeCourse One Page Person Centered Description" in a blue header. Below the title, there are fields for "Name:" and "Date:". The form is divided into three main sections: 1. "What People Like and Admire About Me:" (blue header) containing a box labeled "LIKE & ADMIRE" and a box labeled "PHOTO". 2. "What's Important to Me:" (orange header) containing a large box labeled "WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE PERSON". 3. "How Best to Support Me:" (blue header) containing a large box labeled "HOW TO SUPPORT THE PERSON".

LifeCourse One Page Person Centered Description

Name: _____ Date: _____

What People Like and Admire About Me:

LIKE & ADMIRE

PHOTO

What's Important to Me:

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE PERSON

How Best to Support Me:

HOW TO SUPPORT THE PERSON

How to Use It for the Holidays

- Share with family and hosts before gatherings
- Guide for meal planning
- Support predictability
- Help with transitions

Ethan's Profile

LIKES & ADMIRE

- Curious
- Creative
- Helpful
- Resourceful
- Family-oriented
- Joyful

What People Like & Admire About Me

- I'm curious and love learning new things.
- I'm creative and enjoy making my own dishes.
- I'm helpful in the kitchen.
- I'm great with technology.
- I care about spending time with my family.

Ethan's Profile

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ETHAN

- Cooking
 - Sense of pride
- Family connections
 - Love and inclusion
- Predictability & routine
 - Reduced stress
- Quiet space
 - Supports self-regulation

What is Important to Me

- Cooking or baking something special for the family.
- Spending time with my cousins and laughing together.
- Having some quiet time when things get busy.
- Knowing the plan for the day (like when dinner starts and who's coming).
- Keeping some traditions, like decorating or making favorite foods.

Ethan's Profile

HOW TO SUPPORT HIM

- Provide a schedule
- Create a quiet space
- Encourage cooking
- Time with cousins
- Be sensitive to volume
- Allow breaks

How Best to Support Me

- Tell me the schedule ahead of time so I know what's happening.
- Give me a quiet space if the house gets too loud with dim lights, headphones, and a book.
- Let me help in the kitchen—it makes me happy!
- Warn me if plans change so I can get ready.
- Keep conversations calm when I'm tired or stressed.
- I like to play board games and hide and seek.

What is a social story?

Short, personalized narrative designed to help individuals understand social situations, routines, or events in a clear and reassuring way.

- Reduces anxiety
- Clarifies Expectations
- Supports Self-Regulation
- Improves Communication
- Encourages positive participation



How to Create a Social Story

1. Identify what activity or event needs to be explained?

2. Use Clear Language: one to two sentences, short and concrete.

3. Describe Steps in Order: What will happen, what the person can do, how others will help.

4. Add Visuals: Include drawings or actual photographs.

5. Keep It Positive: Focus on what the person likes or can do.

6. Read the story together at home or before doing the activity.



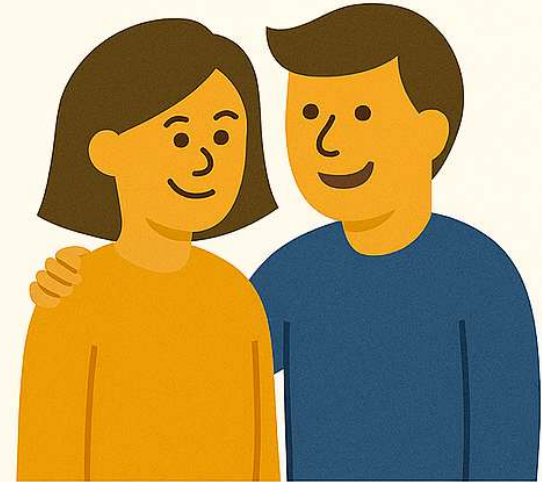
MY HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



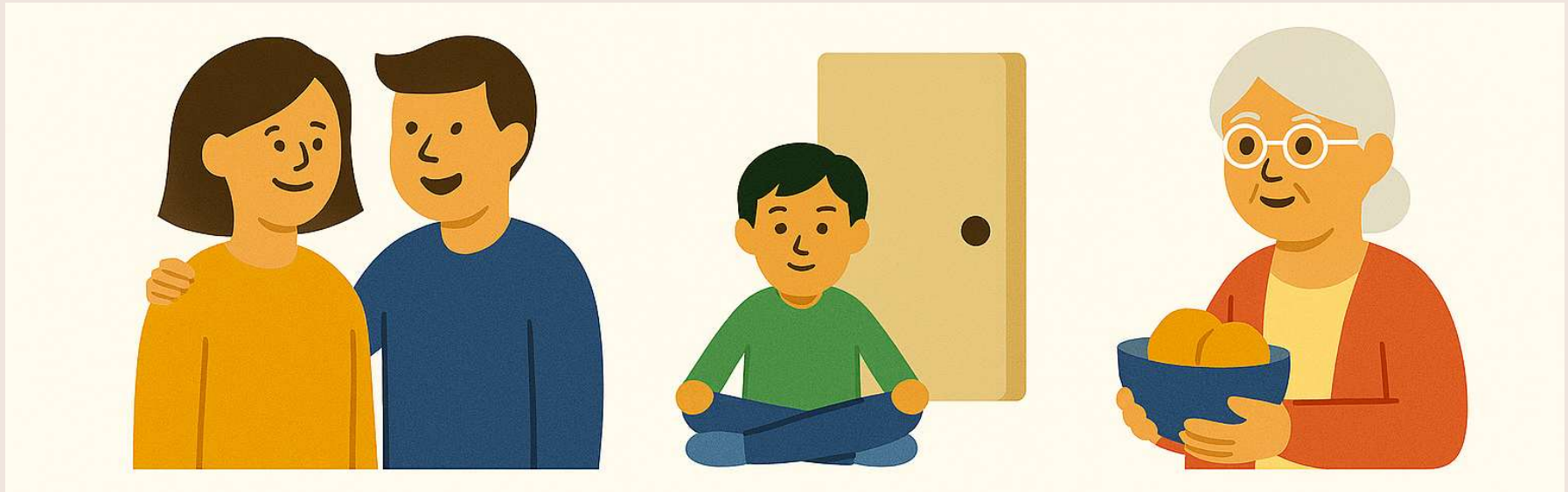
The holidays are a time when families celebrate together.
We eat special food, give gifts, and spend time with people we love.



On Christmas Eve, I will wake up at home.
Later, we will go to Grandma's house.
There will be lights and music.
I will see family members.



If I feel tired or need a break, I can go to my quiet space.
I can use my headphones or read a book.
I can ask Mom or Dad for help.



Mom and Dad will tell me what is next.
They will help me find my quiet space.
Grandma will have snacks I like.

Here is my plan for Christmas Eve.



Breakfast → Drive → Grandma's → Dinner → Gifts → Quiet Time



Holidays can be fun.
I will do things I like.
I will have breaks when I need them.
I will have a happy holiday.

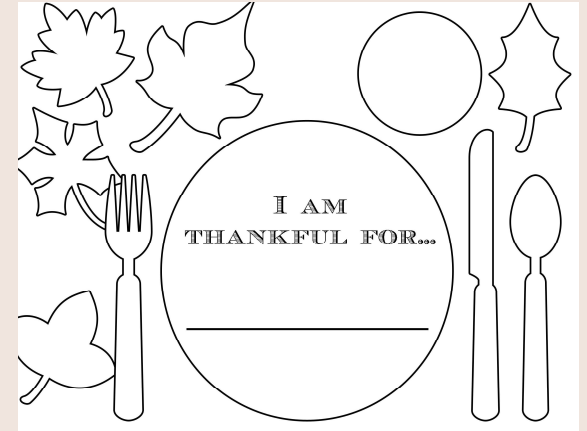
REMEMBER: DON'T COMPARE

- The Holidays should reflect what you want them to be
- Not all family traditions have to look the same.
- Be flexible with yourself and your child and choose your battles.
- It's OK if your holiday doesn't match the stereotypical holiday traditions.



IDEAS FOR YOUR THANKSGIVING

- Thanksgiving Placemat
- Thanksgiving Turkey Name
- Thanksgiving Jokes
- Thanksgiving Prayer
- Thanksgiving Treat Bags
- Social Story



What happened when the turkey got into a fight?

He got the stuffing knocked out of him!



There is also a list of activities to download and enjoy!

Questions?





Five Core Services

- Adapted Community Events

- Dec. 2 - Adapted North Pole Adventure
- Dec. 6 – Visit with Santa at Stark DD
- Dec. 9 - Adapted North Pole Adventure
- Dec. 13 - Visit with Santa at Quirk Center

- Advocacy

- Enjoy the holidays and we will see you in 2026!

- Education

- Jan. 12 - Supporting Positive Behavior webinar
- Feb. 2 – Safe Relationships webinar
- Mar. 2 - College Planning for Students with IEPs & 504s webinar

- Information and Referral

- Free HelpLine 330-940-1441 x1

- Support

- Jan. 14, 21, 28 - Portage County Parent Café
- Coffee, Tea, and Autism Facebook Group





Online Diagnosis Guides

User-friendly digital tools with intuitive navigation, accessible design, and mobile compatibility, making it easy to find the support and information you need, when you need it.

Scan the QR Code to View the Guide

For Children

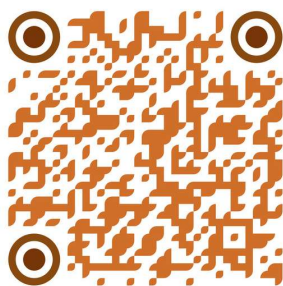


For Adults





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Thank you!