



Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy Series

Welcomes You to Our

*Empowerment Training for
Mothers of Students with Disabilities*

Saturday, March 9, 2019

www.RespectAbility.org

Debbie Fink is the Director of Community Outreach and Impact for RespectAbility, and responsible for its *Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy* Series.

An author, educator and performer, her books and curricula have been distributed through schools worldwide, as she 'edu-tained' on global tours with the USO.



Picture: Debbie Fink
smiling at the camera.

Today's Goals:

TO DELIVER TOOLS OF EMPOWERMENT TO:

- ✓ **TAKE CHARGE ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD**
- ✓ **TAKE CHARGE CARING FOR YOURSELF**
- ✓ **TAKE ACTION IN NYC'S CIVIC LIFE**
- ✓ **MEET NEW MOTHERS ON A SIMILAR JOURNEY AND CULTIVATE NEW RELATIONSHIPS**

Vivian Bass has dedicated her career as an advocate for people with disabilities worldwide. She is Chair of Jewish Women International (JWI)'s Board of Trustees; serves on RespectAbility's executive committee; and is CEO Emeritus of The Jewish Foundation for Group Homes.



Picture: Vivian Bass smiling at the camera.

**We wish to express our profound thanks to our generous hosts
here at the Guttman Office of AccessABILITY Services**

And to these organizations for their collaboration (alphabetically):

- Arts for All Abilities Consortium
 - DemocracyNYC
 - Guttman Office of Partnerships and Community Engagement
 - Girls for Gender Equity
 - INCLUDEnyc and
 - L.O.V.E. Mentoring
 - Youth Action YouthBuild East Harlem
-

*And thank you to the New York Women's Foundation and the
Coca-Cola Foundation for its direct support for this effort.*

Disclaimer

Please note that any views expressed by today's speakers are solely in a personal capacity and are not intended to represent the views of their companies, organizations or RespectAbility; or to be taken as legal or medical counsel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz_d-cikWml#action=share

Film placed here, but file too big to send

PARENT ADVOCACY:

*Victories from the Past, Navigating the Present,
and Advancing the Future*

Moderator: Gabby Einstein-Sim, RespectAbility Board Member

Panelists:

- **Donna Meltzer**, CEO, National Association of Councils on Development Disabilities (NACDD)
- **Michelle Grier**, LMSW, Director of Social Work, Girls for Gender Equity; and
- **Dr. Nelle Robinson**, Self Advocate and CEO of *The Will To Win Ministry*

Meet Gabby Einstein-Sim

Gabby Einstein-Sim is a board member of RespectAbility. She is currently a Master's Student in Community Health Education at Columbia's Teachers College. She is a member of the Jewish National Fund's Disability Task Force, focusing specifically on the Special in Uniform program, which enables people with disabilities to serve in the Israeli army.



Picture: Gabby Einstein-Sim smiling at the camera.

Parent Advocacy: Victories from the Past

Donna Meltzer is a board member of RespectAbility and the CEO of the National Association of Councils Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). NACDD is a national non-profit organization that supports the nation's 56 governor-appointed Developmental Disabilities Councils that work within state government to promote independence, productivity, and integration of people with disabilities through systems change activities.



Picture: Donna Meltzer, smiling at the camera.

Parent Advocacy: Navigating the Present

Michelle Grier, LMSW, is a social justice worker who is the Director of Social Work for Girls for Gender Equity. She dedicates her time to providing culturally relevant mental health services to youth of color. She also trains social workers and educators on bringing culturally sensitive models to their practice. Prior to her current position, Grier worked for Achievement First Endeavor Middle School as the Director of Socio-Emotional Learning and Social Work.



Parent Advocacy: Advancing the Future

Dr. Nelle Richardson is a Pastor and self-advocate with an invisible disability; godmother to Miss Wheelchair NY 2018 and mother of two adult children. Dr. Richardson has worked for the Federation Employment and Guidance Services/ NYC LINKS in its Mental Health Unit and a case manager for the Criminal Justice Department. Dr. Richardson volunteers in her community, addressing suicide prevention among youth in the LGBTQ community. Dr. Richardson is completing her first book, *Safety in Chaos*, to help children find safety when everything around them seems chaotic.



Victories from the Past

by

Donna Meltzer

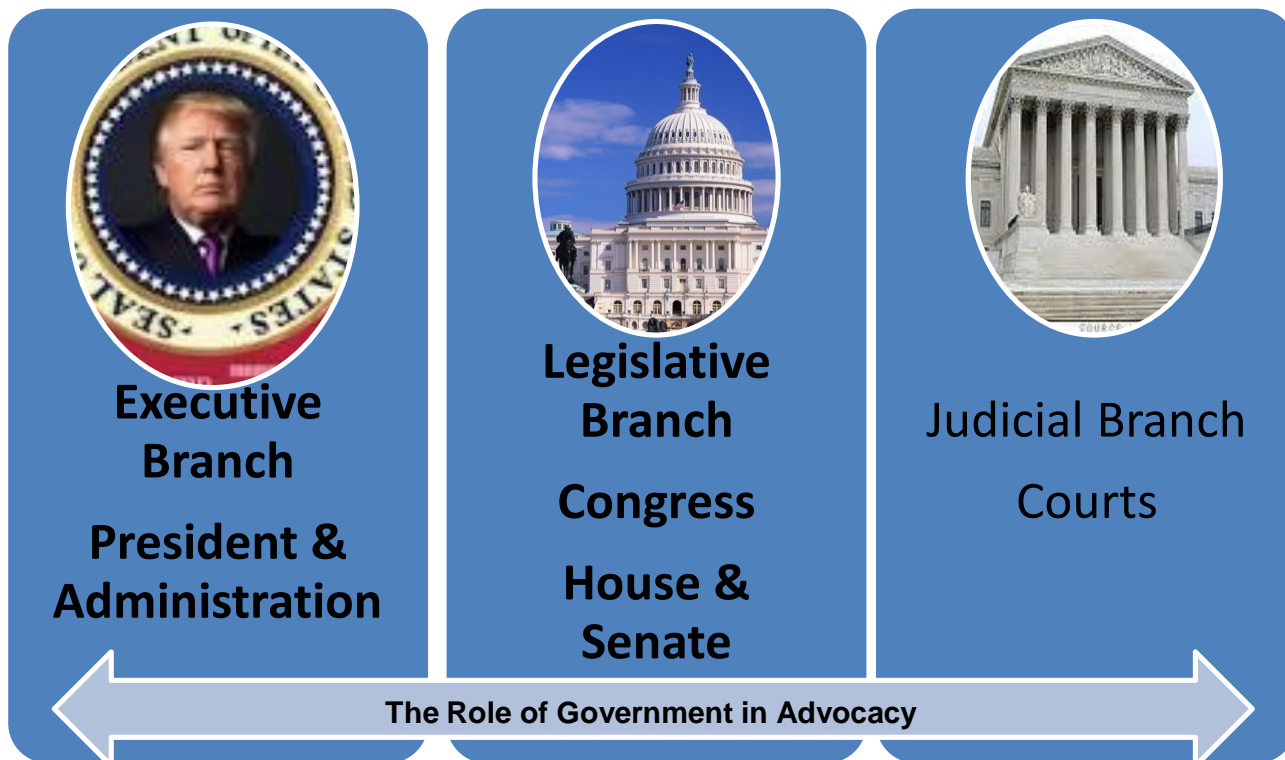


Disability Advocacy: Victories From the Past 1

History of Advocacy: Disability Rights

Donna Meltzer, CEO
National Association of Councils
on Developmental Disabilities

Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 2



Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 3

Major Civil Rights Laws - Disability

Developmental Disabilities Assistance and
Bill of Rights Act
(DD Act)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
(Section 504)

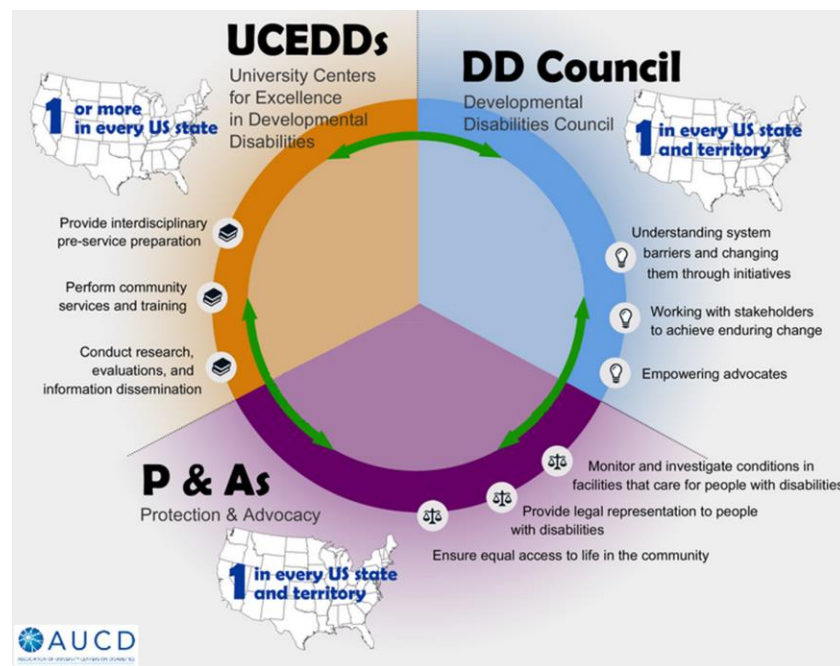
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 4

Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act)



Photo of the Kennedy/Shriver family,
smiling and laughing at camera, with a
dog looking away



Circle diagram showing UCEDDs,
DD Council, and P & As

Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 5

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

PARC v.
Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania (1972)

Education for All
Handicapped Children
Act (1975)

Individuals with
Disabilities Education
Act (1990)



1972 ad for children denied education due to disability.
"This desk is empty!"

IDEA Principles Today:

1. Free Appropriate Public Education
2. Appropriate Evaluation
3. Individualized Education Plan
4. Least Restrictive Environment
5. Parent Participation
6. Procedural Safeguards

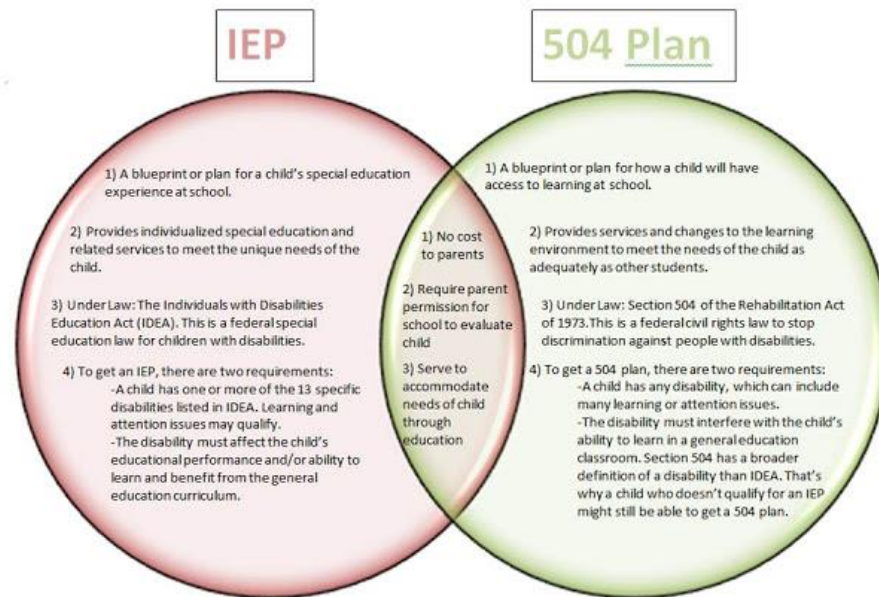


NACDD
National Association of Councils
on Developmental Disabilities

Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 6

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

Section 504 states that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under" any program or activity that either receives Federal financial assistance or is conducted by any Executive agency or the United States Postal Service.



Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 7

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

Passed by Congress in 1990, the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is the nation's first comprehensive civil rights law addressing the needs of people with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications.



To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered. The ADA is built upon four pillars: full participation, independent living, equality of opportunity, and **economic self-sufficiency**.

Disability Advocacy: Victories from the Past 8

All of these laws have common language and were built upon one another – each plays a role in our rights and our responsibilities and helps us know what we can do and what we can achieve.

You are standing on the shoulders of giants. You don't need to be a giant, but you do need to know to know some history and your rights so that you can be the best advocate for your child.

Navigating the Present

by

Michelle Grier, LMSW



Where are we today?

What the data tells us . . .

- The percent of students with IEPs varies greatly across New York City.
- The most prevalent disability classifications are learning disabilities and speech or language impairments.
- Boys are more likely to be classified with autism, emotional disturbance, and other health impairments.
- Disability classifications vary substantially by race/ethnicity.

Sources:

https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/site/research_alliance/2018/11/19/what-are-the-contours-of-nycs-special-education-landscape

Organizations in NYC

What are the contours of NYC's Special Education landscape?

https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/site/research_alliance/2018/11/19/what-are-the-contours-of-nycs-special-education-landscape/

- IncludeNYC - www.includenyc.org
- Post-School Success for English Learners with IEPs
<https://www.postschoolsuccessiepbilingual.org>
- Advocates for Children - www.advocatesforchildren.org

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What does this mean for mothers and caregivers of students in NYC schools?

- You have to be an advocate for your child and for others in the school.
- Get informed, know your rights, and document everything.
- Recognize your social location and find allies in your community and within the school to support your child.
- Ask questions (i.e.):
 - What programs does this school offer?
 - Do they have:
 - Culturally Responsive Differentiated Instructional Strategies,
 - Inclusive classroom settings (what does that model look like and if they don't have it what can they offer), and
 - Personnel who are trained in the best practice modalities.

Advancing the Future

by

Dr. Nelle Richardson



Parent Advocacy: Advancing the Future 3

Make a conscious decision to take care of your health. Do whatever you can to make sure you are physically and mentally fit, including:

➤ **Illness Prevention**

- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Diet/healthy eating
- ☐ Taking medicine as prescribed...HBP, Diabetes, pain meds

➤ **Illness Behavior - Moderate / avoid use of:**

- ☐ Alcohol
- ☐ Drugs
- ☐ Cigarettes
- ☐ Sugar
- ☐ Salt
- ☐ Sodas and soft beverages
- ☐ Lack of healthy foods / too much fried food

➤ Proper Self-Care

- ☐ Get adequate sleep: 7-8 hours per night

Sleep deprivation leads to many illnesses including:

Memory loss, anxiety, stress, depression and even death.

- ☐ Meet with your dentist and your medical doctor annually.
- ☐ Take vitamins on a daily basis – don't wait until you are sick.
- ☐ Take a warm bath especially when you are stressed, as it helps to calm you down.
- ☐ Most people need motivation to get healthy and remain healthy. Always remember, you have an obligation to take care of yourself, so you can better take care of others.

➤ **Make / Take Time with Your Other Kids!**

- ☐ Listen to them, lift them up, laugh with them, meet their needs, too.



Picture: Enlarged Q & A in 3-D; Q in red, & in blue, A in green

TIP TALKS

*Planning for Success: Advocating for
Your Daughter or Son with a Disability:*

Panelists will be joined by the following co-facilitators:

- Ketrina Hazell, Ms. Wheelchair NY 2018;
- Jordana Mendelson, Parent Advocate and Associate Professor, NYU; and
RespectAbility Fellows:
- Tatiana Lee, Award-Winning Actress
- Candace Cable, Paralympian Champion

“TipTalks” – 5 Stations to discuss 10+ Tips:

Planning for Success: Advocating for Your Daughter or Son with a Disability:

TipTalks: #1 and #8 with Dr. Jordana Mendelson, steering committee of *Arts for All Abilities* and NYU professor

TipTalks: #2, #9, and #“10+” with Dr. Nelle Richardson and Ketrina Hazell, Ms. Wheelchair NY 2018

TipTalks: #3 and #10 with Tatiana Lee and Candace Cable, RespectAbility Fellows (Communications and Policy)

TipTalks: #4 and #5 with Michelle Grier, LMSW

TipTalks: #6 and #7 with Donna Meltzer

Taking Action! Community Resources & Opportunities

- INCLUDEnyc
- Arts for All Abilities Consortium
- Sign-Up for Social Outing / Networking Opportunity to see “Addy & Uno” at Kirk Theatre (410 W. 42nd St)
- DemocracyNYC
- Today’s Survey – please complete!

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 - INCLUDEnyc and
 - L.O.V.E. Mentoring
 - Youth Action YouthBuild East Harlem
-

*And thank you to the New York Women's Foundation and the
Coca-Cola Foundation for its direct support for this effort.*

**“It takes a village to
educate a child!”**

**Thanks again to everyone for being a
part of the village and
teaming together today!**

Debbie Fink

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*and Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy
Series*

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Planning for Success:

Advocating for your daughter or son with a disability

Dr. Victor Santiago Pineda
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Paola Vergara Acevedo
Edith Espiritu

This toolkit is made possible by:





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Senior Advisor, RespectAbility



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RespectAbility



Paola Vergara Acevedo
Co-Chair of Spanish
Language Committee



Edith Espiritu
Parent Coordinator
and Outreach, Fiesta
Educativa

1. Recognize children with disabilities are capable and can change the world

- ❖ It's important to have high expectations for your child because all children have the ability to learn and grow.
- ❖ Don't let the negative views of others define them.
- ❖ Recognize their talents and potential to contribute to their communities.
- ❖ With a support network, available resources, mentors and the love of their family, your daughter or son can achieve their highest potential.



Students with disabilities learn jobs skills at a Long Beach Unified High School in Southern California.

2. Create a network of support

- ❖ Think about the resources at your disposal to ensure that your child can use his or her potential without barriers.
- ❖ Create a community around you that can support you as your neighbors, other parents of children with disabilities, and support groups for parents and people with disabilities.
- ❖ With a strong support network that understands the services present in the community and the accessibility of those services for people with disabilities, you will better understand how to take advantage of the opportunities for your child.



Family photo of a newly enrolled family at the Harbor Regional Center in Torrance, CA.

3. Promote your child's independence

- ❖ By leaning on the community and using technology, you can help strengthen your child's independence without fully disconnecting from you.
- ❖ Talk with your child to understand his or her wishes and interests. Support the independence and help your child find and form one's own identity.
- ❖ If your child requires personal assistance, reach out to your community and other experts to get more information about programs and support services for independent living.



An African American male student with a disability wearing a red apron with his arms crossed, looking at camera

4. Meet with teachers to create a success plan for your daughter or son.

- ❖ Teachers and guidance counselors can be great advocates and resources for the success of your child.
- ❖ Have a relationship with the teachers and guidance counselors in the school, to support your child.
- ❖ Together, with your child, you can create an educational success plan.



Students with disabilities pose for a group photo in the hallway of a Long Beach Unified School District high school.

5. Be involved in your child's learning

- ❖ Keep up with your child's curriculum and school activities to identify opportunities for more school achievements.
- ❖ Talk with your child about his/her studies to see if s/he is having any difficulty participating in class.
- ❖ Talk to the teachers so that they are aware of the way your child learns best.
- ❖ Review schoolwork with your child or find out if there is a tutor or program at school who can work with your son or daughter to review what s/he has learned during the day.



A mother holding her young son with a disability with her young daughter by her side.

6. Know your rights and fight for them

- ❖ There are three important laws that protect students with disabilities.
 - 1) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - 2) The American Rehabilitation Act
 - 3) Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ❖ IDEA requires schools to support students with disabilities and helps your child(ren) get the support they need.
- ❖ The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities.



A slight smile from this Long Beach student with a disability.

Know Your Rights-IDEA, IEP & 504

❖ Know your rights (cont'd).

- ❖ Learn the differences between IEP and 504 plans and which would be right for your child.
- ❖ IEP: a blueprint or plan for a child's special education experience at school.
 - Includes only [13 specific disabilities](#) listed in [IDEA](#).
 - The disability must affect the child's educational performance and/or ability to learn and benefit from the [general education curriculum](#), leading to the need for specialized instruction.
- ❖ 504: a plan for access needs at school
 - A child with a disability - not restricted.
 - The disability must substantially limit one or more basic life activities, such as learning.



This student with a disability is out in the sun, doing work on the sunlit campus of his Long Beach, CA high school.

7. Learn more about the resources and experts that can support your child

- ❖ Find experts such as child psychologists, therapists, and personal assistants in your community. Speak with and maintain a relationship with these experts, who can help you identify solutions and support your child in school.
- ❖ They will know how to advise you about the resources that exist for your child in the school environment.
- ❖ Remember the phrase: "Nothing About Us Without Us!" This is the motto of the disability community. Talk to your child about the resources you have found - their perspective is the most important.



This student with a disability rolls down his high school's hallway delivering mail and practicing job skills.

8. Be involved in your child's extracurricular activities

- ❖ It is important that you are present so that you learn more about the interests of your child and the network of people with whom you have placed your trust.
- ❖ Your presence does not have to be and should not be one that watches everything. Your child has to have a space to grow and learn without always having you by his or her side.
- ❖ Do not worry - your children, although they will not always tell you, want to feel that you support them and that you are present in their life.



This student smiles at the camera in a school hallway.

9. Nurture a positive disability identity

- ❖ Find mentors, and exemplary people in your community who can be role models for your child.
- ❖ Look for positive stories from leaders of people with disabilities. Your child can learn that s/he is part of a strong community and can continue to create a better world for everyone, including people with disabilities. Learn more about activists like Judy Heumann and other activists that fought for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990.



This energetic young man with Down Syndrome is framed in the coolly lit hallway of his Long Beach high school.

10. Recognize challenges and celebrate successes

- ❖ Recognize the challenges not simply as barriers, but rather as opportunities to be creative and to change things.
- ❖ Work with a support team to find solutions and remove the barriers that limit or exclude the full participation of your child(ren) in their school and family community.
- ❖ Each achievement is a step forward. Success comes step by step.



These Long Beach high school students sit down with their job coach to talk about applying for summer jobs in the community.

RespectAbility would like to thank the following fellows for their help in the creation of this guide:

National Leadership Fellows:

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Ben Spangenberg

Frank Anderson

Elizabeth Jones

Debbie Fink

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- ❖ National Rehabilitation Information Center - <https://www.naric.com/?q=en/content/spanish-language-resources>
- ❖ Learning Disabilities online <http://www.ldonline.org/espanol?lang=en>
- ❖ Web Accessibility and Disability Resources in Spanish - <http://www.icdri.org/hispanic/Hispanic.htm>
- ❖ Pacer Center Spanish Resources <http://www.pacer.org/publications/spanish.asp>
- ❖ Colorin Colorado - <http://www.colorincolorado.org/>
- ❖ Understood.org - <https://www.understood.org/es-mx>
- ❖ Recursos para personas con discapacidades - <https://www.benefits.gov/es/newsroom/news-and-updates/article/238>
- ❖ Discapnet El Portal de las Personas con Discapacidad - <https://www.discapnet.es/>
- ❖ ADA Guide Spanish - https://www.ada.gov/cguide_spanish.htm
- ❖ Servicio de Información sobre Discapacidad - <http://sid.usal.es/default.aspx>
- ❖ World Enabled - <http://worldenabled.org/>
- ❖ Fiesta Educativa - <http://fiestaeducativa.org/>
- ❖ Coca-Cola Foundation - <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/our-company/the-coca-cola-foundation>