

# OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION



## Newsletter

March 2023



President Reagan named March National Developmental Disability Awareness Month in 1987 in an effort to increase awareness on the potential of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities "to work, contribute, and enjoy typical lives."

## Special Education Spotlight: Intellectual Disability

In New York State, an intellectual disability is defined as a significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

In other words, it describes when a person has certain limitations in cognitive functioning and skills, including communication, social and self-care skills. These limitations can cause a child to develop and learn more slowly or differently than a typically developing child.

Some physical causes of intellectual disabilities include Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, and genetic or chromosomal conditions.



### Supporting Students with Intellectual Disabilities

- Be as concrete as possible
- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Provide immediate feedback
- Explicitly teach social skills
- Use a predictable schedule
- Provide a quiet workspace
- Be patient

# Supporting the Special Olympics



*-From [specialolympics.org](http://specialolympics.org):*

The Special Olympics mission remains as vital today as it did when the movement was founded in 1968. Special Olympics strives to create a better world by fostering the acceptance and inclusion of all people.

Through the power of sports, people with intellectual disabilities discover new strengths and abilities, skills and success. Our athletes find joy, confidence and fulfillment—on the playing field and in life. They also inspire people in their communities and elsewhere to open their hearts to a wider world of human talents and potential.

There are as many as 200 million people with intellectual disabilities around the world. Our goal is to reach out to every one of them—and their families as well. Special Olympics does this through a wide range of trainings, competitions, health screenings and fund-raising events. We also create opportunities for families, community members, local leaders, businesses, law enforcement, celebrities, dignitaries and others to band together to change attitudes and support athletes.



## CONTACT US

**Babette Valentine** – Executive Director (315) 255-8854 [Babettevalentine@aecsd.education](mailto:Babettevalentine@aecsd.education)  
**Aliza Querns** – Special Education Coordinator (315) 255-8819 [Alizaquerns@aecsd.education](mailto:Alizaquerns@aecsd.education)  
**Tonya Russell** – Special Education Coordinator (315) 255-8775 [Tonyarussell@aecsd.education](mailto:Tonyarussell@aecsd.education)

# March is School Social Worker Month



## SOCIAL WORK

## BREAKS BARRIERS

WHAT IS SOCIAL WORK? Social work can be difficult to understand because the profession is so diverse. Social workers work in many different places, including schools, hospitals, mental health practices, veteran centers, child welfare agencies, the criminal justice system, corporations, and state, federal and local governments—to name a few.

Although there are many kinds of social work, members of the profession all share common principles: They are people dedicated to seeking complete equality and social justice for all communities and helping people achieve their own potential.

Each day social workers help break down barriers that prevent people from living more fulfilling, enriched lives. They work on the individual level, helping people overcome personal crises like food insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or limited access to good health care. They also advocate on a systems level to ensure laws and policies are adopted so everyone can access such services.

From [socialworkers.org](http://socialworkers.org)

***Join us and thank all of our Social  
Workers for the great work they do  
every day!***

**THANK  
YOU**



# Celebrating our Teacher Aides & Teacher Assistants:

The Auburn Enlarged City School District Special Education Department includes a combination of teacher aides and teacher assistants that support our students and programs in a variety of ways. Some of our paraprofessionals act in a 1:1 capacity, supporting students with disabilities with unique health and/or safety needs. Other paraprofessionals support our special classes as program aides, while others support by providing specialized testing accommodations. The roles of our support staff are as unique as our students and we are grateful for their support.



Thank you for all that you do for  
our students!

