



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

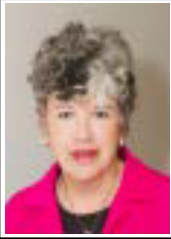







Supporting Parents and Caregivers of Students with High Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Play and Leisure

May 22, 2020

Supporting Parents and Caregivers of Students with High Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Project Partners & Coordinators

<u>CT State Department of Education (CSDE)</u>	<u>RESC Alliance</u>	<u>CT Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)</u>	<u>CT Association of Private Special Education Facilities (CAPSEF)</u>
 <p>Colleen Hayles Education Consultant <u>Bureau of Special Education</u> 860-713-6910 <u>Colleen.Hayles@ct.gov</u></p>	 <p>Deborah Richards Director of Student Services <u>Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)</u> 860-524-4025 <u>derichards@crec.org</u></p>	 <p>Jane Hampton-Smith Acting Executive Director <i>CT Parent Advocacy Center</i> 860-739-3089 <u>jhampton@cpacinc.org</u></p>	 <p>Karen Helene Education Director <u>Benhaven, Inc.</u> 203-793-1905 <u>khelene@benhaven.org</u></p>
<p>Alycia M. Trakas Education Consultant <u>Bureau of Special Education</u> 860-713-6910 <u>Alycia.Trakas@ct.gov</u></p>	 <p>Nicole Natale Senior Education Specialist <u>Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)</u> 860-929-8673 <u>nnatale@crec.org</u></p>	 <p>Jennifer Lussier Family Engagement Coordinator <i>CT Parent Advocacy Center</i> 860-739-3089 <u>jlussier@cpacinc.org</u></p>	 <p>Ana Wittig Chief Administrator and Vice President of Education <u>Oak Hill</u> 860-944-8728 <u>Ana.Wittig@oakhillct.org</u></p> 

Supporting Parents and Caregivers of Students with High Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The information and resources included in this resource guide are organized into ten different topical categories:

- Getting Started;
- Communication Skills;
- Literacy;
- Math;
- Science, Social Studies, and Current Events;
- Physical Activity and Mobility;
- Life-Skills and Self-Help Skills;
- Art;
- Sensory Activities and Supports; and
- Play and Leisure.

[Resource Guide](#)

[One-Pager](#)

[Getting Started](#)

- 1) Some Functional Tips
- 2) Self-Care for the Parent/Caregiver
- 3) Setting Up the Environment for Continued Educational Opportunities at Home

[Overview & Getting Started Webinar](#)

- [Download the Presentation](#)

Session Presenters & Goal



Karen Helene

Education Director

[Benhaven, Inc.](#)

203-793-1905

khelene@benhaven.org

Dan Kahl

Physical Education Teacher / PMT Trainer

[Benhaven, Inc.](#)

203-927-6404

dkahl@benhaven.org



Session Goal

- ✓ Provide an overview of the *Play and Leisure* section in the resource guide

<https://bit.ly/highneeds-play>

Play and Leisure

PLAY AND LEISURE SUPPORTS

Play, recreation, and leisure are critical for all students - especially now during the COVID-19 “Stay Home, Stay Safe” period. They provide a much needed mental break/shift from lessons, and they can also provide much needed gross motor and sensory input. These kinds of activities may be more challenging for students with high needs. They may not have the social skills to play board games or outdoor games with others. They may have unsafe behaviors that interfere with their ability to use manipulatives or lack the fine motor skills to use them effectively. Yet, with some creativity and persistence, students with high needs can have fun and reap the benefits of play as well.

Play and Leisure

PUTTING PLAY AND LEISURE SUPPORTS INTO PRACTICE

- **Consider Your Child's Interests**
- **Consider the Environment**
- **Providing Choices**
- **Play Social Games**
- **Use Sensory/Exploratory Toys**
- **Strategies to Expand on Play and Leisure Skills that Your Child Already Developed**
- **Introduce New Toys**
- **Types of Toys for Interactive Social Play include:**
 - Physical Toys
 - Manipulative Toys
 - Constructive Toys
 - Music Games
 - Board Games
 - Sensory/Exploratory Toys
 - iPad Games

Play and Leisure

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Bright Star](#)
- [Melissa and Doug](#)
- [Parade Magazine](#)
- [Mommy Poppins](#)

Thank You! – Be Safe!

For their contributions to this resource, we sincerely thank:

CT Association of Private Special Education Facilities

- Courtney Bernard, Oak Hill
- Emily Carrin, Oak Hill
- Roxanne Crane, Oak Hill
- Breanna Guide, Oak Hill
- Karen Helene, Benhaven, Inc.
- Dan Kahl, Benhaven, Inc.
- Ana Wittig, Oak Hill

CT Parent Advocacy Center

- Jane Hampton-Smith
- Jennifer Lussier

CT State Department of Education

- Colleen Hayles, BSE
- Alycia M. Trakas, BSE

RESC Alliance

- Chris Barclay, EASTCONN
- Carolann Cormier, CREC
- Elisabetta Corraro, CES
- Kathy Dyer, CREC
- Lisa Fiano, CREC
- Rose Jaffery, EASTCONN
- Maegan Kiger, CREC
- Julia Murphy, CES
- Nicole Natale, CREC
- Michael Pietruska, CREC
- Deborah Richards, CREC
- Joyce Rioux, CREC

We are all in this together!