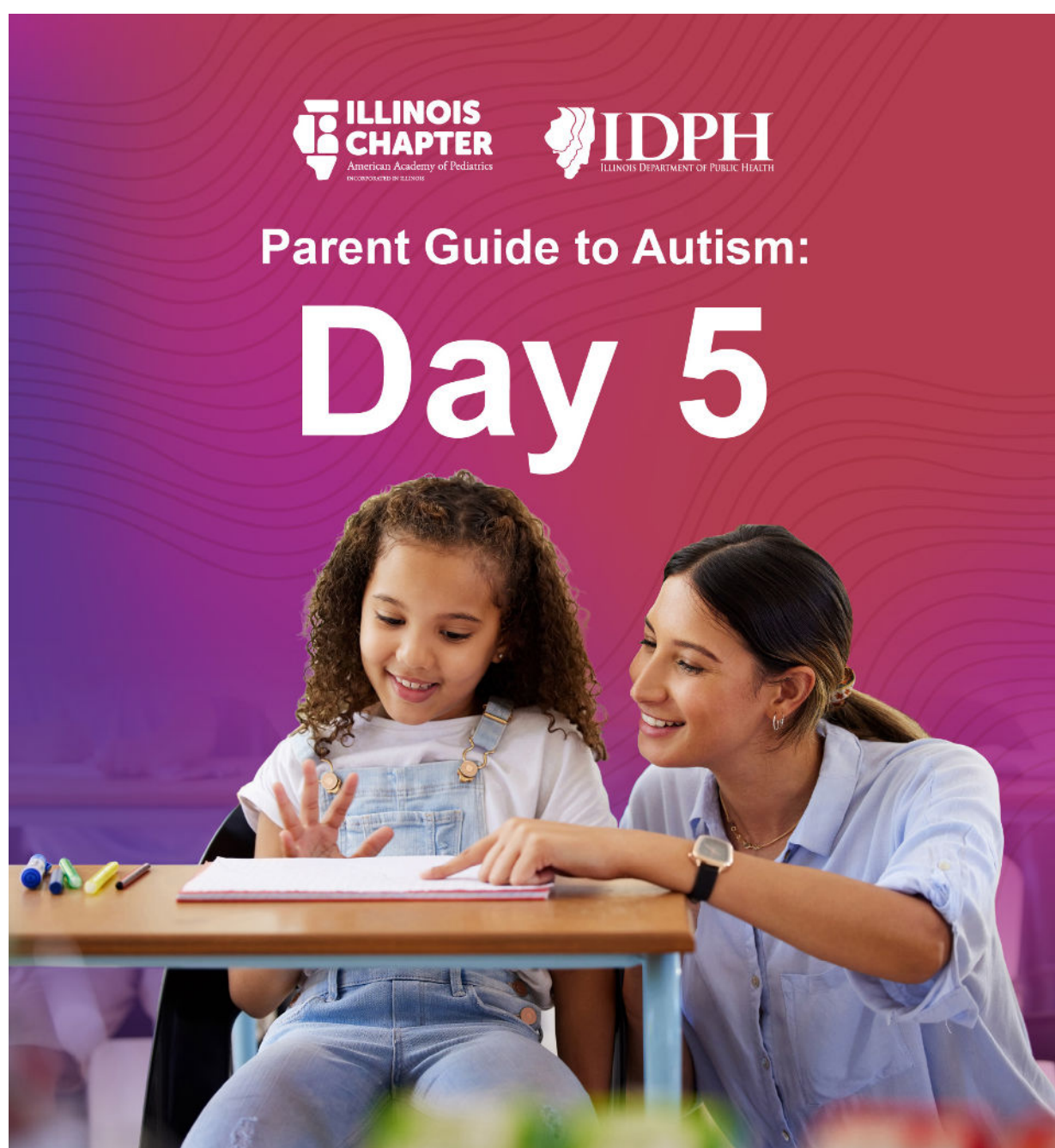


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Welcome back, <<First Name>>!

Understanding IEPs and School Support

Educational Plans That Support Your Child

If your child is elementary school age or older, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can help ensure they have the support they need at school. An IEP is a legally binding document that outlines specific services and accommodations tailored to your child's unique needs. This might include:

- Speech and language therapy
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Specialized instruction
- Behavioral supports



Some children may also benefit from a 504 plan, which provides accommodations without specialized instruction. Examples include more time for assignments, the use of sound-blocking headphones, access to sensory toys, or preferential seating.

Understanding Inclusion and "Least Restrictive Environment"

Public law requires that children with disabilities are educated with their peers without disabilities as much as possible. This is called inclusion, and it should be guided by your child's individual needs.

Inclusion isn't just about academics, it's also about:

- Participating in activities before, during, and after school
- Joining clubs, committees, or sports teams with peers
- Building social connections and friendships

The goal is to find the right balance where your child receives effective instruction and support while having opportunities to learn alongside their peers. Special education is not a "place" but a coordinated set of services. The most important factor is effective instruction that meets your child's needs, not where it takes place.



How Support Changes as Children Grow

As children move from elementary to middle and high school, their educational needs may shift. While some students continue in regular education classes, others may need more specialized support for certain subjects. It's important to remember that:

- Academic success is important, but so are life skills
- Skills like self-care, communication, job readiness, and self-advocacy help prepare students for independence
- The right educational setting may change over time as your child's needs evolve



Working with Your Child's School

If you feel your child's needs are not being met at school, you can advocate for additional support! Your pediatrician is a valuable partner and can assist with connecting you to community resources, therapy services, and support programs that can help your child thrive.

Helpful Resources:

- [IEPs and 504 Plans: A Guide for Parents](#) – Understand the difference between IEPs and 504 plans and how to get started
- [Inclusion in School & School-Based Services for Children with Autism](#) – Overview of inclusion and support in school and services available through your child's school

Tomorrow we'll go over additional resources to support you on this journey.

You've come so far this week!

With care,

The ICAAP Team

Get Connected!



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310 South Peoria Street, Suite 304
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