

# DIALOGUE

A Quarterly Publication of the Regional Center of Orange County

VOLUME 37 NO. 4 • FALL 2023



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Coordinated Family Services

**IT'S NOT OFTEN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ROLLS OUT AN ENTIRELY NEW SERVICE FOR ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**, so it was big news when Coordinated Family Services (CFS) was announced. Launched last year as a pilot program with just a few regional centers, the pilot was expanded in January 2023 to include all of California's regional centers.

#### Origins of CFS

CFS is a natural outgrowth of the community care system's continually-evolving, person-centered approach to meeting individual needs. Regional centers and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) have both heard from families that they need greater support accessing the full range of services, supports and public benefits – beyond those offered through regional centers and generic resources. CFS aims to fill that gap, while also offering the capacity to provide direct support in areas such as independent living, respite, and the like, for up to 90 days while the regional center works to identify and approve contracts for ongoing services.

***To be eligible for CFS, the person served must be an adult 18 years or older, living with their family.***

#### Who Might Benefit from CFS?

Though it has taken some time to get program guidance in place, DDS has specified that to be eligible for CFS, the person served must be an adult 18 years or older, living with their family. *NOTE: CFS is not open to individuals in the Self-Determination Program (SDP) as it was determined that the SDP's Independent Facilitators should be providing a comparable service.*



While the CFS service provider should not duplicate the role of the RCOC Service Coordinator or generic resources, that provider is expected to have more one-on-one time with the individual and family than would be typical for a regional center service coordinator. It is hoped this approach will foster more in-depth discussions to more effectively uncover unmet needs and help to encourage more long-term planning.

This would include, for example, futures planning for adults with aging caregivers who might need

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## DIALOGUE

This newsletter can also be read online at RCOC's website:

[www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com).



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Please check the Monthly Calendar on RCOC's website for the most up-to-date information regarding Board meeting dates and format.

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# Sensory-Friendly Holiday Events for RCOC Families

**OUR ORANGE COUNTY ARTS COMMUNITY** has once again stepped up to help brighten the holidays for individuals and families served by RCOC. These two events are specifically geared to be welcoming of those with sensory issues. However, all RCOC families are welcome!

## Camino Real Playhouse: A Charlie Brown Christmas

With ticket costs subsidized by Hyundai Cares, this special performance of A Charlie Brown Christmas will feature lowered sound and lights always on. A limited number of wheelchair accessible seats are available. To reserve general admission tickets and wheelchair seats, call 949.489.8082.

**Saturday, December 2 at 11 a.m.**

31776 El Camino Real in San Juan Capistrano

## Irvine Barclay Theatre: The Nutcracker

This special performance features an abbreviated version of the beloved holiday ballet, The Nutcracker, with reduced soundtrack volume, ambient lighting and open doors to let guests come and go as needed. After the performance, guests can enjoy photo opportunities with the dancers, as well as sweet treats and musical performances. To purchase tickets, which are \$5 each, visit [bit.ly/SensoryFriendlyNutcracker2023](http://bit.ly/SensoryFriendlyNutcracker2023). For more information, email [info@thebarclay.org](mailto:info@thebarclay.org) or call 949.854.4646.

**Friday, December 8 at 2 p.m.**

4242 Campus Drive in Irvine



# NCI Provides Objective Data to Guide Decisionmaking

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director



**PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK ME HOW RCOC DETERMINES WHAT ISSUES AND CONCERNS TO PRIORITIZE AT ANY GIVEN TIME.** There are a lot of things that go into those decisions – including the need to comply with

mandates from the California's Legislature and Department of Developmental Services (DDS) – but among the most valuable contributors to our strategic planning process is data we receive from the National Core Indicators (NCI) Survey.

The NCI surveys are confidential and conducted by experts unconnected with regional centers or DDS, so we can be confident the survey results are objective, representative of our diverse community, and reflect the experiences of those we serve. There are four surveys: adults we serve who are surveyed in-person, and written surveys of families with pre-adult children living at home, families with adult children living at home, and families/guardians of adults living in community settings.

We shared the most recent NCI results in a public meeting. That meeting presentation appears on RCOC's website, and there is also

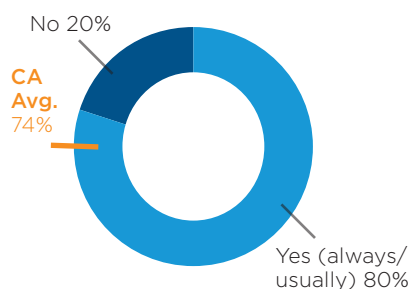
an interactive dashboard on the DDS website ([www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)) that depicts NCI results for all of California's regional centers.

As always, there was constructive feedback on areas for improvement which we appreciate. It was, however, gratifying to see us outperform the state average in several areas, including overall satisfaction with the services and supports families receive. More specifically, we were pleased with the feedback concerning RCOC's responsiveness to the changing needs of those we serve, our efforts to provide families with information to make good decisions, and our efforts to enable families to choose who works with their family member.

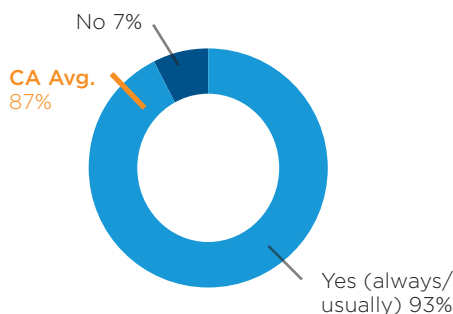
Since we serve a large number of children, we also place a high priority on transition planning and this is an area where we perform exceptionally well compared to other regional centers.

I hope it's clear that the feedback you provide through the NCI surveys is reviewed carefully, both at RCOC and at the state level. It's one of the most important ways you can help shape the future of California's developmental services system, so I urge everyone who is contacted to respond and answer thoughtfully.

### Do Services/Supports Change When Families' Needs Change?

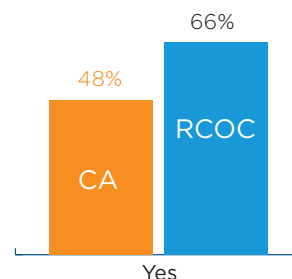


### Are You Satisfied With Current Services And Supports Your Family Member Receives?



### Does Their Family Member Have A Transition Plan?

(For Those Who Left School Services During The Past Year)



## PERSON-TO-PERSON

### Nothing About Us, Without Us!

By Yvonne Kluttz, PAC Chair and Amy Jessee, PAC Co-Chair



**REGULAR READERS OF THIS COLUMN WILL NOTICE SOMETHING DIFFERENT THIS ISSUE.** Sylvia Delgado, who for several years served our community as an RCOC Board Member, Board Officer and Peer Advisory Committee (PAC) chair, completed her last term and the two of us have been appointed to co-lead the PAC and co-author the Person-to-Person column. We are both grateful for Sylvia's contributions and honored to take on this new role!



Amy is a self-advocate who receives services from RCOC and has cerebral palsy. She also has a photographic memory for anything having to do with numbers. An active member of Alliance of Abilities' Integrity House, she advocates for friends who can't speak for themselves and has attended disability rights meetings in Sacramento and worked on transportation issues for people with disabilities.

Yvonne is also a self-advocate who receives services from RCOC. She has epilepsy and an intellectual disability. She also serves on the Individual Served Advisory Committee for the California Department of Developmental Services and has served on Orange County's local Area Board XI and on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. She was honored with RCOC's Spotlight Award in the Self-Advocate category in 2013.

We're both excited about using this platform to encourage people with developmental disabilities to participate in decisions about the services and supports we all receive. We believe passionately in the disability rights slogan "Nothing about us, without us" so in future issues, among the things we'll be writing about are ways to make your voice heard.

## Behavior Management Workshops for Parents

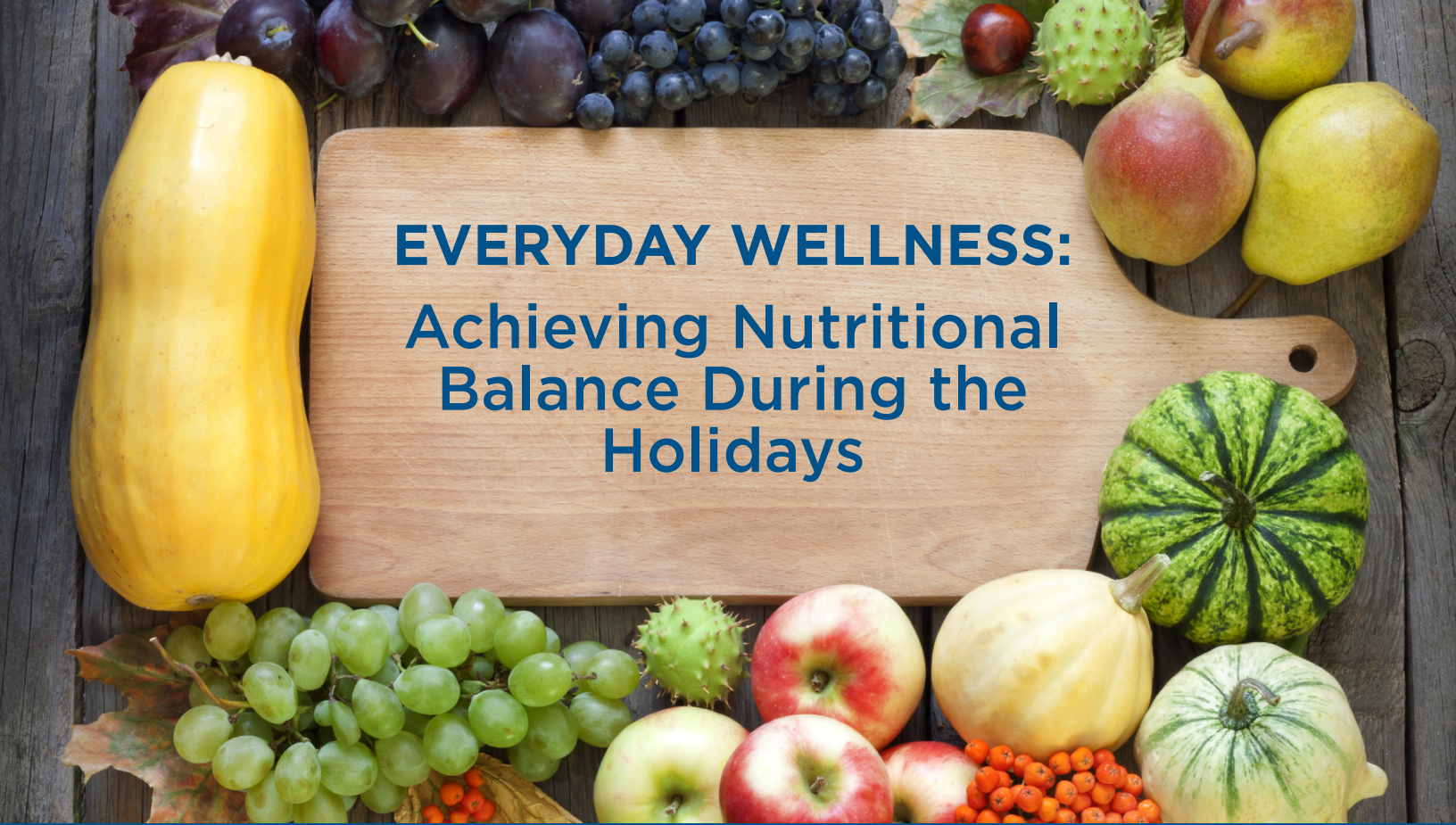
This workshop is free for parents, and is offered via Zoom. It covers basic principles of positive behavior management, with a practical focus on helping parents change their own behavior and that of their children. Parents are actively involved, and invited to discuss the specific behavioral challenges they are confronting. To gain the most value from the experience, parents are encouraged to attend all sessions in the series. Toilet training is the focus of the last session. Advance registration is required. Contact your Service Coordinator for additional information, and to register.

**Presented in Spanish by Footprints**

**When:** Thursday evenings – January 18, January 25, February 1, February 8, and February 15

**Time:** 5:30-8:00 p.m.





## EVERYDAY WELLNESS: Achieving Nutritional Balance During the Holidays

**IT'S FAIRLY COMMON, ACROSS MANY CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD, THAT HOLIDAYS ARE A TIME WHEN DELICIOUS FOOD BECOMES THE CENTER OF FAMILY CELEBRATIONS.** And many of the special dishes families like to share tend to be indulgences that may not fit with the balanced, whole foods-based diet we know is best for everyday health and wellness.

At the same time, we know that constantly depriving ourselves can lead to later over-indulgence and unproductive feelings of guilt and failure. The key is for each person to find the right balance that works for them in their personal wellness journey.

### Make Conscious Choices

One of the most important benefits of mindfulness is that it encourages us to think about our food and drink choices. Rather than simply eating what is put in front of us, it's empowering to consciously choose indulgences – whether sweet treats or savory favorites – that have significance to us, our family traditions and culture.

### Choose Things that Bring You Joy

If you're like most people, not everything on the holiday table will be a favorite food. However, you'll probably know in advance what items will be available. Give some thought in advance

of the big meal or party about which treats are most important for you to truly enjoy the celebration, so you don't inadvertently fill up on other foods that don't bring you the joy of your favorites.

***Constantly depriving ourselves can lead to later over-indulgence.***

### Be Mindful of Portion Size

It can also be helpful to remind yourself that you can give yourself permission to enjoy favorite foods year-round. For example, if you remember that pumpkin pie doesn't have to be just a Thanksgiving food, it might help you decide that just one slice is enough to satisfy you.

Finally, remember that eating more slowly, and chewing each bite carefully, are proven mindfulness techniques for truly savoring food while giving your body time to feel full from the food that's been consumed.

# ABC's of Special Education

## Plan Now for Extended School Year



### **EDUCATION EXPERTS KNOW LONG SCHOOL BREAKS, SUCH AS THE SUMMER BREAK, CAUSE CHILDREN TO LOSE GROUND WITH THEIR STUDIES.**

This can be particularly true for those with developmental disabilities, who are more vulnerable to “summer learning loss.” This is one of the reasons public school districts offer Extended School Year (ESY) services. However, the fact that a child has an IEP (Individualized Education Program) does not guarantee ESY eligibility and it’s important for parents to plan well in advance if they believe their children will need ESY.

### **ESY is Different from Regular School Services**

Though ESY is aimed at minimizing the loss of new and emerging skills, it is not the same as regular school. Varying according to school district, it typically comprises just 4-6 weeks. It also will likely take place at a different location, with different hours, and with a different teacher than regular school. This can require some adjustment for the child and can present transportation challenges for some parents who may need to ensure that transportation to the ESY site is specified in the IEP.

*Those with developmental disabilities are more vulnerable to “summer learning loss.”*

### **Requirements for ESY**

ESY services must be tailored to the unique needs of the student and parents are encouraged to request an IEP meeting no later than the end of the first semester of school to

discuss ESY eligibility for the coming summer. The IEP team will review the student’s progress and consider a variety of measurements to determine whether ESY services are necessary for the student to continue to progress.

*It’s important for parents to plan well in advance if they believe their children will need ESY.*

Parents can help by providing examples from past experience to show how their child has not retained skills after the end of the school year and needs the ongoing practice ESY can provide.

RCOC has an Educational Consult Resource Group that can provide parents with support and expertise regarding their educational concerns. To schedule a phone or videoconference consultation, contact your RCOC Service Coordinator.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Coordinated Family Services, cont.

to identify alternative living and/or caregiving resources to take over when current caregivers are no longer able to meet the needs of the person with disabilities.

#### Expanding the Pool of Service Providers

As of the writing of this story, there were three service providers vendored to provide CFS in Orange County: Adjoin, Beyond Achievements, and Mentors for Life. However, more are on the way and are expected to be able to fully meet the needs of our community.

Importantly, all CFS service providers are required to have the capacity to serve those with different language needs.

***All CFS service providers are required to have the capacity to serve those with different language needs.***

According to Jeff Clark, Southern California Regional Director for Adjoin, his organization's many years of experience providing supported living and independent living services, transportation, and crisis services, as well as employment, day programming and educational services gave them the background necessary to meet vendor criteria for CFS. The organization's culture is very quality-focused and Jeff's team is enthusiastic about providing a high level of support and guidance to families dealing with some of life's most important issues.

Adjoin is currently working on assessments for two individuals served by RCOC, and is also vendored to provide CFS to those served by San Diego Regional Center and Valley Mountain Regional Center. Though regulations allow service providers up to 60 days to complete their assessments, Adjoin is often able to complete the process in just a month or so.



#### Refining the Program

Because CFS is still in the pilot stage, DDS is requiring more frequent reports as well as family surveys, in addition to the standard service provider reports. These are expected to help guide the future of the service, determining whether the current processes and tools created for the program might need revision.

#### How to Access CFS

When the CFS program was initially announced, but not yet available to families, RCOC began compiling a list of individuals who expressed an interest in learning more. Those individuals have been contacted and provided details of the currently available service providers. However, if you think you or your family member could benefit from CFS, be sure to reach out to your RCOC Service Coordinator. We're here to help!



REGIONAL CENTER OF ORANGE COUNTY

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## DIALOGUE NEWSLETTER



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## Regional Center of Orange County Locations

Santa Ana Office  
1525 N. Tustin Avenue  
24-hr Phone: 714.796.5100

Cypress Office  
10803 Hope Street, Suite A  
24-hr Phone: 714.796.2900



The Naranjo family, of Anaheim.

## RCOC Hosts Backpack Giveaway

With Aveanna Healthcare and BPSOS donating backpacks, RCOC hosted a back-to-school event on July 15 for students with developmental disabilities and their families. RCOC's Comfort Connection Family Resource Center organized the event and worked with Service Coordinators to identify children we serve from low-income families. Those families were then contacted by Comfort Connection and invited to participate. Thank you Aveanna, BPSOS and all the volunteers for helping at the event!



**REGIONAL CENTER OF ORANGE COUNTY** has prepared this insert especially for the individuals and families we serve who are most comfortable communicating in Spanish. These events, programs and activities are presented in Spanish and/or are geared specifically for those in Southern California's Hispanic community. However, some are not funded or endorsed by RCOC and this information is provided as a courtesy. If you know of other opportunities you would like to share with other Spanish speakers, please contact Comfort Connection Family Resource Center Parent Service Coordinator Giulia Rodriguez at 714.558.5402 or grodriguez@rcocdd.com.

### TACA Sensitive Santa

Enjoy fun, photos with Santa and treats at this holiday event. For information, call 949.640.4401 ext. 104.

**Saturday, December 2**

10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Anaheim First Church of the Nazarene

1340 N. Candlewood Street  
in Anaheim



### Hispanic Parent Support Groups



These organizations provide parent support groups and monthly trainings, primarily for Spanish-speaking

families to connect, learn, and share their concerns and experiences. For information, contact the individual contacts below.

#### **Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders (CAND)**

Contact: Marlene Cuevas at 949.267.0442 or mcuevas3@hs.uci.edu

#### **Down Syndrome Association of OC**

Contact: Alicia Sanchez at 714.540.5794 or asanchez@dsaoc.org

### Bilingual Spanish Storytime

#### **Tustin Library**

345 E. Main Street  
in Tustin

Every Wednesday at  
10:30 a.m. through  
February 2024



#### **San Clemente Library**

(through December 14)

242 Avenida Del Mar in San Clemente

All ages on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m.

Babies ages 0-2 on Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m.  
and Thursdays at 11:15 a.m.

Toddlers ages 2-3 on Mondays at 10:15 a.m.

Preschoolers ages 3-5 on Mondays and  
Tuesdays at 11:15 a.m.

### Down Syndrome Association Breakfast with Santa

This holiday event is geared for children and adults of all ages with Down syndrome and their families. For information, contact Alicia Sanchez at 714.540.5794 or asanchez@dsaoc.org.

**Saturday, December 2**

9-11 a.m.

Garden Grove Elks Lodge

11551 Trask Avenue in Garden Grove

# What is Futures Planning?

**FOR MOST OF THOSE RCOC SERVES, FAMILY MEMBERS ARE THE MAINSTAY OF THE PERSON'S CIRCLE OF SUPPORT.** In fact, of the more than 25,000 individuals we serve, more than 21,000 reside in the family home. Over half of those we serve are adults, so it's not just children living at home.

Though a variety of residential options are available for adults with developmental disabilities, it's clear that many prefer to live with family and that many parents prefer to be their loved one's primary caregivers. Still, futures planning is important to consider because as parents become older, many are likely to become less able to meet their adult children's daily needs. RCOC considers futures planning so important that it's included in each person's IPP (Individual Program Plan).

***RCOC considers futures planning so important that it's included in each person's IPP.***

## **Why it's Important to Plan Ahead**

Reliable routines are very important to many people with developmental disabilities. So, when an elderly caregiving parent becomes incapacitated and unable to provide daily care, the disruption is much more challenging as the person with disabilities must also cope with emotional concerns for the parent's well-being.



A well-crafted futures plan takes into account situations like this one, so it's clear who will step up in the parent's absence to provide day-to-day care. Sometimes this will be a sibling or extended family member, or it could be an RCOC service provider. In addition to specifying where the person with disabilities will live and who will take over as primary caregiver, a good futures plan aims to help the person develop the skills for independence they'll need as the parent becomes less able to handle tasks such as grocery shopping, meal preparation and laundry, for example.

## **Getting Help with Futures Planning**

If you'd like to learn more about futures planning, be sure to contact your RCOC Service Coordinator any time. We're here to help!

**REGIONAL CENTER OF ORANGE COUNTY** has prepared this insert especially for the individuals and families we serve who are most comfortable communicating in the Vietnamese language. These events, programs and activities are presented in Vietnamese and/or are geared specifically for those in Southern California's Vietnamese community. However, some are not funded or endorsed by RCOC and this information is provided as a courtesy. If you know of other opportunities you would like to share with others in the Vietnamese community, please contact RCOC Cultural Specialist Kaitlynn Yen Truong at 714.558.5405 or [ktuong@rcocdd.com](mailto:ktuong@rcocdd.com).

## Winter in the Grove

The 6th Annual Winter in the Grove event will feature song and dance performances from local schools and performers, a holiday crafts boutique, visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, free refreshments, and activities for children of all ages. For more information, call 714.741.5200.



**Saturday, December 2 from 3-7 p.m.**

Village Green Park  
12732 Main Street in Garden Grove

## Westminster Holiday Events

For information on these City of Westminster events, call 714.895.2860 or email [csronline@westminster-ca.gov](mailto:csronline@westminster-ca.gov).

### Tree Lighting Ceremony

Light the tree, sing carols, restock the food pantries for the needy, and enjoy a visit by Santa Claus.

**Monday, December 4**

Civic Center Sunken Garden



### Breakfast With Santa

The \$15 cost includes breakfast, crafts, and a stocking for each child. Children must be accompanied by an adult and all family members must be pre-registered at the City's website: [www.westminster-ca.gov](http://www.westminster-ca.gov).

**Saturday, December 9 from 9-10:30 a.m.**

## Parent Support Groups for Vietnamese Families

These support groups provide a caring environment for parents of children with special needs to share and gain valuable information, advice and resources. Meetings are in Vietnamese, and provide opportunities for parents to benefit from the experience and support of professionals, and learn valuable coping and intervention strategies. For information, contact the individual support group contacts below.

### Vietnamese Parents for Disabled Children Association (VPDCA)

Contacts: Hung Gia Nguyen at 714.527.9216 or [vpdcahung@yahoo.com](mailto:vpdcahung@yahoo.com) or Tien Nguyen at [tienvpdca@gmail.com](mailto:tienvpdca@gmail.com).

### BPSOS Center for Community Advancement

Contact: Thu Tran at 714.897.2214 or [thu.tran@bpsos.org](mailto:thu.tran@bpsos.org).

### Vietnamese Parent Support Group for Children with Special Needs/Mental Health Challenges

Contact: Project Vietnam Foundation at 714.888.5800 or [info@projectvietnam.org](mailto:info@projectvietnam.org).



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