



# exceptional families

**Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.**

## **Parent Workbook and Syllabus Delivery Type 1: Supplemental Extension**

**This is an extension of a hybrid implementation of one of the Thrive Initiative core, universal parenting programs that should be delivered to an existing group.**



This material is the result of partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with Penn State University.

**CLEARINGHOUSE**  
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS



## Summary of Training

Use this summary to help you track your completion times for sessions and meeting dates, times, and location(s).

### Thrive Initiative Course Registration

Due Date	
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### Introduction Meeting *(Meeting: 20 min/Homework)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Complete the Module's Overview and Session 1
Due Date	

### Supplemental Module Meeting 1: Discussion of the Module's Overview and Session 1 *(Meeting: 60 minutes/Homework)*

Date	
Time	
Homework	Complete Sessions 2 and 3 and the Wrap-up
Due Date	

### Supplemental Module Meeting 2: Discussion of Sessions 2 and 3 and the Module's Wrap-up *(Meeting: 60 minutes)*

Date	
Time	
Homework (optional)	Visit the Thrive Initiative's website for additional parenting resources: <a href="https://thrive.psu.edu">https://thrive.psu.edu</a>

## Supplemental Module Registration

Complete these steps prior to delivery of the Supplemental Module Introduction (added to the last universal parenting program meeting).

### Access Course in Your Thrive Initiative Account

- Use this link to access the Thrive Initiative’s website: <https://thrive.psu.edu/>.
- Navigate to and select “Modules.”
- Select “Supplemental Modules” in the drop-down menu.
- Identify the module on Exceptional Families, and select the “Learn More” button.
- A new web page will open. Select the blue button that reads “Get this course.”
- A pop-up box will ask you to Login or Sign up. Since you have an existing account, select the “Login” button.
- Enter your username or email, and select the blue “Login” button.
- You will be directed to the supplemental module on Exceptional Families. Select the blue “Go to Course” button to start the online supplemental module.

**If you have any difficulty accessing the Thrive Initiative supplemental module, we would be happy to assist you!**



The Thrive Initiative Team can be emailed at [thrive@psu.edu](mailto:thrive@psu.edu).



Phone inquiries can be directed to **1.877.382.9185**.

# Introduction Meeting



**Introduction Meeting**    *20 minutes*  
**Homework**

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	





## Step 1: Attend Meeting

- Review the supplemental module welcome materials provided by your facilitator.
- At the first meeting, your facilitator will provide an overview of the program and ensure you have access to the Thrive Initiative website and supplemental module.

## Step 2: Complete Homework [For Supplemental Module Meeting 1]

Please complete the following activities in preparation for the next meeting:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** supplemental module's Introduction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Session 1: Disability and You
- \_\_\_\_\_ Download and review the materials mentioned from the Parent Toolkit resources in the supplemental module.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare to discuss the topics addressed in the Overview and Session 1 during the next meeting by answering the questions in *Step 3: Prepare Community-Building Activities/Discussion Questions*. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the discussion, note them in Step 4.

## Step 3: Prepare Community-Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Write your responses in the blue boxes on the next few pages as you prepare for the *next meeting*. During the *Supplemental Module Meeting 1* group discussion, record your notes in the magenta boxes.

As you complete the questions and activities, recognize that understanding and implementing the information we are learning will not happen immediately. You will need to use the strategies and skills you have learned throughout ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** consistently and make them part of your everyday life in order to see desired changes in your child's or your reactions or behaviors. Keep practicing what you have learned!

Each time you meet with the other program participants as a group, share and celebrate the small, short-term, positive changes you see in your interactions with your child. Also, consider what the long-term benefits may be for your family as you continue to use the skills and strategies you have learned and are learning in the ***Exceptional Families. Embracing Differences. Flourishing Together.*** module.



## Supplemental Module Introduction (Exceptional Families): Interaction and Discussion Questions

In the supplemental module's introduction, we recognized that parenting a child who has a disability can be difficult. You may feel lonely, but you are not alone. We want to share our experiences and information, so we can learn and grow together. Hopefully, you will be more confident after this course in your caregiving.

- A. What dreams or hopes do you have for your child?
- B. What do you hope to gain from this course? What are your expectations

### *Reflection:*



### *Group discussion notes:*



## Session 1: Disability and You

### Understanding Disability Interaction and Discussion Questions

Session 1 talks about what disability IS and what it IS NOT. Most children, with or without disabilities, will go through the same milestones and developmental stages—just at different speeds.

- A. What were your initial feelings when you received your child’s diagnosis? What were your first concerns as you considered what your child’s delays may be and what they may mean for your family?
- B. What are some unique pathways that your child has taken to reach developmental milestones and how have you assisted your child in accomplishing those goals?
- C. What are some feelings that you associate with raising your child? Why do you think you feel that way?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



## **Session 1: Disability and You** **The Importance of Self-Care Interaction and Discussion Questions**

Taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of your child. Consider what activities you engage in that help you feel refreshed or recharged.

A. Do you tend to put yourself last? Why do you think you do that?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## Session 1: Disability and You

### Remember: Parenting can be challenging Interaction and Discussion Questions

Parenting is challenging, and challenges may reach new heights when you are parenting a child with a disability. You may experience moments when you need to make decisions that leave you questioning everything you thought you knew about parenting.

- A. What is a difficult decision that you have had to make regarding your child's care?
- B. What did you learn from making that decision?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



## Session 1: Disability and You

### Recognize: You're not perfect, and that's okay Interaction and Discussion Questions

Nobody is perfect, and all parents make mistakes.

- A. What mistakes have you made, and how did you feel when you realized you had made a mistake?
- B. Write the Letter of Forgiveness to yourself. What did that experience feel like?
- C. What would others say your greatest strength is as a parent?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



## Session 1: Disability and You

### Relax: Take a breath! Interaction and Discussion Questions

The module provided two techniques for taking time to relax and focus and a resource that contains information on additional techniques and strategies for taking a breath.

A. Practice the Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique. How did it feel?

B. Practice the Mental Vacation technique. What did you like about this strategy?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



## Session 1: Disability and You

### Recharge: Enjoy guilt-free time away from parenting responsibilities Interaction and Discussion Questions

Think about what activities you enjoy doing.

- A. How do you find time to engage in activities you enjoy and that recharge you?  
What activities do you do to refresh or rejuvenate?
- B. What challenges prevent you from engaging in these types of activities? How  
can you overcome those barriers?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



**? Session 1: Disability and You**  
**Reconnect: Support systems are essential to healthy parenting Interaction and Discussion Questions**

Complete the Circle of Support activity.

A. Who is part of your Circle of Support?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## Session 1: Disability and You

### Relish: Celebrate everything – big achievements and small milestones Interaction and Discussion Questions

Remember, take the time to celebrate all of the accomplishments you and your child make as you navigate steps in your journey!

- A. What do you, your child, and your family like to celebrate? How do you celebrate?
- B. If you don't currently celebrate achievements and milestones, how might you consider building these accomplishments into your family routines?

#### *Reflection:*



#### *Group discussion notes:*



**Step 4: Prepare Additional Questions for Supplemental Module Meeting 1**

 Note any additional questions you may have for the group or the facilitator.

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



# Supplemental Module Meeting 1



**Discussion of Overview  
and Session 1**

*60 minutes*

**Homework**

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	





## Step 1: Attend Meeting

Return to Introduction Meeting, *Step 3: Prepare Community-Building Activities/Discussion Questions* to discuss the activities and questions on the previous pages as a group. If new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting, note them in the magenta boxes under your prior homework responses.



*To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after the Introduction Meeting.*

## Step 2: Complete Homework [For Supplemental Module Meeting 2]

Please complete the following activities in preparation for the next meeting:

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete Session 2: Disability and Your Child

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete Wrap-Up

\_\_\_\_\_ Download and review materials mentioned from the Parent Toolkit resources in the supplemental module.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare to discuss the topics addressed in Sessions 2 and 3 and the Wrap-Up during the next meeting by answering the questions in *Step 3: Prepare Community- Building Activities/Discussion Questions*. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the discussion, note them in Step 4.

## Step 3: Prepare Community-Building Activities/Discussion Questions

Write your responses in the blue boxes on the next few pages as you prepare for the *next meeting*. During the *Supplemental Module Meeting 2* group discussion, record your notes in the magenta boxes.



**? Session 2: Disability and Your Child**  
**Giving Your Child a Voice Interaction and Discussion Questions**

In Session 2, you learned that you and your child need to understand what is important TO and FOR your child.

- A. Complete the TO and FOR template with your child. What did you learn from this experience?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## **Session 2: Disability and Your Child** **Behavioral Supports Interaction and Discussion Questions**

In Session 2, you completed an activity that was based on a family scenario that took place at the grocery store.

- A. What did you learn from completing this scenario?
- B. What tools might you use to better understand what your child may be telling you when behavior challenges arise?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## Session 2: Disability and Your Child Educational Supports Interaction and Discussion Questions

In Session 2, you reviewed the Relationship Circle and completed an activity related to your child.

- A. What did you discover from completing the activity and using the Relationship Circle tool?
- B. Who are the people with whom your child interacts?
- C. Were you able to identify any casual relationships that you feel are worth exploring or any relationships that could be strengthened?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



## **Session 2: Disability and Your Child** **Social Supports Interaction and Discussion Questions**

In Session 2, you learned that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a document that describes the special services your child will receive to help your child meet his or her educational needs. The IEP acts as a contract that explicitly states the support(s) your child will receive to increase his or her school-related success.

- A. Have you created an IEP for your child? Why or why not?
- B. Has your family experienced any obstacles or successes during the process of developing and carrying out your child's IEP?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## **Session 2: Disability and Your Child** **Assistive Technologies Interaction and Discussion Questions**

Session 2 discussed using assistive technologies (AT).

- A. Do you use any type of AT for your child?
- B. What does your child use, and when does your child use it?
- C. How is that AT working for your child?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## **Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child** **Early Intervention Services Interaction and Discussion Questions**

In Session 3, you learned about Early Intervention Services (EIS) that are specifically designed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities.

- A. What successes or challenges has your family experienced when accessing EIS for your child?
- B. Did you find and use any helpful tips regarding how to access benefits? Were there any tips that were specific for a military family?
- C. Were there any available resources you found useful as you navigated specific services or benefits?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



**? Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child**  
**Home Practice with Therapeutic Activities Services Interaction and Discussion Questions**

In Session 3, you learned that when transitioning to a new location, parents may find that wait times to receive services can be long. Therefore, parents can practice a variety of therapies with their children while they are searching for service options in their new location. In fact, many physical, occupational, and speech/language therapists encourage at-home practice with therapeutic activities in order to realize gains.

- A. Do you engage in any physical, occupational, or speech/language therapies at home? If so, what therapies do you work on with your child, and how does participating in those therapies work within the constructs of your family?
- B. Did you review the resources that are available in the module for the different types of therapies? Do you think you might try to use any of the resources and which ones?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## **Session 3: Disability Services and Your Child** **Planning for the Future Interaction and Discussion Questions**

As your child gets older, you will start to think about and wonder what steps are next for your child. From learning how to choose and then engage in activities to determining transition planning to postsecondary education or employment, parents need to remember decisions should be planned WITH your child and not FOR your child.

- A. Have you begun the transition planning process in your family? If so, could you share tips on how to make this process move forward smoothly? Are you worried about transitions for your child?
- B. What challenges have you encountered in planning for your child's future?

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*



## Wrap-Up: Module Discussion Summary Questions

- A. Which topic discussed in the supplemental module was the most beneficial to you as a parent? Why?
- B. What strategies or skills did you learn about in the supplemental module that you will use to help you achieve the goals you have for your child or your family?
- C. What has changed in your interactions with your child since you began to complete the supplemental module?
- D. Have you noticed a difference in the way your child is responding to your parenting since participating in this module?

*Reflection:*



*Group discussion notes:*



## Step 4: Prepare Additional Questions for Supplemental Module Meeting 2

-  Note any additional questions you may have for the group or the facilitator.

*Reflection:*

 *Group discussion notes:*

## Supplemental Module Meeting 2



**Discussion of Sessions 2 and 3  
and Wrap-Up and Resource Sharing**

*60 minutes*

**Homework**

*None*

Date	
Time	
Link/Location	





### Step 1: Attend Meeting

Return to Supplemental Meeting 1, *Step 3: Prepare Community-Building Activities/Discussion Questions*, to discuss the activities and questions on the previous pages as a group. If new ideas are mentioned during the group meeting, note them in the magenta boxes under your prior homework responses.



*To engage in discussion, go back to the homework you completed after Supplemental Module Meeting 1.*

### Step 2: Complete Homework [optional]

Consider registering for additional Thrive Initiative universal parenting programs or supplemental modules.

- Information about the Thrive Initiative universal parenting programs can be accessed at <https://thrive.psu.edu/>.
- Supplemental modules can be accessed at <https://thrive.psu.edu/modules/supplemental/>.

Visit the Thrive Initiative website at <https://thrive.psu.edu> to access additional resources and materials.

