

MAY 2025



VOL. 5, ISSUE 5

# Best News

Blind Early Services TN - Newsletter for Caregivers and Providers



## Supporting the Whole Child & Family: May is Speech-Language-Hearing and Mental Health Awareness Month

May is both Mental Health Awareness Month and Speech-Language-Hearing Awareness Month—two areas that are deeply connected to the well-being of young children who are blind or have low vision. At Blind Early Services TN (BEST), we recognize that a child's development is more than just reaching milestones—it's about supporting the whole child, including their emotional health, communication abilities, and the environment in which they grow.

For families raising a child with vision loss, everyday

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 5 (11:00 AM - 1:00 PM)

#### Move Inclusive Dance Summer Social

*Kickoff to summer for current and prospective families with glow stick dancing and free ice cream!*

1113 Murfreesboro Road, Unit 404

Franklin, TN, 37064

June 7 (11:00 AM - 3:00 PM)

interactions can feel more complex—especially when a child also faces delays in speech or social-emotional development. Vision plays a big role in how young children communicate, connect, and explore the world, so it's no surprise that children who are blind or visually impaired may need extra support in these areas. And so do the parents and caregivers who walk alongside them.

This month, we're highlighting the importance of early intervention that considers both mental wellness and communication needs. Whether it's helping a toddler express their feelings through alternative communication strategies, or guiding a parent through the emotional journey of navigating services and diagnoses, BEST is here to provide expert, compassionate support every step of the way.

Together, we can create a foundation where children can thrive—not just in what they achieve, but in how they feel, connect, and grow.

## Summer Fun Factory at Lakeshore Learning Stores (Nashville & Memphis locations)

[Find Your Store & Get the Event Flyer](#)

June 14

### Tri My Best Triathlon & Family Festival

*An Adaptive Triathlon Race for Children (ages 5-18)  
with Disabilities and their Buddies*

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center

2800 Opryland Dr.

Nashville, TN 37214

[Learn More and Register by June 5th](#)

June 23

### Virtual Webinar: Caregiver Self-Care

from Vanderbilt's Kennedy Center's TRIAD Families  
First Program

[Find Registration under "Summer Schedule"](#)

## Supporting Your Child With Emotional Regulation Strategies



Emotional regulation develops most effectively in blind and visually impaired young children when it's intentionally taught by their caregivers. Try the strategies below to discover what works best for your child and family:

**Teach calming techniques using tactile and auditory methods:** breathing exercises, fidget toys, calming, sensory-friendly environments, and progressive muscle relaxation to name a few.

**Provide predictability whenever possible.** Structured routines help children anticipate what's coming next, reducing anxiety and increasing their sense of security.

**Use music as a guide.** Incorporate music therapy by choosing specific songs as cues for daily routines like mealtime, bath time, or bedtime.

**Create a tactile or object-based schedule.** Allow your child to engage with physical representations of their daily activities to promote understanding and independence.

**Introduce social stories.** Use descriptive, sensory-rich stories to help prepare your child for new experiences or transitions.

**Name emotions.** Label and talk about the emotions your child may be feeling to help them recognize and manage their internal states.



**ab**

**THE BEST SESSIONS**  
*where music meets mission*

**Kim Parent**  
**Jon Vezner**  
**Bernie Chiaravalle**  
**Bill Lloyd**

**June 22nd 5:00 PM @ AB Hillsboro**

Get tickets today at [givebutter.com/theBESTSessions](https://givebutter.com/theBESTSessions)

## June 22nd, Join Us for a Night of Music Benefiting BEST

Buy your tickets today for a night showcasing local singer-songwriters! All ticket proceeds go to BEST, allowing us to better serve our families!

Expect a night of wonderful folk and country music with drinks (alcoholic and nonalcoholic) available for purchase on site, as well as charcuterie plates.

Single tickets are \$20, or take advantage of one of our bundles- our Duet Deal (2 tickets) for \$35 or the Harmony Four Pack (4 tickets) for \$65.

Parking is available on the street or paid. The garage directly next to AB is recommended as the most affordable paid parking in the area.

AB Hillsboro's address is 2111 Belcourt Ave #101, Nashville, TN 37212. Hope to see you there!

Get Your Tickets Today

## Caregiver Community

At BEST, we know the importance of community, especially for caregivers of young children who are blind or have low vision. While, we, of course, count every single one of you as part of our BEST family, there's no such thing as too much connection. That's why we are highlighting the Lighthouse Guild's Tele-Support Groups for Parents this May!

### The (FREE) Lighthouse Guild Tele-Support Groups for Parents

In these groups, you can expect to connect with other parents to share resources, experiences, strength, and hope. Groups meet weekly, and are professionally moderated.

As the Lighthouse Guide highlights, whether you choose to actively participate or just listen, you are welcome and not alone.

Tele-support groups are offered for parents of children with the following eye conditions: Cortical visual impairment, Retinopathy of prematurity, Leber congenital amaurosis, Autism and blindness, Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome (English and Spanish), CHARGE syndrome, Albinism, and other rare eye conditions



Click Here to Learn  
More About Tele-  
Support Groups Today

## Inclusive Camp Options in Middle TN



From *MOVE: Inclusive Dance*

Parent + Child Summer Series for June and July: