

CITY OF CORAL GABLES ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS
 CORAL GABLES HUMAN RESOURCES & RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
 254 Minorca Avenue, Suite 214
 Coral Gables, FL 33134
 WEDNESDAY, September 3, 2025

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	APPOINTED BY:
	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	
Jennifer Ward Sando	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	EA	P				Mayor Vince Lago
Justine Chichester	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P				Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Wilfredo Jauregui	-	-	-	-	-	P	E	P	Z				Commissioner Richard Lara
Bonnie Blaire	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P				Commissioner Melissa Castro
Vanessa Bedoya	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P				Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Eddy Martinez	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	Z				Ex-Officio Member Chamber of Commerce

P – Present
E – Excused Absence
A – Absent
(-) – No Appointment
(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Raquel Elejabarrieta – Human Resources & Risk Management
 Eglys Hernandez – Human Resources & Risk Management
 Yanessa Rodriguez – Community Recreation – Administrative Operations Manager
 Catie Hastings – Community Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator

CITIZEN ADVISORS: Dr. Jennifer Durocher

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 10:02am

MEETING ABSENCE: None

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

August 6, 2025

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

SECRETARY’S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS’ REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Explore Partnership SFACS Expansion – Contractual Agreements Community Agencies – Director Elejabarrieta (Information provided by Mr. Sam Joseph – SCRC) (Exhibit 1)

Director Elejabarrieta shared information provided by Mr. Sam Joseph of SCRC about what they are doing through Miami Dade County Public Schools regarding their request for authorization to enter into agreement with six community agencies to operate programs for children with disabilities. Director Elejabarrieta stated it seems this is something they do every year, and they sent this information to let this board know, review, support, or not support.

Director Elejabarrieta stated another of the SCRC issues was a directive to explore strategic partnerships with South Florida Autism Charter School for facility expansion at the former Country Club middle school site located in Hialeah. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated the SCRC board had not had the opportunity to further discuss this matter, because SCRC’s main concern is the Compact Agreement and there has not been enough time to further discuss this issue.

Compact Revision Section 1 and Section 8 (Exhibit 2). – Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike

Ms. Palacio-Pike provided information on the Compact Agreement. The board went through the document and made revisions to it.

A motion was made regarding the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs to accept the revisions:

To accept and recommend these provisions of the School Community Relations Committee Compact Section 1 and 8 as revised

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

Ms. Palacio-Pike stated these revisions will be presented at the next SCRS meeting so that they can be further discussed.

OLD BUSINESS:

October – National Disability Awareness Month – Presenter / Recipient – Ms. Chichester

Ms. Chichester asked Ms. Dietz to provide suggestions regarding possible receipt of the proclamation. Ms. Dietz stated perhaps it would be great to showcase Ms. Hastings programing by having the person who has attended the most receive it. Ms. Hastings stated this would be an idea which requires a bit more research and time to come up with the best way to proceed. Ms. Blaire stated it is a great idea, however, it would be best to check with the families and perhaps to have a back-up in case needed.

Director Elejabarrieta stated there are two commission meetings in October, one on the 14th and the other on 28th. Director Elejabarrieta stated Ms. Hastings and her will further discuss. Ms. Blaire suggested as to Ms. Hastings and Recreation department may be the recipients. Director Elejabarrieta stated they have been the recipient in the past. Director Elejabarrieta stated perhaps the board should consider ex-officio board member, Mr. Eddy Martinez’s program “Summer of Success” as the recipient for this October’s proclamation. Ms. Blaire stated perhaps it would be best to have Mr. Martinez as the recipient and that will allow for more time to work regarding the previous recommendation. Director Elejabarrieta stated it sounds like a great idea and will provide Ms. Hastings with a better time frame to review and put something together with her group.

Motion to have Mr. Eddy Martinez, Summer of Success, as recipient for October Disability Awareness Month & suggestion to have participants of My Squad to prepare to be recipient of the April Awareness Proclamation

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously

Ms. Chichester stated she would like the board to keep in mind conversations which have taken place in the past, regarding best ways to proceed with prompting the city's available programming for individuals with disabilities.

Community Recreation – Ms. Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings provided information regarding the various events and activities coming up for the next months. Ms. Hastings advised My Squad has had up to thirty participants. Ms. Hastings advised lighting would be improved at the My Squad location. Ms. Hastings shared pictures from Mud Day Event with board.

Ms. Palacio-Pike shared with board tool provided by Dr. Laura Olivos (**Exhibit 3**) which can be used by first responders when aiding individuals with disabilities. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she would be sharing it with the Coral Gables Police Department.

Mr. Jauregui stated he would like to include as a topic to discuss at the next board meeting the delivery services robots currently around town.

Mr. Martinez stated he would like to include for discussion at next board's meeting regarding input from the board for the Coral Gables Monopoly Game.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

NEXT MEETING: October 1, 2025

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 11:09am

Motion by: Vanessa Bedoya / 2nd: Jennifer Ward Sando / Approved unanimously

EXHIBIT 1

**Contractual Agreement Community Agencies
Director Elejabarrieta**

Ms. Lourdes Diaz, Chief Academic Officer
Office of Academics and Transformation

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTUAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS WITH SIX COMMUNITY AGENCIES TO OPERATE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,726,245 EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026, CONTINGENT UPON APPROVAL OF THE 2025-2026 DISTRICT BUDGET

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION AND TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Authorization is requested for the Superintendent to enter into contractual agreements with six community agencies to provide extensive educational and/or therapeutic services to a unique population of children with disabilities which includes cocaine-exposed, Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder as well as visual and hearing impairments.

Each agency will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the programs, facilities, staff assistance with the identification and placement of children, staff development training, and administrative support. In support of these services, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will provide assistance with the identification and placement of eligible children and monitoring to ensure compliance with applicable laws and rules.

During the 2024-2025 school year, facility reviews and monitoring of children's records and program delivery models by District staff found the programs to be effective in providing early intervention services and to comply with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements.

An exception to School Board Policy 6320 regarding bids or Request for Proposals should be granted as these six community agencies are providing educational and related services to support students with significant disabilities.

C-3

Funding for each agency is based on program delivery models as outlined below:

Agency	# of Students	Funding Amount
Association for Retarded Citizens of South Florida, Inc. dba The ARC of South Florida	A maximum of 134 B-2 children	In an amount not to exceed \$1,514,531
Easter Seals South Florida, Inc.	A maximum of 84 B-2 children	In an amount not to exceed \$965,893
Miami Lighthouse Academy, LLC.	A maximum of 12 B-2 children A maximum of 22 PK-ESE children A maximum of 30 Kindergarten, 1 st – 3 rd grade children	In an amount not to exceed \$134,093 In an amount not to exceed \$301,957 In an amount not to exceed \$410,149
University of Miami Debbie Institute	A maximum of 72 B-2 children A maximum of 35 PK-2 nd grade children	In an amount not to exceed \$823,153 In an amount not to exceed \$580,203
University of Miami, Linda Ray Intervention Center/Department of Psychology	A maximum of 45 B-2 children	In an amount not to exceed \$484,421
United Cerebral Palsy Association of Miami, Inc., dba United Community Options, Inc.	A maximum of 45 B-2 children	In an amount not to exceed \$511,845

Funding for these services will come from 80% of the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) generated from the Florida Education Finance Program based on the level of services needed for each child listed in the Individualized Family Support Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The remaining 20% of the FTE will cover ancillary services/costs.

The appropriation for this item for Birth-to-Two (B-2) and prekindergarten programs for children with disabilities will be included in the General Fund of the 2025-2026 Tentative Budget under Fund 100000, Funds Center 1901300, Program 68400000, Function 521700, and Commitment 531000 to be recommended for adoption in August 2025, contingent upon approval of the 2025-2026 District Budget.

The appropriation for this item for the PK-12 program for students with disabilities will be included in the General Fund of the 2025-2026 Tentative Budget under Fund 100000, Funds Center 1973100, Program 68400000, Function 521700, and Commitment 531000 to be recommended for adoption in August 2025, contingent upon approval of the 2025-2026 District Budget.

RECOMMENDED: That the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida authorize the Superintendent to:

1. Enter into contractual agreements with six community agencies to operate programs for children with disabilities in an amount not to exceed \$5,726,245 effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, contingent upon approval of the 2025-2026 District Budget, as follows:
 - Association for Retarded Citizens of South Florida, Inc., dba The ARC of South Florida in an amount not to exceed \$1,514,531.
 - Easter Seals South Florida, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$965,893.
 - Miami Lighthouse Academy, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$846,199 (B-2 contract in an amount not to exceed \$134,093; PK-ESE in an amount not to exceed \$301,957 and Kindergarten through 3rd grade in an amount not to exceed \$410,149).
 - University of Miami Debbie Institute, in an amount not to exceed \$1,403,356 (B-2 contract in an amount not to exceed \$823,153 and PK-2nd grade contract in an amount not to exceed \$580,203).
 - University of Miami, Linda Ray Intervention Center/ Department of Psychology, in an amount not to exceed \$484,421.
 - United Cerebral Palsy Association of Miami, Inc., dba United Community Options, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$511,845; and
2. Utilize an exception stated within School Board Policy 6320, based on the provision of educational and health-related services to support students with significant disabilities.

The appropriations for this item will be included in the General Fund of the 2025-2026 Tentative Budget to be recommended for adoption in August 2025, contingent upon approval of the 2025-2026 District Budget.

Authorization is also granted to the Superintendent to make adjustments to contracted amounts based on any State changes to the Base Student Allocation.

Mr. Roberto J. Alonso, Board Member

SUBJECT: DIRECTIVE TO EXPLORE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH FLORIDA AUTISM CHARTER SCHOOL FOR FACILITY EXPANSION AT THE FORMER COUNTRY CLUB MIDDLE SCHOOL SITE

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Schools dedicated to serving students with autism, such as South Florida Autism Charter School (SFACS), a high-performing charter school under the management of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, play a critical role in serving students with autism across our community. In fact, during the most recent legislative session, the State of Florida appropriated dedicated funding to support SFACS's expansion efforts to better meet growing demand for specialized services. At the same time, Country Club Middle School, located in the heart of our district, was recently repurposed as a District office due to declining enrollment, yet there are several students with autism who can be served in that area.

The availability of the County Club Middle School facility presents a strategic opportunity to support a vulnerable and growing student population with specialized needs; maximize use of existing district assets; strengthen the district's ongoing relationship with organizations that serve these students; and generate new, recurring revenue for the district. The facility can be repurposed in a different way that brings value to the community, aligns with our strategic priorities, and ensures continued use of district assets.

This item therefore is presented for the Board's consideration to direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of establishing a District school dedicated to serving students with autism at the County Club Middle School facility; if deemed appropriate, partner with entities who already provide these services, such as SFACS, in establishing this school, and analyze the feasibility of this potential partnership, including potential enrollment, programming needs, space utilization, and necessary facility upgrades, and leveraging the recent state funding; if the new use of the facility is deemed feasible, evaluate the financial implications for the District of establishing such a school, including potential revenue through leasing and management fees; and present findings and recommendations to the Board at the October 2025 Facilities and Construction Committee Meeting.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. ROBERTO J. ALONSO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. Explore the feasibility of establishing a District school dedicated to serving students with autism at the County Club Middle School facility;
2. If deemed appropriate, partner with entities who already provide these services, such as SFACS, in establishing this school, and analyze the feasibility of this potential partnership with SFACS, including potential enrollment, programming needs, space utilization, and necessary facility upgrades, and leveraging the recent state funding;
3. If the new use of the facility is deemed feasible and appropriate, evaluate the financial implications for the District of establishing such a school, including potential revenue through leasing and management fees; and
4. Present findings and recommendations to the Board at the October 2025 Facilities and Construction Committee Meeting;

EXHIBIT 2

Compact Revision Section 1 and Section 8

Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike SCRC



Coral Gables' School Community Relations Committee Education Compact Revision

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 2006, the Education Compact between the City of Coral Gables and Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) has been a collaborative tool aimed at fostering a high-quality educational environment for the community's students. However, as the needs of students, teachers, and schools evolve, it is essential that this compact be updated to address emerging challenges and opportunities. By renewing and enhancing this partnership, both the City and MDCPS can ensure that Coral Gables remains a leading example of educational excellence, offering its students the resources and support they need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

This updated Education Compact focuses on several key areas, including ensuring continued educational excellence across all schools, improving faculty and staff recruitment and retention to maintain a skilled and committed workforce, and enriching classrooms and programs to provide dynamic, engaging learning experiences. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of promoting healthy kids through comprehensive wellness initiatives, enhancing the visibility and reputation of local schools, improving mobility options for students, and ensuring the safety of students and staff. By working together to update and strengthen these focus areas, the City and MDCPS will create an educational ecosystem that supports every child's success, both inside and outside the classroom.

II. PROGRAMS & EFFORTS

1. EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Support Coral Gables schools' efforts to obtain and maintain A school grades.
- [The City will](#) Support schools who wish to obtain and maintain certifications like Florida Green Certified, Magnet Schools of America, Parent Teacher Association School of Excellence, International Baccalaureate, STEAM designations, etc. [Advance Placement- \(AIC\). Academic International Certificate of Education and other Highs School Acceleration Programs.](#)

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2. FACULTY & STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Encourage collaboration with the University of Miami and local universities [and local colleges](#) to recruit their graduates to work in Coral Gables' schools, support local

internship programs and training opportunities, and service-learning opportunities for current undergraduate and graduate students.

- Provide citywide incentives to school employees like parking discounts, free admission to cultural events, and gift cards and discounts to local businesses.
- [The City](#) Continue to foster relationships with principals, other [compact](#) school administrators, and staff.
- [The City would](#) [P](#)prioritize school staff for any workforce housing made available in the City. [The City will provide professional Development services.](#)

3. CLASSROOM AND PROGRAM ENRICHMENT

- Collaborate with local arts and cultural institutions like the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, Coral Gables Museum, Sanctuary of the Arts, GableStage, Actor's Playhouse at Miracle Theater, Coral Gables' Arts Cinema and other community groups to increase students' exposure to arts programming.
- Support art enrichment during school hours and provide funding to art programs for early youths.
- Establish a fund to award mini grants and stipends to properly vetted school and teacher initiatives.
- Support and expand opportunities to increase student exposure to STEAM and STEM learning.

4. HEALTHY KIDS

- Continue to foster the City and MDCPS' relationship through joint use agreements of the City's parks and MDCPS' campuses (e.g. community meetings, specialized athletic activities, and cultural and historic events).
- Support and promote efforts by MDCPS and its Sustainability Officer to fulfill multiple School Board resolutions (e.g. energy upgrades, reductions in food waste, the promotion of composting and school gardens, and the replacement of plastic silverware with biodegradable utensils).
- Support and promote efforts by MDCPS to fulfill School Board resolutions related to students' mental health.
- Explore federal and state grant opportunities, including those made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as funding from private institutions like the Foundation for New Education Initiatives' Green Fund to modernize facilities that create a healthier, more sustainable future for students.
- Ensure nursing staff are present at all schools.

5. PROMOTING SCHOOLS

- Provide spaces for schools to promote themselves at City events like the Farmers Market, Christmas Tree Lighting, Family Literacy Festival, etc.
- Hold City Commission meetings on school campuses. (SEE BELOW ALTERNATIVE)
- Create a Mayor's Roundtable, or Educational Town Halls, to host quarterly meetings on educational issues with various partners and MDCPS/School staff. One goal of the regular briefings will be to improve coordination and gather input for the City's legislative agenda in Tallahassee, the Florida League of Cities and other inter-governmental forums.
- Create an education corner in the citywide newsletter and create a marketing brochure for distribution by the City, Chamber, and Coral Gables Community Foundation containing the educational offerings and opportunities at public schools.
- Continue supporting a Realtors Breakfast by the Chamber of Commerce that provides updated information on schools and explore the feasibility of "realtor tours" of individual schools
- Support the creation of an information kiosk at the City's Youth Center to inform parents and community members about the City's schools and the City's resources.
- Enhance connections to the more than 20 foreign consulates located in Coral Gables to provide mentoring, internships, cultural events and other partnering opportunities for schools and students.

6. MOBILITY

- Provide bus coverage for all students who attend Gables' schools;
- Support efforts to reduce carbon emissions from school transportation by bringing newly purchased electric buses to Coral Gables and exploring other or Foundation for New Education Initiatives (FNEI)
- Promote biking and walking to school.

7. SAFETY

- Enhance pedestrian safety within schools' vicinity; provide additional security support at school pick-up and drop off and potentially during the school day.
- Prioritize student and staff safety when the City makes road and sidewalk improvements near schools.

What is UDL

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that aims to make learning accessible to all students by proactively designing lessons and assessments with diverse learners in mind. It focuses on providing multiple means of representation, action & expression, and engagement, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach.

Here's a breakdown of the key components:

1. Three Core Principles of UDL:

- **Multiple Means of Representation:**

Presenting information in various formats (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) to cater to different learning preferences and needs.

- **Multiple Means of Action & Expression:**

Allowing students to demonstrate their understanding in different ways (written, oral, visual, etc.).

- **Multiple Means of Engagement:**

Motivating learners through varied activities, choice, and relevant content that sparks their interests.

2. Benefits of UDL:

- **Increased Inclusivity:**

UDL helps create a more welcoming and accessible learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities.

- **Improved Student Outcomes:**

By providing multiple pathways to learning, UDL can enhance student engagement, motivation, and ultimately, their academic success.

- **Enhanced Learning Skills:**

UDL fosters flexible learning, enabling students to adapt to different learning styles and contexts.

- **Proactive Approach:**

UDL is not a reactive strategy for addressing learning difficulties; it's a framework for designing learning experiences that are inherently inclusive.

3. Examples of UDL in Practice:

- **Providing audio and visual options for learning materials .**

- **Allowing students to choose between writing an essay or creating a video presentation .**
- **Using gamification and interactive activities to engage students .**
- **Offering flexible seating options in the classroom .**
- **Utilizing technology to support diverse learners .**

By embracing the principles of UDL, educators can create more effective and equitable learning experiences for all students.

EXHIBIT 3

Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike



Police



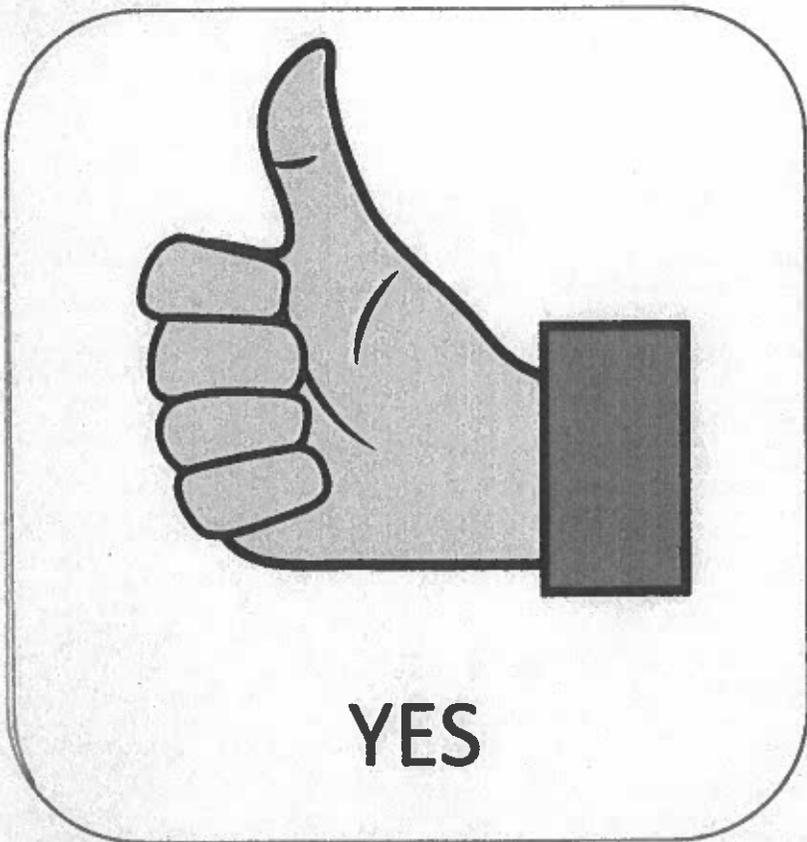
Handcuffs



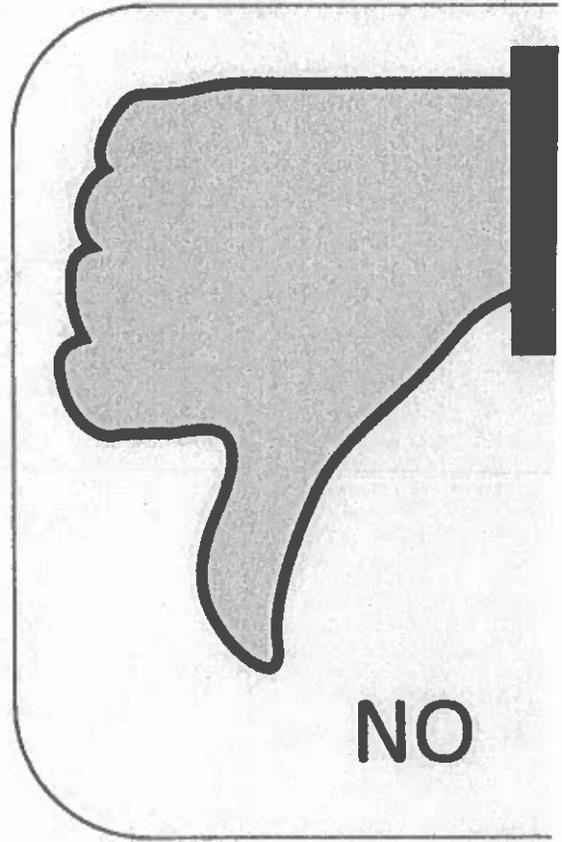
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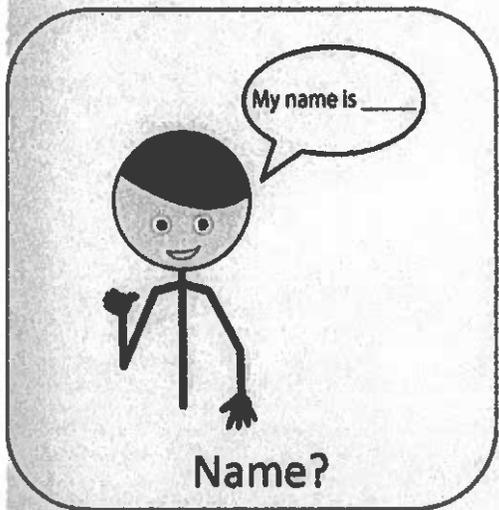
No Jail



YES



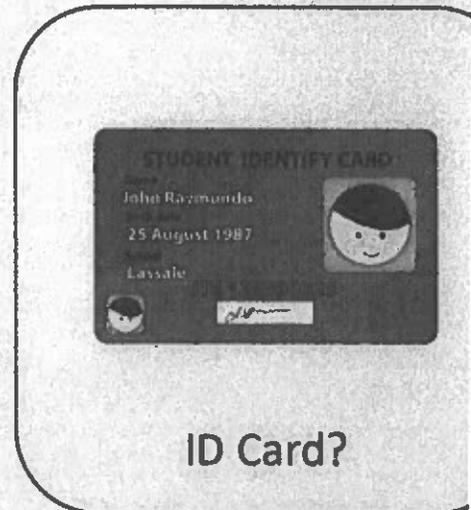
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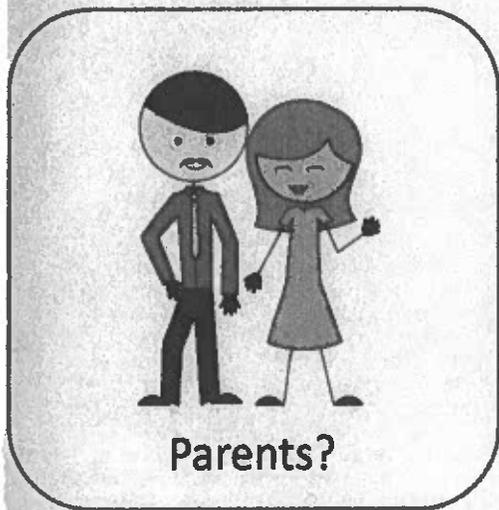
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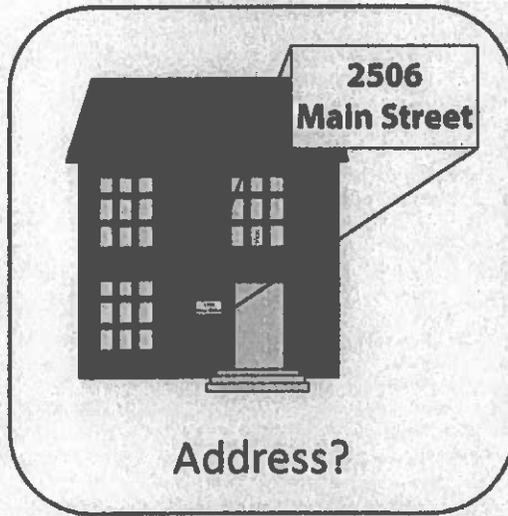
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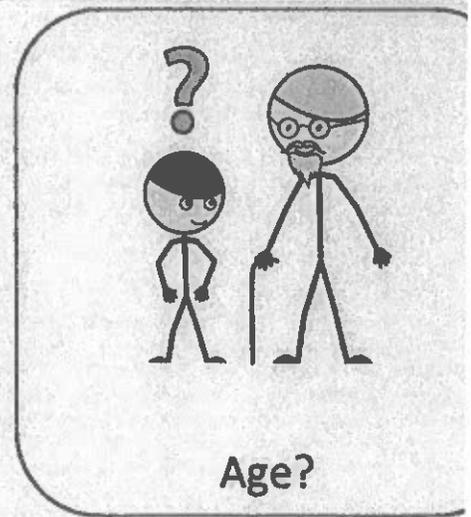
ID Card?



Parents?

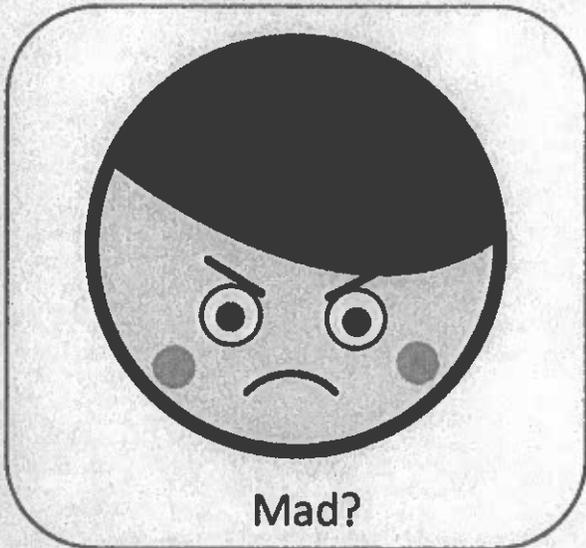
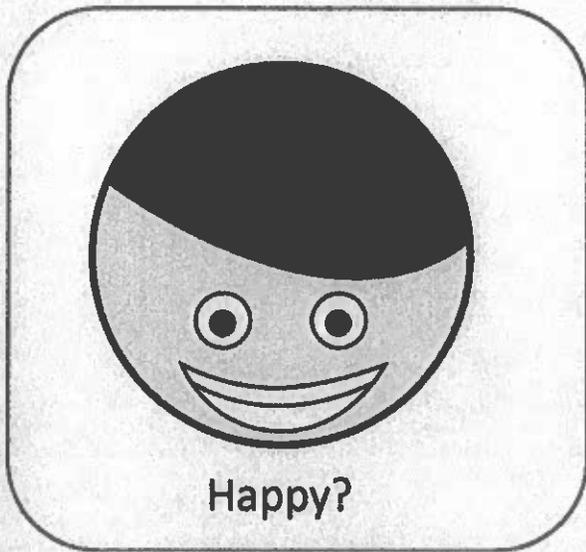


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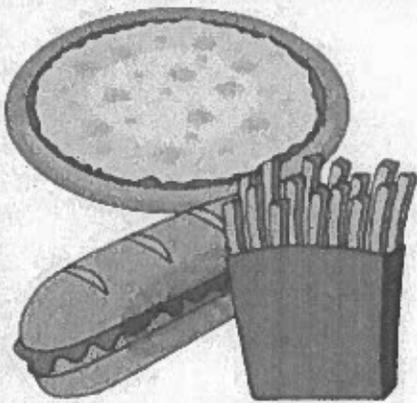


Age?

How do you feel?



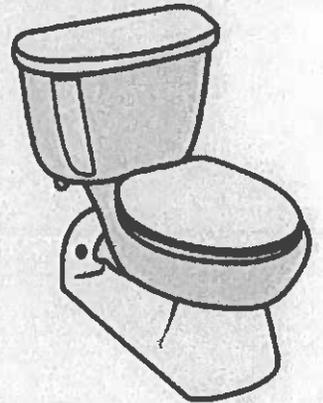
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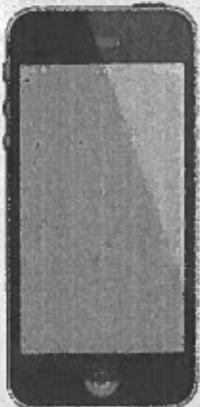
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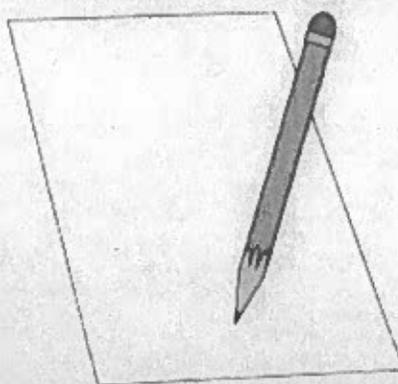
Bathroom



Phone

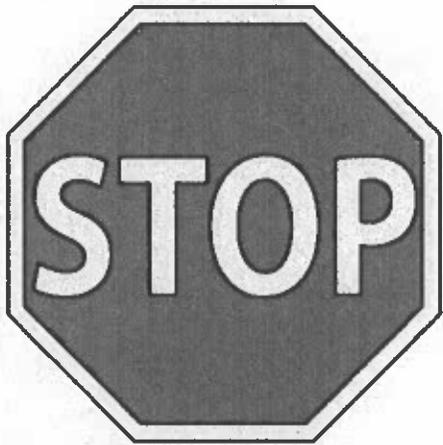


Write



Break

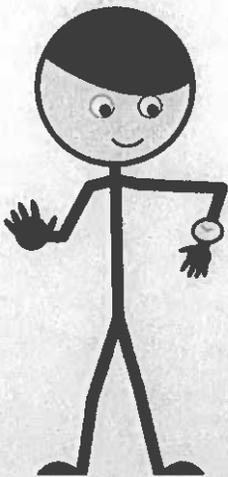




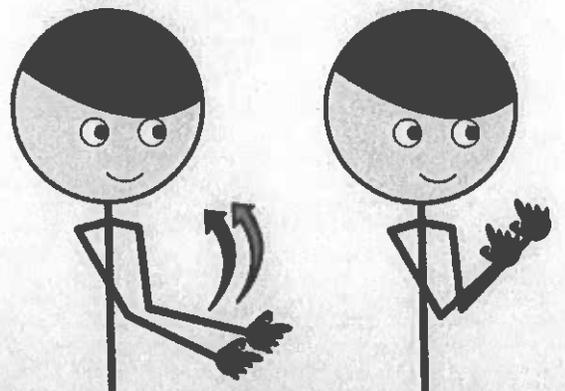
STOP



SIT



WAIT



COME

I am here to help.

You are safe.

I know you want _____, I will help you _____.

Yes. First _____ then _____

Now _____ later _____

Police



Help



It's okay

