Effective Family Involvement in Transition
“Plan for the future because that is where you are going to spend the rest of your life.”

Mark Twain, Author
Family Involvement

- Family Engagement
- Importance
- Benefits
- Barriers
- Strategies
Learning Topics to be Covered

• What is family involvement?
• Why is it important?
• What are the benefits?
• What do we know?
• What are the barriers?
• Are we involving all families and considering cultural diversity?
• Current collaboration strategies
• Resources
What is Family Involvement?
Family Engagement is any way that a child’s adult caregivers (parents, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) effectively supports learning and healthy development.
Benefits

• Parent and family involvement is a predictor of postsecondary success

• Most accurate predictor of a student’s school achievement is the extent to which a family encourages learning
Sarah Vasquez Speaks
What is the common theme?

Thoughts?
NLTS Report on Family Involvement

Transition-age youth whose families are more involved in their schools are more likely to have had regular paid jobs while in school
Very few parents (11.5%) are highly involved in transition planning training
Tapping the Powers of Families

Families are often the first, most knowledgeable, and most consistent “case manager” youth with disabilities have.

InfoBrief NCWD Issue 27 April 2011
Benefits of Engaging Families

- Parent and family involvement is a predictor of postsecondary success
- The most accurate predictor of a student’s school achievement is the extent to which a family encourages learning

Family Involvement & Supports

All youth need parents, families and other caring adults who:

• Have high expectations which build upon the young person’s strengths, interests, and needs and fosters their ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency;

• Are involved in their lives and assisting them toward adulthood;
Family Involvement & Supports continued......

- Have access to information about employment, further education, and community resources;
- Take an active role in transition planning with schools and community partners; and
- Have access to medical, professional, and peer support networks.
Rachel Speaks About Parents
Importance of Parents

I can DO IT!!

Strengthen belief in self

Create learning environments

High Expectations

Reaching Dreams
View Families as Assets

• Families are valuable members of the team having the most fundamental information about their youth with disabilities

• Families motivate and encourage their children to become self-advocates and directors of their own futures
View Families as Assets (continued)...

• They tap into their own personal and professional networks, expanding the opportunities for learning and employment.

• Until the youth with disabilities learns how to take the lead, families are THE experts on their youth with disabilities. Their active involvement can make the difference between success and failure.
Parents Role

- Collaborate in the IEP process
- Instructors in youth’s emergent independence
- Decision makers and evaluators
- System change agents
- Peer mentors

Pleet and Wandry 2009
Meet Randy
ACTIVITY??????
Families in Transition Planning

• Help professionals learn about youth’s strengths and needs
• Assist in exploring interests related to living and work
Families in Transition Planning (continued)...

• Ask questions, be part of discussions, help develop postsecondary goals

• Help youth complete transition related activities
Families in Transition Planning (continued)...

- Learn about what questions to ask when looking at postsecondary agencies and services.
- Parents can assist by engaging their own networks for experience opportunities, job leads and other supports.
Families in Transition Planning (continued)...

- Build work skills at home
- Help youth interact appropriately with others and learn the importance of maintaining appropriate personal appearance for work
- Play a role in career exploration
- Support work in the workplace
8 Top Transition Issues for Families

- Strategies to help parents promote self determination of youths
- Internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities
- Promising practices that prepare youths with disabilities for employment
- Supported or customized for youths with significant disabilities
8 Top Transition Issues for Families (continued)...

- Information and training materials on ADA that could be used with youths, not just their parents
- Family-friendly information about VR services
- Postsecondary education options
- Examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, VR, human services and other systems
NCWD Guideposts for Success

- Schooling
- Career Preparation
- Family Involvement
- Connecting Activities

www.ncwd-youth.info
How do we practice Cultural Competence in our work with families?

• Provide training to staff on cultural competence
• Learn how to identify and use interpreter services
• Involve good language translators and cultural interpreters
Cultural Competence

- Provide and share information in native language when possible
- Consider poverty and how it impacts families
- Look for cultural attitudes that might help or hinder a family’s willingness or ability to work in partnership with case managers and counselors
How do we practice cultural competence in our work with families?

- Provide training to staff on cultural competence
- Learn how to identify and use interpreter services
- Involve good language translators and cultural interpreters
- Provide and share information in native language when possible (IPE cited in Rehab Act)
- Look for cultural attitudes that might help or hinder a family’s willingness or ability to work in partnership with counselors
Let’s Talk

• What challenges do you have engaging families?

• What practices hinder families from participating in transition planning?
Barriers to Families Engagement

• Lack of understanding of transition process and don’t feel prepared
• Families may be exhausted from the daily needs of taking care of a child with a disability
• Meetings held at an inconvenient time for families
• Families may have had negative experiences in the past and are reluctant
• Other barriers (real or perceived)
• Different values and beliefs
# Parent Transition Information Needs Survey

This survey is designed to be completed by parents in preparation for transition discussions at IEP and agency meetings. Practitioners may want to review the completed survey prior to the meeting so that they can prepare for discussion of needed information.

### I would like to learn more about...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would like to learn more about...</th>
<th>This is a priority!</th>
<th>I would like more information now</th>
<th>Maybe later</th>
<th>No information needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my rights (the procedural safeguards) in the IEP process.</td>
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<td>2. my adolescent’s disability, specifically how it affects his/her learning and what accommodations and/or technology might be appropriate in different placement options.</td>
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<td>3. how I can support my adolescent as he/she develops IEP or ITP goals and takes ownership of his/her educational and future success.</td>
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<td>4. high school graduation requirements and the choices my adolescent will have within this high school program.</td>
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<td>5. Age of Majority guidelines that will give my adolescent legal rights in this state and what they will mean for us.</td>
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<td>6. vocational rehabilitation and other adult service systems that my adolescent may be eligible for after high school.</td>
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<td>7. laws that protect civil rights for adults with disabilities (i.e., Americans with Disability Act and Rehabilitation Act).</td>
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<td>8. disability support services that are available in postsecondary institutions and how they are different from high school.</td>
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<td>9. parent support groups and mentors (also parents of youth with disabilities) who will listen to my concerns and provide me information and support.</td>
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<td>10. opportunities for me to provide feedback to the school and system about what they are doing right as well as areas for improvement.</td>
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<td>11. opportunities for me to become a mentor to other parents just beginning the transition process.</td>
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<td>12. opportunities for me to become a leader in school improvement or systems change, using what I have learned as a parent.</td>
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</table>
What are some practices to promote family engagement?
Engagement Practices

• Collaborate with families to identify how professionals and the family can support the student in achieving their desired post-school goals

• Provide flexible times for meeting with families

• Help families recognize the importance of having high expectations for their child
Engagement Practices (continued)...

• Provide staff training on culturally competent transition planning (recognizing and honoring differences such as ethnic, socioeconomic and values of the family)

• Consider developing materials in languages accessible to the community

CEC’s DCDT Fast Facts: Parental Involvement
How do you engage families?

• What strategies do we use to actively solicit feedback, ideas, comments, and concerns from families and students?

• How do we communicate with families?

• What information and skills do parents need to be full partners in transition?
Students with Disabilities Tell us.......

- Described themes that emerged from focus groups (i.e., creation of a vision for the future, family and student involvement in the transition planning process, and family involvement in facilitating self-determination)

- Discussed issues surrounding student views of family involvement (i.e., family role in creating a future vision, family involvement in the planning process, and family involvement in facilitating self-determination)

Meet John Newman
John’s Message

High Expectations

Hopes and Dreams

Discovery
What excites youth?

Interests

Strengths
The Family as a Critical Partner in the Achievement of Successful Employment Outcome (the 26th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues)
Introducing VR services
How can we help parents?

• Connect with VFN who serves families in your community

• Share information about VFN events and activities with families
How can we help parents? (continued)...

- Share VFN publications with families
- Access VFN training for your staff
- Partner with the VFN to improve the systems serving children with disabilities
Topics Covered

• What is family engagement?
• Why is it important?
• What are the benefits?
• What do we know?
• What are the barriers?
Topics Covered (continued)...

- Are we engaging all families and considering cultural diversity?
- Current collaboration strategies
- Resources in Transition Toolkit
How Can We Help You?

Call Vermont Family Network:
1-800-800-4005 or (802) 876-5315

http://www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org