

Making the most of your time at the NTACT State Capacity Building Institute: Tips for parent centers and families

Parent centers and families play a critical role at the Capacity Building Institute (CBI) and we want your time at the Institute to be productive and meaningful. We have put together some information and tips that we hope will be beneficial in making the most of your time at the NTACT CBI.

The purpose of the CBI is to allow interdisciplinary state teams (e.g., state education agency, state vocation rehabilitation agency, parent centers, state departments of disability or mental health or juvenile justice, university personnel, employers, local educators and service providers, youth and families) to:

1. Gain content knowledge for enhancing effective secondary programs through knowledge and application of strategies of evidence-based practices.
2. Increase knowledge and application of strategies for data collection across agencies (e.g., education, vocational rehabilitation),
3. Participate in a continuous improvement model to build capacity of the state system to prepare students for success in college and careers, and
4. Gain knowledge and content from (a) state team colleagues, (b) national technical assistance and dissemination centers, (c) and experts in the field of secondary transition.

Institute Format:

The CBI is an exciting three-day Institute where attendees get an opportunity to hear a national keynote speaker, participant in state planning time, and attend content sessions relevant to secondary transition.

- *State planning time:* State leaders in secondary transition from special education, vocational rehabilitation, and other interested stakeholders participate in interdisciplinary state teams to develop plans to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities in their respective states. The teams range in size, but generally are comprised of 4 – 10 people. All states have a facilitator that assists their team in the planning process. Teams meet during designated times throughout the three-day conference. Not all states bring a team to the CBI.
- *Content sessions:* Participants at the conference have an opportunity to attend a variety of sessions on topical areas related to secondary transition to support the work they do during the state planning times. Individuals can choose which content sessions they want to attend once they arrive at the CBI. Many times, the state teams divide and conquer to make the most of their time at the CBI and to ensure they are able to access most content presented at the CBI. Team members will select the content sessions most relevant to their area of interest to attend and then report back to the team related to content during team planning time.

How to become a Member of your State Planning Team?

If you are not already part of your state planning team and would like to get involved here are some tips for what to do either before the CBI or during the CBI.

During the CBI:

- Refer to the CBI program to Identify where your state’s team will be meeting during planning sessions.
- Ask a NTACT staff to introduce you to the state team.

Contributing to the State Planning Process at the CBI:

Parent centers and families play an important role at the Capacity Building Institute (CBI) and in state planning for secondary transition. Given the importance of the role parents/families play in the lives of their children and the complex nature of schools and transition planning, it is important for state capacity building teams to understand how parents can be involved, what skills and knowledge parents need to effectively support their students, and strategies high schools can use to increase parent involvement for youth with disabilities.

In Preparation for Team Planning: Sometimes, it is nice to know what you are stepping into. If you would like some background knowledge about secondary transition efforts in your state, you may consider previewing information related to a state’s performance plan and annual performance report (SPP/APR) or other state agency plans (e.g., unified plan).

SPP/APR: Since 2004, U.S. states have collected information from students and former students with disabilities regarding graduation, drop-out, secondary transition components of the IEP, and about students’ employment and further education activities in the first year after leaving high school. Although a youth’s personal information is kept confidential, states compile the APR summarizing the results of these data collection efforts and submit to the U.S. Department of Education. This plan is posted and can be viewed on your State’s special education department website. We recommend you review Indicators 1, 2, 13 & 14 from your states APR and ask the following question:

- How is this data used to strengthen accountability, decision making, and program improvement systems as it relates to improving postsecondary outcomes for special education students?

If you can’t find answers to these questions in the APR/SPP, or have more questions, ask your State Transition Specialist/Coordinator for clarification

Unified State or Combine State Plan: Vocational Rehabilitation is required to submit a Unified State or Combined State Plan with six other “core” programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. States have to submit this plan to their

Visit GRADS 360 to see your state’s profile:

<https://osep.grads360.org/#program/idea-part-b-profiles>

Here you will find:

- The most recent SPP/APR
- OSEP’s response and required actions
- State Data Profile
- Current Determination Letter
- State Result’s Driven Accountability Matrix

perspective federal agencies. For 2016, states are just completing this process. For more information on your particular state plan visit your states vocational rehabilitation website.

During the CBI: Remember your role is to assist the interdisciplinary team in examining and using the graduation, dropout, and post-school outcomes data in order for program improvement. One way to become an active member is to **ask questions** of the team. Questions to consider asking include:



- What patterns can be seen in the State and district graduation, dropout, and PSO data when you look at the categories of disability type, gender, method of exit, and race/ethnicity?
- Is there a region or geographic area in the State where youth are graduating, dropping out or engaged at higher rates? What do you think contributes to the higher rates in

this area?

- How does your district's data compare to other districts? What district policies and/or procedures may be contributing to the graduation, dropout, and engagement outcomes for youth with disabilities?
- What actions could the state take to improve graduation and engagement rates?

In addition to asking questions, you should **contribute ideas**. How can you support a states' capacity building related to improved student outcomes? Below are a few ideas for what you could contribute.

- Provide recommendations for how to acquire the support of parents/families in the transition efforts.
- Suggest ideas for improving collaborative efforts among schools and community agencies.
- Share information related to effective interventions that have led to positive outcomes for your child or others you know.
- Discuss how family values and culture influence transition planning and supports and how schools can support families in preserving these important attributes while promoting student success.

After you leave the CBI: It is important that your involvement in Secondary Transition efforts does not stop after the CBI has ended. You will want to continue to collaborate with members

of the state team asking questions and sharing possible solutions to answers. Continue to seek out opportunities to provide input through other existing state workgroups or planning teams.

Attending Content Sessions at the CBI

The CBI provides opportunities to learn more about secondary transition practices and programs through the designated content sessions. There are about between 20-30 different content sessions offered through the CBI on various topics. Previous topics included evidence-based practices in transition, transition assessment, analyzing post-school outcomes data, and model drop-out prevention programs. It can be sometimes overwhelming to decide which content sessions to attend. Below are some recommendations for selecting content sessions.

- Scan all sessions offered during a particular content session slot.
- Highlight the sessions that most interest you.
- Discuss with your state team what sessions they will be attending.
- Decide if content being offered will assist in team planning or other work you are doing in the state.



Thank you for joining us at the CBI. We appreciate the contributions of parents and families. They are valued members of the state capacity building teams. We hope you take advantage of the times to learn and network. Most of all, have fun.