

An Informed Family Engagement Plan (IFEP)



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*NTACT Capacity Building Institute
May 5, 2016*

Outcomes

1. Participants will become familiar with a framework to (a) address factors that influence engagement, (b) identify disengaged family stakeholders, and (c) create strategies for engaging families.
2. Participants will learn strategies to engage particular sub groups of families who are not typically engaged at local and state/regional levels.
3. Participants will work collaboratively to (a) identify strategies to initiate efforts for expanding family engagement and (b) methods to evaluate whether efforts for engaging families are effective.

Family Engagement: a National Priority

National Post-School Outcomes

National Longitudinal Transition Study 2, Wave 5 (2009) www.nlts2.org

Currently employed	59%
Attended postsecondary institution in last 2 yrs	32.6%

US. Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Available to work & employed:	Sept. 2008	Sept. 2014
Adults 16+ non disabled	71.6%	68.5%
Adults 16+ w disability	23.6%	20.1%

Research findings:

Many students with IEPs exit high school

- without disability awareness
- without knowledge of civil rights
- without registering for disability supports in higher education

McGahee, Mason, Wallace & Jones, 2001



Taxonomy for Transition 2.0

TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING

STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family Involvement	Family Empowerment	Family Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families' cultural background and intimate knowledge of and experience with their child informs the IEP • Families provide information about their child either orally or in writing • Families participate in the entire transition planning process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - student assessment - evaluation of student's program - IEP and other individual program planning meeting - decision making • Families participate in service delivery • Families participate in natural support network as trainers, mentors, peer advocates, or community liaisons • Families participate in program policy development • Families concerns and needs are represented in school governance • Non-family member interpreters provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition information provided prior to student's age 14 • Information provided in their ordinary language and shared in culturally responsive and respectful manner • Structured method to identify family needs • Pre-IEP planning activities specific to families • Child care and respite care provided for transition-related meetings • Supports provided for families to engage youth in community experiences • Students and families linked with adult service providers during transition planning • Students and families are assisted to apply for college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family learning and preparation provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transition-related planning process (e.g., IEP, ITP, IPE) - empowerment strategies - setting high expectation - promoting child's self-determination, with respect for cultural views and values - advocacy - natural supports - agencies and services - facilitating community experiences for youth with disabilities (e.g., safety, transportation, social skills, mobility) - legal issues

Figure 2: The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships



...a compass, not a road map...

State Capacity Building Plans

Themes across years regarding parent engagement included in Capacity Building Plans:

Strengths related to parent engagement have shifted from measures of IEP attendance, to measures of increased participation, to measures of engagement and involvement.

Increased efforts to find ways to authentically engage parents in teams and partnerships.

State Capacity Building Plan Goals ...for Family Engagement...

1. Develop system for information sharing between school and families
2. Increase family involvement in IEP development
3. Increase family knowledge of transition services Increase family involvement in providing assessment information Increase family involvement in IEP development
4. Increase training and information to families around transition services and graduation requirements.
5. To increase IEP development involvement through family knowledge and of transition services in IEP development

Our IFEP

Professional capacity



Family capacity



WHO are these hard to reach families...

Why plan for families you know?

You **MUST** identify and plan for families you do not know!!

Free and Reduced Lunch

ESL Students

Homeless

Geography

Disabilities

Culture

Ethnicity

Family Structure

Education Experiences

Literacy

Use your own data!

Political barriers

WHY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

- ❖ Family engagement that is more **directly related to student learning** is more likely to have a positive impact on student achievement and can take place **at home** or **in the community**. (Westmoreland et al)
- ❖ The **lack of engagement** by minority, lower income, and families who speak limited English is often the result of differing needs, values, and levels of trust rather than lack of interest or willingness to get involved. (cited in Brewster & Railsback, 2003)

HOW - WHAT WORKS!

- Identify the barriers to engaging specific groups of families
- Create unique strategies and tools to address these barriers
- Develop relationships with community partners and mentors
- Support families in helping their students
- INSTRUCTION versus INSTRUCTIONS
- Foster relationships between families and educators....not with BUILDING
- Ask families “what works” and LISTEN
- Use technology when appropriate
- Reinforce engagement at home and school and make sure “home” is recognized and supported as much as “school”
- Support families in moving from “home” to “school” participation and leadership.

Adult services...

Staff of adult services agencies (Voc Rehab, County, Community Providers, Postsecondary Education) may have unique challenges when it comes to engaging families:

- Lack of expectation
- Lack of capacity building or support
- Lack of pre-service training
- Privacy laws
- Adult services means you deal with the adult
- Others?

Ideas for Adult Services

Family involvement does not have to mean lack of self-advocacy.

- Establish clear, two-way communication
- Explore methods for feedback from families
- Put it into policy
- Partner with parent groups and disability orgs
- Build capacity of staff

Strategic Planning

Informed Family Engagement Planning (IFEP) Tool

This DRAFT tool is designed for the use of programs, schools, districts, and adult agencies committed to effective transition planning prior to developing an action plan for building strong family engagement practices and at strategic evaluative checkpoints. Bulleted strategies are example activities that states/schools/districts/agencies have implemented successfully. Your feedback is welcome.

Component I: Contextual conditions that influence all family engagement	
A. Professional Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1A1. Professionals make all families feel welcome, build trust, and use two-way communication practices.- 1A2. Professional actions affirm high expectations for youth post-school outcomes.- 1A3. Professionals employ culturally competent practices.- 1A4. Professionals use family perspectives to evaluate and improve effectiveness of transition programs/services.	B. Family Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1B1. Families work with professionals to build a climate of partnership.- 1B2. Families have access to information to expand knowledge about the transition process.- 1B3. Families benefit from systems that prepare them to support their youths' learning and development.- 1B4. Families benefit from systems that assist them to build support networks.
Component II: Family engagement at the local school/ district/ agency level	
A. Professional Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2A1. Professionals practice proactive communication skills.- 2A2. Professionals conduct outreach to disengaged families.- 2A3. Professionals provide useful information about transition to families.- 2A4. Professionals use a systemic approach to empowering family support of youth learning and development.- 2A5. Professionals use a systemic approach to connecting families with community organizations.	B. Family Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2B1. Families empower their youth's learning and development.- 2B2. Families participate in meaningful ways in IEP/ITP/IEP meetings.- 2B3. Families explore transition resources/ options appropriate for their individual children in employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.
Component III: Family advisory at regional/ state level	
A. Professional Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 3A1. Professional organizations systematically recruit participation of diverse family perspectives in advisory roles.- 3A2. Professionals systematically engage family partners in broad scale strategic planning.	B. Family Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 3B1. Family representatives understand vision and scope of advisory/ advocacy board.- 3B2. Family representatives perform their role as a spokesperson.

Possible uses?



Brainstorming Stations

1. Outreach for hard to reach families
2. Preparing families for advisory board participation
3. Partnering with PTI Centers
4. Building capacity to foster family partnership at IEP/transition meetings
5. System for two-way information sharing between schools and families

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