Parent and Family Involvement Tool Kit for Virginia Schools

Developed by

Parent Involvement Priority Project

Virginia Department of Education

Why is Parent Involvement So Important?

Parents play a vital role in their children's education. Studies show a strong correlation between family involvement and student outcomes, including academic achievement. This relationship holds true for families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students of all ages, with or without disabilities. Student benefits include:

- Attaining higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests.

- Enrolling in more challenging academic programs.

- Passing more classes and earning more credits.

- Having better attendance.

- Showing improved behavior at home and at school.

- Demonstrating better social skills and adaptation to school.

(From A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement, 2002, by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp. National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Available through their web site at http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/Keyfindings-reference.pdf.)

Schools and the educators who staff them are one of the first places parents and families turn to in looking for information. In this tool kit you will find online resources that you can share with parents and family members to encourage and support their involvement in the education of their children.

This booklet's resources can be found at www.centerforfamilyinvolvement.org.

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Academic Resources

Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTACs), funded by the Virginia Department of Education(VDOE), work to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth through 22 years).

Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers:

- George Mason University: http://ttac.gmu.edu

- James Madison University: http://www.jmu.edu/ttac

- Old Dominion University: http://ttac.odu.edu

- Radford University: http://radford.edu/ttac

- The College of William and Mary: http://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac

- Virginia Commonwealth University: http://www.vcu.edu/ttac

- Virginia Tech: http://www.ttac.vt.edu

Also visit T/TAC Online at http://www.ttaconline.org. Click on any region; then click on the "Resources" tab at the top; then click on "Parents/Family" on the left-hand side.

Assistive Technology Resources

Virginia Department of Education's Assistive Technology Priority Project:
http://www.ttac.vt.edu/vaatpp/consideration_Assessment.html

■ Select "Online Trainings" tab

AIM-VA Overview: This overview introduces "AIM-VA: Accessible Instructional Materials-VA," a unique and alternative system of providing accessible educational media under the standards set by the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS).

National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards: An overview of NIMAS, NIMAC, and Virginia's response to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) standards.

Person-Centered Resources

Person-centered practices focus on the needs and preferences of the individual; empower and support the individual in defining the direction for his/her life; and promote self-determination, community involvement, contributing to society and emotional, physical and spiritual health.

Here are some web sites that can be used to learn more about person-centered planning, thinking and practices.

- http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/cdservices/pcprb.htm

- http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/tsal/pcp/

- http://www.dimagine.com/page27.html

- http:www.learningcommunity.us

- http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk

- http://www.disabilityisnatural.com

- http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk

- http://www.communityworks.info

- http://www.participantdirection.org

Collaborative Resources

Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University:

- **Collaborative Standards-Based IEPs Online Training:** A series of five training modules that address collaborative skills, person-centered practices, and basing goals on statewide age-appropriate standards.

  http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/ieps/index.html

- **It's About Me:** A workbook for students and IEP team members to be used in preparing for and developing the IEP (in English and in Spanish). The workbook focuses on active student participation, collaboration among all team members, and developing goals based on the gaps that exist between Standards and students' actual performance.

  https://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/partnership2/ecom/category.asp?cat=4

- **Creating Collaborative IEPs: A Handbook second edition** (in English and in Spanish): This handbook focuses on collaborative skills and practices that support full team involvement in the IEP process, including that of the student.

  https://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/partnership2/ecom/category.asp?cat=4

T/TAC Online Collaborative/Teaming Web Shop Training Resources

www.ttaconline.org

- Select any region
- Select "Online Training" tab
- Select "Display All" box
- Search for the following training titles

The Team Meeting Process: When schools work to effect change, the work often falls on the shoulders of the team. Team members need to make sure that their limited meeting time is used effectively and that there is a process for making certain that tasks are completed. A structured team meeting process offers a way to make meetings more productive.

What's Your Team Type?: The web shop provides an introduction to the characteristics of the different team member types. An activity and description of the different team member types are included.

Collaboration and Communication: This workshop provides information on collaboration and communication in the schools.

Self-Determination Resources

I'm Determined and IEP Resources

www.imdetermined.org

■ **For Students:** All students need to be a part of their IEP meetings after being provided with direct instruction, accommodations, and opportunities to practice or role-play their participation. This section includes lesson plans, brochures, and PowerPoint presentations. These items are designed to help students understand the IEP and the role he/she plays on the IEP team.
https://php.radford.edu/~imdetermined/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=24

■ **For Family Members:** Families are instrumental team players in the development of the self-determined student. Family members can help model important self-determination components such as making good choices and setting and achieving goals. This section includes information for families.
https://php.radford.edu/~imdetermined/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=26

■ **For Educators:** Teachers, paraprofessionals, and case managers can find information in this section to assist students. Included here are lesson plans that have been classroom-tested:
https://php.radford.edu/~imdetermined/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11&Itemid=29

https://php.radford.edu/~imdetermined/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=13

Individual Education Resource Programs

Parent Education Advocacy Training Center (PEATC):

www.peatc.org

■ **Select "Special Education" tab** for fact sheets, student profile template and sample; IEP checklist includes additional links to best practices within the fact sheets.

■ **Link to** www.circleofinclusion.org to find inclusion information for birth to eight years, including a preschool portfolio. Resources are available in English and Spanish.

■ **Select "Next Steps" tab** for transition program resources including fifteen informational webinars.

■ **Select "Resources for Parents" tab** for link to Alliance of PACER Minnesota Parent Training & Information Center (PACER Center) www.pacer.org.

■ **Select "Programs and Resources" tab**, then the "Programs" link. Select the "Parents Helping Parents" link. Then select "Parents Helping Parents Program" Then select "Parents Helping Parents Program." for the following resources:

   • Special Education: What Do I Need to Know? (37 minute video)

   • Attending Meetings to Plan Your Child's IEP (audio download & handout)

   • Evaluation: What Does It Mean for Your Child? (audio download & handout)

   • Transition Planning for Children with Disabilities (30 minute video)

   • School Accommodations & Modifications (audio download & handout)

   • Universally Designed Technology in Schools (4:46 minute video download & handout)

Also under the "Programs and Resources" tab are informative newsletters, PACER publications, webinars and web sites to assist families and professionals. The Alliance web site features research-based information on special education and related topics. The FAPE (Families and Advocates Partnership for Education) web site aims to improve the educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

Transition Resources

■ **Going to College:** contains information about living college life with a disability. It's designed for high-school students and provides video clips, activities and additional resources that can help students get a head start in planning for college. www.going-to-college.org

■ **HEATH Resource Center** (Online Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities): information for students with disabilities on financial assistance, scholarships and materials that help students with disabilities transition into college, university, career-technical schools, or other postsecondary programs. The "Modules" tab includes links to a "Parents' Guide to Transition." www.heath.gwu.edu

■ **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET):** A national resource for secondary transition including resources and effective practices. Under "Hot Topics," the "IEP and Transition Planning" links to a number of helpful resources, including a thorough and very readable explanation of the IDEA transition requirements under "Frequently Asked Questions." www.ncset.org

■ **National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC):** A national Technical Assistance and Dissemination center funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Under the "Students and Families" tab are links to many resources related to transition, including a helpful postsecondary goals activity, and the "Transition Assessment Guide." www.nsttac.org

■ **Succeeding in College and at Work: Students with Disabilities Tell Their Stories:** In videos on this site, students with a variety of disabilities share strategies to successfully stay in school, graduate, and get jobs. http://www.adaptiveenvironments.org/neada/site/student_videos

■ **A Life 4 Me:** A middle-school transition web site designed to introduce students with challenging disabilities to opportunities in their communities. http://www.alife4me.com/

Transition Resources (cont'd)

- **PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights):** A parent training and information center for families of children and youth with all disabilities from birth through 21 years. Under the "Programs & Resources" tab is a link to "Publications," and the topic "Transition" includes a lengthy list of (free) handouts on a broad array of topics. "Parent Tips for Transition Planning" is a helpful starting place. www.pacer.org

- **Virginia Easy Access and Virginia Navigator:** A web site developed for seniors, adults with disabilities, their caregivers, and the providers that support them. Virginia Easy Access has helpful information about services and supports available across the Commonwealth and is the gateway to the Virginia Navigator provider database. www.easyaccess.virginia.gov

- **Community Services Boards (CSBs):** Virginia's Community Services Boards (sometimes called Behavioral Healthcare Authorities) are local government agencies created by the Code of Virginia. CSBs exist in every locality and provide community-based mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disability services. From the home page, click on the "CSB/BHA Directory" tab for local CSB contact information. www.vacsb.org

- **Department of Rehabilitative Services:** The state's vocational rehabilitation agency provides a variety of service options. Employment services help people with disabilities get ready for, find, and keep a job. Several community-based services support people with significant disabilities to maximize their independence, employment, and full community inclusion. The department also provides Assistive Technology and Disability Determination services. The "Find an Office" tab on the home page links to a list of contact information for field offices. www.drs.virginia.gov

VA Department of Education

The Center for Family Involvement at the
Partnership for People with Disabilities at
Virginia Commonwealth University
provides training and resources for families and
the people who work with them.

**CENTER FOR
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

www.centerforfamilyinvolvement.org
1-877-567-1122

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