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## Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

*Virginia's Parent Information Resource Center*

### **Workshop Descriptions**

#### **Parent Training Information (for families of children with disabilities)**

##### **❖ Understanding Special Education**

This workshop will help you identify your child's learning strengths and challenges as well as organize your important information about your child so it will be helpful in educational planning. Come and learn the seven phases of the special education process and identify the specific actions you may take during the special education process. You will become familiar with due process rights and learn ways to work as partners with teacher and other school personnel. **This workshop is offered in both English and Spanish**

##### **❖ The ABC's of Behavior**

As a result of this workshop participants will be able to look at how behavior influences our lives and understanding how it is addressed in IDEA 2004. You will become familiar with the ABC's (Antecedent, Behavior & Consequence) of all behavior supports and behavior management. Functional Behavioral Assessments will be covered and you will have an opportunity to practice using a FBA tool to assess behavior. **This workshop is offered in both English and Spanish**

##### **❖ How to Talk So Schools Will Listen (and Listen So Schools Will Talk)**

Why are partnerships so difficult? What can be done to improve understanding between parents and professionals as they seek to find mutual agreement on IEP's and other issues related to education for students with disabilities? This workshop will help participants discover communication techniques, learn how to recognize and prevent barriers to communication and build agreements around difficult problems.

##### **❖ Friendship Building Strategies**

Participants will explore the diversity and nature of their own friendships and build a vision of possibilities for children to develop positive relationships and friendships with each other. The importance of creating a climate of acceptance, belonging, and community in schools will be stressed by infusing opportunities for creating this climate across all areas of the curriculum and throughout the school day. Lastly, attendees will identify specific strategies that parents, general educators, and special educators can use to facilitate friendships for students.

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❖ **CSI: Transition (Clues for a Self Investigation for Middle School Students with Disabilities)**

Employers, and university personnel point to the lack of self advocacy skills of college students and job seekers with disabilities in not adequately accessing accommodations that will help them be successful. Students with disabilities and need help and practice, articulating their disabilities and needed accommodations. The IEP process is the perfect setting for students to practice talking about their disabilities, their strengths, and the help they need. Self advocacy is a difficult subject for parent to bring up with their adolescent children with disabilities.

CSI: Transition (Clues for Self-Investigation) is the conversation starter that parents (and teachers) can use to help break the ice and prepare middle schoolers for developing the tools they need to become self advocates. Using the new PEATC developed CSI transition Workbook and facilitators guide, parents and educators will learn useful strategies to help prepare middle school students to assume a meaningful role in the IEP process. This interactive session will walk participants through the workbook and help parents and teachers better understand how they can foster self advocacy skills in their children. **This workshop is offered in both English and Spanish**

❖ **Positive Behavioral Interventions**

Parents have often been the strongest advocates for a more informed approach to helping their children learn behavioral skills. While not all parents have the skills to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviors, many have expressed frustration and anger over the use of repeated punishment that has not resulted in behavior change. Their experience has been that punishment does not address the problems their child is having, but instead addresses the symptoms. The challenges for parents and educators is together to find new ways of understanding the interactions between a child and his or her environment so that useful interventions can be developed that lead to lasting behavior change.

❖ **Early Intervention- Families are Important**

This workshop covers the early intervention process and the family's role in developing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) **This workshop is offered in both English and Spanish**

❖ **Early Intervention- The Home Information Specialist**

Participants will learn the fundamentals of: becoming a home information specialist and the value of Parent - Professional partnerships. Participants will come away from the workshop understanding how the information families have about their children is critical to developing a plan for the baby and the baby's family. Families in the midst of chaos, grief, fear, and the unknown will learn how to be their child's and their family's best and most effective advocate.

❖ **Measurable IEP Goals**

This workshop brings families and educators together using a common language to build measurable goals to all students. What is a measurable goal? How do you understand and write a measurable goal? These questions and much more will be answered in this workshop.



❖ **Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?**

This free workshop offers intervention strategies for parents of children with disabilities who may be the target of bullying at school. Participants will learn how to: identify types of bullying, develop strategies to prevent bullying, identify responses to bullying, talk to their child about bullying, obtain help from professionals and find out about disability harassment laws.

❖ **CHAMPIONS TOGETHER Parent Courses \***

These courses are research based and developed to help to assist families' schools and communities with the academic and personal development of children. These courses are given in 3 weekly sessions of 90 minutes each and will commence with a graduation ceremony. The courses are very practical, take-it-home-and-use-it type of courses. The courses are:

*My Child at Home-* This course is designed to help parents of children with disabilities deal with the diagnosis, handle health and medical needs and gives best parenting practices.

*My Child at School-* This course is designed to help parents of children with disabilities learn the special education rules and regulations learn how to be active partners at the IEP conference and gain skills to become or continue to be great advocates for their children.

❖ **CHAMPIONS TOGETHER Parent Mentor Training \***

In this training parent leaders are trained to be effective mentors for parents of children with disabilities. After a parent mentor completes this course they will feel comfortable enough to present the *Champions Together: My Child at Home and My Child at School* Parent Courses.

❖ **NEXT STEPS: The Transition Series- Planning for the Future Workshops**

Partner team participants are first introduced to the Rehabilitation Act and the importance of self-advocacy in the transition process through a talk show format. Training activities include discussions and activities that illustrate the nature and importance of effective partnerships. This is an 8 course series:

**#1-Transition: Making it in the real World**

For all young people, the transition from student life in school to adult life in the community is complicated. For students with disabilities and their families, this change can be particularly challenging, overwhelming and exciting. For young people to experience transitions to satisfying adult lives there must be teamwork among students, parents, educators and others. During this workshop, participants review the four critical goals of transition, consider practical opportunities which promote their achievement, become familiar with pertinent federal legislation and understand the important roles of family members in the transition process

**#2 Transition Plans: Roadmaps to the Future**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires transition planning for all students with disabilities. Is a transition plan a written document? If so, who writes and signs it? Is transition planning a meeting? If so, who attends? This workshop is designed to give parents, students, educators and adult service provider's answers to these questions and more. Participants learn how transition planning can be incorporated into students' ongoing special education plans. They discuss the influence of competency testing, graduation requirements, diplomas, integration and curriculum emphasis on transition plans. Sample transition forms are reviewed and participants develop transition goals.



### ***#3 Self-Advocacy and Supports: Keys to Independence***

Young people with disabilities are learning to make choices about their lives. In school, community and family discussions, they are finding the words or behaviors to communicate their opinions and concerns. They are taking leadership in determining their own futures. Children and young adults who learn self-advocacy skills are best prepared to live satisfying adult lives in the community. This workshop is designed to help family members identify strategies for respecting a young person's choices while offering continued love and guidance. A variety of skills and supports that assist a young person in adult life will be reviewed.

### ***#4 Moving On: Life in the Community***

Do satisfying work opportunities for young adults with disabilities really exist in the community? Once young people leave school can they find friends, recreation activities and community events that match their skills and interests? Too often in the past, young people left school and found their worlds getting smaller, their daily lives emptier. This scenario is changing as self-advocates, parents and others are creating community supports that enable people to enjoy full lives. During this workshop, a panel of adult community service representatives provides information and answers questions regarding local employment, education and independent living opportunities.

### ***#5 Getting Ready: Preparing for Work while in School***

What should be happening in school to ensure that students with disabilities find satisfying work in the community? This workshop is designed to assist families in understanding the role of vocational education in special education plans. Participants learn about the entry criteria, assessment and placement procedures for vocational education. Guest speakers will discuss specific examples of community based vocational education opportunities. Participants learn how reasonable accommodations, job coaches and supports in the workplace assist a student in learning, enjoying and keeping a job.

### ***#6 Planning Ahead: Future Finances and Supports***

During this workshop, parents step away from daily activities of family life to learn information and strategies useful for shaping secure futures for their children. Through a case study, participants review the range of on-going family supports related to adult life in the community for a young person with disabilities. Guest speakers share their expertise regarding resources for financial and estate planning. During the session, parents will begin to write a "letter of intent" that provides future care givers with guidance in understanding the needs and desires of the person with disabilities and his family.

***Workshop Series number 7 and 8*** Focuses on the rehabilitation process and adult services. These workshops were developed to help individuals with disabilities, their parents, family members, advocates, and other authorized representatives work in equal partnerships and participate effectively in the rehabilitation process. These two workshops differ from NEXT STEPS 1-6 in that:

1. The training team is expanded to include an individual with disabilities (self-advocate) as a meaningful trainer along with the parent/professional team.
2. The audience is made up of self-advocates each accompanied by a team of parent, educator, transition specialist, rehabilitation counselor and other partners that will support the self-advocate in successfully accessing adult services.



## **Parent Involvement Resource Center (for parents of all students)**

### **❖ No Child Left Behind: What's in it for parents?**

This workshop explains the purpose of No Child Left Behind and its four pillars: accountability, flexibility, parental choices and research-based reforms. Participants will also learn how to read their school and district report cards.

### **❖ How to Talk So Schools will Listen (and Listen So Schools Will Talk)**

Why are partnerships so difficult? What can be done to improve understanding between parents and professionals as they seek to find a mutual agreement on issues related to education for students? This workshop will help participants discover communication techniques to recognize and prevent barriers to communication and build agreements around difficult problems. This workshop also highlights good e-mail etiquette as well as helpful hints to help parents prepare for parent-teacher conferences.

### **❖ Parents and Learning- A Workshop for Teachers \***

This research-based workshop for teachers discusses the most significant variables that affect learning and focuses on one of them- the home environment. This workshop covers the "curriculum of the home," the parent-child interactions and patterns of family life that influence children's school learning. This workshop highlights the role of the teacher in encouraging these positive home practices that contribute to school success.

### **❖ Teaming Up for Student Success- A Workshop for Parents and Teachers \***

With parents and teachers blended as participants, this workshop serves to strengthen the working relationship between parents and teachers to build student achievement. This workshop focuses on the learning process, the development of study habits and learning skills, and how the role of parents and teachers relate to the process. The workshop activities demonstrate and reinforce these concepts.

### **❖ SOLID FOUNDATION- Parent Courses \***

These courses are research based and developed by the Academic Development Institute in Illinois to help to assist families' schools and communities with the academic and personal development of children. These courses are given in 3 weekly sessions of 90 minutes each and will commence with a graduation ceremony. The courses are peer lead and very practical, take-it-home-and-use-it type of courses. **These courses are offered in both English and in Spanish.** The courses are:

***Ready, Here I come!*** - This course is for parents of pre-school children (age 3-5). This course teaches family activities that help prepare children for school.

***Reading at Home-*** This course helps parents build their children's reading habits and instills a lifelong love of reading. The course is best suited for parents of children in grades K-3.

***Studying at Home-*** This course is designed to help parents build their children's study habits in the home. The course is best suited for parents of children in grades 4-8.



***Raising Good Kids-*** This course is for all parents. It explores the way children develop their sense of respect and responsibility within the context of the family.

**Periodically PEATC hosts a Parent Leadership course that helps lead parents develop the skills needed to facilitate these parent courses. Please contact PEATC if you would like to be notified when this class is offered in your area.**

\* CHAMPIONS TOGETHER and SOLID FOUNDATION are Research based programs developed by the Academic Development Institute. The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them.