

# 2009-2010 TATRA Survey of Federally Funded Parent Centers

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE on TRANSITION  
and the REHABILITATION ACT (TATRA)**

*TATRA is a project of:*

**PACER CENTER**   
CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES®

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE on TRANSITION  
and the REHABILITATION ACT (TATRA)**

**The 2009-2010 TATRA Survey of  
Federally Funded Parent Centers**

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*\*An online version of this document includes additional appendix materials with question by question response data and responses to open ended questions. Go to [PACER.org/TATRA/knowledgecenter.asp](http://PACER.org/TATRA/knowledgecenter.asp) to download.*



This study was conducted by PACER Center's Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) Project. Funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) since 1994, the TATRA Project conducted similar surveys in 1999 and 2003.

The TATRA Project coordinates technical assistance activities serving seven RSA-funded Parent Information and Training programs that conduct transition-focused parent training in 10 states. It also supports over 100 parent centers funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) by disseminating a weekly enews, hosting an annual conference, and presenting an annual award for excellence.

The purpose of this survey is to ensure that the TATRA Project and other technical assistance (TA) providers address the needs and priorities of the families of transition-age youth with disabilities served by federally funded parent centers across the United States. This information will help the TATRA Project and other TA providers:

1. identify emerging and ongoing transition issues for families of youth with disabilities
2. focus resources on areas of greatest need
3. develop tools to help parent centers work with families on these issues
4. inform policymakers about the training and information needs of families of youth with disabilities and about the resources parent centers require to meet these needs

## Methodology

The TATRA Project conducted a national survey of 104 parent centers that provide families with information on special education and related issues for children and youth with disabilities from birth through age 26.

The online survey was conducted from mid-June to mid-July 2009 using the web-based tools of SurveyMonkey. An invitation to participate was emailed to executive directors of all OSEP-funded parent centers and to project directors of all RSA-

funded parent training programs. The survey did not allow more than one response from an individual IP address. Eighty-one of 104 parents centers responded.

Survey questions were organized into five categories reflecting the Guideposts for Success used by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) to promote successful post-school outcomes (see Appendix A). The Guideposts synthesized current research in order to identify what supports all youth, including those with disabilities, need to succeed. The five Guideposts are career preparation; education; family involvement and leadership; youth development and leadership; and connecting activities (other programs, services, activities, and supports that help youth with disabilities achieve post-school success). The survey included six or seven questions in each of these categories.

Parent center staff were asked to indicate "to what degree" information and resources on specific topics would "help your center better serve the families of transition-age youth with disabilities." Respondants rated 34 topics using a five-point Likert scale (0 = not at all important; 4 = very important). The survey included additional open-ended questions and also asked respondents to identify the formats of technical assistance delivery they found most helpful.

An average rating for each of the Likert-style questions on the survey was determined to identify those topics that were collectively deemed to be of the highest need. The information from the open-ended questions was reviewed and summarized by question.

Respondents indicated a high need for information on almost all topics addressed by the survey. Thirty-one of the 34 questions had average ratings somewhere between "very important" (4, the highest possible rating) and "important" (3). Average ratings ranged from 3.6 to 2.41 (question by question response data and a comprehensive list of responses to the survey's open ended questions are available online at [PACER.org/TATRA/knowledgecenter.asp](http://PACER.org/TATRA/knowledgecenter.asp)). The mean rating was 3.32.



# TATRA Survey Highlights

## Key Findings

### Technical assistance topics rated\* the most important:

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Promoting the self-determination of youth  | 3.60 |
| Internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities  | 3.56 |
| Promising practices that prepare youth for employment  | 3.54 |
| Supported and customized employment options for youth with significant disabilities  | 3.54 |
| Family-friendly information about the vocational rehabilitation system   | 3.53 |
| Parent- and student-friendly materials on the transition provisions of IDEA 2004   | 3.53 |
| Postsecondary education  | 3.51 |
| Examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems | 3.50 |

\*4 = very important; 3 = important; 2 = neutral; 1 = low importance; 0 = not at all important

### Great need for additional staff:

- 88.8 percent of parent centers responding to the survey rated the need for additional staff specializing in transition and vocational rehabilitation as “very important” (72.5%) or “important (16.3%) in order to meet the needs of families.

### Parent centers need family-friendly materials in more languages than ever before:

- Spanish language materials are most needed by parent centers.

### A growing trend among parent centers—training youth directly

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Resources to help parent centers provide information and training directly to youth emerged among the 10 highest-rated needs. | 3.54 |
|---|------|

### Formats preferred by parent centers

Parent center respondents indicated:

- a preference for accessing technical assistance information and resources via the web (81%) and webinars (67%)
- a great need for one-page handouts (90.5%) and workshop curricula (81.1%) on transition topics to share information with families
- a preference for receiving staff developed training via train the trainer–style conferences (74.3%)

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN THE GUIDEPOST AREAS

## Employment and Career Development

As a whole, employment related topics received higher ratings than other topics (education, youth development, family involvement and connecting activities) indicating a strong need among parent centers for technical assistance in this subject area. Six of seven topics in the employment category had ratings above the mean. The exception was self employment options for youth with disabilities which received a 3.13 average rating—any rating of 3.0 represents a topic deemed “important” by most survey respondents. The three employment topics included among the ten highest rated issues related to internship and work experience opportunities, promising practices that prepare youth with disabilities for employment, and supported/customized employment for youth with significant disabilities. See figure 1 for list of topics organized by ranking.

## Education

Of seven questions on education topics, five were rated above the mean score. Two topics received ratings that placed them among the top 10 issues identified by parent centers in the survey: “parent- and student-friendly materials on the transition provisions of IDEA 2004,” and “postsecondary education options.”

## Youth Development and Leadership

Six questions were included in the Youth Development section of the survey. Four received ratings above the mean. Two of these are among the top 10 issues: “providing information and training to youth as well as their parents (3.54).,” and promoting self-determination, which received the highest rating in this survey (3.60). A total of 93.5% of survey respondents rated “strategies to help parents promote the self-determination of youth” as “very important” (70.1%) or “important” (23.4%), reflecting a great desire for technical assistance on this topic.

## Connecting Activities

Three topics in the “Connecting Activities” section received ratings above the mean, and two of these landed in the top 10: “family-friendly information on vocational rehabilitation” and “examples of transition programs that blend funding” from multiple systems—“education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems.”

## Family Involvement and Leadership

Three of the six topics in this section received ratings higher than the mean: resources to better serve culturally diverse families, the need for translated materials, and “preparing parents to participate in policy development and systems change.”

## Transition Basics

In addition, participant responses to open-ended questions convey a great and ongoing need for basic parent training on transition issues:

- “Parents in general do not know what transition is really about.”
- [Parents are unfamiliar with] “the process and all agencies involved and their roles.”
- [Parents are] “unaware that students need to have an opportunity to work toward meaningful transition goals based on ongoing age-appropriate assessments, postsecondary objectives, appropriate employment training, and extra-curricular inclusion activities.”
- “Families need to know the options so they can make the best decisions for the future.”
- [Parents] “don’t understand the shift from entitlement to eligibility.”
- [Parents need to learn how to work] “effectively with school personnel/IEP team in developing transition plans and opportunities for youth with disabilities.”

**FIGURE 1:**

Figure 1 organizes topics included in the survey by their relative rankings, with topics receiving the highest rating presented at the top of the list.

| <b>SURVEY OF PARENT CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS ON TRANSITION TOPICS</b> |  |               |
|--|--|---------------|
| <b>RANKING</b>   | <b>INFORMATION NEED</b>  | <b>RATING</b> |
| 1.   | Strategies to help parents promote the self-determination of youth   | <b>3.60</b>   |
| 2.   | Funding for additional staff specializing on career development and vocational rehabilitation issues in order to meet the needs of families of transition-age youth                  | <b>3.59</b>   |
| 3.   | Internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities  | <b>3.56</b>   |
| 4.   | Promising practices that prepare youth with disabilities for employment  | <b>3.54</b>   |
| 5.   | Supported/customized employment for youth with significant disabilities  | <b>3.54</b>   |
| 6.   | Providing information and training to youth as well as their parents (e.g., self-directed Individualized Education Programs [IEPs], the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], etc.) | <b>3.54</b>   |
| 7.   | Family-friendly information about vocational rehabilitation services   | <b>3.53</b>   |
| 8.   | Parent- and student-friendly materials on transition provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA) (e.g., Summary of Performance)                        | <b>3.53</b>   |
| 9.   | Postsecondary education options  | <b>3.51</b>   |
| 10.  | Examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems   | <b>3.50</b>   |
| 11.  | Career and technical education program options   | <b>3.49</b>   |
| 12.  | Transition materials in other languages  | <b>3.43</b>   |
| 13.  | Serving transition-age youth and their families from culturally diverse and new immigrant families   | <b>3.42</b>   |
| 14.  | Vocational assessments   | <b>3.41</b>   |
| 15.  | Preparing youth for postsecondary education  | <b>3.41</b>   |
| 16.  | Access to transportation services  | <b>3.41</b>   |
| 17.  | Work incentives to keep Social Security medical benefits while working   | <b>3.39</b>   |
| 18.  | Disability provisions of the 2008 Higher Education Act   | <b>3.39</b>   |
| 19.  | Promoting the achievement and engagement of middle-school youth  | <b>3.37</b>   |
| 20.  | Housing options for young adults with disabilities   | <b>3.36</b>   |
| 21.  | Preparing parents to participate in policy development and systems change  | <b>3.35</b>   |
| 22.  | Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of foster care  | <b>3.31</b>   |
| 23.  | Diploma options and ramifications  | <b>3.30</b>   |
| 24.  | Strategies to help parents talk with their youth with disabilities about sexuality   | <b>3.29</b>   |
| 25.  | Parent center and state vocational rehabilitation agency partnerships  | <b>3.29</b>   |
| 26.  | Outreach to youth with disabilities, using new technology (e.g., social networking sites, hand-held devices)   | <b>3.27</b>   |
| 27.  | Integrating youth leadership opportunities into parent center programs   | <b>3.19</b>   |
| 28.  | Best practices in health management for youth and young adults with disabilities   | <b>3.18</b>   |
| 29.  | Self-employment options for youth with disabilities  | <b>3.13</b>   |
| 30.  | Including students with disabilities in standards-based assessments  | <b>3.09</b>   |

|     |   |             |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 31. | Serving effectively on a State Rehabilitation Council   | <b>3.00</b> |
| 32. | Serving effectively on a Statewide Independent Living Council   | <b>2.93</b> |
| 33. | Patient-centered models of adult health care and/or medical home initiatives  | <b>2.84</b> |
| 34. | Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of the juvenile justice system | <b>2.41</b> |

## FURTHER DISCUSSION

### Comparing the 2009 Survey with 1999 and 2003 Results

This is TATRA's third national survey of the technical assistance needs of OSEP-funded parent centers and RSA-funded Parent Information and Training programs. The TATRA Project conducted surveys in 2003 and 1999, but changes in the questions and the number of questions asked make comparisons among the three surveys inexact. Thirty-four questions were asked in 2009; 27 questions were asked in 2003; 17 questions were asked in 1999. One must keep this in mind when comparing survey results. Relative rankings among the top 10 issues identified in each survey are provided below (see Figure 2).

### Similarities

Although questions were not identical on each survey, there is some consistency in the top 10 issues identified in each survey. Seven of the 10 highest-ranked issues of 2003 were also among the highest-ranked issues of 2009. Five of the top 10 issues of 1999 remained among the top 10 issues of 2009. A sixth topic appearing among the top 10 issues of 2009 was ranked 11 in 1999, almost making it to the top 10.

The need for “funding for additional parent center staff specializing in transition and vocational rehabilitation” was at or near the top of the list all three years, receiving the highest ranking in both 1999 and 2003, and the second-highest ranking in 2009.

Other issues consistently identified among those of greatest need include:

- promoting the self-determination of youth (#1 in 2009; #6 in 2003; and #5 in 1999)
- promising practices that prepare youth for employment (#4 in 2009; #7 in 2003; and #4 in 1999)

- supported and customized employment options for youth with significant disabilities (#5 in 2009; #10 in 2003; not included in 1999)
- family-friendly information about the vocational rehabilitation system (#7 in 2009; #13 in 2003; and #7 in 1999)
- parent- and student-friendly materials on the transition provisions of IDEA (#8 in 2009; #4 in 2003; and #11 in 1999)
- postsecondary education options (ranked #9 in all three surveys)
- examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems (#10 in 2009; #8 in 2003; not included in 1999)

The need for transition materials to help parent centers serve culturally and linguistically diverse families of youth with disabilities was identified in all three TATRA surveys conducted in the past decade. “Serving transition-age youth and their families from diverse cultures” was ranked #12 in 2009; #19 in 2003; and #13 in 1999. Likewise the need for transition materials in other languages was ranked #13 in 2009; #26 in 2003; and #16 in 1999. While not ranking among the “top 10” scores of any year, the need for transition materials to better serve culturally and linguistically diverse families has been expressed consistently. This need is not surprising given the immigration trends and the population growth of non-Caucasian citizens in the United States over this time period.

It appears that parent centers have had an ongoing need for up-to-date technical assistance on all of the above topics. Rather than suggesting a lack of progress in the field, this consistency likely reflects emerging research-based best practices as well as a heightened awareness of the need to improve post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities.

**FIGURE 2:**

| <b>TOP 10 NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN 2009 TATRA SURVEY<br/>Compared to 1999 and 2003 Surveys*</b>  | <b>2009<br/>Ranking</b> | <b>2003<br/>Ranking</b> | <b>1999<br/>Ranking</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Strategies to promote self-determination of youth   | 1                       | 6                       | 6                       |
| Funding for additional staff specializing on transition and vocational rehabilitation issues in order to meet the needs of families                 | 2                       | 1                       | 1                       |
| Internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities   | 3                       | N/A                     | N/A                     |
| Promising practices that prepare youth for employment after high school   | 4                       | 7                       | 4                       |
| Supported/customized employment for youth with significant disabilities   | 5                       | 10                      | N/A                     |
| Providing information and training to youth as well as their parents (e.g., self-directed IEPs, the ADA, etc.)                                      | 6                       | N/A                     | N/A                     |
| Family-friendly information about the vocational rehabilitation system  | 7                       | 13                      | 7                       |
| Parent- and student-friendly materials on the transition provisions of IDEA   | 8                       | 4                       | 11                      |
| Postsecondary education programs options  | 9                       | 9                       | 9                       |
| Examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems          | 10                      | 8                       | N/A                     |
| <b>SELECTED TOP 10 NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS TATRA SURVEYS<br/>Compared to the 2009 Survey</b>   |                         |                         |                         |
| Preparing parents to participate in policy development and systems change   | 21                      | 15                      | 8                       |
| Diploma options and ramifications   | 23                      | 5                       | 3                       |
| Including students with disabilities in standards-based assessments   | 30                      | 15                      | 10                      |
| Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of the juvenile justice system | 34                      | 14                      | 2                       |
| Examples of IEPs that address transition service needs at age 14  | N/A                     | 2                       | 5                       |
| Issues relating to the impact of NCLB on transition-age youth   | N/A                     | 3                       | N/A                     |

\*N/A indicates that this question was not asked on that year's survey

## Differences

Two issues ranking among the 10 highest concerns of parent centers in 2003 were not included in the 2009 survey (IEPs that address transition needs of students at age 14 and the impact of No Child Left Behind [NCLB] on transition-age youth with disabilities). These were omitted because changes to IDEA 2004 transition requirements and the likelihood of changes to NCLB were possible.

To reflect emerging trends and the implementation of specific evidence-based best practices, two new topics were added to the 2009 survey. Both ranked among the top 10 issues of 2009: “internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities” (ranked as #3) and “providing information and training to youth as well as their parents—e.g., self-directed IEPs,

the ADA, etc.” (ranked as #6). For the same reasons, two topics first included in the 2003 survey were “supported/customized employment for youth with significant disabilities” (ranked as # 10 in 2003 and # 5 in 2009) and “examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems” (ranked #8 in 2003 and #10 in 2009).

It is interesting to note the differences in the declining rank of specific issues over the course of 10 years (see Figure 2). For instance, “diploma options and ramifications” ranked among the top 10 issues in 1999 (#3) and 2003 (#5), then fell to #23 in 2009 with a score just below the mean.

One can only speculate on the reasons for such declining trends. Like other programs largely funded

by government grants, parent centers have had to function with reduced funding in recent years. Are parent center directors less able to focus on these issues in order to address other priorities? Or, are parent center directors feeling adequately informed about how to assist parents on these issues? Yet, many youth with disabilities still do not earn a standard diploma, and many families still have to advocate for appropriate accommodations in high-stakes testing. In addition, the overrepresentation of youth with

disabilities in the juvenile justice system remains high. A 2002 national study found that the prevalence of adolescents with disabilities among those incarcerated ranges by state from 9.1 percent to 77.5 percent, with a mean of 33.3 percent<sup>1</sup>.

It is probably helpful to again consider that 31 of the 34 questions on the 2009 survey had ratings between “important” (3) and “very important” (4) and that average ratings ranged only from 3.6 to 2.41.

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<sup>1</sup> MM Quinn RB Rutherford , PELeone , DM. Osher , JM.Poirier (2005) . “Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections: A National Survey,” *Exceptionality*, v13 n2 p89-102. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

## Open-ended Questions

Responses to the open-ended survey questions reflect a variety of concerns (see Appendix C).

The question, “What are the two to three areas related to transition and vocational rehabilitation that are of greatest concern to parents in your area?” generated several pages of responses. No single issue emerged as significantly more important than the others. The NCWD/Youth Guideposts for Success proved an effective way of organizing responses with subcategories under each of the five major categories. With this method of organization, most comments fell under the “Connecting Activities” category. This distribution is not surprising given that the information and training provided by the national network of OSEP-funded parent centers focuses on IDEA-related special education issues. Parent center staff are generally less familiar with the vocational rehabilitation, postsecondary education, housing, health, transportation, and other adult service systems that fall within this category.

Nonetheless, many comments did focus on the transition planning process and transition services mandated by IDEA. Other education-related comments focused on interagency collaboration, graduation requirements, and dropout re-engagement strategies. The large group of comments related to education reflects a critical need for more technical assistance on work-based learning, career and technical education, and other special education related issues.

Responses to a second open-ended question asking about the “knowledge or materials your parent center needs in order to meet the [transition] concerns of parents more effectively” also varied a great deal. Several respondents stressed that their greatest need was not for more information, but for more funding to support staff development on these issues, hire additional staff to specialize in transition topics, and otherwise support transition-focused parent training activities (see p. 35). These comments reinforce the

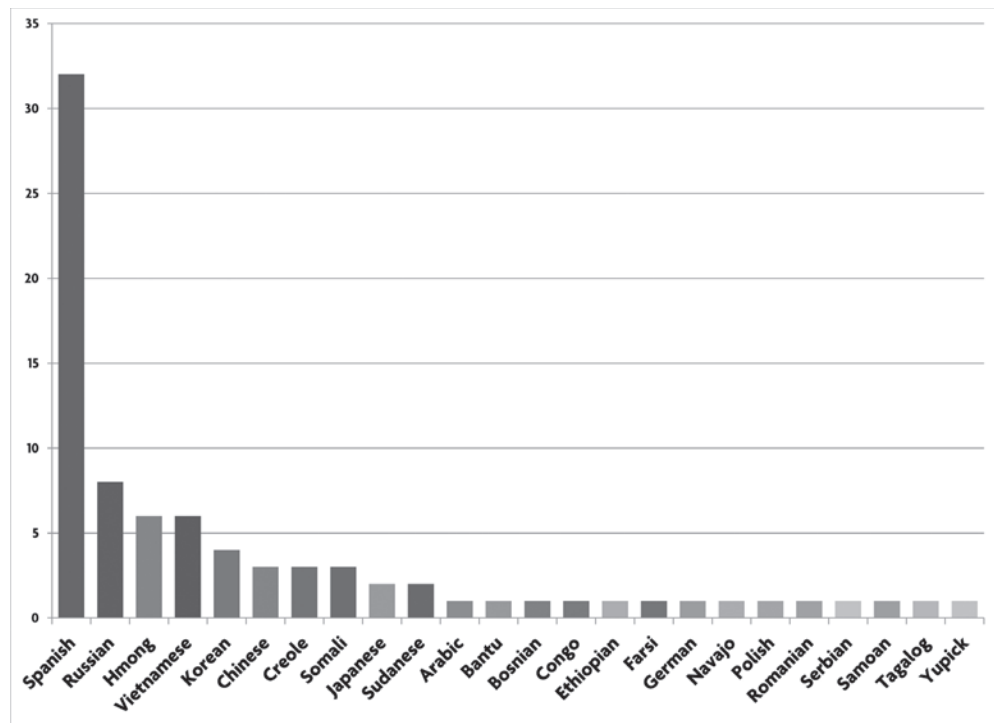


Figure 3

high importance respondents gave to “funding for additional staff specializing on career development and vocational rehabilitation issues in order to meet the needs of families of transition-age youth,” which ranked as the second-highest need.

Two individuals commented on the need to provide information and training directly to students, not just to their parents. Youth-focused activities are a growing trend among many of the parent information and training programs funded by the RSA in recent years and was a new item in the 2009 survey. The fact that it emerged as one of the top 10 needs (#6), together with the fact that “strategies to promote the self determination of youth” was the #1 need in 2009 suggests a trend for parent centers to provide more training directly to youth, not just to their parents.

A number of comments also addressed a need for leadership and advocacy training to prepare parents for roles as agents of systems change, not only as advocates on behalf of their own family member (see p. 34). As noted earlier, there is a continued need for parent training materials to be translated into multiple languages. Spanish language materials are clearly needed by many parent centers, and many parent centers indicate they are serving other non-English speaking populations as well. (see Figure 3). Additional comments reiterated the need for very short, low-literacy materials for families and students.

## Desired Formats

Survey responses indicate that most parent center directors or transition coordinators prefer to access information about transition from websites

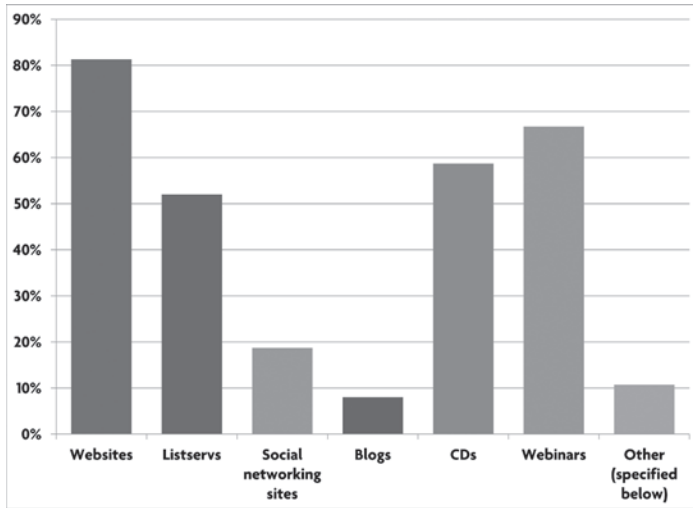


Figure 4

(81%), followed by webinars (67%), CDs (59%), and listservs (52%). Social networking sites (19%) and blogs (8%) are currently less-used sources of information. Examples of other technology used by a smaller number of individuals (5.4%) include short, downloadable podcasts, conventional conference calls, and wikis. Percentages exceed 100% because survey participants could select more than one answer in this series of questions.

Survey responses indicate the types of materials most desired by parent center directors are fact sheets (90%), workshop curricula (81%), and DVDs (62%).

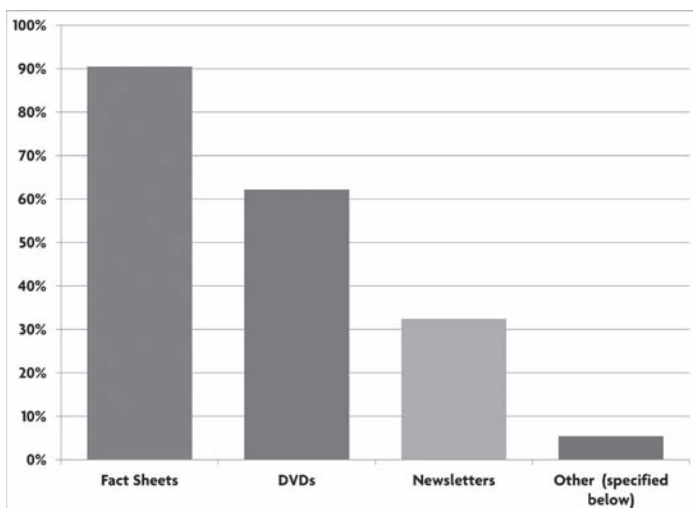


Figure 5

Thirty percent also find newsletters a helpful source of information. Respondent comments reiterate that materials should be in various languages and that brochures, pamphlets, and other written materials remain helpful to people who do not have access to a computer.

Parent center survey responses indicate that training of trainers is the most preferred way to receive staff training (74%), followed by regional or national conferences for parent center staff.

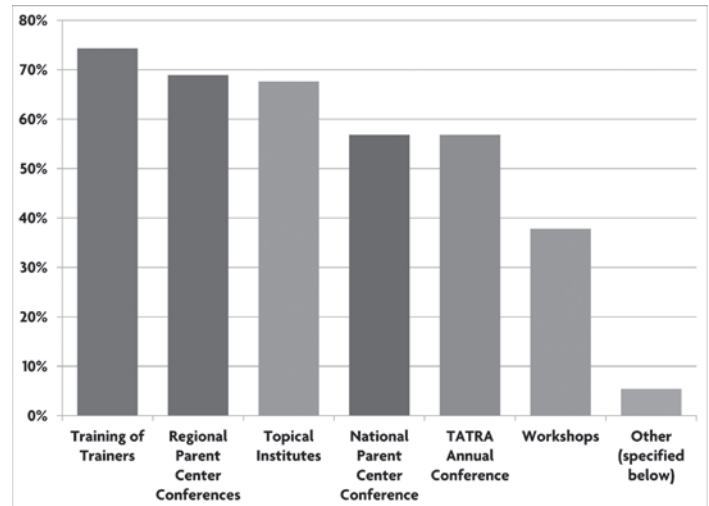


Figure 6

## Conclusion

What have we learned? Parent centers indicate there is a high need for technical assistance materials on a range of transition topics. Strategies to help parents “promote the self-determination of youth” was the highest-rated need. Parent centers also convey an interest in providing information and training to youth themselves, not just to their parents. Indeed an increasing number of parent centers are offering programs to families that include separate tracks for youth and parents.

Parent centers are eager to receive technical assistance on effective practices that prepare youth for employment including specific strategies such as internships and customized employment. There is also high interest in information on postsecondary education options. The technical assistance priorities identified in this survey clearly align with the articulated priorities of the Office of Special Education

and Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Social Security Administration, and the Center for Medicaid Services. Parent centers are poised to play an important role in disseminating information about research-based transition practices funded by these agencies.

It is evident that parent centers are working with the growing numbers of immigrant and new American families who speak languages other than English. This survey identified a strong need to have transition information and training materials available in other languages, particularly Spanish.

In addition, parent centers stress that they lack the resources to fully meet the needs of families of transition-age youth. In all three consecutive surveys conducted by the TATRA Project over the past decade, parent centers identified a strong need for additional staff specializing in transition, career development and vocational rehabilitation issues. Many survey respondents also commented that additional information and technical assistance, without funding to hire and train transition specialists would not significantly increase their capacity to meet the needs of transition-aged youth with disabilities and their families.

However, the need for more widespread transition-focused parent training is reinforced by two recent national studies examining the current state of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for transition-age youth with disabilities. An overarching theme of interviews with stakeholder groups conducted for the National Council on Disability was the lack of information about the transition process and VR that is made available to students and families. Stakeholders reported that families of youth with disabilities are often unaware that their children may be eligible for VR services. There was also a shared perception that it was unlikely that educators would include a referral for VR services in a student's IEP if families were not already aware of the VR program (NCD, 2008). Likewise, the lack of parent and family involvement was one of the most consistently identified barriers to providing effective transition services reported by VR directors responding to a 2007 national survey.

Technical assistance providers can address the training and information needs of parent centers, but the real challenge is how policymakers and administrators will respond to the unmet need for additional resources in economically uncertain times. The priorities of parent centers identified through this survey can help them direct resources where they are most needed.



# About the TATRA Project

PACER's Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) Project provides technical assistance to parent training programs that are part of a Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) initiative to provide training to families of individuals with disabilities.

Parent training programs served by TATRA have helped families in Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin over the past 16 years. (Parent centers located in these states have received some RSA funding for parent training during this time, but no more than seven parent training programs have been funded by RSA in any one grant year.) RSA-funded parent training programs teach families how they can help youth with disabilities:

- prepare for employment, postsecondary education, and independent living
- access vocational rehabilitation and other adult service systems
- work effectively with professionals

## Why Parent Training on Transition and Vocational Rehabilitation?

Families provide important supports for their sons and daughters with disabilities long after they reach adulthood. Because they know their youth's strengths and interests so well, families can make critical contributions to the career development and vocational rehabilitation process. In addition to expressing the expectation that their young person will be capable of working as an adult, family members also can advocate for high school work-based learning opportunities, facilitate community volunteer experiences, help youth select courses that lead to their career goal, encourage youth to graduate and go on to postsecondary education, visit college campuses, participate in job search activities, and help youth understand and interact with adult social service systems. These are just a few examples of how families can help youth achieve successful employment outcomes.

A national network of parent centers authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) helps parents of children with disabilities access early childhood services and a free appropriate public education from grade school through high school. Once students leave the special education system, however, they and their families may be unsure where to find help with issues such as employment, postsecondary education, and independent living. They also may need help accessing supports through adult service systems such as vocational rehabilitation.

## The Rehabilitation Act and Parent Training

Congress recognized that youth with disabilities and their families needed information and training on career development, employment, higher education, and adult service systems. It first authorized funding for Parent Information and Training Programs address these issues in the 1992 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, however, budget constraints have limited the number of such programs.

## TATRA Services to Parent Training Programs

TATRA offers a variety of services that help the RSA-funded parent training programs achieve their goals. TATRA consults with each program annually to identify and help meet each project's individual and shared needs. These services include information dissemination, referral and networking, on-site consultation, materials review, an annual conference, monthly teleconferences, and weekly electronic news updates.

## Visit the TATRA Project Online

[PACER.org/tatra](https://pacer.org/tatra)

# Appendix: *Survey Questions*

## 1. Purpose

The TATRA Project is conducting this survey to learn about the transition, career development and vocational rehabilitation issues that families are seeking help with. This information will help the TATRA Project and other technical assistance providers to:

1. Identify emerging and ongoing issues that families of transition-age youth with disabilities are struggling with;
2. Focus resources on areas of greatest need;
3. Develop tools to help parent centers work with families on these issues;
4. Inform policymakers about the training and information needs of families of youth with disabilities, and the resources needed by parent centers to meet these needs.

Survey results will be published online and available to all who are interested.

About the TATRA Project:

The Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) Project has been funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) since 1994. TATRA coordinates technical assistance activities provided to Parent Information and Training Programs also funded by RSA. Parent centers funded by the Office of Special Education Programs also benefit from TATRA Project activities such as the Reference Points e-news service featuring resources and updates to help parent organizations, advocates and professionals better serve adolescents and young adults with disabilities and their families. You can sign up for Reference Points or access many other transition resources from our web site at [www.pacer.org/tatra/](http://www.pacer.org/tatra/)

## 2. Career Development

Please indicate to what degree information and resources on the career development topics below would help your center better serve the families of transition-age youth with disabilities.

### **Promising Practices that prepare youth with disabilities for employment**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Career and technical education program alternatives**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Self employment options for youth with disabilities**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Work incentives to keep Social Security (medical) benefits while working**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Supported/customized employment for youth with significant disabilities**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Vocational assessments**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **To what degree do you need funding for additional staff specializing on career development and vocational rehabilitation issues in order to meet the needs of families of transition-age youth?**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### 3. Education

Please indicate to what degree additional information and resources on the topics below would help your center better meet the needs of the families of middle- and high-school students with disabilities.

#### **Promoting the achievement and engagement of middle school youth**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

#### **Parent and student-friendly materials on transition provisions of IDEA-04 (e.g. Summary of Performance)**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

#### **Including students with disabilities in standards-based assessments**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

#### **Preparing youth for postsecondary education**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

#### **Diploma options and ramifications**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

#### **Disability provisions of the 2008 Higher Education Act**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

#### **Postsecondary education options**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

## 4. Youth Development and Leadership

Please indicate to what degree additional information and resources on the topics below would help your center better meet the needs of the families of middle- and high-school students with disabilities.

### **Strategies to help parents promote the self-determination of youth**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Providing information and training to youth as well as their parents (e.g. Self-Directed IEPs, the Americans with Disabilities Act, etc.)**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Best practices in health management for youth and young adults with disabilities**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Integrating youth leadership opportunities into Parent Center programs**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Strategies to help parents talk with their youth with disabilities about sexuality**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### **Outreach to youth with disabilities using new technology (e.g. social networking sites, hand-held devices)**

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

## 5. Connecting Activities

Please indicate to what degree additional information and resources on the topics below would help your center better meet the needs of the families of middle- and high-school students with disabilities.

### **Family-friendly information about vocational rehabilitation services**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

### **Examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

### **Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of foster care**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

### **Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of the juvenile justice system**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

### **Patient-centered models of adult health care/medical home initiatives**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

### **Housing options for young adults with disabilities**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

### **Access to transportation services**

Very Important     Important     Neutral     Low Importance     Not Important

## 6. Family Involvement and Leadership

Please indicate to what degree additional information and resources on the topics below would help your center better meet the needs of the families of middle- and high-school students with disabilities.

### Parent center and state vocational rehabilitation agency partnerships

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### Serving effectively on your State Rehabilitation Council

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### Serving effectively on your Statewide Independent Living Council

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### Preparing parents to participate in policy development and systems change

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### Serving transition-age youth and their families from culturally diverse and new immigrant families

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

### Transition materials in other languages

Very Important    Important    Neutral    Low Importance    Not Important

What languages?

## 7. Additional Questions

**Is there a need for disability specific information on transition? If so, which disability populations?**

Yes

No

If yes, what populations?

**In your opinion, what are the two to three areas related to transition and vocational rehabilitation that are of greatest concern to parents in your area?**

**What additional knowledge or materials does your parent center need in order to meet the above concerns of parents more effectively?**

## 8. Format of Information

What are the ways you would most like to receive information on topics related to transition?  
(Check all that apply.)

### Technology

- Web sites
- Listservs
- Social networking sites
- Blogs
- CDs
- Webinars
- Other (Please specify)

### Materials

- Workshop curricula
- Newsletters
- DVDs
- Fact Sheets
- Other (please specify)

### Trainings

- Training of Trainers
- National Parent Center Conference
- Regional Parent Center Conferences
- TATRA Annual Conference
- Topical Institutes
- Workshops
- Other (please specify)

## 9. Contact Information (Optional)

You must enter your contact information below to be included in the drawing to attend the 2010 TATRA National Conference.

### Please complete the following information:

Name:

Parent Center:

State:

Email Address:

# Appendix: Rehabilitation Services Administration Funded Parent Training Programs, 2007-2012

## CURRENTLY FUNDED PROJECTS

### **Exceptional Parents Unlimited**

4440 N. First St.  
Fresno, CA 93726  
559-229-2000  
info@exceptionalparents.org  
exceptionalparents.org

### **Family Network On Disabilities Of Florida**

2196 Main St., Suite K  
Dunedin, FL 34698  
727-523-1130  
fnd@fndfl.org  
fndfl.org

### **Maine Parent Federation**

P.O. Box 2067  
Augusta, ME 04338-2067  
207-623-2144  
parentconnect@mpf.org  
mpf.org

### **Missouri Parents Act (MPACT)**

8301 State Line Rd., Suite 204  
Kansas City, MO 64114  
816-531-7070  
info@ptimpact.org  
ptimpact.org

### **PACER Center, Inc.**

8161 Normandale Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044  
952-838-9000  
PACER.org

### **Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center**

100 N. Washington St., Suite 234  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
703-923-0010  
partners@peatc.org  
peatc.org

## The WIN-MILL Regional Training Program

### **Family Resource Center On Disabilities**

20 E. Jackson Blvd., Room 300  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-939-3513  
info@frcd.org  
frcd.org

### **IN\*SOURCE**

1703 S. Ironwood Dr.  
South Bend, IN 46613  
574-234-7101  
insource@insource.org  
insource.org

### **Parents Sharing Parents' Support**

PO Box 1162  
Westphalia, MI 48894  
989-587-6756; 517-648-0105

### **Wisconsin FACETS**

2714 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Dr.  
Milwaukee, WI 53212  
414-374-4645  
wifacets.org

# Appendix B: Transition Responses

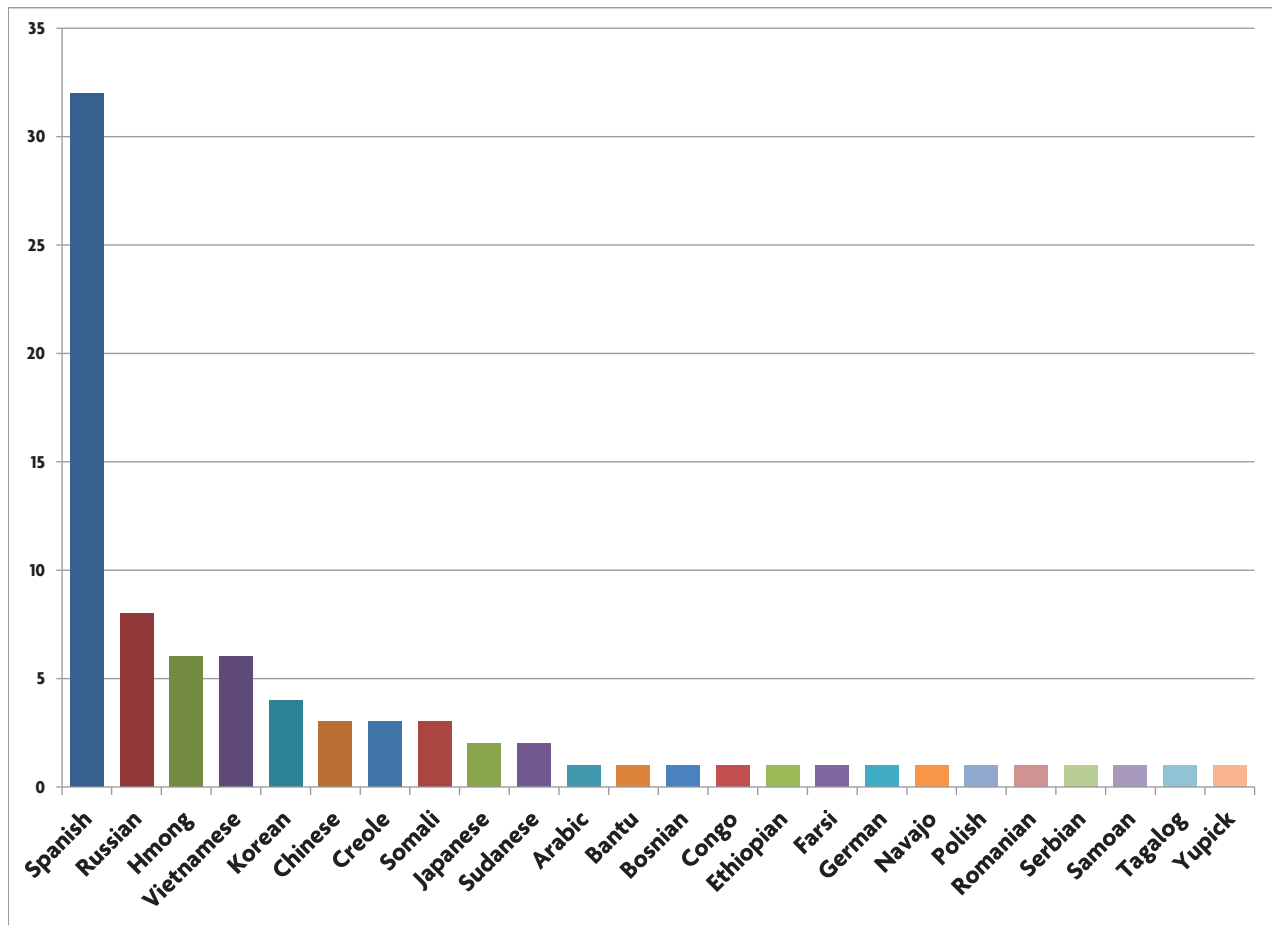
| TATRA Transition Needs Survey 2009  | Average Rating | Very Important (4) | Important (3) | Neutral (2) | Low Importance (1) | Not at All Important (0) |  | Total # of Responses |
|---|----------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT</b>   |                |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| <b>1. Promising Practices that prepare youth with disabilities for employment</b>   | 3.54           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 59.3%              | 38.3%         | 1.2%        | 0.0%               | 1.2%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 48                 | 31            | 1           | 0                  | 1                        |  | 81                   |
| <b>2. Career and technical education program alternatives</b>   | 3.49           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 54.3%              | 43.2%         | 1.2%        | 0.0%               | 1.2%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 44                 | 35            | 1           | 0                  | 1                        |  | 81                   |
| <b>3. Internship and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities</b>   | 3.56           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 61.7%              | 35.8%         | 0.0%        | 1.2%               | 1.2%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 50                 | 29            | 0           | 1                  | 1                        |  | 81                   |
| <b>4. Self employment options for youth with disabilities</b>   | 3.13           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 38.0%              | 41.8%         | 17.7%       | 0.0%               | 2.5%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 30                 | 33            | 14          | 0                  | 2                        |  | 79                   |
| <b>5. Work incentives to keep Social Security (medical) benefits while working</b>  | 3.39           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 55.0%              | 32.5%         | 10.0%       | 1.3%               | 1.3%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 44                 | 26            | 8           | 1                  | 1                        |  | 80                   |
| <b>6. Supported/customized employment for youth with significant disabilities</b>   | 3.54           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 61.7%              | 33.3%         | 3.7%        | 0.0%               | 1.2%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 50                 | 27            | 3           | 0                  | 1                        |  | 81                   |
| <b>7. Vocational assessments</b>  | 3.41           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 55.6%              | 33.3%         | 8.6%        | 1.2%               | 1.2%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 45                 | 27            | 7           | 1                  | 1                        |  | 81                   |
| <b>8. To what degree do you need funding for additional staff specializing on career development and vocational rehabilitation issues in order to meet the needs of families of transition-age youth?</b> | 3.59           |                    |               |             |                    |                          |  |                      |
| Response Percent  |                | 72.5%              | 16.3%         | 10.0%       | 0.0%               | 1.3%                     |  |                      |
| Response Count  |                | 58                 | 13            | 8           | 0                  | 1                        |  | 80                   |

| EDUCATION  |      |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
|--|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|--|----|
| <b>9. Promoting the achievement and engagement of middle school youth</b>  | 3.37 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 50.0% | 39.7% | 9.0%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 39    | 31    | 7     | 0    | 1    |  |    |
| <b>10. Parent and student-friendly materials on transition provisions of IDEA-04 (e.g. Summary of Performance)</b>                                   | 3.53 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 60.3% | 34.6% | 3.8%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 47    | 27    | 3     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>11. Including students with disabilities in standards-based assessments</b>   | 3.09 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 33.8% | 44.2% | 20.8% | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 26    | 34    | 16    | 0    | 1    |  | 77 |
| <b>12. Preparing youth for postsecondary education</b>   | 3.41 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 50.0% | 43.6% | 5.1%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 39    | 34    | 4     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>13. Diploma options and ramifications</b>   | 3.30 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 45.5% | 42.9% | 9.1%  | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 35    | 33    | 7     | 1    | 1    |  | 77 |
| <b>14. Disability provisions of the 2008 Higher Ed Act</b>   | 3.39 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 45.5% | 50.6% | 2.6%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 35    | 39    | 2     | 0    | 1    |  | 77 |
| <b>15. Postsecondary education options</b>   | 3.51 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 57.7% | 38.5% | 2.6%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 45    | 30    | 2     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP   |      |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>16. Strategies to help parents promote the self-determination of youth</b>  | 3.60 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 70.1% | 23.4% | 3.9%  | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 54    | 18    | 3     | 1    | 1    |  | 77 |
| <b>17. Providing information and training to youth as well as their parents (e.g. Self-Directed IEPs, the Americans with Disabilities Act, etc.)</b> | 3.54 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 62.8% | 30.8% | 5.1%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 49    | 24    | 4     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>18. Best practices in health management for youth and young adults with disabilities</b>  | 3.18 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 35.1% | 51.9% | 10.4% | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 27    | 40    | 8     | 1    | 1    |  | 77 |

|  |      |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
|--|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|--|----|
| <b>19. Integrating youth leadership opportunities into parent center programs</b>  | 3.19 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 37.7% | 48.1% | 11.7% | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 29    | 37    | 9     | 1    | 1    |  | 77 |
| <b>20. Strategies to help parents talk with their youth with disabilities about sexuality</b>  | 3.29 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 46.2% | 41.0% | 10.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 36    | 32    | 8     | 1    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>21. Outreach to youth with disabilities using new technology (e.g. social networking sites, hand-held devices)</b>  | 3.27 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 44.9% | 42.3% | 9.0%  | 2.6% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 35    | 33    | 7     | 2    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>CONNECTING ACTIVITIES</b>   |      |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>22. Family-friendly information about vocational rehabilitation services</b>  | 3.53 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 62.8% | 29.5% | 6.4%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 49    | 23    | 5     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>23. Examples of transition programs that blend funding from education, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, human services, and other systems</b>          | 3.50 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 62.8% | 26.9% | 9.0%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 49    | 21    | 7     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>24. Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of foster care</b>                 | 3.31 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 41.0% | 52.6% | 3.8%  | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 32    | 41    | 3     | 1    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>25. Meeting the education, career development, and independent living needs of youth with disabilities transitioning out of the juvenile justice system</b> | 2.41 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 46.2% | 43.6% | 9.0%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 36    | 34    | 7     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>26. Patient-centered models of adult health care/medical home initiatives</b>   | 2.84 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 19.7% | 52.6% | 22.4% | 2.6% | 2.6% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 15    | 40    | 17    | 2    | 2    |  | 76 |
| <b>27. Housing options for young adults with disabilities</b>  | 3.36 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>  |      | 53.2% | 33.8% | 10.4% | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>  |      | 41    | 26    | 8     | 1    | 1    |  | 77 |

|   |      |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|--|----|
| <b>28. Access to transportation services</b>  | 3.41 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 52.0% | 40.0% | 6.7%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 39    | 30    | 5     | 0    | 1    |  | 75 |
| <b>FAMILY INVOLVMENT AND LEADERSHIP</b>   |      |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>29. Parent center and state vocational rehabilitation agency partnerships</b>                              | 3.29 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 47.4% | 39.7% | 9.0%  | 2.6% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 37    | 31    | 7     | 2    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>30. Serving effectively on your State Rehabilitation Council</b>   | 3.00 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 26.9% | 50.0% | 20.5% | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 21    | 39    | 16    | 1    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>31. Serving effectively on your Statewide Independent Living Council</b>                                   | 2.93 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 26.3% | 44.7% | 26.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 20    | 34    | 20    | 1    | 1    |  | 76 |
| <b>32. Preparing parents to participate in policy development and systems change</b>                          | 3.35 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 48.7% | 41.0% | 7.7%  | 1.3% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 38    | 32    | 6     | 1    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>33. Serving transition-age youth and their families from culturally diverse and new immigrant families</b> | 3.42 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 55.1% | 34.6% | 9.0%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 43    | 27    | 7     | 0    | 1    |  | 78 |
| <b>34. Transition materials in other languages</b>  | 3.43 |       |       |       |      |      |  |    |
| <b>Response Percent</b>   |      | 52.6% | 40.8% | 5.3%  | 0.0% | 1.3% |  |    |
| <b>Response Count</b>   |      | 40    | 31    | 4     | 0    | 1    |  | 76 |

## What languages?



35. Is there a need for disability-specific information on transition? If so, which disability populations?

| Answer Options    | Response Percent | Response Count |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes               | 76.20%           | 48             |
| No                | 23.80%           | 15             |
| answered question |                  | 63             |
| skipped question  |                  | 52             |

36. In your opinion, what are the two to three areas related to transition and vocational rehabilitation that are of greatest concern to parents in your area? (See Appendix C for compilation of responses)

| Answer Options    | Response Count |
|-------------------|----------------|
| answered question | 68             |
| skipped question  | 14             |

37. What additional knowledge or materials does your parent center need in order to meet the above concerns of parents more effectively?

| Answer Options    | Response Count |
|-------------------|----------------|
| answered question | 58             |
| skipped question  | 24             |

**38. What are the ways you would most like to receive information on transition? (Check all that apply)**

**A. Technology**

| Answer Options          | Response Percent | Response Count |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Websites                | 81 %             | 61             |
| Listservs               | 52 %             | 39             |
| Social networking sites | 19 %             | 14             |
| Blogs                   | 8 %              | 6              |
| CDs                     | 59 %             | 44             |
| Webinars                | 67 %             | 50             |
| Other (Please specify)  | 11 %             | 8              |
| answered question       |                  | 75             |
| skipped question        |                  | 7              |

**Comments:** Short, downloadable 5-8 minute podcasts; conference calls are great!; wikis; we do not need the information; conference specifically about transition; brochures, pamphlets, written materials, many still do not have a home computer; Hard copies in various languages; by mail.

**B. Materials**

| Answer Options         | Response Percent | Response Count |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Workshop curricula     | 81.1%            | 60             |
| Newsletters            | 32.4%            | 24             |
| DVDs                   | 62.2%            | 46             |
| Fact Sheets            | 90.5%            | 67             |
| Other (please specify) | 5.4%             | 4              |
| answered question      |                  | 74             |
| skipped question       |                  | 8              |

**Comments:** Youth-friendly materials; we do not need information; Spanish [translated materials]; training curricula that are in useable formats—not just having the actual law printed on PowerPoint.

**C. Trainings**

| Answer Options                     | Response Percent | Response Count |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Training of Trainers               | 74.3%            | 55             |
| National Parent Center Conference  | 56.8%            | 42             |
| Regional Parent Center Conferences | 68.9%            | 51             |
| TATRA Annual Conference            | 56.8%            | 42             |
| Topical Institutes                 | 67.6%            | 50             |
| Workshops                          | 37.8%            | 28             |
| Other (please specify)             | 5.4%             | 4              |
| answered question                  |                  | 74             |
| skipped question                   |                  | 8              |

**Comments:** Webinars; we do not need the information; it is great if you can provide trainings on a conference call and web so all are staff can participate; in any of these formats as long as there is funding provided for centers to be able to send staff members.

# Appendix C: Responses to Open-Ended Questions

## 36. In your opinion, what are the two to three areas related to transition and vocational rehabilitation that are of greatest concern to parents in your area?

*(Responses were varied and to aid analysis were organized using the categories of the NCWD Guideposts for Success framework.)*

### EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- employment skills
- career development planning
- job training
- jobs
- jobs and educational opportunities that have dignity and foster independence
- job placement/careers and unsubsidized employment
- employment options
- job skills and an actual job for the individual
- there are not enough jobs for youth and young adults
- creative job carving
- the job market is drying up and limiting employment opportunities for youth with disabilities
- very limited supported job experience in areas of interest for individuals. Too often the individuals have to fit the job, not the job fitting the individuals
- employment options that fit the child
- meaningful employment
- while in high school, a lot of students do not have employment opportunities available to them. Parents either believe or are being told that getting youth opportunities for job experiences is the parents' responsibility
- helping families and service providers see past "sheltered workshops" as employment options for youth with disabilities
- options for meaningful (and where possible, competitive) employment, and supports for youth to engage in these
- development of employers' willingness to hire people with disabilities
- employment/supported employment options in rural areas
- supportive employment job coaches, board certified

behavior analysts, and related service personnel (OTs, etc.) working together to ensure students have work options

- work incentives
- keeping health care and SSI benefits while working
- meeting the needs of youth with severe/significant disabilities
- further options for students with more significant disabilities for programming and job development

### EDUCATION

#### Graduation Requirements:

- access to a meaningful diploma
- aligning the Michigan merit curriculum with transitional needs of youth with disabilities—career crosswalks, alternatives to the MMC diploma
- surveying students with disabilities who have dropped out of school to determine how we can re-engage them and how we could have prevented their disengagement
- diploma options
- an alternate accountability test and path to a diploma for students with persistent academic disabilities
- path to a diploma for students working on vocational skills

#### Interagency Collaboration:

- agencies collaborating together to smooth the transition process for parents and students
- how to partner with the school system and community agencies to prepare youth for transition
- how to get the most out of VR counselors time at IEPs and/or involvement with students—especially at an earlier age (i.e. not only last semester of senior year!). VR folks do not have a good understanding of IDEA and their role in IEPs, therefore families don't often think to use them as resources (nor do school staff)

#### Transition Planning in Schools:

- lack of transition planning or guidance in schools
- IEPs that fail to address transition issues for students who are 16 years of age and older
- career development planning
- job training
- assessment by the school district is often not individualized and is not based on true needs and

strengths that would sustain viable employment

- assessment is not always done by qualified people who understand the disability
- having a transition plan in HS
- working effectively with school personnel/IEP team in developing transition plans and opportunities for youth with disabilities
- not enough information provided by LEAs so that parents and students know when and how to prepare
- 16 is too late to start planning for transition
- parents are STILL not encouraged or supported by schools to prepare for anything other than a speedy graduation (or drop out)
- Individualized Transition Plans: ITPs in Louisiana tend to be referrals not plans. Students and parents need to be prepared to insist on true transition planning
- transition planning is hit or miss depending on the skills and training of the case manager
- lack of preparation for post-school options by schools
- concern that students are leaving the public school system with insufficient skills and education to meet the demands of adulthood
- transition for youth with severe disabilities is very vague in PA

#### **Transition Services:**

- there are some transition and voc programs for children with less severe disabilities, but they are lacking in quality and quantity
- full day transition programs
- while in high school, a lot of students do not have work-based learning/employment opportunities available to them. Parents either believe or are being told that getting youth opportunities for job experiences are the parents' responsibilities
- extended school year—students with ITPs may be eligible for ESY for employment or other goals. We must continue to support parents and students to have goals regarding employment, socialization, independent living that can be extended into the summer
- appropriate employment training, and extra-curricular inclusion activities
- independent living skills for students with learning disabilities, autism, and emotional-behavioral disorders are not being discussed and because the students can usually walk and talk, schools do not think these students have needs in these areas

## **CONNECTING ACTIVITIES**

### **Adult Services:**

- how can students get the supports they need after they graduate
- availability of service providers and agencies for support
- community agencies that provide services and health care
- adult services and support based on eligibility and available funding
- access to adult services
- given the state of the economy...cuts to essential services are already happening making limited options even more limited
- qualifying for and maintaining adult service programs
- no variety of options. It's just choice between segregated day programs with very little room for any self-determination
- understanding adult-services and self-directed supports for postsecondary employment, education and living
- funding is very limited, therefore more creative solutions to independence would be helpful
- clarification of eligibility, clarification of timelines, clarification of available services
- lack of vision from providers for what a student could do
- 15 - 20 year waiting lists for county-funded services (supported employment, adult living, etc)
- supports needed for young adults with the full range of disabilities
- blending funding streams to develop appropriate services
- greater use of person-centered planning and futures planning
- service coordination, coordination of agencies
- the silo tendency of the system
- collaboration of agencies that serve persons with disabilities
- agencies collaborating together to smooth the transition process for parents and students
- funding is very limited, therefore more creative solutions to independence would be helpful
- blending funding streams to develop appropriate services
- lack of support for youth with learning disabilities and mental health issues once they transition
- there are barely any services/assistance for students with less "severe" disabilities once they leave high school
- our system is too fragmented and hard to navigate—especially for culturally diverse populations

**Health:**

- health care and keeping medical coverage
- community agencies that provide services and health care
- meeting their children's health care needs
- medical issues for youth and adults
- health services
- health care

**Housing:**

- independent living options
- post high school living arrangements
- living arrangements
- supported living
- housing
- supported living—actual support, not just information about options
- housing is challenging in our area—very expensive
- housing
- independent/supportive housing
- housing
- a safe and acceptable place for the youths [sic] to live outside of the parent's home

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services:**

- more involvement/coordination between high school and voc rehab
- family-friendly information about vocational rehabilitation services
- strategies to navigate [the state vocational rehabilitation agency]
- the length of time the person with a disability needs a coach is often longer than allotted
- state has frozen new VR intakes
- understanding all of the services available from VR
- understanding of the process & access to qualified rehab counselors—evaluation process
- clarification of eligibility, clarification of timelines, clarification of available services
- limited VR services and limits on number of clients served
- drop in VR funding for education (i.e., help with books, transportation, tuition, etc.)
- continued unwillingness to support youth with most severe disabilities in our state/county
- who qualifies? How to keep a case open and the counselor involved?
- a consistent service across the state
- vocational rehab has a wait list and provides service based on priority of need, which means most specific learning disabilities, and health-impaired individuals

are not receiving assistance

- how to get the most out of VR counselors time at IEPs and/or involvement with students- especially at an earlier age (i.e., not only last semester of senior year!). VR folks do not have a good understanding of IDEA and their role in IEPs, therefore families don't often think to use them as resources (nor do school staff)
- voc rehab does nothing or at the least poorly trained
- lack of dollars

**Postsecondary Education:**

- higher education
- postsecondary education options
- support at college—community or four-year and technical/vocational programs
- postsecondary education and/or training
- access to higher education
- continuing education
- technical school options
- the transition stage from high school to college... better information when entering college
- the difference between high school entitlement and college rights
- how to access support in college

**Transportation:**

- transportation
- accessible transportation
- transportation issues
- meeting the needs of poor rural families
- in our area, there is a tremendous number of individuals who live in geographically isolated areas with little or no public transportation available

**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT****Parent Training and Leadership Development:**

- very little funding to address this need
- if the school does not mention it, parents do not know that transition and employment readiness should be discussed
- lack of understanding of the process
- parents don't understand their child is in "transition" until they are at the end of it
- parents in general do not know what transition is really about
- working effectively with school personnel/IEP team in developing transition plans and opportunities for youth with disabilities
- understanding the process and all agencies involved and their roles
- a critical area that is of great concern to parents is

how to articulate meaningful questions that guide the team to appropriate ongoing transition assessments. Parents often do not realize the importance of the role of carefully selected evaluation questions and how they may guide and determine an appropriate plan for a student

- often families hear about “having met credit requirements” and don’t have the knowledge of transition planning. Helping parents understand how to get assessments that utilize person-centered planning and what career and skill inventories/assessments can provide meaningful data to assist a young person in an appropriate transition plan
- parents are often under the impression that graduation occurs when credit requirements are met, often they are unaware that students need to have an opportunity to work toward meaningful transition goals based on ongoing age-appropriate assessments
- postsecondary objectives, appropriate employment training, and extra-curricular inclusion activities
- legal ramifications when the child reaches the age of majority
- parents don’t realize that youth need to sign consent forms
- parents need to be aware of options understanding adult services
- families need to know the options so they can make the best decisions for the future
- parents don’t realize adult services have waiting list—fear of no work for their young adult—fear of no opportunity for work experience
- how to meet their children’s health care needs
- parents don’t understand the shift from entitlement to eligibility
- adult services and support based on eligibility and available funding
- knowledge of transitional and vocational rehab services and programs and how to access them
- parents need to know what is available for their child in order for them to be as independent as possible
- preparing parents (leadership skills) to participate in policy development and making systems change
- when [guardianship] is needed, who needs it, how to start the process and how to pay for it
- issues of guardianship and conservatorship that have not yet been addressed
- guardianship options and financial planning
- the silo tendency of the system, parents don’t get included
- the importance of raising the bar on expectations/no

blame game—(parents won’t let [youth work because they] may lose benefits).

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### Self-advocacy:

- disclosure, explaining a disability, asking for accommodations, advocating for services
- self-advocacy/determination

### Independent Living:

- basic living skills; supported living; social opportunities
- raising expectations for students with disabilities
- parents need to know how to better prepare their kids while they are in school for postsecondary life

### 37. What additional knowledge or materials does your parent center need in order to meet the above concerns of parents more effectively?

## TRANSITION TOPICS

- creative ways parents can help their young adult to get work experience (doing chores at home, for the neighbor, volunteering)
- curriculum that helps educators and parents assist students in student-led IEPs
- resources and information about promising secondary education transition practices including school-supervised work experiences, mentoring/coaching, and functionally oriented programs that target occupationally specific skills, employability/workplace skills and academic skills
- better understanding on the crosswalks between the general education curriculum and career or technical education
- alternatives to academic achievement (i.e., apprenticeship programs)
- graduation requirements
- creative ideas for getting this info to parents to change their expectations of their sons and daughters and of the system of supports
- proactive futures planning
- families should be visiting adult agencies just like they visit colleges to learn and plan ahead. Parents are inadvertently led to believe that they will be handed off to an adult system
- we need to redirect the messaging to support collaborative partnerships but with guiding principles that encourage families to take the first step toward future planning.

- guide to vocational assessments; list of assessments, explanations of assessments, etc.
- roadmap of the [state vocational rehabilitation agency]—evaluation process; parent- and student-friendly guide to navigating [the state vocational rehabilitation agency]
- clear, consumer-friendly information for students on voc rehab services
- parents need to understand what voc rehabilitation does—more than a brochure
- resources and videos on transition/voc rehab
- postsecondary education, and vocational education training options
- how to find and weigh postsecondary options
- employment
- assisted and supported employment; self-employment opportunities and supports; information on strategies for different kind of abilities and interests; a wider choice of options for individuals with developmental disabilities
- info to help parents identify natural supports
- need to know community resources that are available and how to best utilize them; inform parents to make sure they sign any consent forms and sign up for services if needed
- health care issues
- home- and community-based waivers
- Medicaid, work incentives
- guardianship options and special needs trusts
- clear, parent-friendly information on SSI
- housing
- residential benefits
- Section 504
- legal briefings
- information or materials on public policy change
- materials highlighting practical application of best practices nationally

## **LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY**

- how to advocate for their young adult
- partnerships with service providers, families, [community-based organizations], other stakeholders to develop and implement meaningful transition programs in schools and communities
- how to effectively serve on boards to make the transition experience positive and worthwhile for the consumer
- effective networking to increase knowledge and gain new ideas about what works
- strategies to impact the bigger picture, examples of some effective practices in some tough situations

- how to unify parents of students with disabilities whose youth will not qualify for any or limited adult services
- RSA policy training for parent center staff would be helpful
- models and examples of collaborations between state [department of education, state vocational rehabilitation agency, and OSEP-funded parent centers]

## **FORMATS**

- 1- to 2-page handouts on all topics
- fact sheets
- parent- and student-friendly one-pagers
- more 1 page fact sheets—no one reads the long booklets anymore
- Checklists, not just things to read, but tools that are useful and that families can write on, mark up, and use as working documents
- workshop curricula
- PowerPoint presentations with best practices information
- reproducible materials or workshops
- best practice, research-based curricula and information
- training in alternative formats to meet the time constraints of families
- curriculum development that targets specific populations served
- step-by-step guide
- a book/pamphlet/brochure that is more like a road map, to give parents more clarification and direction(s)
- resources and videos on transition/voc rehabilitation
- family/student friendly materials; materials at low literacy levels (4th- through 6th-grade reading level)
- family- and student-friendly guide that is written at a 3rd-grade level that most students could understand
- more parent-friendly/easy-reading materials
- parent-friendly print materials; need information for parents and students that is easily understood and has direct applications
- transition materials in multiple languages
- youth-to-youth training on transition; youth training in self-advocacy
- materials that are targeted to the student and the role they need to play in the planning for their future. Parents often have a lifetime to understand the special education process, students...have as little as two years in many instances.
- parent and youth leadership materials and training that is activity-based with a direct focus on youth training
- trainings for youth and parents together on handing

over the primary responsibility for advocacy from parent to youth

- youth self-advocacy training and training for parents to “let go” in a safe way
- access to info/training that others have developed including TATRA, parent centers, OSEP, ALLIANCE, ... and other federally funded grants

## **FUNDING FOR TRANSITION-FOCUSED PARENT TRAINING**

- There are good materials out there, but our parent center does not have enough funding to purchase some of the materials that may have a cost.
- we would like to create a transition center here, but we need not only materials, we need a little funding.
- Funding to send staff to good conferences regarding transition is very limited.
- additional staff/dedicated staff person
- our center does not have enough staff to provide information and support to parents and youth, participate on voc. rehab, independent living, and state transition councils, and help schools personnel understand their role in the students’ transition process.
- It would be great to have a staff person dedicated to transition—we’d need additional funding for that, though. But, it is critical.
- We do not need any additional knowledge or information—we are very well informed. We have no funding to do this kind of work.
- Additional funding, such as an RSA-funded program in each center would be very cost-effective way to help centers provide quality services to families and youth. Our RSA-funded TILES Project with [Florida Network on Disabilities] provides a multitude of information on transition. Anything I have lacked, they have provided me with.



[PACER.org](https://www.pacer.org)