



Supporting Families Through the Transition Process

South Dakota Parent Connection

Connecting families who care for individuals (birth to age 26) with disabilities or special health care needs to information, training and resources in an environment of support, hope and respect.

Issues we can address:

Education/Special Education

Parenting Topics

Programs and Resources

Specific Disabilities or Health Conditions

Medicaid and Insurance

We Are Here to Help!

Email: sdpc@sdparent.org Website: www.sdparent.org

South Dakota Parent Connection

✓ Parent Training Information Center (PTI)

South Dakota Parent Connection, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that was founded in 1985 by a group of dedicated parents and professionals to provide training and information statewide to meet the needs of parents and families caring for individuals with disabilities.

Since 1985 South Dakota Parent Connection has served continuously as the state's only Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). In 2005 South Dakota Parent Connection partnered with the South Dakota Department of Education, Special Education Programs to establish the **Navigator Program**. In 2007 South Dakota Parent Connection received a grant to serve as the state's Family to Family Health Information Center (F2FHIC) and continues to serve as our state's F2FHIC.

✓ Navigator Program

The Navigator Program provides individualized guidance to parents who suspect or have a child with a disability, and school professionals, at no cost. The program is a partnership between the South Dakota Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and South Dakota Parent Connection. Working with a Navigator is an informal, time-limited, problem-solving process.

Navigators remain objective and neutral as they help both parents and school personnel.

✓ Family 2 Family Health Information Center (F2FHIC)

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) have (or are at increased risk for) a chronic, physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally. Because the health care needs of CYSHCN may be chronic and complex, parents and caregivers often struggle to find the resources and services their children need. The Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F HIC) provides information and guidance to families, and the professionals who serve them, to access services and resources.

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How Schools can Enhance Parent and Student Understanding and Participation in the IEP process

Betsy Drew

South Dakota Parent Connection, Outreach Specialist



Why are we here?

This is what we are hearing from parents:

Parent quote, "I don't know what I don't know"

- Parents are confused with the transition portion of the IEP.
- Parents are not understanding the vocabulary, acronyms, process, procedure, services available, community resources, etc.
- Parents are in a panic about their young adult's future.
- Parents are not aware of the services available from individuals that can attend their young adult's IEP meeting.
- Parents do not understand their responsibility in the transition plan process.
- Parents sign an IEP but not clear about what they signed.

Quick Review of the purpose of the IEP

Two main parts of the IEP requirement:

- First, the IEP Team jointly makes decisions about the student's **eligibility** and the **educational program**.
- Second, the IEP document is the **written record** of the decisions reached at the meeting.

The IEP meeting serves as: (purposes and function)

A **communication vehicle** – to jointly decide student's needs, services, outcomes, equal participants between parent/guardians and school personnel

An opportunity **to resolve any differences** – if needed through procedural safeguards

A **commitment of resources** – FAPE

A **management tool** – to provide appropriate services to meet individual learning needs

A **compliance and monitoring document** – to ensure FAPE

A **progress monitoring device** – to determine the progress made toward IEP goals and general classroom

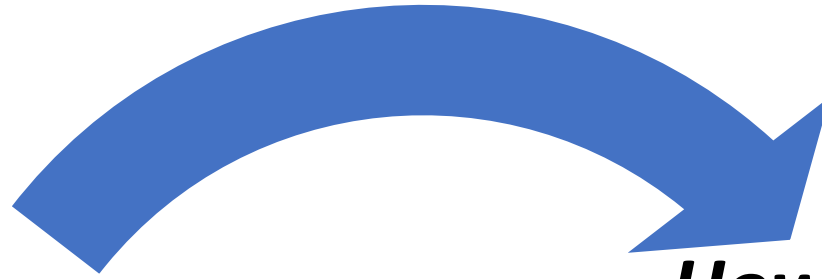
Things to ponder

- What do you do to develop a positive relationship with your families?
- Do your students understand their disability?
- Do your students own their disability?
- Do your students and their parent(s) understand how the disability impacts their life?
(supports they will need)
- How do you explain the Transition Plan to parents and students?
- Parents' realization that their role is shifting as their young person moves from high school to adult life, "Guide on the side." (can be emotional)

*Your guidance impacts the student and his/her parent.
Families are in uncharted territory.*

*(Discussion
from Handout)*

*How can I be
sure that the
IEP meets my
child's
Transition
needs?*



A Walk through the Transition Plan

Sections in the Transition Plan where parents seem to be most confused. You are familiar with the terms and process, but this is a whole new world for parents.

- Measurable Post Secondary Goals (MPSG) and their importance
- Course of Study
- Guardianship
- The difference between receiving a District Diploma or Certificate of Completion
(unclear understanding accommodation vs. modification and its impact)
- Coordinated Set of Activities
- Educational Goals and Objectives
- Accommodation/Modification
- Summary of Performance

ALL of It!! 😊

(Transition Plan template)

Measurable Post Secondary Goals (MPSG)

When we ask parents what their son/daughter's MPSGs are, generally they can't answer the question. They are not clear where to find them, and what they are.

- ✓ Guide the student and their family's understanding of the importance of MPSGs and how the goals guide the Transition Plan.
- ✓ Explain how you determined the goals (transition assessments, surveys, interviews, inventories, parent input, etc.) related to the areas of employment, education or training, independent living (where appropriate).
- ✓ Clearly letting the parent/student understand he/she is answering the question, *"What will I do after high school/post school?"* and it might change.

Please share with the group what has worked for you as you develop goals with your students and in your meetings.

Course of Study

The course of study is a multi-year description of the planned coursework to achieve the student's desired post-school goals, inclusive of the student's current grade through anticipated exit year (graduation or age 21).

- ✓ Share with parents when determining a course of study, the IEP team should ask the following question:

“Is this course of study aligned with the student’s postsecondary goals?”

Help parents understand how it all works toward the student’s goals.

- ✓ Share that the course of study is a map of what classes and experiences will benefit the student in reaching his/her MPSG. Be sure parents know it can be amended.
- ✓ Share that the course of study is dependent on the student’s interests, abilities, and needs.

What is your process with your students as you develop the course of study?

Guardianship

When parents are told to check into guardianship, they don't have any idea how to do it, who to contact, and are in a panic by the time they call us. They've been told to "check into guardianship."

- ✓ **When they call us, they ask how they would know if their son/daughter needs guardianship.**
- ✓ **They want to know who to contact, what the process is, how much it costs, will they need a lawyer?**
- ✓ **Please refer them to our website. We have recently published the booklet entitled, *Preparing for the Future . . . Understanding Guardianship Alternatives*. Parents can request a copy at no expense.**

How do you answer your family's questions regarding guardianship?

Diploma

Parents are very unclear about what impacts a regular high school diploma and how or why a student would receive a certificate in place of the regular high school diploma.

- ✓ Clearly explain to families the implications on receiving a high school diploma when course work requirements are modified. Please be sure parents are fully informed.
- ✓ It is important to explain to parents in some cases the advantages of their son/daughter not receiving a high school diploma. Help them understand the benefit.
- ✓ As you review the course of study each year be sure parents understand the modified graduation courses are brought forward each year and their son/daughter qualifies for an 18-21 program.
- ✓ As you visit with your student and his/her family, clearly discuss whether the student is on track for graduation.

Please share your conversation with parents on this topic.

Coordinated Set of Activities

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities that promote movement from school to post-school activities.

Parents are not clear why they are included in the activities. Clearly share with parents their part in helping their youth meet their course of study and the post-secondary goals.

- ✓ Help parents understand to achieve some goals the school cannot achieve them alone. Explain how their role looks.**
- ✓ Help parents understand the activity and how you track progress.**
- ✓ Help parents understand the activities are developed because they tie back to each of the student's MPSGs. Help student/parent understand why the activities are appropriate.**

How do you explain the Set of Activities to your families?

Educational Goals and Objectives

When sharing the annual goals share how the student will be expected to complete the skill. Clearly state the specific skill or observable behavior you will expect the student to perform and how the goal supports MPSG.

- ✓ Parents in some cases are not understanding their son/daughter's actual ability/performance level.

(They are not understanding reports that indicate S-Sufficient with no explanation, P-Proficient with no explanation, they are not sure what their child can and cannot do?)

- ✓ When reporting the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) in a previous section on the IEP connect how the strengths support the MPSGs and how the needs could/will impact the MPSGs and emphasize the PLAAFP reflects current achievement/performance. This is the time to emphasize how the student's disability impacts their performance. Explaining why _____ is hard for them.
- ✓ Explain to the parent how the skill is linked to the student's assessment, to the curriculum and content standards, and his/her MPSGs.

It is tough to, "tell it like it is." How do you send the message of a positive future for your student even though you sometimes have to deliver difficult information. How do you handle it?

Accommodations, Modifications and/or Supports

Parents do not understand the difference between accommodation and modification. Please take the time to help parents understand the impact modification has on receiving a high school diploma.

✓ **Accommodation** – How the student is taught

How information is presented, how the student responds, what environment is needed for student to learn, what timing and scheduling of the instruction is best for the student.

✓ **Modification** – What the student is taught

Changes and reduces the expectation for learning or demonstration of same knowledge.

✓ **Supports** – Available for student and educators allowing the student to access curriculum with peers.

Supports for the student and school personnel necessary for the student to advance toward annual goals, general curriculum, and educated with other students both with and without disabilities.

How do you make sure everyone knows how the accommodations/modifications/supports will be implemented?

Reflection Discussion

- How do you develop your relationship with the students and families you serve?
- As families enter high school how do you familiarize the parent and young adult with the Transition portion of the IEP?
 - Process
 - Vocabulary/Acronyms
 - Services
 - Programs available
- How do you promote self-advocacy within the IEP meeting and throughout your classroom/building?
- Do you send the IEP draft to parents prior to the IEP meeting?
- When do families receive the Summary of Performance?

Thank you for attending the session!



South Dakota Parent Connection

SDPC – South Dakota Parent Connection WWW.sdparent.org

TSLP – Transition Services Liaison Project www.tslp.org

ILC – Independent Living Choices www.ILCCHOICESW.org

VR – Vocational Rehabilitation <https://dhs.sd.gov/rehabservices/vr.aspx>

DOL – Department of Labor <https://dlr.sd.gov/>

PACER CENTER Champion for Children with Disabilities www.pacer.org

South Dakota Department of Special Education Regional Reps.

www.doe.sd.gov/sped/

Special Education Programs vary in an regional system.

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
Public School Districts	Public School Districts	Public School Districts	Public School Districts	Public School Districts	Public School Districts	Public School Districts
Black Hills	Big Horn	Brookings	Butte	DeWitt	Edwards	Glenn
Butte	DeWitt	Edwards	Glenn	Hamlin	Lead	Minnehaha
DeWitt	Edwards	Glenn	Hamlin	Lead	Minnehaha	Sioux Falls
Edwards	Glenn	Hamlin	Lead	Minnehaha	Sioux Falls	Wahpeton
Glenn	Hamlin	Lead	Minnehaha	Sioux Falls	Wahpeton	Yankton
Hamlin	Lead	Minnehaha	Sioux Falls	Wahpeton	Yankton	
Lead	Minnehaha	Sioux Falls	Wahpeton	Yankton		
Minnehaha	Sioux Falls	Wahpeton	Yankton			
Sioux Falls	Wahpeton	Yankton				
Wahpeton	Yankton					
Yankton						



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