

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Fact Sheet for Virginia's Parents Family Engagement in the Transition Process

The Importance of Parent Involvement

Research has shown that family involvement is a greater predictor of successful outcomes for youth than income or social status.

- Students with one or more parents who participated in the IEP meetings during 11th and 12th grades are more **likely to be engaged in post-school employment**.
- Students with parents who had **high expectations** are more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education and employment.
- When families remain involved in their children's middle school and high school education, students are more likely to **attend school regularly**, have a **positive attitude** about school, earn **higher grades**, **score higher** on standardized tests, **graduate** from high school, and **enroll in postsecondary programs**. (Henderson, A.T., & Mapp, K.L.)

Meet Parents Where They Are

Families know their child best and are their best advocates. They have a big-picture view of their child and will be present to support the student long after they leave high school. Family involvement should be encouraged and respected. It is also important to know that a family's capacity to be involved may vary based on their individual life circumstances. Many families are anxious and even fearful about their child's future. They may...

- ✓ Have difficulty seeing their child as an adult and moving toward independence or be concerned that the child won't be independent.
- ✓ Be overwhelmed trying to understand all the different services systems, especially the adult services systems which are complex.
- ✓ Be concerned about giving up control. It is often hard for some parents to let go and let their child try new things and even fail at them.
- ✓ Be exhausted from years of advocacy on behalf of their child, some of which may have been negative or frustrating experiences.
- ✓ Be concerned about the financial assistance and benefits their child needs for long term care.

References/Resources

[Family Engagement - Iris Center](#)

[Parenting Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities: Becoming the Mentor, Advocate and Guide Your Young Adult Needs - NCET](#)

[Prepare Your Child for Age of Majority and Transfer of Rights - PACER Center](#)

[Educate, Collaborate, and Engage – CTI Fast Fact](#)

[Why Parent-Teacher Engagement is Critical to Student Success - PEATC Fact Sheet](#)



Contact Us:

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Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

10 Ways to Ensure Family Engagement and Involvement

1. Provide **multiple opportunities for participation** and input even if at first engagement efforts are unsuccessful. Look at every interaction as a chance for a **fresh start** for family involvement and engagement especially if there has been negative interaction. Help parents **learn how to be involved**.
2. Give families **sufficient notice** of meetings and **provide paperwork** like evaluations or Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in advance.
3. Make sure families know that **you truly want them to participate**. Brainstorm ideas together rather than coming to the meeting with an already developed plan. A draft is okay as long as it truly is a draft.
4. Make sure families and students **are really listened** to during meetings. Be aware of your **body language**; avoid **side conversations** and ensure a **welcoming environment**.
5. Present information in a **clear and understandable way**. Be conversational and don't use jargon. Patiently **answer questions** or **go over information** as needed. Families may be hesitant to ask questions so make sure you are paying attention to body language and other cues to see if they may need help.
6. Demonstrate respect for the family's **culture and values**. Avoid assumptions and show that you have **high expectations** for the student.
7. Be sure parents understand as early as elementary school, the **impact of decisions** regarding statewide assessments and diploma options that can affect their child's future.
8. Talk to parents about the importance of **building self-advocacy skills** in their child and help them to do. Encourage **student participation** in all IEP meetings.
9. Work with parents to **understand the transition process**, including the **transfer of rights** at age 18. And advise parents of ways to stay involved with their child's education by **offering resources and information**, but don't provide legal advice or try to steer parents in a certain direction.
10. **Talk with parents and students** about the future. What are their concerns? What are they proud of? What are their dreams? **Never squash dreams** even as you try to look at realistic alternatives. Work with families to keep the **End in Mind** and work towards the desired destination for that student.

What do Families Need and Want?

- Positive, consistent interpersonal support and understanding
- Respect, honesty, and integrity
- Knowledge and trust that the team is working on behalf of the student
- Real conversations in which parents feel as though they are being heard and listened to
- Information on options, supports, and services that will benefit their child
- Ability to work together to ensure their child will be healthy, happy, safe, and a full community member with friendships and relationships
- Feeling that they belong and are an integral part of their child's education and transition team

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life. For more information about us, please contact:

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The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M140013-18. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.

