



WEBCAST TAKEAWAYS

INCREASING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

SUMMARY

In our June 2019 webcast, two parents of young people with disabilities shared their sons' transition experiences and offered advice on how school staff can increase family engagement in schools. See below some highlights of our conversation with Janet Shouse and Ann Curl.

Advice for families to help them prepare for an IEP meeting:

- Families should consider taking someone with them (spouse, grandparent, friend, advocate) because IEP meetings can be emotional.
- Families have 14 days to sign the IEP.
- If families do not agree with the IEP after those 14 days, they need to make the choice to file due process or go to mediation.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Advice for school districts on how to increase family involvement:

- Have a postsecondary education night for students with disabilities
- Include different service providers in parent nights so they can share their information with parents
- Offer meetings with district level special education employees
- Be mindful of scheduling, offer things on weekends
- Offer childcare
- Find a form of communication that works best between parents and teachers

LEARN MORE

- IDD Toolkit.** Offers trainings for medical professionals and families on how to better serve adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. <http://iddtoolkit.vkcsites.org>
- Rise to Work: An Insider's Look at Disability and Employment.** Contains information that families and individuals with disabilities may be interested in that will ultimately lead to employment. www.tennesseeworks.org/blog/
- STEP of Tennessee.** Offers support and training for parents. www.tnstep.org
- Tennessee Disability Coalition.** Teaches parents about education, rights, responsibilities, and inclusion. <https://www.tndisability.org>
- Wrightslaw.** An organization that has books on law and advocacy and does trainings. <https://www.wrightslaw.com>
- Disability Rights Tennessee.** Provides information & referral, advocacy services, and legal representation. disabilityrightstn.org
- Transition TN's Supports and Partnerships Course.** Comprehensive information on agencies and organizations that supports individuals with disabilities. transitiontn.org/supports-partnerships/