



Arkansas Transition Services Newsletter

Fall 2017

Person Centered Planning

by Paul Johnston

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So you have a student for which you have really been having a hard time coming up with a Transition Plan. You have given assessments but the student still doesn't know what they want to do, or the parents and student are not on the same page for post-school???

Consider a Person Centered Plan. Some may also know this as Futures Planning or MAPS.

A Person Centered Plan is a facilitated conference all about the student. Typically the attendees will include the student (always must be present), parents, teachers, grandparents, other relatives, friends, pastors, waiver workers,

anyone who works with the student or has a unique perspective on that student.

The facilitator goes through a number of questions gathering information about the student. Things like the student's history, likes and dislikes, choices, ideal day, needs, become part of a "map." Additionally, an action plan is always part of the meeting—even if the plan is to come back and revisit maps or do additional maps. It can take a couple of hours, but is worth every minute!

All the gathered information can be used to help write a realistic Transition Plan for the student. Plus, it counts as a Transition Assessment!

If this sounds like something you would like to try, contact your Transition Consultant and they can help you get one set up.

Arkansas Transition Services also provides periodic statewide trainings so you can learn to facilitate your own Person Centered Plans!

Take a look at this sample map!

Personal Preferences

Likes

- Pizza
- Chocolate
- Jerry Neels
- Food!!!
- Christian Rock – FFH, Sonic Flood
- Music
- Internet Time
- Animals
- Horseback Rides
- Camp
- Shopping
- Library
- Scrapbooking
- Money
- Boys

Dislikes

- Baths
- Being Talked About
- Intellikey Keyboard
- Loud Noises
- Clothing – Sensory/Tight
- AFO's – Braces
- Wheel Chair
- Math
- Told what to do
- Change!!!
- Leg Shots

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ATS Summer Sessions

by Bonnie Boaz

Summer Trainings were HOT this past summer for Arkansas Transition Services. Consultants reported an increase in attendance at all of their trainings, which is a great thing!

Each summer (in addition to when trainings are specifically requested), Arkansas Transition Services hits the road and offers educators the chance to get more in-depth on transition and topics surrounding transition. This summer was no different as we presented a training on transition planning that included the new paperwork, "Transition Toolkit Training." This training takes participants through all the transition planning components and provides hands-on activities that allow for taking assessment results to write measurable, post-secondary goals. Consultants also provided the, "Transition Planning: Considerations for Students on the Autism Spectrum and Students with Intellectual Disabilities." We revised this training and included additional resources that many teachers found extremely beneficial. It is a great way to think about how to approach transition planning for individuals on the spectrum or with intellectual disabilities! Thinking outside the box is critical!

In addition to the annual coop trainings held, we also had our 11th annual College Bound Arkansas camp at the University of Central Arkansas. For three days in June, students with disabilities who are interested in going to college attended the camp to learn about self-determination, study/organizational skills, college classes, financial aid, and many other topics. Best of all, they made friendships and got a taste of how the college experience can help them grow in the future. The Freshman Fifteen was held the day before CBA to give 8th-10th graders the chance to learn what they can expect as they consider attending college.

Finally, the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership (AITP), held the 5th annual Summer Connections—a chance for special educators to come and learn about the services of various agencies in our state. It was our largest attendance to date and we hope it continues to grow.

We want to thank those who took time to join us this summer and learn more about what is so important to students with disabilities: transitioning to life after high school! We know it is hard sometimes to get all the professional development you need in the summer. Please be aware that we will provide any type of transition training to you at any time of the year—you just have to ask! Our services are free of charge, but school districts must request specific training. We are more than happy to work with you throughout the year and we really want to—this is the best way to ensure our work is always improving and providing the most we can for students with disabilities.

Did you miss your summer opportunity to get transition training? Have some questions related to transition? Do you want to make sure your students' transition plans are the best they can be? Check out all the ways we can work with you to help you improve your transition programming—call your consultant today or go to our website, www.arkansastransition.com, and click on "Meet Your Consultant."

Also, if you are currently not receiving emails from Jennifer Bibel, including information on trainings and our newsletter, please email Jennifer.Bibel@arkansas.gov and let her know to add you to our list!

Have a great year!

Each newsletter we will alternate putting the spotlight on an exceptional district or an exceptional student in transition. If you would like to submit one of these, please let us know! Our next newsletter deadline is Nov 1.

Transition Assessments Recommended for the Start of the School Year

by Karen Randolph

Transition Assessments are recommended to be completed through the school year; however, you may want to select assessments that help in writing and seeing students' progress during the year in Career/Employment, Education/Training and Independent Living Skills/Community Participation. The following assessments can assist you, the student and parent in writing a Plan and seeing how much progression is accomplished within the year.

Brigance Transition Skills Inventory can be used as a Pre/ Post assessment. It can give a snapshot of where the student is functioning in the beginning as a pretest and at the end as a posttest. It includes in-depth assessments of job-oriented, academic, and functional life-skills in the perspective of employment, post-secondary education, and real-world situations.

Casey Life Skills is a free online assessment that can be used as a Pre/ Post assessment. With CLS you get two different viewpoints, one from a caregiver, and the other from the teacher. These different points of view determine if the student can transfer skills from one environment to another. This assessment covers all areas in transition planning.

AIR is also free and provides information on the student's ability to obtain their needs and wants in life. There's a form for the student, teacher and parent. This is one more test that can be used as a pre/posttest. The AIR assess all areas of transition and also assist in writing activities for each area.

Parent Transition Survey is free and helps parents to explore their child's needs and expectation for the future. It covers all areas related to transition needs. The Survey helps parents to think about Guardianship and Financial support or trust options. Transportation is another area that parents can address as well as Recreation and Leisure needs. This assessment will help you understand the parent's point of view on their child's future and make sure parents have input in their child's plan.

Transition Student Interview 2014 is another free informal assessment. Students are given the opportunity to express their desires, preferences and needs. The TSI will help determine what other information is needed to assist in writing an effect Transition Plan.

These are just a few assessments that can assist in writing and seeing progression toward the student's Transition Plan. If you need assistance in finding the appropriate transition assessments for your students, please contact your Transition Consultant. Your consultant has a library of assessments for you to check out and try out! Let us know if you would like to see what we have in our libraries!

CIRCLES

by Jennifer Williams

With a strong desire and willingness to do something more in the transition process, Harrisburg High School, with guidance from Arkansas Transition Services and National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), implemented CIRCLES (Communicating Interagency Relationships and Collaborative Linkages for Exceptional Students) this past spring. The CIRCLES model has three levels of interagency collaboration: a community level team, a school level team, and the IEP team. The first school level team meeting was held in April with six students individually presenting to a panel consisting of members from nine different agencies and organizations. The student's parents were invited to attend their child's presentation as well. Each student designed and shared a PowerPoint highlighting the student's likes, dislikes, and dreams for the future. After the presentation, the panel asked questions of the student and discussed what the agency could help provide for the student. During the presentations notes were made for follow up and to take information back to the IEP team.

Thoughts on the first CIRCLES presentations were best articulated by Harrisburg High School Principal Brandon Craig: "I saw relief, hope, and encouragement on the parents' faces. It was absolutely incredible! Each of those students had an entire support staff who wants nothing more than to help them be successful. It was an emotional day to say the least. I am so very proud of this department and of our school. We are in the business of changing student's lives and today, this department and our school knocked it out of the park!

Harrisburg will continue serving as a CIRCLES pilot school for the state during the 2017-2018 school year. Way to go Harrisburg!!

Want to know more about CIRCLES? Please let us know! We have a few districts who will be starting the CIRCLES program this year – we'd love you to join them!

Financial Aid and Scholarships

by Carrie Tuttle

It is essential for **ALL** seniors to apply for Federal Financial Aid no matter the type of postsecondary education the student is planning to participate in. Federal Financial Aid is the doorway to other programs and services. The window for FAFSA application begins in October of each year, so do not forget to encourage your students to complete the forms with their families. You can go to <https://fafsa.ed.gov> to start the applications process.

Applying for FAFSA allows students to be considered for scholarships and other financial supports from postsecondary institutions and agencies. Have students speak with their guidance counselors for additional information about scholarships and other supports.

Scholarships can be available to many of your students. When the students have selected the career path they want to pursue make sure you have them investigate financial support options. Please go to <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships-and-programs/a-z/> for an A-Z list of scholarship/program options for students. One new program that needs to be investigated by your students is the Arkansas Futures Grant. Information about this new program can be found at <http://scholarships.adhe.edu/scholarships/detail/arfutures>.

Your students need to meet with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services no later than the end of their junior year/start of senior year to see if they will qualify for employment training/supports. If eligible, these supports could potentially include covering some/all of the cost of needed training.

If you have questions please feel free to reach out to your transition consultant and visit our website at <http://www.arkansastransition.com>

Transition Classes in Arkansas

More and more school districts are working on providing a transition classes! Many have succeeded and already have a transition class in place. We have 18 schools who are implementing the Opportunities for Work-Based Learning (OWL) program this year! Several others are working with local agencies to help provide pre-employment transition services within a transition class. These programs will eventually provide work experience for students while they are in high school (some experiences will be paid). This is one of the predictors of post-school outcomes success! Students who participate in work experience in high school are five times more likely to have employment when they leave high school! What a difference the opportunities can provide for students! We are more than happy to provide you with more information on how to make a transition class work for you. Please contact your regional transition consultant to find out more!

Take a look at Ouachita School District's new space for their Transition Class!





STEP Success

by: Monya Clifton, Lake Hamilton School District

Sometimes success comes in disguise. We expect to take the form of perfection while we are in the process of working towards it, but it does not always happen that way. We recently heard about a student who, a few months ago, many would not have thought would have reached success.

You have read before in our newsletter about Lake Hamilton's STEP program. They provide opportunities for students to learn pre-employment transition skills and obtain work experience while they are in high school. They are doing an excellent job and have many great stories, but one stood out to us recently. Monya Clifton, Assistant Special Education Supervisor to Lisa Wheeler provided the following for our newsletter:

During the first year of the STEP program at Lake Hamilton High School, one student worked at a dog groomer's facility for her first rotation and then was placed in a child care facility, which was her top vocational interest. She started to skip classes due to some strong (but not so great) influences and got involved with the wrong crowd. The teacher knew she was not in class or showing up for work and gave the student a verbal warning for skipping classes and work. When the student continued to skip class and work, the teacher provided a written warning. Following standard procedure for a typical workplace, when the student still missed class and work, she was placed on probationary status. Subsequently, as she made the choice to continue to skip class and work, she was removed from the program. This was a tough decision for the teacher, Mrs. Jodie Keeling, because the young woman was great at her job, when she chose to show up. It's a hard lesson to learn, but one that students need to learn before they leave high school. This is what their STEP program is about—teaching these critical work skills. Students must learn that this is not acceptable behavior before they lose their chance to obtain good-paying jobs they like and that will allow them to reach their goals, be happy, and be successful.

Mrs. Keeling received a text message last week from that very student who has since graduated. The message from the student was thanking her for allowing her the opportunity to try employment. Since she has graduated from high school, the daycare where she worked in the STEP program hired her! She gathered her courage and asked for a second chance! She told Mrs. Keeling that she would not have ever even thought to apply at a day care, and she most certainly would not have known how to fill out the application or interview without the STEP program. THIS is why these programs are so critical! THIS is why we have to work through the hard times. THIS is why we have to work through the paperwork, the struggles to make a program that works for a district, and the days we just want to say, "THIS is too hard!" Students rely on these programs without even knowing it. However, when they reach their goals, they know it! And they thank you—maybe not in the formal or even verbal sense, but they thank you. Very often failures eventually grow into success. We all THANK YOU for everything you do to help students reach better outcomes. THANK YOU TO ALL THE TEACHERS, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS, EMPLOYERS, JOB COACHES AND EVERYONE OUT THERE WHO SUPPORTS TRANSITION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS. THIS is some of the most important work we do.

December 2017 Cadre Meeting for Two Team Members of Local Transition Teams Coming Soon

by Bonnie Boaz

The Arkansas Transition Services annual cadre meetings are fast approaching! Planning agenda details for the December Cadre meeting are in the final stages and registration will be available soon!

December 7-8, 2017, will provide an opportunity for special educators to come together as teams of two and get professional development on evidence-based practices, agency services and WIOA! It will be at the Crowne Plaza in Little Rock.

If you have never attended a Cadre meeting before, here are a few things you should know:

The Cadre events are for TWO members of your local transition team to attend.

The Cadre Meetings happen twice a year—once in December and once in February (weather permitting).

A “cadre” is a group of professionals with a common goal—in this case, that common goal is working to improve transition. These Cadre events allow teams time to continue to plan and update progress, keeping their transition goals in mind and never getting too far away from them.

Registration is online and is limited to a certain number of people, so do not delay in registering.

Registration will be available on our website, but if you are on our distribution list, you will get an email announcing that registration is available.

It is usually one and a half days in length.

We provide professional development on transition topics and will have at least one agency presentation.

Cadre meetings provide you and your teammate an opportunity to update your transition team’s plan.

Arkansas Transition Services is currently able to provide one sleeping room at the hotel for teams who must drive over 30 miles to attend.

Arkansas Transition Services is currently able to provide reimbursement for travel for those who must travel outside a 30 mile radius of Little Rock to attend (we must have a w-9 in addition to a mileage form completed).

Arkansas Transition Services provides each attendee with an emailed certificate of attendance/participation.

Cadre meetings are a great time to learn, network, improve what you are already doing, and have fun too!

