

How Schools Can Involve, Engage and Enlist  
Parents in Secondary Transition for Youth

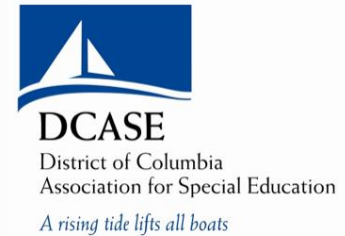


# How Schools Can Involve, Engage and Enlist Parents in Secondary Transition for Youth



## Local Parent Advocates:

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- **Rhonda White**, Family and Community Engagement Liaison and Family Ties of DC Program Coordinator, Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities  
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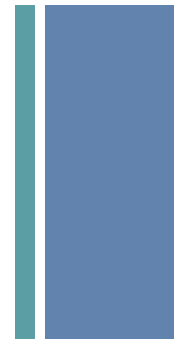


# + Session Objectives



- Help educators and administrators develop parent-friendly language and provide accessible resources to ensure a true partnership with parents.
- Assist with helping educators to enhance every student's transition plan to be a real, attainable and powerful tool to ensure a student's transition to a productive and meaningful adult life.

# + What to Remember



- Many parents of students with disabilities are completely unaware of what secondary transition planning is and how important it is to preparing for life after school.
- Transition planning is a crucial time for students with disabilities and schools that involve parents have significantly better results in guiding students toward well-rounded and high-achieving adult lives.



# What is the purpose of Special Education?

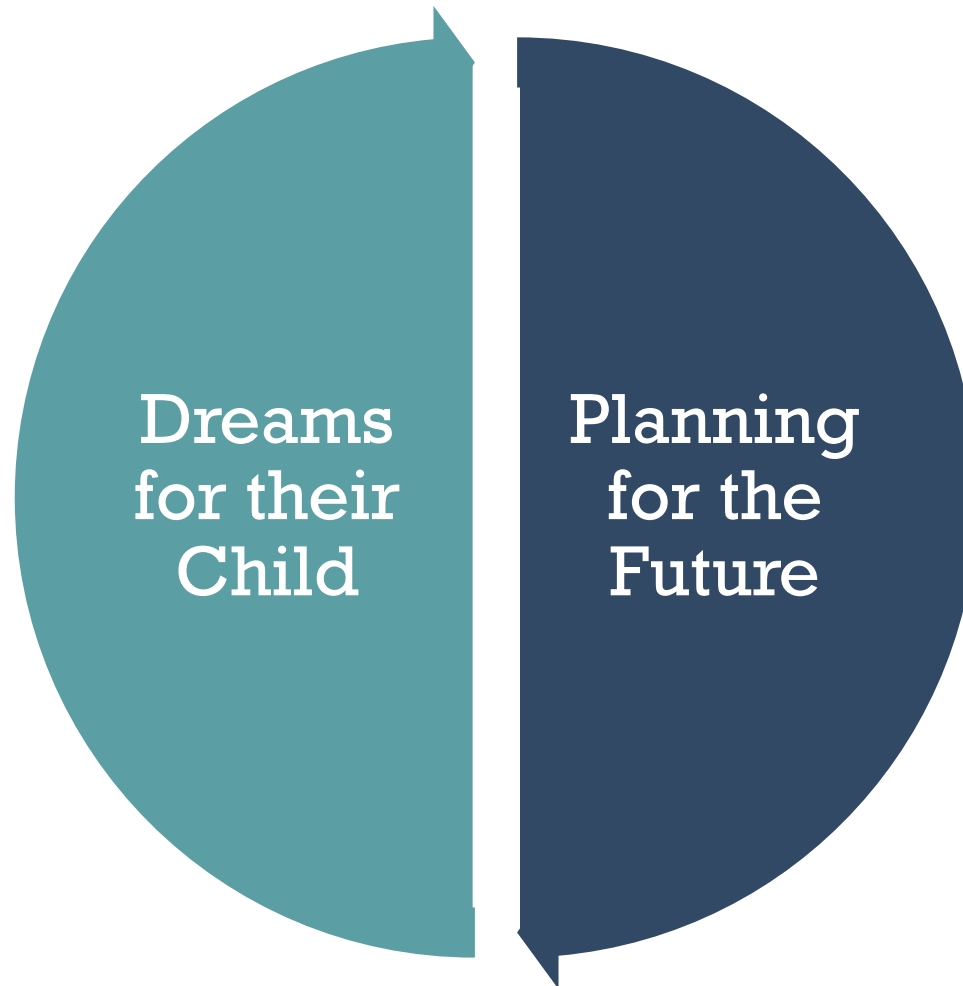


... a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet students' unique needs and to....

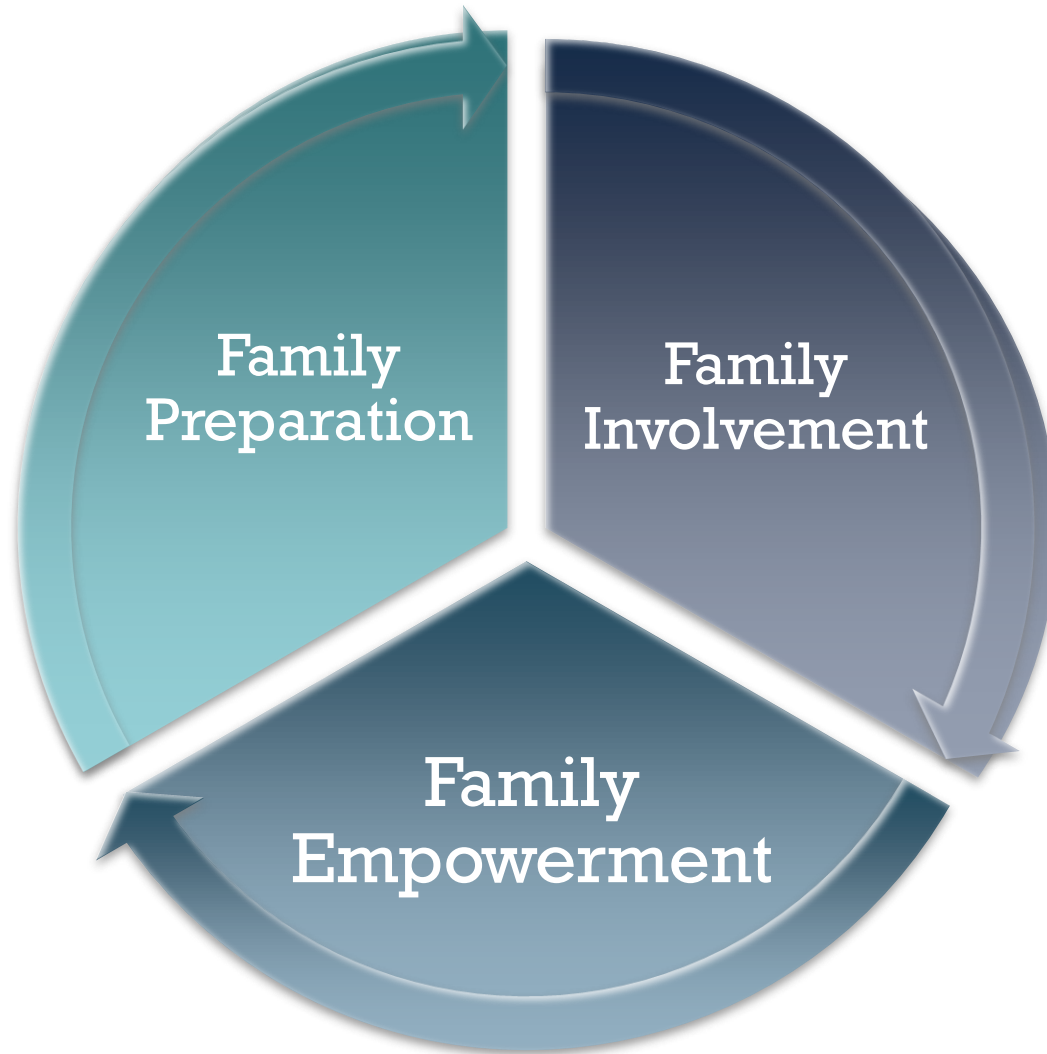
Prepare students for further education, employment, and independent living.

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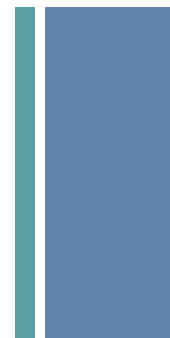
Parents need to know that  
Transition planning is about...



# + What is Family Engagement?



# + Family Engagement:



Family Involvement	Family Empowerment	Family Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families' cultural background and intimate knowledge of and experience with their child informs the IEP</li> <li>• Families provide information about their child either orally or in writing</li> <li>• Families participate in the entire transition planning process including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- student assessment</li> <li>- evaluation of student's program</li> <li>- IEP and other individual program planning meeting</li> <li>- decision making</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Families participate in service delivery</li> <li>• Families participate in natural support network as trainers, mentors, peer advocates, or community liaisons</li> <li>• Families participate in program policy development</li> <li>• Families concerns and needs are represented in school governance</li> <li>• Non-family member interpreters provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition information provided prior to student's age 14</li> <li>• Information provided in their ordinary language and shared in culturally responsive and respectful manner</li> <li>• Structured method to identify family needs</li> <li>• Pre-IEP planning activities specific to families</li> <li>• Child care and respite care provided for transition-related meetings</li> <li>• Supports provided for families to engage youth in community experiences</li> <li>• Students and families linked with adult service providers during transition planning</li> <li>• Students and families are assisted to apply for college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family learning and preparation provided for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- transition-related planning process (e.g., IEP, ITP, IPE)</li> <li>- empowerment strategies</li> <li>- setting high expectation</li> <li>- promoting child's self-determination, with respect for cultural views and values</li> <li>- advocacy</li> <li>- natural supports</li> <li>- agencies and services</li> <li>- facilitating community experiences for youth with disabilities (e.g., safety, transportation, social skills, mobility)</li> <li>- legal issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# + The Family Role



We tend not to look at family involvement in terms of specific roles and responsibilities:

- Setting expectations
- Help youth set goals for themselves
- Responsible for specific tasks
- Active participation on IEP team

# + The Youth Role



**This tends to be the forgotten component:**

- Active participation on IEP team
- High expectations for themselves
- Responsibility to set a vision and communicate it
- What is my disability and how does it impact me?



# Barriers to Family Engagement in Transition Planning



**What are the main barriers to building capacity for family engagement?**

**What can you do at your school to create positive family engagement?**

# + The Family Perspective

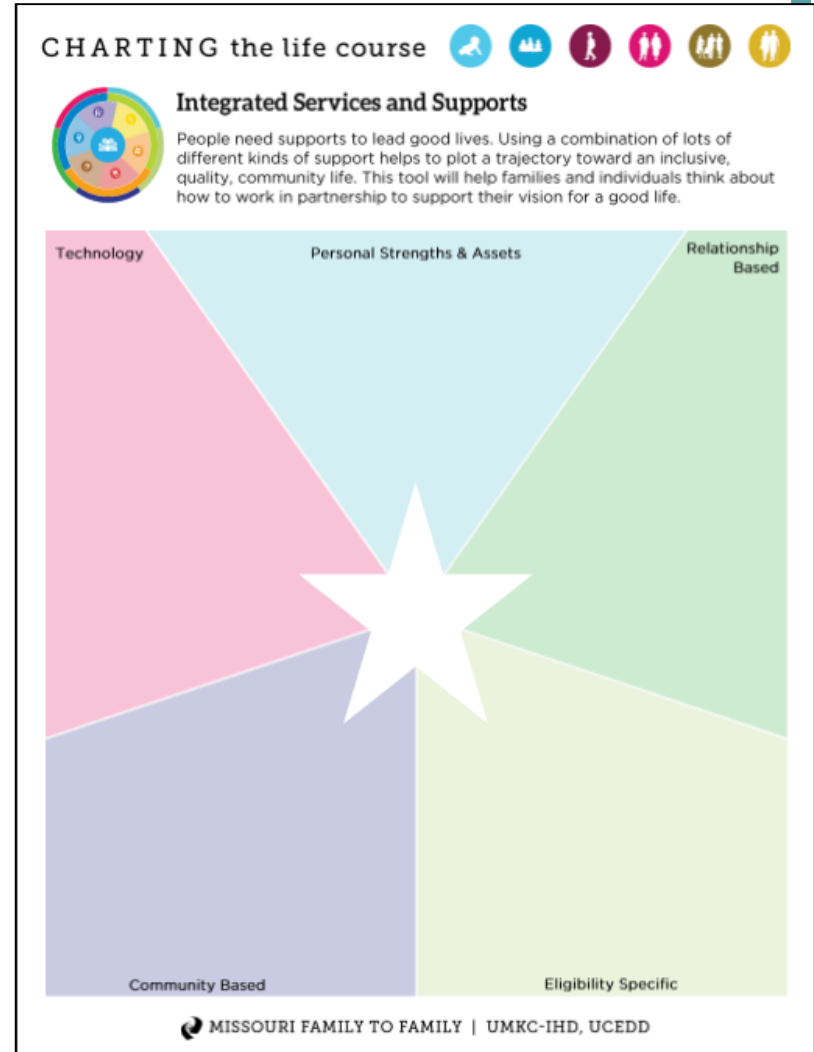
## **Do you know my child?**

- Do you want what I want?
- Communication issues around transition
- They tell me I'm part of the team, but....
- The professionals don't seem to know
- I'm busy, is this important?
- Tell me something good (10/90)
- Keep focused on going forward

# + Do you know my child?

## Charting the Life Course Tools

- Integrated Support Star
- Life Trajectory
- Experiences and Questions













# Tool for Developing a Vision

## CHARTING the LifeCourse



### Tool for Developing a Vision – Individual

Forming a vision and beginning to plan for the future in each of the life domains helps plot a trajectory for a full, inclusive, quality life in the community. This tool is to help individuals with disabilities of all ages think about a specific vision in each life domain for how they want to live their adult life, and prioritize what they want to work on right now that will help move toward the life vision.

LIFE DOMAIN		My Vision for My Future	priority	Current Situation/Things to Work On
 Daily Life Employment	What do I think I will do/want to do during the day in my adult life? What kind of job/career might I like?			
 Community Living	Where would I like to live in my adult life? Will I live alone or with someone else?			
 Social & Spirituality	How will I connect with spiritual and leisure activities, and have friendships and relationships in my adult life?			
 Healthy Living	How will I live a healthy lifestyle and manage health care supports in my adult life?			
 Safety & Security	How will I stay safe from financial, emotional, physical or sexual harm in my adult life?			
 Citizenship & Advocacy	What kind of valued roles and responsibilities do/will I have, and how do/will I have control of how my own life is lived?			
 Supports for Family	How do I want my family to still be involved and engaged in my adult life?			
 Supports & Services	What support will I need to live as independently as possible in my adult life, and where will my supports come from?			

# + Basic Components of Family Engagement



- The issue is important to parents, their family, & their community.
- Families have something to contribute.
- They believe that they will be listened to.
- Their contributions respected.
- Their participation will make a difference.

# + Share One Good Idea



How do we engage families so they can be meaningful partners in the transition process?

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- 
- 

How can we involve youth so they can take ownership of their own transition?

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# + What Does it Take?

- Communication is the Key – Think about HOW you say it, *“It doesn’t matter what you say, it matters what they hear”*
- Establishing and maintaining an effective line of communication between professionals and families/youth continues to be a challenge
- Building Trust
- Student Led Planning
- Paid work experience/organized volunteer experience while in high school
- Administrative support and buy-in
- Understanding of joint and individual roles and responsibilities
- Effective formal and informal communication structure
- Use of data decision making. This includes feedback from youth and families
- Ah Ha’s from parent experiences

# + Primary Supports Needed



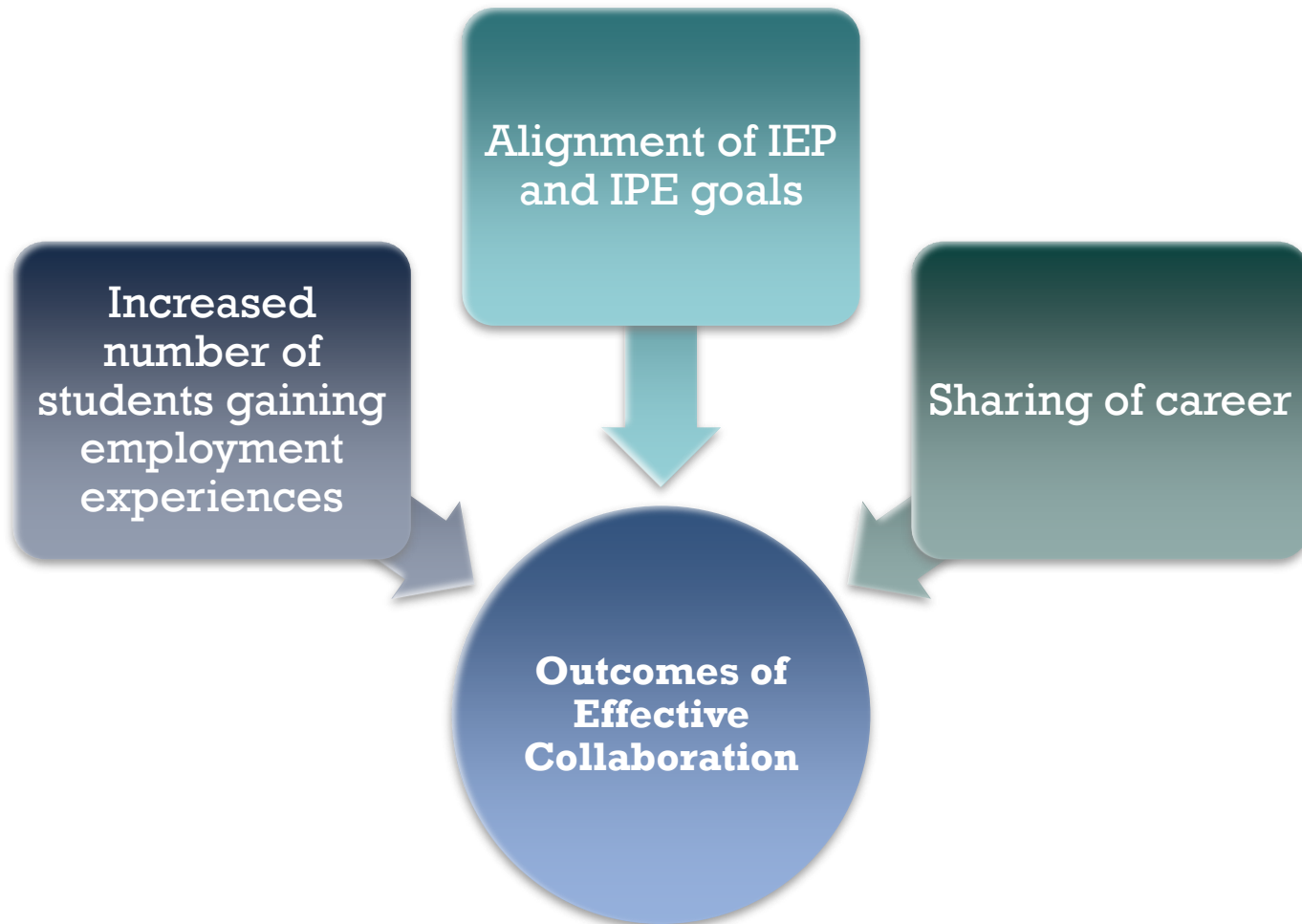
- **Tangible Supports**
- **Emotional Supports**
- **Environmental Supports**

# + Diverse Populations

- Immigrant Families/Non-English Speaking Families
  - Schools access the language line
  - Caveat – the lack of experience of interpreters
  - Special education “language”
- Parents with accessibility needs
  - Be cognizant on the level of “understanding”
  - Sensitivity with the student and family dynamics



# + WHY engage families?

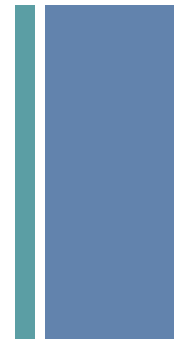


# + WHY engage families?

- Partnering with families can improve outcomes
- Partnering with families should be a core ethic of how a school does business
- Staff need training on how to effectively partner with families
- Staff should be held accountable to this expectation
- High expectations is a great common ground to start
- Families also need guidance on how best to fulfill their role as partners
- All of this should be focused on the youth identifying and reaching their goals



# Transition planning tips for parents



## Talk to your child about

- ✓ Awareness of their disability and self-advocacy for help/support.
- ✓ Keep the focus on your child – what do they want their life to look like
- ✓ Put supports in place for things you know they struggle with (i.e., cooking, METRO, shopping).
- ✓ Talk to your school for ideas or to share what is successful

## Find Supports

- ✓ Mentors, internships, afterschool programs, summer clubs, summer employment, etc.
- ✓ Connect with other parents and create a network

**Start NOW!**

# + Sustainability of Family Engagement

- Multiple opportunities for participation.
- The level of participation can vary as needed.
- Families receive sufficient advance notice.
- Family participation is facilitated.
- Families are listened to.
- Their ideas are supported & respected.
- Family participation has an impact.
- Family participation is consciously & visibly appreciated.



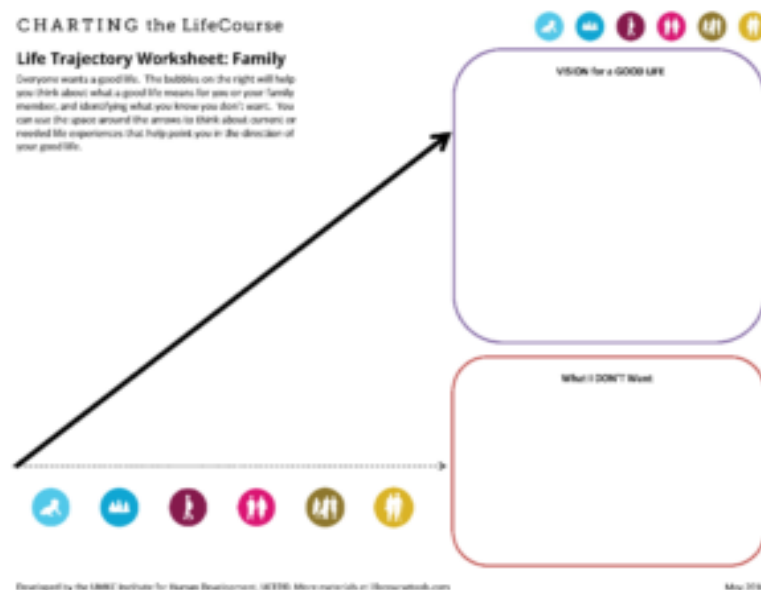
# Impact of Family Engagement:

- Students with one or more parents who participated in the IEP meetings during the 11th and 12th grades are **SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO BE ENGAGED IN POST-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT.**
- Students with parents who had **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and employment.

## CHARTING the LifeCourse

### Life Trajectory Worksheet: Family

Everyone wants a good life. The bubbles on the right will help you think about what a good life means for you or your family member, and identifying what you know you don't want. You can use the space around the arrows to think about current or needed life experiences that help point you in the direction of your good life.



Developed by the LMRI Institute for Human Development, UIC. More materials at [Remotework.com](http://Remotework.com)

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# Resources:



- **Center for Parent Information and Resources:** [www.parentcenterhub.org](http://www.parentcenterhub.org)
- **Adult SSI-needs based for people with disabilities** [www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi](http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi)
- **(DC) RSA, DDS, and Eligibility** [www.dds.dc.gov/page/rsa-supported-employment](http://www.dds.dc.gov/page/rsa-supported-employment)
- **National Parent Center on Transition and Employment** [www.pacer.org/transition](http://www.pacer.org/transition)
- **National Technical Assistance Center on Transition:** [www.transitionta.org](http://www.transitionta.org)
- **LifeCourse Toolkit:** [www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com)
- **National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making:**  
[www.supporteddecisionmaking.org](http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org)
- **Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities:** [www.dcqualitytrust.org](http://www.dcqualitytrust.org)
- **DC Association for Special Education:** [www.dcase.org](http://www.dcase.org)
- **Wrightslaw:** [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)
- **Special Education Thursday Webcasts:** [www.aje-dc.org/programs-3/special-education-thursdays/](http://www.aje-dc.org/programs-3/special-education-thursdays/)
- **Got Transition™ /The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health:**  
[www.gottransition.org](http://www.gottransition.org)
- **Full Circle Employment Solutions LLC:** [www.fullcircledc.com](http://www.fullcircledc.com)