

Informed Family Engagement Reflection Tool

This DRAFT tool is designed for the use of programs, schools, districts, and adult agencies committed to effective transition planning prior to developing an action plan for building strong family engagement practices and at strategic evaluative checkpoints. Bulleted strategies are example activities that states/ schools/ districts/ agencies have implemented successfully. Your feedback is welcome

Component I: Contextual conditions that influence all family engagement	
<p>A. Professional Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1A1. Professionals make all families feel welcome, build trust, and use two-way communication practices. - 1A2. Professional actions affirm high expectations for youth post-school outcomes. - 1A3. Professionals employ culturally competent practices. - 1A4. Professionals use family perspectives to evaluate and improve effectiveness of transition program/services 	<p>B. Family Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1B1. Families work with professionals to build a climate of partnership. - 1B2. Families have access to information to expand knowledge about the transition process. - 1B3. Families benefit from systems that prepare them to support their youths' learning and development. - 1B4. Families benefit from systems that assist them to build support networks.
Component II: Family engagement at the local school/ district/ agency level	
<p>A. Professional Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2A1. Professionals practice proactive communication skills - 2A2. Professionals conduct outreach to disengaged families - 2A3. Professionals provide useful information about transition to families. - 2A4. Professionals use a systemic approach to empowering family support of youth learning and development. - 2A5 Professionals use a systemic approach to connecting families with community organizations. 	<p>B. Family Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2B1. Families empower their youth's learning and development. - 2B2. Families participate in meaningful ways in IEP/ ITP/IPE meetings. - 2B3. Families explore transition resources/ options appropriate for their individual children in employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.
Component III: Family advisory at regional/ state level	
<p>A. Professional Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3A1. Professional organizations systematically recruit participation of diverse family perspectives in advisory roles. - 3A2. Professionals systematically engage family partners in broad scale strategic planning. 	<p>B. Family Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3B1. Family representatives understand vision and scope of advisory/ advocacy board. - 3B2. Family representatives perform their role as a spokesperson.

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Component I: Contextual conditions that influence all family engagement.	
A. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY	Evidence of Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1A1. Professionals make all families feel welcome, build trust, and use two-way communication practices. • Create written policy about welcoming families to the transition planning process • Conduct faculty/ staff training on outreach to families, including diverse families, sensitivity to changing needs and availability of families over time. • Employ routine practices for family participation in transition and program planning. • Ensure information about transition is accessible and family friendly. 	
<p>1A2. Professional actions affirm high expectations for youth post-school outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expose families to role models who have achieved high expectations (guest speakers, videos, websites). • Provide professional training on promoting high expectations within the transition planning process. • Promote practices that support youth self-awareness and empowerment. 	
<p>1A3. Professionals employ culturally competent practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in opportunities to learn how to interact respectfully with families according to their unique cultural-linguistic differences and priorities. • Use cultural sensitivity in empowering diverse families to determine appropriate transition practices and outcomes for their youth. • Provide translated materials and interpreters as appropriate. 	
<p>1A4. Professionals use family perspectives to evaluate and improve effectiveness of transition program/services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey families at least annually to gather data on the effectiveness of transition services and supports. • Ensure that families speak regularly at school board or policy 	

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<p>board meetings about how policies impact their youth and family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in ongoing efforts to solicit family perspectives to inform policy and practice. 	
<p>B. FAMILY CAPACITY</p>	<p>Evidence of Implementation</p>
<p>1B1. Families work with professionals to build a climate of partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and embrace their partnership role. Share with professionals background and current information about their youth, including concerns and accomplishments. Understand family rights and responsibilities. 	
<p>1B2. Families have access to information to expand knowledge about the transition process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access information in multiple formats (brochures, flyers, website links, workshops). Become informed about disability provisions under IDEA, 504 and ADA. Explore resources to increase awareness of disability specific and advocacy organizations to empower their support of their youth. 	
<p>1B3. Families benefit from systems that prepare them to support their youths' learning and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize information about school/ agency procedures so they can endorse the intent/ purpose with their youth. Understand educational assessments so they can ensure student goals align with the youth's targeted outcomes. Understand disability rights and responsibilities and implications of preparing youth for adult settings. Collaborate with professionals to promote youth self-determination/ self-advocacy/ autonomy. 	
<p>1B4. Families benefit from systems that assist them to build support networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access resources to expand their support networks (role models, advocacy organizations, and peer mentoring). Utilize personal networks to strengthen their parenting skills, empower them to trust their instincts, and use collective voice for advocacy. 	

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Component II: Family engagement at the local school/ district/ agency level	
A. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY	Evidence of Implementation
<p>2A1. Professionals practice proactive communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use person first language when discussing disability. • Invite parent input and use practices that reassure families they are heard. • Provide professional training in proactive problem solving and dispute resolution practices. 	
<p>2A2. Professionals conduct outreach to disengaged families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify those families who are not engaged with school/ agency activities • Use cultural understanding to bridge differences in community norms, educational level, language, and literacy that impact parent involvement. • Engage in efforts to solicit family perspectives through community-based focus groups. • Address identified barriers in plans for engagement activities and strategies. 	
<p>2A3. Professionals provide useful information about transition to families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate information about transition through print, online, social media, and video clips. • Ensure that materials are accessible, family friendly, and translated. • Provide interactive training opportunities to families to expand knowledge/skills for partnering in transition process. 	
<p>2A4. Professionals use a systemic approach to empowering family support of youth learning and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide families useful information about adolescent brain development, self-efficacy, executive function, self-determination, and leadership. • Make a commitment (understood or written) to empower families to support youth development. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about the importance and suggest methods to support youth development. • Use culturally appropriate ways to support families as partners in youth development. • Use proactive problem solving and dispute resolution within ongoing family support for youth development. 	
<p>2A5 Professionals use a systemic approach to connecting families with community organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with community and service organizations to develop culturally appropriate joint outreach to families. • Disseminate contact information about local community agencies (parent information centers, disability advocacy organizations, vocational rehabilitation, developmental disabilities agencies, mental health services, higher education supports, residential and independent living centers). • Share with families effective methods for accessing and partnering with supportive adult service providers. • Support a person-centered process to empower each family to establish a network of support as individually appropriate. 	
<p>B. FAMILY CAPACITY</p>	<p>Evidence of Implementation</p>
<p>2B1. Families empower their youth’s learning and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth to understand implications of their disability on learning and functioning and learn appropriate disability disclosure within a self-efficacy/ self-determination context. • Support youth to access services and supports needed for success in school and adult settings (assistive technology, tutoring/learning supports, social skills, health management, transportation). • Partner with professionals in behavior and executive skill prompting. • Encourage youth to explore extracurricular and community opportunities that promote social development and leadership. 	
<p>2B2. Families participate in meaningful ways in IEP/ ITP/ IPE meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access advocacy and parent training options to expand knowledge of their youth’s disability and the transition process. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute family perspectives in transition assessments. • Use professional contact prior to meetings to prepare for meaningful contributions to planning. • Partner with transition team (and youth) to create a vision of the youth’s future at IEP/ IPE planning meetings, starting early. • Support youth as they learn to take leadership roles in the IEP/ ITP/IPE planning process. 	
<p>2B3. Families explore transition resources/ options appropriate for their individual children in employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use provided contact information for local adult service agency representatives to explore postschool support options early. • Investigate federally or locally funded parent information center and disability specific advocacy organizations to access relevant resources and opportunities. • Encourage youth to investigate and recruit natural supports in adult environments (peers, fellow students or employees). • Support youth to investigate and appropriately self-advocate for disability rights and protections in school and adult settings. 	
<p>Component III: Family advisory at regional/ state/local level</p>	
<p>A. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY</p>	<p>Evidence of Implementation</p>
<p>3A1. Professional organizations systematically recruit participation of diverse family perspectives in advisory roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and recruit representatives from disengaged family groups (cultural, disability type, socioeconomic, geographic regions, family structure) to participate in advisory/leadership roles. • Establish procedures to allow family participation from a distance. • Provide background information to new advisory board/ committee members (orientation to jargon, organizational vision, structure, and policies, membership and purpose of board). • Arrange mentors for new members of advisory board/ 	

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<p>committee.</p> <p>3A2. Professionals systematically engage family partners in broad scale strategic planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that background, statistical information, issues and solution options are clarified for all members (including families) of advisory board/ committee. • Partner with disability and family advocacy organizations to gather family input on change issues. • Address family concerns and priorities within new policies and programs. 	
<p>B. FAMILY CAPACITY</p>	<p>Evidence of Implementation</p>
<p>3B1. Family representatives understand vision and scope of advisory/ advocacy board or committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orient themselves to vision, purpose, guidelines, and intent of board/ committee membership. • Use assigned mentors to clarify questions about practices, issues, and proposals considered by board/ committee. • Seek additional information about other stakeholders, their organizations, and the value of diverse perspectives. 	
<p>3B2. Family representatives perform their role as a spokesperson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the power of the personal story in communicating fundamental values underpinning proposed policies and programs. • Become an active participant in board/ committee work (providing effective testimony, sharing family concerns, participating in sub-groups, proposing solutions). • Expand contributions as a spokesperson by gathering information about the population represented (public forums, phone surveys, personal conversations). 	

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