From Parent Involvement
To
Parents as Essential Partners in Employment
President’s Committee on Person’s with Intellectual Disabilities
September 8, 2008
Cathy Healy Director of Training PEATC
What parents really want for their children with disabilities - Dennis, Williams, Giangreco, & Cloninger, 1993).

- To be safe and healthy
- To have a home where they can live now and in the future (e.g., with a family or friends; supported apartment)
- To have friends and other personally meaningful social relationships
- To have access to a variety of places and activities available to people without disabilities (e.g., general education schools and classes, supported employment (community facilities/activities)
- To use communication and self-advocacy to exert choice and control that match their ages and cultural contexts
- To have access to supports and skill development to pursue lifelong learning
- To pursue personal growth (e.g., creative outlets)
- To ensure that their children are contributing to their community

©2008  Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center  www.peatc.org
Planning for a self-determined life?

“...planning for guardianship was separated from the transition planning process and that full guardianship had become the set path for every student in the educational program.” --CEC Journal: Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities Erin M. Payne-Christiansen and Patricia L. Sitlington, Spring 2008

©2008  Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center www.peatc.org
Parents share many of the same concerns that employers do

- Can my son/daughter do the job?
- How will they do the job?
- Will they be successful at the job? Will they get fired?
- Will they be accepted on the job or cause problems with co-workers?
- How will they get to the job?
- Will they be safe?
Let’s begin by building the ‘business’ case version for families.
1. Awareness, awareness, awareness
2. Answer the question fully- What are the real benefits of employment for your sons and daughters?
3. Here are some successful models.
4. Find the partners to help make it work for.
“The support and expectations that parents provide to their children have far greater influence on children than any other identifiable demographic such as income or race.”

Parents often depend on the knowledge of school personnel. Better informed special education and transition personnel will help articulate the range of employment options.

Recommendation # 1: Integrate high expectations for employment outcomes in special education teacher/transition personnel prep.
Family members often play the role of de facto job coach.

Recommendation # 2: Investigate through a qualitative research study the myriad of ways parents are essential partners in employment in order to identify replicable models.
Family members often provide case management, and service coordination services.

Recommendation # 3: Provide incentives (tax or other) to families to encourage their sustained involvement in ensuring employment.
Bring visibility to successful models of employment to families, youth, and school communities.

Recommendation # 4: Leveraging the success of October Disability Employment Month, infuse a public relations effort targeted to individuals with intellectual disabilities and families showcasing successful employment models.
Support the parent community in raising awareness.

Recommendation # 5: Commit resources to PTI’s to help promote awareness of employment options, facilitate understanding of Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education Transition programming.
Families were excited by the prospect of the New Freedom Initiative

Recommendation # 6: Assess the impact of the New Freedom Initiative specifically around the area of employment.
Bibliography


Johnson, David, University of Minnesota, Literature review, “Issues Influencing the Future of Transition Programs and Services in the United States”. National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.


