



Volume 2, Issue 1

# Family - School Partnership



June 2011

*where every seat counts*

## Welcome!

Roundtable is the quarterly e-newsletter of the Family-School Partnership at The Advocacy Center. Our goal is to give families the tools to fully participate in their children's education. When families partner with schools, they form a strong foundation of support for children. This gathering is casual with a family and school-friendly atmosphere. You are invited to visit often. Contribute your questions, comments, topic suggestions or writing at [Dixon@advocacycenter.com](mailto:Dixon@advocacycenter.com). Feel free to bring guests.

## Why Roundtable?

We chose the name "Roundtable" because at a round table there is no seat that is more important than any other seat. Since there is no head of the table, everyone seated is an equal member. Children benefit when families and schools work together.

## Look what you can find at our website!

Our website: [www.specialedparentcenter.org](http://www.specialedparentcenter.org) has many great resources such as links to other helpful websites, documents such as sample letters and archived copies of past newsletters. These resources can help you learn more about special education process and specific disabilities.



To view the resources on our website click here:  
<http://specialedparentcenter.org/en/1/resources>

# Transition: A Change is Going to Come

The title says it all! Change is inevitable no matter how hard you try to stop it. So, there is only one thing left to do and that is to prepare, prepare, prepare.

The word transition means movement, passage, and change. In Special Education, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Article 89 of New York State Education Law define transition services as a coordinated set of activities which are designed to prepare the student for outcomes that we envision for the student in adult life.

This quarter Roundtable takes a look at Transition. Change will come. For those of us that struggle with it, consider the 3 'Ps': Our Perspective or viewpoint is our vision for the future. Purpose helps us with the difficult question of what will happen after high school. The Plan itself is called Transition. How will my child successfully live, work, and have meaningful relationships in the community as an adult with a disability? Is college an option? Your family holds the answers.

Thinking about our children's lives after high school is not an easy task when most of us are just trying to take one day at a time. Remember the 3 'Ps' and prepare, prepare, prepare. If we don't make these important choices, someone else will.

## Transition Services: A Planning and Implementation Guide

Available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/transition/guide.htm>

### What are Transition Services?

The IDEA and Article 89 define transition services as a coordinated set of activities which are designed to prepare the student for outcomes that are envisioned for the student in adult life. Outcomes may include post-secondary education, employment, vocational training, adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation. The set of activities for each student needs to be based on the student's individual needs, preferences, and interests. The activities must include instruction, community experiences, and development of employment or other post-school adult living objectives.

### Why Plan for Transition?

Transition into the adult world can present challenges for all young people. The process of transition is more difficult for many youth with disabilities and requires unique strategies to enable each student to achieve the maximum possible independence in working, living and participating in the community as adults.

### How Can Districts Initiate the Process?

Districts are advised to develop a strategic plan for incorporating transition services within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. To implement transition planning and services, the CSE will need a method for identifying post-school outcomes for each student and for incorporating activities in the IEP that prepare the student to fully participate in adult life in the community.

### What Students Receive the Services?

As part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) all secondary education students with disabilities, ages 15 through 21, and younger if determined appropriate, who are eligible to receive special education services, must be provided with transition services. For students younger than age 15 who are considered to be at risk of dropping out of school, or who could benefit from transition services, this process should be initiated earlier. The transition planning process must be delivered in a manner that is sensitive to the participation of students and their families from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

## SAVE THE DATE

### **Success from the Start: Strategies for the Journey to Adulthood**

A Day of Inspiration and Learning for  
Individuals with Disabilities, Family Members, and Professionals

What: A Full-Day Conference

When: Saturday, September 24, 2011

Where: St. John Fisher College, Rochester NY

## **Tools for School**

### Great Resources

Did you know that we have several "sample letters" on our Family-School Partnership website? You can download the sample letters and then insert information specific to your situation.

Just visit:

<http://specialedparentcenter.org/modules/docs/>

and select the "sample letters" tab for quick and easy access.

### Workshops!

Attend workshops to build your skills in advocacy, communication, and collaboration. Also, get more information about Special Education processes, specific Disabilities, and transition. Visit our website at [www.specialedparentcenter.org](http://www.specialedparentcenter.org) for a list of workshops and check the calendar for scheduling.

### Parent Member Training

Have you ever considered becoming a parent member for the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) or Committee on Special Education (CSE) in your school district?

#### **What is a parent member?**

A parent member of the CPSE/CSE is a parent of a child with a disability who lives in the school district or a neighboring school district. They attend the Committee meetings to support the parents/guardians and to help insure that the focus of the meeting is on the child. A parent member of the CPSE/CSE should not be confused with a Parent Advocate.

The role of the parent member at a Committee on Special Education meeting is to:

- support the parent(s) and explain the process as needed
- provide feedback from a parent's point of view
- seek clarification and explain to the parent as needed
- keep all student and family information strictly confidential

For more information please see our website:

[http://specialedparentcenter.org/en/17/parent\\_member\\_training](http://specialedparentcenter.org/en/17/parent_member_training)

## **Latest News!**

### **NYSED Public Hearing on Mandate Relief Tuesday June 28th 2-5pm at Monroe 1 BOCES**

At its May meeting, the Board of Regents issued a vote of support for NYSED to seek public comment on selected special education mandate relief proposals prior to proposing statutory revisions or adopting regulatory changes. Three public hearings on these special education mandate relief proposals have been scheduled. Information on these public hearings, including dates and locations, can be found at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/policy/mandaterelief-publichearing611.htm>

Further information on the proposals is available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/policy/mandaterelief-chart-611.htm>

If you are not able to attend, but would like to provide public comment, please use the following form for submission of your comments no later than July 25, 2011. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/policy/mandaterelief-commentform.htm>

# Maritza's Inspiración



*Maritza Cubi is  
a Bilingual  
Parent  
Education  
Specialist*

## When I grow up

When we ask our kids what they want to be when they grow up, we usually hear, “I want to be a princess, a fireman, or a super hero”. Sometimes we find this to be cute and it can make us laugh, but this lets us know that our children have begun to have dreams and plans for their own future. I believe that it is important for us to help our children build those dreams and plans. I’m not suggesting we encourage our children to be princesses or super heroes. What I’m talking about is that we as parents need to be involved in our children’s education. We need to make sure that we help our children develop the skills necessary to be what they want to be when they grow up. I know that as parents, we also have dreams and plans for our children. However, I have had to take a step back and encourage my children to have their own dreams.

By the age of 15, our children should have an educational transition plan. This is a set of planned activities included in the child’s IEP (Individualized Education Program). The planning process includes the student, parents, adult agency representatives, and other people in their school and community working together to develop services which help the child make a successful transition into his or her adult life. To me, this means helping them develop realistic goals and encouraging experiences that will help them make decisions and gain the necessary skills needed to be successful. Plans should be developed according to each individual child, because all children don’t have the same dreams, plans, or interests. These plans should include a variety of experiences in our community which are necessary to help children learn and develop the skills needed to reach their future dreams and plans.

The transition process is designed to prepare a child with a disability to achieve his or her goals in areas such as employment, college, and community living: “Creating a world that works for everyone.”



## The Road of Transition

### The Road of Transition

Transition is the process of change, passing from one stage to another. As parents our whole lives seem to be about transition. Watching, witnessing and encouraging our children to jump from one stage to the next. Completing milestones, conquering challenges, moving mountains (or so it sometimes seems).

When we use the word transition in the world of special education we are really talking about preparation for adulthood: the afterlife of high school, the REAL world. This idea of transition can be quite frightening for many: so much for us parents to think about! Post-secondary education, housing, programming, life skills... what will truly bring my child joyous days for years to come?

Well, as luck would have it we don't have to travel this transition road alone. There are quite a few resources in our community to help guide families. One of these transition champions is Jeanne Ricigliano . I recently sat down with Jeanne to get more information about how she helps families.

**Carrie:** Tell me a little bit about your agency.

**Jeanne:** The Parent Partner position was created at Monroe #1 BOCES in 1995 to focus on families. We encourage meaningful family engagement and empowerment.

**C:** Whom do you serve?

**J:** Families within the 10 Component Districts of Monroe #1 BOCES and the Greater Mid-West Region including but not limited to, Genesee Valley BOCES, Monroe 2 Orleans BOCES, Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES, and the Rochester City School District.

**C:** What are the biggest barriers or challenges you face in doing your job?

**J:** I struggle with not enough time in the day to serve everyone and make the connections I want to make. Also, funding concerns are always present.

**C:** How do you help families with the transition process?

**J:** We discuss all the necessary topics around transition. I help families sort out questions such as what type of diploma does my child wish to obtain? What are my child's future goals, hopes, and dreams? What barriers might they face and what supports do they need to make these dreams a reality?

**C:** Why is transition planning so important?

**J:** Transition planning helps families and students map out a life plan. It focuses on the necessary planning of future living, learning, earning, friendships, and relationships.

**C:** Please provide us with a little known fact or quote you frequently use.

**J:** Transition is all about "where you are going to live, learn, earn, and build relationships in your community."

# April's Alternative Dish



April Dixon  
is a Parent  
Education  
Specialist

## Clouds...It's all In What You See

One of my favorite pastimes is looking at clouds. There is just something so peaceful and calming that floods my senses. Maybe it is just the action of looking up or the awareness that an escape exists far above the chaos that often describes my life.

When the clouds are dark and stormy instead of fluffy and white, I still find myself mesmerized by the way they purposefully cover the horizon. Regardless of the many forms they take and differences of color, clouds are just clouds.

Isn't it amazing that a group of people can lie on their backs, watch the same sky and yet each person can see something different in the clouds? One may see a plane and another a dinosaur or a tree. There is never a question of if it is indeed clouds that they are watching.

Wouldn't it be grand if we as people could look at one another and appreciate our majestic, awesome, and unique selves? We are individual and yet all it takes is a moment to realize that we will always have "human" as our common bond.

So, the next time you notice something different about someone, remember that even though they may or may not walk like you, act like you, communicate like you, or even look like you do, take time and realize that they actually are like you. There should never be a question of this fact.

### Remember ~

When parents and professionals work together, everyone benefits – especially our children!

If you have questions, need help, or would like more information about our workshops, please contact us. All services are free to parents and all information is confidential.

### Family-School Partnership at The Advocacy Center

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To subscribe to Roundtable please e-mail [Dixon@advocacycenter.com](mailto:Dixon@advocacycenter.com)

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