



# The National RAISE Technical Assistance Center

*Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment*

## OVERVIEW

**I**n 2014, the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, a parent-led and family-centered nonprofit Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), was funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide support to individuals with disabilities through the transition from secondary school into competitive employment and independent living.

RAISE was funded by a national grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to provide technical assistance and support to seven Parent Centers. The seven RSA-PTIs include:

- ◆ **New York State Transition Partners**
- ◆ **Open Doors for Multicultural Families**
- ◆ **Project Launch**
- ◆ **REACH for Transition**
- ◆ **Shift Transition Project**
- ◆ **STELLAR Project**
- ◆ **Federation for Children with Special Needs**

## RAISE HELPS CENTERS

*Assists* individuals with disabilities and their families in better understanding vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living programs and services

*Provides* follow-up support for transition and employment programs for individuals with disabilities and their families

*Provides* support and expertise for individuals with disabilities and their families in obtaining information about rehabilitation and independent living programs, services, and appropriate resources

*Assists* individuals with disabilities and their families in communicating more effectively with transition and rehabilitation personnel and other relevant professionals

*Provides* support to individuals with disabilities and their families in the development of the individualized plan for employment

*Assists* individuals with disabilities and their families in understanding the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, particularly provisions relating to employment, supported employment, and independent living



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## RAISE ADVISORY PARTNERSHIP

The RAISE Center is informed and supported by a group of knowledgeable ambassadors: the RAISE Advisory Partnership (RAP). These 21 board members include the seven RSA-funded PTIs, self-advocates, disability activists, and professional partners. In addition to giving feedback on RAISE work and materials, the partnership has been active in the product development work groups.

This partnership meets on quarterly conference calls, attends an annual face-to-face summit and meeting, and works together on an ongoing basis to provide TA, develop and curate resources, and stay abreast of the needs of youth with disabilities, their families, and professionals in the field.

### PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS

- ♦ **Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)**
- ♦ **Center for Workforce Development at the Institute for Educational Leadership**
- ♦ **Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)**
- ♦ **National Black Disability Coalition (NBDC)**
- ♦ **National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)**
- ♦ **National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NFFCMH)**
- ♦ **National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)**
- ♦ **TASH**
- ♦ **Transcen Inc. Career and Workforce Development**

*RAISE Collaborates* with several teams to develop and disseminate information and training materials on transition services, VR, supported employment, independent living, and career development across the Parent Center network:

- ♦ The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) team (housed at SPAN)
- ♦ The National Disability Rights Network
- ♦ The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM)
- ♦ The Regional PTACs
- ♦ Other RSA and OSEP-funded technical assistance and training centers
- ♦ The National Collaborative for Workforce Development (at the Institute for Educational Leadership)

## WHAT RAISE DOES

**RAISE employs strategic use of face-to-face meetings, webinars, social media, and other web-based media, as well as one-to-one technical assistance strategies, to provide a variety of services:**

- ◆ **Disseminates** information on promising and evidence-based practices that lead to high-quality employment outcomes and independent living for individuals with disabilities
- ◆ **Shares** strategies for reaching and serving individuals from culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds with the RSA-funded PTI centers
- ◆ **Creates** tools to help RSA-funded PTI centers build their capacity to disseminate information and conduct training activities for including transition-aged youth with disabilities and their families on the transition from school to adult life, available VR program services, career development, and related fields
- ◆ **Fosters** development of expertise in assisting State-level, RSA-funded PTIs as they work with transition-aged youth with disabilities and their families to access transition services, VR programs, and career development opportunities\*  
*\* This expertise also includes the provision of technical assistance on how to coordinate a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) with the individualized plan for employment so that the services provided to young adults with disabilities under both plans are more likely to lead to high-quality competitive employment in the integrated labor market.*
- ◆ **Supports** RSA in collecting quantitative and qualitative data from the RSA funded Parent Training and Information Centers

## 2017 MEETING & SUMMIT

The 2nd Annual 2017 RAISE Advisory Partnership Meeting and Summit was held September 17-19, 2017.

September 17 was the annual face-to-face board meeting. This meeting focused on the quality and usefulness of technical assistance over the previous year, reviewed current products, and discussed potential improvements for technical assistance over the next year.

September 18 and 19 were dedicated for professional development. Information about new legislation,

employment, working with adult systems, and youth development was shared.

### *Summit Sessions Included*

- ◆ **“The Art of Youth Engagement: Presentation” with Pat Amos and Josie Badger**
- ◆ **“RSA-PTI Showcase”**
- ◆ **“Working with Adult Services: Presentation” Panel**
- ◆ **“Staying in The Loop: Policy and Regulation Updates” with Ron Hager**

## RAISE SERVICES & PRODUCTS

### *Individualized TA*

Individual technical assistance is provided to RSA PTIs based on the preferences and schedule of each center. These schedules are determined during their annual technical assistance needs assessments.

### *Annual needs assessment*

During the annual technical assistance needs assessment, the needs and strengths of each program are analyzed. These assessments are individually conducted with the directors of each program and a RAISE co-director.

The results are used to inform future technical assistance including topic for webinars, resource development, information provision, and connections to peers and experts in the requested fields

### *RSA-PTI Peer-to-Peer Calls & Meetings*

On a bimonthly basis, the RAISE Center hosts a conference call for all RSA PTIs and the RSA program director. During these calls RAISE provides updates on RSA changes, records updates from each center, and discusses topics that are important to all of the centers. This year's calls had a 90% attendance rate by the RSA PTIs.

### *Speaking Engagements*

Members of the RAISE team have spoken at these events on employment, youth engagement, preparing young adults' for a successful adult transition, self-advocacy, ADA generation, and youth partnerships:

## *Webinars*

The National RAISE TA Center collaborated with various partners to host four (4) webinars for the RSA-PTIs, OSEP-funded Parent Centers, individuals with disabilities and their families, and our partners. Closed-captioned recordings are available through the RAISE website and YouTube page (youtube.com: "Raise Center"). Each is accompanied by a PowerPoint slide deck, a list of relevant resources, and other handouts for use by participants.

- ◆ **Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)** *Developing Financial Capability Among Youth*
- ◆ **Youth Transitions Advisory Council** *Family Support in Post-Secondary Education*
- ◆ **NY PTIC** *Breaking Barriers: Reaching the Hard to Reach*
- ◆ **National Disability Rights Network** *Helping Youth Build Work Skills*

- ◆ The NTACT Capacity Building Institute
- ◆ The Federation for Children with Special Needs Annual Conference
- ◆ The Peak Regional Leaders Conference
- ◆ TASH, DDC, NEPACT, New Mexico PTI Conference
- ◆ The RSA Directors Conference

## RAISE'S ONLINE PRESENCE

**Website** Raisecenter.org hosts information on the different RSA-PTIs, RAISE partners, the RAISE Center, and RAISE staff. It also provides our bimonthly newsletters, webinars, blog, and upcoming events. The most important aspect of this website is its ability to connect visitors to the CPIR Hub ([parentcenterhub.org](http://parentcenterhub.org)) and its repository of resources on transition. RAISE's work group has identified over 78 resources (articles, webinars, and web-based tools) for the repository. As part of our formative evaluation, many of these get reviewed by our users as to their relevance, usefulness, and quality. Since the site's creation, there have been 3,386 page views.

**Social Media** To promote and market RAISE, the RSA-PTIs, and important information or events from other sources, RAISE maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter account. Between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018, 220 resources, tools, articles, and opportunities were posted for 188 followers including the RSA-PTIs, families, individuals with disabilities, and other disability programs. These pages highlighted tools, resources, policies, and best practices related to employment, independent living, and improved outcomes for youth with disabilities. [Facebook.com/RAISEcenter](https://www.facebook.com/RAISEcenter) cross-posts to [twitter.com/RaiseCenter](https://twitter.com/RaiseCenter).

**RAISE Blog** The newest feature is a monthly blog ([raisecenter.wordpress.com](http://raisecenter.wordpress.com)) from RAISE Co-Director Dr. Josie Badger and the occasional guest blogger(s) that is shared with both the [raisecenter.org](http://raisecenter.org) audience of professionals working with Parent Centers on Transition-related issues as well as with a more general audience that includes self-advocates and allies who would benefit from awareness about the issues from a personal perspective. The focus is on the personal experiences of having a disability as well as issues of transition and more from an insider's point of view. Topics have included defining transition, a look back at fitting in during school when one has a disability, and a four-part series on the intersection of disability with the #MeToo movement. Since its launch, the blog has had 78 visitors and 109 views.

**E-Mail** Resources are sent to the RSA-PTIs at least twice a month. From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, a total of 116 resources were shared.

## Newsletters

From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, seven (7) *RAISE Standard* e-newsletters were disseminated to 450 subscribers, highlighting best practices, research, tools, and resources for improving transition and post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. The *RAISE Standard* is sent to all OSEP and RSA Parent Centers, the CPIR mailing list, and individuals who have subscribed off the RAISE website. All issues are archived at [raisecenter.org/news](http://raisecenter.org/news).