



The National RAISE Technical Assistance Center

Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: SHOWING THE IMPACT

Spotlight on RAISE & RSA-PTIs, 2018

Prepared by

**Dr. Josie Badger
Peg Kinsell**

Co-Directors, National RAISE Center

Debra Jennings

Executive Co-Director, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

Nancy Mader

Director, The LINK Center (MA)

Barbara Glassman

Co-Directors, New York State Transition Partners (NY)

Jenny Hutkowski

Susan Barlow

Simon Rojas

Youth/ADS Program Manager, Open Doors for Multicultural Families (WA)

Judy Moses

Sharman Davis Barrett

Co-Directors, Project Launch (MN, KY, OH, IN)

Dawn Monaco

Diana Autin

Carolyn Hayer

Co-Directors, REACH for Transition (CT, ME, NH, NJ, NYC, PA, VT)

Beth Schaffner

Director, Shift Transition Project (CO, AZ, UT, NM)

Carrie Ragsdale

Program Coordinator, Project STELLAR (MO)

Jessica Wilson

Director of Communications, National RAISE Center

*Funded by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
Parent Information and Training Program
Technical Assistance (TA) for Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs)
CFDA Numbers: 84.235G & CFDA 84.235F*

RAISE and RSA Parent Centers Grant

Even though the disability community makes up the largest minority group in the world, it also ranks as the minority group with the largest unemployment rate. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2017, only 18.7% of people with disabilities were employed in comparison to the 65.7% of their nondisabled counterparts.

Unemployment is detrimental to the individual and society. Without a job and income, people with disabilities require additional funds and services. Further, without an income, they are unable to pay back into society through taxes, buying power, or simply using their skills and knowledge through employment.

Although some disabilities themselves can play a role in the barrier of gaining employment, the larger issues often are a lack of information about rights, services, supports, and opportunities.

Purpose of the Grant

In 2014, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services funded one national technical assistance center (RAISE) and seven (7) Rehabilitative Services Administration Parent Training and Information Centers. The purpose of these Centers is to effectively and efficiently address the issue of unemployment and independent living for people with disabilities through already established parent training and information centers. Through directly integrating transition information into these centers it is possible to address the transition barriers earlier, with families and youth by connecting centers.

What is RAISE?

RAISE (Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment) provides technical assistance and support to the RSA-PTIs that work with individuals with disabilities through transition from secondary school into competitive employment and independent living.

RAISE strategically employs 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 products and services.

What are the RSA PTIs?

The seven RSA-PTIs support the needs of youth with disabilities and their families during transition. These projects include: Federation for Children with Special Needs, New York State Transition Partners, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, Project Launch, REACH for Transition, Shift Transition Project, and STELLAR Project.

Each program has a different approach, set of objectives, and deliverables. RSA-PTIs have hundreds of collaborative partnerships, present to thousands at transition trainings, provide one-on-one assistance to hundreds more, and reach hundreds of thousands through newsletters, social media, and resource events.

RAISE and RSA-PTI Centers Outcomes

Outcomes for Families & Youth:

- ◆ Learning to navigate adult support systems.
- ◆ Becoming “guides on the side” supporting their youth to build self-reliance and self-advocacy skills.
- ◆ Youth are speaking up about their goals, strengths, interests, and the supports they need.
- ◆ Parent centers are gaining expertise and resources for engaging youth and families in learning about transition and how to access needed support.

Getting There

A student needed support with independent travel, so the RSA-PTI conducted skills and needs assessments to help him understand the train and practice traveling around. He then attended a workshop where he helped other young people learn to map out routes.

The RSA-PTI helped him apply for a reduced fare travel card, which greatly increased his social network and independent living prospects. He applied for VR services, enrolled in the VR's maintenance and retail training program, received job coaching, and is now learning to stock shelves and be part of a team within a professional environment.

RSA-PTIs' materials are often shared within school districts for professional training.

RSA-PTIs have hundreds of collaborative partnerships, present to thousands at transition trainings, provide one-on-one assistance to hundreds more, and reach hundreds of thousands through newsletters, social media, and resource events.

He's Hired!

A mother and her son, who has a significant disability, attended an RSA-PTI workshop series, telling others at the first session that the young man had been turned down for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. After attending the first two workshops, armed with the info they had gained, they decided to recontact VR. The young man proudly walked into the third workshop announcing that he had a new job at Barnes and Noble with job coaching support!

PTI INVOLVEMENT IN SYSTEMIC CHANGE: *“Coming together twice a year to share ideas and thoughts has been extremely helpful in my work at our Parent Center.”*

Parent/Family Member Surveys

The RAISE RSA-PTI Parent/Family Member Survey measures whether family members agree that the information or support they received from the RSA-PTIs fulfilled their various needs.

According to the 2017 survey, 97% of families agreed or strongly agreed that their technical assistance “met their needs”, and 98% stated that it “was understandable”; 96% that it “was useful”; and 97% that it “was applicable.”

“I learned a lot at the youth transition conference. I learned that college is an option for me. I learned that I need to do things for myself. I learned that I can make my own decisions. I learned that I have to be responsible for me. Thank you for teaching us about our rights and about self-advocacy.”

RSA-PTI Partnerships with Non-profit, For-profit, & Government Agencies

Non-Profit	For-Profit	Government Agency
376	15	110

RSA-PTI Centers In-Person Training

IN-PERSON TRAINING AUDIENCE October 1, 2015–June 30, 2018

Family Members	13,550
Youth/Young Adults	8,102
Professionals	9,174
Advocates	925
Parent Center Staff & Volunteers	945

Total In-Person Trainings 32,696

THE IMPACT OF RSA-PTI CENTERS

RSA-PTI Centers Direct Assistance to Individuals

DIRECT ASSISTANCE CONTACT AUDIENCE October 1, 2015–June 30, 2018

Family Members	29,053
Youth/Young Adults	2,486
Professionals	4,391
Parent Center Staff & Volunteers	402

Total Direct Assistance Contacts 36,670

RSA-PTI Centers Outreach & Dissemination Activities

OUTREACH/DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES October 1, 2015–June 30, 2018

Newsletters (print & electronic):	1,636,309
Resource Disseminated at Exhibits/ Poster Sessions:	161,306
Media Events Held:	432,857
RSA PTI Website Page Views:	1,377,666
Social Media: Individuals Reached– Twitter/Facebook “Likes”:	786,772

Total Outreach & Dissemination: 4,394,910

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT: *“I found the webinar information presented on student led IEPs, and preparing students with self-advocacy skills, very helpful.”*

A CLOSER LOOK

RAISE & RSA-PTI Spotlights



The National RAISE Technical Assistance Center

Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment

RAISE helps centers provide their support and expertise to individuals with disabilities and their families on vocational rehabilitation (VR), independent living programs, services, and appropriate resources so they can:

- ◆ better understand the services and resources;
- ◆ obtain information about opportunities;
- ◆ receive follow-up support for transition and employment programs;
- ◆ communicate more effectively with transition, rehabilitation, and other professionals;
- ◆ develop individualized plans for employment;
- ◆ understand the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, particularly relating to employment, supported employment, and independent living.

Resources

RAISE's resources, research, and tools for improving employment and independent living outcomes are reviewed by RSA-PTI directors and professional panels. 99% of these resources were considered useful or highly useful and all resources were rated as good quality or high quality and relevant or highly relevant.

Speaking Engagements

RAISE team members have spoken at these events on employment, youth engagement and partnerships, preparing young adults for transition and self-advocacy:

Parent Centers

- ◆ Northeast Parent Center Assistance & Collaboration
- ◆ New Mexico Parent Training & Information Conference
- ◆ Vermont Family Network Conference
- ◆ Federation for Children with Special Needs Annual Conference
- ◆ Peak Regional Leaders Conference
- ◆ The RSA Directors Conference

National Organizations

- ◆ National Family and Community Engagement Conference
- ◆ Association of People Supporting Employment First
- ◆ The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition Capacity Building Institute
- ◆ TASH
- ◆ Developmental Disabilities Council

RAISE Helps By:

- ◆ **Disseminating** information on practices that lead to high-quality employment outcomes and independent living for individuals with disabilities
- ◆ **Sharing** strategies for reaching and serving culturally, linguistically, and, ethnically diverse youth
- ◆ **Supporting** RSA in collecting data from the RSA-PTIs
- ◆ **Creating** tools to help RSA-PTIs disseminate information and conduct training activities for transition-aged youth on transition, VR services, career development, and related fields
- ◆ **Fostering** the RSA-PTIs' ability to work with local, state, and national-level departments and organizations on serving youth and families in transition

Annual Needs Assessment

RSA-PTI and RAISE directors meet annually to analyze each center's strengths and needs to create individualized TA plans.

Individualized TA

Provided to RSA PTIs based on their preferences, determined during annual TA needs assessments.

Peer-to-Peer Calls & Meetings

RAISE hosts bimonthly calls with RSA-PTIs and RSA to discuss Center and RSA updates and other topics that are important to the centers.

PARTNERSHIPS

The RAISE Center is informed and supported by the RAISE Advisory Partnership (RAP). These 21 RAP members include the seven RSA-PTIs, self-advocates, disability activists, and professional partners.

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 and curate resources.

- ◆ **Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)**
- ◆ **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**

Collaboration

RSA-PTI directors all agree or strongly agree that RAISE:

- ◆ Consistently makes information about transition services available.
- ◆ Coordinates with their PTI center to disseminate general information related to transition supports.

BOARD MEETING & SUMMIT

Since 2014, RAISE has hosted four RAISE Advisory Partnership face-to-face meetings and three summits. The annual meeting brings together all of the partnership members to discuss progress made by the centers and technical assistance needs. The RAISE summits are full training days covering various topics surrounding transition.



The LINK Center connects families, professionals, and individuals with disabilities who are transition age (14-26) with information, supports, and services; provides answers to transition related questions, education, and training throughout Massachusetts; and offers a centralized transition-based website with relevant resources and information for families to easily navigate.

The LINK Center is one of seven Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) PTIs throughout the US. The centers have been identified to support other parent training information centers on issues of youth transition.

The LINK Center collaborates with statewide agencies and other organizations to support effective transition practices including the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Developmental Services, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Training & Technical Assistance

The LINK Center is a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs and works closely with the Parent Training Information Call Center (PTIC) to support families in addressing transition related concerns. FCSN offers training and outreach support to multi-lingual, multi-cultural families. Workshops, materials, and information have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Haitian Creole.

Community Partners

- ◆ Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- ◆ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
- ◆ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- ◆ Easter Seals Massachusetts
- ◆ Partners for Youth with Disabilities
- ◆ Massachusetts Independent Living Centers
- ◆ Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative Program
- ◆ The Arc of Massachusetts
- ◆ Boston Public Schools

Advisory Council The LINK Center is guided by an advisory council consisting of parents, professionals, and young adult self-advocates. The council meets quarterly for updates on LINK Center projects, sharing best practices in the field of transition services, and feedback on LINK Center work and materials. The advisory council also helps the LINK Center to connect to communities across the state. Council members represent communities across Massachusetts including the western part of the state, the north shore, the south shore, and metro Boston. Understanding and connecting to the diverse communities of the state is crucial to the success of the LINK Center.

WIOA Student & Family Support Project

The WIOA Student & Family Support Project is a collaboration between the LINK Center and MRC that provides pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities ages 16-22 and their families. The WIOA Student & Family Support Project has three main goals:

- ◆ Partnership with MRC Area offices to offer transition workshops for families and professionals;
- ◆ Provide transition resources through websites, webinars, workshops, technical assistance, and phone calls;
- ◆ Referral based person-centered transition support for vocational rehabilitation eligible students and families.

Transition Brochures

The LINK Center collaborates with DESE to create family-friendly brochures regarding transition and transition-related topics including The Secondary Transition Planning Process; Transition Assessment; Self-determination; Decision-Making and the Age of Majority; Secondary Transition Services; Disability Disclosure; and The Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF).

In 2018, NYS Transition Partners reached more than 3,000 parents, youth, and professionals with essential information through direct assistance and trainings, and tens of thousands more have received newly-developed, up-to-date information on the rapidly evolving postsecondary transition landscape.

Learning Communities

NYS Transition Partners conducted two Learning Communities on Supplemental Security Income and Work-based Incentives and Health Home Care Management, with approximately 80 participants representing higher education, vocational rehabilitation, job training and employment services, education, and advocacy groups as well as parents and young adults.

nystransitionpartners.org

All products, including English and Spanish tipsheets, learning community presentations, videos, ACCESS newsletter archives, and success stories developed through the project in all grants years are currently hosted on our website.

Additionally, we added links to more than 70 outside resources on employment, independent living, adult systems and services, transition, as well as laws, policies, rights, and regulations for New York State families.

Information Resources

There were ten new information English/Spanish resources disseminated this year, including four videos and six tip sheets. All were distributed through our monthly ACCESS newsletter, at conferences, through social media posts, and as handouts and resources at trainings. In addition, they were shared with school districts and agencies in their professional development and parent programs.

Mini Grants

We received triple the number of applications for the second round of project mini grants. We awarded eight grants to an array of projects:

- ◆ Creating Hope through Opportunity, Participation and Empowerment, Inc. (dba C-HOPE) to develop a food service vocational training program for individuals with disabilities.
- ◆ Community Inclusion & Development Alliance, Inc. to partially fund the production of two videos and a guide booklet focusing on Korean-American families.
- ◆ Job Path, Inc. to fund “There’s a job for everyone” online video.
- ◆ The Kelberman Center to help fund the “Glitch – Empower Transition through Technology Transition Symposium.”
- ◆ Long Island Communities of Practice, Inc. to help fund the Self Determination Youth and Parent Summit.
- ◆ Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL) to help fund two transition conferences – “You Hold the Keys to Your Future” and “Recipes for Success.”
- ◆ ROC Spirit Ventures, Inc. to help fund their resource workspace to help individuals and families transition.
- ◆ Westchester Institute for Human Development to expand their “Draft IEP” tool.

Marketing and Outreach

ACCESS, our monthly news aggregate of transition-related news, resources, and events, was sent to approximately 35,000 recipients per month, totaling more than 400,000 annually. We also developed and executed a social media campaign (“Transition Tuesdays”) to promote examples of employment, independence, and self-direction, and promote high expectations. There were more than 150 Transition Tuesday and transition-related posts this year reaching more than 60,000 people.

Statewide Collaborations

- ◆ State’s Inclusive Workforce Alliance
- ◆ Governor’s Employment First initiative
- ◆ New York Association of Training & Employment Professionals conference supporting WIOA Youth Navigators
- ◆ 2017 Transition Age Youth Institute: *Preparing Youth for Transition through De-Stigmatizing Disability and Self-Advocacy*
- ◆ New York State Education Department Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities membership



OPEN DOORS
for MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES

multiculturalfamilies.org

Services for Professionals

Technical Assistance on how to:

- * Use the *Life After High School: A Guide for Culturally Linguistically Diverse Families of Youth with Disabilities*;
- * Engage and effectively partner with families and students; and
- * Recognize cultural considerations.

Information and Resource sharing on:

- * Preparing for meeting with interpreters;
- * Interpreter evaluation;
- * *Engaging Diverse Families in Transition: Self-assessment*

Open Doors for Multicultural Families have **the Multicultural Parent Training & Information Center Project**, which aims to ensure access to post-secondary resources and services for culturally and linguistically diverse families of youth with disabilities in Washington State.

Services for Youth & Families

Information & Referral to better understand:

- * Transition process and planning;
- * Rights in the transition process;
- * Employment support through VR;
- * Post-secondary education or vocational training;
- * Independent living.

Cultural consultation on how to:

- * Actively participate in the transition process;
- * Effectively communicate with transition professionals

Services available in other languages through the use of language line.

2018 Program Highlights

698 copies of *Life After High School: A Guide for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families of Youth with Disabilities* disseminated in nine languages

229 views for the Transition video series

241 transition-age youth cases opened with families

24 hours of Technical Assistance, cultural consultations, and cultural competency trainings provided to transition professionals

Open Doors implements DVR's Pre-ETS programs, serving up to 80 students with disabilities from communities of color and immigrant refugee backgrounds.

Summary, 2017-2018

In 2014, PACER Center received the Project Launch grant to develop and implement transition trainings in four states (MN, KY, OH, and IN). Project Launch has partnered with VR, Centers of Independent Living, Workforce centers, employers, and others to provide information and training in support of meaningful employment, independent living, and full community inclusion outcomes.

Training/Individualized Assistance Activities:

3,659 individuals were reached through individual assistance

700 individuals attended trainings and workshops

New Resources & Information Through Technology & Partnerships

295,900 individuals were informed about this project's activities and rehabilitation services with additional efforts to reach persons with severe disabilities and those from under-

represented populations.

Training/Information to Culturally & Racially Diverse Individuals/Families (Workshops Without Walls)

2,800 Hmong listeners were reached through transition services sessions on a local AM radio station.

696 individuals were reached (including the Chinese, Somali, African American, Native American, and Hmong communities) through training and individual assistance.

Five-part video series provides career exploration tips for parents of youth with disabilities.

Additional Activities, Observations, and Summary

Project Launch and Launch PTI staff:

- ◆ Help postsecondary students and employees with disabilities obtain accommodations.
- ◆ Hold positions on their State Rehabilitation Advisory Council, State Services for the Blind, and CILs.

PROJECT STELLAR

Supporting Transition to Engaged Lives by Linking Agency Resources

The goal of the STELLAR (Supporting Transition to Engaged Lives by Linking Agency Resources) project is to provide information and training to assist transition age youth (14-26) with disabilities, their parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives of the individual to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the vocational, independent living, and rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.



Innovative approaches to this initiative include:

- ◆ Transition Mentors work statewide to provide direct assistance to youth with disabilities and their families on transition issues and available services
- ◆ Statewide Region Transition Networks (RTN) who will create ways to deliver on-going training and information to enable individuals with disabilities, parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives of the individual to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the vocational, independent living, and rehabilitation needs of the individuals with disabilities, particularly those who are members of populations that have been unserved or underserved
- ◆ Each RTN will (1) develop a strategic action plan to address training and information dissemination for the transition services needs of youth with disabilities and their family members that were previously unserved or underserved; (2) increase collaboration with school districts to more effectively partner with employers to gain work experience for youth with disabilities while still in high school
- ◆ RTNs will disseminate information and resources to transition age youth with disabilities, family members, service providers, school districts, and community members statewide on all key components of transition to adult life and the work of the RTNs

Strategies

- ◆ Career focused and on-the-job training while in school
- ◆ Inclusion of self-advocacy and self-determination skills in the curriculum
- ◆ Interpersonal skills, and job-related skills training for students
- ◆ Supervised on-the-job training in the community with continuous support for both the employer and the student
- ◆ Involvement of students, parents, businesses, and community representatives in interagency transition teams
- ◆ Meaningful job placement experiences that provide living wages and career opportunities for youth with disabilities
- ◆ Coordination between school and post-school activities

RSA SHIFT TRANSITION PROJECT

Realizing New Transition Possibilities

Information and Training for Youth with Disabilities and their Families

- **One-to-one transition assistance and follow-up support**
- **Quality print and web-based information** for navigating service systems to realize a positive vision for the future
- **Tools for making and using effective action plans**
- **Workshop series** in local communities that are interactive, accessible, and useful
- **Informational online training webinars**
- **Self-advocacy and leadership development course** for youth and families
- **Guide booklets** (in development) accessible to youth and families on future planning, careers, and independent living



Check out the PEAK website:

www.peakparent.org

or contact:

Beth Schaffner,

Project Director

bschaffner@peakparent.org

719.531.9400

Project Overview

In 2014, PEAK Parent Center was awarded a five-year grant by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide information and support to youth with disabilities and their families as they prepare for and move through transition from high school to adult lives.

Through this project, PEAK develops cutting edge resources and provides technical assistance to other Parent Centers for using the project's products with the families and youth with disabilities they serve.

Technical Assistance to Region 5 Parent Centers

- Parent Center Transition Community of Practice
- Transition services self-assessment process
- Access to and technical assistance for implementing the project's workshop and self-advocacy training curricula and other products
- Skill-building webinars for parent center staff
- Coalition-building toolkit for working with statewide and local agencies
- Online repository of resources toolkit



A collaboration between nine Parent Centers in Northeast Region 1 serving parents, youth/young adults with disabilities, and professionals; and their state partners, including representatives from special education, Centers for Independent Living, and state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies. In collaboration with the Region 1 Parent Technical Assistance Center, REACH for Transition brings together all 21 Parent Centers in the NE Region, including the other two RSA grantees in this region, FCSN and the NYS Partnership, in a community of practice that shares challenges, solutions, resources and tools. REACH is a project of SPAN: spanadvocacy.org/content/reach-transition-resources-employment-access-community-living-and-hope

Core Components of REACH

- ◆ Bi-annual face-to-face forums with the Region 1 PTAC to share and collaborate on transition-related activities and projects
- ◆ Quarterly Governance Board Meetings to review and guide current and future activities
- ◆ A growing resource repository of over 150 transition-related documents from all Region 1 Parent Centers available for easy access
- ◆ Webinars on topics such as “Community Resources” and “Disability & Sexuality”
- ◆ Virtual Train-the-Trainers on topics such as
 - ◇ Assistive Technology & Engaging Youth Through Social Media
 - ◇ Building Capacity to Engage Youth
 - ◇ Plan for the Future: Transition Tools to Help Youth/Young Adults

Sample REACH Partner Activities

- ◆ Incorporation of youth activities and self advocacy/self-determination into workshops & trainings
- ◆ Direct support activities for youth in areas of education, employment and community involvement
- ◆ Youth Advisory Board such as NJ Youth Engaged in Leading and Learning (NJ YELL) and NH Youth for Education
- ◆ Support and education for college Developed and/or enhanced partnerships with with state partners to promote youth focused activities

Performance on Projected Measures

Across the first three years of the project, REACH partners provided a variety of resources and information to families, youth and young adults with disabilities, and the professionals who served them, exceeding projections and reflecting an increase each year in the numbers served.

Of surveyed families, youth and young adults with disabilities, and professionals who serve them:

Web-based information:	85,763, Year 3 84,646, Year 2 66,267, Year 1	}	236,676
Technical assistance and support:	13,647, Year 3 13,510, Year 2 12,951, Year 1	}	40,108
Training:	15,816, Year 3 13,406, Year 2 12,806, Year 1	}	42,028
Information:	82,761, Year 3 63,762, Year 2 57,398, Year 1	}	203,921

- ◆ **95.6%** indicated that the information, training, technical assistance, and support (products and services) was of high quality, relevant, and useful;
- ◆ **92%** reported an increase in knowledge and awareness of transition, independent living, rehabilitation, and increased confidence in communicating with VR, IL, and other adult services providers.