Best Practices for Engaging Families with Unique Learning Needs (ULN)

Jennifer Aprea

Director of Family Engagement
The Arc Tennessee
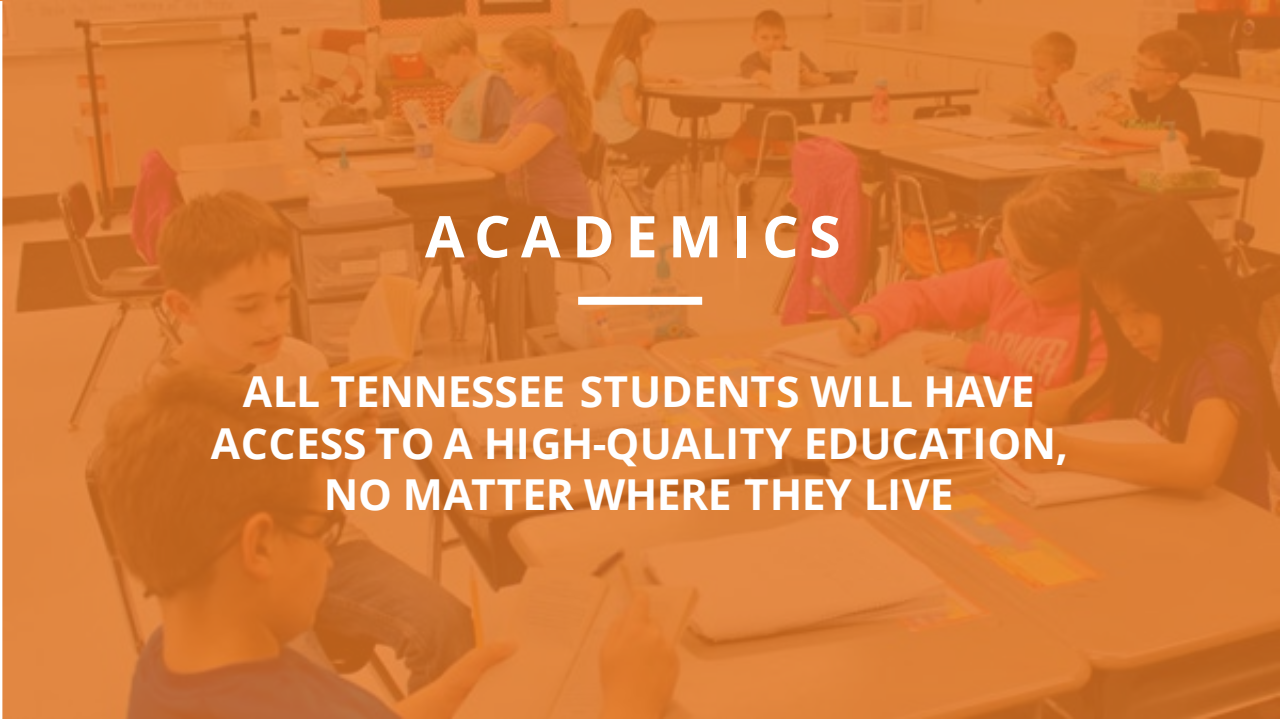
#TNBestforAll

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BEST **FOR** **ALL**
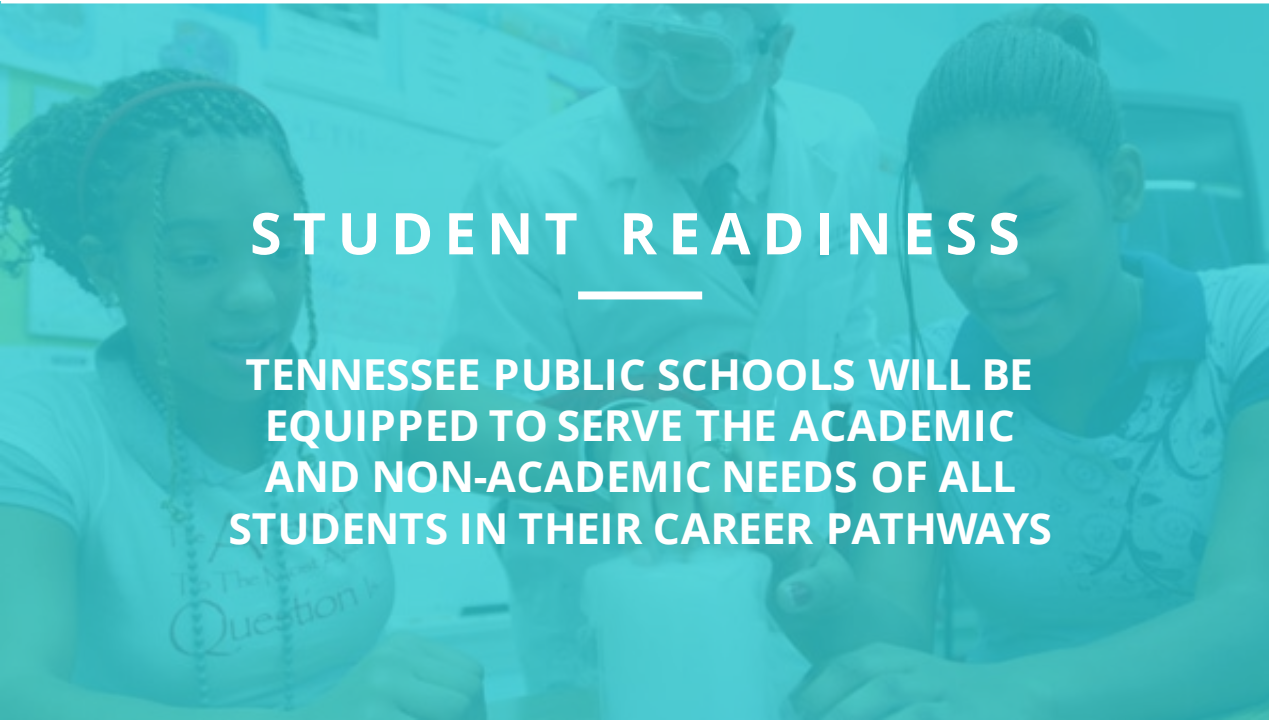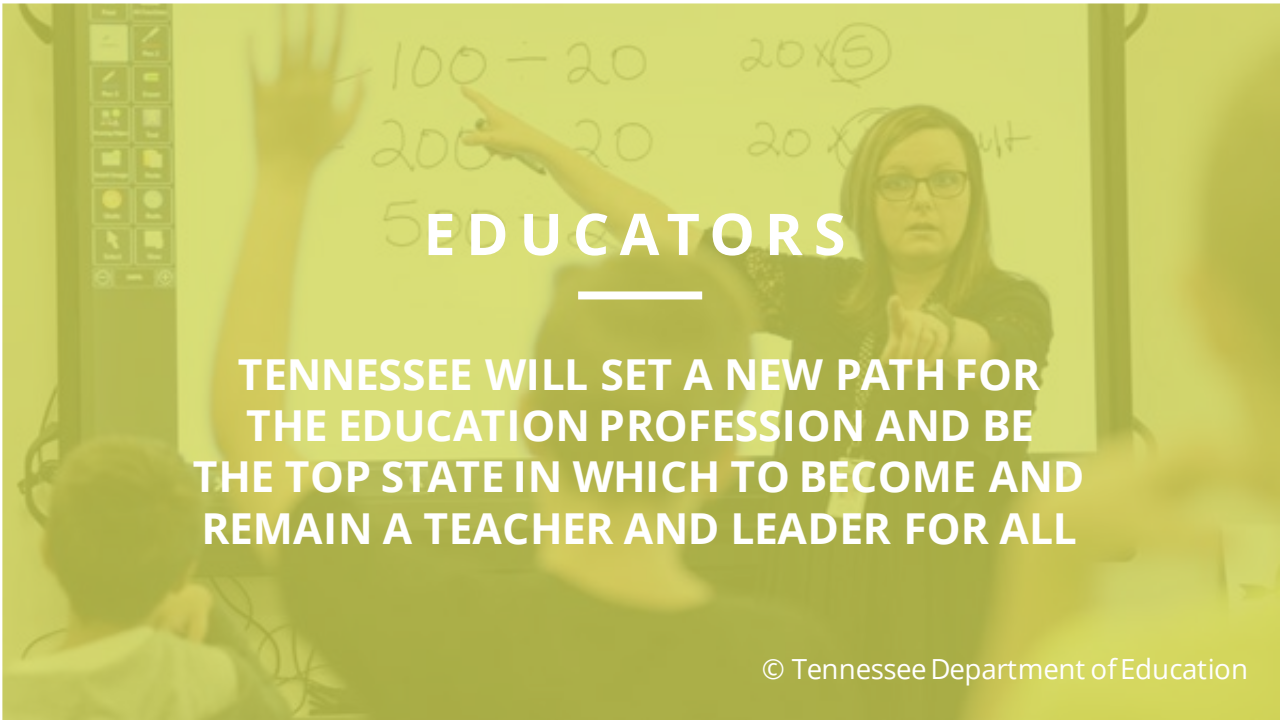
We will set all students on a path to success.

ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE

STUDENT READINESS

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL

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- What the Family Engagement Project offers
- Why engaging families matters
- Barriers families face
- Tips for reaching families

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> **"** At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.

- Jane D. Hull

The Department's Partnership with the ARC

- Through funding from the department, the ARC provides trainings and support to schools and families of children with disabilities (CWD) who are receiving services through one of the following programs:
  - A public IDEA 619 preschool special education program (ages 3-5)
  - A public K-12 special education program (ages 6-21)

Regional Family Engagement Specialists

Annette Graves · Kendra Jones · Jeremy Conner · Kathleen Basham · Erica Konyak

Northwest · Mid Cumberland · Upper Cumberland · First TN · East TN · Southwest · South Central · Southeast

Katrina VanBuren · Susan Carr · Molly Anderson

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Jen Aprea
Family Engagement Director

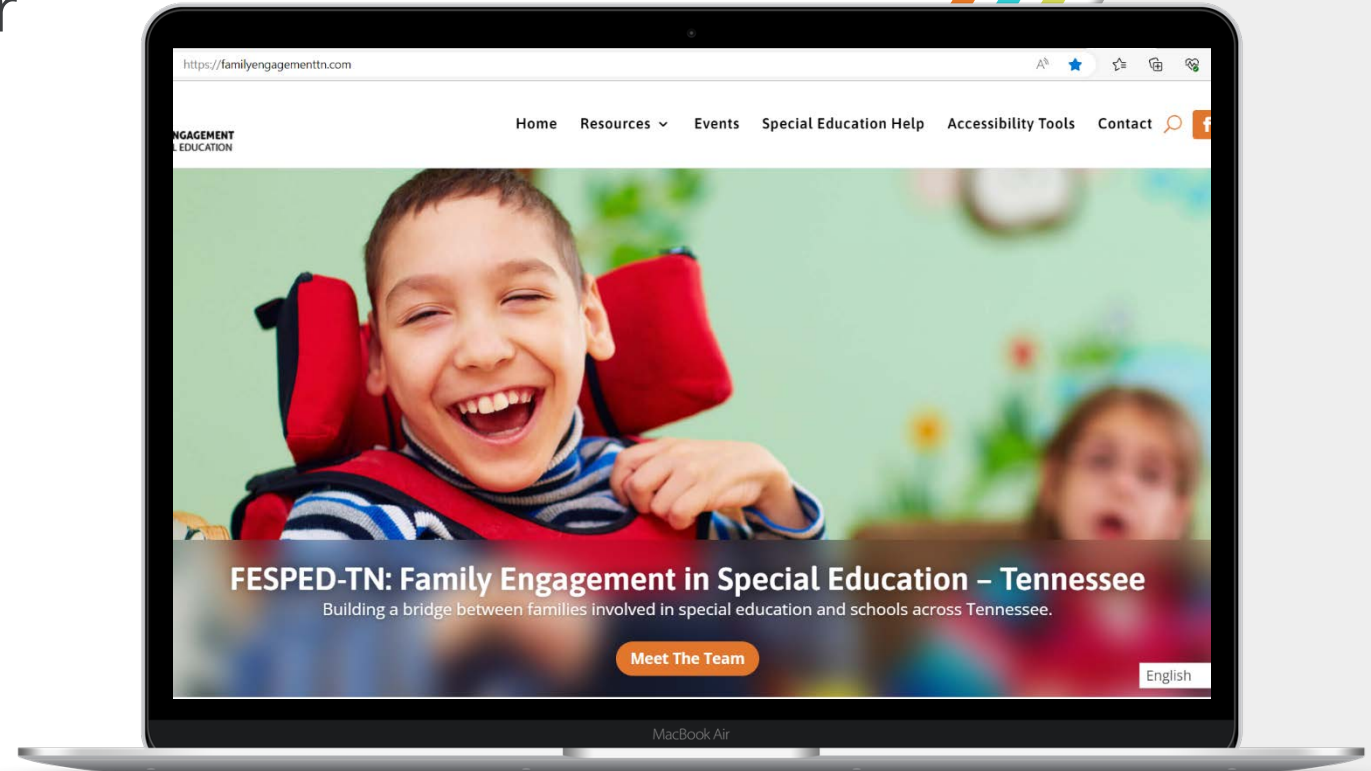**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**
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Contact

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800-835-7077

specialeducation@thearctn.org ● 833-596-1553 ● familyengagementn.com
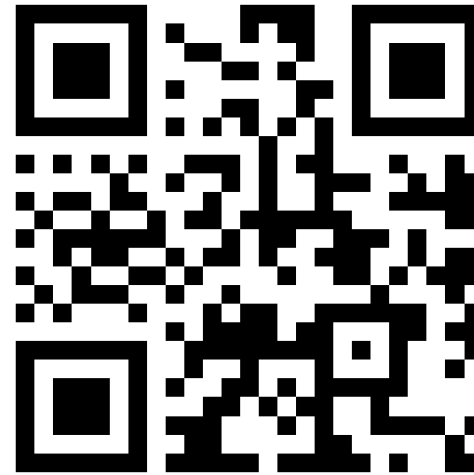
Visit our new website for resources!

- Dedicated chat box and toll-free number
- Schedule trainings for families or professional development for teachers
- Search the blog for shareable resources
- Links to social media

Family Engagement Networking Events

We can help you establish or host:

- Family Engagement Workshops
- Parent Support Groups
- Parent Advisory Council for Students with Disabilities
- Transition Fairs
- Community Conversations

Why Family Engagement Matters

- 2002 research review *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement,* by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp.

- There is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education.

- When families are involved in their children's learning both at home and at school, their children do better in school.

Source: PTA.org research study

Family Engagement Matters

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

Finding 1: Involvement programs that link to learning improve student achievement.

Finding 2: Speaking up for children protects and promotes their success.

Finding 3: All families can contribute to their children's success.

Finding 4: Community organizing gets results.

Stronger Together

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Indicator 8	**Parent Involvement**: Percent of parents of SWDs who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means to improve services and results for SWDs.
	Target is established based longitudinal data, trends, state and national averages, and input from stakeholder groups.

- The Annual Performance Report (APR) **Indicator 8** parent survey is administered by the department annually between February 15 and May 15.
- Not every district is surveyed every year.
- The score is based on respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with Question 1 on the survey.

Indicator 8

Parent Involvement: Percent of parents of SWDs who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means to improve services and results for SWDs.

Target is established based longitudinal data, trends, state and national averages, and input from stakeholder groups.

FFY 2018 SPP/APR Data

Number of respondent parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities	Total number of respondent parents of children with disabilities	FFY 2017 Data	FFY 2018 Target	FFY 2018 Data	Status	Slippage
4,277	4,683	89.48%	94.00%	91.33%	Did Not Meet Target	No Slippage

The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.

30,936

Percentage of respondent parents

15.14%

Indicator 8

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FFY 2020 SPP/APR Data

Number of respondent parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities	Total number of respondent parents of children with disabilities	FFY 2019 Data	FFY 2020 Target	FFY 2020 Data	Status	Slippage
4,798	5,434	77.40%	83.35%	88.30%	Met target	No Slippage

Parent Involvement Targets

The target for the 2021-22 determination year will be 89.30% or more.

Targets by Determination Year

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	83.35%	89.30%	90.04%	90.78%	91.52%	92.53%
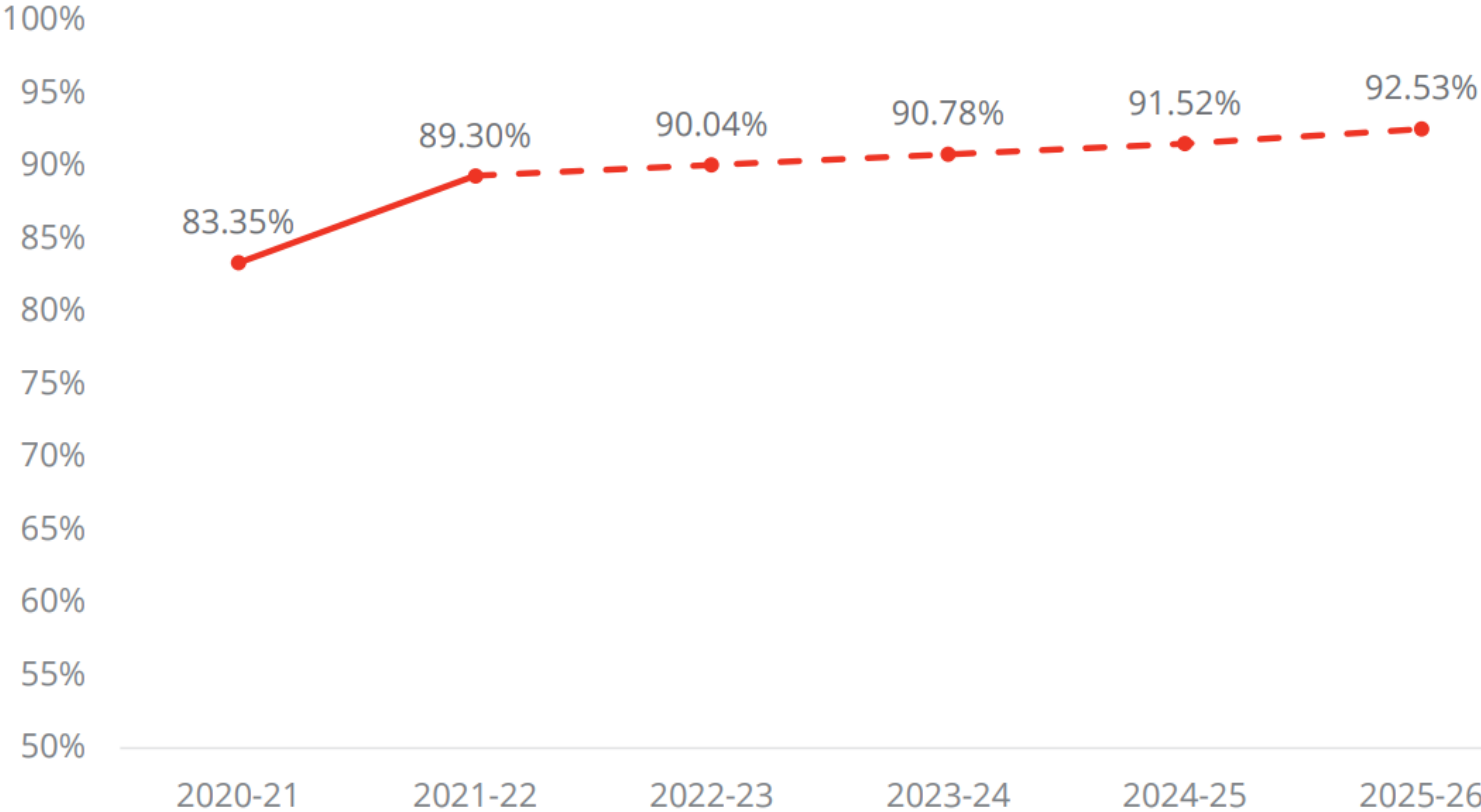
How do we engage families?

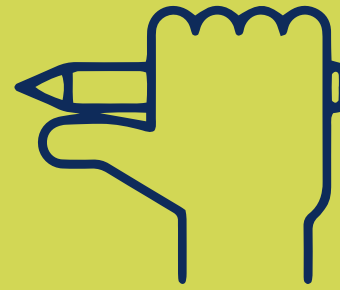© Tennessee Department of Education

Community Conversations

Invite stakeholders

Share ideas

Take notes

Improve student outcomes

Question #1

Go to **wooclap.com** and use the code **DLGFIX**

What does Family Engagement in Special Education look like in your community?

Let's vote!

Click on the projected screen to start the question

answers received

wooclap

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What does Family Engagement in Special Education look like in your community?

- Families only hear from schools when something is going wrong
- Families are not involved in events
- Families don't fully understand the Individual Education Program (IEP) process
- Events are only planned with the general education population in mind
- The only time families engage with the school is during the IEP meeting
- Families face a variety of barriers to participate in school events

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What can Schools and Districts do to strengthen Family Engagement?

- Positive communication
- Community engagement events
- Family involvement in educational decisions/transition meetings
- Empower families to exercise leadership within school
- Build relationships with families
- Ask families directly how can they be supportive of the student
- Consider students with disabilities (SWDs) in all planning for schoolwide events

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What Can Schools Do to Support Families?

Communicate

Help Parents Advocate

Build Relationships

Positive IEP Meetings

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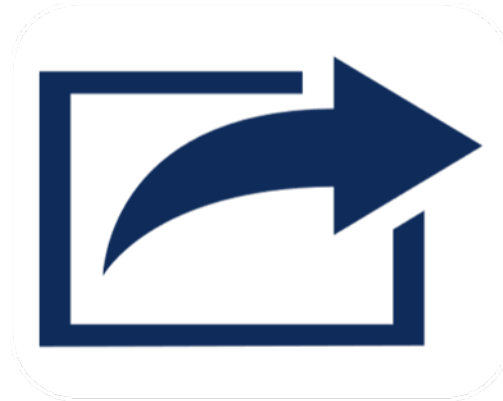
Communication

- Share resources with families.
- Personally invite families to school events.
- Make sure information is translated into the student's home language.
- Communicate the positive!
- Transparency is key.

Help Parents Advocate

- This is where we can help!
- Connect families with advocacy groups.
- Recommend parents of SWDs for leadership roles.
- Create a Parent Advisory Council.

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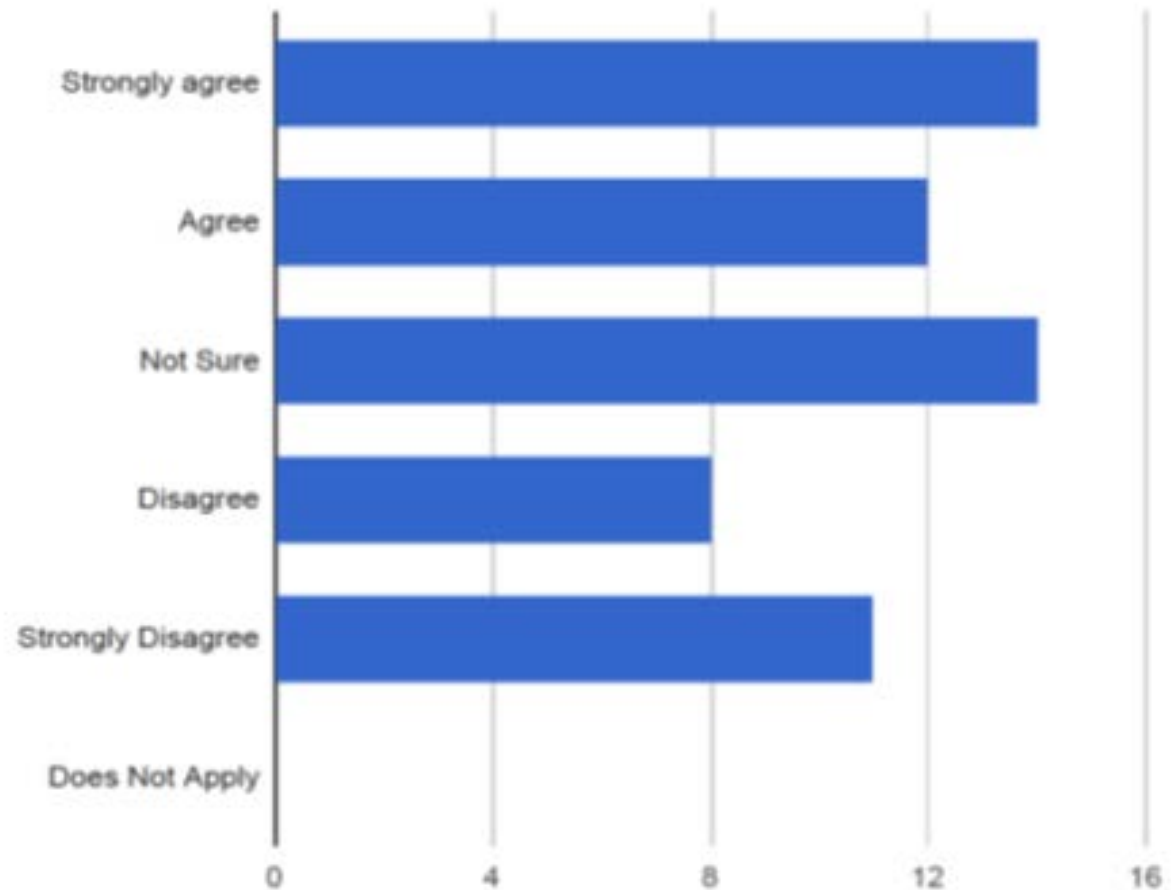
Build Relationships

- From our Community Conversations and our family survey, we've learned that families feel their children are often misunderstood or labeled based on their diagnosis.

- Get to know the individual child's strengths and weaknesses.

- Talking with parents early on will help!

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School Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Specific Learning Disability	47,040	48,785	48,115	44,582	41,952
Speech or Language Impairment	33,314	33,183	32,903	33,064	32,578
Other Health Impairment	14,360	15,220	15,472	16,048	16,898
Intellectual Disability (formerly Mental Retardation)	7,519	7,504	7,672	7,945	8,181
Developmental Delay	8,814	9,053	9,407	9,990	10,602
Emotional Disturbance	3,299	3,274	3,214	3,239	3,259
Autism	7,317	8,007	8,652	9,421	10,432
Multiple Disabilities	2,214	2,217	2,232	2,159	2,146
Hearing Impairment	1,496	1,455	1,431	1,347	1,319
Orthopedic/Physical Impairment	737	695	645	644	597
Visual Impairment	688	648	630	590	592
Traumatic Brain Injury	328	337	343	341	366
Deaf-Blindness	11	9	13	16	14
TOTAL	**127,407**	**138,387**	**130,729**	**129,386**	**128,936**

Building Relationships

- Results from our family survey that asks, "School Staff that work with my child understand their disability"

Positive IEP Meetings

- For some families, this is the main (or only) point of contact with the school.
- This meeting can set the tone for the parent/school relationship.
- Tip sheet for virtual meetings: https://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/virtual-iep-meeting-tipsheets.pdf

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Let's Talk About IEP Meetings

Before the Meeting

- Consider whether the student is ready for a student-led IEP meeting
- When you discuss the draft, make parents aware that you'd like their feedback on student's strengths/challenges so they can be prepared

Holding the IEP Meeting

- Walk in with the family
- Talk together about the student's strengths and areas of growth
- Explain how supports and accommodations can be used in school and at home
- Decode acronyms

After the Meeting

- Let families know they don't have to sign right away
- Schedule follow ups as needed
- Communicate regularly on progress

https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/09/how-have-successful-iep-meeting#:~:text=%E2%80%9CIEP%20meetings%20should%20be%20anchored,strengths%20and%20areas%20of%20growth.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Let's Share!

What are some things that you've done in your district to increase family engagement in special education that have worked?
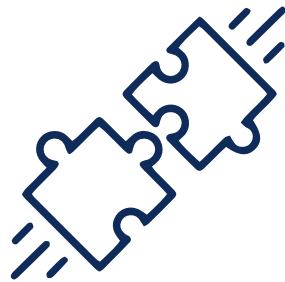
Feedback

I wanted to let you know how appreciative I am of our partnership with The Arc TN. Susan Carr is a phenomenal person and always shares AMAZING resources with us. She is instrumental in building parent relationships, and she even took time out of her schedule to attend our pre-k graduation/picnic this past Spring. I just wanted to drop you a line expressing our appreciation for her and The Arc TN in general.

Wendy L. Wilkerson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Director of Special Education and 504 Coordinator

Tullahoma City Schools

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Connect with us!

Connect with The Arc Tennessee's
Family Engagement Project

[Instagram] @fespedtn

[Globe] www.FamilyEngagementTN.com

Sign up for our newsletter:

[Facebook] Facebook.com/fespedtn
Facebook.com/TheArcTennessee

[Twitter] @fesped_tn

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The Arc.
Tennessee

Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN)

provides school districts, administrators, educators, and families access to high-quality training, resources, and supports designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, ages 3-22.

Intensive Behavior

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides technical assistance for complex behavior support needs and associated training. Supports include direct instruction for staff on behavior assessment and intervention implementation, as well as ongoing coaching to help students engage within their least restrictive environments.

Preschool

AnLar assists in building capacity and systems to support meaningful access to preschool for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, leadership coaching, preschool program evaluation and support implementing evidence-based practices in inclusive settings.

RTI²-A+RTI²-B

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center assists districts and schools as they build and implement an aligned student support system. The center provides training, coaching, and resources for building an aligned framework for tiered academic and behavioral supports.

Autism

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides training, consultation, and coaching services designed to support educators in their classrooms and develop school and system-wide supports to address needs specific to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Assistive Technology

The Assistive Technology Project (ATP) assists districts and staff in building capacity to provide assistive technology supports for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, direct coaching for staff, and access to AT equipment-lending libraries for assessment trials.
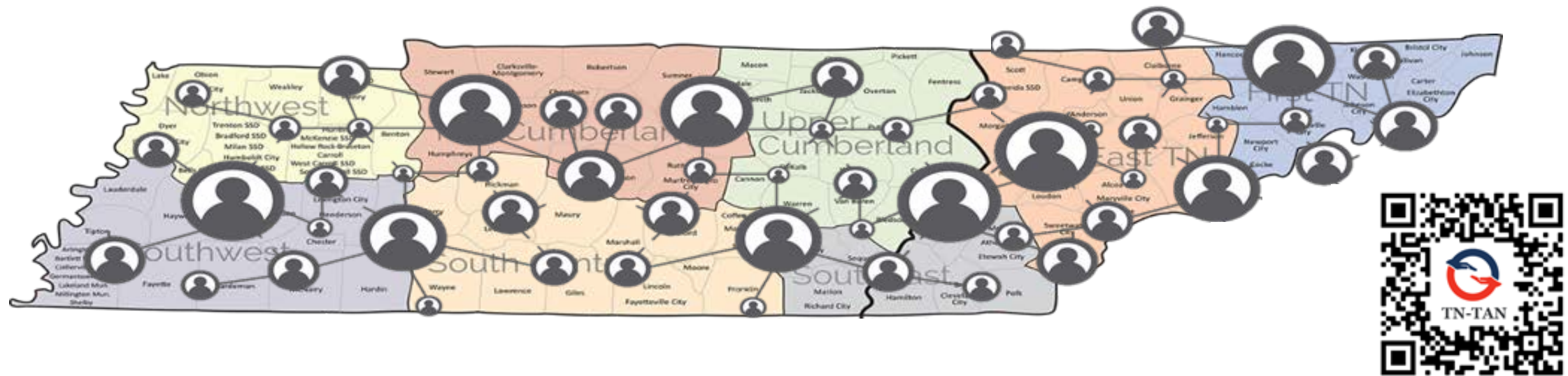
Secondary Transition

Transition Tennessee provides a range of services to transition stakeholders to improve in-school and post-school outcomes for transition-aged students (14-22) with disabilities. Supports include tiered technical assistance for in-school transition stakeholders and resources and services specific to educator and family needs.

TN-TAN: The Vision

A coordinated network that implements strategic supports to school districts, administrators, educators, and families through high-quality training, resources, and supports designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, ages 3-22.

Autism • Inclusive Preschool • Intensive Behavior • RTI²-A+RTI²-B • Family Engagement

• Assistive Technology • Secondary Transition

Thank You!

Questions?

Please complete our feedback survey.

TN | Department of Education

Tuesday-Thursday
Please Share Your Feedback:

You may access the PD by navigating here:
https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/2023fpi_pd_survey

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