

# Working with Families

Rebecca Cokley  
NCLD/Youth



# A History Lesson

Did you know???

YITRC projects were originally envisioned as a youth-driven counterpart to Parent Training and Information Centers

# How do we define families?

“Parents, Family Members, and other caring adults in the lives of youth with disabilities”

# The 6 Myths of Working with Families

- Myth #1: “Youth Should Be the Sole Focus of the Intervention”
- Myth #2: “There is No Need to Involve the families of Adolescents”
- Myth #3: “The Success of Family Involvement Can Only Be gauged Through the Physical Presence of Family Members at Schools or Youth Programs”
- Myth #4: “Parent Tracking is Okay”
- Myth #5: “Families Have Nothing to Offer”
- Myth #6: “Involving Families Means Involving Mothers”

What do we know?

# The Importance of **Families**



The most accurate predictor of a student's school achievement is the extent to which a family encourages learning.

# The Importance of **Families**



Families play an important role in making sure their student graduates.

Staying involved in a teen's life during middle school and high school is critical for parents.

# The Importance of **Families**

**High school students whose parents remain involved tend to:**

- make better transitions
- maintain quality of work
- develop realistic plans for their future
- have higher graduation rates
- seek postsecondary education



# What do **families** need?

- All Youth Need families, parents, and other caring adults that:
- have high expectations that build upon the young person's strengths, interests, and needs and that foster each youth's ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency;
- remain involved in their lives and assist them toward adulthood;
- have access to information about employment, further education, and community resources;
- take an active role in transition planning with schools and community partners; and
- have access to medical, professional, and peer support networks.

# What do **families** need?

- Youth with disabilities need families, parents, and other caring adults who have the following:
- an understanding of the youth's disability and how it may affect his or her education, employment, and daily living options;
- knowledge of rights and responsibilities under various disability-related legislation;
- knowledge of and access to programs, services, supports, and accommodations available for young people with disabilities; and
- an understanding of how individualized planning tools can assist youth in achieving transition goals and objectives.

# Cultural Competence Issues

- There are also significant sources of cultural stress that immigrant families must respond to (Chope & Fang, 1999). Some of these are:
  - **biological** stress with changes in diet and the entry of new foods;
  - **physical** stress in adjusting to a new, unfamiliar physical environment with different housing standards and climate;
  - **psychological** stress when values, beliefs, attitudes, and sense of belonging change;
  - **family stress** when generational differences are magnified by disparate contact with the host culture;
  - **social stress** effected by vast changes in employment opportunities, educational instruction, and ethnic and social status; and
  - **cultural stress** in the encounter of new politics, language, religion, and purchasing power.

# Welcome to the **KSAs**

KSAs are “Knowledge, Skills & Abilities of staff working with Youth with Disabilities”

# To Serve All Youth Effectively, Staff Need Assistance

- Engage/build relationships with family members or other significant persons
- Resource mapping/ability to connect youth to community institutions, resources, and supportive adults
- Ability to engage youth in community service and leadership activities

# To serve Youth with Disabilities Effectively, Staff Need Assistance

- Involving families, guardians, and advocates, including connections to disability specific resources & groups
- Community resources, including disability specific resources and organizations

# Changing Demographics of Families

- Current state of economy leads to increased likelihood that parents/family members work multiple jobs
- Continued increase of female headed households
- This generation is actually moving back to be geographically closer to family members than previous “suburban flight” families

# Opportunities, not Challenges

- Meet Families where They Meet
  - Make yourself known to rec centers, local religious centers, community service groups
  - PTAs, High School Booster Organizations (orchestra, sports teams, academic-based)
  - Existing support networks (single parent groups, groups organized around a disability type)
- Use supportive parents/family members as ambassadors of your program

# Tools & Resources

- All of NCWD/Y KSA materials will be available shortly
  - Family Engagement Checklist
  - Interactive training modules focused on supporting staff in engaging families (From 1 hr. to Multi-Day)
- NICHCY & National Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Center on Family Support
- Family Support 360 Projects

What challenges are  
you encountering?

# Best practices for engaging families



in YITRC work



- Use of cultural brokers (community based leaders who already have a community's trust)
- Use of parent mentors who can mediate challenging situations (otherwise known as HIP Moms and Dads)
- Partnering up with parent organizations

# Contact Information

KSA Website:

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ksas>

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