***A Parent Mentor Partnership Training Tool to Ensure Statewide Consistency in Content Delivery to***

***New Parent Mentors & Administrators***

**The Georgia Parent Mentor**

**Partnership (GaPMP)**

**2010-2011**

**A Family Engagement Initiative since 2002**

Divisions of Special Education

Services and Supports,

Georgia Department of Education

**FY11 Rookie Training Manual**



 **MISSION STATEMENT:**

**The mission of the Parent Mentor Partnership of Georgia is to build effective family, school, and community partnerships that lead to greater achievement**

**for all students, especially those with disabilities.**

“Impacting Student Achievement through Family Engagement Strategies”

**INTRODUCTION**

The Parent Mentor Partnership is now celebrating its eighth anniversary of working together to increase family engagement in special education. The partnership, which started as a small group of parents and administrators, now collaborates with about 80 local school systems and more than 150,000 families raising a child (ren) with learning and/or physical challenges.

Created, directed and partially-funded by the Georgia Department of Education’s Divisions of Special Education, the 90 Parent Mentors are moms and dads hired by local school systems and our three state schools to work with special education directors, parents, school teams, teachers, and the community. Their goal is to build a bridge of communication between home and school. Together, they collaborate with parents to increase engagement in education, both in addressing concerns as well as in reaching targeted goals to improve all children’s achievement levels. The Partnership, which meets every October for its annual meeting and sometimes offers a Leadership Meeting in the spring, and four times a year regionally, is locally driven, which allows each unique program to meet the needs of its respective area.

Mentors build connections for families in the community, concentrate on transition needs of high-school students and young children, lead task forces, organize training sessions, collaborate with teachers, and offer more parent involvement activities in schools. Most importantly, the mentors listen to both parents and educators, and use their unique knowledge of both worlds to overcome obstacles in communication. The DSESS Family Engagement Specialist coordinates the Partnership statewide by leading trainings, communication and statewide collaboration efforts with other agencies and organization zeroing in on family engagement and support.

The Parent Mentor Partnership Council offers support throughout the year and leads efforts in planning and training. A Parent Mentor Leadership Council regional representative in each region is responsible for working on a consistent basis with new Parent Mentors, known as rookies, and leading data collection and reports in the spring.

This training manual was written and compiled in 2008 by Parent Mentors Nalini Isaac, Bibb County School System and Kay Rogers, Rockdale County School System.

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A second edition was updated August 2009

 By Parent Mentor Terri Goodridge, Bibb County Schools

*Manual Editor: Patti Solomon, Family Engagement Specialist, GaDOE*

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**Sources to Answer Questions:**

**Patti Solomon, Family Engagement Specialist**

 **404-657-7328**

Psolomon@doe.k12.ga.us

**Debbie Currere**

**Contracted State Family Outreach Coach**

**770-722-6250**

**Debbiecurrere@gmail.com**

**Names to Be Familiar:**

**Nancy O’Hara, Associate Superintendent of Innovative Programs**

**Debbie Gay, Director of the Division for Special Education**

**Julie Causey, Project Manager of the Division’s Professional Learning Unit, which provides staff support for Parent Mentor Partnership**

**GaPMP Leadership Council Advisors: Mikki Garcia and Joan Baird**

**GaPMP Leadership Council Chair: Anne Ladd, Gwinnett County Parent Mentor**

**Web Questions: Jane Grillo, GaPMP Communications Coach**

**Unit 1**

**Welcoming Georgia Parent Mentors and Directors!**

**First Steps**

**Introduction/ Contacts:**

1. **Please send all school contact information for the parent mentor and his/her director or administrators, as well as any other administrator in the system who wants to be informed of GaPMP happenings to debbiecurrere@gmail.com.**
* **Every system is listed on the parent mentor web site. Please send an individual photo of the mentor and the director to Jane Grillo, web editor & communication coach,** jgrillo@white.k12.ga.us **for the Parent Mentor web site. The GaDOE approves materials for the public side of web site but the site’s home site is housed on the Pioneer RESA server.**
* **Also, parent mentors should send his/her for personal telephone number to Debbie Currere. We have a personal mentor contact list that is for GaPMP members only. (Providing a cell phone number is *optional but 98 percent of mentors provide a cell phone number so they can contact one another at times out of the office)***
* ***Link*** [*www.parentmentor.org*](http://www.parentmentor.org) ***official web site to your school system’s special education page***
* ***Work with the system to promote the parent mentor on the special education page, along with contact information and office hours.***
1. **Set up office (cube), telephone, computer, email etc. Facilities vary widely based on factors such as the system size, tax base, location, demographics, etc. Discuss the rules and processes in a system. Directors please discuss protocol with your rookies.**
2. **Trainings and meetings:**
* **Plan on attending the drive in Orientation training on Sept. 8 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Gwinnett County Public Schools' Instructional Support Center, 437 Old Peachtree Road, NW, Suwanee, Georgia 30024-2978**
* **It is important for the Rookie to attend:**
	+ **the one-day Orientation,**
	+ **the Annual Kick off Conference Oct. 12-14 in Athens,**
	+ **the drive in North or South University training in November, and**
	+ **each of the four regional meetings scheduled throughout the school year.**

**Directors are encouraged to attend orientation or send another administrator**

**with the mentor. Directors are strongly encouraged to attend the annual state**

**meeting in October. *Administrators have an open invitation to attend all mentor***

***trainings and meetings.***

* **Joining the list serve; this is our primary means of communication between the mentors. Parent to Parent of Georgia (GaP2P) leadership also is on our listserve to share information. We work very hard to collaborate with P2P.**

**Parent to Parent is our state’s Parent Information Training Center (PTI) which is funded by the US Department of Education under IDEA. Send email to** KAddams@aol.com **and ask that you be added to our list serve,** parentmentors\_georgia@yahoogroups.com**. Once you have been added, send out an email to the list serve introducing yourself. Directors/Administrators are welcome to join the list serve but must opt not to because of time restraints. The list serve is a professional communication tool.**

* **Every new parent mentor will receive a thumb drive at Orientation in September or at Kick Off in October with valuable reference and resource information. Thumb drive stations will be set up at the Kick off Conference and University trainings for updates and additional downloads. Administrators are welcome to bring a thumb drive and copy the material.**
* **All important contact information for fellow PMP members will be updated and finalized with a list for the thumb drives by the Annual Meeting.**
1. **Let us know how you want on your name to appear on your GaPMP Name Tag and pass to Debbie Currere ASAP**
2. **Order business cards for the rookie**
3. **Phone: Experience has taught the GaPMP that parents should be able to leave a private message for the Parent Mentor. It is essential a parent does not have to leave his/her name with a district or school secretary. We want to practice confidentiality at all times.**
4. **More to dos…..**
* **Discuss procedures for staff to look at IEPs on file. Some systems will need the parent to fax permission. Other systems allow Parent Mentors to review relevant files but keep a record of it.**
* **Mapping your resources (see addendum)**
* **Set regular meeting with the mentor and her/his administrator**
* **Discuss childcare and respite with your rookies. Encourage her/him to reach out to other mentors to navigate the respite system or other options so he or she can attend the Annual Meeting without stress over leaving a child with a disability.**
* **Go on the GaPMP Learning Curve. The LC is the password-sensitive portion of the parent mentor website. There is a login from the home page of** [www.parentmentors](http://www.parentmentors)**. org. To sign in, type “partnership” and then your region’s name such as northeast, northwest, metro, middle, southeast or southwest. If at first you are unsure what region you are in, type in any of the region names and you will be linked. Mentors will find a vast array of materials to use in local programs with the director permission. Also, major announcements and registrations will be on the Learning Curve (except to Orientation). Your regional representative will help the rookie.**
* **Read both Parent Mentor Toolkits on the parent mentor web site.**

**Addendums for this unit include:**

* GA Performance Goals and Indicators.
* PTA Standards showing the six types of involvement for successful partnerships with families.
* Blank chart to be used to customize System Goals.
* Blank Anecdotal Story form.
* Examples of stories
* Data Rewind
* Handouts on Parent Surveys and IEP Attendance

**Unit 2**

**Helpful hints:**

* Encourage the Rookie to find a “mentor” within the department who can introduce him/her to key people in the system. If possible, suggest the director and the mentor makes a plan for introductions.
* Encourage the Rookie to focus on building these important relationships and partnerships, beginning with everyone in their department and moving out into the schools, their system, and community. **Title I parent liaisons** are important partners as our graduation coaches.
* Some aspects to remember are, confidentiality safeguards, and boundary setting.
* Respect co-workers by ensuring the following:
* You are prepared for meetings with talking points and questions
* Meetings begin and end on time
* Both parties actively participate in the ensuing discussion
* Turn off your cell phone in the buildings
* Wear district name tag/Carry business cards with you
* Dress appropriately
* Communication is open and responsive.
* Respect different perspectives and learn from them
* Honor each other’s expertise and experience
* Safeguard confidentiality
* Manage time well and put interruptions aside
* Maintain accountability at the local and state level
* Doesn’t spend too much time on the web researching while at work/ knowledge from new colleagues on various programs, disabilities, education rules etc

Is much more powerful. Spend time listening

**Leadership Opportunities Some Parent Mentors Participate:**

Ga Parent Mentor Partnership Leadership Council

CA.F.É. DIALOGUES

Project Search

PTI, Parent Training Information Center – Parent to Parent of GA

Navigation Teams

Communities of Practice, IDEA Partnership

State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) on dropout prevention and early literacy

Positive Behavior Supports initiatives in selected schools

State Advisory Panel, DSESS

Focused Monitoring Teams, DSESS

Georgia Council for Developmental Disabilities

Unlock the Waiting Campaign

Family Connections local partnerships

DHR - DBHDD Regional Planning Boards

Autism State Advisory, DSESS

PTA, PTO

Special Olympics, Buddy Ball

**Unit 3**

**Familiarizing**

*As an engaged parent, you may already know some or all of the above. If not, it may seem overwhelming at first, though you will soon be a PRO. Reviewing these materials with an eye to Parent Mentor goals will assist you in your daily work. Keep in mind that all Parent Mentor activities should be tied and embedded into YOUR System’s goals, to provide a partnership approach to student achievement.*

* The “Special Education Handbook for Families,” that most systems offer to families. This may be on the system web site. The Rookie should obtain a hard copy and keep it for reference. This document generally forms the basis of family and system interaction and the Rookie should be very familiar with it. If a system does not have an existing handbook, then point the Rookie to the GLRS web-site to obtain a generic handbook? Some systems also provide a handbook for teachers which would provide system information for the mentor. Also, make sure she/he knows where the Parent Rights’, which are in in seven different languages, can be found on the GaDOE website – especially the parent-friendly version created by the State Advisory Panel which currently is again being updated. Locate the **Parent Fact Sheets** on the GaPMP web site and on the GaDOE special education page.
* “Georgia Performance Goals and Indicators” the “PTA Family Engagement Standards” showing the six types of involvement for successful partnerships with families.
* Accountability and the anecdotal story
* Parent Surveys and IEP attendance

**Unit 4**

**Introducing the New Mentor to His/Her System**

 The following are some ways to inform the system and community

about the new Parent Mentor:

* Introductions at Central Office Staff meetings and Coordinator, Lead teacher meetings.
* Mentors often tell their individual story to central staff so colleagues can understand

 the challenges a parent feels raising a child with a disability.

* The local special education director sends a letter of introduction to school administration, counselors and teachers, therapists, psychologists, inside partners etc.
* Create or customize existing Parent Mentor Brochure with your information. With your Director’s approval, get a sufficient quantity printed for distribution. (Check the Parent Mentor “Learning Curve” for samples of existing introductory brochures).
* Meet with principals, counselors, and social workers in each school. Plan visits based on YOUR system goals and priority. Attend family and community meetings and listen. Make sure you introduce yourself at the meetings.
* Meet with individual school PTA/PTO’s. Determine if ALL parents are being included and how you can help. Contact the partners on your community map. Call the P2P rep for your area.
* Build relationships and partners with leaders to work towards including ALL parents in their activities – especially Title I and ESOL.
* Provide information about the program to local newspapers, with prior approval from your Director and system Media coordinator. Learn the approval protocol for any flyer, news item etc.
* Disseminate your information school web sites, PTA/PTO newsletters.
* Mail introduction letter to every family who has a student with an IEP/ or send a letter to every teacher. Decide with your director what you are able to provide the first six months. Don’t promise services you are not yet ready to provide.
* Distribute your contact information to intake staff, social workers, psychologists, counselors and diagnosticians to be given to parents at the time of referral or evaluation.

**Unit 5**

**Creating Partnerships**

*Encourage rookie to get an overview of these services and programs. This is information they will need on an ongoing basis*.

**INSIDE PARTNERS (inside your school system)**

* After School Tutoring programs
* Alternative Schools
* Career -Technical and Agriculture Education
* Community In Schools
* English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
* High school graduation coaches
* Media Specialists.
* Parent Teacher Resource Centers(Often funded by Title One)
* School Improvement
* Student Clubs
* Title One Program.

**OUTSIDE PARTNERS (all other community type resources)**

* GA Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRCS.)
* GLRS- GA Learning and Resource Centers
* Parent Teacher Associations -PTA and PTO
* Proactive Parent Support Groups.
* Special Olympics GA
* local Parks and Recreation Adaptive Services
* Interagency Coordinating Council (Babies Can’t Wait)
* Interagency Transition Council
* **The Parent Leadership Coalition** is comprised of 10 agencies that work collaboratively to train Parent leaders and increase collaboration across the state.
* Navigation Teams, which were started by the PLC, are run by P2P.

Contact Parent to Parent for more information.

**Parent Leadership Coalition**

* Bright from the Start-Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Childcare Inclusion and Pre-K Coordinators
* Children with Special Needs Babies Can't Wait, Project SCEIs Parent Educators
* Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education and Title 1 Parent Outreach
* Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)
* Parent to Parent of GA
* Department or Behavior Health and Developmental Disabilities
* Georgia Family Connection Partnership
* Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD)
* Leadership Institute on Developmental Disabilities, Georgia State University
* State PTA
* State Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC)

**Unit 6**

**Using the Learning Curve and Other Internet Resources**

**Introduce Learning Curve:**

This is the Parent Mentor on line resource that houses items such as current directories, current initiatives, calendars and scheduled events, and resources. It also houses materials created by mentors that are available for all mentors to down load and customize for use in their systems. These include- Power Point Presentations, Brochures, Flyers, Newsletters and a variety of other handouts and resources.

**Other Internet Resources**

In addition, there are other Internet Resources listed below and

also included on the jump drive:

**GEORGIA**

[**www.parentmentors.org**](http://www.parentmentors.org)

The official site of the Parent Mentor Partnership of Georgia, providing families, educators and community members information on team building, communication strategies, family support, personal stories from parents and educators, links to resources and best practices in family engagement initiatives at the state, regional and local school level.

**www.cobbparentmentors.eboard.com**

A bulletin board format used by Cobb County School System Parent Mentors to quickly get out information to families and educators on upcoming events and topics. The site also archives past information for easy referral.

**www.gadoe.org**

The official site of the Georgia Department of Education with links on the Special Education Section to a **Transition Manual** to assist families and students to understand adult learning, working and living options. In addition, a link to the **Implementation Manual** created by 60 educators and 10 parents in a chapter format explains the State Rules on Special Education

[**GeorgiaStandards.Org**](https://www.georgiastandards.org/Pages/Default.aspx) Provides Ideas and strategies to understand the Performance Standards with sections divided by subject area at each grade level for parents and students as well as lesson plans for educators.

**P2PGA.org FIRST STOP**

The site of the state’s Parent Training Information Center and vast resource data base on supports and services including information about Navigation Teams at the local level. There is an extensive database and trained parents answer the phone 40 hours a week.

[*www.partnershipsforsuccess.com*](http://www.partnershipsforsuccess.com/index.php)

An initiative of the Georgia Council for Developmental Disabilities that provides students with disabilities opportunities to participate with their non-disabled peers in areas of recreation, social activities, sports, and community service. It also offers a self determination curriculum and training on Student led IEPs.
[**www.georgiapta.org**](http://www.georgiapta.org) Partners at the state level as well as in local communities with the GaDOE and Parent Mentors in family engagement initiatives

**OHIO LINKS (Our Partner in Parent Mentor Development)**

**www.thelinkto.org/parentmentor** the Ohio Parent Mentor Program, an initiative by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities. (OCECD)

[Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.](http://www.ocecd.org/ocecd/parentmentor.cfm) During the early 1990's, OCECD worked with Ohio parents of children with disabilities and the ODE to establish a statewide parent/professional collaboration model to support the appropriate education of children and youth with disabilities. This was the collaborative model Georgia modeled to establish its Parent Mentor Partnership.

**Ohio.gov**/**Education** to reach a Virtual Tour of a Family Friendly School go to **Learning Supports** on the Department of Education page and then click family and community engagement.

**Project Search: www.cincinnatichildrens.org** The Project Search High School Transition model which is being used in many systems in Georgia is collaboration between a school system, vocational rehabilitation, a business, and a supported employment agency.

**National Family Engagement Research Links:**

[**www.sedl.org/connections**](http://www.sedl.org/connections)

National Center for Family and School Connections with Schools

**www.partnershipschools.org**

National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University

[**www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/fine**](http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/fine) A Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) is a community of thousands of educators, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers dedicated to strengthening family–school–community partnerships. There is no cost to become a FINE member.

**National Resources**

**www.eric.ed.gov**

US Department of Education information including sections geared to families

[**www.ideapartnership.org**](http://www.ideapartnership.org)Site of the DIAGOGUE *problem solving method* used in Georgia’s C.A.F.E. DIALOGUEs on dropout prevention and early childhood issues and links to National Communities of Practices on many key education issues facing families.

[**www.fape.org**](http://www.fape.org)The Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) links families, advocates, and self-advocates to information about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**www.pacer.org**

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights–PACER Center, is the National Center for the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

[**www.ndpc-sd.org**](http://www.ndpc-sd.org/)The National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD), assists in building states’ capacity to increase school completion rates for students with disabilities and is a partner in Georgia’s parent initiatives.

Link to research on family engagement’s importance to prevent dropout: [**www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/family\_engagement/overview.htm**](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/family_engagement/overview.htm)

[**http://www.inclusion.com**](http://www.inclusion.com/inclusionnetwork.html)Provides information on resources and links to Futures Planning such as MAPs, PATHS and other community building initiatives.

# Information about Specific Disabilities

#### Attention Deficit Disorder/ADD-ADHD

[**www.add.org**](http://www.add.org) Attention Deficit Disorder Association. Attention Deficit Disorder Association, ADDA, provides information, resources and networking opportunities to help adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) lead better lives. We provide hope, empowerment and connections worldwide by bringing together science and the human experience for both adults with AD/HD and professionals who serve them. Contains links to comprehensive articles on ADD issues.

[**www.chadd.org/**](http://www.chadd.org/) - Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD) website is a good place to begin when gathering information about Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder. Their "FAQ" (Frequently Asked Question) and "Fact Sheet" pages are very helpful, and you can link to a local CHADD chapter if you are interested in their support groups and activities**.**

**Developmental Disabilities**

[**www.thearc.org/**](http://www.thearc.org/) - The Arc is a national non-profit organization serving families of individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. The site includes many informative articles and links to local Arc chapters. Their [*Position Statements*](http://www.thearc.org/position-statements.htm) are interesting reading.

[**www.autism-resources.com/**](http://www.autism-resources.com/) - Autism Resources provides a rich and comprehensive site, with links and links to information about Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome. A collection of parent letters is featured in its [*Advice to parents who discover their child is autistic*](http://www.autism-resources.com/advice-to-parents.html) link**.** [**www.autism-society.org**](http://www.autism-society.org) – The mission of the Autism Society of America (ASA) is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact. ASA has grown from a handful of parents, into the leading source of information, research, and reference on autism. ASA is the oldest and largest grassroots organization within the autism community.

[**www.ndss.org/**](http://www.ndss.org/) **-** National Down Syndrome Society website is a good source of general information about Down syndrome, education, health and research issues. The site is easy to navigate and includes an information and referral service**.**

[**www.pwsaga.org**](http://www.pwsaga.org) - Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Georgia provides education, networking and support programs and services. It is an excellent resource for information about Prader-Willi Syndrome.

Learning Disabilities

[www.interdys.org/](http://www.interdys.org/) - International Dyslexia Association (IDA) site is an excellent place to learn about dyslexia and other learning disorders. IDA is involved in policy and research, and the site hosts a bulletin board.

#### [www.ldonline.org/](http://www.ldonline.org/) - LD Online is the main source for information about learning disabilities. Easy to navigate and full of helpful information, LD Online is the first place to start when looking for resources on learning differences and ADD/ADHD.

#### [www.ncld.org/](http://www.ncld.org/) - National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) site contains on-line copies of their well-respected publications. These publications include listings of national and local resources. This is an important site to visit.

#### [www.nldline.com/](http://www.nldline.com/) - Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities site provides information for families with children with NLD and for adults, too. Its articles are important resources.

### [www.schwablearning.org/](http://www.schwablearning.org/) - Schwab Foundation for Learning provides information about learning disabilities, access to free publications and links to local resources. It includes a message board and you can subscribe to their newsletter.

### [www.ldonline.com/](http://www.ldonline.com/) - Learning Disabilities Online provides information on learning disabilities. The website has an online store, provides resources on learning disabilities as well as links for parents, kids and teachers of students with LD. [www.**l**dresources.com**/**](http://www.ldresources.com/) **-**LD Resources is a collection of over 986 entries on various aspects of learning disabilities with and more than 637 comments from community members just like you. Read more [about](http://www.ldresources.org/about) this site. Learn how to use the site, leave feedback, and get [help](http://www.ldresources.org/?p=875). Discussion, announcements and educational information for the learning disabled community.

### [www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org)/ - United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) is the leading source of information on [*cerebral palsy*](http://www.ucp.org/document.cfm/447) and is a pivotal advocate for the rights of persons with any disability. As one of the largest health charities in America, the UCP mission is to advance the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with disabilities through an affiliate network.

**Information on General Disabilities**

[**www.eparent.com/**](http://www.eparent.com/%20) - This is the web version of Exceptional Parent Magazine, which has been an ongoing resource for families with children with any disability for many years. Although it is commercial, there is always an abundance of resources and timely articles.

[**www.disabilityresources.org/**](http://www.disabilityresources.org/) - Disability Resources, Inc. is a non-profit organization that organizes and publishes this website and a monthly newsletter, as well. The site is comprehensive and easy to navigate. The [*DRM Webwatcher*](http://www.disabilityresources.org/DRMwww.html) is an index to hundreds of disability-related subjects. The ["Just for Parents (or Service Providers)"](http://www.disabilityresources.org/PARENTS-OF.html) page is especially fine as a starting point. Don’t be put off by the "updated 3/2000" note on the top of the page: the site is current.

[**www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/**](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/) - Family Village is an excellent place to begin a search for information. There is a vast library, arranged alphabetically by disability, which provides links to basic information, web sites, list-serv and organizations. Sections such as Community Center, School or Hospital contain links to subject-related information. It is simple to use and is kept current. There is also a Bulletin Board page to facilitate communication among parents.

[**www.irsc.org/**](http://www.irsc.org/) - Internet Resources for Special Children site was created and is maintained by a parent of a child with multiple disabilities. Its "Disability Links" page is organized alphabetically by subject and provides further links to many valuable sites.

[**www.nichcy.org/**](http://www.nichcy.org/) - National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY) is a national information and referral organization and its site contains many valuable publications, as well as a database to enable the searcher to find national organizations that provide information to families of children with disabilities. Its [*State Resource Sheets*](http://www.nichcy.org/states.htm), with their lists of governmental and non-profit organizations that provide services to families of

**Unit 7**

**The Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership (GaPMP)**

**Regional and Statewide Meetings:**

**The PMP Directory** lists Mentors by PMP Region as well as by DOE district. Please check it for your listing. Mentors are classified as:

* Rookies-1st year mentors
* 2 year or more are called Varsity.

**Regional Divisions:**

* Southern: Southeast, Southwest and Mid-Georgia Regions
* Northern:Northeast, Northwest and Metro

**Tips & Reminders:**

* The Parent Mentor is a representative of the school system so act accordingly.
* All Mentors should obtain permission from their Director or direct report staff, to attend required conferences and training sessions. Please apply for permission well in advance as some systems have a long approval process. Registration costs and hotel expenses for

approved overnight stays are usually paid by each system. Contact your Regional representative for specific questions. (Provide telephone support on funding questions and reimbursement.)

**Ga Parent Mentor Partnership Leadership Council:**

Leadership opportunities abound within the Parent Mentor Partnership. The Leadership Council consists of an Executive Board and Regional Council Representatives. The Council meets separately twice a year for specific training and to participate in meetings regarding direction and guidance for the Parent Mentor Partnership. The PMP Directory lists all of the above. Please feel free to contact YOUR Regional Council Representatives with any questions or comments.

The name of your regional representative will be provided to you at Orientation.

**Unit 8**

**Anecdotal Stories**

**Overview:**

* This is a qualitative accountability piece that is critical to data collection and evaluation of the Parent Mentor Partnership. The stories are a vehicle to report the qualitative data across the state, using a specific format.
* The Parent Mentor Partnership is using Anecdotal Stories to measure the impact of Parent Mentors in their systems and in the State.
* Anecdotal stories are basically an illustration of what the Mentor is doing in their system to improve student achievement.
* As a Parent Mentor, you are creating this story all year long. Thus, making it an on-going process. (Forms to be used are in the addendum).

S**teps to begin the process:**

* Get with your Director or supervisor and determine SPECIFIC goal or goals that your system wants you to address.
* These goals should generally be from the GA Performance Goals and Indicators.
* Once you have your goal or goals, start keeping notes on all the ways you are working to meet the goal, tied to the PTA Standards of -Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at home , Decision making and Collaborating with community.
* A pattern will emerge. You can then pick an example of a particular situation where the goal is being specifically met.
* Start actively pursuing that goal, documenting with interviews and quotes as you proceed.

***Generic Example:***

For example using the GA Performance Goals and Indicators **Goal 3, indicator 10:**

Using learning at home as your tool to improving student test results. You could participate in workshops on READING/MATH, where parents are given examples on helping students learn at home. You can tie this into workshops that schools are already providing. You could partner with a Title One Parent liaison on these workshops. From there you could provide copies of reading/math tips, audio books etc. Begin engaging parents and documenting their progress. Tie it into the students test results. Before you know it, you are documenting the components of your anecdotal story!

**Unit 9**

**Steps to Dealing with Parent Concerns**

* Ensure you are using and maintaining Confidentiality and good listening and communication skill
* Collect all available background information
* The student's file may be reviewed, with prior parent permission or as per School District protocol.
* If required, with guidance from the Director or supervisor, the mentor can act as a liaison to assist in resolving the concern or dispute.
* Ensure that the parent or guardian has a copy of the DOE Dispute Resolution Sheet. This can be found on the GA DOE website and in many counties is included in the Parent Welcome Packet upon a child entering into the Program for Exceptional Children.

 ***NOTE: Discuss these steps with your Director/supervisor before proceeding. There is specific updated information available on the DOE website, regarding dispute resolution. Please check this out. You can also direct the parent to information on the site.***

**GaDOE Dispute Resolution Steps:**

1. Share with the parent the following possible steps to resolving a concern. Request an IEP team meeting to discuss concerns. Focus on the issue at hand. Keep the discussion ALL about the student and his or her educational needs. Remember that everyone is on the same team, working to ensure an appropriate education for the student.
2. Next steps if the concern is not resolved: Discuss your concerns with the principal
3. If unresolved: Discuss with the special education director or his/her designee,
4. If unresolved: Discuss them with the superintendent.
5. If still unresolved after every effort to correct the problem, the following three options are available to the parent. Depending on the concern, one strategy may be better suited than another. It is always recommended, to first try to resolve the problem with the teacher, school or school system.

**Other Options:**

* + Filing a formal complaint
	+ Requesting Mediation
	+ Requesting a Due Process Hearing

***It is important to follow up with the parent/ system to check on the outcome. It may help to direct parents to agencies and proactive support groups and resources to support their ongoing needs.***

 **Unit 10**

**Best Practices**

**Best Practices have been prepared to provide Mentors with suggestions on parent engagements. These were presented at the Leadership Conference last year. Stress to the Rookie these are only suggestions and they do not have to be used until they feel comfortable in their role.**

**Information on these Best Practices is in the addendum section.**

**ADDENDUMS**

<http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCPerfGoals>

**Georgia’s Performance Goals and Indicators for Students with Disabilities**

1. **Improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities**

 1. Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who **drop out** of school.

2. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who **earn a regular high school** **diploma**

3. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who **transition to employment or post-secondary education.**

 4. Increase the percentage of transition aged students with disabilities who have

 coordinated and measurable IEP goals and transition services that will lead to

 **attainment of post- secondary education**.

1. **Improve services for young children (ages 3 – 5) with disabilities**
	1. Increase the percentage of young children r**eferred** by parents, or other agencies **prior to age three** who are determined eligible and have an **IEP implemented by the third birthday.**
	2. Increase the percentage of **time** young children with disabilities spend in **natural environments** with typically developing peers.
	3. Increase the percentage of young children with disabilities who show **improved positive social/emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors.**
2. **Improve the provision of a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities**
	1. Increase the percentage of students who **are evaluated and determined** eligible for special education **within 60 days**.
	2. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who receive their **instruction in the general education** setting with appropriate supports and accommodations.
	3. Increase the **performance** of students with disabilities on **statewide assessments** when given appropriate accommodations.
	4. **Decrease** the percentage of students with disabilities who are **removed from their school or placements for disciplinary reasons.**
	5. **Decrease the disproportionate** representation of students with disabilities due to inappropriate policies, procedures, and practices.
	6. Increase the percentage of parents of children receiving special education services who report that schools **encouraged parent involvement** to improve results for students with disabilities.
3. **Improve compliance with state and federal laws and regulations**
	1. All identified noncompliance will be corrected as soon as possible, but no later than one year from identification.
	2. Dispute resolution procedures and requirements are followed within any applicable timelines. Includes formal complaints, mediation, due process hearings, and resolution sessions.
	3. Reports are submitted in a timely manner.

**National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement/ Also PTA Standards and used in the School Keys Strand on family engagement:**

***Standard 1: Communicating***

***Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.***

Communication is the foundation of a solid partnership.  When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved, and students make greater progress.

Too often school or program communication is one-way without the chance to exchange ideas and share perceptions.  Effective home-school communication is the two-way sharing of information vital to student success.  Even parent-teacher conferences can be one-way if the goal is merely reporting student progress.  Partnering requires give-and-take conversation, goal setting for the future, and regular follow-up interactions.

***Standard 2: Parenting***

***Parenting skills are promoted and supported.***

Parents are a child’s life support system.  Consequently, the most important support a child can receive comes from the home. School personnel and program staff support positive parenting by respecting and affirming the strengths and skills needed by parents to fulfill their role.  From making sure that students arrive at school rested, fed, and ready to learn, to setting high learning expectations and nurturing self-esteem, parents sustain their children’s learning.

When staff members recognize parent roles and responsibilities, ask parents what supports they need, and work to find ways to meet those needs, they communicate a clear message to parents: We value you and need your input in order to maintain a high-quality program.

***Standard 3: Student Learning***

***Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.***

Student learning increases when parents are invited into the process by helping at home.  Enlisting parent’s involvement provides educators and administrators with a valuable support system, creating a team that is working for each child’s success.

The majority of parents are willing to assist their students in learning, but many times are not sure what assistance is most helpful and appropriate.  Helping parents connect to their children’s learning enables parents to communicate in powerful ways that they value what their children achieve.  Whether it’s working together on a computer, displaying student work at home, or responding to a particular class assignment, parent’s actions communicate to their children that education is important.

***Standard 4: Volunteering***

***Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.***

When parents volunteer, both families and schools reap benefits that come in few other ways.  Literally millions of dollars of volunteer services are performed by parents and family members each year in the public schools.  Studies have concluded that volunteers express greater confidence in the schools where they have opportunities to participate regularly.  In addition, assisting in school or program events/activities communicates to a child, "I care about what you do here".

In order for parents to feel appreciated and welcome, volunteer work must be meaningful and valuable to them.  Capitalizing on the expertise and skills of parents and family members provides much needed support to educators and administrators already taxed in their attempts to meet academic goals and student needs.

Although there are many parents for whom volunteering during school hours is not possible, creative solutions like before- or after-school "drop-in" programs or "at home" support activities provide opportunities for parents to offer their assistance as well.

***Standard 5: Advocacy and Decision Making***

***Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.***

Studies have shown that schools where parents are involved in decision making and advocacy have higher levels of student achievement and greater public support.

Effective partnerships develop when each partner is respected and empowered to fully participate in the decision-making process.  Schools and programs that actively enlist parent participation and input communicate that parents are valued as full partners in the education of their children.

Parents and educators depend on shared authority in decision-making systems to foster parental trust, public confidence, and mutual support of each others efforts in helping students succeed.  The involvement of parents, as individuals or as representative of others, is crucial in collaborative decision-making processes on issues from curriculum and course selection, to discipline policies and over-all school reform measures.

***Standard 6: Collaborating with Community***

***Community resources are used to strengthen school, families, and student learning.***

As part of the larger community, schools and other programs fulfill important community goals.  In like fashion, communities offer a wide array of resources valuable to schools and the families they serve.

When schools and communities work together, both are strengthened in synergistic ways and make gains that outpace what either entity could accomplish on its own:

* Families access community resources more easily;
* Businesses connect education programs with the realities of the workplace;
* Seniors contribute wisdom and gain a greater sense of purpose; and ultimately,
* Students serve and learn beyond their school involvement.

The best partnerships are mutually beneficial and structured to connect individuals, not just institutions or groups.  This connection enables the power of community partnerships to be unleashed.

Use the Six Types of Involvement to Reach Goals for Students

How might a comprehensive goal-oriented partnership program benefit students in your school system? Choose one major goal that your school system has set for students. Then identify specific partnership practices to support that goal.

TYPE 1: **PARENTING**

TYPE 6: **COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY**

TYPE 5: **DECISION MAKING**

TYPE 2: **COMMUNICATING**

TYPE 3: **VOLUNTEERING**

TYPE 4: **LEARNING AT HOME**

Bibb-Parent Mentor-Using- Six Types of Involvement to Reach Goals for Students

# I

TYPE 4: **LEARNING AT HOME**

Work with educators, Home School Facilitators and the Parent Teacher Resource Center to involve and **encourage ALL families to support students learning at home**. Pursue programs that provide appropriate materials for home use.

TYPE 5: **DECISION MAKING**

Partner with system on self **determination curriculum for students.** Foster decision making skills, eventually leading to student led IEP’s. Invite and educate families on the IEP process and ways to become involved in decision making regarding their students.

TYPE 6: **COLLABORATING** WITH COMMUNITY

Highlight and strengthen existing

community partnerships and seek new ones.

Work on establishing **Transition related** employment opportunities, with community collaboration.

TYPE 3: **VOLUNTEERING**

Encourage volunteering by recognizing outstanding volunteers. Partner with teachers and school to identify volunteer opportunities. **Collaborate with Schools and Community partners** on effective recognition of volunteerism.

TYPE 2: **COMMUNICATING**

**Provide** **regular updates and resources to families administrators and educators.** Invite and enable **reciprocal communication** from all.

Explore efficient and cost effective methods for above.

TYPE 1: **PARENTING**

Establish parent involvement at **entry into School System**.

Provide PM brochure at initial IEP meeting. Seek to make personal contact with all new families.

Example of a Parent Mentor’s introductory letter to families:

Dear Parents,

The transition into a new school year is met with mixed feelings of anticipation, excitement, and fear. This can be especially true for parents of children with disabilities. Understanding the special education process can be confusing and at times overwhelming.

At the beginning of the last school year, I assumed the duties of Parent Mentor for Exceptional Children in Rockdale County. This position is part of a new program headed up by the Georgia Department of Education called the Georgia Parent Mentor Project. Through this project, a parent of a child with a disability is employed to serve as a resource to students receiving special education services, their families, and teachers.

As Parent Mentor, some of the ways I can assist you include:

* Understand the special education process and can provide you with information to assist in IEP planning and preparation
* Provide a parent’s perspective to educators
* Direct you to resources available within and outside the school system
* Provide training programs on topics parents have requested
* Listen to parents and understand their concerns/issues

I look forward to working with families, educators, and community organizations to ensure our children reach their fullest potential. I may be reached at:

**Office: 770 860 4244**

**Email: krogers2@rockdale.k12.ga.us**

Best Regards,

Kay Rogers

Parent Mentor

**PARENT MENTOR NEWSLETTER**

The Parent Mentor Newsletter is a publication for parents, educators, and caregivers of children receiving special education services in Rockdale County Schools.

###### LINKING PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

You know your child better than anyone, and your observations and insights are important! Here are some things you can do to get prepared for your child’s meeting:

* Ask yourself these questions:
* What are my child’s strengths?
* What does he or she need help with?
* Gather information or documents that you may want to share with the IEP team:
	+ health records, independent evaluations,

 samples of school work, etc.

* + specific situations that cause problems for

 your child

* + recent changes in your child’s life (such as a

 death in the family)

* + special abilities or interests your child may

have medications your child takes

* Make a list of questions you have or points you would like to discuss so you won’t forget to bring them up during the meeting.
* Get advice! It may help to talk with someone who is familiar with the IEP process. Rockdale County Schools has someone who can help guide parents through Special Education process and provide information on services, policies, and procedures. Please contact Kay Rogers, Parent Mentor, 770 860-4244 if you have questions or need help preparing for your child’s IEP.

**Helpful websites on IEPs:**

[**http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=296**](http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=296)

[**http://nichcy.org/resources/IEP1.asp**](http://nichcy.org/resources/IEP1.asp)

**Getting Prepared for Your Child’s IEP Meeting**

**Ten Steps to Protecting Your Children’s Future**

By Susan S. Dennis, JD

Having special needs children carries special issues and responsibilities for their parents. Every parent has the responsibility of preparing for the possibility of their own death, but special parents have special responsibilities. The following ten steps are a good way to get started in your planning:

1. **Prepare a Life Plan** – Decide what you want for the future regarding residential needs, employment, education, and social activities. You should write this information down and make sure that whoever will be caring for your child knows where this information is located.
2. **Preparing Information & Lifestyle Directives** – Prepare a letter of intent. Write your hopes, instructions, and goals for your loved one in a letter. Include information about their physicians, diet, medication, and favorite activities. Help the caregiver explain what has happened to you in a way your child can understand.
3. **Decide on supervision** – Who will care for your child? Who will make medical and educational decisions for your child? These decisions do not have to be made by the same person.
4. **Determine the Cost** – Make a projection of what it will take to care for your child in the future. You must consider current and future expenses, government entitlements, etc.
5. **Identify Resources to Fund Plan** – Resources include government entitlement, family aid, life insurance, etc.

 **(continued on P2)**

COMMON BOND



Spring, 2007

Volume 2, Issue 2



(*Ten Steps to Protecting Your Children’s Future*

*Continued from page 1*)

1. **Prepare Legal Documents** – Make sure your attorney is qualified to prepare wills, trusts (including special needs trust), guardianship, conservator ship, and power of attorney.
2. **Consider creating a “Special Needs Trust”** – The “Special Needs Trust” holds assets for the benefit of a person with a disability. The income from the trust is used to provide for their supplemental needs. Assets are not in the child’s name under the trust, therefore, government resources are not lost. Trustees are appointed to manage the trust.
3. **Put All Documents in a Binder** – Create a folder and place copies of your legal documents in the binder and originals in a safe deposit or fireproof box. Let anyone who will be responsibility for your child know where the binder and safe deposit box are located.
4. **Hold a Meeting** – Hold a meeting with anyone who will be involved in your child’s care. Present your plan and invite questions. Should your child’s life be turned upside down by the loss of his/her parents, it is important that the people who care for him/her do not skip a beat in providing care.
5. **Review the Plan** – As your child grows, their needs will change. The plan should be reviewed each year, or at least every three years, and the letter of intent changed as necessary. Consult your attorney if the legal documents need modifying.



State Advisory Panel

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that all states have special education advisory panels to include representation from constituents who are concerned with providing improved educational opportunities to children with disabilities. The goal in Georgia is to have an active State Advisory Panel with broad representation from across the state to advise the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) regarding the state performance plan, state improvement grants, the Georgia Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process, IDEA Regulations and other initiatives designed to improve outcomes for all children with disabilities in Georgia’s schools. Applications are being accepted for Georgia’s State Advisory Panel for Special Education

If you are interested in seeking membership on the State Advisory Panel, please complete the application, with references, and submit no later than April 1, 2007 in order to be considered for membership in 2007-2008.

For an application go to:

<http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCSAP>

(More of example from Rocksdale County)

Parent Surveys Are Coming

Last year in May, surveys were distributed to all children in Rockdale County Schools receiving Special Education Services. The purpose of the survey was to help the Georgia Department of Education develop a baseline in measuring parent satisfaction. This month, some of you will be asked again to participate in a survey. The survey has been shortened to 25 questions and will be sent home with your child. Not all schools will be included as the State DOE will be using a sampling process.

***If your child’s school is selected to participate, please take the time to complete the survey and return by April 30th. Your response is completely anonymous***.

 **Community Resources**

**Autism Society of Georgia**

770-451-0954

[www.asaga.com](http://www.asaga.com)

**Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS)**

770-388-5025

Assistance with Medicaid

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

404-298-4900 Voc Rehab Counselor

Supported employment, work adjustment, and assistive technology related to employment

**FOCUS – Families of Children Under Stress**

770-234-9111 [www.focus-ga.org](http://www.focus-ga.org)

Family Support, respite, family activities

**Georgia Community Support and Solutions**

404-634 4222 [www.gacommunity.org](http://www.gacommunity.org)

Respite care/family support

**Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS**)

678-676-2400 Metro East GLRS

[www.glrs.org](http://www.glrs.org)

**Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia**

404 303-7774

[www.ldag.org](http://www.ldag.org)

**Metro Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities & Addictive Diseases Regional Office**

770-414-3052

Regional Board for Medicaid Waivers and other support. Perform intakes, evaluations, and level of care for MHDDAD Metro Region

Three

**Parent Mentor**

Kay Rogers

Office: 770-860-4244

Email: krogers2@rockdale.k12.ga.us

**Rockdale Cares, Inc.**

770-922-7272 [www.rockdalecares.com](http://www.rockdalecares.com)

Recreation activities for teens and adults with disabilities.

**Rockdale Mental Health**

770 962 5544 – Access Line

**Rockdale County Recreation Department**

770-918 6306 – Tom McPike

[www.aspirecoaltion.com](http://www.aspirecoaltion.com)

Recreation activities for special needs population

**Special Olympics of Rockdale County**

**Rockdale County Special Olympics**

770-378-1318

www.[rockdalespecialolympics.org](http://home.comcast.net/~rockdale.ga.special.olympics),

**Social Security Administration**

1-800-722-1213 [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

SSI Benefits for eligible clients

Family income no longer considered after age 18.

**Techable**

770 922-6768

Assistive Technology and Credit Able services

A caption is a sentence describing a picture or graphic.

UPCOMING EVENTSParent Engagement Best Practices

Rockdale County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability in any educational programs or activities or in employment policies and practices.

 DANCE

Spring Fling.

Place- our place, 875 davis dr., conyers, GA

dates: April 21

time: 2:00PM – 4:00PM

contact: barbara kilpatrick, rockdale cares,

You must RSVP to Attend

(770) 922 – 7272

Luau

Place- our place, 875 davis dr., conyers, GA

dates: June 23, 2007

time: 2:00PM – 4:00PM

contact: barbara kilpatrick, rockdale cares,

You must RSVP to Attend

(770) 922 – 7272

Resource Fair:

Place- Rockdale Baptist Church, Smyrna Rd., conyers, GA

dates: March 22, 2007

time: 6:30PM – 8:30PM

contact: Juanita Rowe at770 605 5241

 Stephanie King at 770 401 4059

Down Syndrome Play Group

Place- Johnson Park, Ebenezer Rd. conyers, GA

dates: 2nd Saturday of the Month

time: 11AM-1230PM

contact: Melissa Kendrick 770 860 4244

Summer Camps in Rockdale

FOCUS – For more information call770-234-9111

Rockdale County Parks and Recreation – For dates and more information call Tom McPike(770) 918 - 6306

Summer Camps in the METRO AREA:

Summer Camp Directory – Log on to GLRS at

[www.glrs.org](http://www.glrs.org) or call (678) 676 - 2400

RESPITE

Provided by FOCUS.

Place: Heritage Hills Baptist Church

dates/times: Check with Focus

Contact: FOCUS (770) 237 - 9111

Provided by Ga. Community Support and Solutions.

Place: Our Place

dates: 1st, 2nd and 4th Saturday each month

Contact: (404) 634 - 4222

RECREATION:

Special Olympics Track and Field Meet

Place: Rockdale County High School Stadium

date: Friday, April 13, 2007

Time: 930AM – 100PM

contact: Cecelia Hart 770 378 1318

 Tom McPike 770 918 6306

**A Taste of Rockdale** – visit various restaurants in Conyers

Place- Leave from Johnson Park

 dates: March 22, April 19

time: 5:30PM

contact: Tom McPike – Parks and Recreation

770 918 6306

Additional Recreation Activities can be found at [www.aspirecoalition.org](http://www.aspirecoalition.org) or by calling Tom Mcpike 770 918 6306

CONFERENCES:

Autism Society of Georgia

Place- Gwinnett Convention Center

dates: April 13-14, 2007

registration info: [www.asaga.org](http://www.asaga.org)

**Prepared by the GA Parent Mentor Partnership**

**2007**

TRANSITION – INTERAGENCY TRANSITION COUNCILS

GOAL - IMPROVE POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES

INDICATOR – INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT OR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

ACTIVITY: Create an Interagency Transition Council comprised of local stakeholders in transition. Using a fact sheet distributed at the “Touch the Future” conference, we:

1. Held our initial meeting in a small group setting during the conference. The group was comprised primarily of school system personnel from Rockdale and Newton County. (As our business community overlaps, we partnered with a neighboring county.)
2. Developed a list of potential community partners (including parents)
3. Composed a letter for the initial contact with signatures from Directors of Special Education from both counties.
4. Held our first meeting with the goal of establishing a mission statement and goals. We have a facilitator help us with the activity. We also elected Co-Chairpersons and a secretary who would be responsible for scheduling meetings and maintaining meeting minutes.
5. Developed an action plan to achieve our goals, e.g. develop a transition brochure, provide parent workshops on transition issues, and develop a transition manual.
6. Encouraged parent involvement in our meetings.

We have realized several positive outcomes from our ITC:

1. Stronger parental involvement in transition issues, e.g. college/technical school information. We have several parents who attend our monthly meetings.
2. Relationship with community partners has been strengthened
3. Families have become more aware of community resources. Our transition workshops have assisted in this outcome.

The primary challenge for an ITC is to keep members interested and involved. We continually address meeting formats, topics, direction, etc.

Rockdale County Public Schools – Debi Glanton – Secondary Coordinator

 Kay Rogers – Parent Mentor

**Family Engagement Best Practices**

**Prepared by the 2007 GA Parent Mentor Partnership**

Community Connections/Tutoring

Performance Goal: Improve the provision of a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities.

Indicator: Increase the percentage of parents of children receiving special education services who report that schools encouraged parent involvement to improve results for students with disabilities.

Overview: This project trains parents/family members raising a child or children receiving special education services to be confident team members who understand all aspects of negotiating the special education process effectively. The goal is to provide the family members with specific knowledge of the educational process and effective communication skills necessary to achieve understanding, respect and support. The outcome is that parents and teachers build effective home-school partnerships and provide children with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

P.A.P.A. Objectives:

* To develop an atmosphere of trust between parents and school.
* To educate parents on IDEA including the IEP process and NCLB.
* To provide parents with understandable and accurate information on complex issues surrounding the educational system and provide outreach and support.
* Develop a network of parent liaisons and build leadership capacity.

Outcome: Since the development of this project in 2004, Fayette County trained 12 parents and subsequently placed three parents in elementary and middle schools as Parent Liaisons to help building administrators resolve parent concerns and help build effective home-school partnerships. The number of parent issues/concerns in schools with Parent Liaisons has shown a 10% decline.

Future: Our plan is to train five parents each year until we have placed a Parent Liaison in each of our 28 schools. Any school district with a Parent Mentor could adopt this curriculum and develop their own parent training program to assist parents in negotiating the Special Education maze within their district.

Fayette County Exceptional Children’s Services Nick Harris, Parent Mentor Phone: (770) 461-5894 Email: nicholasrharris@bellsouth.net or parentme@bellsouth.net

**Family Engagement Best Practices**

**Prepared by the 2007 GA Parent Mentor Partnership**

**Community Connections/Tutoring**

Performance Goal: Improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

Indicators: Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school.

**Overview**: This project involved collaborating with community agencies, families, and school to decrease the number of students who drop out of Mitchell County School System. A group was formed to generate ideas on how to make education meaningful for students who were considering dropping out of school. As a result of the group’s discussions and brainstorming, it was decided that providing special tutoring would be an appropriate intervention for the students. The group also addressed issues and needed resources such as transportation, location, tutors, and supplies.

**Outcome:** The Mitchell County School System, along with several concerned agencies, and 45 devoted parents, created the Tutoring Project for children that are at risk of dropping out of school.

As a result of this project, a positive relationship is evolving between the school system and the parents of at-risk students. This bond is helping to close the communication gap between the parents and the school system.

**Future Expectations**: It is my expectation that we will continue to serve these at-risk children until graduation, thus decreasing the number of dropouts and increasing the number of graduates at Mitchell County High School.

Mitchell County School System

Shirley Daniels, Parent Mentor

Phone: (229) 336-2100, ext. 1453

Email: Shirley\_daniels@mitchell.k12.ga.us

Seminole County School System

Tracy Barber Rogers, Parent Mentor

Phone: (229) 524-6647

Email: tbarber@seminole.k12.ga.us

**Family Engagement Best Practices**

**Prepared by the 2007 GA Parent Mentor Partnership**

**CRCT Focus Group**

Performance Goal: Improve the provision of a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities.

Indicator: Increase the performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments when provided with appropriate learning and practice activities.

**Activity Overview**: By accessing CRCT records, target students (those scoring 10-15 points above or below passing) were identified and put into a Focus Group. The Parent Mentor created a file for each student and identified the area(s) of weakness, then created three to five tests per area. Once the folders were completed, the Parent Mentor took them to the school’s Instructional Specialist who distributed the folders to the Homeroom and Special Education Teachers. The children practiced these tests during homeroom, before-school tutoring, after-school program, study hall and some portions of their special education time.

**Outcome:** This project, along with the other interventions that the school used, removed the school from the “needs improvement” category. The professional relationships that were developed between administration, faculty and the Parent Mentor were invaluable. The Parent Mentor was seen as an agent for student learning, in addition to their role as a relational resource for parents.

**Future:** My plan is to increase parent participation and involvement in this project. I will host a CRCT Study night for parents and provide childcare and dinner for the families. I will instruct parents on how to study with their child, as well as explain the importance of things such as a good night’s sleep and a good breakfast before their testing. It is also my plan to expand this project to additional schools in the future.

Whitfield County School System Trion City Schools

Erin Kenemer, Parent Mentor Michelle White, Parent Mentor

Phone: (706) 876-3929 Phone: (706) 734-7433

Email: erin\_kenemer@whitfield.k12.ga.us Email: mwhite@trionschools.org

**Family Engagement Best Practices**

Prepared by the 2007 GA Parent Mentor Partnership

**Collaborating With Graduation Coaches**

**Performance Goal:** Improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Indicators:** 1) Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school. 2) Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular high school diploma.

**Activity Overview:** This project incorporates networking with the appropriate school staff in an effort to provide parents with up-to-date information concerning their child’s track to graduation. The first plan of action is to develop a "Task Force." The team consists of graduation coaches, the principal, assistant principal, and guidance counselors from the middle school and high schools, 9th grade Academy coordinator, teachers, and parents. The graduation coaches are responsible for developing a subgroup of at-risk students. From this list, students with IEPs are identified and their parents are contacted to initiate a dialogue concerning their child’s graduation plan. This includes introduction of the Parent Mentor and the graduation coach. Specifics about class selection, possible career paths, tutoring, test preparation, and diploma options can then be explored. The parents are subsequently kept informed and involved in their child’s graduation progress throughout the year. This information exchange can be achieved by coordinating parent contacts with the graduation coach’s mailers or through phone contacts. Whatever method is chosen, it is important to have ongoing communication among team members.

**Outcome:** The strongest outcome has been the development of stronger collaborative relationships. Since this project increases the schools” partnership with parents, we expect the percentage of satisfied parents (as indicated on the state survey) to increase from 31% to 50%. We expect an increase in the percentage of students retaking the GHSGT in the 5 allotted times given during the school year and that the number of passing scores will increase. We expect a 12% increase from last year in the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular diploma and a 12% decrease in the dropout rate.

**Future:** During the first month of next school year, graduation coaches will be able to develop a list of credit deficient students for placement in appropriate enrichment classes. This will also allow for earlier parent contact and student counseling. To extend this program to middle school, we will arrange meetings with 8th grade students, families, and school staff to prepare for transition to the 9th grade Academy.

Catoosa County Public Schools Meriwether County Schools

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**Family Engagement Best Practices**

Prepared by the 2007 GA Parent Mentor Partnership

**Portfolio Parties**

**Performance Goal:** Improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Indicator:** Increase the percentage of transition aged students with disabilities who have coordinated and measurable IEP goals and transition services that will lead to attainment of post-secondary goals.

**Activity Overview:** This activity is designed to open a dialogue between teenagers, parents and teachers in a non-threatening, fun, creative atmosphere, using the “Take a Look at Me” portfolio as a catalyst. The portfolio promotes self-discovery and self-determination. By using this “strengths based portfolio” a teen is allowed to “voice” their thoughts and feelings, look inward to assess strengths and choices for the future, then create a visual record of their likes, interests and desires using words and pictures.

* The process begins with an explanation of how the portfolio would benefit each of the participants.
* The students are asked to build a portfolio at school, along with or as a precursor to lessons in self-determination.
* The parents are assigned the task of building a portfolio at home assessing their own perceptions of their child.
* One month later, students invite others to a party to share and exchange portfolios.
* Similarities and differences are discovered and discussed within the family. Each student is asked to share their favorite page from the portfolio as well as their hope and dream for the future.
* This hope and dream is listed on a poster as a goal.
* The family then identifies three steps that could be taken to help attain the goal and three people who can help.

**Outcome:** We expect this activity will increase participation in the IEP process by the student and their family because they have become invested in a positive high school outcome. We also expect that the transition goals will become more meaningful because the goals have been identified and selected by the student and family. Teenagers who know who they are and understand that their “best work” is within them, are empowered to express their goals and desires for their future to parents, teachers and peers, and to make the transition to life after high school successful. In addition, this dialogue has increased the knowledge the teacher has about the student and increased the parents’ knowledge about the capabilities of their child.

**Future:** This activity may be conducted in a variety of settings. Another option is to have the student and parent complete a combined portfolio. The key components are to make the activity:

* **Fun** by providing the opportunity to use creative materials such as photographs, pictures, stamps and markers
* **Meaningful** by providing opportunity for students to generate their own ideas
* **Create dialogue** that identifies future opportunities.

“Take a Look at Me” Portfolios were developed by the Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia. [www.takealookatmeportfolio.com](http://www.takealookatmeportfolio.com).

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**FY09 Parent Mentor Partnership Accountability**

**Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports**

 **DATA REWIND**

**Anecdotal Data/Stories… What Are They?**

Parent Mentors are being asked to give a snapshot of their ongoing work to embed family Engagement initiatives into the Local School System’s effort to reach a targeted Indicator in the Performance Goals. The Parent Mentor’s work is shown through *qualitative* data stories, known as the *Anecdotal Story*. Here is an example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A series of Parent Meetings are held on High School Transition** **for families of targeted students who are at risk to dropout.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To collect Qualitative data ask yourself:*** How many parents attended?
* How many educators participated?
* How many meetings were held and on what subjects?
* Did you do a presurvey and a post survey on transition knowledge and what did it show?
* What was the ongoing impact of the trainings?
* What happened between meetings?
* Did parents lead the Transition Fair?
* Did IEP attendance go up among these parents? How many of the students led their own IEPs?
* Who were your collaborative partners?
* What were some of the solutions the parents arrived upon to assist their child and others (mentoring, tutoring, dads in the hallways, career counseling…?)
 | **To find the Quantitative data, you might come up with numbers such as these examples:****Short term data:**Look at absentee rates and discipline referrals during the period of your initiative. Compare to the previous year.Target a group of students.See if your identifies students became involved in a school activity. Identify parent leaders and see if they bring in new parents to meetings and activities. Check if volunteer numbers increased by parents and by the community.**Long term results:*** Look at your target group and see if any dropped out.
* Find out how many received a general education diploma
* Look at the district overall

number on dropout and outcomes improved.  |

 |

So What Are We Measuring?

The Parent Mentor Partnership’s family engagement work on a targeted indicator can impact the local school system’s short term quantitative data such as by decreasing absenteeism rates or discipline referrals. Later, it can be part of the long-term impact to reach the annual targeted quantative progress on a particular performance goal/indicator.

Yet, before the quantative data is tallied for the year, Parent Mentors have led family engagement initiatives, which are guided by the National Family Engagement Standards, and aimed at empowering families to partner and collaborate with the school system in reaching a particular indicator within the district’s achievement goals. *This part is known as the qualitative work!*

The Parent Mentor Partnership chose four targeted indicators for mentors to target this past school year (08-09). Here are the four indicators chosen by the PMP to target in both FY08/09

**Goal 1, Indicator 3:** Increase the percentage of transition aged students with disabilities who have coordinated and measurable IEP goals and transition services that will lead to attainment of post-secondary goals.

Goal 2, Indicator 5: Increase the percentage of young children referred by parents, or other agencies prior to age three who are determined eligible and have an IEP implemented by the third birthday.

Goal 3, Indicator 10: Increase the performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments when given appropriate accommodations.

Goal 4, Indicator 13: Increase the percentage of parents of children receiving special education services who report that schools encouraged parent involvement to improve results for students with disabilities.

Parent Mentors worked with his or her Special Education Director to decide which indicator to target by embedding family engagement ongoing activities. In addition, Parent Mentors kept track of parent, educator and community contacts.

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**What Do All These Terms Mean?**

What is a Performance Goal? It is an objective that sets expectations to guide educators in ways to lead efforts to increase student achievement. Research indicates that setting challenging; attainable goals leads to high performance.

**Performance Goals set challenging and attainable expectations for the state and its school systems**:Also, ties goals to organization objectives. (See below in advance lesson on GaDOE Strategic Plan)

|  |
| --- |
| **----------------------------------------------****What is an *Indicator*?** |
| As you know, there are 16 indicators under the IDEA State Performance Goals. Indicators help us evaluate our success on the performance goals. Think of the Performance Goal as the umbrella and the indicators are the spokes that hold it up.**An Indicator** helps the school system know how far it has gone on reaching the goal. Each goal has two to four indicators that help it evaluate its progress. **What is a *Strategy*?**A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal. Based on research, we believe systems need to activate our **three family engagement strategies** to reach our targeted indicators. We also know statewide we have activated the strategies in our Parent Mentor Partnership Program. We developed our family engagement strategies from the lessons taught by the PMP over the last seven  |
|  |
| **What is a *Best Practice*?**This is an ongoing initiative that makes a difference on a target. They are methods to use that other mentors successfully used to deliver the wanted outcome. If you follow these processes, you will have an easier time to reach the goal. Best practices should be the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing the goal to date.  |
| **What are *Ongoing Activi*ties?**These are the actual events designed to ultimately reach the indicator and eventually the goal. The activities can have short term measurements leading to the long term goal. Strategies help guide us in these activities. Once there are a number of activities that create a data change for the indicator, they become a best practice. For each major indicator you should be able to measure the effectives of your activities/implementation.**So To Conclude:** Anecdotal Data Stories are a series of descriptions of ongoing activities demonstrating the family engagement work being coordinated by the Parent Mentor to reach a performance indicator. They can be about one activity with ongoing results or it can be a series of activities that will lead to an impact on the targeted indicator. There should be matching data to defend the anecdotal story. Remember, Qualitative Data collects "soft" data while quantitative collects "hard" data. **The quantitative tells you what, and the qualitative tells you why!**   |
|  |

**Extra Credit Reading for those who wonder: How Did We Get Here?**

**T**he Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) measures the success of the Georgia Department of Education’s work in assisting students with disabilities by looking annually at the targets reached on the **State Performance Plan. (SPP)**

The **Annual Progress Report (APR)** is Georgia’s annual update on the SPP to OSEP.

 In the APR, GaDOE reports: the new annual data; updates the targets if needed; and write new activities if warranted by data changes. In some cases the activities in the SPP will be updated.

Each system looks at its data for each IDEA Performance Goals - with the indicators that follow underneath each goal – and determines what to concentrate in its Comprehensive Local Improvement Plan. (CLIP) The CLIP is sent to the GaDOE each summer for review. *The Parent Mentor is listed on the CLIP as a partner working toward meeting the targeted IDEA goal(s).*

![MCj00787720000[1]]()**Annual Parent Involvement Survey for Georgia Families**

 **Raising a Student with a Disability**

Georgia Department of Education, (GaDOE)

Division for Special Education Services and Supports

In Partnership With

Parent to Parent of Georgia

**Why Take a Statewide Survey?**

If *all* students are to cross the GRADUATION finish line prepared to achieve a lifetime of success*,* families need to be an integralpart of theschool team, according to more than 30 years of Family Involvement national research. Therefore, to raise the achievement rate for students with disabilities it is critical the Division for Special Education assist local school systems in partnering with families. To do a better job, we need you to take the time to fill out this score card.



**Who Is Being Surveyed?**

The GaDOE is surveying a scientific sample of parents of students

with disabilities throughout Georgia.

**How do I know something good will come out of this for my child?**

**Parent to Parent of GA**, the statewide Parent Training Information Center, will work with the Division for Special Education on the results and identify state, district and family needs relative to parent involvement. The nonprofit parent organization and its statewide parent network will collaborate with the Division’s Family Engagement Parent Leadership to implement trainings and assistance for schools and families. Also, the results will be sent to the federal Office of Special Education Programs as part of the Georgia Annual Performance Report.

In case you are concerned:

Individual answers are kept confidential. The GaDOE contracted with evaluators at the University of Georgia to guarantee confidentiality. Each response will be coded by a number – not a name.

What do I need to know before I start the survey?

Use a pencil so the computer can read it and answer as many questions that pertain to your son or daughter. Surveys are available in Spanish. When you finish, mail the survey to the evaluation team in the provided stamped envelope or seal the envelope and return it to your child’s school. Collected envelopes with surveys will not be opened by your school but sent directly to the evaluation firm. You also can go on line to complete the survey at **www.gadoexxxxxxx** or be linked to the survey from **parenttoparentofga.org** or[**www.parentmentors.org**](http://www.parentmentors.org)**.**

Why do you want to know my child’s ethnicity & disability?

For further validity, additional data is being collected on geographic area, ethnicity and disability group to ensure the results are valid and reflect the overall demographics of the state.



Questions or Assistance with completing the survey:

Call Parent to Parent of GA at 800-229-2038 or go to:

**www.parenttoparentofga.org.**

You also can call your local school system’s Parent Mentor.

To find out if your system has a Parent Mentor on staff, go to [**www.parentmentors.org**](http://www.parentmentors.org)