

ATS Newsletter

Fall 2015

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Disability Awareness Day

October 28 is the Annual Disability Awareness Day Event. The Arkansas Disability Coalition will have a rally on the Arkansas State Capitol Steps on October 28th from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The rally will be a morning of empowerment, advocacy, and celebration of our different abilities. The second floor of the rotunda has also been reserved in case the weather prevents an outdoor event. T-shirts are available for purchasing at the following link, www.booster.com/adcrallyforawareness. We will continue our celebration at a fundraising dinner on October 29th from 6:00 until 9:00 p.m. at the Center at Bishop Park in Bryant, Arkansas.

The cost will be \$12 per person, but people who have a disability will not be charged because we are celebrating them and the 25th Anniversary of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). There will be organizations and agencies exhibiting during this event as well.

Registration for dinner and/or exhibit space should be done by contacting our office at 501-614-7020 or by email, adcinfo@adcpti.org.

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Disability Awareness Day Continued



Disability Awareness Day is October 28! This is an important day to raise awareness of the ABILITIES of people with disabilities. The AITP is asking for your help in letting others know that people with disabilities are people who can learn, set and reach goals, work, play, have fun and live a happy and successful life!

We want to hear what you know about people with disabilities! With your help and participation we will put together a compilation of all the

wonderful things we know and have experienced with the people we live, work and play with, (who happen to have disabilities). Please answer the following questions in 50 words or less:

- **What does Disability Awareness mean to you?**
- **Why should people be aware of disabilities?**
- **What amazing thing have you seen a person with a disability do?**

- **Tell us something about an amazing person you know or work with who happens to have a disability.**

Please submit your answers to bonnie.boaz@arkansas.gov by October 20, 2015.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Counselors and Students with Disabilities

by Bonnie Boaz

School counselors have an important role in helping students understand their options for life after high school. These counselors work with ALL students, including those with disabilities, and it's important that they have the resources and information in the areas of transition for students with disabilities.

This summer I was asked to co-present with an assistant special education supervisor in Pulaski County School District, Stephanie Cole, to a room full of counselors from elementary to high school. Stephanie knows first-hand the importance of counselors having access to information that could help them guide students with disabilities in the right direction. Students with disabilities need to not only recognize their strengths and interests, but they must also know how to incorporate them into their goals.

She knows that special educators, general educators and counselors must communicate and work together in order to see students succeed. With Stephanie leading the presentation, the counselors were able to learn more about different processes and terminology in special education. She emphasized how all students are working toward different goals, but there are valuable tools that can help our students with disabilities. The Guidance and Career Counselor's Toolkit (check it out on the Teacher/Counselor Tools page on our website, www.arkansastransition.com) offers pages of information that can break down possible barriers to helping students with disabilities. It provides information and resources counselors and educators need to help students go on to post-school education and employment.

The chapters define the different disabilities, strategies for working with students with disabilities, the roles of the counselor in working with students with disabilities and how to implement self-determination activities while working with students. It also includes great resources for assessing students with disabilities in the areas of transition planning, job shadowing, and working with agencies.

There are 31 chapters that are packed with information that will help even the most experienced guidance/career counselor. We hope that you will take time to talk with your counselor and ask what kind of information they have that could help you enhance the transition plans for your students. Then share with them this incredible resource—your relationship will be much stronger and we are pretty sure your students' outcomes will be much more positive!

The Puzzle Pieces in Creating a Local Transition Team

by Karen Randolph

Now that another school year is underway, each district needs to exam the existence of their Local Transition Team. Is there a puzzle piece or pieces missing? Does your District have a Team and is it being utilized? If not, let's explore the reason to establish or re-establish this Team.

Purpose:

Assist students in investigating and achieving their Post-Secondary Goals.

Assist School Personnel, Community and Family members in prioritizing needed transition services for individual students.

Promote positive transition policies, programs and funding through education activities.

So, we see that the purpose of the team can benefit the Student, the District, the Community and the Family, but how do we get this team up and running? Let's consider the following in getting the Team started.

Starting:

Explore the possibility of creating a local team or piggybacking on an existing school team that may have some of the same topics of interest.

Identify business leaders, community leaders, and agencies that provide services to our students.

Hold a planning meeting with your identified business/community leaders, agencies, school personnel and if possible include a student and parent representative.

Define transition issues that may exist in your community and ask for suggestions.

Contact your Transition Consultant for suggestions, and support.

Let's review our findings concerning our Team. We know the purpose of the team and how to get the team started. We can use these tools in getting started or evaluating an existing team for its effectiveness. To make our team efficient we will need to have structure. Please reflect with your team on how to create this structure, so our team meets our students' transition needs.

Structure:

Develop a mission statement with goals and objectives.

Design the organizational structure based on the local needs of the students

Decide on the number of meetings per year, times, location etc.

Publicize the team's activities and achievements

Keep your Transition Consultant informed of activities as well as invite them to at least one meeting

**If you have a Transition Class, please consider allowing them to prepare the snack/meal, invitations etc.

By establishing a Local Transition Team, the art of providing transition services to meet the needs of all our students becomes easy. We now have all the puzzle pieces to create an effective Local Transition Team. If you need more assistance, please contact your Transition Consultant.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Person Centered Planning Training

October 21

Cadre

December 1-2

Transition Teams at Cadre Meetings

by Bonnie Boaz

Arkansas Transition Services has been holding Cadre meetings for years now, but we know there are still people who have never attended! What is a Cadre meeting, you ask? It would probably help to know what a Cadre is first. Well, by definition:

ca-dre

'kadrē, 'kādrē, 'kad,rā, 'kād,rā/

noun

1. a small group of people specially trained for a particular purpose or profession.

"a small cadre of scientists"

- a group of activists in a communist or other revolutionary organization.
- a member of an activist group.

Perhaps some synonyms would be helpful:

corps, body, team, group, nucleus, core, "a cadre of academic specialists."

The **corps** of teachers (and some special education supervisors) who attend our Cadre meetings are all a part of their local transition **team**. That team's **particular purpose** is to improve post school outcomes for students with disabilities. This **group** assesses their needs and prioritizes

those needs to develop a plan to improve outcomes. The **nucleus** of their work is positive post-school outcomes. They meet and discuss the **core** of the needs in their own community and how they can make things work better, all to make lives for our students better. We meet formally twice as a whole Cadre meetings, usually in December and in February. We keep it **small** and invite only two members of local transition teams to attend. This is partly due to space available and partly due to funds available. We simply don't have the space or funds available to have every team member of every transition team meet twice a year.

At these meetings we report on progress (so if you want to be invited, make sure you have progress to report), share resources and things that are working, learn about services and programs from one to two agencies and have other professional development on a particular transition topic or two. It's a great way to stay connected with each other and to learn from one another.

If your team is working hard on improving transition or if you are a brand new team who would like to work hard on transition, let us know! You will be hearing more about our December Cadre soon!

Transition Team Challenge!

It's never too early to start planning for the ATS Transition Summit (October 19-20, 2016)!

We challenge you to meet with your team before the end of the this year, December 31, 2015. Update your plan using the online tool and show us what kind of progress your team has made. Whether your team has achieved a goal set at the last Summit or accomplished steps toward reaching your goal, we want to know and we want to make sure everyone is continuing to meet. If your team is up for the challenge you might receive a free registration to the 2016 ATS Transition Summit! Let your transition consultant know when your team will meet next, we'll contact you for updates from the meeting and make sure you don't need help with the online tool. Then we'll add your team to a drawing for one free registration to the 2016 ATS Transition Summit!

The AIR Self-Determination Scale

by Carrie Tuttle

In an attempt to better inform our teachers of assessments that are available and will provide valuable information for the Transition Plan development process, we are highlighting various Transition Assessments. In this month's edition the focus is on Self-Determination and one of the **Free Assessments**, the AIR Self-Determination Scale. You can obtain this assessment from our website, <http://arkansastransition.com>, under the **Assessing Tools** section. We have both the English and Spanish versions available.

First, let's talk about what Self-Determination is. Below you will find one of the best general descriptions of Self-Determination and why it is so important.

Self-determination is described as ...

"a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in **goal directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior**. An understanding of one's strengths and limitations, together with a belief of oneself as capable and effective

are essential to self-determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society" (p. 2). Field, S., Martin, J., Miller, R., Ward, M., & Wehmeyer, M. (1998). *A practical guide for teaching self-determination*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

The purpose of the AIR Self-Determination Scale is to assist educators in measuring two broad self-determination components. The first is **Capacity** which refers to the student's knowledge, abilities, and perceptions that enable them to be self-determined. The second is **Opportunity** which refers to the student's chances to use their knowledge and abilities. The scale is divided into four pages: 1) Things I Do, 2) How I Feel, 3) What Happens At School, and 4) What Happens At Home. The scales are written on a 4th -6th grade reading/comprehension level and can be read aloud to the student

if needed. There are three scales in total: 1) Student, 2) Parent/Guardian, and 3) Professional. It should be completed by/for High school age youth and is most appropriate for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Note, that all three scales do not have to be completed in order to help an educator develop meaningful goals in self-determination. Self-determination is an area that is often overlooked in the assessment process, but that is an essential component to students knowing their needs and how to obtain supports for success after high school.

In Summary, the AIR Self-Determination scale will provide the following results:

1. It will produce a profile of the student's level of self-determination.
2. It will identify areas of student strength and areas in which the student needs improvement.
3. It will identify specific educational goals that the educator can incorporate into the student's Transition Plan.

AIR Self-Determination Scale[®]
STUDENT FORM

Student's Name _____ Date _____
School Name _____ Your Grade _____
Your Date of Birth _____
Months Day Year

HOW TO FILL OUT THIS FORM

Please answer these questions about how you go about getting what you want or need. This may occur at school, or after school, or it could be related to your friends, your family, or a job or hobby you have.

This is not a Test. There are no right or wrong answers. The questions will help you learn about what you do well and where you may need help.

Goal You may not be sure what some of the words in the questions mean. For example, the word **goal** is used a lot. A **goal** is something you want to get or achieve, either now or next week or in the distant future. Like when you are an adult. You can have many different kinds of goals. You could have a goal that has to do with school (like getting a good grade on a test or graduating from high school). You could have a goal of saving money to buy something (a new iPod[®] or new sneakers), or doing better in sports (getting on the basketball team). Each person's goals are different because each person has different things that they want or need or that they are good at.

Plan Another word that is used in some of the questions is **plan**. A **plan** is the way you decide to meet your goal, or the steps you need to take in order to get what you want or need. Like goals, you can have many different kinds of plans. An example of a plan to meet the goal of getting on the basketball team would be: to get better by shooting more baskets at home after school, to play basketball with friends on the weekend, to listen to the coach when the team practices, and to watch the pro play basketball on TV.

The AIR Self-Determination Scale was developed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), in collaboration with Teachers College, Columbia University, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), under Cooperative Agreement H02220005.

1. AIR Self-Determination Scale, Student Form

AIR Self-Determination Scale[®]
PARENT FORM

Student's Name _____ Date _____
Date _____
School Name _____
Parent's Name _____

HOW TO FILL OUT THIS FORM

Please answer these questions about how your child goes about getting what he or she wants or needs. This may occur at school, or after school, or it could be related to your child's friends, other family members, a job or hobby.

This is not a Test. There are no right or wrong answers. The questions will help us learn about your child's strengths and areas where your child may need help.

Goal A **goal** is something your child wants to get or achieve, either now or next week or in the distant future. Your child can have many different kinds of goals. Your child could have a goal that has to do with school (like getting a good grade on a test or graduating from high school). Your child could have a goal that has to do with getting along better with friends or family (like making his mom proud). Your child could have a goal of saving money to buy something (a new iPod[®] or new sneakers), or doing better in sports (getting on the basketball team). Each child's goals are different because each person has different things that they want or need or that they are good at.

Plan A **plan** is the way your child decides to meet his or her goal, or the steps your child needs to take in order to get what (s)he wants or needs. Like goals, your child can have many different kinds of plans. An example of a plan to meet the goal of getting on the basketball team would be: to get better by shooting more baskets at home after school, to play basketball with friends on the weekend, to listen to the coach when the team practices, and to watch the pro play basketball on TV.

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1. AIR Self-Determination Scale, Parent Form

AIR Self-Determination Scale[®]
EDUCATOR FORM

Student's Name _____ Date _____
Date of Birth (or age) _____ Grade _____ Female Male
Educator's Name _____
School Name _____

HOW TO FILL OUT THIS FORM

Each page of this form lists characteristics and behaviors that indicate the degree to which your student demonstrates traits of self-determination and the degree to which the people influencing your student provides opportunities that foster self-determination. For each item, select the appropriate rating code based on what you have observed about your student. An example is provided to illustrate each characteristic. Feel free to write in a different example that supports your rating for your student.

Here is an example of how you should mark your answers.

EXAMPLE QUESTION:
Student checks for errors after completing a project.

EXAMPLE ANSWER:
Check the box of the rating code which tells what your student is most like:
(Check ONLY ONE box per question).

1. Never.....student never checks for errors.
2. Almost Never.....student almost never checks for errors.
3. Sometimes.....student sometimes checks for errors.
4. Almost Always.....student almost always checks for errors.
5. Always.....student always checks for errors.

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ATS Summer Workshops 2015

by Jennifer Harte

This summer Arkansas Transition Services held two Professional Development workshops for Special Education teachers.

The first, *Video Modeling – Practical Applications for Transition-Aged Youth*, presented by Ryan Kellems, was held on July 13 with 26 attendees from 15 districts in attendance. Video modeling involves participants watching a video of someone modeling a desired behavior and then imitating the behavior of the person in the video. Attendees worked in small teams to develop and implement their own video modeling clips. Attendees stated, "This workshop was wonderful for the transition classes, especially in the areas of job interviews, filling out applications and use of telephone etiquette", and "I will be able to use this training for life skills, social skills, Transition and across the curriculum".

The second, *Do It Yourself Study Aids: Winning Websites and Apps*, presented by Tony Vincent, was held on July 14 with 32 attendees from 18 districts in attendance. Tony discussed a multitude of apps and websites students can use to learn and retain information by creating their own study aids or playing games. A few that were presented include Crossword Labs (www.crosswordlabs.com), where students can create their own crossword to help them study vocabulary and Quizizz (www.quizizz.com), a multiplayer quiz that allows students to practice together. This workshop gave attendees "lots of new ways to engage students in the learning process". It also aided teachers in becoming "more creative in bringing games and study skills into the classroom."

Transition Consultants are beginning follow-up for these workshops. We will share success stories of how teachers are using video modeling or study aids in their classrooms soon! Contact us if you'd like more information or useful websites and apps for students with disabilities.



Arkansas PROMISE seeks 14-16 year-old youth receiving SSI benefits to enroll in research project

Arkansas PROMISE still has 575 openings for youth and families who would like to enroll in the project. Arkansas PROMISE is a research project that seeks to show that more intensive services and support for youth and families during jr. high and high school results in better outcomes for youth as adults, including better jobs, higher education attainment, and higher incomes. The project will continue until at least September of 2018.

Arkansas PROMISE provides many services to youth who are receiving SSI and their families. Services include: a Connector who works intensively with families to support the whole household's needs and goals; a transition specialist who works to support the youth in school and coordinate school and work goals; benefits counselors who work with families and the Social Security Administration so youth can earn income as students, without reducing the monthly benefit received by the family; up to two paid work experiences of 200 hours each (average earnings total \$1600); job coaching to support the youth during their summer jobs; financial support to meet the unexpected needs of families throughout the program; rewards for youth and adults as they complete the planned activities of the project; monthly gatherings with other families in the PROMISE project with additional lessons and tools to achieve your goals; a week-long college-like session in the summer hosted by a public university; and assistance and support to make and achieve long-term school and work goals.

Because PROMISE is a research project, each youth that enrolls will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: the Program group will receive the services listed above; the Usual Services group will not receive the services listed above, but will receive a list of services in their community that they are eligible for and can access just as they could before enrolling in PROMISE.

PROMISE has a goal to enroll 2000 youth and their families before April 30, 2016. We need the help of school staff, community leaders, parents, and trusted advisors to help us spread the word about this unique opportunity. Please visit promisear.org, or call 1-855-649-0022 to get in touch with one of our local staff to help support this project, or to check eligibility and to enroll.

District Spotlight Greenwood

Outstanding Transition Programs

by Paul Johnston

Greenwood Arkansas has developed an outstanding Transition Program in their schools. This program would have never started without Special Education supervisor Patti Allison looking toward the future, giving Special Education Designee Tammie Rose the lead for the program and great district administrative support from Superintendent John Ciesla and High School Principal Jerry Efurd. Patti and Tammie also attended the National State Capacity Building Institute, a three day conference dedicated to gaining knowledge and resources to plan for transition program improvement, as part of the Arkansas Team.

This program started with wanting to improve Transition for their students.

File reviews, in-services, and continuous professional development from the Transition Consultant were the first steps. Greenwood then built a Transition Team that includes parents, agencies, school and community members. This team has attended the Transition Summits and all the Transition Cadres. The district has also implemented Transition Assessment Libraries at the Junior High and High school levels. They have a Transition Class at the High School that has been active for a couple of years and a Vocational Skills class at the Junior High. They have implemented various Transition Curriculums 7th -12th grades. They have started Transition led / Student led conferences at the secondary level.

Greenwood held a Transition Fair in 2013 and started a number of Parent Transition Information Nights in 2014. The Parent Transition Information Nights focus on specific areas of Transition. They have had a night for Medicaid Waiver and a night for Project AWIN on working with a disability. They have implemented separate Transition Folders as part of the IEP. This is way to have all of the Transition information in one spot in the Due Process folder that can be pulled out to specifically work on Transition and to make sure Transition leads all decisions made for the student's education.

Some new activities happening this year include a Transition Parent Interview in K-6th grades. This is to start parent communication about Transition and district activities and also expose parents to programs like Medicaid Waiver, SSI, and Guardianship. This year Greenwood will have a Futures Fair. This is a two track event with one track for students going on to college and one track for those going into the workforce. Greenwood is also working on developing a work program for the High School students that might include a student run school based business.

All of these together are giving the students at Greenwood a great start at post-school success!



Special Education Supervisor, Patti Allison, Special Education Designee, DeMaris Barnett, Special Educator Marka Keddie, and (not pictured) Tammie Rose, Special Education Designee.