



Lunchtime Leaders Family Engagement Webinar Series
Families And Schools Together (FAST)
Increasing Student Success Through Partnership

Hearing the Families' Voice

 *Parent Concerns as a Priority*

STEP, Inc. houses the US Department of Education OSEP funded Parent Training Center and is the family partner on Tennessee's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

<https://www.tnstep.org/>

<http://www.tnspdg.com/>

STEP: Who We Are & What We Do

Support and Training for Exceptional Parents, Inc. (STEP) is a statewide not-for-profit established in 1989 serving Tennessee families. We are Tennessee's PTI - Parent Training and Information Center.

WHO do we help?

Families or caregivers in Tennessee with children and youth, birth to 26, with a diagnosed or suspected disability or special healthcare/ mental health need. STEP believes parents and caregivers are a child's best advocate.

HOW do we help?

- ★ Navigating special education laws
- ★ IEP or 504 Plan review and assistance
- ★ Workshops and in-person training
- ★ Referrals to other agencies
- ★ Life after high school planning
- ★ Training videos and webinars
- ★ Collaboration and communication
- ★ Special education updates

Services are FREE for Tennessee families

STEP: Who We Are & What We Do

STEP believes in collaborating with schools and agencies to improve results for Tennessee students.

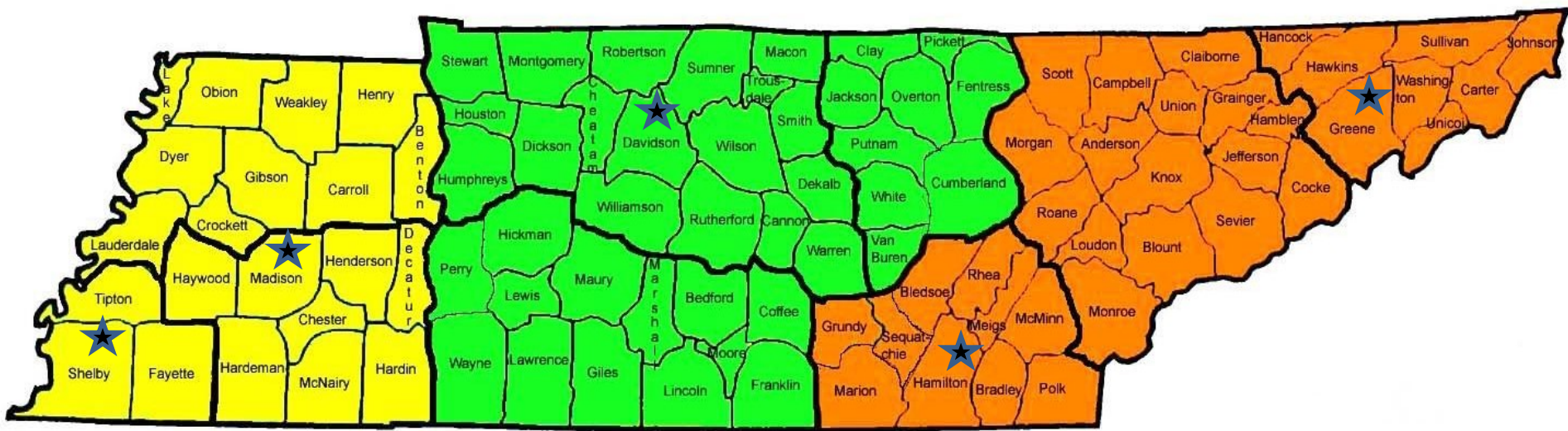
WHAT does STEP offer professionals?

- ★ High quality in-service and professional development
 - IDEA and Section 504
 - Instructionally appropriate IEPs
 - Response to Intervention
 - Family engagement
 - Postsecondary transition
 - Customized needs-based training
- ★ Parent workshops on special education topics
- ★ Youth activities

HOW much does it cost for Professionals?

- ★ FREE if parents and caregivers are invited
- ★ FREE if funded by grants from the Tennessee Department of Education
- ★ Fee-for-service but very cost effective

Services Available Across Tennessee



West

Memphis office
Serving West TN

Middle

Nashville office
Serving all counties in Middle TN

Bilingual staff available for families

East

Greeneville office and Headquarters
Serving all counties in East TN

Chattanooga Satellite Office
Serving Bilingual families all across the state

STEP, Inc. is one of over 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) nationwide, providing training, tools, and information to parents, caregivers, and professionals in Tennessee.



a brighter future for children with disabilities

Our Funding Sources

PTI

Tennessee
Parent
Training &
Information
Center



VR-PreETS

Pre-
Employment
Transition
Services



SPDG

State
Personnel
Development
Grant



TA Region B

Funded by
OSEP –
Consultant
for 12 state
region
technical
assistance



Funds raised through events, donations, contributions,
foundations, sale of products, other sources



Our Mission

STEP's Mission is to serve families of children and youth, young adults, and those who are involved in their lives.

We provide accurate, timely, and relevant information and training related to special education rights, equal access to quality education, and connections to community resources.

We believe that parents and caregivers are their children's best advocates, and that youth disabilities should be self-advocates.

We know that families and youth who are informed, empowered, and engaged can effectively collaborate as part of a team for services and supports that will lead to improved outcomes and success in life.



Our Vision

STEP's vision is to ensure a brighter future for children and youth in Tennessee, with an emphasis on those with disabilities, special health care needs, and mental health needs.



Objectives

1. Recognize the importance of sharing descriptive parent concerns.
2. Use questioning tools to prepare for IEP discussions.
3. Increase understanding and skills to share concerns related to your child's education.
4. How to use parent concerns as a springboard for IEP planning.
5. Understand best practices in responding to parent concerns.



a brighter future for children with disabilities

Student Name:
DOB:

LEA:

IEP Meeting Date:

Current Descriptive Information

Describe the student's strengths

Describe the concerns of the parents regarding their student's education

Describe how the student's disability adversely impacts his/her access to participation in the general curriculum:

Consideration of Special Factors for IEP Development

Does the student have limited English proficiency?

If yes, what is his/her primary mode of language?

Is the student blind or visually impaired?

If yes, does the student need instruction in Braille?

Does the student have communication needs No

If yes, what are they?

Is the student deaf or hard of hearing?

If yes, did the IEP Team consider:

- a. the student's language and communication needs;
- b. opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the student's language and communication mode;
- c. necessary opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communication mode?

Is assistive technology necessary in order to implement the student's IEP?

If yes, what is needed?

Does the student's behavior impede his/her learning or that of others? If yes, the IEP Team has addressed the student's behavior in the following way(s):

IDEA 300.324 (a) ii

The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child.

C₃ **O**₁ **N**₁ **C**₃ **E**₁ **R**₁ **N**₁

Definition of Concern

worry; make anxious:

a matter of interest or importance to someone

a complicated or awkward object or structure

marked interest or regard usually arising through a
personal tie or relationship

a matter that causes feelings of unease, uncertainty, or
apprehension

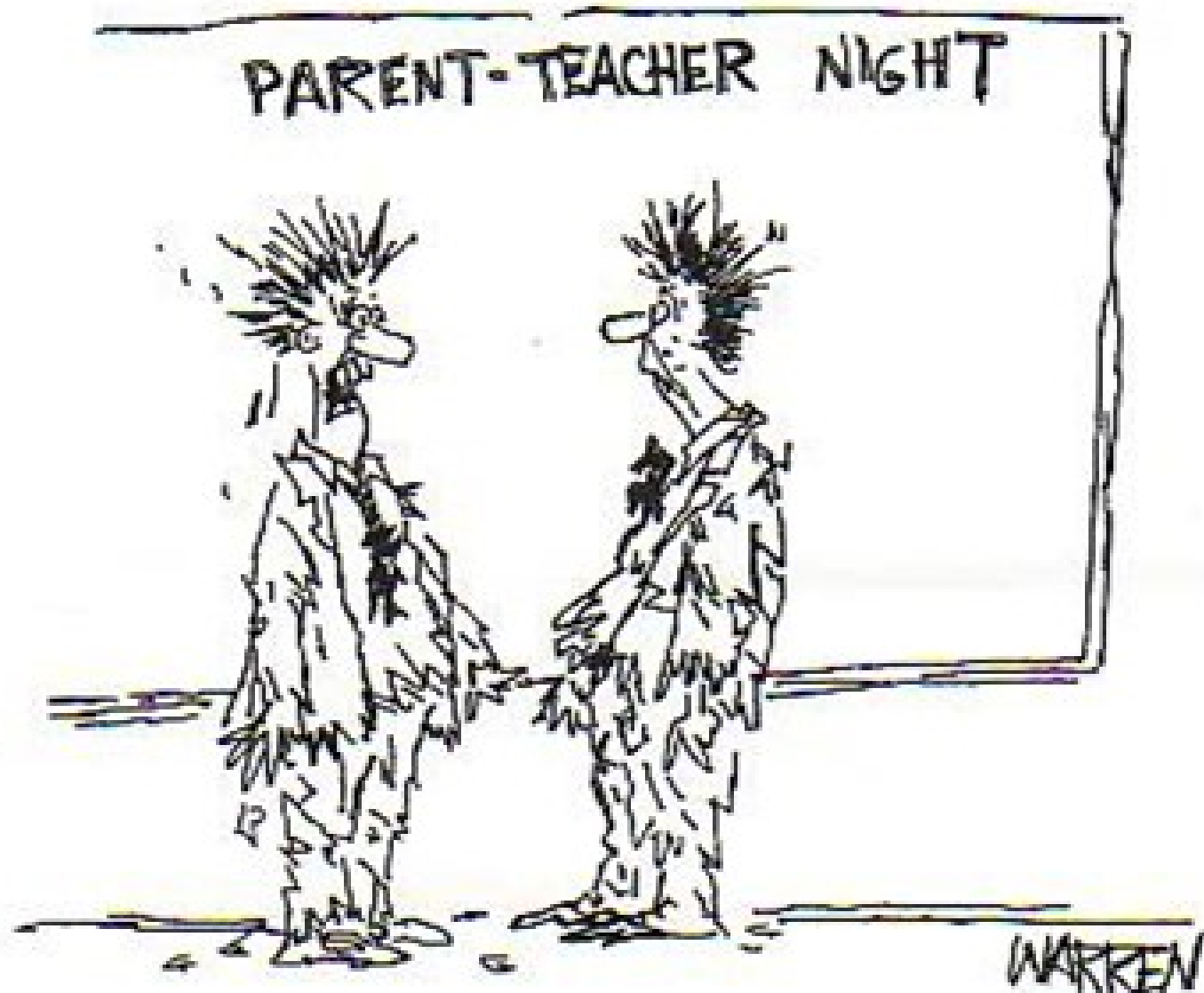
a matter for consideration

Parent Concerns

Parent concerns are a **springboard** to address the points you want to cover throughout the meeting.

Parent Concerns

Education is more than just academics,
(reading, writing, and math).



"You must be Timmy's dad. I'm Timmy's teacher."



**Karen Harrison with husband, Jim;
daughter, Sarah; and "Snowman"**

**Already In
The IEP**



need to address further



data results
progress

**New
Concerns**



state clearly



further evaluation
goals and objectives

Questions to Begin Exploring Descriptive Parent Concerns

What are your goals for your child in the next year?

What do you see as your child's strengths?

What are your child's greatest needs?

How would you describe your child's attitude toward school?

How would you describe your child's peer relationships?

What are your future hopes and goals for your child?

Questions to Begin Exploring Descriptive Parent Concerns

What are your concerns, if any, in the following areas?

Academic (math, language arts, reading, science, communication)

Emotional and/or Behavior

Community Participation (safety, transportation, group interaction)

Independent Living (self-care, responsibility, habits)

Job Training (relating to self-sufficiency or future employment)

Other concerns (health considerations, communication, physical abilities, mobility)

Narratives in the IEP: Parent Concerns

Not Descriptive:

I would like Karen to do better in school.

Descriptive:

I would like Karen to improve in the areas of reading comprehension. I am concerned Karen's reading progress and the impact her ability has in other academic classes. Ms. Davis reports that Karen is easily frustrated when she has to read independently and I worry that she will only fall further behind.

Note: Examples are provided for training purposes only.

What discussions and actions could this parent concern lead to?

Gina's family has a few main concerns. They worry that although she understands expectations, they often hear complaints that she is not following directions quickly or completely in class. Gina tends to do poorly on standard academic assessments, even in math, which is a relative strength. Her family worries that she will not score above basic on this year's standardized assessment. Although Gina gets along well with staff members, she often complains that she doesn't have friends and tends to isolate herself from peers at lunch and recess. She doesn't seem to know how to engage in social interactions with her peers.

Example of Descriptive Parent Concerns

Mr. & Mrs. Test are very concerned about Susan's reading progress. They report that she is easily frustrated when she has to read independently and worry that she will only fall further behind.

Example of Descriptive Parent Concerns

Piper's parents are worried about her continuing success once she leaves the structure and routine of school. They still remind Piper of her schedule, homework, and help her organize her backpack and agenda each day. Also, Piper is still behind in math.

Example of Descriptive Parent Concerns

Delia's parents would like Delia to continue improvement in reading comprehension and functional academic skills. They would also like Delia to continue exploration of different career options by participating in Work-Based Learning and visiting different post-secondary programs and job sites.

Parent Concerns



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwpdsdBDURI&list=PLnymSoOkb61XC3RtujR766vKX8moXSBPA&index=6>

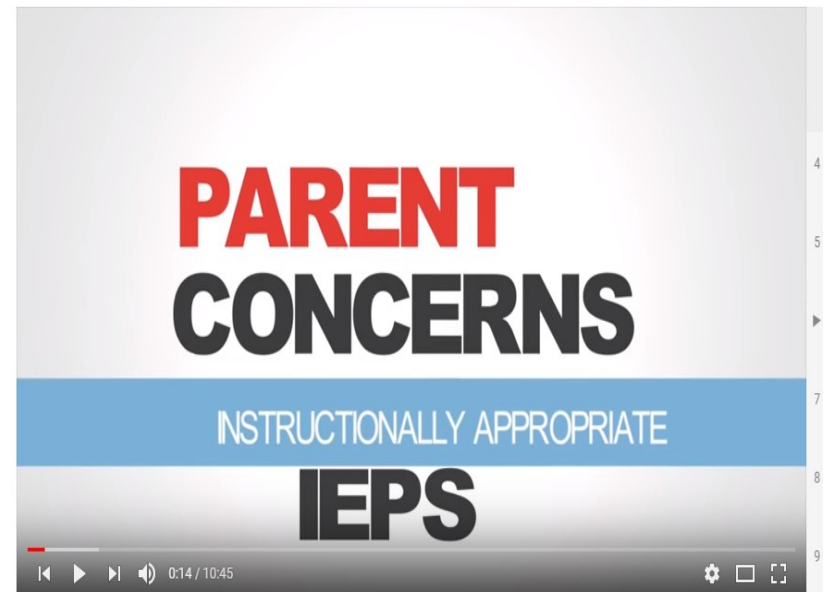
Working together, families and educators can help students succeed!

**Next STEP Lunchtime Leaders Webinar
January 22, 2020**

Supporting Students in their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



Training Resources



Don't forget to also check out resources on the SPDG website

<http://www.tnspdg.com/>

Presenter Contact Information



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