



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

# Identifying Student's Strengths and Needs

A yellow star is positioned at the top left, with a dashed grey line trailing from it in a curved path towards the bottom left. A second, smaller dashed grey arc is located below the main trail.

<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.**

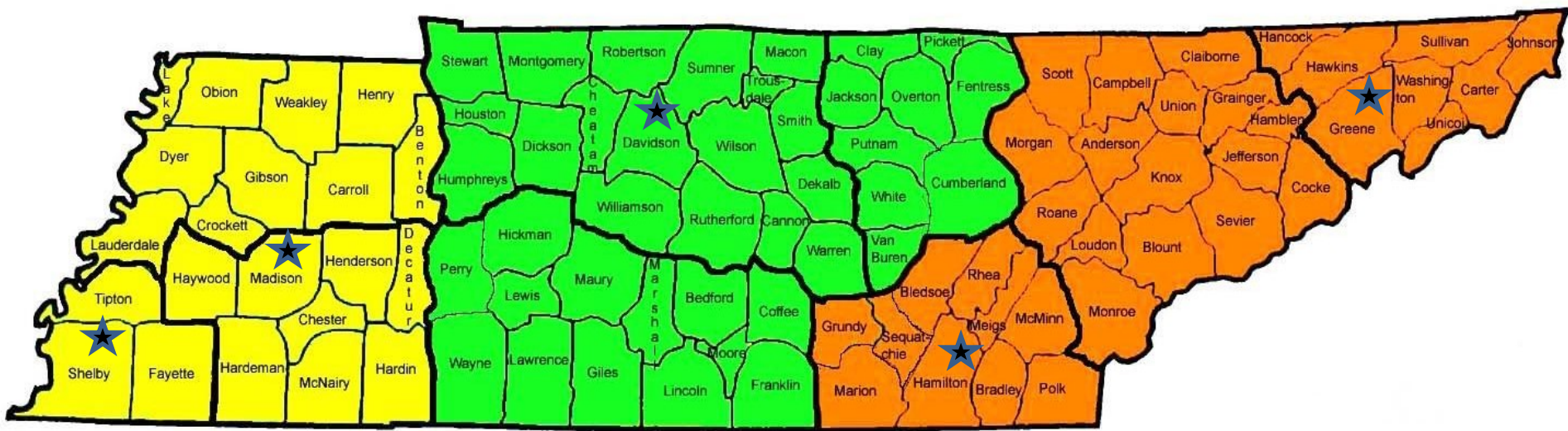
## **WHAT does STEP offer professionals?**

- ★ 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.



# 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

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**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

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**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

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1. Understand the link between student strengths and student success.
2. Become familiar with tools families can use to provide important information about their child to teachers and that can also be used by teachers to gather information from families.
3. Increase understanding about the importance of families and schools working together to ensure great outcomes for all children.



*a brighter future for children with disabilities*



# Effectively Communicating Strengths and Needs



I Love Lucy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd3INJxnqo>

# Why is it important to know a student's strengths and needs?

Please type your answers into the Chat Box

# Strengths & Needs

What are the child/youth's strengths and needs compared to same age and grade students?

Has the IEP team considered:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Academic progress (measured by classroom, districtwide, and state tests)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social/emotional development
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health/medical issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Communication skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Functional life skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other areas of development

Student Name:  
DOB:

LEA:

IEP Meeting Date:

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### Current Descriptive Information

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#### 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:

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### Consideration of Special Factors for IEP Development

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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):

# Narratives in the IEP: Student Strengths

- Relevant to supporting them as a learner and active participant in the school environment.
- Written and delivered in positive terms.
- Comes from a variety of sources.

*Note: Examples are provided for training purposes only.*

Riley's receptive language skills, math calculation skills, and conversational skills are strengths. Riley exhibits good attention in class, perseveres on tasks, and enjoys working with her peers.

*Note: this is an example provided for training purposes only.*

Jason is doing well academically, particularly in math. He loves creative problem solving and using pictures and objects to describe his thinking. In reading, he does well reading silently to himself and in reading comprehension.



<b>Non-Descriptive Example</b>	<b>Descriptive Example</b>
Sue is no problem at school.	Sue is polite, respectful and gets along with her peers. She is willing to participate and likes to be asked to help with errands and to assist the teacher or her peers. She demonstrates motivation and following directions.
Joey is a very polite child and his peers seem to like him.	Joey is able to comprehend text on a 5th grade level. He especially likes stories about sports. He also enjoys being outside with his friends and gets along very well with adults and peers. He is very visual and excels in basketball.
Donna is a very strong willed young lady.	Donna has strong organizational skills and decision making skills. She is extremely motivated when work involves using the computer.

## TOOL: Strengths Chain – Understood.org

A strengths-based IEP looks at:

- what students can do
- what the team wants them to do next
  - how strengths might be used to set goals to help address a particular need.

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/uvqC72wUOXImeeSapX3Y6/7c0fcc7b9271d4374c7a9afdcabd8b08/Strengths\\_Chain\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/uvqC72wUOXImeeSapX3Y6/7c0fcc7b9271d4374c7a9afdcabd8b08/Strengths_Chain_Understood.pdf)

[Understood.org](https://www.understood.org)

# TOOL: One-Page Profile

*My One Page profile*

Your Name Age  
Occupation

*What people appreciate about me*

*What is important to me*

*How to support me*

The form is a vertical stack of four colored boxes. The top box is grey and contains the title 'My One Page profile' in a cursive font, followed by a dashed rectangular box for a profile picture. Below this is a grey box with the text 'Your Name' and 'Age' and 'Occupation' in small font. The second box is red and contains the cursive text 'What people appreciate about me'. The third box is yellow and contains the cursive text 'What is important to me'. The bottom box is green and contains the cursive text 'How to support me'.

One-page profile templates:

<http://www.sheffkids.co.uk/adultsite/pages/onepageprofiletemplates.html>

<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/one-page-profile-templates/>

# One-Page Profile Example

**Things we like and admire about \_\_\_\_\_**

- Outgoing, Fun, Loves to build things, Trusting, \_\_\_\_\_

**Things to know about \_\_\_\_\_**

- He needs time to process information before responding.
- He needs his personal space to be respected.
- Once he starts something, it is very important for him to finish it.

**How to successfully support \_\_\_\_\_**

- Using positive behavior techniques, really works. Short phrases, rewards, choices, patience, attention work well.
- He needs to know what is expected. Prepare him for changes.
- When he is upset or excited he needs \_\_\_\_\_
- If you need to be in his space to work alongside him, ask him to sit on his hands.
- When he is upset use one or two word phrases. “Stop” “Sit down”.

# Student Sharing Information

- Get me out of bed before 7:50 so I don't have to rush.
- Remind to go faster when I have a job I have to get done.
- Sometimes I get my math wrong when I rush. Remind me to stay calm and take my time so I can think about what I am doing.
- If I have a problem at recess I like to try to sort it out on my own. Sometimes I need an adult to help me sort it out.

# Parent and Student Information

## **Connor's Mom:**

If Connor has a temper tantrum in school he gets an early bedtime.

## **Connor's Response:**

Tell me if my behavior is leading me to an early bedtime so I have a chance to stop and redeem myself.

# TOOL: All About ME

Place  
Your  
Child's  
Picture  
Here

## “All About ME”

Hi! My name is

I am \_\_\_\_ years old



Designed and Produced by STEP, Inc. - TN Parent Training & Information Center

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

Toll free in TN: 1 (800) 280-7637

[information@tnstep.org](mailto:information@tnstep.org)

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Tennessee State Improvement Grant [www.tnspdg.com](http://www.tnspdg.com)





**Working together, families and educators can help students succeed!**

**Next STEP Lunchtime Leaders Webinar**

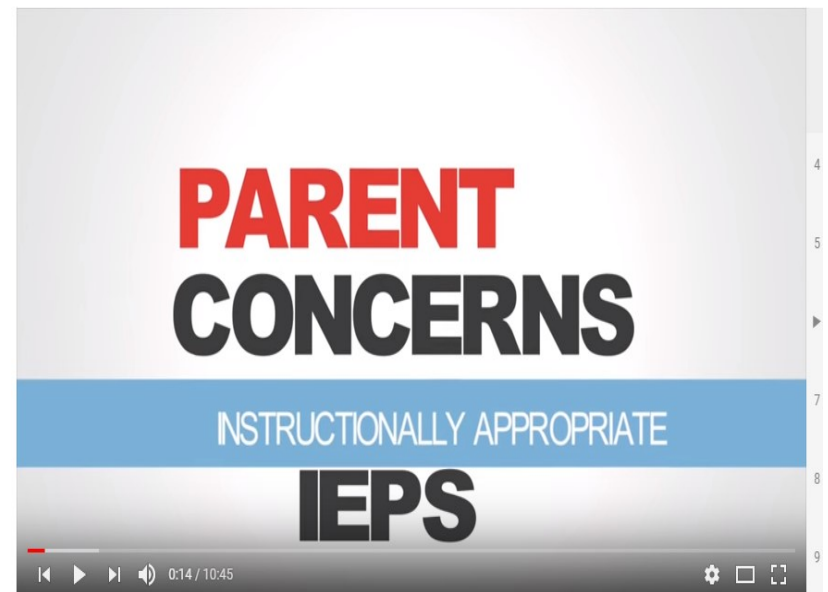
**November 19, 2019**

**Hearing the Families' Voice**

**Parent Concerns as a Priority**



# Training Resources



# Presenter Contact Information



**Karen Harrison**

**Executive Director**

[Karen.harrison@tnstep.org](mailto:Karen.harrison@tnstep.org)

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

**800-280-7837**