



Improving Outcomes for Justice-Involved Youth with Disabilities

Universal Strategies and Tips that Build
Organizational Capacity within Parent Centers



a brighter future for children with disabilities
www.tnstep.org

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.

- ★ 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

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STEP: Who We Are & What We Do

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

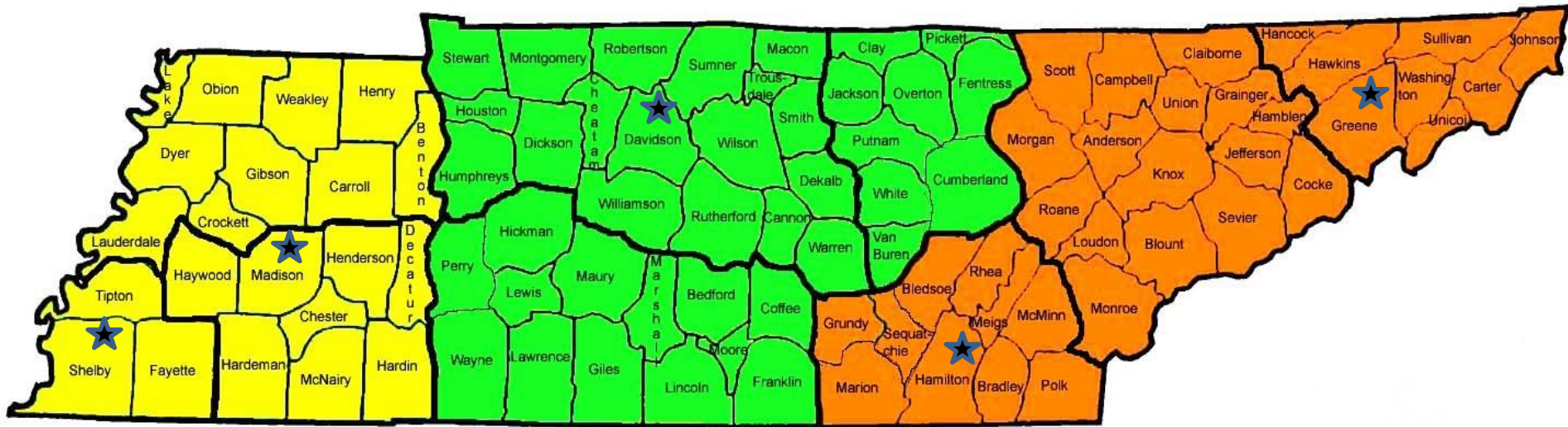
WHAT does STEP offer professionals?

- ★ 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 all counties in 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.

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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 with 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.



Disclaimer

The general interpretations in this presentation are based upon the opinions and perspectives of the presenter. Attorneys and other agencies may have differing views. Federal and state laws, regulations, and procedures may change over time. Persons should consult the statutes, regulations, and an attorney for purposes of compliance on a specific matter.



Objectives

- A Snap Shot of Juvenile Justice in the USA
- A Trauma Informed Approach to Parent Engagement
- The 7P's Community Organizing Model
- Tools from the Parent Center Hub Toolkit



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Juvenile Justice in the USA

- Over 60,000 youth under 21 years old are looked up throughout the country. The rate in which we lock up youth far exceeds international norms.
- African American, Latino, and Students with Disabilities are more likely to be referred to law enforcement from school staff than their peers.
- The average cost to confine a young person is about \$88,000 per year.
- 55% of youth released from juvenile justice facilities are rearrested within a year.
- Many incarcerated students with disabilities and english language learners have the greatest need of academic, emotional, and behavior supports.

A Trauma Informed Approach to Parent Engagement



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Endless Sources of Daily Trauma Families Face

- **IEP & 504 Meetings**
- Generational Poverty
- Court Costs
- Toxic Stress
- Doctor Appointments
- Medical Expenses
- School Systems
- Domestic Violence
- Unruly Behaviors
- Child Abuse or Neglect
- Poor Literacy Skills
- Accidents and Natural Disasters
- Grief and Loss
- Immigration Challenges
- Disability (Physical or Mental)
- Human Trafficking
- Foster Youth Challenges
- Homelessness/Substance Abuse
- All types of Discrimination
- Justice Systems
- Child Welfare Systems
- Witnessing acts of violence
- **IEP & 504 Meetings**



Trauma Sensitive Customer Service

“Trauma occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and responds with intense fear, horror, and helplessness. Extreme stress overwhelms the person’s capacity to cope.”

www.TheNationalCouncil.org

- Understand the impact of trauma on the families we serve and do not add to it.
- Be intentional to ensure quality interactions occur on every intake call, face to face meeting, email, social media post, etc.
- Integrate evidence based mentoring that opens doors to partnerships with juvenile facilities. Parent Center staff can operate as subject matter experts on IEP & 504 teams of incarcerated youth.
- Provide professional development to Parent Center Staff regarding managing the impact of second hand trauma.
- Ensure IEP teams consider “Special Factors” due to the fact behavior that impedes learning could also have a direct link to trauma, involving the exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).
- Facilitate IEP and 504 meetings that are Trauma-Informed. <https://www.kennedykrieger.org/stories/trauma-informed-practices-considerations-iep-meeting>

Use the 7P's Community Organizing Model to Support Justice-Involved Youth and Families with Wrap Around Services



Parents/Guardians



Police/Attorneys



Principals/Education Leaders



Pastors/Faith Leaders



Partners/Clinical



Politicians



Proprietors/Business ¹⁴

Tools from Parent Center Hub

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/juvenile-justice-toolkit/>

Juvenile Justice Toolkit

Parent Center Intake Questions

1. Basic information and demographics – ranging from typical intake to more specificity:
 - a. How old is the student? If over 18, does the person speaking have decision-making authority?
 - i. Who are you speaking with (if not the parent): CASA, guardian *ad litem*? Is there limited parent involvement or is the student over 18?
 - ii. If the student is over 18, have they provided written consent for you to gather information and resources on their behalf/ participate in educational decision-making?
 - b. Is the student out of school?
 - i. If so, for how long? When was the last date of attendance?
 - ii. Are you waiting for a Manifest Determination hearing?
 - c. Does the student have (or is the student suspected of having) a disability? Is there an IEP, 504, ADA plan?
 - d. What is the language spoken in the home?
 - e. How did you hear about us? What kind of support are you looking for? (Let them know what your limitations are—make a referral if appropriate.)
 - f. Information release.
2. Questions about the event leading up to the call:
 - a. Where did the alleged offense occur? At school, on school property or at school event?
 - b. Do the circumstances involve another student or staff member?
 - c. Has the student been questioned by school personnel, SRO, or other law

Sample Questions for PTI/CPRC Staff When a Parent/Guardian Calls About an Arrest

From: Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (dredf.org)

1. Calls from parents when their child has recently been arrested are difficult because we are often dealing with an overwhelmed, emotional, outraged, or despondent parent (or a combination of these). Here are some questions to help you navigate this situation and be as helpful as possible.

First, be sure that the person who is calling has education rights—if it is a relative caregiver or foster parent, this may or may not be the case. Do a quick exploration of whether the person on the phone is the educational decision-maker. If they are not, encourage them to call back together with the person who holds educational rights or have that person call separately.

2. Does the student currently have an IEP or 504 plan or is any assessment in process to Determine whether they might be eligible.

- If the answer to that question is no, ask whether the caller thinks evaluation is needed. Offer sample letters and other resources in that case.
- If the answer is yes, ask when the IEP or 504 was last revised, category of disability, and our usual questions about whether there is a behavior intervention plan or mental health support around outbursts aggression or any of the behaviors might have led to the arrest. Also ask whether they have supplied a copy of the Plan to the police department.

3. Did the incident that triggered the arrest occur at school or on the way to or from school or is it related to school problems in some way?

- If yes, have you received an incident report from the school?
- If no, have you received any paperwork about the incident? Have you received a call from anyone? If yes, who? Do you have their name and contact information?

Potential Partners

Developing traditional and non-traditional partnerships to advance or begin work with justice-involved youth in each state requires active outreach. This document, created by participants in the Juvenile Justice workshop at the Parent Center Boot Camp 2017, lists potential partners for staff to reach out to for both resources and collaboration.

Parent Centers should fill in as much contact information as they can for each group in their state. They can then contact these partners for resources, support, and other coalition-building.

National Organizations

- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (ojjdp.gov)
- National Juvenile Justice Network (njjn.org)
- American Civil Liberties Union (aclu.org)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (naacp.org)
- National Association of School Resource Officers (nasro.org)
- The ARC National Center on Criminal Justice & Disability (thearc.org/NCCJD)
- *Other protection and advocacy/disability rights organizations*

Local/State Government

- Child welfare/foster care agencies
- County or state office of education
- Juvenile justice commissions
- Juvenile justice task forces
- Vocation rehabilitation
- Behavioral health
- Mental health agency

Success Stories

- A student accused of murdering their Principal became a peer mentor and experienced positive restorative outcomes due to literacy interventions while incarcerated.
- An incarcerated youth received a full tuition scholarship to a local barber college and positive media exposure upon release as a result of implementing the 7P's
- We advocated and helped to start a school inside a county juvenile facility in which all teens were not receiving access to public education for several years.
- An under-resourced youth from a single parent home in a violent community earned a 4 year college degree due to post secondary supports and mentoring.

James Baldwin (writer)

“For these are all our children. We will all profit by, or pay for, whatever they become.”



More Information



www.youtube.com/user/TNStep



Events Calendar

www.tnstep.org/events/



Workshops
English & Spanish



STEP's Parent Manual View
on front page of www.tnstep.org,
or order disc or hardcopy



www.facebook.com/steptn

Empowering Families to Ensure a Brighter Future for Children with Disabilities

This is a journey and the STEP staff is available to provide support, information, and training to families and students!

Call 800-280-7837 or your local office

West Tennessee

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(901) 726-4334

Middle Tennessee

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(615) 463-2310

East Tennessee

eastrtc@tnstep.org

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Español

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Fax (423) 636-8217

(423) 639-0125



What questions do you have?



“Persistence achieves equity in education”

Derek Flake

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