

FMPTIC Transition Newsblast

Fall 2024



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The purpose of the FMPTIC NewsBlast is to provide information to youth ages 14 1/2 through 22, parents, and professionals who serve youth with disabilities in planning for, and achieving, a successful transition into high school, through high school, and into needed adult services and their community.



Check our latest Podcast featuring
Kimberly Johnson



Look for the next
issue of the
NewsBlast in
February 2025!

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Making a Lasting Impact

For individuals with disabilities, finding meaningful employment can be a path to independence, self-confidence, and financial stability. Family-run small businesses are uniquely positioned to provide valuable employment opportunities tailored to the skills and needs of people with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive community.

Family-run businesses often operate with a strong sense of community and a commitment to personalized service. This environment can be highly adaptable, making it ideal for individuals with disabilities. Small businesses can offer flexible hours, individualized training, and roles that match specific strengths and interests, which may not be feasible in larger corporate environments. Employees in these settings often become part of a close-knit team, experiencing support and understanding that can be harder to find in larger workplaces.

How Small Businesses Can Support Employees with Disabilities

To maximize success, family-run businesses can adopt specific strategies to support employees with disabilities. This may include:

- 1. Customized Job Roles:** Tailoring responsibilities to the employee's abilities and strengths, such as data entry for individuals who prefer structured tasks or customer-facing roles for those with strong social skills.
- 2. Training and Mentorship:** Family businesses can provide one-on-one mentorship, helping employees learn at their own pace and offering constructive feedback in a supportive environment.
- 3. Accommodations:** Simple adjustments, like accessible entrances or modified workstations, can significantly enhance job satisfaction and performance.
- 4. Focus on Soft Skills:** Working in a family-run business offers a chance to develop social and interpersonal skills, critical in almost any job. Employees learn how to interact with customers and co-workers, preparing them for various career paths in the future.





When Mark and Kim decided to make the decision to by a candy shop, it was with the idea Chelsey would always have a job doing what she loves. Chelsey Johnston is well-known in her hometown community. She is an individual that loves to take charge and lead. Once Chelsey graduated from high school, Mark and Kim started to take steps to help Chelsey become a small business owner. Chelsey, along with her family, owns **Chelsey's Kandy Shop**, a sweet treat concession business and candy shop in Shelbyville, Illinois. Chelsey specializes in caramel apples and homemade candy. Chelsey is a pillar in her community and a great example of successful entrepreneurship.



Tucker Family Concessions LLC is family-owned and operated concession business. The Tucker Family opened their food concession business in 2023. Jamie and Tom Tucker, owners, created this business as a way for their son's Tommy and Teddy, to find gainful employment in their community. Tommy and Teddy, both on the autism spectrum, needed a more personized approach to employment. So Tom and Jamie found a way to provide that. Tucker Family Concessions can be found around Central Illinois serving delicious smash burgers and homemade ribbon fries.

Service Provider of the Month

Picket Fence Foundation

“Picket Fence Foundation in Chillicothe, IL, was founded in 2021 by Jim and Laura Sniff. Their son, Jimmy, has Autism. The Sniffs discovered a troubling lack of services and work programs for people like Jimmy. So they set out to bring opportunities to this community on their farm through their flagship nonprofit, Blue Ridge Community Farm, and now Picket Fence Foundation. This registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization was previously Picket Fence Floral and Garden Center, a full-service gift shop, garden center, greenhouse, and floral design studio. With such a wide variety of products and services available under one roof, Picket Fence quickly became a strong platform of opportunities for adults with a wide variety of skills and interests to find meaningful work. Now, Picket Fence Foundation provides the same quality products and services with inclusion at its core.

Our team consists of greenhouse specialists, designers, retail associates, job coaches, and volunteers who bring the joy of serving our community to work with them every single day. We hope you will come out and see us at work any time! Take a look around our Gift Shop, which is home to our Ability Marketplace, stocked with products made by individuals with disabilities. Our Garden Center is stocked with everything you need to design and build the landscape of your dreams. Check out the floral arrangements from our Design Studio and place an order for yourself or someone you love. Or take a stroll through our Retail Greenhouse and pick out your favorite plants to take home with you. Every purchase you make helps us bring training and employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities.”



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TOP TEN

- 1** Build-in time to recognize, understand, and use the youth perspective on your meeting agendas.
- 2** Be open to Youths' ideas and feedback even if it is difficult to hear.
- 3** Give youth tangible things to work on.
- 4** Take a young person at their word.
- 5** Respect boundaries set by young folks.
- 6** Take time to teach youth the system(s) including providing lists of typical acronyms and lingo.
- 7** Youth are Experts on Their Own Experiences.
- 8** Take the time to learn about what the Young Folks who are being invited into teams/spaces with adults are passionate about.
- 9** Listen to and honor accommodation requests.
- 10** Social interactions and discussions are important.

Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI) with NTACT-C

Check out this great youth engagement infographic from NTACT. Want to read more? Click here:

<https://transitionta.org/topics/youth-engagement/>

Charting the Life Course Video, click here!

<https://youtu.be/jAUqCnJ3zmc>



LifeCourse Nexus
Training and Technical Assistance Center

Have you explored the Charting the Life Course Nexus? The program, out of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development - UCEDD, offers education, tools, and resources targeted at Person-Centered Planning and Community Integration. It is an excellent resource for the transition from school to community! Family Matters PTIC will be providing more on CTLC in the Spring of 2025.

Check out the CTLC tools here:

<https://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/person-centered/>

Transition Information to Know



Understanding PUNS

Every state has a Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver and here in Illinois, you can get that waiver by enrolling on the PUNS. PUNS stands for “Prioritization for Urgency of Need for Services”. is a statewide database that records information about individuals with developmental disabilities who are planning for or seeking services. The State uses the data to select individuals for services as funding becomes available, to develop proposals and materials for budgeting, and to plan for future needs. When you enroll your child, Illinois places your child’s name on a priority list for various support services.

To learn more watch this [video](#) for The Arc of Illinois

Transition Service Providers:

(Click on the logos to get to the websites)

Social Security Administration



SSA provides government benefits to eligible individuals including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Search the website for “disability benefits”. Search “ticket to work” to learn about working while receiving benefits.

Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living



CILs exist to help people with disabilities achieve maximum independence in work, school, housing and every other part of life. They offer peer support, information and referral, individual and systems advocacy, independent living skills training, and transition support to bridge high school to college and/or work.



Illinois Department of Employment Services

IDES administers employment services in Illinois. Search “Employment First” on the website to learn how Illinois law promotes community-based, integrated employment as the first option for employment-related services for individuals with disabilities.

Community Residential Services Authority



CRSA provides technical assistance to families, service providers, educators and other professionals to help plan for and implement appropriate, effective services for children with severe emotional disturbances and behavior disorders in Illinois. This includes youth in high school.

Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services – DRS



DRS assists people with disabilities in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities. They provide personal attendants through their Home Services Program.



Illinois Department of Human Services

Independent Service Coordination (ISC) /Pre-Admission Screening (PAS)

PAS agencies conduct and arrange for assessment of individuals with developmental disabilities who are in need of active treatment. ISCs assist in setting up services and registering individuals for the PUNS database of persons in need of services and funding.

The Autism Program of Illinois



The Autism Program of Illinois serves and supports persons with autism spectrum disorder and their families through a coordinated network of providers, parents, and university programs. They provide evidence-based services for individuals including youth of transition age. They connect youth through programs such as virtual support groups and social skills groups.



UIC-SCC partners with families and children and youth (to age 18) with special healthcare needs. Care coordinators work with families to put together a transition plan that identifies clear goals for adulthood and the strategies, services and resources necessary to achieve them.

Illinois Assistive Technology Project



IATP provides free information and assistance on assistive technology and other related disability topics. They can provide assistive technology evaluations and devices, including those to support community living, education, and employment. IATP provides WIPA (Work Incentives Planning and Assistance) services for 67 counties of Illinois. This program helps those receiving SSI/SSDI to make informed choices about employment.

The Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission protects the rights and promotes the welfare of persons with disabilities. They provide legal representation, investigate rights violations, and provide state guardianship for persons with disabilities in Illinois.



They help families navigate special education issues and provide information on guardianship and alternatives to guardianship including Supported Decision Making.

RAISE is a project of SPAN, the Parent Training and Information Center of New Jersey. It is funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and assists youth and young adults with disabilities and their families. RAISE helps families: better understand vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs; communicate more effectively with transition and rehabilitation personnel; understand the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act related to employment, supported employment, and independent living; and develop an individualized plan for employment.



SELF-ADVOCACY ONLINE

An online resource for learning about self-advocacy, viewing stories from self-advocates, and finding self-advocacy groups.



Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) is a national self-advocacy organization. They are a national board of regional representatives and members from every state in the US. SABE's mission is to ensure that people with disabilities are treated as equals and that they are given the same decisions, choices, rights, responsibilities, and chances to speak up to empower themselves; opportunities to make new friends, and to learn from their mistakes.

The Alliance is a statewide network of self-advocates, advocacy groups and allies in Illinois. They work together to make life better in communities and services better for people with disabilities in Illinois. They want advocates and allies from around the state to speak together with one loud voice. They say "we can do more when we all work together!"



National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making

EVERYONE has the Right To Make Choices

A resource for information on each state's law related to Supported Decision Making as an alternative to adult guardianship. In Illinois, the Supported Decision-Making Agreement Act authorized the creation of supported decision making agreements and allows a supporter to assist a principal in accessing, collecting, or obtaining information that is relevant to a decision authorized under the supported decision making agreement. It provides that all adults are presumed to be capable of managing their affairs and to have capacity unless otherwise determined by a court.



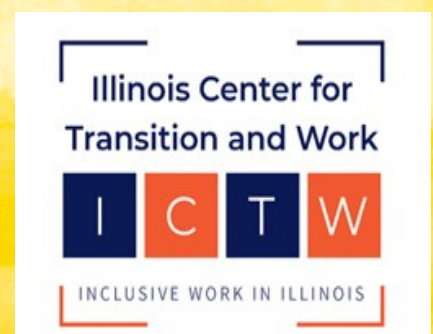
NTACT provides assistance and information to all stakeholders who can help students and youth with disabilities experience increased enrollment in postsecondary education, graduation, credential attainment, competitive integrated employment and community engagement.



National Technical
Assistance Center
on Transition

On the Students and Young Adults tab of the PACER website, there is information to help youth develop self-advocacy skills and gain a better understanding of how to more effectively participate to increase success in the classroom, at home, and in the community. By understanding a disability and its impact on everyday life, youth have a better chance of improving their life and accessing the systems of care that serves them

Since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, policies and practices impacting transition from school to work have evolved and affected the services provided to students with significant disabilities and traditionally underserved populations. To address these changes, the Illinois Center for Transition and Work provides support to special educators, related services personnel, and administrators by providing state-wide training and technical assistance focused on preparing students with significant disabilities for the transition from high school to employment with the goal of improving employment outcomes. They also provide resources that benefit youth and parents.





Equip for Equality

Advancing the Human & Civil Rights of People with Disabilities in Illinois

Equip for Equality's Transition Project provides free legal services that includes legal advice on transition services, attendance at IEP meetings, assistance with negotiation or mediation, assistance to prevent premature graduation, and special education trainings. This project will help with developing a transition plan for students with disabilities ages 14 1/2 to 22 and getting the school to conduct age-appropriate transition assessments.

Ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them you will reach your destiny.

Carl Schutz

Union Army general and American Statesman



FMPTIC provides individual support to students with disabilities and their parents related to educational services and provides training on transition-related topics. Staff work with youth on self-advocacy skills and teach them about their special education rights and responsibilities.

Please let us know of other organizations that serve youth statewide or nationally to add to this list.

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