

Comprehensive Syllabus

Fall 2011

How to Partner with Families of Middle and High School Students with Disabilities to Achieve Success
Online Course

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to equip educators with the knowledge and skills required to develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships with families of middle and high school students with disabilities, in order to assist students to successfully transition to adult life. When we speak of achieving “success,” we encompass not only the end goal of transition for students with disabilities, which is to prepare them for further education, employment and independent living, but also the process goal of creating optimal conditions of communication and trust so that professionals and families can work together effectively. This course will focus on models of partnership, the requirements of the law, research findings, effective communication, and understanding and working with families, including issues specific to adolescence, family systems, and cultural competence. As a final project, course participants will create their own plan for family-professional partnerships.

TEXTS:

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES:

Knowledge: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more cognizant of:
Models of partnership between schools and parents including Epstein’ six types of parent involvement
Requirements of the law relating to IDEA and Elementary and Secondary Education Act(NCLB)
Grief cycle and how it relates to parental concerns
Research findings related to parent involvement in education and outcomes for students
Issues specific to adolescence, family systems, and cultural competence
Transition planning for students with special needs
Role of community partners in relationship to schools

Skill: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become better able to:
Effectively communicate with families regarding education of their child
Partner with parents of students with special needs in the IEP process
Collaborate with the student and family on transition planning

Increase parent involvement in their child's education
 Map community resources which can support educational goals

Caring: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more competent in your ability to:

Discuss student challenges with families
 Foster resilience and motivation to learn for students with special needs
 Identify and respond to adolescent concerns which interfere with learning

Ethical: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more competent in your ability to:

Establish professional boundaries with students and families
 Respect cultural differences
 Maintain transparency around IEP compliance

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There will be a forum discussion each week, based on the week's course materials. In order to participate in the forum, participants should read and then post answers to 2 of each week's Guiding Questions in "This Week's Forum." Answers must be thorough and reflect engagement with course materials. *Guiding Questions often have multiple parts, so please read and respond carefully.* The purpose of the forum is not only to answer the Guiding Questions but to respond to others' ideas. Comments need not be limited to addressing the Guiding Questions. Participants should read what others have written and make relevant and well thought-out comments which move the discussion forward. Thoughtful questions are as welcome as thoughtful answers. Thus, weekly forums will provide both an opportunity for class participants to post their own reflections on the week's course materials AND to respond to the thoughts of other class members. All new topics start on a Wednesday or Thursday (depending on class section); all comments should be posted by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday or Wednesday before the start of the following week's topic. Required reading is supplemented by links to additional articles and websites, audio clips from experienced teachers and short videos.

This course requires three additional written assignments, assigned on Weeks 3, 7, and 11, and due on Weeks 7, 9, and 13. Assignment One-Parent Interview ; Assignment Two -Role of Fathers in Student's Education; Assignment Three- Strategies to Avoid Communication Disasters

Course participants will create a practical, stepwise, and comprehensive written plan for family-professional partnership with families who have middle or high school children with disabilities, for use in their own school, informed by what they have learned about (a) Joyce Epstein's Six Types of Involvement, (b) the requirements of the law, (c) family systems and issues in adolescence, (d) making community connections, (e) cultural competence, and (f) trust and effective communication. Plans should map out stepwise implementation and include means for sharing with school colleagues what course participants have learned. Because each educator serves different numbers and profiles of students in different types of school and classroom settings, each plan will be specific and unique. However, participants are encouraged to share ideas and information with other course participants while developing the project. Course participants who work at the same school are encouraged to work together to create group projects. Participants should contact the instructor by phone or e-mail during Week 8 to give a brief oral or written update on plans for the final project. Final projects are due by midnight the day of Week 14 and should be submitted by posting on the course website in the Week 14 Forum. Work that is missed may be submitted the following week after contacting instructor by e-mail.

EVALUATION OR GRADING POLICY:

A	B+	B	C
Demonstrating maximal engagement with course materials, asking questions and offering comments which give evidence of extremely substantive personal reflection and insight into coursework. Extremely meaningful contributions to class discussion.	Demonstrating very considerable engagement with course materials, asking questions and offering comments which give evidence of substantive personal reflection and insight into coursework. Quite meaningful contributions to class discussion.	Demonstrating moderate engagement with course materials, asking questions and offering comments which give evidence of moderate personal reflection and insight into coursework. Moderately meaningful contributions to class discussion.	Demonstrating minimal engagement with course materials, asking questions and offering comments which give evidence of minimal personal reflection and insight into coursework. Minimally meaningful contributions to class discussion.

Forum responses (13 forums) - 35%

Written assignments -15%

Final project-50

COURSE CONTENT / TOPICAL OUTLINE**How to Partner with Families of Middle and High School Students with Disabilities to Achieve Success****Week One: Introduction**

In this session, participants will reflect on the importance and meaning of partnership with families who have students with disabilities. After completing this week's assignments, participants will know the seven principles of effective partnerships and will explore how these principles may be applied in their work.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp. 138-156) N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Week Two: Why Partner? – What the Law Says

In this session, course participants will learn the requirements of IDEA 2004 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) pertaining to parent and student involvement. Participants will be able to explain how these requirements inform their work with families.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp.113-134) N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. *No Child Left Behind Action Brief: Parental Involvement* (2004)

Week Three: Why Partner? – What Research Says

In this session, course participants will become familiar with research on family-professional partnerships at the middle and high school level, learn about evidence-based practices, and consider how research can inform their own professional practices.

Patrikakow, E (2004). *Adolescence: Are Parents Relevant to Students High School and Post Secondary Achievement?* (Family Involvement Research Digest). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project

Boufard, S. and Stephen, N., (2007) *Promoting Family Involvement?* (Family Involvement Research Digest). MA: Harvard Family Research Project

Week Four: A Framework for Family-Professional Partnerships

In this session, course participants will learn about the Six Types of Parent Involvement and Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) model developed by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at the National Network of Partnership Schools and the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. Participants will review Epstein's framework in the light of their own experience and analyze how it could be used to structure effective partnerships in their schools.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp.293-294) NN.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Epstein, J. et al. (2002) *Six Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful partnership in School, Family and Community Partnerships* (2nd ed.) CA: Corcoran Press

Epstein, J. et al. (2002) *Six Types of Involvement : Action Team for Partnership in School, Family and Community Partnerships* (2nd ed.) CA: Corcoran Press

Week Five: Understanding Families, Part One

In this session, course participants will learn about family characteristics and challenges which can influence each family's experience of disability.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp.4-25) N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Hammer, E., (1996) *Anticipatory Guidance for Parents of Children with Disabilities* (workshop), Infant Mental Health Advisory Center: Baylor University

Week Six: Cultural Competence

In this session, course participants will learn to understand the effect of culture on professional and family attitudes and perspectives and will evaluate their own cultural practices. Participants will learn evidence-based practices for promoting partnerships with students and families from diverse cultural backgrounds and will learn a four-step process of cultural reciprocity.

Kalyanpur, M. and Harry B.,(1999) Chapter 2 in *Culture and Special Education* : Paul H. Brooks

Southwest Education Development Laboratory. (2000) *Family and Community Involvement: Reaching Out to Diverse Populations* (pp 1-26) Texas: SEDL

Leake, D., and Black, R. (2005) *Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Implications for Transition Personnel* Minnesota: National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Week Seven: Understanding Families, Part Two

In this session, course participants will understand families as systems with varied levels of cohesion and adaptability. Participants will understand the impact of disability on family functions and consider how this affects family-professional partnerships.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp. 26-69). N.J. Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Week Eight: Issues in Adolescence – Partnering for Life Success

In this session, course participants will learn about six success attributes for students with disabilities and recognize how to foster resilience and motivation to learn. Participants will consider how to encourage middle and high school students and their families to partner for success. **Reminder:** Participants should contact the instructor by phone or electronic means during this week to give a brief oral or written update on plans for the final project.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp. 81-95). N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Agosta, J. (2006) *Youth with Disabilities Just Want to Grow Up*. Impact 2 (19) University of Minnesota

Week Nine: Issues in Adolescence – Partnering for Life Success, Part Two

In this session, participants will learn specific strategies for partnering with families in order to foster student self determination, including person-centered planning, learning styles analysis, and the use of the Summary of Performance as a tool for advancing student self-knowledge.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (p.243). N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Callicott, K.J., (2003) Culturally Sensitive Collaboration within Person Centered Planning *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities* 1(18)

Week Ten: Communication & Trust

In this session, participants will explore the role of trust as the keystone in family-professional partnerships, considering issues at the individual and building level. Participants will detail strategies for fostering open communication.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp 159-180, 259-274). N.J.: Pearson **Merrill Prentice Hall**

Week Eleven: Communication & Collaboration

In this session, participants will learn specific methods for effective, positive communication and conflict resolution, and increase their repertoire of communication strategies.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp 85-208). N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Windle, R. and Warren S. (1999) *Collaborative Problem Solving: Dispute and Resolution in Special Education*. National Center for Dispute Resolution in Special Education

Week Twelve: Partnering with the Community

In this session, course participants will further explore the benefits of school-community collaboration in middle and high school. Participants will learn about asset mapping, a tool which can be used to identify school, family, and community needs and resources and will explore the role of educators in assisting families to meet their basic needs.

Crane, K. (2005) *Community Resource Mapping*: National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Ferguson, Chris (2005) *Developing a Collaborative Team Approach to Support Family and Community Connections with Schools*: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

Week Thirteen: Partners in Decision-Making

In this session, course participants will learn how families can be involved as decision-making partners by examining the role of School Councils and Special Education Parent Advisory Councils in Massachusetts.

Vohs, Janet. (2007) *School Councils :Parents as Partners in Decision Making* Parent's Place Bulletin 9(1) Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center

Green, A. (2007) *New Statewide Parent Survey, Newline .28(1)* Federation for Children with Special Needs : Massachusetts

Week Fourteen: Learning at Home In this session, course participants will learn how to partner with families around curriculum-related activities and planning that takes place at home. Participants will make connections between learning at home and in school, and strategize about partnering with families in transition assessment. Final Projects are due today.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull R., Erwin, E., & Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership & Trust* (5th ed.) (pp278-281). N.J.: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Epstein, J. et al. (2002) *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork*, in *School, Family and Community Partnerships*. (2nd ed.) (Pp.300-301) CA: Corcoran Press

Week 15 : teleconference (optional)

Discussion of final projects