

## **Regional Collaborative Networks Community Partners Meetings Information for RCN Leadership Teams**

Each RCN is scheduled to have at least two Community Partners meetings during the 2009/2010 school year. The following information is provided to assist the RCN Leadership Teams in developing focus areas and agendas for those meetings. Given that START has identified Transition to Adulthood and Parent Collaboration and Involvement as two primary priorities in the coming year, these two areas will be the focus for the Community Partners Meetings. We have established two goals, one in each area for the upcoming year and then have offered ideas for additional outcomes based on the unique needs of the RCN.

### **Transition Focus**

One of the Community Partners meetings during the 2009/2010 AY must focus on Transition to Adulthood. As START works collaboratively with the MDE OSE-EIS Transition grant staff, we initially need information about current practices across the state with respect to transition so we can determine what supports are missing or need to be improved. As such, your first Transition meeting should focus on fact finding. START will provide a format for gathering data re: the services that are currently available in your area for students with ASD that are transitioning to adulthood (18-26). Suggestions for participants in the meeting might include school personnel (i.e. transition coordinators, post-high teaching staff, etc.), supported employment agencies, local businesses, independent and semi-independent living agencies, community mental health reps, etc. that support students with ASD in their transition to adulthood.

During the '10-11 RCN grant year, we will move to developing innovative plans to address the needs of transition age students with ASD.

Should the RCN wish to continue to address transition in the subsequent Community Partners Meetings during this grant year, the following is provided as examples of related activities. From these activities, the RCN can establish sub-teams to gather information and develop implementation strategies for improving transition services in the region. Reps from these sub-teams can then report regularly to the RCN Leadership Team.

1. Invite local Parks and Recreation directors to determine what kinds of recreational services are available to students with ASD and how to expand and develop additional services.

2. Invite local medical, dental, hair care facilities, etc. and provide them with information about ASD. This will assist parents when taking their children to get their hair cut, going to the dentist, doctor, etc.
3. Invite first responders and assist them with better understanding of the students with ASD within your RCN. Also for ongoing support and communication with the first responders
4. Invite PTO leadership to an RCN meeting. Assist the parents of the typically developing students to better understand the needs of students with ASD. This might also be helpful if the RCN is trying to develop peer to peer support programs in their area.
5. Invite staff from local libraries, movie theaters, roller skating rinks, etc to assist with their understanding of ASD.

### **Parent Collaboration and Involvement**

Based on feedback from parent agencies as well as the MDE OSE-EIS, START is developing an online resource center for professionals, families, and community partners. The resource site will include a wide range of content information about ASD. Additionally, the site will include a local service provider database that includes services and resources available such as dentists, doctors, hair stylists, therapist, etc. in regions across the state. As such, we need the RCN to work with local parents and parent agencies to identify these services and resources in their particular region. START will provide a survey for gathering this information that the RCN Leadership Team may provide to parents and parent organizations. One of the Community Partners Meetings could be used to invite parents and parent organization representatives to establish a workgroup to accomplish this task and then report to the RCN.

In addition to this goal, each RCN may decide to address additional family needs in their region. The following are ideas that may be considered:

1. Resource Fair: The RCN could develop a day-long fair to highlight resources and services available in the region.
2. PS START (Parents Supporting START): The RCN could develop a sub-group of the RCN that includes parents and parent support group representatives to specifically address issues related to parent needs in the region. Additionally, work that the RCN does not have the time or staff to get done in a reasonable time could be delegated to this group.
3. Peer to Peer Support for Community Activities: The RCN may work to develop a peer network for students with ASD who would be willing to participate in after-school, extra-curricular, and community activities as a peer supporter.