



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



INFORMING, EDUCATING, EMPOWERING FAMILIES
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WIOA Student & Family Support Project Massachusetts

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Who we are



The LINK Center connects families and individuals with disabilities who are transition age (14-26) to information, supports and services to achieve their future vision.

The Parent Training and Information Center is a project of the Federation. It provides free information, support, technical assistance and affordable workshops to families who have children with disabilities and the professionals who work with them.





WIOA Student and Family Support Project

- Project overview
- Groundwork
- Process details
- Project goals
- LINK Center projects





WIOA Student & Family Support Project

Collaboration between FCSN and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)

- ✓ FCSN is a contracted vendor to MRC
- ✓ Provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities ages 16-22 and their families
- ✓ Transition Family Support Specialists
 - Statewide reach
 - Act as liaisons to MRC
 - Support students and families



Groundwork

1. Built relationship with MRC over several years
2. Application to RSA for LINK Center funding
3. After establishment of LINK Center proposed a collaboration around transition services with MRC
4. MRC appointed senior manager to FCSN advisory committee for the LINK Center
5. Exposed MRC to the need for family engagement
6. Responded to RFR around family engagement



Established Relationship with MRC

- Transition Works Initiative - 2008-2013
 - Engaged families and youth in transition focused activities with focus on Boston, Springfield and Worcester
- A Family Guide to Transition Services in Massachusetts
 - Co-wrote and disseminate family-friendly booklet
- Planning a Life-Two Day Transition Conference
 - MRC staff present on employment/MRC resources





Secured RSA Funding

LINK Center Goals under RSA Grant

- Educate youth and families about WIOA statewide
- Assist youth and families to better understand options:
 - Employment, postsecondary education and independent living
 - Provide support for transition and employment services through individual consult via telephone and email
- Increase capacity of individuals with disabilities to exit educational services to successful outcomes
- Expand and strengthen collaborative relationships with state, regional and community agencies and organizations



Exposed MRC to Importance of Family Engagement

- MRC commissioner appointed a senior manager to FCSN advisory committee for the LINK Center
 - Families discussed needs and concerns
 - Professionals in the field presented best practices, needs, and resources
- Invited MRC counselors to present at Planning a Life conference (3 yearly, statewide)
 - Engaged with families and responded to questions



Partnership with MRC

Responded to RFR proposing to provide services to MRC counselors, students and families, pre-employment transition services vendors, community partners, and schools.

- Improve MRC's understanding of working with families and schools through trainings and technical assistance.
- Improve family and student understanding of adult eligibility services and the MRC process and connect them with resources.
- Provide training regarding transition to MRC vendors, community partners, and schools.



Three Main Goals

1. Partnership with MRC area offices to offer transition workshops for MRC counselors, families, and professionals.
2. Provide transition resources through website, webinars, workshops, and technical assistance.
3. Referral based individualized transition support for vocational rehabilitation eligible students and families.



Measureable Goals

- 250 individualized meetings with students and families
- 1 workshop for every MRC area office (24) per year
- 1 workshop for each area office community per year (24)
- Workshops for pre-ETS vendors
- Impact 2500 families, students, and professionals statewide per year
- Quarterly Project Advisory Meetings



Outreach and Resources

- Transition Family Support Specialists
- Outreach team (Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole)
- LINK Center website
- Call center
- Workshops
- Webinars
- TIPS brochures





Individualized Transition Support

- One-time meeting
- Must be MRC eligible consumer
- Referrals from MRC





LINK Center Projects

- Planning a Life Conference – 2 day transition planning conference (3 x per year)
- TIPS brochures – partnership with MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Becoming a Leader: Youth Leadership Forum at Visions of Community Conference
- Youth Advisory Board and Facebook group
- WIOA Project Advisory Board
- A Family Guide to Transition Services in Mass
- Transition Listserv



Contact Information

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