



POUDRE SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Integrated
Services**

PSD Transitions Newsletter:

*serving elementary school through
post-high school students*

JANUARY 2017

Hi! Let's talk Transition!

This is Poudre School District's first newsletter to address TRANSITION to adulthood. We hope that it will be a source of information and inspiration for students, family members and teachers. The PSD Transition Team is planning to have each newsletter center around a specific topic – such as Self-Advocacy for students, Recreation opportunities available in our community, PSD Transition Programs and Adult Agencies, to name a few.

We will include a calendar of upcoming events such as, the **Transition Series**, which are informational and provide families an opportunity to get firsthand information on specific topics, as well as meet other families, share experiences, and learn about community resources. We will also include information about meetings and training opportunities for young adults and family members sponsored by other agencies. Be watching for the **Transition Basics Workshops** coming in February and March of 2017. Flyers about these events will be sent via school messenger in the next few weeks! The newsletters will also spotlight students and their accomplishments as well as following up with young adults who have transitioned to adulthood and are working and living in the community.

We recognize that Transition can be a stressful time in the lives of our students and families. Sometimes it is difficult to imagine life without the routine of school! We hope this newsletter will provide information that will help students plan for a positive future. We are collaborating with agencies and organizations in and around Fort Collins to gather information that will help students and families set goals, make decisions and solve problems that arise during the journey to adulthood. Regardless of the level of need each student's disability presents, families need to know they are not alone and that the community of Fort Collins has a wide variety of resources to support students as they make their way along the journey of transitioning to adulthood.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and we welcome your ideas for future editions!

Romie Tobin, PSD Transition Coordinator

PSD Transition Services

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Website

**The Arc of Larimer County's
5th Annual Film Festival**

Dispel stereotypes with us as we feature short films that ReFrame Disability

Tickets Go On Sale February 1st at the CSU Campus Box Office
March 28, 6-8 p.m. • Lory Student Center, CSU

For more information, visit thearcoflarimercounty.org/film

Use Your IEP Meetings to Learn How to Advocate for Yourself

Self-advocacy is a key step in becoming an adult. It means looking out for yourself, telling people what you need, and knowing how to take responsibility. No one is born knowing these skills. Everyone has to learn them. Ready to begin learning? Here is some great information from teens, for teens, that can start you on your way:

WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?

Self-advocacy means taking the responsibility for telling people what you want and need in a straightforward way. It is knowing how to:

- speak up for yourself
- describe your strengths, disability, needs, and wishes
- take responsibility for yourself • find out about your rights
- obtain help or know who to ask if you have a question

WHERE CAN I PRACTICE SELF-ADVOCACY?

A great place to practice self-advocacy is in your Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. You can learn ways to:

- explain your disability to others
- set goals for yourself
- build teamwork skills
- share with teachers what works and does not work for you
- ask for accommodations
- accept help from others
- lead all or part of the IEP meeting



SERVICES

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Use Your IEP Meetings to Learn How to Advocate for Yourself (continued)

BUT I DON'T LIKE GOING TO THESE MEETINGS!

Understandable, but did you know there are still many ways you can be involved and learn self-advocacy skills? Which of these ideas might work for you?

- Come for just a few minutes, instead of attending the whole meeting.
- Write down your ideas, questions, and concerns before the meeting.
- Practice or role-play ahead of time what you want to say in the meeting.
- Introduce yourself.
- Tell team members about your interests, strengths, and desires for the future.
- Explain to the team what it is like to have your disability.
- Help your special education teacher write the agenda.
- Help the team develop IEP goal areas.
- Ask for explanations if you do not understand something.
- At the end of the meeting, review what the team decided.
- If you choose not to attend the meeting, share your input with your parent(s) or special education teacher before the meeting and review the meeting's events afterward.

BE PREPARED!

Most people are more comfortable at meetings if they have had some time to think about what they want to say. Before your IEP meeting, you could think about these questions:

- What do I want to learn or work on this year?
- What are my special concerns for the school year?
- How do I learn the best?
- What do I need to be successful?
- What would make learning easier for me?
- What positive information about myself can I share at the meeting?

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT MY ATTENDING IEP MEETINGS?

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that you must automatically be invited to all of your IEP meetings once you are 16. (You don't have to go, but it's a good idea. After all, no one knows you better than you.) In Utah, transition services begin no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16 (such as in an IEP meeting conducted when the student is 15 years old.) You should be invited then and whenever the IEP team is talking about transition services. You may want to discuss attending your IEP meeting with your parents. Transition is about planning for your future. You will look at your skills in three areas:

- employment
- postsecondary education and training
- independent living, if appropriate (includes recreation and leisure as well as community participation)

All this planning and self-advocacy will serve you well. When you turn 18, you will be considered an adult—and will make lots of decisions on your own unless you have a legal guardian. You will be signing your own IEP. This is why it is a great idea to practice self-advocacy as much as possible before turning 18. Learning good self-advocacy skills is important. It will help you while you are in school—and when you become an adult. Knowing and exercising your rights are important steps in becoming a strong self-advocate.

This article comes from the Utah Parent Center Website and is being shared with their permission.

Utah Parent Center

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Activities for Helping Students Develop Self-Advocacy

It is never too early to begin encouraging a student's self-advocacy skills! The following lists are suggestions, by grade level, of activities that encourage the development of self-advocacy skills.

Grades K-5

- Help student create a goal for themselves.
- Introduce the concept of work and careers into everyday activities.
- Provide opportunities for student to make choices (what to wear, what to eat at a restaurant, etc.)
- Make your student a productive part of the household, introduce chores and an allowance
- Encourage choice making and independence
- Explore community advocacy organizations that are available.

Grades 6-8

- Begin Career Exploration, watch movies, read books, go to work with adults, etc.
- Develop independent living skills; continue to do chores at home.
- Explore recreation and leisure interests.
- Have student participate in their IEP meeting
- Have student identify 2 people at school/in their life they can go to for advice/help/with questions

Grades 9-10

- ask student to share ideas for possible accommodations/modifications that would be helpful in the classroom

- Discuss vocational options and expectations for employers
- make a phone call to set up an appointment
- create school schedule with counselor
- discuss transportation options and plan for community access; driving, bus training, Dial a Ride.
- Have student participate in their IEP meeting

Grades 11-12

- Have the student present their "Self-Directed IEP" at the start of their IEP meeting (*multiple formats/assistive technology available*)
- Revisit plan of study and graduation date
- Begin resume and collect letters of recommendation
- Obtain Colorado State ID card or Driver's License
- Be able to communicate their disability and necessary accommodations
- Register to vote

Post School

- Be in close contact with adult service agencies
- Student schedule appointments
- Student arrange recreation/leisure activities in the community with friends (include cost, transportation, time)

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Success Stories



I am a graduate of Fort Collins High School. I attended the Cooper Home Learning-4-Living Program after high school and then participated in the Project SEARCH Program. I participated in two internships during my time at Project SEARCH and was hired as a dietary aide at New Mercer Commons. I got married this summer and my husband and I live in our own home.

-Brittany



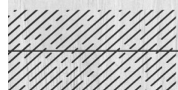
School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) staff, when presenting to high school classes, emphasizes to students that they can apply for services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) more than once to gain support for employment and/or education. Jean Greuel, SWAP Coordinator has worked with a young man over the past five years, Brian, who has done just that. Brian has gained support from SWAP and DVR staff with not only obtaining and keeping jobs but also support for education. Brian has been successfully working the past two years at Woodward, Inc in the manufacturing realm and has completed two quarters of machining coursework at FRCC in Longmont. Brian works a minimum of 40 hours per week (often working OT) and will be exploring completing his third and final quarter in machining. DVR provided financial assistance to help Brian pay for his machining coursework. Though SWAP and DVR can be commended for the support they have provided Brian – it is Brian that needs to be commended above anyone else for his persistence in the face of disappointments, his hard work – often working two jobs, and for believing in himself and not giving up. Brian has been an inspiration and is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when one sets a goal and does not give up. **KUDOS to Brian!!!!**



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Self-Advocacy and People First

This was written by Maggie Wesley, Adult Advocacy Specialist and People First Advisor

Many times, when people hear the term “self-advocacy,” the first thought that comes to mind is: “What is self-advocacy?” The answer is more straight-forward than you might think, as self-advocacy is essentially exactly what it sounds like, advocating for yourself. But what does it mean to advocate? It means to speak up and speak out. So, in turn, self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself, and speaking up about what’s important to you as a person. Self-advocacy is making independent decisions about one’s life, and is also about taking responsibility and ownership of one’s choices and goals.

For individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, self-advocacy is an incredible tool that allows an individual to make their voice heard. Self-advocacy is a mixture between speaking in public venues to public officials (like a city council meeting or hearing at the State legislature) to advocate for systems changes like employment resources for people with disabilities, and speaking to your friends and family members about how you want your life to look and what steps you can take to achieve that vision. It is also knowing when to ask for help and recognizing and utilizing the support around you. Self-advocacy is about communicating your own goals and needs along with speaking up in favor of supports and services that can help meet those needs and turn goals into achievements.

So how do you “learn” how to self-advocate? Self-advocacy is learned through day to day life experiences, through the classroom or the workplace, at home, and through mentors, and even peers. One great place for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to learn and practice self-advocacy is through People First.

People First of Larimer County is a self-directed community focused on self-advocacy for adults who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. The members of People First advocate for community access, including access to transportation and employment, and participate in community outreach through presentations and testifying at the City Council and State Legislature. The group meets monthly, the last Friday of the month, at the Senior Center prior to the Adaptive Recreation Opportunities (“ARO”) dances. The leadership team (composed of People First officers and two advisors, but open to all group members) meets monthly as well, on the first Monday of every month.

The leadership team plans the agenda for each group meeting, which might include topics like safety, independent living, health, recreation, employment, transportation, and leadership skills. The group meetings are also a chance to present other opportunities to participate in other self-advocacy events like testifying at the Fort Collins City Council in favor of Sunday bus service, or making a trip to Colorado Springs for the State of Colorado Division for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Council’s first annual summit on self-advocacy to the broader group.

People First has achieved a great deal over the past year, and been an active voice in the Larimer County community. People First has testified before the Fort Collins City Council in support of ADA accessible bus stops and Sunday bus service and before the Colorado State Legislature in support of the Employment First Bill. The group also organized a Voter Registration and Information Drive with the League of Women Voters, participated in a voter accessibility initiative with the annual Coleman Conference through the University of Colorado, and facilitated a transportation panel at the State of Colorado DIDD Self-Advocacy Summit. And those are just some of People First’s recent accomplishments!

Self-Advocacy and People First

A great way to understand what self-advocacy is and see it in action, is to meet some of the People First members:

Julian Wang is President of People First of Larimer County, Treasurer for the state-wide self-advocacy organization, Speaking for Ourselves, employed at the Home Depot, and attends classes at Front Range Community College. Julian is very involved in the community as a board member for the Arc of Larimer County, a member of the advisory council for the State on the Employment First Bill that passed this past year, and an active member at Timberline Church. When asked why self-advocacy is important to him, Julian said, "Because it [self-advocacy] is a lifestyle that the world needs. My friends and family depend on it, and it's how we can make the country great."



Kendra Kettler is Secretary of People First of Larimer County. Kendra is also very active in the community, working at First Bank and volunteering regularly with Thrift Rite and The Arc of Larimer County. Kendra lives independently, uses public transportation to get around town, and likes to hang out with her friends and family. When asked why self-advocacy is important to her, Kendra said, "Because it's good to know what you want and need in life."

Self-advocacy is an important skill that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities can use in making choices, setting goals, and becoming involved in the community. People First is a great organization that teaches and promotes self-advocacy, and allows those with intellectual and developmental disabilities to practice self-advocacy in a peer setting while getting involved in the greater Larimer County community. If you're curious and want to learn more, come to the next People First meeting and check it out for yourself, or call the Arc of Larimer County to get information on upcoming events.



Resources for
Disabled Students



The College Experience: What Parents and Family Members Should Know...

As a parent or guardian, many of your previous rights now transfer to your student once she/he is enrolled in college. You are still afforded some rights regarding your student's educational endeavors. However, these are more limited than for K-12

One fundamental difference between higher education and the K-12 system is related to the federal mandates regarding students with disabilities. In higher education, students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations in support of their equal opportunity to pursue an academic degree. Resources for Disabled Students (RDS) is the administrative unit designated by the Colorado State University to determine a student's eligibility for accommodations. Disability is defined broadly. It includes mobility, hearing, visual, and learning limitations or impairments as well as chronic physical, mental or neurological conditions that may impact a student's ability to participate fully in campus life.

Accommodations are recommended based on the student's type of disability as verified from relevant documentation and other information provided by a student. All recommendations also consider the fundamental nature of the academic program or activity. Students must meet the basic requirements of an academic program to be otherwise qualified to participate. While accommodations are recommended to a student, it is up to the student to choose to utilize these accommodations.

In general, Resources for Disabled Students advocates on behalf of students to ensure the following is available: Academic adjustments, academic, accommodations and some one-on-one supports.

Who Advocates?

At the age of 18, your student is now considered an adult. As an adult, your student is expected to make decisions and be accountable for those decisions. As a parent or guardian of a college student, your role changes once your student is enrolled. While your support of your student is essential to her/his success, how you provide that support may differ from the strategies you've had to employ while navigating the K-12 system.

How to Help

Do encourage your student to...

- pay attention to the requirements of a course or academic program
- determine whether the requirements are manageable for him/her-self
- discuss possible accommodations that might be needed
- seek appropriate assistance when problems arise
- meet with her/his instructors and other administrators when needed
- find different strategies when old habits no longer are effective
- be responsible for his/her behavior
- learn to deal with the consequences of mistakes if they are made
- not give up when things seem unfavorable to his/

This article part of a more detailed article written by Rose Kreston, Director of Resources for Disabled Students (RDS), at Colorado State University. The RDS website has more detailed information on specific services available for students at CSU. <http://rds.colostate.edu/>

Upcoming Events

Financial Protection

Date & Time: Wed., Jan. 25th, 6pm-8pm
Location: The Arc of Larimer County, 1721 W. Harmony Rd., Unit 101 Ft. Collins
Info/RSVP: Charlette Leon at cleon@arclc.org
Cost: Free
Event Flyer: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2e5RmU7aoZWSUJQX0ZyeGlxcGc/view?usp=sharing>

Childcare and Translation available upon request

Building Employment Skills

Date & Time: Wed., Feb. 8th, 6pm-8pm
Location: The Arc of Larimer County, 1721 W. Harmony Rd., Unit 101 Ft. Collins
Info/RSVP: Charlette Leon at cleon@arclc.org
Cost: Free
Event Flyer: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2e5RmU7aoZWQUF6Y1dmVHJCR2c/view?usp=sharing>

Childcare and Translation available upon request

Guardianship & Less Restrictive Options

A Presentation on the Options Available, What They Mean to You and Your Family, and How to Begin the Process.

Date & Time: Wed., Feb. 16th, 6pm-8pm
Location: The Arc of Larimer County, 1721 W. Harmony Rd., Unit 101 Ft. Collins
Info/RSVP: Charlette Leon at cleon@arclc.org
Cost: Free
Event Flyer: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bx_TYXzYrWeXOGotSjRnRVlyZFU/view?usp=sharing

Light Snacks will be Served Childcare and Translation available upon request*

The Arc of Larimer County's 5th Annual Film Festival

Date & Time: Tues., March 28th, 6pm-8pm
Location: CSU Lory Student Center Theater
Info/Tickets: On sale Feb. 1 at CSU Campus Box Office



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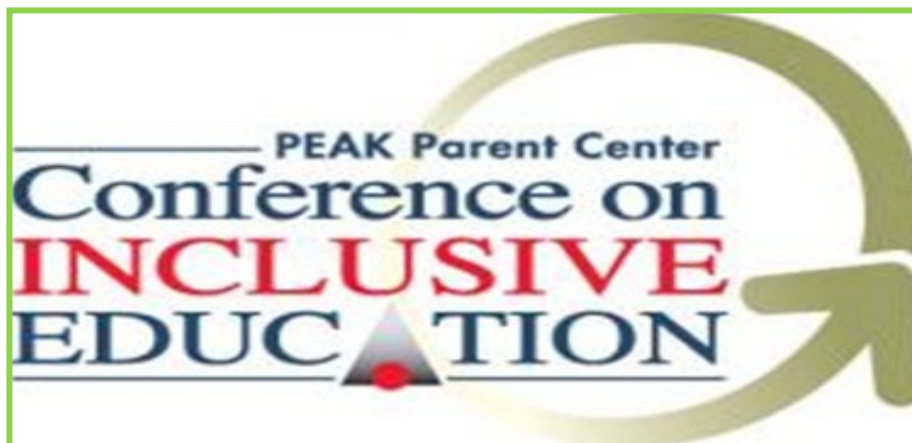
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PEAK's 2017 Conference on Inclusive Education

Feb 9 2017 - 8:00am to Feb 10 2017 - 5:00pm

The Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel, 3801 Quebec Street, Denver, CO 80207

February 9-10, 2017 Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel Denver, Colorado

PEAK's Mission: The mission of PEAK Parent Center is to provide training, information and technical assistance to equip families of children birth through twenty-six including all disability conditions with strategies to advocate successfully for their children

As a result of PEAK's services to families and professionals, children and adults with disabilities will live rich, active lives participating as full members of their schools and communities.

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