PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING
A guide for caregivers

Person-Centered-Planning is a process used by teams to help students and families plan for the future when school is no longer in the person's life. The plans for the future are built upon the student's hopes and dreams, interests and needs. It is guided and directed by the student and family and is facilitated by a team member who is familiar with the student.

Person-Centered Planning is based on the belief that:

- All people have the right to plan lives for themselves that are personally meaningful and satisfying.
- All people have talents and strengths that they have the responsibility to develop.

Person-Centered Planning is a way of thinking about people that respects their interests, hopes, dreams and desires. It is a **process** of discussion and self-evaluation in which a student discovers how he or she wants to live in the future and family and friends help explore what needs to be done to reach these goals. This is also a time to identify possible supports that will be needed and to begin to think about from where these supports will come.

The Person-Centered Planning process provides a structured format that helps with the task of gathering information for a transition plan that is an integral part of the IEP. The process helps to build trusting and positive relationships among team members. Students who participate in their own transition plan have more of a commitment to that plan and are developing self-advocacy skills.

The Person-Centered Planning should take place before the IEP/ARD meeting. Team members may include the following:

1. Student
2. Parent(s) or guardian
3. Special Education Teacher and any support staff
4. Teaching Assistants
5. Any people involved with the student (siblings, other relatives, advocates, etc.)
6. Community-based agency representatives, if appropriate.

The meeting typically lasts for one hour. One person is designated as the facilitator and another as the recorder. At each step, the facilitator will direct the questions to the student first (as appropriate). Other team members are then free to respond.

All ideas will be recorded using actual wording if possible. Team members have the right to pass or not discuss something. All ideas should be expressed in a positive way. It is also acceptable to record ideas that appear to be in conflict with one another.

The purpose of the probing questions is to gather and share information about the student. This is not a legal meeting and no legal, binding documents will be generated. No decisions regarding IEP goals and objectives or programming will be decided at this meeting.

Probing questions will involve the areas of transition: **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, EMPLOYMENT, INDEPENDENT LIVING AND POSTSECONDARY INSTRUCTION**.

Frequently Used Person-Centered Planning Questions

1) What is this person's history?
2) What is this person's dream for his or her life after school?
3) What are this person's interests and preferences?
4) Who is this person? How do they fill their time now?
5) What are this person's gifts, talents and strengths?
6) What are this person's needs in order to meet their goals?

The facilitator must have good listening skills and be able to ask probing questions with meaningful follow-up questions. The facilitator helps the team draw their ideas together in order to formulate a comprehensive educational plan that supports the student's goals, and makes use of the student's strengths and talents.

A number of person-centered models for planning have been developed. Three of the most well-known plans are:

- MAPS – The McGill Action Planning System, by Vandercook, York, Forest.
- Personal Futures Planning, Beth Mount
- Essential Lifestyle Planning, Michael Smull

The values guiding the usage of the MAPS tool are:

- Inclusion of the student into the regular school community at all levels.
- An educational and life plan specific to the needs and desires of the individual student.
- Teamwork and collaboration in the planning process and in carrying out the steps needed to support the student.
- Flexibility (of everyone concerned)

Sample questions might include:

- "If you could have any job as an adult, what would it be?"
- "Where do you see yourself living in the future? Who will live with you?"
- "What is the one thing that would make school better for you?"
- **To the parent:**
- "What is your dream for your son/daughter?"
- "What would you see as the dream job for your son/daughter?"
- "What do you hope your son/daughter learns during this school year?"
- "What do you hope he/she learns on the job/in the community?"

After all information is gathered regarding the student's hope, dreams, interests, preferences, strengths and needs, the team can begin to list activities, opportunities and supports that the student will need now and in the future.

NEEDS statements might include the following:

- Further vocational assessment
- Job exploration
- Involvement in community activities
- Exploration of independent living options
- Additional community support services
- Skills development in a specific area

As a final note to the meeting, the facilitator spends a minute or two asking participants how they felt about the process and what they learned from it.

Person-Centered Planning for:

DOB: _____

Last Name   First Name   Meeting Date

Adult Agency: _____   **Guardianship:** _____   **SSI:** _____

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	INDEPENDENT LIVING
EMPLOYMENT	**INSTRUCTION**

Person-Centered Assessment

NAME _____ AGE _____

What is important to me?	What is important for me?
What makes me happy and feel good about myself?	*What are the things that keep me safe and healthy?*

What else do we need to know?

Useful websites:

- http://factoregon.org/person-centered-plan-samples/ - Person centered plan samples
- https://rtc.umn.edu/docs/pcpmanual1.pdf - A manual for facilitators