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## Parent Liaison Program

Parent Liaisons are parents of students with an IEP that have shown leadership qualities among parents of students with disabilities. These parents have expressed an interest in helping other families with similar issues.

### Requirements for Parent Liaison:

- Must be the parent of a child with special needs.
- Must have a strong desire to support other parents of students with disabilities.
- Must be recommended annually by the local school district.
- Must be committed to partnership-building with schools, families, and the community.
- Must have the ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Must be able to attend two trainings by the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center (ISTAC), one regional and one statewide.

### Desired Competencies, the Parent Liaison will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of special education rules and regulations
- Demonstrate presentation skills in diverse settings and an understanding of group facilitation.
- Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to support positive and collaborative interaction with parents and educators.
- Demonstrates sensitivity to cultural differences of families and educators.
- Demonstrates a willingness to seek out information on how to relate effectively to diverse groups.
- Demonstrates an understanding and use of early conflict resolution skills, including creative problem-solving and partnership-building skills.
- Demonstrates a knowledge and use of outreach methods.

## **Desired Activities are:**

### **A. Collaborating with district leadership to integrate the parent liaison program for families with district services.**

- i. Assisting with local needs identification.
- ii. Developing district information for parents and educators.
- iii. Fostering ongoing communication among all stakeholders throughout the district.
- iv. Participating in the development, implementation, and sustainability of school, family, and community partnerships.
  - a. Representing parent perspective on advisory boards.
  - b. Informing parents about participating in the development of and monitoring of school improvement plans.
  - c. Providing leadership to parents to help build community capacity (strong networks of parents, schools and community leaders).

### **B. Building knowledge about special education programs offered by the district.**

- i. Disseminating district information for parents, regarding resources related to the education of children with disabilities.
- ii. Organizing and conducting training activities:
  - a. Arranging and promoting workshops.
  - b. Providing workshops on:
    - 1) The special education process
    - 2) The parent's role
    - 3) IDEA
    - 4) FAPE and LRE
    - 5) The IEP process
    - 6) Procedural safeguards
    - 7) Assessment
    - 8) Transitions
    - 9) Mediation

**C. Organizing a system of support for families.**

- i. Identifying, developing, and supporting networks with and for parents to voice their concerns and mutually provide support to other parents.
  - a. Identifying parent needs through evaluation.
    - 1) Using referrals from districts and schools requesting assistance with school issues.
    - 2) Using parent intakes.
  - b. Providing parent-to-parent peer support.
  - c. Developing culturally relevant support groups.
  - d. Support parent through:
    - 1) Phone
    - 2) E-mail
    - 3) Website
- ii. Attending IEP meetings with parents until they are familiar with the process.

**D. Documenting progress and evaluating outcomes.**

- i. Participating in family engagement assessment tools.
- ii. Informing ISTAC-Parents of services provided as a Parent Liaison and the results of those efforts.
- iii. Communicating quarterly outcome data to ISTAC-Parents.

**ISTAC-Parents will support Parent Liaisons through:**

**A. Two annual trainings.**

- i. Statewide training in Springfield.
- ii. North and South regional trainings.

**B. Mentoring through:**

- i. Site visits
- ii. Conference calls
- iii. E-mail

**C. Online resources, including:**

- i. Monthly newsletter
- ii. Lending Library
- iii. Mentor/liaison forum
- iv. Categorical Search

**D. Curriculum for parent trainings**

**E. Parent Liaison Tool Kit**