

# The Circle of Life: Leadership in IEP Meetings

Advocates & Teachers Empower Parents  
Parents & Teachers Empower Students  
Students Empower ONE ANOTHER

Treva Maitland & Jenny Williams for CADRE's 2015 Symposium

# Who We Are & Why We Do What We Do

- \* **Treva Maitland, MS**

- \* Parent of 2 who had IEPs
- \* The Arc Tennessee Lead Project Specialist
- \* PCAT Parent Leader
- \* Certified Mediator
- \* PATH Facilitator
- \* Graduate of Partners In Policymaking & Project Leadership

- \* **Jenny Williams**

- \* Parent of 1 who had an IEP and 1 who did not
- \* Family Voices Resource Specialist
- \* TN Guide By Your Side Parent Guide
- \* PCAT Parent Leader
- \* SibShop Facilitator

# Agenda

- \* **What is Leadership?**
- \* **The Roles People Hold in IEP Meetings during the Secondary Transition Process**
- \* **Changing Roles**
- \* **Self-Determination**
- \* **Self-Advocacy**
- \* **What are Student-Directed IEPs?**
- \* **Effectively Integrating Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy Skills into IEP Meetings**
- \* **Early Conflict Resolution Skills & Empowering Others**
- \* **More Resources**



# What is Leadership to You?



# Who Leads IEP Meetings in Your District?

## Does the student:

## Opportunity

Begin meeting by stating purpose?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Introduce participants?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Review past goals and performance?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Express skills and limits?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Express interests?

0 1 2 3 4 5

State needed support?

0 1 2 3 4 5



# Roles People Hold in IEP Meetings

- \* We all have roles and responsibilities in life.
- \* Who is required to be **invited** to a student's IEP meeting and what role do they play?
- \* Who is required to attend and what role do they play?



# Changing Roles

- \* The Secondary Transition process brings changes within a student's IEP meeting (if those changes haven't already taken place).
- \* What changes do you see taking place for students between ages 12-15?
- \* 16-18?
- \* 19-21?
- \* How do we feel about those changes?

# Leadership



- \* According to the idea of transformational leadership, an effective leader is a person who does the following:
  - \* Creates an inspiring vision of the future.
  - \* Motivates and inspires people to engage with that vision.
  - \* Manages delivery of the vision.
  - \* Coaches mentor & build a team prepared to achieve the vision.
- \* Leadership brings together the skills needed to do these things.



# MENTORS Sustain the Team

- \* **M**otivates
- \* **E**mpowers
- \* **N**avigates
- \* **T**eaches
- \* **O**riginatees
- \* **R**esults
- \* **S**uccessfully



# Community Cafés Encourage Role Sharing, Empowerment and Change

- \* What's working well now?
- \* What's not working well now?
- \* What solutions would you propose?

# Leadership Roles Can Be Shared



# IDEA Tells Us

- \* Students need to be a part of their IEP meetings by **age 16 (14 in Tennessee)**
- \* Transition aged IEPs are **based upon student preferences and interests**
  - \* Higher Education/training
  - \* Employment
  - \* Independent Living
  - \* Community Participation
- \* Instructionally Appropriate IEPs are **based on Assessments**



# School and Transition Goals

My education interests	My skills	My limits & how they impact goals

# Change: You Can Lead It!

- \* “The freedom to have choices and personally make decisions is cherished by people in all stages of life, yet it is a freedom that is typically denied to persons with disabilities.” (Falvey, 1995, p. 229)
- \* “The attitudes and abilities required to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to make **choices** regarding one’s life and to make **choices** regarding one’s actions *free from undue external influence or interference.*” (Wehmeyer, 2007, p.305)

# Self-Determination--Making One's Own Choices

- \* **Self-Determination is**
  - \* All about knowing yourself
  - \* Making your own choices
- \* **The principles of Self-Determination:**
  - \* *Freedom* to develop a personal life plan
  - \* *Authority* to control a targeted goal
  - \* *Support* needed to reach personal goals
  - \* *Responsibility* for goals and actions
  - \* *Confirmation* that one's involvement is appreciated

# Self-Determination Is . . .

- \* Especially important for students and youth with significant disabilities because for most of these individuals, their choices have not been made by themselves, but by parents, guardians, teachers, and service providers
- \* Not just a matter of lack of opportunity

(Kleinert & Kearns, 2001)



# Getting to Self-Determination

- \* **Things I do all by myself**
- \* **Things I really like**
- \* **Things I really dislike**
- \* **Things I need help with**
- \* **Things that are working well for me**
- \* **Things that are not working for me**
- \* **Things I (and my family, friends, and school) would like to change... this becomes my goal!**

# Person Centered Planning Tool

IMPORTANT TO	IMPORTANT FOR

# Examples of Self-Determination

**Robert is not pleased with his current job, in his work-based learning class. He learned that there is a list of different job placements he could explore. How can he decide which placement he might enjoy most?**

**Discuss your ideas.**

# Another Example of Self-Determination

**Every Thursday support staff takes Keisha and her two roommates go bowling. She does not enjoy bowling. How could Keisha decide another activity she would prefer?**

**Discuss your ideas.**

# Implementing Self-Determination

- \* **Choice-making**
- \* **Self-initiation**
- \* **Self-monitoring**
- \* **Self-reinforcement**
- \* **Goal setting**
- \* **Asking questions**
- \* **Planning one's own schedule**

# Self-Advocacy is...

- \* All about knowing yourself
- \* Sharing your own choices
- \* Knowing what you need and asking for it.
- \* Happening in IEP (Individualized Education Plan) Meetings, COS (Circle of Support) Meetings, at the doctor's office, anywhere, and everywhere.

# Self-Advocacy--Voicing one's own Choices

- \* Learn to make choices for yourself.
- \* Share information with someone you trust.
- \* Practice what you want to communicate.
- \* Speak for yourself; find your voice.
- \* Don't give up if people don't listen the first time.
- \* Celebrate accomplishments.

# Benefits of Self-Advocacy

- \* **Develops self-identity and pride**
- \* **Builds competence, changes images**
- \* **Impacts on quality of human services**
- \* **Increases knowledge of rights and responsibilities**
- \* **Promotes the ability to ask for help when needed**
- \* **Improves the quality of life for the self-advocate.**



# Why is Self Advocacy Important?

- \* Most school teachers, college faculty, and academic advisors have received very little preparation for special education, accommodations, or the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- \* Most employers receive little training in working with individuals with disabilities.
- \* Most people think they are helping and trying to take care of others when they make decisions for them.

# When Students Lead Their Own IEPs

- \* Students are the star of the show!
- \* Students gained confidence and a better understanding of their abilities and disability.
- \* Students learn leadership skills.
- \* IEP Team Meetings take less time and remain on focus.
- \* Parents and teachers are more focused on the student and his/her plans and long-rang outcomes.

# Examples of Self-Advocacy

- \* I understand my health and can talk about it.
- \* I schedule my own doctor's appointments.
- \* I make a list of things I want to talk to my doctor about.
- \* I talk directly to my doctor so s/he talks directly to me.
- \* I call in my own prescription refills to my pharmacy.
- \* I carry my health insurance card in my wallet.
- \* I check-in at the doctor's office myself.

# Self-Advocacy

- \* An expression of respect and value of the person.
- \* Enforces independence.
- \* Contributes to systemic change.
- \* “Nothing about me without me.”
- \* Respect for the wishes of the person.

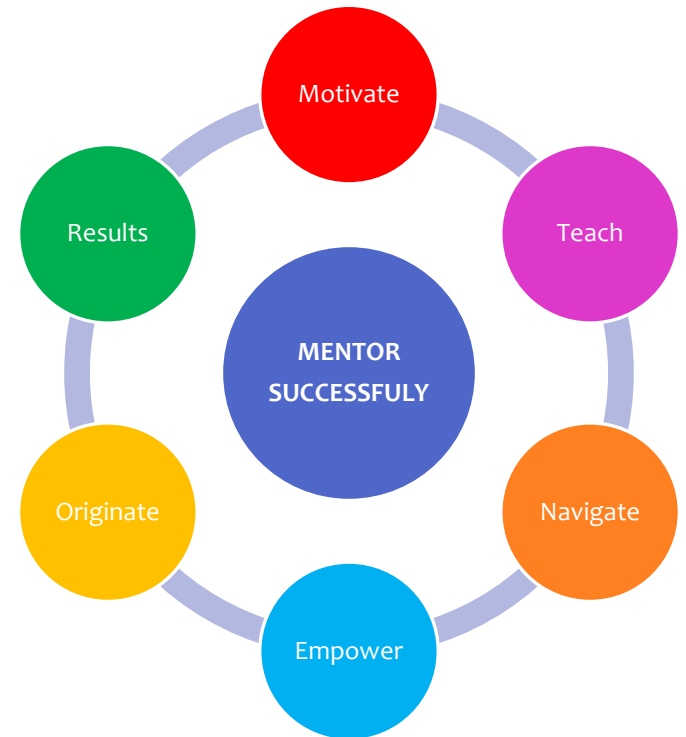
# Barriers to Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- \* Feeling uncomfortable due to lack of experience.
- \* Feeling too shy to speak.
- \* Feeling frustrated.
- \* Feeling afraid of saying the wrong thing.
- \* Having too many thoughts and feelings at once.
- \* Wanting to be nice to everybody.
- \* Not wanting to cause a problem.
- \* Not wanting to draw attention to myself.

<https://ncwwi.webex.com/ncwwi/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=742644347>

# Encouraging Students

- \* What Can I Do to Encourage Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy for *Myself* and Others?
- \* Questions?
- \* Suggestions?



# Review

## Self-Determination

- \* The Student Making His/Her own Choices

## Self-Advocacy

- \* The Student Voicing His/Her own Choices



# Student-Directed IEP training

Based on **Dr. Jim Martin's Research on "Self-Directed IEPs:"** University of Oklahoma Three Year IEP Meeting Study

## \* **Meeting Facilitation**

- \* It's MY MEETING (students will need a copy of their IEP)
- \* Welcome, Introduce Team Members & State Purpose of Meeting
- \* Close Meeting by Summarizing Decisions & Thanking People for coming

## \* **Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy**

- \* Express Interests
- \* Express Skills and Limits
- \* Review Past Goals and Performance
- \* Express ST Options and Goals

## \* **Effective Communication & Conflict Resolution**

- \* Ask Questions for Better Understanding
- \* Deal with Differences of Opinion





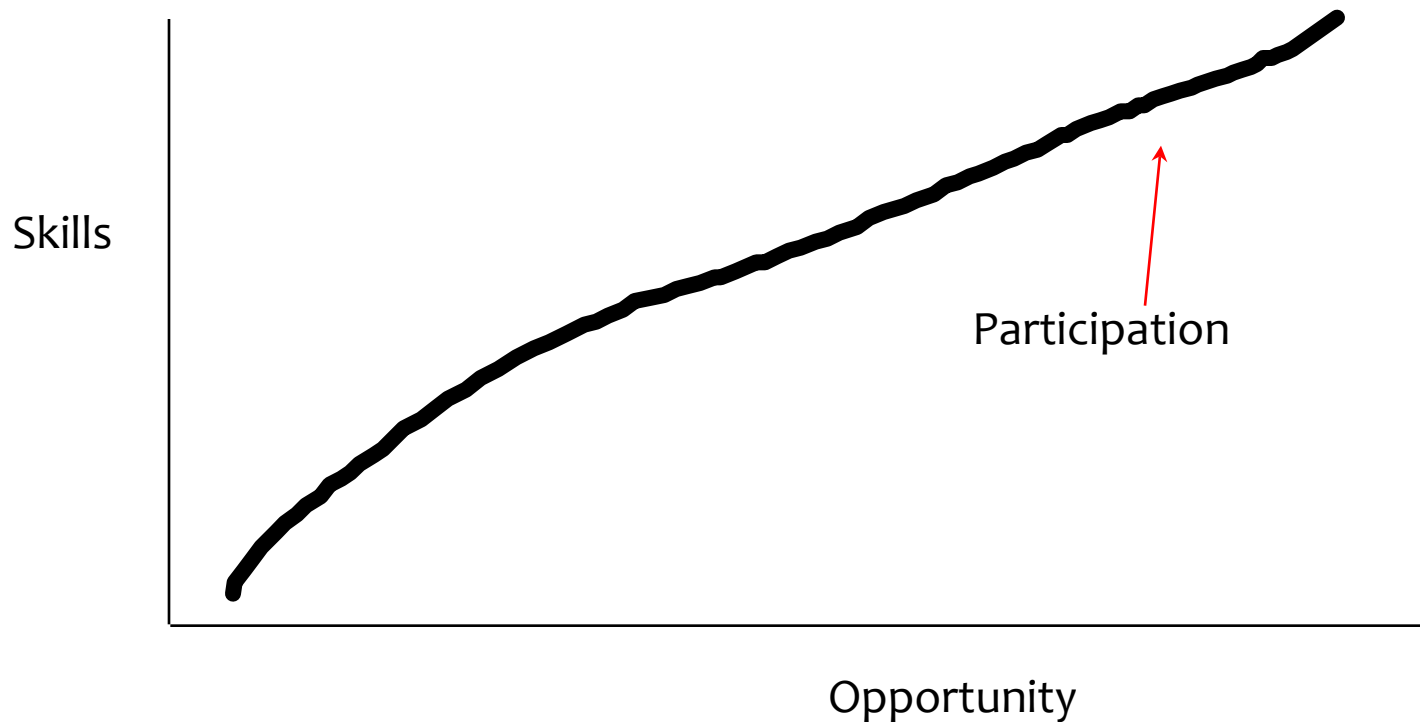
# Self-Directed IEPs are Research Based

- \* Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) measured the self-determination of students with learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities prior to their exiting high school.
- \* **Students with higher levels of self-determination had higher employment rates.**
- \* Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) replicated the 1997 study and found the same positive benefits of increased self-determination skills.
- \* Martin, Mithaug, Oliphint, Husch, and Frazier (2002) compared employment outcomes for almost 600 workers with disabilities, who completed a systematic self-determination and job placement program, to 200 workers who only completed the job placement program.
- \* **Those who completed the self-determination and job placement program kept their jobs significantly longer than those who did not.**

# Student-Directed IEPs

- \* Active Participation and Perhaps **Leadership** of the IEP process **is** a wonderful way to teach Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy skills!
- \* It's **easier with** practice.
- \* **Student-Directed IEPs** provide the opportunity to practice skills during active participation.

# IEP Participation Is a By-Product of Skills and Opportunities



# Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy Can Be Taught

**I**nventory your learning strengths, weaknesses to be improved, goals and interests, and choices for classroom learning

**P**rovide your inventory information during the meeting

**A**sk questions

**R**espond to questions

**S**ummarize your IEP goals

<http://www.lessonplanet.com/> for Effective Communication, Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination lesson plans

# Empower Students by Teaching: Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy skills

Students can learn five behaviors (SHARE) that enable Effective Communication:

**S**it up straight

**H**ave a pleasant tone of voice

**A**ctivate your thinking

**R**elax and

**E**ye communication



[http://sdsp.uncc.edu/pdf/curriculum\\_components.pdf](http://sdsp.uncc.edu/pdf/curriculum_components.pdf) for list of Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination curricula

# The LUCK Strategy: Early Conflict Resolution

**L**isten to and restate the other person's opinion.

**U**se a respectful tone of voice.

**C**ompromise or change your opinion if necessary.

**K**now and state the reasons for your opinion.



**Practice Makes Perfect**

# Modifying SD-IEPs

- \* Each student has their own gifts, talents, skills, and needs
- \* Modify each student's Student-Directed IEP as needed
  - \* PowerPoints and Prezis are great tools to assist students in directing their own meetings.
  - \* PATHs can assist students in Person Centered Planning.
  - \* Skype, FaceTime, and other apps or programs can be used too.

# Students, Prepare for **Your Meeting** with Your Own One Page Profile

Person Centered Planning Tools have adapted from <http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk> and Person Centered Planning training by Michael Smull really helped us empower our children.

- **Students, use the resources that are available free of charge to you!**
  - **Choose your own tools (Self-Determination).**
  - **Present your info to your team in your IEP meeting (Self-Advocacy) & ask for help if you need it!**
- **Parents, empower your child!**
- **Advocates, empower all the parents!**

One page profile	
<p><b>Photo</b></p> <p><i>Each one page profile has a current photo of the person.</i></p>	<p><b>Appreciations</b></p> <p><i>This section lists the positive qualities, strengths and talents of the person. It can also be called 'like and admire'.</i></p>
<p><b>What's important to the person</b></p> <p><i>This is a bullet list of what really matters to the person from their perspective (even if others do not agree). It is detailed and specific. This section needs to have enough detail so that someone who does not know the person can understand what matters to them. It could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Who the important people are in the person's life, and when and how they spend time together.</i></li><li>• <i>Important activities and hobbies, and when, where and how often these take place.</i></li><li>• <i>Any routines that are important to the person.</i></li></ul>	<p><b>How to support the person</b></p> <p><i>This is a list of how to support the person, and what is helpful and what is not.</i></p> <p><i>The information in this section includes what people need to know, and what people need to do.</i></p>



## Dr. Jim Martin's **Self-Directed IEP Steps**



1. Begin meeting by stating the purpose
2. Introduce everyone
3. Review past goals and performance
4. Ask for others' feedback
5. State your school and transition goals
6. Ask questions if you don't understand
7. Deal with differences in opinion
8. State what support you'll need
9. Summarize your goals
10. Close meeting by thanking everyone
11. Work on IEP goals all year

**BEGIN  
WHERE YOU  
ARE TO GO  
WHERE YOU  
WANT TO  
GO (ONE  
STEP AT A  
TIME WITH  
MODIFICA-  
TIONS AS  
NEEDED)**



# Research Brief for Self-Directed IEPs

upon which we based our Student-Directed IEP program

- \* Students learn skills to become active team members (Allen, Smith, Test, Flowers, & Wood, Snyder & Shapiro, 1997; Arnold, & Martin 2002)
- \* Students remember IEP Goals (Sweeney, M. (1996)
- \* More students and parents attend IEP meetings ( Sweeney,1996)
- \* Effective for students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and intellectual disabilities (formerly known as MR) (Allen, Smith, Test, Flowers, & Wood, Snyder & Shapiro, 1997; Arnold, & Martin 2002; Snyder, 2002)

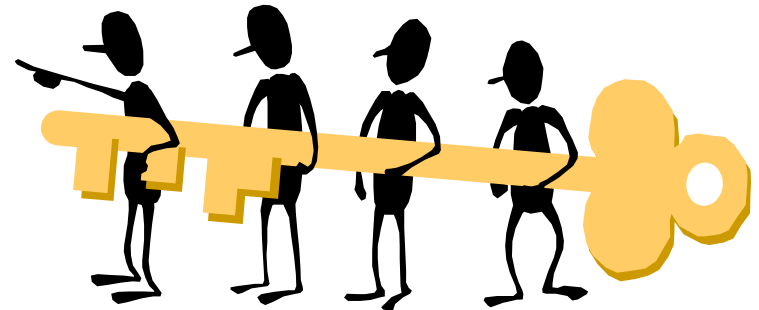
# ACTIVE STUDENT PARTICIPATION (Leadership)

## INCREASES

- \* GRADUATION RATES
- \* EMPLOYMENT RATES
- \* WHAT THE STUDENT WANTS TO WORK ON

## DECREASES

- \* DROP OUT RATES
- \* SUSPENSION RATES
- \* EXPULSION RATES



More at [www.transitioncoalition.org](http://www.transitioncoalition.org)

<http://clec.utk.edu/employment/career-workforce-development/>

# Early Conflict Resolution skills

- \* **Students need to be taught Early Conflict Resolution skills all through school**
- \* **Students learn best by doing**
- \* **It's never too early to start**
- \* **Empowering others**
  - \* **Model using good emotional intelligence**
  - \* **Be a good example**
  - \* **Encourage communication as a problem-solving tool**
  - \* **Encourage peer mentoring opportunities**

# Changing Roles: Effective Integration

- \* **Effectively Integrating Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy Skills into Students' IEP Meetings**
  - \* **Begin in the beginning**
  - \* **Start slowly**
  - \* **Build confidence**
- \* **Early Conflict Resolution Skills & Empowering Others**
  - \* **Celebrate successes**
  - \* **Keep empowering students to be all they can be!**

*"He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still."*

- Samuel Butler



# Our Goal

# Resources

- \* [www.transitioncoalition.org](http://www.transitioncoalition.org)
- \* <http://www.pacer.org/tatra/resources/studentiep.asp>
- \* [http://www.proedinc.com/store/index.php?mode=product\\_detail&id=9292](http://www.proedinc.com/store/index.php?mode=product_detail&id=9292)
- \* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv7IS6NLcng>
- \* <http://www.cec.sped.org/bk/catalog2/self.html>
- \* <http://www.ncset.org/publications/mfmp.asp>
- \* <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/ta2book.htm>



# Community Cafés



## Community Conversation looks for solutions for employing students with disabilities

By Crystal Burns

A cross section of the Gibson County community came together last week for an intimate conversation to find solutions for employing students with disabilities before they leave high school.

Treva Maitland and Jenny Williams, members of the Gibson County Leadership & Advocacy Council, received a mini grant from TennesseeWorks to host the Community Conversation. To get ready for the event held at First Presbyterian Church in Trenton, Maitland, Williams, Judy Carpenter, and Sandra Gibson recruited individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities to help bake pies, which were served with coffee, tea, or water at Thursday's conversation.

Dr. Erik Carter, a professor at Vanderbilt University, is one of the co-leaders of the TennesseeWorks project. He said that Gibson County's attendance of 79 easily surpassed Community Conversations held in larger Tennessee cities.

"We've found that rural communities are bringing together more people than even some of the larger cities," Carter said.

The night's agenda was

brainstorming ideas to change the employment landscape for people with disabilities by focusing on creating or securing meaningful, paid employment for students with disabilities before they graduate high school.

One expert in the field said there is currently a six-year waiting period for students with disabilities to find employment after graduation.

There are 49,000 residents in Gibson County, 9300 of whom have a disability. Of those 9300, 1500 have an intellectual or developmental disability and less than 300 of the 1500 are employed. The majority of the 300 employed make less than minimum wage.

Maitland presented those facts to participants before instructing them to answer three rounds of questions.

The first question was, "What would it take for every student with a disability to have paid meaningful job experience prior to leaving high school?" After about 20 minutes of discussion at their tables, participants changed tables and tackled the same question again. After switching tables a third time, participants sought solutions for the final ques-

(Continued on page 4)



**HOMEMADE PIES** go great with coffee and conversation. The Gibson County Leadership & Advocacy Group hosted a Community Conversation last Thursday evening at First Presbyterian Church in Trenton to discuss finding ways to employ students with disabilities with paid, meaningful jobs before they graduate high school. Helping bake pies and facilitate the conversation were (from left) Jenny Williams, Jeanne Crocker, John Wesley Williams, Kelly Wendel, Lauren Bethune, Treva Maitland, Dr. Erik Carter, Sidney Maitland, and Robert Martindale. Nearly 80 people attended the Community Conversation. Photo by Crystal Burns.

## Milan area Korean War vets hold 65<sup>th</sup> reunion

By Steve Short

Bill McLean was 17 years old and looking forward to his senior year at Milan High

school, organized the 65<sup>th</sup> reunion of his old Milan National Guard unit, the 2998<sup>th</sup>

Engineer Treadway Bridge Company (ETBC). The company built bridges in

Korea to carry U.N. troops over rivers.

At the reunion held at Northside Baptist Church, seven 2998<sup>th</sup> veterans and



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## Hope

by Vaclav Havel

Hope is a state of mind, not a state of the world.

Either we have hope within us or we don't.

Hope is not a prognostication—it's an orientation of the spirit.

You can't delegate that to anyone else.

Hope in this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy when things are going well,

or the willingness to invest in enterprises

that are obviously headed for early success,

but rather an ability to work for something good to succeed.

Hope is definitely NOT the same as optimism.

It's not the conviction that something will turn out well,

but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

It is hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things,

even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.

In the face of this absurdity, life is too precious a thing

to permit its devaluation by living pointlessly, emptyly,

without meaning, without love, and, finally, without hope.

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# NEED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

For more information on **Secondary Transition**, visit **The Arc of Tennessee's** website at <http://www.thearctn.org/Education.php>

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This document was prepared by The Arc of Tennessee staff in collaboration with Tennessee Disability Coalition, under an agreement with The State of Tennessee, Department of Education, Division of Special Education

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[www.thearctn.org](http://www.thearctn.org)



*Achieve with us.*

**Advocacy, Information, and Support**  
***for People***  
***with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities***  
***and Their Families***