

DATE: July 8, 2015

TO: David Test  
High Expectations Working Group

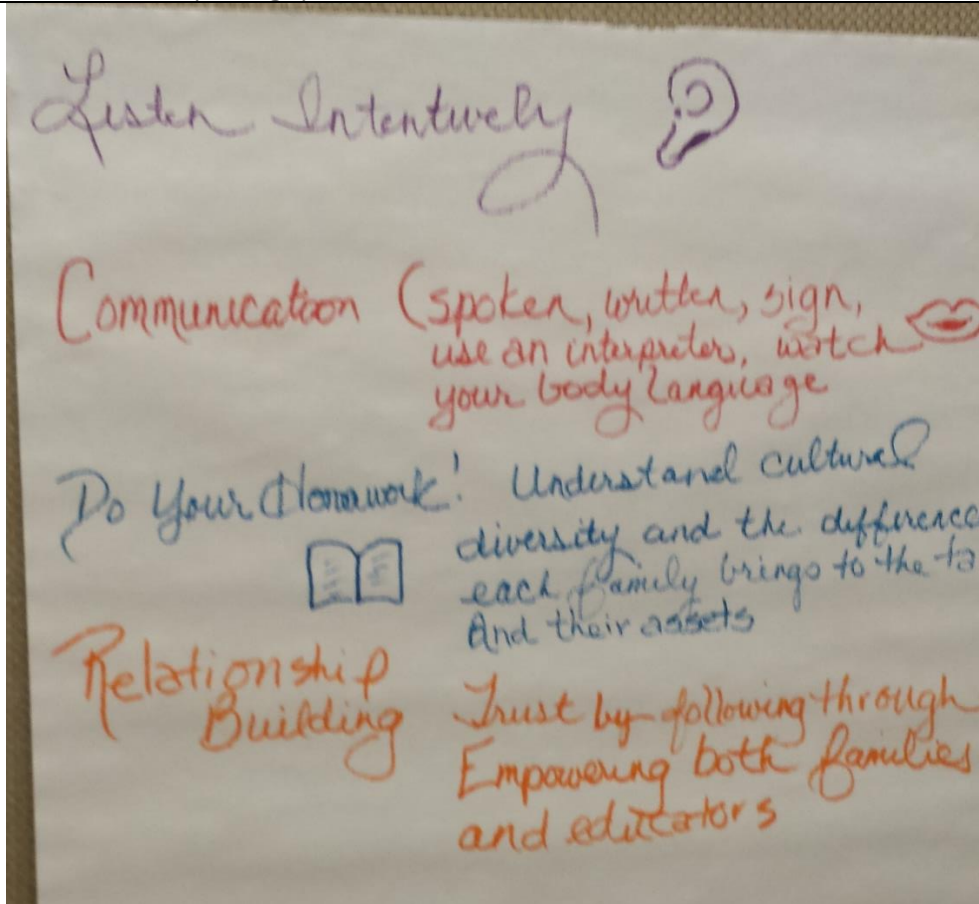
FROM: Amy Pleet-Odle

RE: Responses at the National Family & Community Engagement Conference (June 23, 2015)

On June 23, Sean Roy (PACER), Dianne Malley (NJSPAN) and I presented a session called “Promoting High Expectations for Youth with Disabilities” at the National Family & Community Engagement Conference in Chicago. We provided a draft list of the 10 actions for professionals as well as some new materials “Seeds of Trust” from the IDEA Partnership: Leading by Convening (see attached handout packet). There were 8 tables; we asked each table to discuss the implications of nourishing the seeds of trust with one of the 10 actions. They each developed a poster and explained their thinking. I took pictures of the posters (below) and recorded their 2 minute explanations. Because we think there are implications for our High Expectations Working Group, I want to share their responses with you.

PS. We told participants that the list of 10 below is not the workgroup’s final version, but we wanted to use the draft list to provide focus for their interactions.

**1. DO interact respectfully with each family according to their unique cultural-linguistic differences and distinct competing priorities.**



Comments:

- Seeds of Trust Lesson #3 – listening and communication are critical.
- Do homework - understand the family's cultural diversity
- Relationship building – build trust by following through on promises. Both ways – empowering both families & educators.

**2. DO make it safe for families to discuss their fears and sensitivity to discussion about the future based on possible negative past interactions.**

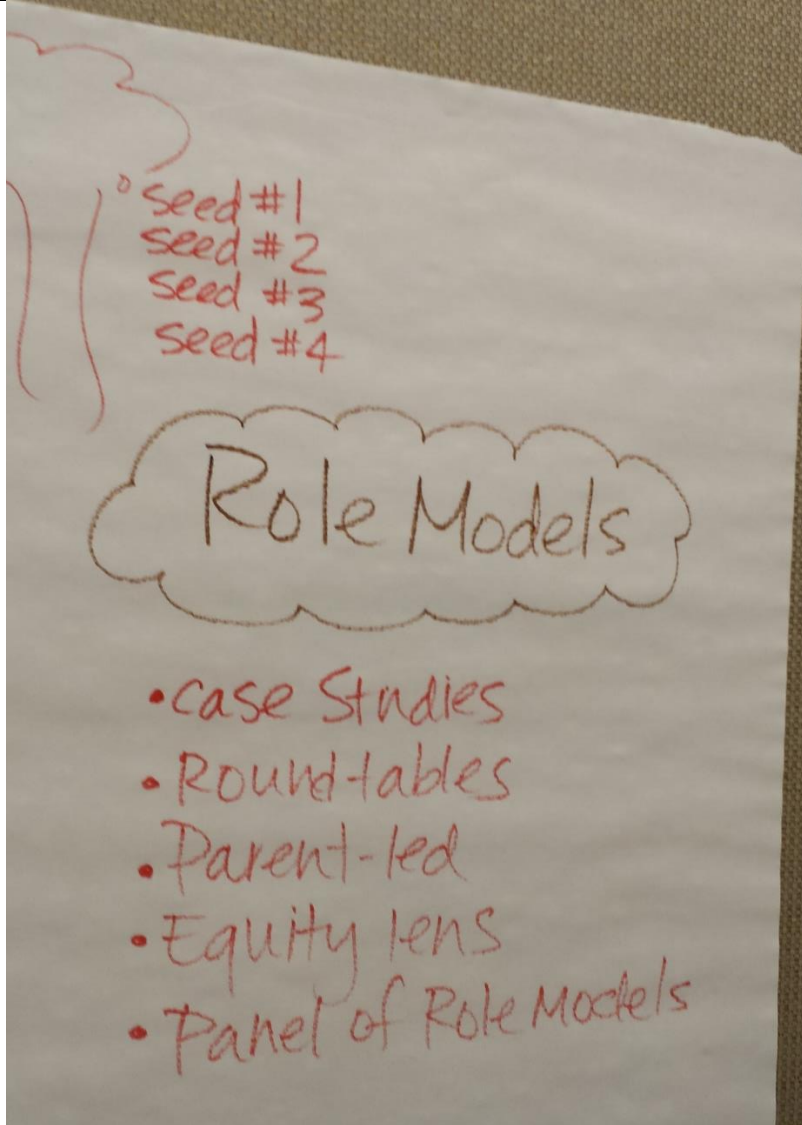
Learned lesson #3

- 10/90 Rule
- Validate the history but focus on the future
- Positivity - No judgement - open minded
- All meaningful input is equally valued + respected
- There may be times we have to agree to disagree but that is recognized and accepted.
- Confidentiality will be a high priority
- "GWH Free" Zone

Comments:

- Seeds of Trust Lesson #3 – use 10/90 rule (10% of time talking about history; 90% talking about future)
- Validate the history – acknowledging what families bring to the table that may influence how they interact; reinforce no judgement stance.
- All input needs to be equally valued regardless of whether it comes from the family or other stakeholders
- Agree to disagree if necessary. Based on accepting differences.
- Confidentiality critical to keeping trust when we have to talk about sensitive issues
- Nobody should feel guilty because of past experiences that are shared.

3. DO encourage families to explore examples of role models who have achieved high expectations.

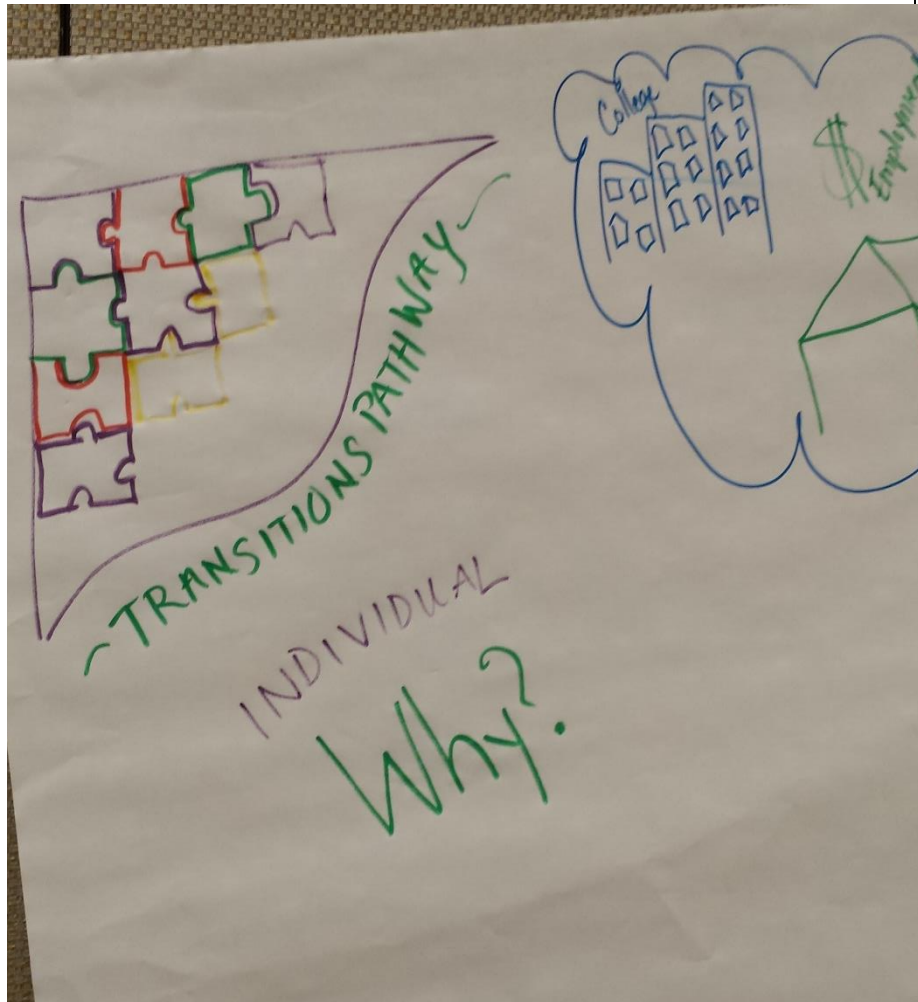


Comments:

- To employ all 4 Seeds of Trust lessons, group suggests providing a variety of role model activities
- Provide case studies in various formats
- Have round tables where parents/ families can talk with individuals who are role models
- Ensure that these are parent/ guardian led
- Have a panel of role models for families who don't/ won't have access to online resources or who wouldn't research on their own.
- Use an equity lens to be sure all groups are represented

4. DO provide parent training opportunities in a variety of formats to address transition related school and adult service supports, eligibility and access.

Comments:



- Seeds of Trust Lesson #1 - Start with the questions: Why would parents want to come to this training?
- Use a puzzle graphic on the invitation to show that transition planning and adult services systems are like putting together pieces of a puzzle.
- The trainings for families will lead to understanding the “transition pathways.”
- The dreams of college, employment, and housing are not such a far off dream when families have participated in workshops and learned about options for support.
- The trainings can be group, but should focus on individual students.

**5. DO empower families to trust their own instincts about their youth's future and help them build a network of support.**

Not discussed

Comments:

**6. DO increase the effectiveness of educational and transition-related organizations outreach to families to foster positive post-school outcomes, based on awareness of prevalent myths and current research/practice.**

Not discussed

Comments:

**7. DO begin planning for transition early and engage families as partners to build a robust transition IEP**

Student participation @  
IEP meetings starts at the beginning.

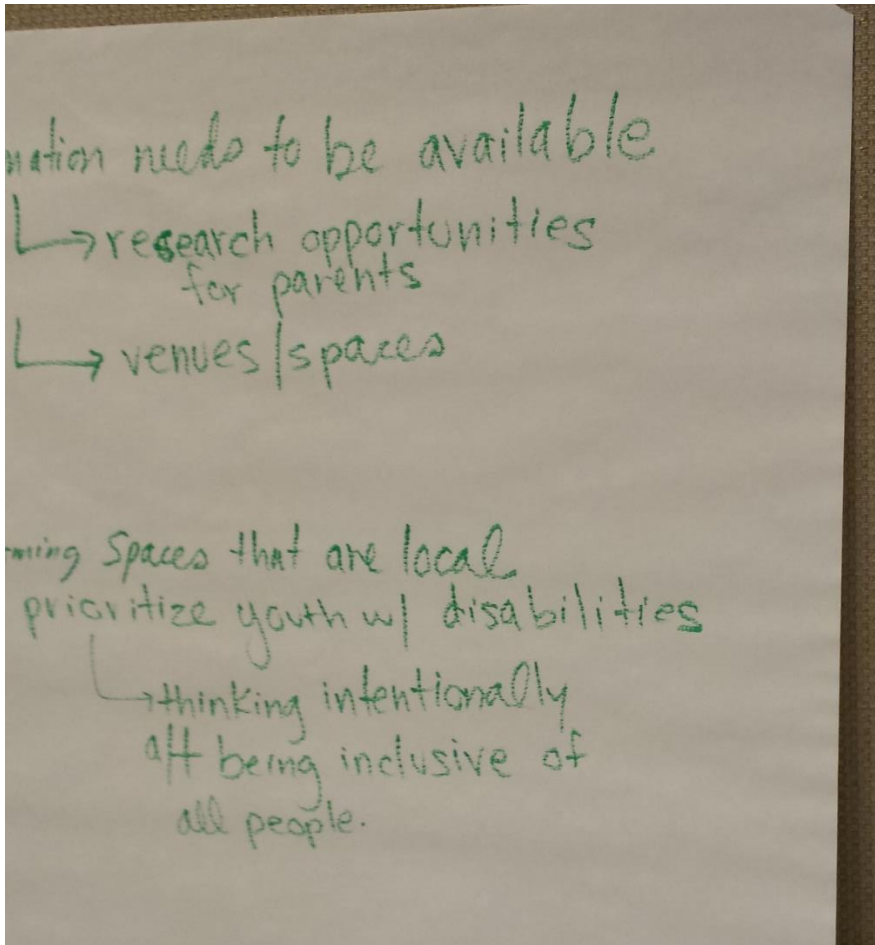
- prepare - Asset based  
What's working  
Needs to know diagnoses & what it means to them
- Educating student, Parent + staff to language
- Building trust through relationship building 2 way street
- teaching students about IEP
- Asset based

Comments:

- Seeds of Trust – all 4 lessons
- Transition planning starts with inviting student as a participant in their own IEP meeting as early as possible. That builds in self-determination right away.
- Stakeholders at IEP meeting need to support youth participation in their IEP meeting
- Asset based student preparation for IEP meeting. Focus on “what’s working” rather than “what’s not working.”
- Building trust in relationship through 2 way street (family/youth and school)
- Teaching student about the IEP and about their own diagnosis & what it means to them as early as possible.



**8. DO work with families to support students' school years success in all domains - academic, recreational, extracurricular, spiritual, and community participation.**

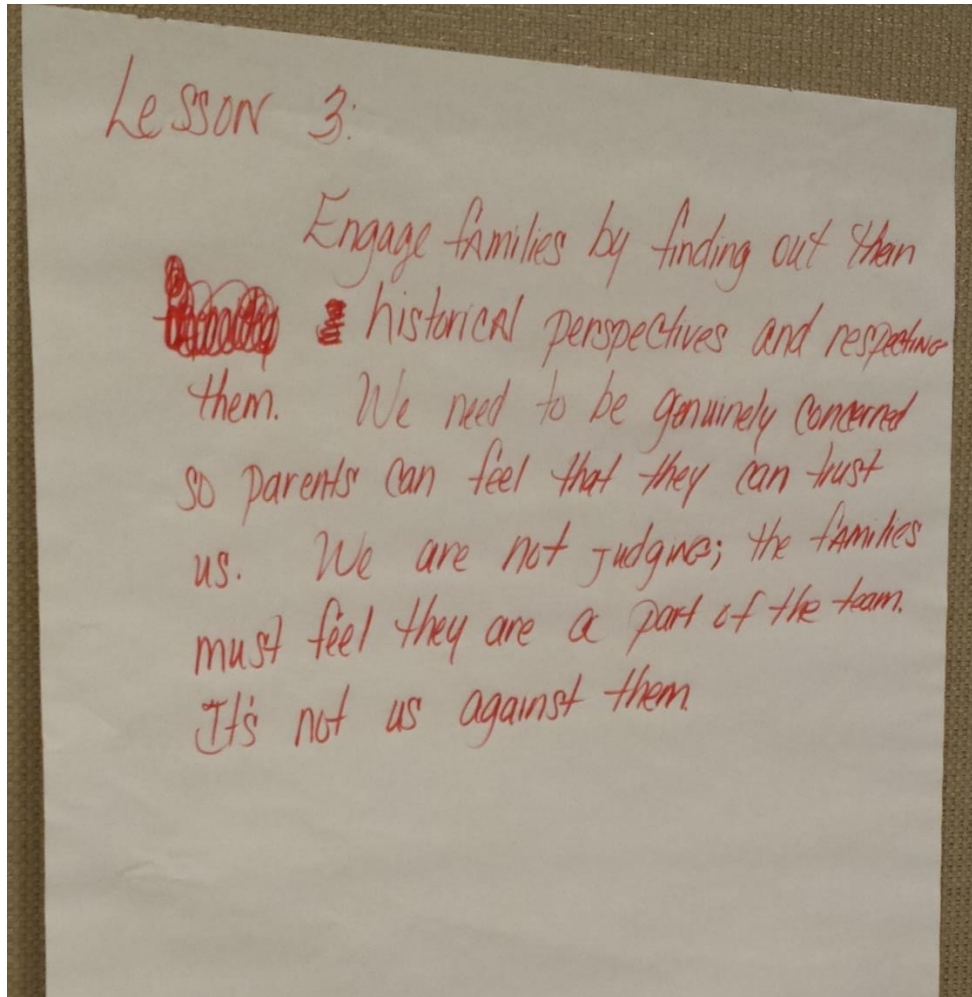


Comments:

- Make information REALLY available with research opportunities for parents to access the information. The info should be provided in a variety of venues and spaces.
- In many communities, especially low income and non-English speaking, there is a lack of information about options for both youth with and without disabilities.
- Think intentionally about providing information and resources that would serve all inclusively.
- Community agencies and partners who provide youth services should work with families to include all youth, including those with disabilities.



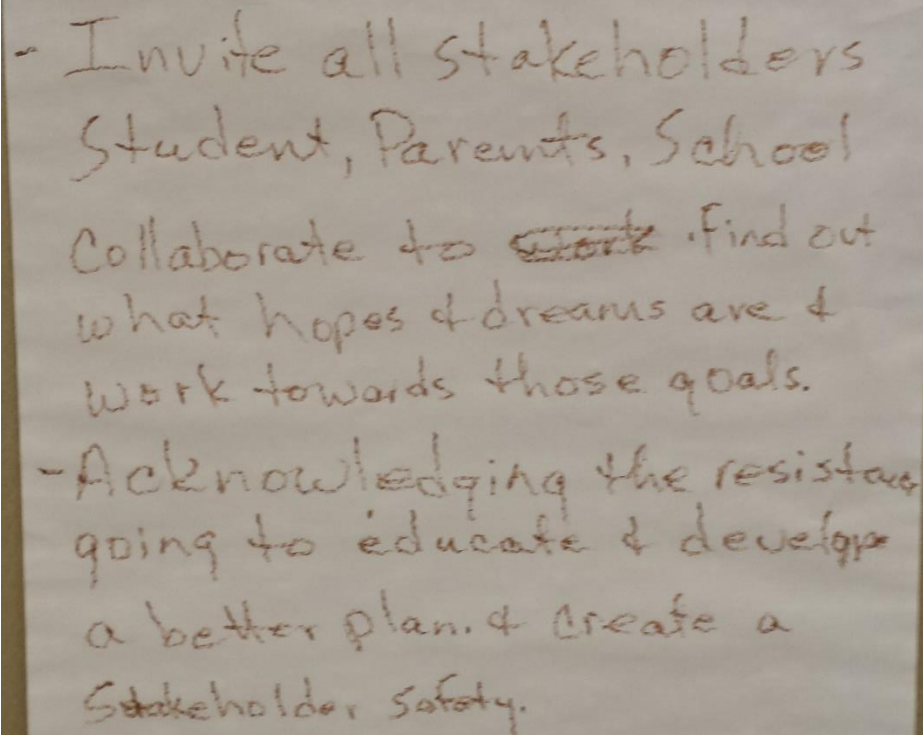
**9. DO engage families as partners in transition planning and implementation, valuing their historical perspectives on the whole life of their youth.**



Comments:

- Seeds of Trust Lesson #1 – be sure to invite them to be a partner, not just to follow our lead in the way we always do things.
- Build the trust first.
- Ask: What is your family structure/ your historical perspective? Be sure they feel valued & appreciated. What works well?
- Be sure families are taking the lead.
- You have the vision as a parent; we have tools as educators. What are your child's skills that we can build on?

10. DO support family members in their journey to discover their young person's present and future preferences, interests, needs and strengths.



- Invite all stakeholders  
Student, Parents, School  
Collaborate to ~~work~~ find out  
what hopes & dreams are &  
work towards those goals.  
- Acknowledging the resistance  
going to educate & develop  
a better plan. & create a  
Stakeholder safety.

Comments:

- Seeds of Trust Lesson #1 – be sure that all stakeholders are invited & know how important their contributions are. Go beyond the typical 8 ½ x11 invitation.
- Seeds of Trust Lesson #4 – acknowledge points of resistance and address them. This will make it safer for all to participate and ultimately will create a stronger transition plan.