

Your Voice Matters: Empowering Parents to Engage

A WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

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Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)

- ✓ Statewide nonprofit
- ✓ **Virginia's Parent Training & Information Center**
- ✓ **Empower** families and youth with disabilities
- ✓ Free and confidential
- ✓ Learn about navigating special education and disability service systems
- ✓ Birth to age 26
- ✓ Assistance available in 300+ languages



Targeted outreach areas

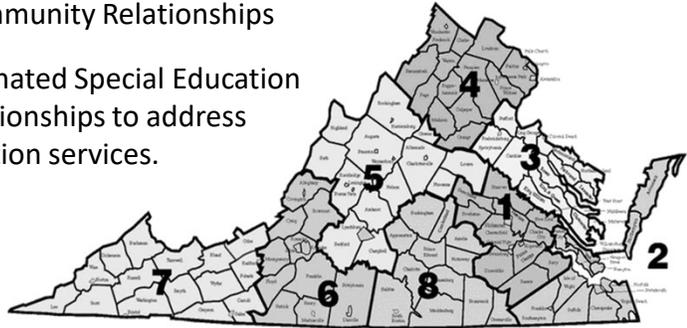
- Bullying Awareness
- Family Engagement
- Military Outreach
- PEATC En Español
- Early Childhood
- Transition to Adulthood



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PEATC Regional

- ✓ Special Education Legislation in 2024 VA General Assembly
- ✓ Staff in all regions of Virginia – Community Relationships
- ✓ Connect with school division-designated Special Education Liaison to develop collaborative relationships to address family concerns about special education services.
- ✓ **Direct assistance**



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PEATC Services

Direct Assistance



- In-Person
- Zoom
- Phone
- Email

Trainings



- Workshops
- Courses
- Virtual and In-Person

Resources



- Factsheets
- Email Templates
- Portfolios
- Resource Documents
- Online Transition Guide

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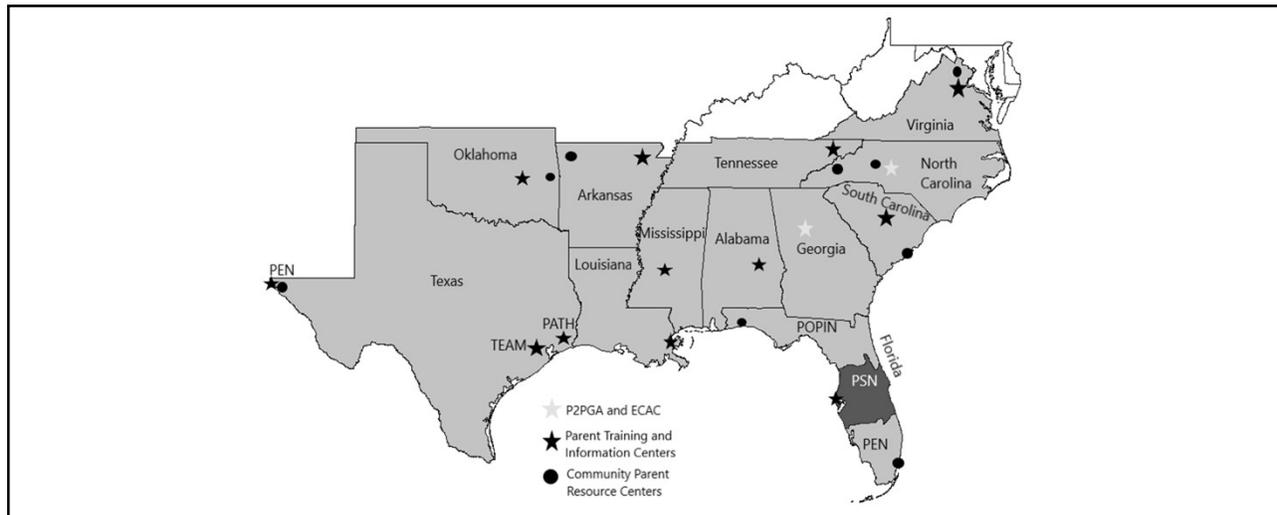
Formal Partnerships



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Part of a Larger Entity

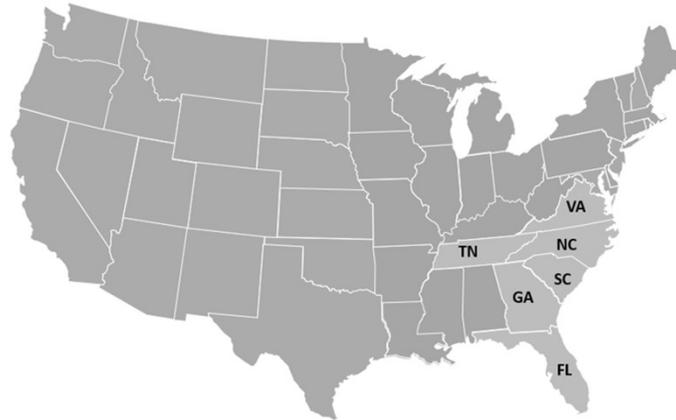
PEATC is also supported by a Technical Assistance Project funded by the USDOE, OSEP.

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RSA Parent Center



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Objectives

- Explore the importance of Parental Engagement.
- Understand the significance of your involvement in your child's educational achievements.
- Explore the definition of an Advocate.
- Discover effective and actionable strategies for fostering robust, cooperative partnerships with your child's school.

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The Importance of Parental Engagement



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Family Engagement Is a Plea From Both Sides of the Table to Engagement



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How Do Schools Engage Parents?

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The Research Shows

When families are engaged in their child's education:

- Improved Academic Performance
- Increased Motivation and Behavior
- Reduces absenteeism
- Enhanced Self-Esteem and Wellbeing
- Reduced Achievement Gaps
- Long-term Educational Benefits

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Families of Children with Disabilities

There are significant *opportunities for engagement* inherent to the relationship between school and children with individualized educational programs (IEPs).



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In my over 30 years of working with students as a teacher and administrator, I have run across all kinds of families – those that are completely uninvolved, those that are too involved, and everything in between.

I have worked with students who come from rich families, poor families, immigrant families, families who are homeless, broken families, foster families, incarcerated parents, various races of families, and families that face crises the likes of which I could never have imagined. In all of those years, with all those families ***I have never met one that didn't care about their children.***

- Quote by Steven M. Constantino

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Are You Disengaged?

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A Point To Ponder

Disengaged people, regardless of who they are, are disengaged for a reason. They are not born disengaged but rather become disengaged.

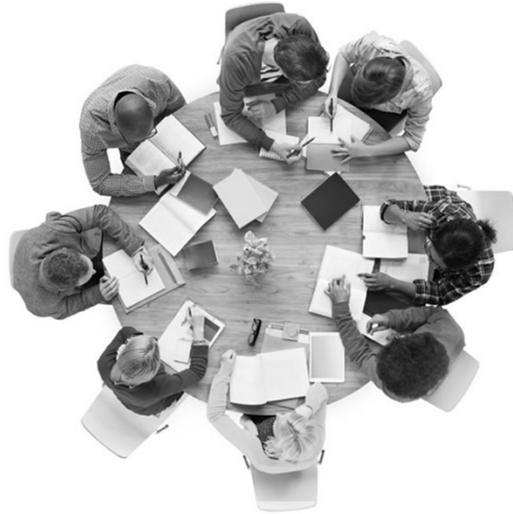


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How Can We Better Engage?



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Share Your Gifts

The “*gifts*” refer to the shared experiences, abilities, and insights exchanged among individuals within a collaborative relationship.

Honoring these “*gifts*” fosters a genuine dialogue between the involved parties.



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Build Bridges Over Barriers

- Open and Flexible Communication
- Languages and Cultural Considerations
- Parent Education and Support Programs
- Shared Decision-Making



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5 Tips To Promote Positive Communication



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Be Your Child's Best Advocate

Someone who supports the rights of others

Someone who speaks, writes or stands up for someone else

You are your child's BEST Advocate!

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Is Your Voice Being Heard?

SPEAK UP
EVEN IF
YOUR VOICE
SHAKES

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See the *value* of your contribution!

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True or False?

- 1) Every family, regardless of their current situation, can contribute to their child's education.
- 2) The parent's voice is valuable in their child's education.
- 3) Positive communication can build stronger relationships between schools and families.
- 4) There are ways to build bridges to get over many of the barriers that keep a family from being engaged.
- 5) Being engaged in your child's education makes a difference.

Your Voice Does Matter

In the future, what is one thing you **will** do to be more engaged in your child's education?

Evaluation

Workshop Evaluation



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Thank You!

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-  partners@peatc.org
-  www.peatc.org

Hablamos Español
Assistance also available in
300+ languages

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