

Parents and Schools: Being Present for the Journey



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Welcome & Overview

- Who's in the room
- Creating safety/group agreements
- Principles of Improvisation
- Identifying barriers and what gets in the way
- Collaboration
- Building networks for staff, families and students
- Flexibility
- Takeaways and next steps



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Parents and Schools

- Being present for the journey
- What does this look like to you:?



**Who's in
the room?**

Michele Williers

**Executive Director
PEAK Parent Centre**



Michele Williers: Parent

- Parent to 22 year old son who is Deafblind with intellectual developmental disabilities
- Executive Director, PEAK Parent Center
- Servant & mission driven non-profit leader with a 30-year-career in leadership and administration for youth serving agencies.



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Marc Purchin

President
Purchin Consulting
Specializing in Alternative
Dispute Resolution



Marc Purchin: Consultant

- An Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) professional since 1997, Marc Purchin has conducted 3,000+ mediations. Beyond individual client work, Marc has developed ADR programs for various county's and school districts. . He has also taught directly related courses at the university level and recently published Building Positive Parent and School Partnerships, a book for staff and parents.
- Former California State Mediator
- Author of *Building Positive Parent and School Partnerships*



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Purchin Consulting

- **Our mission** is to empower individuals and teams to have positive and productive working relationships, through training, coaching, meeting facilitation, and mediation



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Beck Williers



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Beck Williers

- A 23-week, 15 oz, micro-premature miracle baby
- Changing the world through the power of strength, determination & perseverance
- Inclusive education & very strong social skills
- Fluent in American Sign Language
- Independence increasing everyday especially in transition focused 15–21 years & services



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Beck Williers

- 22 years old
- Foundations for Successful Living doing volunteer work gaining post secondary skills
- Proud Honors Chord Graduate & Honor Roll Student from Pine Creek High School
- A huge gamer who gets the high score at PacMan wherever he goes (his name is in Vegas in lights)
- Offered his first job (without even applying) at Chuck E at The Control Room...his fav game spot
- Plans to attend UCCS



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What is PEAK?



1

Per IDEA, each state must have a designated Parent Training & Information Center (PTI).

2

PEAK serves families, self-advocates (individuals with disabilities), educators, related services providers & more as Colorado's federally designated PTI.



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What do we do?

We provided general information and assistance to **287,613 families** and professionals, through:

- **88,560 website hits,**
- **10,663 blog** and event sites visits
- **7253 followers** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn

The Parent Advisor team at PEAK Parent Center provided intensive, general, and targeted technical assistance through one-on-one individualized problem-solving and information dissemination to 1,021 duplicated families and youth during the reporting period.



- We teach parents, student, educators, and professionals the skills they need to successfully educate students with all types of disabilities and abilities.
- We believe that all children, including children with disabilities can learn and participate in their neighborhood schools. An inclusive childhood leads to inclusion in adulthood.
- We know that ALL people, when given proper access, tools, and supports can contribute to our world in positive and meaningful ways.



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Mission & Programs

- The mission of PEAK Parent Center is to provide training, information and technical assistance to equip families of children birth through twenty-six including all disability conditions with strategies to advocate successfully for their children.
- As a result of PEAK's services to families and professionals, children and adults with disabilities will live rich, active lives participating as full members of their schools and communities.

Parent Training
and Information
Center Project

Personal Networks
for Transition Project

Power Transition Project

Alternative Dispute
Resolution Projects
with CDE



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Building networks for staff

- Advocate for all staff meetings
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Create Collaboration through Connections
- Create a place for the discovery and development of capacity
- Share tools & resources that can be used to intentionally identify networks for transition for students and families



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Building networks for families

- Parent groups, training & networking
- Create new ways to build a sustainable long-term network of unpaid support who will be there after you are gone
- Strategically support the development of meaningful relationships that are capacity focused and lead to living a good life of belonging
- Safely transfer roles and responsibilities to our child and a trusted group of individuals who love and support them.
- Share your journey, ask questions, and learn from each other



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Building networks for students

- Include peers in IEP Process
- Consider student led IEPs
- See students apart from labels and identify their strengths
- Through my gifts and strengths develop my identity which leads to capacity - based connections and relationships with others in the community
- Intentionally invite others in to participate in my life in meaningful and practical ways
- Take Up Space



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As we look into the eyes of our young people and their families, we see abundance, potential and a path towards a more just and inclusive world. And together, taking action in the powerful ways you all embody, we can manifest that change.



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**Every sunset
brings the
promise of
a new dawn.**

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



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Group Agreements

- Yes-And mindset
- Support each other
- Stay present
- No Mistakes (learning opportunities)
- Have fun



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Team Building Suggested Agreements



Have Fun!
This is a
time to
escape
and let go.



**Uphold a
safe space.**



**There
are no
mistakes.**



Yes and....



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Improvisation Rules

The same rules as successful teams

1

Yes, and...

2

Pay attention to your partner

3

Make statements

4

Trust one another

5

Make your partner (teammates look good)

6

There are no mistakes



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Yes, let's

Yes–And, Listening, Building Together, Flexibility



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Identifying Barriers

Activity

Fortunately/Unfortunately



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**What gets
in the way?**



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Collaboration



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Flexibility in Action

Multiple Pathways Forward



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Multi-Agency Collaboration

Keeping the student at the center



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Takeaways



**Identify
Barriers**



**Practice
Collaboration**



**Adapt to
Barriers**



**Keep
Student
at Center**



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Resources

- Applied Improvisation Network-
<https://www.appliedimprovisationnetwork.org/>
- CADRE <https://www.cadeworks.org/>
- Communication/Active Listening
<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/communicating-students/telling/effective-communication-barriers-and-strategies>
- Interest Based Negotiation
<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/tag/interest-based-negotiation/>
- Parent/Professional Collaboration
<http://www.ncset.org/topics/family/default>





Thank you!

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