Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT)

Using Innovation to Employ Persons With Disabilities

Empowering Young Adults and Their Families to be Engaged and Active Participants in the Transition to Employment

Connie Zienkewicz, Families Together Inc.
Families Together, Inc.

Youth
- Individual Assistance
- iTransition

Family
- Individual Assistance
- Family Enrichment Weekends
- Workshops

Parents, Youth & Professionals
- Team Empowerment Conferences
- Family Employment Awareness Trainings
Mission

To increase the expectations and awareness of families and individuals with disabilities regarding the possibilities for their son or daughter with a disability to obtain meaningful and satisfying work in the family’s community.
Key Principles

Everyone with a disability can

• work when provided with the appropriate supports and services.
• have a job that is both enjoyable and satisfying.
• make more money working than by relying on public benefits alone.
FEAT Development & Funding

• Initial funding from DHCF using Medicaid Infrastructure Grant monies (2010-2012)
• Continued funding from NIDILRR (2013-2017) to conduct research into effectiveness
• Current funding through Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
FEAT Partnerships

Joint effort among

• Beach Center on Disability, University of Kansas  
  o developed training content and trains trainers

• Families Together  
  o conducts trainings and provides technical assistance (individual and group) to families after the training

• Schools  
  o recruit families and young adults in transition  
  o attend the training and technical assistance

• Workforce Centers and other Community Partners  
  o provide staff support for participants bi-weekly after FEAT attendance.
FEAT was funded as a research project (NIDILRR 2013-2017) to assess it’s effectiveness over time.

SURVEY

PRE-Perceptions Evaluation
POST-Perceptions Evaluation

INTERVIEWS
FEAT positively influenced:

- Expectations for competitive employment for individuals with disabilities
- Knowledge about local, state, and federal employment resources
- Accessing more and different resources
- Ability to overcome barriers

FEAT participants generally agreed or strongly agreed that attending FEAT was beneficial!
FEAT Research Findings

Knowledge and Expectations

**Expectations**

- Short-term – Significantly higher
- 1-Year – Significantly higher

**Knowledge**

- Short-term – Significantly higher
- 1-Year – Significantly higher

**Key Takeaway:** While FEAT family attendees’ expectations were significantly higher than non-attendees in the short-term, the impact of FEAT on expectations was not maintained over time like knowledge was.

Family Employment Awareness Training
FEAT Research Findings

Short-term Perceptions of FEAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEAT positively influenced / improved...</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Strongly agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... my expectations for the employment of individuals with disabilities</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... my accessing more resources</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... my knowledge about employment resources</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... the way I seek out and use employment resources</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... my feeling that I can overcome barriers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... the way I address barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Takeaway: FEAT participants generally agreed or strongly agreed that attending FEAT was beneficial.
FEAT Training Format

A two-part training designed to:

• Increase expectations regarding integrated and competitive employment.
• Teach how to access local, state, and federal employment-related resources and services
• Develop self-advocacy and problem solving skills
• Build capacity through “train-the-trainer” model
FEAT Training Format

• Morning lectures
• Small group activities
• Young adult sessions
• Afternoon community member rotating sessions or panels
• Resource packets and CD/flash drive
LifeCourse Framework

Family Employment Awareness Training
PART 1: Building the Dream of Employment

- Kansas Employment First
- “Outside the Box” Employment Possibilities
- Success Stories
- Family/Parent Role in Supporting Employment
- Transition to Adulthood
- Young Adult Sessions
Employment First policy in Kansas, established in May 2011, provides that “competitive and integrated employment shall be considered the first option when serving persons with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment.”
PARENTS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

Employment First Across the Nation

http://apse.org/we-believe/legislative-advocacy-center/#map

Family Employment Awareness Training
PART 1: Building the Dream of Employment

Employment Possibilities

• Supported and Customized Employment
• Created Jobs
• Carved Jobs
• Resource Ownership
• Self-Employment
• Business within a Business
• Employer-Initiated Models
PART 1:
Building the Dream of Employment

Family/Parent Role
• Building a Support Network
• Creating Partnerships
• Contributing to the Employment Process
PART 1: Building the Dream of Employment

Transition to Adulthood

- IEP Transition Provisions
- Planning Process
- Quality Services
PART 1: Building the Dream of Employment

Healthcare Transition

• Pediatric to Adult Medical Care
• Oral Health
• Staying Healthy So You Can Work
• Paying for Healthcare
PART 1: Building the Dream of Employment

Afternoon Panel

• Young Adults/Adults
• Employers
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

- Services, programs, and information to support gaining and maintaining employment
- Antidiscrimination laws
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Employee Resources

• Benefits Specialist
• Job Coach
• Natural Supports
• Assistive Technology
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Employer Resources

• Job Accommodations Network (JAN)
• Business Leadership Network
  – Sedgwick Co - www.blnsg.org
  – Kansas City Metro – www.gkcbln.org
• Ask EARN: Employer Assistance and Resource Network
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Supported Employment Providers

• Community Rehabilitation Providers
• Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDO)
• Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC)
• Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Services, Benefits, & Programs

- Career One-Stop/Workforce Centers
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Ticket To Work
- Kansas Medicaid
  - Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS)
  - Working Healthy
  - WORK Personal Assistance Services
- Transportation
- Work Incentives
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Other Funding & Information

- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Council on Developmental Disabilities
- ABLE Act
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)
- Others specific to the state
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Anti-discrimination Laws

• State
  – Employment First
  – Anti-discrimination

• Federal
  – ADA
  – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
PART 2: Identifying and Accessing Employment Resources

Young Adult Sessions

Afternoon Panel

• Local area resource/service provider organization representatives

KANSAS WORKS
“Your Workforce Network”

Family Employment Awareness Training
SO WHAT

How will this help me build my company and recruit the people I need in my company?
One Last Thought

I Can!

- [https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/psa-campaigns/i-can-psa/](https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/psa-campaigns/i-can-psa/)
Thank you

Celebrate “National Disability Employment Month” by considering what persons with disabilities might add to your workplace.