

2013-2016 Quasi-experimental Study of FEAT's Impact

Surveys

FEAT family participants indicated FEAT improved their expectations and knowledge, with perceptions of improved knowledge lasting at least a year following training. In addition, 68% of attendees reported sharing their FEAT materials with friends, family, and professionals and using the web resources. Families felt that FEAT positively influenced how they sought out and accessed resources and addressed and overcame barriers to employment.

Although FEAT was designed for families, approximately 50% of attendees in 2013-2016 were professionals (e.g., case managers, job coaches, employment specialists, transition coordinators, special educators), indicating a need for information among this population. Outcome data indicate that professionals who attended FEAT (a) improved their expectations for competitive employment of people with disabilities, (b) increased their use of employment resources, and (c) felt that attending FEAT was worthwhile and positively impacted the way that they helped people with disabilities to attain and maintain employment.

Interviews

Interviews with Spanish-speaking mothers indicated several key themes, including (a) discrimination in schools and the community, (b) a lack of information about special education and available resources, (c) limited transition services in high school, and (d) the power of collaboration. Participants reported a lack of translators in high schools and among service agencies, as well as information related to their children's IEP or high school services. Many also reported not seeking services in high schools or the community and a lack of trust in educators and service professionals, based on breakdowns in communication and frequent staff turnover. Despite these barriers, participants also discussed ways in which they collaborated and the importance and benefits of collaboration activities. In fact, one participant noted that "the school can have the best teachers, but if one doesn't work hand in hand, nothing can be achieved."

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