



Empowering families and students with disabilities through education, support, and resources

Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center

A logo for a Family Matters PTIC, with three individuals, two large and one small, in rust, green and light green, all reaching upward toward three stars. The words Family Matters are written below the logo, followed by Parent Training and Information Center, Established 2002.

UNDERSTANDING PARENT TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTERS

Section overview

What is a PTIC?

- Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICs) are federally funded organizations.
- They help families of children and young adults with disabilities navigate special education.
- PTICs provide training, information, and individualized support.
- Families learn their rights and how to advocate for appropriate services.

The Federal Parent Center Network

- Family Matters PTIC is part of a nationwide Parent Center network.
- Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- Located within the U.S. Department of Education.
- Ensures families nationwide have access to reliable support and information.

Our Guiding Principles

FMPTIC has adopted the following Guiding Principles:

- ***Parents have a comprehensive knowledge of their children.***
- ***Parents who know their children's rights can better advocate for their children.***
- ***The home, school and community are vital components when developing an education program.***
- ***All children are capable of learning and good behavior.***
- ***Students are entitled to appropriate technology and access to buildings, programs.***
- ***All school districts and parents are capable of cooperative relationships.***

The background features decorative curved lines in blue and orange, positioned in the top right and bottom left corners.

OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Section overview

1:1 Family Support

- Educational Support Coaches provide individualized assistance.
 - ***Help families understand IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) rights and protections.***
 - ***More on IDEA here:*** <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
 - Prepare families for full and productive participation in all IEP meetings.
 - Teach and support effective advocacy strategies for student needs.
 - Assist families in identifying priorities, progress, and areas of concern.

Training and Workshops

- Over 100 presentations delivered annually.
- Available both virtually and in person.
- Designed to increase family knowledge and confidence.
- Topics span early childhood through transition to adulthood (0-26).
- Partner with schools, community groups, & parent organizations.

COMPASS Series

- An asynchronous online learning curriculum.
- Designed for families who want deeper understanding of Special Education process and services.
- Launches soon – follow social media & sign up for newsletter for more information.

Resource Development

- Written guides and fact sheets.
- Educational videos and podcasts.
- Training curriculum materials.
- Resources for both families and professionals.

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TRAINING TOPICS

Section overview

Common Training Areas

- Early Intervention and Early Childhood services.
- Procedural Safeguards under IDEA.
- Special education eligibility and evaluation.
- Conflict resolution options.
- Family–school partnerships.
- Understanding the IEP document.

Advanced Training Topics

- Secondary transition planning.
- Behavioral and mental health supports in the IEP.
- Building effective behavior intervention plans.
- Developing Special Education Family Advisory Boards.

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SECONDARY TRANSITION SUPPORTS

Section overview

Transition Facilitator

- Transition Facilitator: Abbi Mars.
- Works with transition-aged youth.
- Provides both individual and group support.
- Ensures transition plans are person-centered.
- Utilizes Charting the LifeCourse tools.

**Abbi Mars, Transition
Facilitator**



Smiling woman,
shoulder length brown
hair, white shirt and black
cardigan

Supporting Students Transitioning to Adult Life

- Develop strong self-advocacy skills.
- Explore career and education pathways.
- Connect with community resources.
- Create plans reflecting their unique long-term goals.



LANGUAGE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Section overview

Bilingual and Multilingual Services

- Services provided in both Spanish and English.
- Interpretation technology allows support in many languages.
- Ensures families across Illinois can access information.
- Embedded Bilingual Educational Support Coach at Grupo Salto starting soon.



Community Partnerships



- Partnership with **Grupo Salto** supports Spanish-speaking families.
 - Collaboration expands culturally responsive outreach.
 - Helps reach underserved communities.

A blue circular logo with the words “GRUPO SALTO” on curved side banners. In the center, a silhouette of a child jumping appears inside a circle surrounded by words: “Informe, Integre, Compartilhe, Expresse, Comunique, Prepare, Acredite,” representing values related to communication, expression, preparation, belief, and sharing. A sunburst pattern radiates outward from the circle.
- Partnership with **The Arc of Illinois**
- Expands program reach
 - 1:1 support starting next year
 - Educational event facilitation

A logo for the Arc of Illinois, with words, The Arc in black, Illinois Below, and a gold wave across the top of the words.

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ADDITIONAL GRANT-FUNDED INITIATIVES

Section overview

Current Grant Programs

- PACER Project Launch: transition support for youth.
- Illinois Elevating Special Educators (SPDG).
- Educational Surrogate Parent Training through ISBE.



FAMILY QUESTIONS WE HELP ADDRESS

Section overview

Common Family Concerns

- Understanding discipline protections for students with disabilities.
- Accessing mental health and behavioral supports in the IEP process.
- Navigating the IEP and 504 plan process.
- Understanding Least Restrictive Environment and inclusion.
- Preparing for adult supports and community inclusion.
- Access to community resources and programs

Questions about FMPTIC

Do you attend IEP meetings?

✓ Sometimes. Due to limited staffing, we attend **in limited and specific circumstances**. Each request is **reviewed individually**, and when possible, participation is typically **via Zoom or Google Meet**.

Is there a cost for your services?

✓ **No**. Our **1:1 Educational Support Coach services are free** for families.

Can you provide a training for our program or organization?

✓ **Yes!** We welcome opportunities to partner with community programs and schools.

Trainings must:

- Focus on **special education topics**
- Serve **individuals ages 0–26 with disabilities and their families**
- **Include family participants**

✓ **Trainings are provided at no cost.**



A circular, multi-colored diagram with several segmented rings surrounding a blue center circle that contains an icon of people. The outer rings are divided into bright sections (purple, teal, orange, green, pink, and blue), suggesting interconnected components or supports around individuals and families.

Section overview

CHARTING THE LIFECOURSE

LifeCourse Framework

- Family Matters PTIC uses the Charting the LifeCourse framework.
- Supports person-centered planning across the lifespan.
- Helps families build strong support networks.
- Encourages community inclusion and meaningful life outcomes.

Explore Charting the LifeCourse Framework

here: <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/lifecourse-framework/>



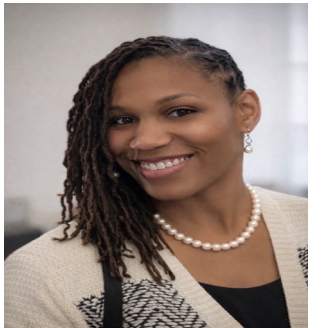
CONNECT WITH FAMILY MATTERS PTIC

Section overview

Ways to Stay Engaged

- Schedule appointments through our online booking system.
 - <https://outlook.office.com/book/FamilyMattersParentTrainingandInformationCenter1@fmptic.onmicrosoft.com/?ismsaljsauthenabled>
- Follow Family Matters PTIC on social media.
- Attend annual conferences and community listening sessions.
 - Special Education Virtual Summit (October)
 - Family Leaders Collaborative Conference
 - Coming Summer 2027, Youth Leadership Summit

Meet Our FMPTIC Team



Important Disclosures

- Family Matters PTIC provides information and support but not legal advice or guidance.
- Information received from FMPTIC should never be construed as legal guidance.
- Families should consult an attorney for legal matters.
- Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center is funded through a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.