Creating Effective School/Family Relationships:

- Have a *vision*;
- Get *educated*;
- Establish *relationships*;
- Be *goal oriented*;
- Keep *communicating*;
- Be *prepared*;
- Practice *flexibility*;
- Be *supported*.
Have a VISION.

- What are your hopes and dreams? Where is your child going after school is over?
- What is your child’s dream?
- What steps will it take to get there?
- Map out a plan because every decision, every action, is a piece of the puzzle that is your child’s life.
Get EDUCATED.

★ Get educated by getting connected to the people and resources who can inform and support you.
Getting Connected…

- **Join** an organization.
- **Get involved**: Participate at your child’s school, in the school district (PTA, SEPAC, Site Based Management, training events…). Get to know the decision makers at the State level. Network, network, network!
- Choose a **list serve** that meets your needs or satisfies your interests.
- **Sign up on the TEA Special Education Listserve**
- **Go to a conference.**
Know who to go to when you have a question or concern. Identify the experts so you don’t have to be one.

Understand the special education process and use it.

BE A STUDENT and know that you do not have to know it all. You just have to keep learning.
Build RELATIONSHIPS

- Communicate effectively.
- Be a collaborator.
- Provide support to your child’s teacher without overwhelming or micromanaging.
- Give the teachers tools to know WHAT WORKS with your child and give them the opportunity to get to know your child.
- Practice respect.
- Always be willing to “begin again.”
- Presume competence.
Be GOAL ORIENTED.

- What does your child need to do in order to achieve their dream?
- Be informed...Ask questions about what services and programs are available on your child’s campus to support them.
GOAL ORIENTED...

- **Share** your ideas/priorities with teachers and related services personnel. Be creative!
- **Ask for a draft of the IEP** prior to the ARD to insure that everyone is on the same page. No one likes surprises!
- **Get everything in the IEP.** It is the contract.
Keep COMMUNICATING

- Stay on top of homework.
- Stay on top of IEP goal progress.
- Develop a communication tool and keep the lines open. (Email, phone, notes?)
- Ask who your point of contact is and document it in the IEP.
- Let teachers know when there are circumstances at home that may affect your child in school.
Communicate!

- Know the teacher’s **conference period** and schedule appointments when there are concerns.
- Do not make ARD meetings an annual event, rather an **ongoing process**.
Be PREPARED.

- When signing an ARD Notice, request a draft of any new goals and any new evaluation information to be received BEFORE the meeting.
- Review the information, talk to the teachers and/or evaluators to seek clarification.
- Call a parent organization to seek support or to answer questions.
- Make a list of things you feel are important for your child to learn. Prioritize the list and be willing to compromise.
- Stay informed of changing laws and policies that may affect your child.
Practice FLEXIBILITY.

- Always try to understand the other perspective…*both are important!*
- If the team reaches an impasse or runs out of time, be prepared to walk away, gather more information and come back to the table.
Be SUPPORTED.

- Get to know other families who have children with disabilities. Share ideas, work together to prepare for ARD meetings and explore the possibilities together.

- Never go to an ARD meeting alone. Support and another ear are always important.
Celebrate A WHOLE LOT!