NTACT THE COLLABORATIVE | National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Walking the Walk of Youth Engagement as a TA Center

Sponsored by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C) and the RAISE Center, the Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI) is leading the way in youth engagement by providing a structured platform for young people with disabilities to develop critical advocacy, leadership, and problem-solving skills. YETI empowers youth to strengthen their voices, collaborate with professionals, and engage in impactful work that shapes policies and practices affecting their lives. With representation from 16 states, YETI ensures that youth perspectives are integrated into transition planning, disability advocacy, and leadership development.

Activities

- **Center Actions**
  - Provided training and technical assistance on youth leadership, advocacy, and self-determination.
  - Supported youth engagement in inter-agency secondary transition state teams.
  - Created digital resources, podcasts, and videos promoting youth leadership.
  - Hosted national webinars, peer mentorship programs, and learning communities.
  - Developed toolkits to guide youth-led initiatives and advocacy strategies.
- **Collaborative Partners**
  - NTACT:C, RAISE Center, and Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs).
  - State and local education agencies focused on youth transition.
  - National disability organizations supporting self-advocacy and leadership.
- **YETI Contributions**
  - Assisted states in forming and sustaining Youth Advisory Councils.
  - Engaged in public speaking at major conferences (CBI, RAISE Summit, OCALI).
  - Provided input on policy and service improvements for transition-aged youth.
  - Supported youth in securing employment through leadership and advocacy opportunities.

Impact

- **Expansion of Youth Engagement Nationwide:** YETI now includes young leaders from **16 states** and has influenced youth leadership efforts in over **30 states** and internationally.
- **Employment & Professional Growth: Eight YETI members** have secured paid employment directly from their participation in YETI, including positions in public speaking, research, consulting, and leadership.
- **Youth Leadership in Policy & Advocacy:** YETI members actively serve on state inter-agency transition teams, advisory boards, and national disability organizations.

Impact Continued

- **Recognition & Influence:**
  - *"Being part of YETI gave me the confidence to advocate for myself and others."*
  - *"We're not just at the table—we're shaping the conversation."*
  - Featured in **research publications, national grants, and media advocacy projects**.

Youth Voices

- Career Influence
- Inspiration
- Community

Lessons Learned

- Early and **intentional youth involvement** leads to sustained engagement and leadership.
- **Cross-agency collaboration** strengthens youth-led efforts and resource alignment.
- **Providing mentorship and training** enhances youth leadership development.
- **Flexibility and inclusivity** ensure engagement is meaningful for diverse youth populations.
- **Employment pathways must be integrated** into youth engagement efforts to support long-term success.

For more Information:

- NTACT:C Youth Engagement Resources: https://transitionta.org/topics/youth-engagement/
- Youth Engagement Now: https://yen.transitionta.org/