



AUTISM TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROJECT

What is success?

Rejecting traditional milestones in favor of authentic success

The Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project

The Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project (ATTA) develops and presents resources that assist individuals with autism in their transition from secondary education to postsecondary education or employment. ATTA provides training and support to important stakeholders as they work to provide an equitable experience for individuals on the spectrum.

The Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support

The Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS) creates, supports, and delivers professional development for education professionals across Illinois. ICSPS provides technical assistance, develops publications, and facilitates program improvement strategies for our partners as they relate to college transition, recruitment, retention, and completion—encouraging achievement of special populations learners. ICSPS was founded in 1977 at Illinois State University and is housed in the Educational Administration and Foundations department in the College of Education.





Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project (ATTA)

<https://autismcollegeandcareer.com>

icsps impacting educational equity



Illinois
State Board of
Education

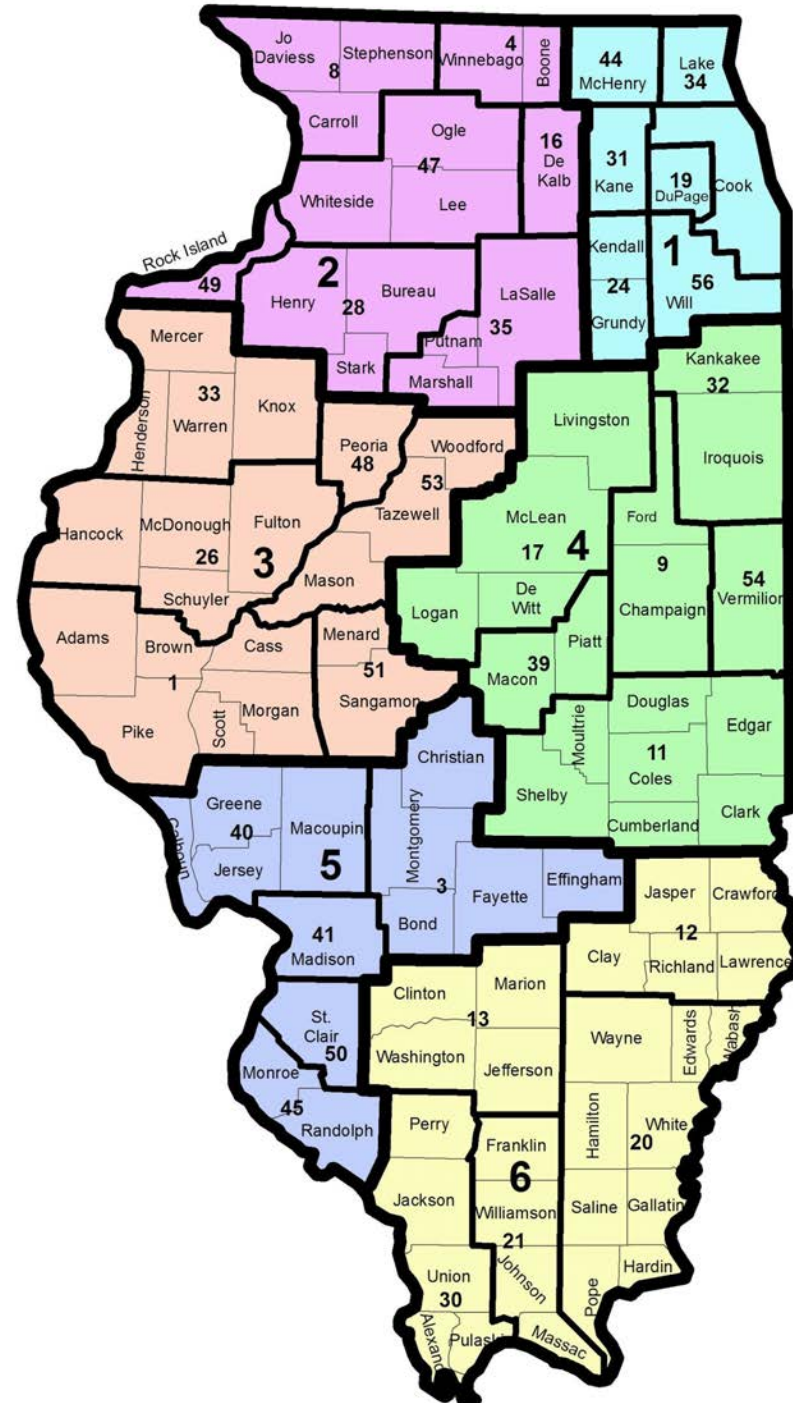


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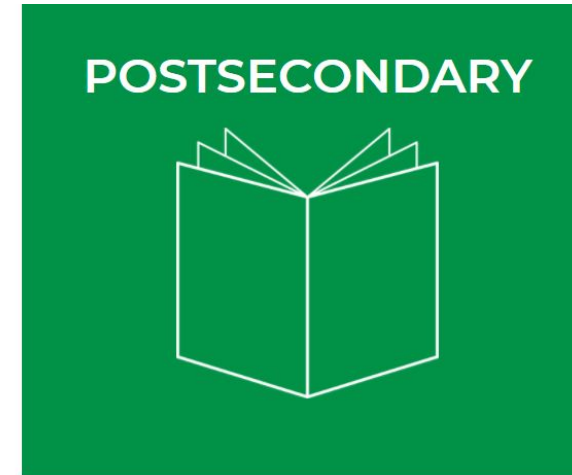
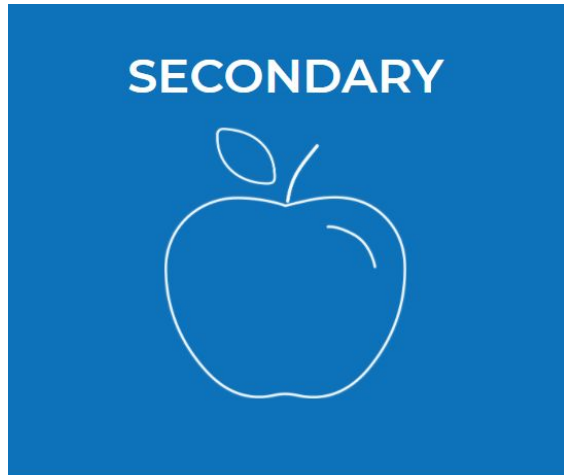


Which Region are you Located in?

1. Chicago
2. Northeast
3. Northwest
4. East Central
5. Southwest
6. Southeast



Which ATTA Stakeholder do you Represent?



Moderator Information



Presenter Information



icsps impacting
educational
equity



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AGENDA

- Thinking about success
- Identifying your own version of success
- Tools of success



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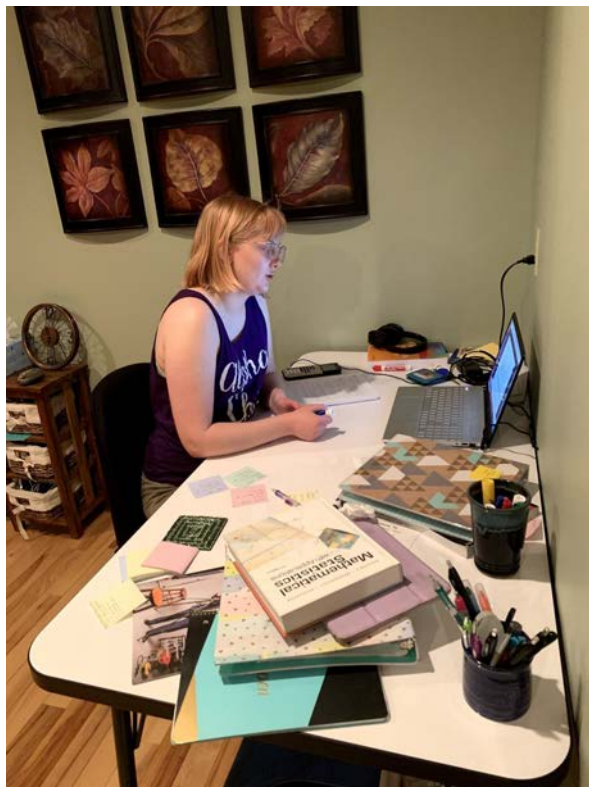
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Why we need to define success

and why I am the one telling you



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A bit about me



“Getting Better”

- Many disabilities are completely incurable with minimal mitigation strategies or therapies available
 - “How will I find success if these difficulties will never leave?”
- There are things a person may want to accomplish that are not feasible due to disability
- Life is hard in a way that sucks + life is always hard = life will always suck?
- I am the reason I will never be able to achieve certain dreams
- The struggles I fight I will have to fight for my whole life

Internal concept of success

- Knowing that your path to success is impacted by a disability
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Shame
 - Loneliness
 - Hopelessness
 - Anxiety

What does success look like for you?

- Everyone is faking their success
 - Don't think you have to measure up
- Success looks different in different situations
 - What makes you happy might not be what another person values
- Realistically, what do you need in your life? What are the tools you can use to get those things?

There is not a prize for doing things the hard way. Using your resources to your advantage is not just allowed but encouraged!





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It is **vitally important**, **absolutely imperative**, to understand that *there are ways to succeed and be happy.*

There are excellent things in life to see and do, and this can be difficult to remember when life throws a curveball

Know yourself to grow yourself

- What are your areas of strength, regardless of if it is a strength that you want?
- What are your areas of difficulty, even if they contradict what you want to do?
- What are your true values and goals, not what you or society thinks is impressive?
- What really helps and hurts you? What actually makes you happy? Look beyond what you THINK and acknowledge your actual interactions.

Standards of success

- What is and isn't ok to do, want, or need
- Academic/career timeline
- Social timeline
- Independence timeline

It is more important to do things in a way that works than to do them in the way that is supposed to work

Separate milestones

- Full time student
- Degree in 4 years
- Leave home for college
- Independent living
- Self sufficient

This includes social milestones

e.g. just because you are in college does not mean that you have to be in a relationship

- A schedule that allows comfort and health
 - Half days/reduced class load
 - Extra semester or year
- Only take on what is reasonable for you
- Be humble and get help from others

Diligent Dedication vs Adaptive Change

- Not a decision of one or the other, but rather the different mindsets required for different tasks
- Day by day, mid-distance goals, long term goals
- Prioritization and willingness to take care of yourself
- Juggling many balls - some are plastic and some are glass
 - it is ok to drop the plastic balls sometimes
 - eat cereal for dinner if you are too tired to cook, cancel plans with a friend if you need to stay home and rest

How to prioritize

- **Prioritize outside your head**
 - talk, write, put it in your calendar
- **Ask for advice from trusted people**
- **Utilize resources**
 - Apps
 - Organizational tools
 - Mentors or therapists
- **Go back to your values and goals**

No man is an island

- It is vital to accept help in various forms
- What are my choices? What is a way to do this that would work better for me? Who are the people who can help me succeed?
- Parents
- Teachers
- Counselors/Therapists
- Mentors
- Friends

What does help look like?

- Areas where help can be received
 - Advocacy
 - Time management
 - Academic accommodations
 - Independence supports
 - Social supports
 - Emotional supports

Assignment help

- Meeting for office hours
- Showing an example of what the completed assignment should look like
- Suggesting places to look for guidance
- Allowing an extension

The problem often is not lack of effort but rather difficulty properly directing that effort

Clarity and truth telling

It can be difficult to make good decisions when you don't know what makes that decision good - truth tellers can help

- What are my choices?
- Best case, worst case, most likely outcomes
- Is a concern a real problem or just anxiety
- What sounds fun vs what will work well
- Difficulties and benefits to an option

To ND or not to ND...

Benefits of diagnosis

- Know self and needs better
- Understand communication with others
- Access to resources
- Connection to a community

Perceived drawbacks*

- Know you are different
- Judgement from others
- Exclusion from opportunities



Wrapping up thoughts



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Questions and Conversation

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