



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 28, 2024  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities  
Route To: Directors of Special Education, Principals, Child Study Team Members, Teachers  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## **2024-2025 Training Opportunities for Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST)**

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in partnership with the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, is sponsoring training sessions on Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST). Person-centered approaches are applicable to all students ages three through twenty-one. PCAST staff from the Boggs Center facilitate training sessions that explore the use of person-centered approaches, including, but not limited to, facilitating individual person-centered plans, classroom implementation, and developing more person-centered Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and processes. This includes focusing on improving the transition from school to adult life.

The PCAST project has been built on a foundation of respect, trust, and partnership with educators, families, and students working together to provide holistic person-centered support for students in both elementary and secondary education. All person-centered approaches involve a continuous process of discovery that engages educators, students, and families with the goal of developing a deep understanding of each student and supporting the personal vision for a positive future.

The PCAST workshops described below will be available to educators, students, and family members statewide using the Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) and other locations throughout the state. Virtual sessions may be offered for select sessions. See the registration webpage link below for additional information.

### **PCAST Workshop 1: An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals**

Participants will be trained in the use and facilitation of a person-centered planning process. Participants will learn fundamental skills, including how to use planning tools and processes to implement person-centered approaches with students. Methods for gathering, organizing, and presenting person-centered information, as well as implementing strategies designed to improve student planning, support, and post-school outcomes will be covered.

### **PCAST Workshop 2: Utilizing Person-Centered Approaches to Improve IEP Meetings**

This workshop will teach person-centered thinking skills and introduce tools designed to improve the quality of collaborative meetings, specifically IEP meetings. Participants will leave with practical strategies and tools related to pre-meeting preparation, effective communication, management of difficult conversations and situations, approaches to sensitive topics, New Jersey Administrative Code requirements, and post-meeting implementation. Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.

### **PCAST Workshop 3: Developing Group Person-Centered Planning with Students**

Participants will learn how to unbundle the skills and tools used in formal facilitated person-centered planning events for use with groups of students in the classroom while strengthening their person-centered planning skills. Each participant will draft a group instruction implementation plan with associated outcomes and actions designed to meet the needs of the students they will be supporting. Example implementation frameworks will be used to assist participants in customizing strategies. Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.

### **PCAST Supplemental Workshop 1: Supported Decision-Making (SDM) in Person-Centered Practices**

Participants will learn specific skills, tools and strategies needed for building decision-making capacity in students of all ages. Participants will share strategies and barriers through group discussions and will develop individual action plans to support the implementation of what is learned. Resources will be shared that help build SDM into planning processes including group planning efforts in classroom settings. This module is designed as a supplement to the Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation workshop. That training is therefore highly recommended.

### **PCAST Supplemental Workshop 2: Culturally Responsive Facilitation in Person-Centered Practice**

Participants will use person-centered thinking skills and tools to learn about implicit bias, microaggressions, and culturally relevant practices. These tools and related activities will help participants to develop and enhance facilitation skills that are culturally relevant to students, families, and communities. Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.

### **PCAST Supplemental Workshop 3: Supporting the Participation of Students Who Use Limited Words to Communicate in Person-Centered Planning**

This workshop will share person-centered strategies developed in New Jersey schools to assist team members in supporting students who use limited words to communicate. Participants will leave the session with ready-to-implement tools and approaches they can use to increase student participation in their planning. Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.

### **Registration**

Please find all the information and instructions for registering for sessions on the [PCAST Registration Webpage](#).

*Note:* There is no charge to participate in any of the training sessions. Funding for these workshops is provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. Local educational agencies are encouraged to identify and invite parents to attend these training sessions. Questions regarding this series can be emailed to [oseinfo@doe.nj.gov](mailto:oseinfo@doe.nj.gov).

c: Members, State Board of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group