

## FAMILY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM



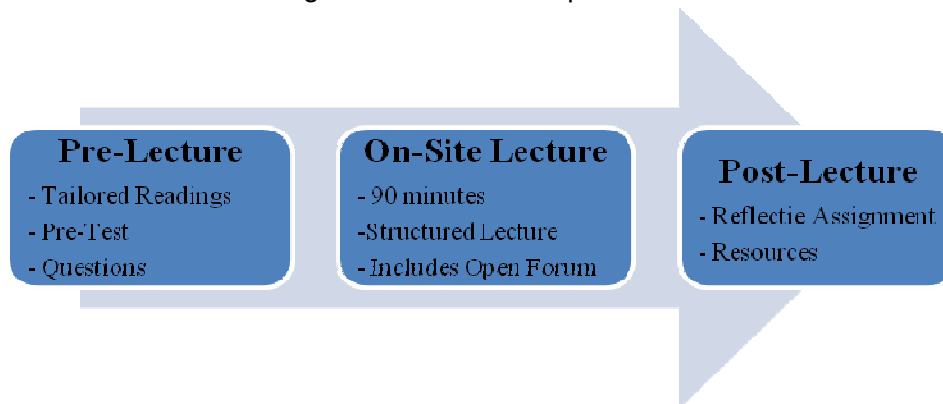
The PEAC Family Connections Program (FCP) provides teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education with access to guest lecturers and resources that represent **parent and family perspectives on special education and related topics**. Through the FCP, parents of students with disabilities provide professional training and support to students and professors of education, psychology, speech pathology, etc. in order to encourage family-professional collaboration and the successful education of diverse learners. The FCP focuses on relevant teacher competency requirements as outlined in Chapter 49 of the Pennsylvania Administrative Code, including:

- To demonstrate the ability to positively interact with economically, culturally and linguistically diverse families. (I-B4)
- To identify how the family's culture and values affect how they view disabilities. ( I-B6)
- To collaborate with all team members, including family members, to plan for and educate the student in a way that will maximize his/her educational experience. ( VII-A)
- To collaborate with parents and other IEP team members for effective behavior management techniques that have been successful with students. (VII-D)
- To implement strategies to address concerns of students and families. ( VII-J)
- To collaborate with the student and family to identify and plan post-school outcomes (vocational, social, and employment needs) based on student's functional, academic and vocational needs. (VIII-D)
- To demonstrate an understanding of the meaningful roles that parents and students play in the development of the student's education program. (G-5)
- To demonstrate sensitivity for multicultural and economic perspectives in order to encourage parent participation. (G-6)
- To demonstrate an understanding of how to support student and family communication and meaningful participation in the student's educational program. (G-7)

**“THE PARENT PERSPECTIVE IS CRITICAL.”**

The **Family Connections Program** provides students and professors the followings resources:

- (1) Pre-lecture materials, including selected readings based on the course level and specific subject area (e.g. graduate vs. undergraduate); a pre-test of student perceptions; and discussion questions that stimulate interest and address controversy;
- (2) On-site lecture by a Parent Consultant and an open-ended discussion forum; and
- (3) Post-lecture reflective assignment and follow-up resources.



**On-Site Lecture:** The in-class lecture requires at least 90 minutes of class time and includes:

- (1) The values inclusion, normalization, and equity;
- (2) The personalized story of one family, demonstrating both best practices and challenges that families often face in advocating for the education of their children;
- (3) Guidelines for enhancing participation of families in the provision of special education services, pitfalls to avoid and effective practices that foster collaboration, ways to assure that families are authentic members of the IEP team, how to promote open communication, and the difference between “equity” and “equality.”
- (4) An open forum for questions and a frank discussion of family life, raising a child with a disability, and managing special education services.

**Topical Lecture Series:** In addition to the above-mentioned topics, Parent Consultants provide lectures on the following topics that might be more aligned with the specific focus of a class:

- Inclusive Education
- Family Perspectives on Special Education (from Identification to Assessment)
- Promoting Authentic Family Participation in Special Education (Collaboration and Communication)
- Family Members with Disabilities: Benefits and Challenges
- Specific Disability (e.g. Autism) in the Family