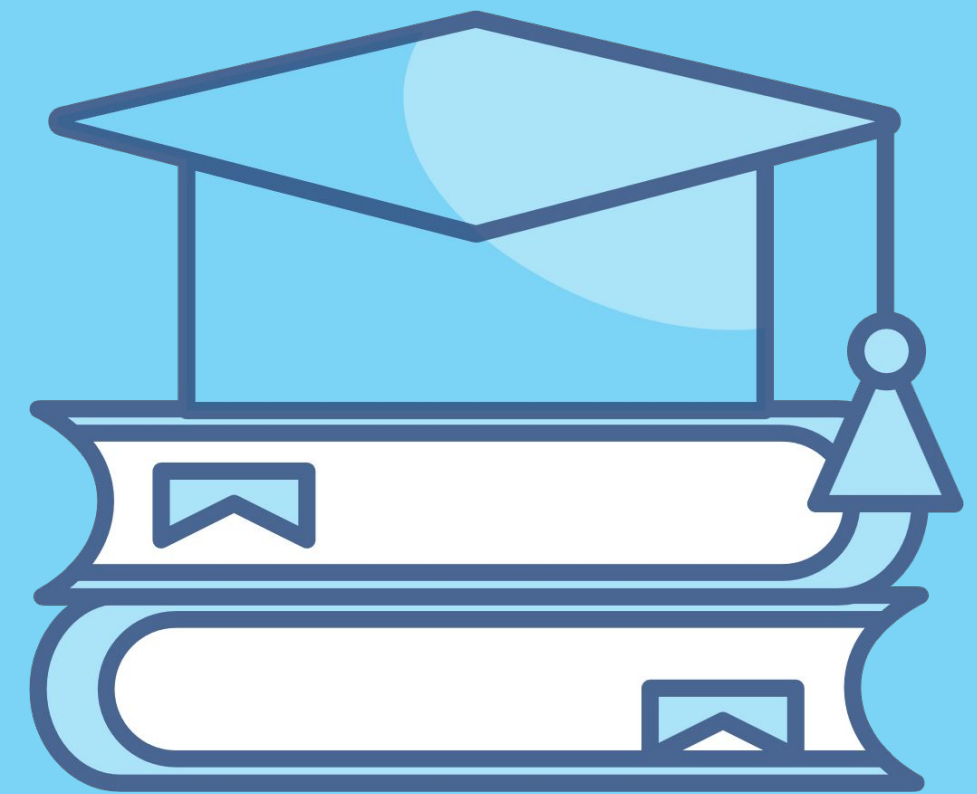


# EMPOWERING NEURODIVERGENT SUCCESS:

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SEAMLESS  
TRANSITIONS



PRESENTED BY: KRISTEN C. ECCLESTON, ED. D.



# SESSION DESCRIPTION

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Join Dr. Kristen Eccleston, a distinguished expert in neurodiversity and mental health within educational settings, for a transformative session on fostering student success through collaboration. With a rich background in Special Education and a deep understanding of the neurodiverse brain, Dr. Eccleston will guide parents through the critical transitions their children face, from early education to post-secondary pathways. This presentation will illuminate the power of tailored educational planning, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and the role of parents, educators, and specialists in creating a supportive network. Learn practical strategies for advocating for your child, enhancing their mental health, and navigating school avoidance, all aimed at unlocking the full potential of neurodivergent students. Engage with Dr. Eccleston in a thought-provoking Q&A session, where you can seek advice and support tailored to your child's unique journey. Together, we can put the pieces together for a future where every student thrives.



# PRESENTATION TAKE AWAYS

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Collaborative Support Systems



Personalized Educational Strategies



Empowerment Through Advocacy



Interactive Engagement for Tailored Insights

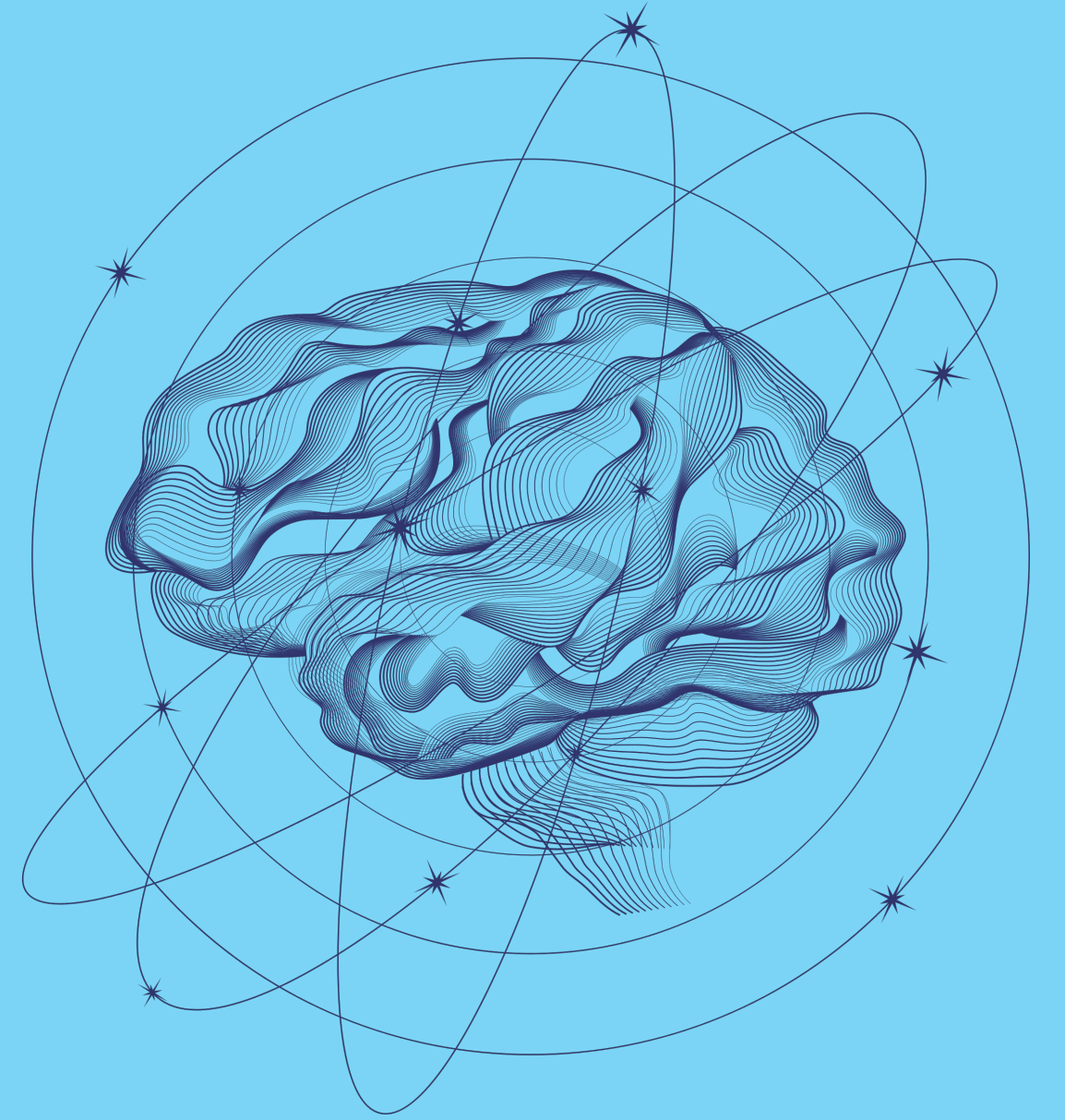
## Opening Poll: Question #1

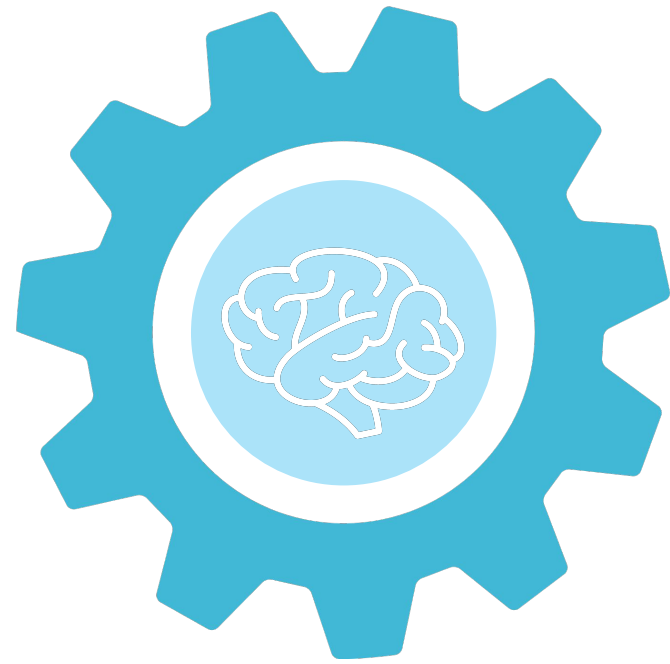
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**What information are you hoping to hear the most about during today's session?**

- **Transition**
- **Mental Health/School Avoidance**
- **Working w/ an Advocate**
- **Being able to ask general questions**

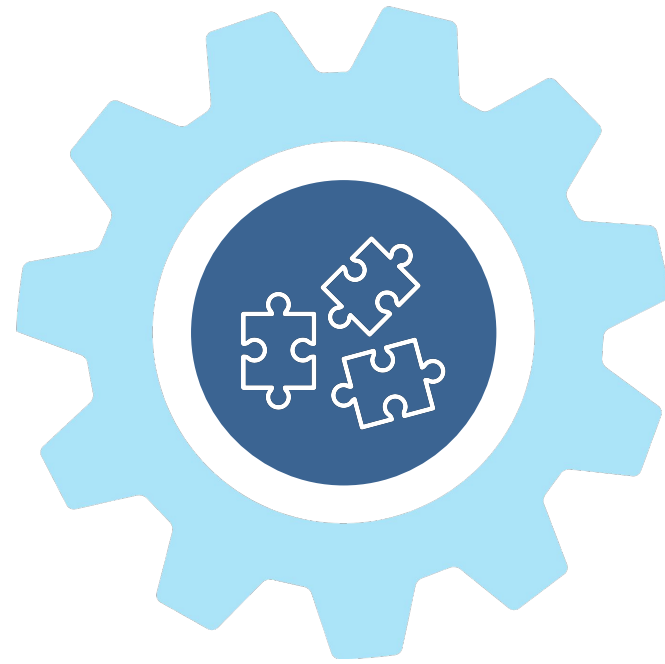
# THE ESSENCE OF NEURODIVERSITY





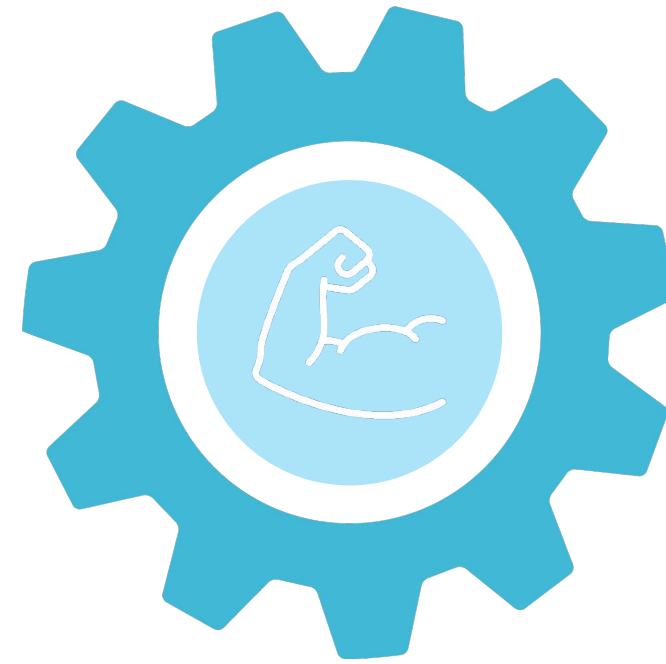
## Neurodiversity Defined

A perspective that brain differences are normal, rather than deficits.



## Spectrum of Neurodivergent

Includes autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other neurological variations.



## Strengths and Challenges

Emphasizing the unique strengths neurodivergent individuals bring, alongside the challenges they may face.

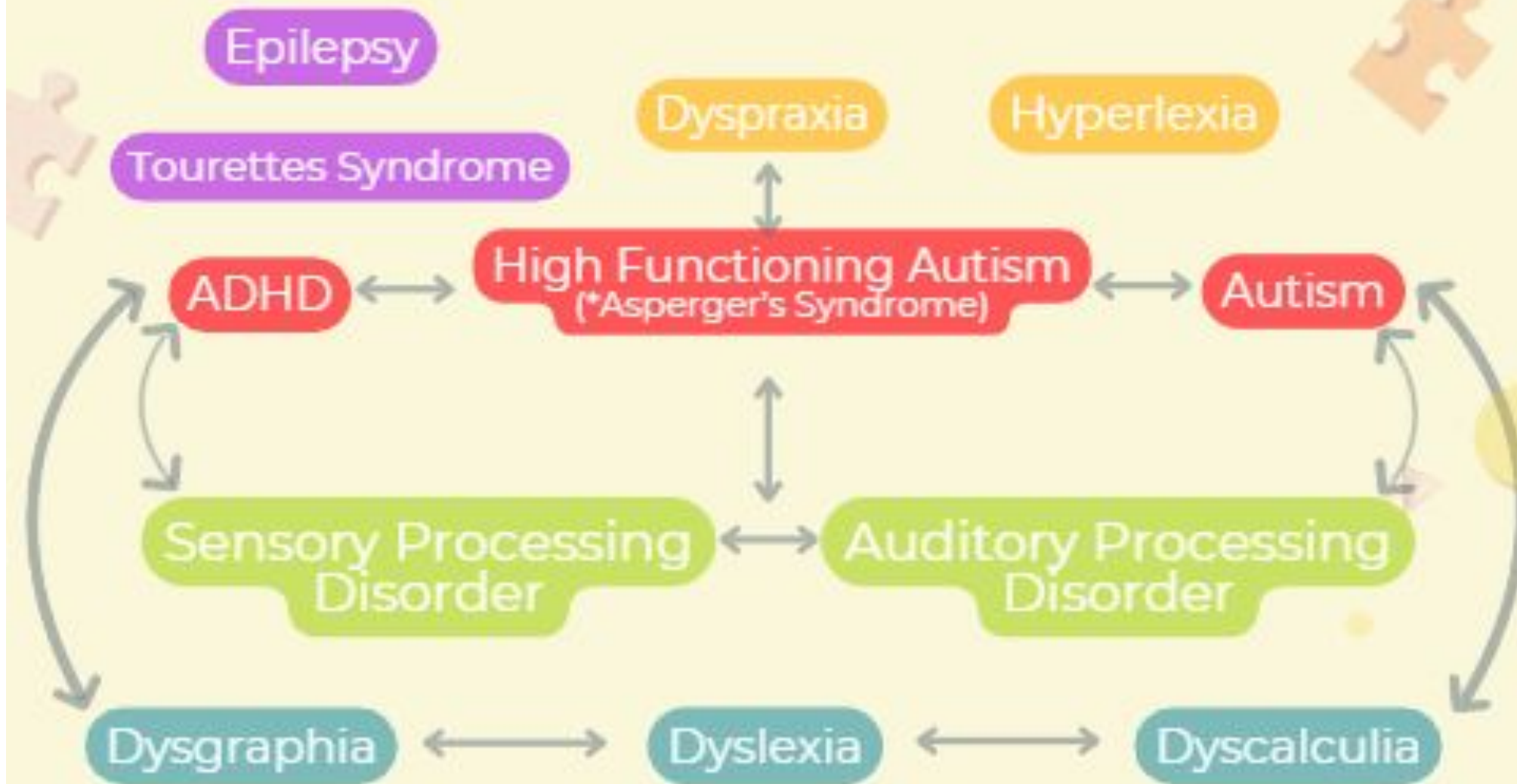


## Importance of Inclusion

The value of creating inclusive environments that celebrate and support neurodiversity.



# Neurodivergent Family Tree



**The Hidden Beauty of a Neurodiverse Mind | Tasha Jackson | TEDx Lake Travis High**





# COLLABORATION AS A KEYSTONE



# Collaboration as a Keystone



## **The Trio of Support**

Parents, Advocates,  
and Schools working  
together.



## **Role of an Advocate**

Guiding families  
through the IEP  
process and  
educational rights.



## **When to Consider a Special Education Lawyer**

Navigating disputes and  
legal challenges.



## **The Power of Collaboration**

Achieving the best outcomes  
for neurodivergent students.

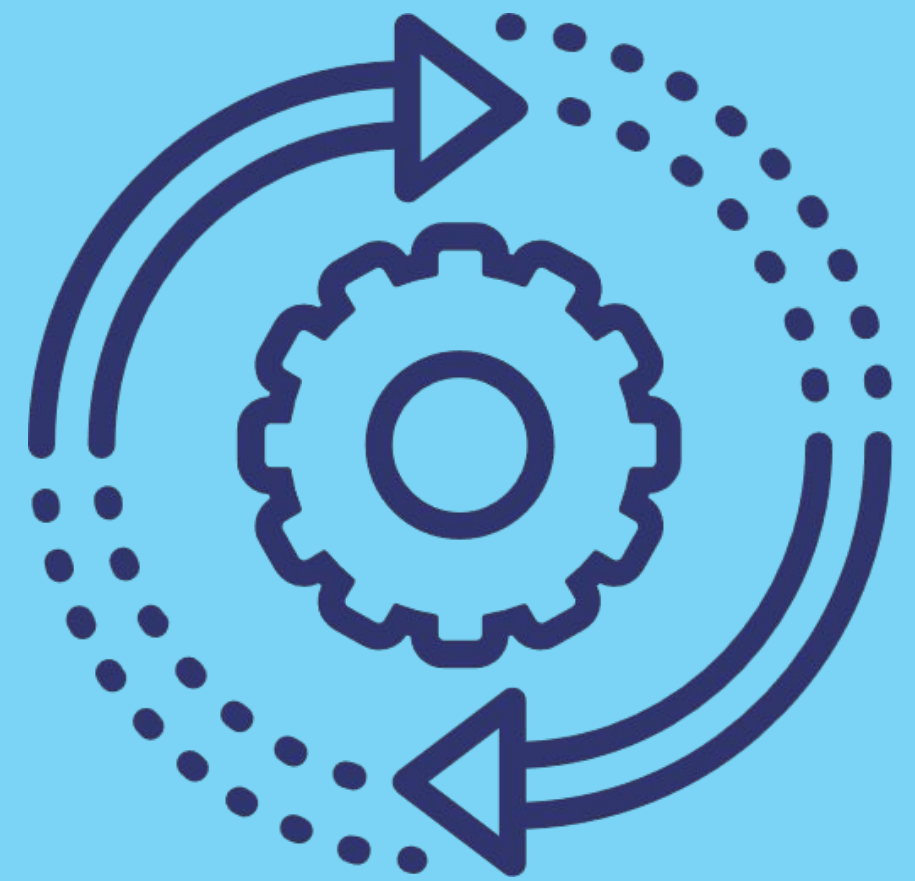
## Poll Question #2

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**What has been your experience in collaborating with schools for your child's education? Select all that apply.**

- **Smooth and effective collaboration**
- **Some challenges, but generally positive**
- **Difficult and frustrating**
- **Used an advocate and saw improvement**
- **Considered or used a special education lawyer**
- **No experience yet, seeking information**

# SMOOTH TRANSITIONS IN EDUCATION





**Key Transition Phases**

Elementary to middle, middle to high school, and beyond

**Transition Meetings**

Essential planning for seamless transitions

**College Disability Services & Special Needs Programs**

Tailored support in higher education

**Role of the Special Education Transition Teacher**

A guide through each transition phase

**Pathways to Independence Programs**

Structured support for life after high school



## Poll Question #3

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**As you think about your child's future transitions, which areas are you most concerned about? Select all that apply.**

- **Adjusting to new routines and environments in each educational phase**
- **Ensuring continuity of academic support and accommodations**
- **Communication and planning between current and future educational institutions**
- **Social integration and making new friends**
- **Accessing and utilizing college disability services and special needs programs**
- **Finding and engaging with Failure to Launch programs for structured post-high school support**

# THE POWER OF SECTION 504 & IEPs



A circular icon with a light blue background and a darker blue border. Inside the circle, there is a dark blue line-art icon of a folder with a gear. The folder is open, showing several pages of text. The gear is positioned in the bottom right corner of the folder.

## 504 Plan vs. IEP:

Key differences and purposes.

## Transitioning from a 504 Plan to an IEP:

When and why.

## Obtaining a 504 Plan or an IEP:

Overview of the process.

## Beyond Academics:

Addressing social and emotional needs through an IEP.

Q & A



# ADVOCACY FOR EMPOWERMENT





## **Behavioral Insights**

Internalizing vs.  
Externalizing  
Students

## **Education Settings**

Navigating Public vs.  
Private

## **Mental Health**

Role in Educational  
Success

## **Red Flags**

Key Indicators in  
Internalizing  
Students



## **Advocacy Best Practices**

Strategies for  
Supporting All  
Learners

## **School Avoidance**

Understanding and  
Addressing the Issue

## The Art of Advocacy for Parents of Children and Youth with Special Needs



# CREATING A SUPPORT NETWORK





## Community Connections

Leveraging social media for support



## Organizational Resources

NAMI and other advocacy groups



## Local Support

Schools, clinics, and community centers



## Online Forums

Safe spaces for sharing and learning

## Action Items:

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- **Create a List:** Start by creating a list of potential resources and groups you are interested in exploring based on your child's needs and/or your own support needs.
- **Engage Actively:** Actively engage with your identified groups by asking questions, participating in discussions, and attending meetings or events when possible.
- **Share Resources:** Share resources and experiences within your own networks to help others in similar situations.



# PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION



# Engaging with Your Child's Education

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Active Participation



Asking Questions



Collaboration with Educators



Empowering self-advocacy

## STUDENT'S SERVICES



### SUPPLEMENTARY

1. Chunking of projects and assignments longer than one page
2. Extra time to complete assignments (up to one additional class period)
3. Frequent Breaks
4. Given 2 choices for task completion
5. Reduced Assignments by 50%
6. Sensory breaks and use of fidget
7. Small group setting for benchmark testing
8. Use of headphones
9. Voluntary responses for class discussion



### SPECIAL ED. SERVICES

- Academic enrichment (10 Minutes Per Month)
- Social Skills through Learning Skills (900 Minutes Per Month)



### TIMING ACCOMMODATIONS

FOR STATE TESTING

- Extra breaks (no studying) Allowed for: WVGSA Grades 3-8, SAT School Day, and ELPA2I
- Separate setting (small group) Allowed for: WVGSA Grades 3-8, SAT School Day, and ELPA2I

## Poll Question #4

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**What techniques have you found most effective for engaging with your child's education and advocating for their needs?**

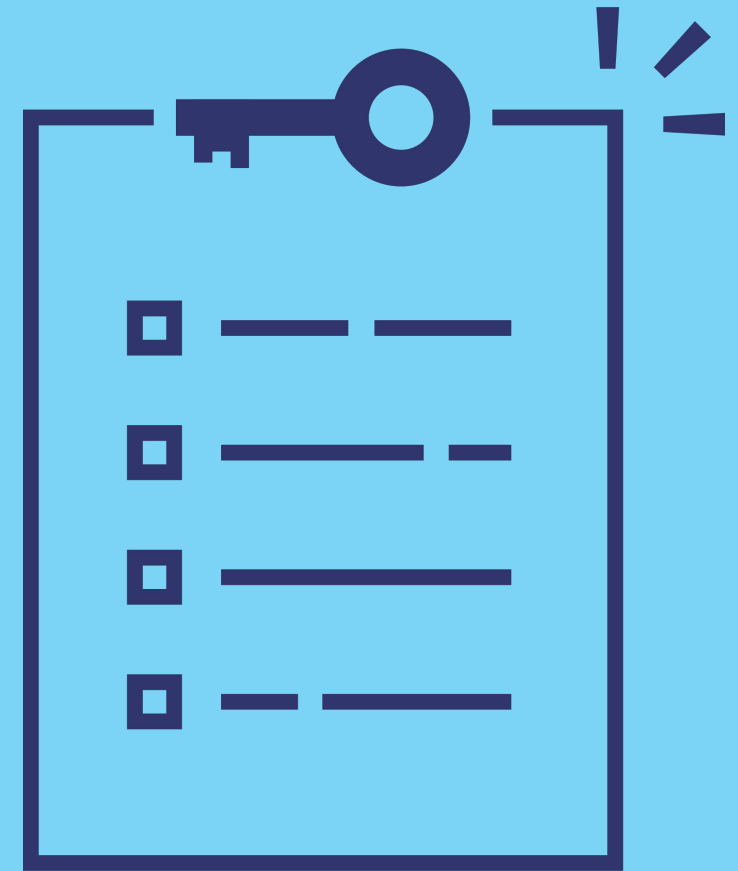
- **Regular meetings with teachers and staff**
- **Creating and sharing a one-page profile about my child**
- **Encouraging my child to ask questions and advocate for themselves**
- **Participating in parent-teacher associations (PTAs) or similar groups**
- **Attending workshops or training on special education rights and strategies**
- **Other (please specify)**

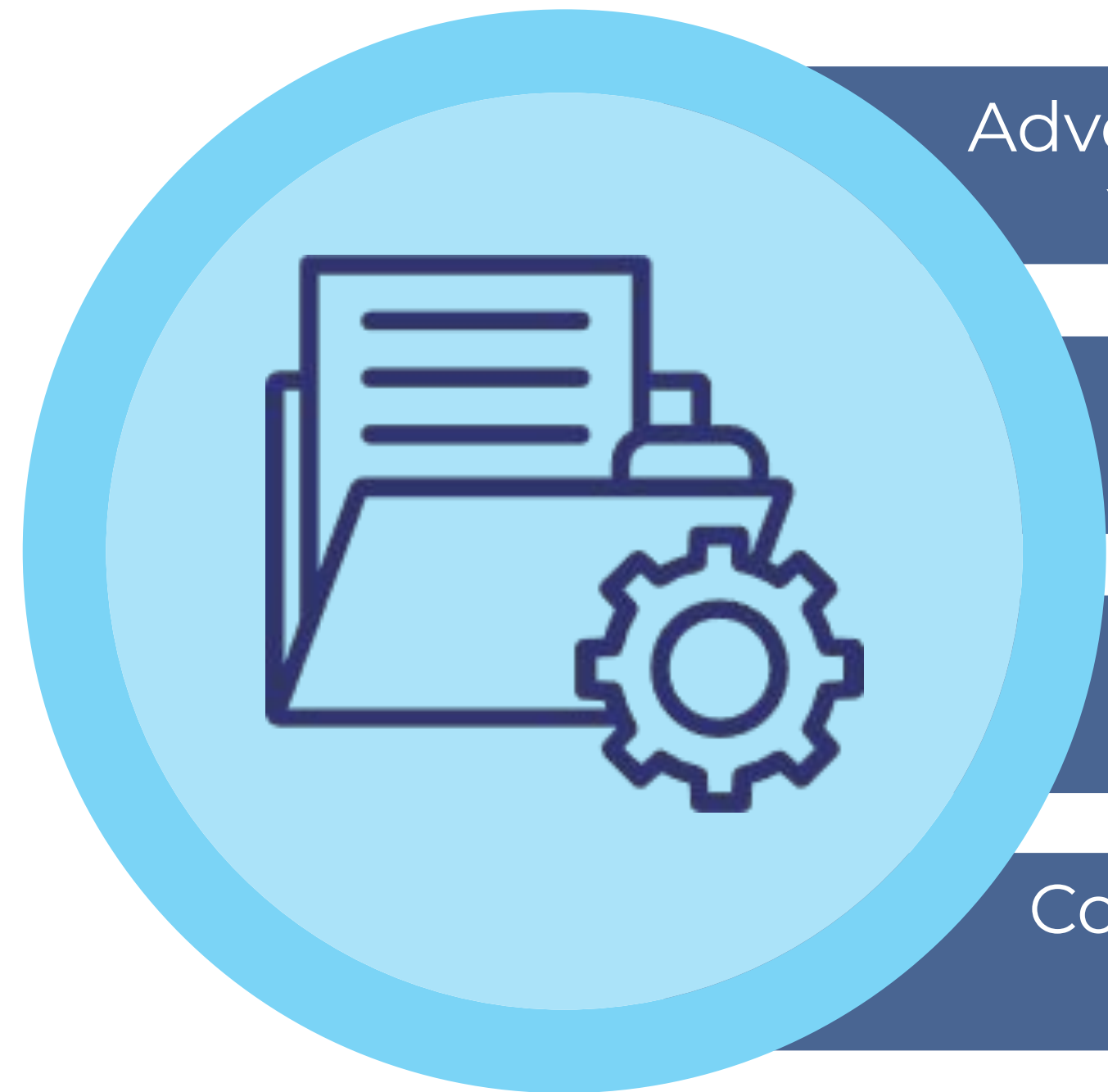
Q & A





# KEY TAKEAWAYS & ACTIONABLE STEPS





### Advocates:

Your partner in navigating special education

### Online Resources:

Accessible support and information.

### Webinars:

Ongoing education and engagement.

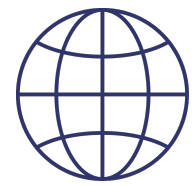
### Community

# CLOSING REMARKS



# THANK YOU

## Let's Connect:



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