

PIECING IT TOGETHER

The Official Newsletter of WVPTI, Inc.

May/June 2025



☀️ *From the Director's Desk: Summer is Almost Here* ☀️



As the blooms of spring give way to the golden glow of summer, I reflect on the beauty of this time of year. Hello, parents, students, and families! My name is Brenda Lamkin, and I am the Executive Director of West Virginia Parent Training and Information (WVPTI). It's a season of change, renewal, and celebration.

May is filled with milestones—graduations, the final ring of school bells, the start of family vacations, and the buzz of summer camp preparations. For our families of children with developmental delays and disabilities, this time can bring both joy and new questions: How can I keep my child engaged over the summer? What resources are available? Where can we turn for inclusive activities and support?

This edition of our newsletter is all about helping you make the most of summer. Whether finding community events, exploring educational resources to prevent summer learning loss, or accessing fun programs that support your child's growth and social skills, we've put together some ideas and tips for every family.

We hope this issue inspires you and equips you with what you need to make the season joyful, enriching, and full of possibilities.

Wishing you a safe, sunny, and adventure-filled summer!


Best,

Brenda Lamkin

Executive Director, WV Parent Training and Information

1. Explore Local Inclusive Summer Camps


Many communities throughout West Virginia offer summer camps specifically designed for children and youth with developmental delays and disabilities. These programs often include trained staff, accessible activities, and peer socialization opportunities.

 **Tip:** Contact your local Parks and Recreation Department or YMCA to inquire about camp offerings.

2. Create a Daily Summer Routine

Transitioning from school-year structure to summer break can be overwhelming for many children. A flexible but predictable routine can help maintain a sense of stability. Consider setting aside daily time blocks for:

- Outdoor play or walks
- Creative time (arts and crafts)
- Academic refreshers (reading time, learning games)
- Sensory-friendly relaxation activities

 **Try This:** Use visual schedules with pictures or symbols to support children benefiting from structured transitions.

3. Dive into Nature and Sensory Play

Summer is a perfect time for outdoor sensory experiences. Some family-friendly and developmentally enriching activities include:

- Water play (sprinklers, water tables, squirt bottles)
- Nature walks with sensory scavenger hunts
- Gardening together and exploring soil textures
- Collecting and sorting natural objects like shells, leaves, or rocks

 Nature is a calming and rich environment for exploration and growth!

Avoiding the “Summer Slide”: Learning Through Play

Summer can still be a time of learning—even without the textbooks. Here are ways to keep young minds sharp:

Literacy Fun

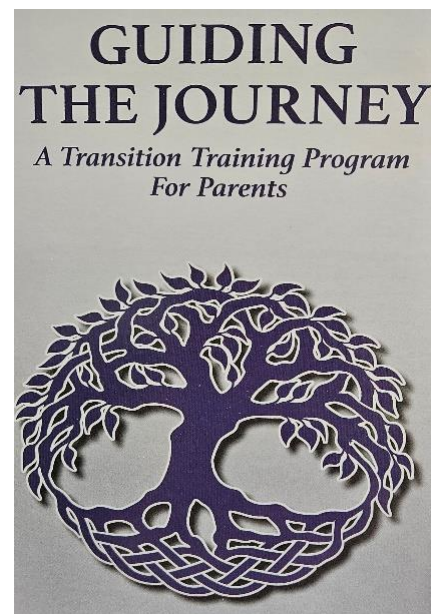
- **Create a summer reading nook** with books at your child’s reading level.
- **Story time with siblings or family members** helps build connection and comprehension.
- Audiobooks are great for road trips or winding down at bedtime.

Math in Daily Life

- Let your child help **measure ingredients** while cooking.
- Count coins during family chores or lemonade stand activities.
- Use sidewalk chalk to draw and solve math problems or shapes.

Seasons of Growth: Beginning with the End in Mind

Summer is a time of sunshine, exploration, and treasured moments with family - a season bursting with possibility and unforgettable memories. Yet as the golden days wind down, the rhythm of back-to-school routines brings fresh opportunities for growth and transformation. As your family prepares for the next chapter in your child’s life this fall, don’t miss the chance to enroll in Guiding the Journey: A Parent’s Transition (Youth to Adulthood) Training Program. Designed with the future in mind, this dynamic program empowers parents and caregivers to support their youth, from early years to graduation, as they prepare for adulthood. It’s never too early to start planning for success and setting future goals. Registration opens in May 2025 on our website - secure your spot early and step confidently into the journey ahead! WVPTI is thrilled to be starting this 3rd year of GTJ.



WV Parent Training and Information – Out and About

WV Parent Training and Information (WVPTI) recently joined the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) state team for the NTAC-CBI training session in Charlotte, North Carolina. The training focused on enhancing Transition to Adulthood outcomes for students with disabilities, bringing together education professionals, Parent Training Centers staff, the Division of Rehabilitation staff, and others to collaborate on effective strategies. WVPTI was proud to contribute a family-centered



perspective to the discussions. A special highlight of the event was when our Executive Director had the unique opportunity to meet the NTAC-CBI Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI), adding a fun and memorable moment to a powerful learning experience.



In April, Dianne Aman represented WV Parent Training and Information (WVPTI) at Calhoun County's Student Interest Day. She had a meaningful and engaging experience during the event, forming valuable connections with students, educators, and fellow participants. Dianne shared information about WVPTI's services and resources for families of children and youth with disabilities while listening to the needs and interests of the staff, parents, and local community. Her presence helped foster greater awareness of family engagement and advocacy for their children in

education, and she looks forward to continuing these critical conversations in future collaborations.

Tammy Taylor Lane, one of WVPTI's dedicated Parent Engagement Specialists, was out connecting with families and community partners at the Nicholas County Parent Expo on May 17, 2025. With her warm energy and wealth of knowledge, Tammy shared valuable resources and support for all families of children with disabilities and developmental delays.



But she's not done yet! Later this month, she'll bring that same enthusiasm to the Fayette County Parent Palooza, where she'll continue to spread awareness of our services to all families, build connections, and empower parents across the region. Stay tuned for more updates as Tammy helps WVPTI make a meaningful impact - one event at a time!

WV PTI Hosts Wrightslaw Training with Pete Wright, Esq.

On May 3, 2025, WV Parent Training and Information (WV PTI) was honored to host a powerful afternoon of learning with nationally recognized special education attorney and advocate, Pete Wright, Esq., of Wrightslaw.



Families, educators, and professionals from across the state gathered to gain valuable knowledge on special education law, advocacy strategies, and student rights under IDEA and Section 504. Pete delivered a dynamic and engaging presentation, equipping attendees with tools to better understand and navigate the complex systems that impact students with disabilities.

The session concluded with an open Q&A, where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and receive direct guidance from Pete—an incredibly informative and inspiring experience for all involved.

We thank Pete Wright and all who attended for making this event a resounding success. WV PTI remains committed to empowering families through education, resources, and support.

We're Here for You – Individualized Support & Advocacy

WVPTI provides **ongoing one-on-one assistance** to families navigating special education, healthcare, and disability services. Our team offers:

- ✓ **Personalized guidance** for parents, caregivers, and youth with disabilities
- ✓ **Limited attendance at IEP, 504, and healthcare meetings** (based on protocol)
- ✓ **Resources and strategies** for self-advocacy and educational success

Our goal is to ensure that families feel empowered, heard, and equipped to advocate for their child's needs. If you need support, we're just a call or email away!

Join Us in Building a Brighter Future!

Your voice matters; together, we can make a difference in the lives of children and youth with disabilities across West Virginia. Whether you're a parent seeking support, a professional looking to expand your knowledge, or a youth eager to advocate for your future—we invite you to be part of our community.

♥ Stay Connected with WVPTI!

🌐 **Visit us online:** <http://www.wvpti-inc.org/>

✉ **Email us:** wvpti@aol.com

📱 **Follow us on social media:**



Thank you for being part of the WVPTI family. Meeting parents where they are! Here's to another year of advocacy, education, and empowerment!

#WVPTI #34YearsStrong #EmpowerAdvocateSucceed



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