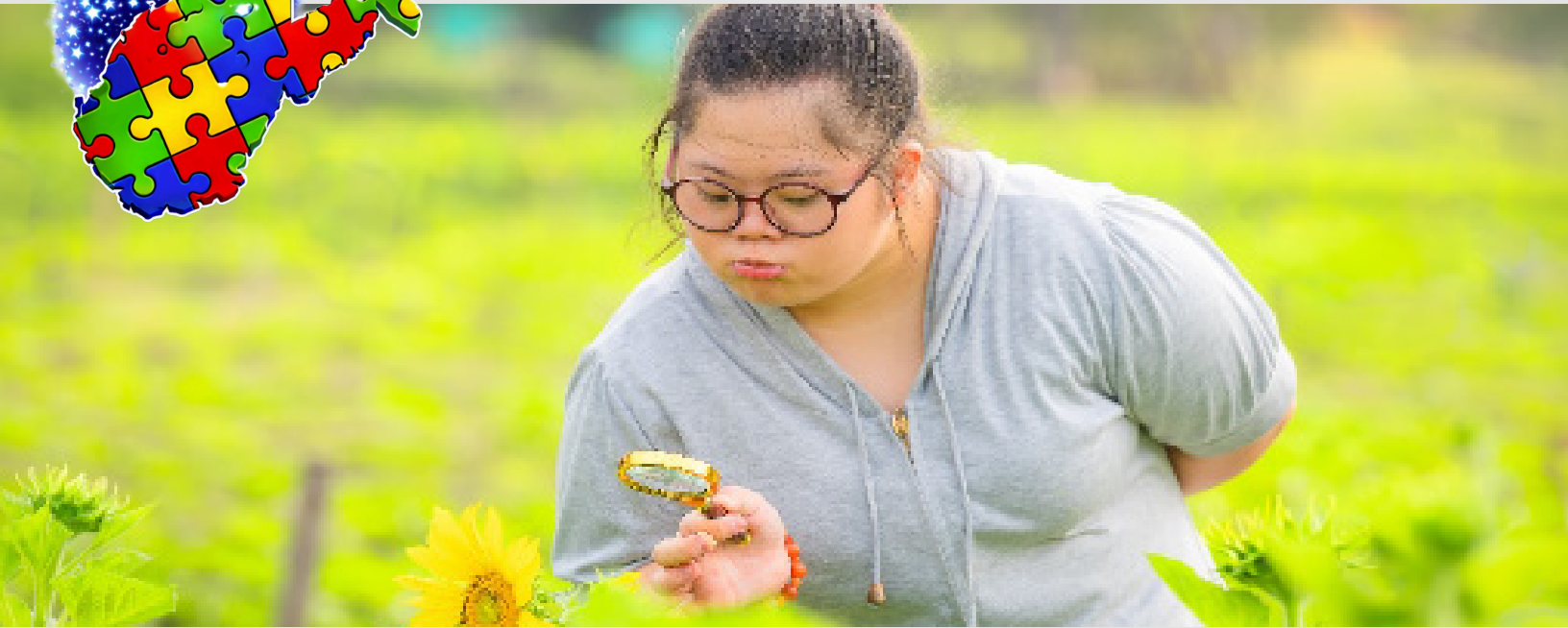


# PIECING IT TOGETHER

The Official WV Parent Training and Information Newsletter

WVPTI - Planting Sunshine - Summer 2026 Newsletter



## Summer Greetings from the Executive Director

Dear Families and Friends,  
As we approach the end of another school year, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible resilience, patience, and dedication of our families and the professionals who support children with disabilities across West Virginia. The spring season always brings a mix of excitement and new beginnings, whether it's wrapping up IEP goals, preparing for summer programs, or planning some much-needed time to recharge.

This time of year also brings in one final round of meetings and planning before we shift years. IEP meetings are an important opportunity to celebrate progress and set realistic, meaningful goals for the fall. Be sure to review your child's current plan before the meeting day, jot down any successes or weaknesses from the year, and think ahead to what supports might make next year smoother.

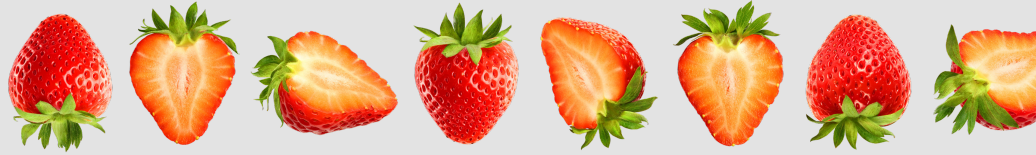
If you have questions about accommodation, extended school-year services, or transition from high school to adult life, our staff is here to guide you through the process. And once that meeting is behind you, give yourself permission to slow down. Summer offers time to brush up on your advocacy skills, reflect on your child's growth, and reconnect with what inspires you. Whether you attend parent training, join an online webinar, or simply swap stories with other parents, every step helps strengthen your confidence and voice.

-Brenda Lamkin, Director



Brenda Lamkin,  
Director

# A Sweet Tradition in Full Bloom



**The 2026 West Virginia Strawberry Festival will take place May 9-17, 2026, bringing nine days of celebration to downtown Buckhannon.**

This long-standing festival, rooted in honoring the strawberry harvest, has grown into one of West Virginia's most recognized community events. Each year, it attracts tens of thousands of visitors and showcases the heart and hospitality of Upshur County.

## Community at the Heart

What makes the Strawberry Festival truly special is how deeply it is woven into the community. Local volunteers, families, and organizations work together to create a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere filled with tradition and pride.

From parades and craft shows to food vendors and educational exhibits, the festival highlights local talent, small businesses, and the agricultural heritage that helped shape the region. It's more than an event; it's a celebration of community identity and connection.

## Music, Entertainment, and Local Talent

The festival is packed with entertainment for all ages.

Visitors can enjoy:

- Live concerts and performances throughout the week
- Marching bands and competitions
- Carnival rides and games
- Street fairs and family activities



In 2026, major entertainment includes a free headlining concert by country band Parmalee, showing how the festival blends hometown charm with big-name talent.

## Celebrating Summer: From Memorial Day to July 4th

With the school year ending soon, families are ready to celebrate! Here are a few highlights coming up around our state:



- **Memorial Day (May 25):** Take time to honor service members who gave their lives for our country. Many local communities hold parades, wreath laying ceremonies, and family picnics. Consider a quiet visit to the Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery or enjoy a reflective day at your local park.
- **Schools out!** The final school bell marks new beginnings. Whether you're attending a summer program, exploring local libraries' reading challenges, or starting a home project, take pride in how far your child has come this year. Consistent routines, balanced with freedom and fun, help children of all abilities thrive even outside the classroom.
- **July Fourth Celebrations:** Independence Day in West Virginia means firework shows, cookouts, and time spent with local ones. Families can enjoy Leesburg's spectacular holiday display, or smaller community events offering quieter spaces for those who prefer less sensory input. Pack a picnic, bring headphones or comfort items, and make the celebration work for your family's unique needs.

## Tick Season and Outdoor Safety

Summer brings sunshine, hikes, and park days, but it also brings an increase in ticks across West Virginia. Health experts report a noticeable rise in tick populations, especially in grassy or wooded areas.

Parents should take a few precautions to enjoy the outdoors safely.

- Wear long sleeves and pants when hiking or camping.
- Apply repellents with DEET or picaridin (always check with your medical doctor)
- Check children, pets, and gear after outdoor play.
- Shower after coming in and run clothes through a hot dryer.



Lyme disease and other tick-borne infections can be serious, but quick checks and awareness go a long way. For families of children who thrive on routine, make “tick checks” a normal part of your end-of-day rhythm this summer.

**The West Virginia State Fair: August in Lewisburg, August 13-22, returns with all the excitement families have come to love, including concerts, farm exhibits, craft booths, and delicious food.**

Fair organizers are working to expand accessibility through quiet rooms, shaded seating, and friendly staff trained to assist visitors with disabilities. Whether your child loves animals, sensory play zones, or Ferris wheels, there’s something special for everyone.

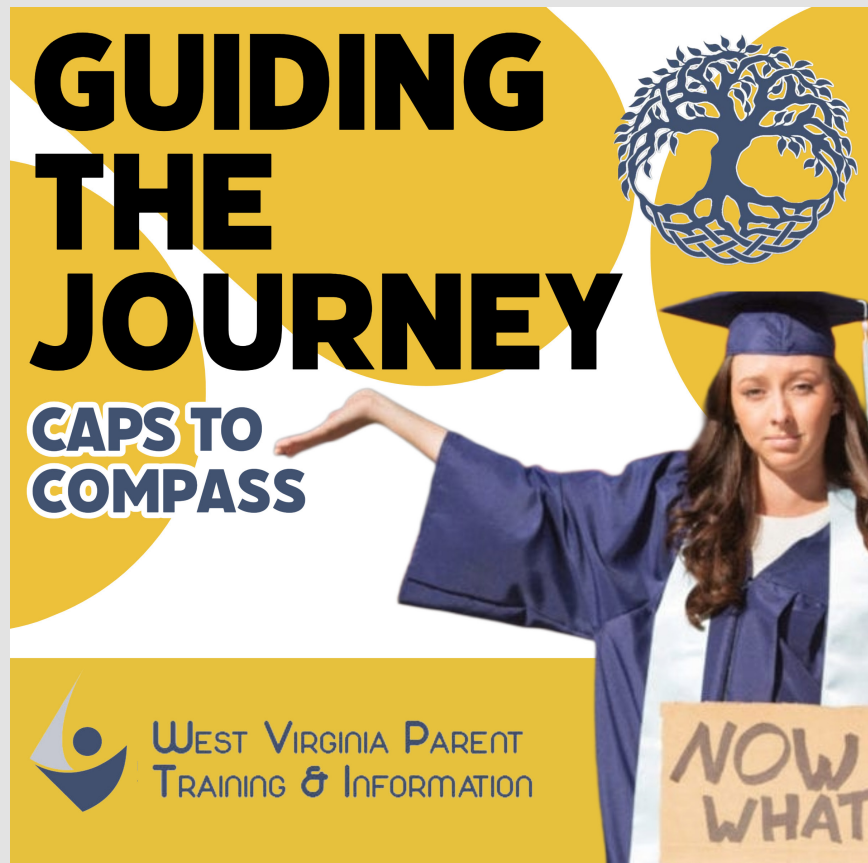
Local hotels fill fast, so plan and explore the fair website for advance tickets and event lineups.



# Guiding the Journey: Caps to Compass

A Training Program for Parents & Youth.

We are excited to share that Guiding the Journey: Caps to Compass is planning another year of parent sessions beginning in August 2026! We have been truly encouraged by the increase in the number of families attending and engaging in these sessions. While we would love every family to attend each session, we understand that life is busy and that families join us when the time and topic are right for them.



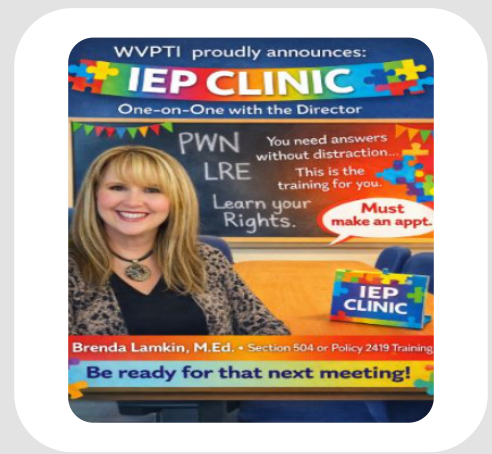
We are committed to meeting families where they are. Not every session may match a family's immediate needs, and some topics will naturally spark more interest than others; that's perfectly okay. Our goal is to provide meaningful learning opportunities based on the requests and feedback we receive from you whenever possible. We are planning a virtual conference at the end of the sessions with a well-known ADHD and autism specialist. More details will be posted after confirmation is secured. Opportunities like this remind us how powerful it is when families, professionals, and experts come together to share knowledge and encouragement. We will have our sign-up link available in July 2026.

**Looking Ahead to Summer and Fall** - This August, our team will be ready with new webinars, in-person training, and resources to help you start the next school year parent-strong. We can't wait to reconnect with familiar faces and welcome new ones at our events. Whether your child is entering preschool, high school, or beyond, remember that advocacy is a lifelong journey, and no one walks it alone. We meet you where you are!

Be sure to sign up for our new IEP Clinic.

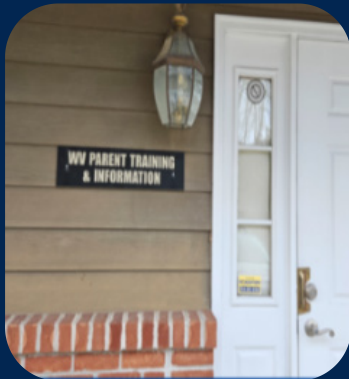
We offer individualized IEP clinics designed to provide one-on-one support for families.

Bring your child's IEP, and we will review it together, offering personalized training and technical assistance tailored to your needs



## Welcome to our new office! Your space for support, empowerment, and community

Meeting parents and caregivers where they are!



New Conference and meeting rooms for families



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Weston, WV 26462  
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304-997-8316

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### WV PTI Primary Contact

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Executive Director

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### Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

*Please note that staff are frequently off-site for meetings or workshops. Please call before visiting to ensure there is someone available to meet with you.*

*If you are unable to call us during office hours, please leave a message. We will be happy to return your call the following day.*

