

Leadership Training for Parents by PTIs

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Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities
(LEND)

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Background

- When Congress created what is now known as IDEA, they recognized that this process of determining an appropriate education plan can be overwhelming, emotional, and confusing for even the most competent and well educated of parents. Therefore, Congress created and funded at least one Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center per state or territory and a number of Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRC) to act as the primary site for supporting all parents to navigate this system effectively.

2004 Update

- In 2004, Congress changed the emphasis for the Parent Centers from helping parents gain access to the IEP process to helping parents collaborate with school personnel over what constitutes an appropriate education for the child (IDEIA 2004). The goal of Congress was to have parents who were well informed and who could advocate effectively for their children as equals.

Parent Training and Information Centers

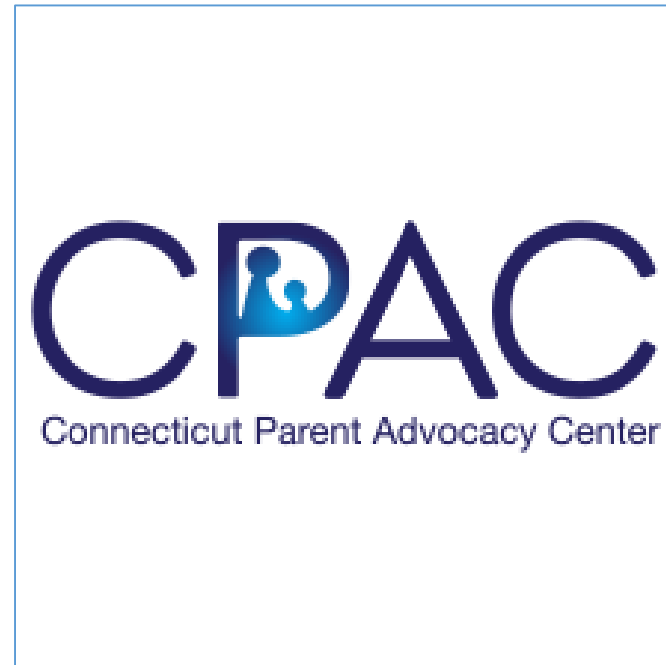
- **Working** with families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, birth to 21
- **Training** parents how to participate effectively in their children's education and development
- **Partnering** with professionals and policy makers to improve outcomes for all children with disabilities
- In 2010-2011, The National Parent Technical Assistance Center reported that 219,278 parents had attended trainings or presentations held by the 71 PTIs through out the country.

Parent Training Centers



National data base for every PTI in the country.

Connecticut's Parent Training Center



Purpose

- The purpose of this study is to determine what skills are being taught by Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) to specifically teach leadership skills to parents.
- If we can determine what skills are being taught to parents on how to effectively collaborate with school districts, then we can possibly replicate the training around the country.

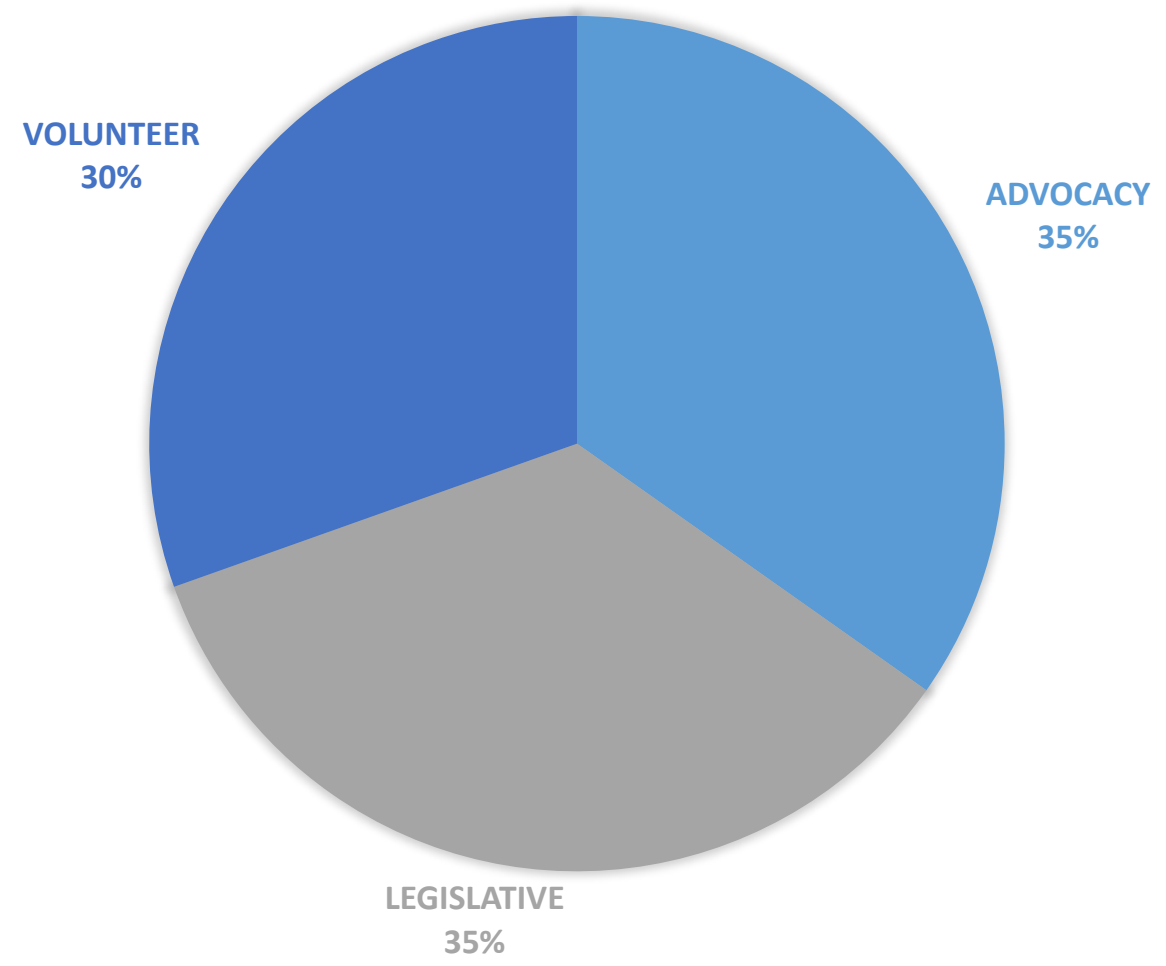
Methods

- An earlier study had looked at every PTI website to determine what Leadership training each PTI had.
- A questionnaire was compiled and submitted for IRB review.
- Each PTI was contacted via email and phone to attempt to secure participation in the study.
- Responses were collected and data interpreted.

Results

- 25 out of the 71 PTIs contacted, participated in the survey; 35%
- Of the 25 PTIs, 23 offer Leadership Trainings; 92%
- There were 3 distinct categories the trainings fall in –
 - Advocacy
 - Legislative training
 - Volunteer Recruitment
- For over half the trainings, there was an application process as a way to determine who would be appropriate for the training.
- Virtually all the trainings are in person (84%)

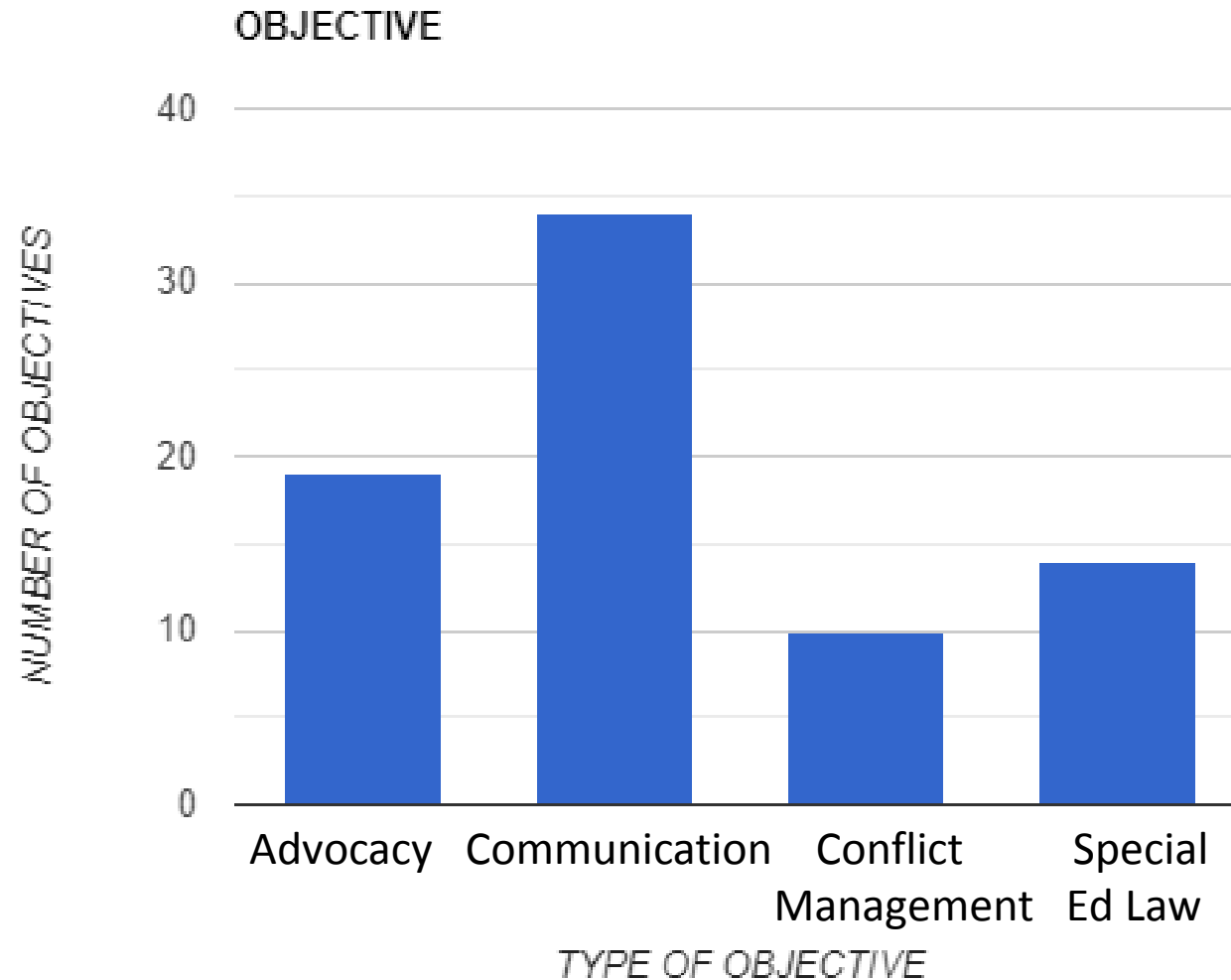
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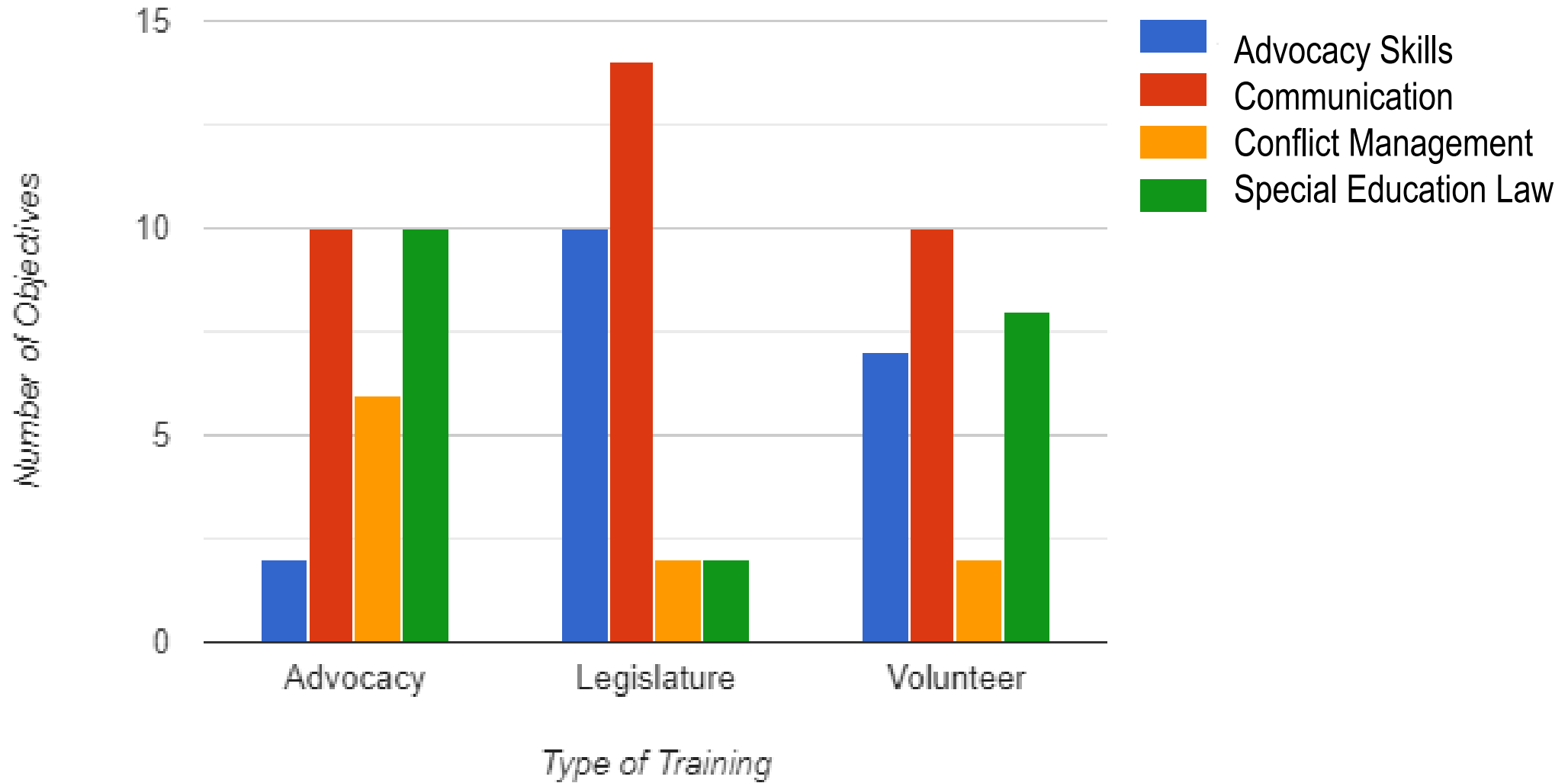
The 3 Different Focuses of Leadership

- Advocacy Training: This training was intended to teach parents how to effectively advocate for their child only. Next Steps in Connecticut is an example of this.
- Legislative initiatives: This training focused on teaching parents how to use their voice to create change via legislation.
- Volunteer Recruitment: This training focused on teaching parents how to advocate for other parents within the special education system.

What skills were being taught?



Objectives by Focus



The Essential Skills

- Based on our research, there are four primary skills that these Leadership training focused on. These are:
 - Communication
 - Conflict resolution skills
 - Advocacy skills
 - Special education law knowledge
- Any Leadership training needs to encompass these skills.

So What??

What we know:

- Conflict in Special education is costly in time, money, and other resources.
- Attempting to resolve conflicts as early as possible, reduces these costs.
- The best way to reduce conflict between two parties vying for the same resources is to ensure that trust is maintained.
- The best way to maintain trust is to continue to engage in positive communication.
- Various studies have found that communication between schools and parents is dissatisfying (Harniss et al. 2001; Kohler 1999; Munk et al. 2001) and centered on conflict (Spann, Kohler, and Soenksen 2003).
- People who are informed about a process feel more in control and better able to deal with conflict.

Does the PTI Leadership training help?

- Several studies have been done on the effectiveness of a number of these trainings. The overwhelming results indicate that these trainings make a marked positive difference for parents. (Shepard and Kervick, 2016; Burke, Mello, Godlman 2016; Burke, Goldman et al 2016)
- One study has shown that there is no statistical difference between in person and remote participation in a training. (Burke, Goldman et al 2016) This could allow for greater access to trainings in rural areas.

What next?

Additional research should be undertaken to determine:

- Why isn't every parent given this training when their child enters special education?
- What are the most cost effective ways to incorporate this training into the process?
- Is there one leadership training that is better than all the others?
- Does the application process lead to better results and greater participation?

References

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