**Helping a Child with Special Needs Prepare for Transition**

The training for helping students with special needs to transition was facilitated by the Arc of Texas; an agency dedicated to promote materials and resources for students with disabilities. The training was about helping the transition from high school to young adulthood which it is a critical stage for all teenagers; especially for students with learning disabilities (LD). Factors to consider include post-secondary education, the development of career and vocational skills, as well as the ability to live independently. The first step in planning for a successful transition is developing the student's transition plan. **A transition plan is required for students enrolled in special education who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 04) requires that in the first IEP that will be in effect when the student turns 16 years of age. His annual IEP must include a discussion about transition service needs. IDEA 04 mandates that the annual IEP meeting focus on more specific planning and goal setting for the necessary transition services. Factors to be included are: academic preparation, community experience, development of vocational and independent living objectives, and, if applicable, a functional vocational evaluation.

It isn't enough to simply be aware that students with disabilities need guidance to transition successfully from high school to the next phase of their life. I learned that action steps must be taken to guide and prepare teens for college and/or a vocational career, in order to prepare them for independent living. Without this guidance, students with learning disabilities often struggle in high school and beyond.