Tips on Collecting Student Follow-up Data
TPSID National Coordinating Center

To demonstrate the longitudinal impact of the TPSID programs on student outcomes, it is critical that we capture data on students *both at exit and annually for the period of time after they complete the program*. For the next 5 years after program completion, the National Coordinating Center will assist you in follow-up data collection by providing access to a follow-up data collection tool, offering strategies and tools to conduct outreach, and if needed, providing supports for data entry. Our hope is to demonstrate and highlight the tremendous benefits these programs have on student outcomes, as well as use this information to help inform continuous improvement efforts.

We recognize that contacting students and families after they complete your program can be challenging. The following tips and strategies may help streamline your efforts in reaching students post-completion and maintaining communication over the years.

1. **Give pre-notification.** It is imperative that before students complete the program, they are informed about your intentions to contact them in the future. During their last year of enrollment, remind students and families several times about the follow-up schedule and that you will be staying in touch. If possible, give these reminders in meetings you have with current students.
2. **Agree on how to stay in touch**. Decide on the most effective ways to reach out to students and stay in contact with them after they exit. Prior to exit, ask students to complete a contact information sheet and tell you their preferred method for you to get in contact (e.g., email, phone, text, Facebook messages). Have students (or appropriate legal guardian) sign a consent form before they complete the program.
4. **Emphasize the importance of data collection.** Explain the purpose of the follow-up data. Let them know that they are helping other students with disabilities by answering the questions and helping programs such as the one they completed.
5. **Tell them what to expect**. Create some familiarity with the questions so they know what to expect when you contact them. You can give them a copy of the follow-up data questions that are available on the Data Network.
6. **If possible, provide incentives.** For example, offer a gift card to those who respond to annual requests. If you will provide incentives and are submitting an application to your IRB, you will want to make mention of this.
7. **Make contact with family members.** You may need the help of family members to get in contact with students or get questions answered.
8. **Use social media.** If students use social media such as Facebook, encourage them to join or like the college or university's Facebook page.
9. **Initiate contact early**. Begin contacting your students at least 4 weeks prior to when you need to enter follow-up data. It may be time-consuming to track down students and meet the follow-up data deadlines, so it is best to start the process early. However, once you get in contact with students, the questions are brief and should take only 5-10 minutes to respond to.

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