



COLORADO

Department of Education

2023 Transition Leadership Institute

Speaker: Jen Mendenhall, Caregiver and Advocate
Co-Presenters: Codi Mendenhall, 11th Grade Student
Session Title: Codi's Life - A Technology Journey



Jen Mendenhall is a 54-year-old mom of a very determined and sassy 16-year-old daughter, Codi. Codi has Cerebral Palsy and uses many forms of assistive technology (AT) and complex rehabilitation technology (CRT). Codi is beginning her school to work/higher education transition process with her IEP Team. Codi and Jen were presenters for TEDx Grand Junction in March of 2020. Their talk, “Codi’s Life: From Coding to Communication Technology”, was selected to be on TED.com. They are current members of the Colorado Assistive Technology Coalition. Jen is a parent member of the Colorado Governor’s State Rehabilitation Council and member of the Colorado Department of Education Sequencing of Services Pilot Program for their local school district. Jen had the pleasure of being the Family Focus Group Lead for a cooperative grant project to create a training curriculum for the Colorado Office of Employment

First and Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. In 2023 Jen became a new quad-chair member of the Colorado Employment First Advisory Partnership. Jen works with Unite4CRT and NRRTS to promote complex rehabilitation technology equity for all. Codi and Jen are advocates for families and students with disabilities to assist in navigating the world assistive technology and transition services. Jen earned a BS in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism from Colorado State University and a MS in Public Administration from the University of AK.



Codi is in 11th grade at Grand River Academy which is an online school. Codi enjoys hanging out with her friends, shopping, swimming, adaptive snowboarding, doing crafts, social media and riding their tandem e trike. Codi was interviewed on Colorado Public radio using her AAC to speak about going back to school after Covid. She used her AAC in a commercial for Code Ninjas, a National Coding Program as well as two Mesa County Valley School District #51 School Board meetings to advocate for Adapted PE teachers and give an informative presentation about the yearbook group at her school. She was featured in the Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering Newsletter, Ride Designs Newsletter and Move United and Directions (NRRTS)magazines. Codi was in the ATAP National AT Awareness Day 2022 video. Codi completed the Spring 2023 Young Emerging Leadership for Disability Power (YELD)course. She most recently published an article called Bi Skiing, Snowboarding and Sliders in the Accessible Journeys online magazine. She also was featured in an article in the same magazine

titled “Codi is defying limitations with adaptive adventures and more...”.