

## Case Study #2: Tracy and Marcy

Marcy is a 36-year-old, deaf, single mother of a 16-year-old daughter with an intellectual and developmental disability. Marcy has a behavioral health disorder and qualified for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) when she aged out of the foster care system. She had her daughter at a young age, and as the primary caregiver has limited work experience. Her Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is \$841 per month. Now, her daughter, Tracy, a minor, also receives SSI in the amount of \$794 per month and receives special education services from the high school where they are supporting Tracy in establishing measurable post-secondary goals. Marcy and Tracy live in a subsidized apartment. Both receive Medicaid as their health insurance. Marcy also qualifies for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), fuel assistance and a supplemental cash assistance program. No child support or alimony is available.

Tracy's IEP team recently met about transition and the team is recommending that Tracy start establishing measurable post-secondary goals and experimenting with employment as all the data suggests that youth who work have better outcomes. Marcy wants the best for her daughter but has a limited work history and is worried about the impact income will have on their SSI payments as well as their rent and SNAP benefits. They barely make ends meet as it is and if Tracy starts to work, Tracy's SSI check will reduce, and the income could also impact Marcy's SSI as well as their rent subsidy. She's also worried about transportation because her car may not pass inspection and gas prices are so high they can barely afford to use the car. If her SSI is lowered, how will they pay the rent? Marcy is fearful that work will create havoc in their ability to pay their living expenses. Tracy wants to work like her friends do at the local grocery store, but it doesn't seem like her mom wants her to. She doesn't want her mom to worry so she doesn't say much at the meetings. The Special Education director feels like the mom is being an obstacle when the team has provided a lot of options to help Tracy succeed. She's just trying to stop Tracy from going to work because she wants to keep her SSI check. Marcy doesn't want to rock the boat but doesn't like attending these meetings because no one understands their situation like she does. She's very stressed and wishes they would just leave them alone. She gets overwhelmed by all the mail, and can't deal with them on the phone because they don't listen to her. She has started to avoid the IEP meetings because they are too intense for her to deal with on top of everything else and the fact they don't secure an interpreter for her in advance. Vocational Rehabilitation recently met with the team but Tracy and Marcy haven't returned the paperwork to get services from them. If there is no commitment to employment, the VR counselor cannot continue to attend future meetings.