Effective Transition Services to Promote Successful Outcomes in Post-School Placements

Authors: Maureen van Stone, JD, MS, Michelle Dauksha, and Christopher L. Smith, PhD

Statement of Problem
- According to the U.S. Department of Education, 402,038 students with disabilities transitioned to post-school placements in 2010-2011.
- In Maryland, 11,088 students with disabilities exited the public school system in 2012-2013.
- Due to rigorous state curricula, high stakes testing, and other graduation requirements, there is minimal time left in the school day to provide adequate transition services.
- The issue becomes how to properly prepare students for post-school opportunities and ensure that best practices for transition planning are being implemented in the school system.
- The effectiveness of transition services must be addressed, because students with disabilities experience unemployment, lower pay, and job dissatisfaction at a higher rate compared to their nondisabled peers.

Best Practices for Transition Planning to Address Problem

Focus of the Transition IEP and Curriculum
- Functional skills for activities of adult living
- Skills valued by employers
- Life skills instruction
- Community-based instruction
- Vocational training
- Inclusion in general education classrooms
- Work experiences

Adequate Transition Planning
- Team of support
- Concrete action steps
- Identify a student’s strengths and needs objectively
- Appropriate and measurable goals early in planning process

Parent Engagement and Education
- Information about the transition process and resources prior to the student turning 16.
- Understand the impact of the disability.
- Be informed about their rights and responsibilities.
- Understand how to access services.
- Be acquainted with individualized planning tools.
- Information about the importance of encouraging and reinforcing the development of skills required for daily activities of adult living, such as:
  - Planning and preparing meals;
  - Self-care, hygiene, and cleaning;
  - Finances;
  - Telephone and email use;
  - Leisure activities and safety procedures;
  - Time management;
  - Self-advocacy;
  - Chores, which are one of the greatest indicators of developing adequate self-care skills; and
  - Learning how to access public transportation systems safely and effectively.

Summary
- Despite the federal mandate under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, many students with disabilities are not receiving adequate transition services to be successful in post-school placements.
- A gap in post-school outcomes remains between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.
- Negative outcomes in post-school placements increase the likelihood of negative health and social outcomes.
- Tailoring plans and options for a student’s future and capitalizing on their strengths provides hope for the future, and may decrease the number of students with disabilities who drop out of high school or are unemployed following their secondary education.
- Effective transition planning is a critical step in promoting successful outcomes in post-school placements.

References

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