

# **STUDENT-FAMILY FOCUSED TRANSITION EDUCATION & PLANNING**

## **Session #1: Introduction and Rationale**

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### **INTRODUCTION TO TRANSITION EDUCATION AND PLANNING**

#### **A. The Concept of Transition Education v. Transition Planning**

1. All secondary education is education for transition
2. Transition programming is the basis for ALL secondary education rather than as an additional activity or requirement
3. Operationalizes a transition perspective of education
4. Identification of post-school goals based upon student abilities, needs, interests, and preferences
5. Development of instructional activities and educational experiences to prepare students for their post-school goals
6. Collaboration and cooperation among a variety of individuals, including the student, working together to identify and develop the goals and activities
7. Critical features of transition education include:
  - a) Student-focused planning
  - b) Family involvement
  - c) Interagency cooperation
  - d) Skill development
  - e) Linkage between family, school, business, and other community organizations/agencies
  - f) Exit mechanisms

### **RATIONALE FOR TRANSITION EDUCATION AND PLANNING**

1. Why knowing what happens to kids when they leave school is important (O-1-2.2)
  - a) Identifies what is actually happening to students when they leave school
  - b) Provides an outcome-focus that emphasizes results based on achievement, exit, and post-school outcomes for the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of transition education
  - c) Establishes a basis for evaluating the relationship between educational programming and achievement and post-school outcomes

- d) Allows us to assess the impact of school and transition programming.
- e) Establishes the outcome areas and focus for successful post-school outcomes
- f) Provides the basis for systematic and effective transition education and planning

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM NLTS & SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAMS

- 2. What the research tells us has happened to students with disabilities when they leave school
  - a) Features of the study
  - b) Methods
  - c) Outcome Domains
  - d) Findings From NLTS & Other National Studies

### Taken from:

Wagner, Mary (December 1993). *The Transition Experiences of Young People with Disabilities: A summary of findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

### For a comparable study see:

Fawcett, G. (1996). *Living with Disability in Canada - An Economic Portrait*. Quebec, CA: Human Resources Development Canada. This book constitutes the most comprehensive review and analysis of available statistical data on Canadians with disabilities. - 213 pages. ([http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/odi/documents/living\\_with\\_disability/toc.shtml](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/odi/documents/living_with_disability/toc.shtml))

### Drop Out

- On the average, about 22% of students with disabilities ages 14 - 21 and older dropped out of school in 1994 compared to about 5.3% of the total student population age 15-24 who had dropped out (taken from **U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994 (based on the October Current Population Surveys)***).
- Within 2 years, over 36% of all students with disabilities dropped out; over half of all persons with severe emotional disturbances had dropped out (55%); persons with learning disabilities (36%), speech impairments (33%), mental retardation (34%), and other impairments (26%) were the next most likely to drop out.

### Poverty Level

- 68% of all students with disabilities in the NLTS sample (n=8,000) came from families with a combined annual income of less than \$25,000.

### Postsecondary Enrollment

- Youth with disabilities were far less likely to enroll in colleges and postsecondary vocational schools than youth in the general population after having been out of school 3-5 years.

### Employment

- Youth with disabilities who exited were more likely to be working in sheltered workshops or not employed than working full or part time.
  - 46% of all youth with disabilities out of school less than 2 years, were unemployed and 25% worked in sheltered workshops
  - 37% of all youth with disabilities out of school 3-5 years were unemployed while 44% were working in sheltered workshops
- Of all youth with disabilities interviewed in 1987 and again in 1990 about a third had been employed at both times while another 30% had never been employed.
- Black and Hispanic youth with disabilities were less likely to acquire employment than White youth with disabilities; dropouts were less likely to be employed than high school graduates; students who aged out were less likely to be employed than those who had dropped out;
- Significantly more males with disabilities(64%) were likely to be employed 3-5 years after exiting school than females with disabilities(40%)

### Employment Benefits

- Youth with disabilities who were out of school and competitively employed earning less than minimum wage were unlikely to be receiving vacation, sick leave or medical insurance.

### Employment Earnings

- Over half (62%) of all competitively employed youth with disabilities out of school for less than 2 years earned less than minimum wage.
- Approximately 25% of competitively employed youth out of school for 3-5 years earned less than minimum wage, about 36% earning between \$4.31 and \$6.00 per hour and about 40% earning more than \$6.00 per hour.

### Independent Living

- Students with disabilities out of school for less than 2 years were almost 3 times more likely to be living at home as their nondisabled peers and 2 times more likely after being out of school 3-5 years.

### Parenting

- While no significant differences were found among males with disabilities their nondisabled peers, females with disabilities were much more likely to become parents 3-5 years after being out of school than their nondisabled counterparts.

- Substantially more Black and Hispanic males were likely to become parents than White males; White females were more likely to become parents than Black and Hispanic females.
- Across gender, dropouts were more likely to become parents than youth who had graduated or aged-out.

### Arrest Rates

- Within 3-5 years after being out of school almost 38% of all males with disabilities had been arrested.
- Black males with disabilities were more likely to be arrested than Hispanic and White males with disabilities; White males with disabilities were more likely to be arrested than Hispanic males with disabilities.
- Within 3-5 years after being out of school over 56% of all males with disabilities who had dropped-out of school had been arrested.

### Services Need by Youth in School

- The percentage of youth with disabilities whose parents reported not receiving vocational assistance services ranged from 26% to 80%. As the level of student independence decreased the percent of students whose parents reported not receiving services increased.

d) What works for youth with disabilities who do well when they leave school

### **Taken from:**

Wagner, M., Blackorby, J., Cameto, R., & Newman, L. (1993). *What makes a difference? Influences on post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities. The third comprehensive report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

### **Definitions & Notes**

**Employment:** paid competitive job outside the home (does not include sheltered, supported or volunteer work)

**Residential Independence:** living alone, with a spouse or roommate, in a college dormitory, or in military housing (not as a dependent).

**Community Participation:** three dimensions

- engagement in work or education-related activities outside of the home
- residential arrangements
- social activities

## **EFFECT OF TIME SPENT IN REGULAR EDUCATION**

### **EMPLOYMENT**

- controlling for other differences including school completion, more time spent in general education classrooms was positively related to employment and community participation

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

- controlling for other differences, students who spent more time in regular education classrooms were more likely to be fully participating in the community
- particularly strong for students with physical disabilities (41 percentage points)
- effects also found to be particularly strong for students with mild and severe disabilities

### **RESIDENTIAL INDEPENDENCE**

- time spent in regular education was positively related to a greater likelihood of residential independence for youth with mild disabilities

### **POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL ENROLLMENT**

- time spent in regular education positively related to a greater likelihood of postsecondary vocational enrollment for youth with mild disabilities

### **WAGES**

- youth who spent more time in regular education had higher earnings

## **EFFECT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COURSEWORK**

### **Definitions**

Survey: courses that sampled a number of vocational education content areas

Concentration: taking four or more classes within a single vocational education content area

### **DROP-OUT RATE**

- Students who took either survey or concentrated coursework in vocational education were significantly less likely to drop out of school than nonvocational or prevocational students.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

- strong positive contributions of both kinds of vocational training to the probability of competitive employment
- no real difference between a concentration and a survey
- largest effect for persons with mild disabilities ( 40 points may be a function of sample size)

### **WAGES**

- both kinds of vocational education were associated with higher wages

- taking a concentration was related to larger incomes than no vocational education or unrelated vocational education (i.e. survey) classes
- concentration had a greater effect on wages than survey courses with an average annual earnings of approximately \$6,200 more than nonvocational or prevocational students
- students taking survey courses earned nearly \$4,000 more per year than students who took none

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- both kinds of vocational education were positively related to full community participation for all youth with disabilities

### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

- no overall relationship
- taking a concentration of vocational courses related to a significantly lower likelihood of pursuing academic training for youth with physical disabilities, presumably because of greater emphasis on employment for these youth

### EFFECT OF WORK EXPERIENCE

- previous studies looking at work experience have found that work experience is one of the strongest predictors of post-school employment
- should in all likelihood consider results to be similar to vocational education results
- methodology tended to find results confounded with vocational education results
- NLTS found the most significant effects to be for students with physical disabilities
  - more likely to find employment
  - estimated to earn \$4,200 more than peers not in work experience
  - results are similar but somewhat smaller for youth with mild disabilities
- generally promotes work habits and world of work knowledge
- has little impact on days tardy or absent, or number of extra curricular activities
- has some impact on time spent on homework and watching television for those who work more than 20 hours per week
  - students who work more than 20 hours per week tend to have lower educational aspirations
- is positively associated with employment and income after completion of high school in the short range
- is not related to delinquent behavior
- generally is approved by parents and friends
- generally does not affect relationships with parents and siblings, albeit, they do spend less time with families

e) Implications of NLTS findings on what works for kids with disabilities  
*Students with disabilities ages 14 and older should be provided ample opportunities to:*

- be included as fully as possible in regular education
- be encouraged to develop skills promoting self-determination

- develop and communicate personal, vocational, social, and academic preferences
- have paid work experiences with employers committed to working with students
- learning opportunities that integrate academic and vocational instruction emphasizing post-school outcomes and adult roles and responsibilities
- be linked to community resources that will support and promote student preferences and full community access and participation

### **C. Why Transition Planning, Programming and Education is Important**

1. Upon leaving school students with disabilities and their families often have a difficult time accessing appropriate adult services and/or postsecondary education and training programs.
2. Effective transition planning for high school students with disabilities can facilitate their success in adult life.
3. Graduates with disabilities are more likely to be employed following school if
  - a) comprehensive vocational training is a primary component of their high school program; and,
  - b) they have a job secured at the time of graduation.
4. Partnerships between the business community and schools enhance employment opportunities for students with disabilities.
5. Parent participation during high school facilitates the successful transition of students with disabilities from school to adult life.
6. Student involvement vests interests and preferences in the successful achievement of goals and objectives
7. Business and community linkages provides for increased access and opportunities for students in post-school environments and settings.
8. Interagency coordination promotes:
  - a) decreases waiting lists and time
  - b) provides increased responsiveness to student needs
  - c) enhances systemic change and program improvement to changing community needs and demographic factors
  - d) decreases duplication and redundancy of services