

CAREER PLANNING BEGINS WITH **ASSESSMENT**

*A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth
with Educational And Career
Development Challenges*

REVISED EDITION

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This document was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, (NCWD/Youth), composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies.

Information on the
Collaborative can be found at
www.ncwd-youth.info/.

Information about the
Office of Disability Employment Policy can be found at
www.dol.gov/odep/.

Information is also available at <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/>,
the comprehensive Federal website of disability-related
government resources.



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First Edition Acknowledgements


In 2002 the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) of the U.S. Department of Labor funded a variety of communities across the country to conduct pilot projects for the purpose of increasing the chances of youth with disabilities becoming self-sufficient adults. A key strategy in all the projects was to build bridges among workforce development organizations (schools, rehabilitation agencies, youth development organizations, One-Stops Centers) for the purpose of providing a set of quality services to youth based on person-centered planning. The organizations responsible for the pilot projects recognized the importance of arming youth, as well as themselves, with as much information as possible about personal goals, career interests, skills, and knowledge in order to assist the young people in making informed choices about their future. Knowing how to ensure that quality assessments occurred was identified as a common need. The development of this assessment guide began with requests from those pilot organizations to the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), ODEP's youth technical assistance center, for assistance in the area of assessment services across agencies and organizations.

It became clear during the development of the guide that the issues go far beyond the selection of a particular assessment instrument, though selecting appropriate instruments is addressed. States and localities should consider treating assessment services as a part of a common infrastructure across the workforce development system in order to effectively use resources within and among organizations and institutions and to provide quality assessment services. We believe that the Assessment Guide provides an excellent framework to begin this process.

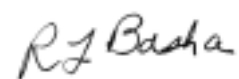
Special thanks go to Joe Timmons and Christine Bremer, Ph.D., from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) at the University of Minnesota, whose calm and steady approach in the drafting and redrafting process proved to be

invaluable. Mary Podmostko, Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), deserves special mention for her persistence throughout the writing to ensure that no stone was left unturned and that the needs of front line service providers as well as policy makers were included in the Guide. Don Lavin, of Rise, Inc., contributed a strong focus on the ethics of assessment and provided the practitioner's perspective. Donna Johnson and Mary Mack at the Institute on Community Integration (University of Minnesota) contributed helpful commentary and perspectives, particularly during the early stages of the writing process.

A wide range of experts generously contributed to the development of this Guide: David Johnson, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Community Integration and NCSET; Martha Thurlow, Ph.D., Director, National Center on Educational Outcomes, and James Ysseldyke, Ph.D. – all from the University of Minnesota; Rich Leucking, Ed.D., President, TransCen, Inc.; Irene Lynn, Senior Fellow, Center for Workforce Development, IEL; C. Paul Mendez, President, National Association of Workforce Development Professionals; Amy M. Pleet, Ed.D., Special Education Graduate Director, College of Education, Towson University; and Nellie Aspel, Principal, North Shelby School, Shelby, North Carolina. A special thank you goes to Pam Leconte, Ed.D., Director, Collaborative Vocational Evaluation Training Program, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, the George Washington University, for her detailed suggestions and encyclopedic knowledge of assessment practice and resources.



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About the Revised Edition

The following updates have been incorporated into this edition:

Chapter One: The Family Involvement and Supports Guidepost has been added to Table 1.1 — *Guideposts for Success*. Table 1.2 — *Selected Transition Components of Federal Programs* has been updated to reflect the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004. The Job Preferences section of Exhibit 1.2 — *Compiling Personal Transition Data* was revamped.

Chapter Two: The list of disability categories has been updated to reflect changes in the IDEA 2004 proposed regulations. The disclosure and accommodations sections have been expanded. A description of the “response to intervention” criterion for learning disabilities and a short section on chronic illness have been added. Information on learning disability screens in Spanish and mental health screens has also been added.

Chapter Three: The Common Performance Measures in Table 3.1 were adjusted to reflect current policy. Nine assessment instruments were added to Exhibit 3.1: Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment, ACT, Behavior Evaluation Scale—3rd Edition, Conduct Disorder Scale (CDS), Devereux Behavior Rating Scale (DBRS), Kuder Career Planning System, Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI 2), SAT, and Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD). Vocational Interest, Temperament, and Aptitude System (VITAS) was removed because it is no longer commercially available. The APTICOM was also removed because it is no longer being sold, although existing customers are being supported. Other entries were updated as needed.

Chapter Four: The section on building an assessment infrastructure has been expanded.

Appendix A — Assessments and Federal Laws: The IDEA Amendments of 1997 section was replaced with a section on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004.

Thank you to all the readers and conference attendees whose questions and suggestions helped shape the second edition. Special thanks to Nancie Payne, Payne & Associates; Robin Schwarz, The TLP Group; Glenn Young, National Association of Workforce Boards; Sallie Rhodes, Institute for Educational Leadership; and Pam Leconte, Collaborative Vocational Evaluation Training Program, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, the George Washington University, for sharing their professional expertise and contacts in addressing the assessment issues described above.

Joe Timmons
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Preface: Purpose of this Guide

To successfully make the transition from school to adult life and the world of work, adolescents and young adults need guidance and encouragement from caring, supportive adults. The best decisions and choices made by transitioning youth are based on sound information including appropriate assessments that focus on the talents, knowledge, skills, interests, values, and aptitudes of each individual.

In this guide, assessment is defined as “the process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions” (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004, p. 5). The assessment process can be complex, and a deep understanding of assessment dynamics is essential, particularly when working with youth with disabilities. Adults who work with youth need to have a solid understanding of the purpose, benefits, and limitations of assessment if they are to provide effective guidance.

This guide will serve as a resource for multiple audiences within the workforce development system. It will be useful to policymakers, administrators, and a wide variety of youth service practitioners including teachers, transition coordinators, counselors, work experience coordinators, tutors, job placement specialists, and job coaches. The guide can be used in many settings including secondary and postsecondary education programs, school-to-work transition programs, One-Stop workforce centers, youth employment programs, community rehabilitation programs, and community-based organizations that serve youth and young adults, ages 14 to 25.

For youth service practitioners, this guide will

- describe the purposes and dynamics of four ways to assess,

- delineate how to select and use assessment tools, both formal and informal,
- provide practical information about many commonly used published assessment and testing instruments,
- describe when and how to seek help or further information about assessments, and
- review legal issues, ethical considerations, and confidentiality as they pertain to assessment and testing.

For administrators and policymakers, this guide will provide helpful information in developing

- practical and effective policies,
- greater collaboration among programs, and
- interagency assessment systems.

Overall, using this guide in transition planning programs can improve

- the quality of services at the local level,
- strategic planning at state and local levels, and
- results for youth.

This guide was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) and the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). Both organizations are charged with assisting education and workforce development organizations to improve the successful transition of youth with disabilities into the workplace.

How to Use This Guide

This guide was developed in response to requests from grantees funded by the U.S. Department of Labor for information on how to find good career-related assessments and how to determine when a youth would benefit from assessment to determine the presence of a disability. The grantees included public schools, non-profit organizations, rehabilitation services offices, institutions of higher education, and Workforce Investment Act service providers who wished to improve practice and develop policy.

The guide was deliberately developed with numerous quick reference charts, tables, and sample forms to save time for counselors, career advisors, and other professionals who work directly with youth. Since quick reference tools are of limited use without an understanding of effective assessment and a context in which to operate, in-depth information is provided on a variety of topics including types and uses of assessment, guiding principles for good assessment, criteria for test selection, special considerations when testing, and organizational concerns such as collaboration agreements, ethics, confidentiality and legal issues.

Ideally, users who do not have considerable background in assessment should read the entire guide. In reality, many users will pick and choose the most relevant items for their immediate needs. Both approaches will work as long as users abide by the principles and practices of good assessment described in this guide. When in doubt, refer to the guide or ask an assessment professional. Assessment professionals can be found in school districts, community service and adult agencies, and at community colleges. Specialists in vocational and career assessment can be found through the Commission on Certification of

Work Adjustment and Vocational Evaluation Specialists at <http://www.ccwaves.org> or the Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals at <http://www.vecap.org>.

Reference

Salvia, J. and Ysseldyke, J. (2004). *Assessment in special and inclusive education*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Table of Contents

Career Planning Begins with Assessment

Acknowledgements	i
Preface: Purpose of this Guide	iii
How to use this Guide	iv

1 Chapter One – Understanding the Terrain of Assessment

Introduction	1-1
Experiences that Support the Postsecondary Planning Process	1-1
• Table 1.1 – Guideposts for Success	1-2
Federal Law and Person-Centered Planning	1-4
Other Federal Legislation	1-4
• Table 1.2 – Selected Transition Components of Federal Programs	1-5
Assessment Activities	1-7
When a Youth Enters a Program	1-8
The Four Domains of Assessment	1-10
• Table 1.3 – Formal Testing Areas	1-12
Settings	1-14
References	1-15
• Exhibit 1.1 – Sample Release of Records	1-16
• Exhibit 1.2 – Compiling Personal Transition Data	1-17

2 Chapter Two – The Dynamics of Disabilities

Introduction	2-1
Youth with Disabilities in Public Schools	2-1
Out of School Youth with Disabilities	2-3
Identifying Disabilities Outside of the School Setting	2-4
Serving Youth with Hidden Disabilities	2-4
Providing Accommodations	2-10
• Table 2.1 – Common Accommodations in Classrooms, Assessment Settings, and Workplaces ..	2-11
References	2-13
• Exhibit 2.1 – Learning Needs Screening Tool	2-14

3 Chapter Three – Selecting and Using Assessments

Introduction	3-1
Meeting Institutional Assessment Needs	3-1
• Table 3.1 – Employment and Training Common Measures	3-2
Meeting an Individual’s Assessment Needs	3-2
Choosing Published Tests and Assessments	3-3
Using Formal Testing Instruments in Assessment	3-5
Educational Domain – Academic Performance or Achievement Testing	3-6
Educational/Psychological Domains – Cognitive Abilities Testing	3-8
Psychological Domain – Behavioral, Social, and Emotional Testing	3-10
Vocational Domain – Interests, Aptitudes, Skills, and Certification Testing	3-12
Vocational/Medical Domains – Physical and Functional Capacities Testing	3-16
Independent Living Skills (ILS) Assessments	3-18
References	3-19
• Exhibit 3.1 – Directory of Commonly Used Published Tests	3-20

4 Chapter Four – The Organizational Perspective

Introduction	4-1
The Current Situation	4-1
Building an Assessment Infrastructure	4-2
Formalizing Interagency Agreements	4-3
• Table 4.1 – Memoranda of Understanding Components	4-4
A Coordinated Assessment Services System in Action	4-6
• Table 4.2 – Roles & Responsibilities by Organizational Level	4-7
• Figure 4.3 – Skill Gap Assessment Model	4-8
References	4-9
• Exhibit 4.1 – Assessment Resource Mapping	4-10
• Exhibit 4.2 – Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education	4-12
• Exhibit 4.3 – Code of Professional Ethics and Practices	4-17
• Exhibit 4.4 – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	4-21
• Exhibit 4.5 – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule	4-22
• Exhibit 4.6 – Sample Interagency Data-Sharing Agreement	4-23

Appendices

Appendix A – Assessments and Federal Laws	A-1
Appendix B – Glossary of Terms Used in This Guide	A-4