Transition 101:

Issues related to Transition for Students with Significant Disabilities

Florida Partners in Transition
National Trends in Employment

- ID/DD Agency National Survey of Day and Employment Outcomes:

  - Major Findings include the following:
    - There continues to be growth in state’s investment in facility based and non-work services.
    - Growth continues in community based non-work services.

2002 Florida Outcomes

§ 55% of students with significant disabilities exited school with no diploma or certificate of completion for school year 2002-2003, according to the Florida Department of Education Data Warehouse.

§ Only 12% of all students with significant disabilities were enrolled in post secondary programs according to 2002 Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIIP) surveys.

§ Only 17.5% of students with significant disabilities were employed after exiting secondary schools with average quarterly earnings of approximately $3,700 according to 2002 FETPIIP surveys.
Florida Trends in Employment between 2000 and 2006:

- Employment of individuals with any disability has decreased from 45.8% to 36.8%
- Employment of people with intellectual disabilities has decreased from 32.3% to 25.5%
- Number of people on waiting lists for day and employment services: 20,249 (as of 2007)

THE GOOD NEWS:

- % of persons served in integrated employment has increased from 14% (2004) to 23% (2007)
IDEA definition of Transition Services

“a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that:

1. Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student’s movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; and…

Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(nn), F.A.C.
IDEA Definition of Transition Services...

2. Is based on the individual student’s needs, taking into account the student’s strengths, preferences and interests; and

3. Includes:
   a. Instruction;
   b. Related services;
   c. Community experiences;
   d. The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
   e. If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and the provision of a functional vocational evaluation, and

Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(nn), F.A.C.
Transition services for students with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(nn), F.A.C.
Three public systems have the primary responsibility for transition from school to work and adult living for individuals with severe intellectual disabilities:

- Public Schools,
- the Rehabilitation System and
- the Developmental Disabilities System.
Most individuals with severe intellectual disabilities are capable of working and participating in typical activities in their communities as adults, but only when accompanied by long-term support (Brown, Shiraga & Kessler, 2006).

In many states (including Florida), “waiting lists” for adult services continue to be an issue.
Factors that Promote Successful Student Outcomes

- Paid work experiences during High School
- Parent Involvement
- A network of family & friends
- Community-based instruction
- A good job match

Rusch & Chadsey, 1998
Key areas related to Transition

- All students w/disabilities should have available to them education & services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for:
  - Employment
  - Post-secondary Education
  - Independent Living
  - Community participation
  - Interagency collaboration
How Transition Services Should be Implemented
Ages 14 and 15…

- The purpose of the student’s IEP team meeting is to identify transition services needs.
- The student must be invited.
- The student’s strengths, preferences, and interests must be taken into account and other steps taken if student doesn’t attend.
- The IEP team must identify transition services needs, to include consideration of the student’s need for instruction or the provision of information in the area of self-determination to assist the student to be able to actively and effectively participate in IEP meetings and self-advocate, so that needed postsecondary goals are in place by age 16.
…How Transition Services Should be Implemented Ages 14 and 15

- The IEP team must develop a statement of whether the student is pursuing a course of study leading to a standard or special diploma.
- The IEP team must document the student’s diploma decision.
How Transition Services Should be Implemented Ages 16 and Older...

- The purpose of the student’s IEP team meeting is the consideration of the postsecondary goals and transition services.
- The student must be invited.
- An agency likely to provide or pay for transition services must be invited to send a representative with consent of the parent or student whose rights have transferred.
- The student’s strengths, preferences and interests must be taken into account and other steps taken if student doesn’t attend.
How Transition Services Should be Implemented Ages 16 and Older...

- The diploma decision must be reviewed and updated if necessary.
- The IEP team must consider whether the student needs instruction or information in the area of self-determination.
- The IEP team must develop measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment in the following areas:
  - Training or Education
  - Employment
  - Independent Living (where appropriate)
...How Transition Services Should be Implemented Ages 16 and Older...

- The IEP team must develop annual goals (and short-term objectives or benchmarks, if applicable) related to the student’s transition services needs.
  - Annual goals for students with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards are required to have short-term objectives or benchmarks.
- The IEP team must identify transition services that focus on improving the student’s academic and functional achievement and will facilitate the student’s articulation from school to post-school.
- The transition services must include courses of study that will assist the student to reach the postsecondary goals.
How Transition Services Should be Implemented
Ages 16 and Older

- The IEP team must reconvene if an agency fails to provide transition services described in the IEP.
- Transfer of rights must be documented in the IEP at age 17.
- The notice of transfer of rights must be sent to the student and student’s parents closer to the time of the student’s 18th birthday.
- A Summary of Performance (SOP) must be provided to students exiting with a standard diploma or aging out of their educational program.
HOW Transition Services should be implemented (cont.):

- IEP’s must focus on providing instruction & real work experiences that prepare the student for later educational experiences, post-school activities, employment & independent living.

- Teach and practice public transportation skills & destination travel training, as appropriate.

- Select courses of study that are meaningful to the student’s future and that will motivate the student to complete his or her education.
Transition services should:

- Be a coordinated set of activities designed within an outcome-oriented process; and
- Be based on the individual’s needs, taking into account the student’s preferences & interests.
DESIRED OUTCOME:

The integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.
Dan’s Journey

A look at Dan’s life and how Individualized Supports make things easier.
Dan Elementary School

- Dan attended an autism class in a SPED Center in LAUSD during Elementary School. (He learned a lot about autism there).
A push for electives...

- With some early advocacy, Dan took some electives in Middle School (like Gen Ed Music) where he got better grades than in the SPED Special Day Class. Here is his graduation day.
Steering his way into his own apartment

- Dan moved into his own apartment with a young couple in Santa Clarita at age 19. Dan pays his share of the rent and utilities.
Transition Services at College of the Canyons

- Dan received transition services based out of C.O.C.
- Services included C.O.C. classes, work experiences and Community Based Instruction
Earning a Paycheck

- Dan started his job at OSH when he turned 21. Avenues got him the job during his last semester at school.
Sweeping & Watering

- Here are some of Dan’s job duties at OSH.
Dusting
More of Dan at OSH
Break-time
Filling in time around his job
Vacations
Anything FAST!
Monday Night Bowling League
Swim Class at C.O.C.
Soccer Class
Fencing Class at the Athletic Club
In full fencing gear
With support from an OSERS Grant, we found that people with significant disabilities typically need at least 3 job placements to help figure out what they want to do (and what works and what doesn’t work). This is why it is important to begin providing paid work experiences prior to leaving school.

Shepard & Manley; 1999-2001
KEY TRANSITION QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- **School/Educational Services:**
  - How are we preparing our students TODAY for life after school?
  - How is what we are doing (especially between ages 14-22) different than glorified baby-sitting? *(Keeping people safe, clean, fed & “toileted”).*
  - Do we have a meaningful Individual Transition Plan (ITP, IEP in Florida) that is guiding the services we are providing?
  - Is the ITP/IEP based on the student’s measurable postsecondary goals that are based on appropriate assessments, including Person Centered Planning?
KEY TRANSITION QUESTIONS TO ASK: (cont.)

- **School/Educational Services:**
  - Are we providing real life experiences (employment, post secondary ed., CBI, etc.), with a focus on ITP/IEP goals to assist people to discover if their goals continue to be realistic and/or desired?
  - Do we revise ITP/IEP goals in the annual ITP/IEP meeting when people’s dreams for the future change?
  - How are we collaborating with adult service agencies and other community resources?
  - Are we working to implement a “seamless transition” upon graduation so that there is not a gap between services?
KEY TRANSITION QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- **Adult Services (Employment/Day/etc.)**
  - *Are we attending IEP meetings and helping students to better understand their support needs PRIOR to graduation?*
  - *Are the services we provide based on the individuals preferences for employment, post-secondary education, and community skills training, or are they based on WHAT WE HAVE AVAILABLE?*
  - *How creative are we at developing individualized, person-centered services for the people we support?*
Richard Rosenberg:

- Quality Characteristics of Transition Planning and transition supports
- Social Security Work Incentives
- Career Planning
- Employment
- Promoting Employment & Valued Roles
- Other strategies to promote success!
My likes and Dislikes

My gifts and talents

What works and What Doesn’t Work

My greatest challenges

Places I go

My health and wellness

The people in my life

How I interact with others

Choices I make

How I communicate

My life story
Mikel Sebastian Falvey
Graduated from Pioneer High School
June 19, 2008
What are Transition Services in VR?

- Assist eligible students with disabilities to transition from HS to postsecondary training, education, or directly into employment upon exit.

- Vocational Guidance and Counseling occurs while the student is still in HS.

- The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is coordinated with the student’s Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and in place prior to the student’s exit.

- Individuals only have a transition case with VR if they apply while in high school.
Legally Speaking

- Both IDEA (Individual’s with Disabilities Education Act) and the Rehab Act state that Vocational Rehabilitation will coordinate with the state’s education agency to transition youth with disabilities.

- In the Code of Federal Regulations (34CFR361.46) it indicates that we will coordinate our IPE with the school’s IEP (Individual Educational Plan).
Why are Transition Services Important?

- Students with disabilities make up about 14% of the Student Population*

- Students with disabilities are more likely to receive discipline*

- Students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of school*

- Some students with disabilities do not require assistance in an educational setting, but will in an employment setting

*FL SEA (State Education Agency) Profile 2009: comparisons to students without disabilities
When Does Communication Begin?

- It should begin before the first person is referred

- Professionals should discuss their challenges and needs to see how VR can help

- VR talks with parents and students about the future to develop supports in the present

- Professionals should obtain releases so that information can be shared and to provide mutually beneficial supports for the student
When Should a Student Apply?

- At least two years prior to HS exit
- Referral should be made at the end of the Sophomore or early in the Junior year... or
- Two to three years before graduation or exit for those students staying until age 22
- At age 16 and older if the student is or will be involved in a community work experience
What Documents Does VR Need from Schools?

- Current IEP or 504 Plan
- Medical and/or psychological records or new evaluations that document disability
- **Transcript** or academic reports
- Attendance and tardiness reports
- Behavioral reports, if applicable
- Vocational training records and/or career assessments, if available
- Involvement with any other agencies
What VR Needs from Schools

- Copies of school records
- Opportunities for VR presentations
- Aid distributing VR info to staff, parents, & students
- Scheduled meeting space & time for school visits
- Invitations to IEP meetings at start of school year or alternate input
- Student referrals at the start of the school year
- Time to speak with teachers, guidance counselors, nurses and students
What is the Parent & Guardian Role?

- A parent of a minor and legal guardians must participate in the VR process and sign all forms.

- Best Practice is to also have the student sign forms (even when their signature is not necessary) to prepare them for this future responsibility.

- Students age 18+ without a legal guardian may sign a Waiver of Confidentiality form to include family or others.

- Family support is valuable.
Transition Web Sites for Students with Disabilities, Families and Professionals

- www.facts23.facts.org
  - Florida’s academic counseling and tracking site

- www.fyitransition.org
  - Fully interactive transition site with an avatar that explains information found there

- www.myfloridayouth.com
  - Transition site emphasizing youth resources available through federal and state agencies

- www.project10.info
  - Comprehensive site for transition resources and technical assistance
VR Supported Employment (SE)

- Ongoing support for persons with most significant disabilities

- VR sponsors Phase I placement and stabilization

- A payer of Phase II follow along services must be expected

- Students with developmental disabilities should apply early to the Agency for Person’s with Disabilities (APD)

- Phase I may begin 5 months prior to school exit
What Activities Support Transition?

- DVR Counselors support student efforts to attain work skills and social behaviors needed to maintain employment.

- Encourage Students to Obtain *Paid* Part-time and Summer Employment

- Support Community Based Work Experiences & Internships

- Consider Apprenticeship and On-the-Job training programs

- Make Business Connections for Employer & Professional Mentoring

- Support Job Shadowing and Volunteerism

- Florida High School/Hi-Tech and Project Search

- Centers for Independent Living and Career Centers

- Youth and Social Clubs
Resource Materials for Transition Counselors

- **www.labormarketinfo.com/pubs**
  - Brochures, posters and information sheets on skills, careers and wages

- **www.apd.myflorida.com/publications**
  - Decision Making Options brochure and various other materials

- **www.advocacycenter.org**
  - Transition Guide for Children in the Foster Care System

- **www.fsapubs.org**
  - Handbooks, guides and forms to assist students, families and professionals understand and obtain financial aid

- **www.rehabworks.org**
  - Type Transition in the consumer search box on Rehabworks.org for resources or type STW for the VR School to Work Transition Guidelines and Best Practices
Questions?

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