



MOVING ON TO HIGH SCHOOL. A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN ON INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

Families get some of their best ideas, information, and insights from talking to other families. Everything from the best durable equipment supplier, to the best place to get socks that fit under leg braces, to which dentists are the best with our kids—they all get passed on by word of mouth.

Time spent in school is probably the single greatest feature of our children's lives, at least until age 22. So it only makes sense to make sure our sons and daughters get what they need from school. There have even been studies looking at which approaches result in the best school experience for students with disabilities. Even though families don't have much influence over how general education and special education courses are structured in schools, there are things that families **can do** to make the most of what their schools have to offer.

This tip sheet is based on the experiences of students with disabilities in public schools age 14-17, and their families. All the students had Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and all were moving on from the middle school grades to high school (9th grade).

Using these Tips: You may find many of these tips apply to students in settings other than public schools. While we have assigned steps to certain stages in the transition process, we recommend you read through all the tips and decide what makes the most sense for your family.

BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL STARTS...

The transition from 8th grade to high school is a very important one. Make sure that people who will be part of your teenager's high school experience are present at the 8th grade IEP meeting. Also include other important people in your adolescent's life.

- ⑤ A member of the high school's special education staff should be present at the 8th grade transition meeting. Make sure your IEP team leader invites a high school staff person. Having a chance to meet and get to know each other outside of the commotion of high school's hectic first days is a big help.
- ⑤ Make sure that your adolescent attends IEP meetings. It's not just the law—it's also important that they be part of planning their own learning and life goals.
- ⑤ Encourage your teenager to bring a friend to this and future IEP meetings. This will help them feel supported, and another student can share inside information about the school and its courses that even teachers may not know.

Become familiar with your teenager's high school and staff before school starts. Take time to arrange an appointment and go in to the school.

- ⑤ Many principals are not familiar with students with special education needs. If you introduce yourself and your teenager, the principal will become more aware. Talk to the principal about what your teen needs and what you can expect from the school.
- ⑤ Find out who will be your initial contact person at the school and meet them. This contact person might need to change once your teenager is at the school and their course of study and related supports are better defined.

WHEN HIGH SCHOOL IS JUST BEGINNING...

Attend orientation meetings and open houses at school; they are not just for "regular" education parents. This is how you learn about new programs, new teams, and any other opportunities that can help, such as community service, vocational programs, and electives.

- ⑤ Schools are always making changes and adjustments to their programs, structure, and courses. As a parent, you need to be up-to-date about any changes because they might include some good new choices for your adolescent.

THROUGHOUT THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS...



COURSE SELECTION

Take high school course selection very seriously. State and federal laws require that students' course planning relate to their long-term plans starting at age 14. Course selection should match the **vision** that the student with their family's input have for the future (post-secondary education, training, employment). A vision statement should be part of the IEP.

- ⑤ Students need to explore their interests well before graduation!
- ⑤ Schools offer multiple versions of most academic classes. Be sure that the course selected for your teenager is going to be what they need. For example, will the English class selected prepare students for any state assessment tests? Also be aware of course requirements for high school graduation and post-secondary programs.
- ⑤ Request that a guidance counselor be involved in the course selection process.
- ⑤ Don't forget the role that electives, internships, community service programs, and vocational programs can play to support the vision for your student.

Find ways to ensure that your teenager gets included in all the high school has to offer. For example, if your teenager is in classes with only special education students, talk with his educational team about making sure there is time in his schedule for inclusive activities. These could include lunchtime, gym, electives, clubs and other extracurricular programs.

- ⑤ Think about the accommodations and/or assistive technology your teenager needs for the courses selected. This might include books on tape, extended time for tests, or computer devices, among other possibilities.

Learn about person-centered planning and make it happen at your teen's school. Person-centered planning is a very powerful process, and the work it takes to make it happen is well worth it.



RESOURCES

Whole Life Planning for People with Disabilities. Manual and video, \$109 for set. Available from TRN Inc., www.trninc.com, 1-866-823-9800. A useful reference for implementing a person-centered planning approach to assist young adults in making the transition from school to adult life. Key aspects emphasize the involvement of family, friends, and community members, with the student driving the process. The video illustrates whole life planning in action by depicting key aspects of the process and the experiences of three students.

Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers. Tools for Inclusion, Vol. 10 No. 1, July 2002. Available from the Institute for Community Inclusion, www.communityinclusion.org, 617-287-4300. This brief reviews a three-stage career development process to help individuals with disabilities make satisfying job choices.

Websites on Person-Centered Planning: <http://ici2.umn.edu/pcplanning/info/sites.html>

THROUGHOUT THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS...

COMMUNICATION

Request a meeting at the end of each school year to focus on accommodations or other elements that will be needed next year.

- ⑤ The more high school staff working with your teen who attend these meetings, the better because it will give more people a chance to understand your teenager's needs. At a minimum, an education team liaison and special educator should meet with you and your teenager.
- ⊗ At this meeting, decide who will be the best person for you to keep in touch with so you can be sure your teenager is getting the accommodations, services, and supports she needs. It might be a special educator, guidance counselor, or even a teacher.
- ⑤ Ask to meet again at the beginning of the year to see how things are going. You want to make sure from the get-go that arrangements fall into place.
- ⑤ Stay in regular touch with your contact person, even setting up a schedule (for example, the first Monday of every month at 9 a.m. by phone). Email and voicemail are other ways to stay in touch.
- ⑤ Work with your contact person to set up planning times when you will be able to meet with individual teachers as needed. If there is any sign that your teen is not doing well (for example, struggling with homework), do go in and meet with the teacher.

Don't wait for progress reports and teacher conferences to find out how things are going. Take the initiative to check in with teachers.

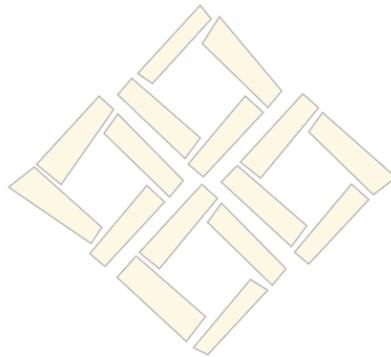
- ⑤ If there are problems, waiting until later in the term will only make it more challenging to make changes or adjustments. It's better to turn the situation around earlier rather than later.

Remember, good teachers want more parent involvement and encourage families to come in to the school to meet.

- ⑤ Don't let yourself get "out of the loop."
- ⑤ Stay up-to-date about opportunities at the school, remembering that they can change from year to year. This includes accommodations, school-to-career programs, and service-learning.

Moving on to High School: A Tip Sheet for Parents of Children on Individualized Education Plans is a publication of the **Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)**, written by **Linda Freeman**.

Thanks to Maria Paiewonsky and Kathy Moriarty for their help with this material.



INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
100 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD



BOSTON, MA 02125
617.287.4300 (VOICE)
617.287.4350 (TTY)
617.287.4352 (FAX)
ici@umb.edu



Visit

www.communityinclusion.org

to read this product online,
find other publications on this topic,
or sign up for ICI's email announcement list.

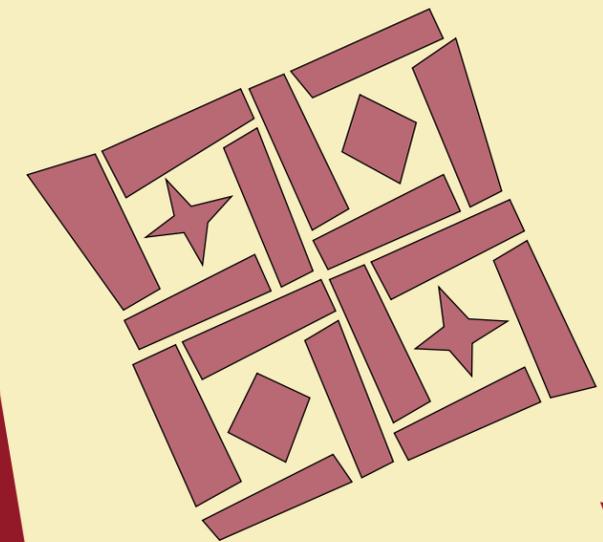
ICI promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities.
Family resources include publications on employment and education.



INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION
UMASS BOSTON
100 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MA 02125

NON PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 52094

MOVING ON TO HIGH SCHOOL



A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS
OF CHILDREN ON
INDIVIDUALIZED
EDUCATION PLANS



INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

The Institute Brief

- OPPORTUNITY —————
————— CHOICE —————
————— INTEGRATION —

A University Affiliated Program

Institute for Community Inclusion

April, 1995

According to The National Longitudinal Transition Study (1988-1993) commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the national dropout rate for students with disabilities is 32%, and fewer than 17% of these students enter formal post-secondary training upon completion of their high school programs. These types of statistics have prompted local, state, and federal governments to enact laws regarding transition for students with disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476), IDEA, is a federal law that contains specific language about transition. It states that the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) address needed transition services for students with disabilities no later than age 16 and, if appropriate for an individual student, beginning at age 14 or younger. The outcomes for transition must be documented in a transition plan that accompanies a student's IEP. Transition planning requires that the school district must:

- Invite the student and family to the team meeting
- Consider student's needs preferences, and interests
- Include future oriented outcomes, goals and objectives in instruction, community experiences, employment and post-school adult living
- Invite the liaison from the appropriate

human service agency if applicable

- Describe interagency responsibilities or linkages before the student leaves the school setting.

Transition from school to adult life is an exciting time filled with many hopes and dreams. It is also a time of uncertainty and sometimes turmoil. All students must think about where they want to live, whether they want to work or go to school, and what to do for fun. These decisions are hard for all students, but they can be especially difficult for students with disabilities. Often, students have not had practice making decisions, trying new things, or independently seeking support and assistance. Students should be encouraged to take the lead in a transition process that will enable them to develop decision-making and problem solving skills they will need to succeed in life. The types of planning required is good practice for all students leaving high school as they prepare for the work force and become a part of the community.

Transition involves, among other things, the kind of work a person does, where and with whom one lives, what one does during leisure time and the type of learning, training, and experiences one may need or want.

Schools are responsible for providing a wide range of coordinated activities that lead to employment, community living, and post-secondary education outcomes. When appropriate, transition planning documents can include the acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation. Transition planning is a cooperative process which involves student choice, parent

involvement, informal supports and use of community resources, as well as more formal procedures and interagency collaboration. Recent trends on both state and national levels encourage this kind of of integrated, cooperative approach.

Linking initiatives can reallocate resources, create forums for sharing a broad range of expertise, assist in bridging the gap between regular and special education and ultimately result in mobilizing the entire community to build the capacity of the local school to address the transition needs of all students. Initiatives related to the overall improvement of education include school reform, School to Work Opportunities Act, Goals 2000, family and school partnerships, school and business partnerships, and the development of inclusive schools.

Defining Transition

Transition is an outcome-oriented process that involves the collaboration of many individuals and results in the student taking control of his/her own life. Outcomes include having a place to live, friends with whom to hang out, a lover, a job, community involvement and a means to financially support oneself.

Transition means different things to different people. Students who are interested in college have to make plans to leave home, learn a new set of school “rules” and norms, often have to deal with being away from home for the first time, etc. Students who choose to work after school must decide where satisfying jobs exist, think about whether or not to live at home, decide if the job can pay the bills if one chooses to live on one’s own...there are many new decisions to make. Students may choose other options like volunteer work, travel, or other non-work related options. Making these choices will impact financial situations and perhaps one’s living arrangements.

Students must be encouraged from a very early age to explore ideas and take chances. Their decisions must be supported by families, friends, teachers, and others to assist them in realizing their dreams.

The following vignettes illustrate some the many choices and possibilities that exist for life after high school:

For **Lakeesha**, getting accepted into a post-secondary school, attending classes, making new friends and living in a dorm is her dream. In addition, she would like to pursue a career in fashion design, live in her own apartment and take regular vacations. These are the outcomes of her successful transition. To realize these dreams, Lakeesha must make sure her grades are good; investigate and apply to colleges offering programs in design; learn the skills to live on her own, and find supports to make accommodations that she may need.

Juan dreams about leaving school and getting an office job that pays well enough to share an apartment with a friend, go to baseball games, shop, and go to clubs most Saturday nights. He hopes to meet a future wife with whom he can share his life and begin a family.

Fiona’s outcomes of successful transition include living in an apartment with one or two housemates of her choosing, arranging for personal care assistance, working part-time with some supports, Friday night movies and many evenings spent going out and dining with good friends.

David would enjoy living with with a family in a foster home, where family members assist him in coordinating his medical needs (assistance with eating, monitoring gastrointestinal tubes, administering medications intravenously). He wants to participate in family activities like camping, boating, and fishing. David also loves weekend trips with friends and family members to pick up bargains at yard sales in their area. David’s van,

which is equipped with a lift and a ramp, is large enough to pick up most of the items found on their travels.

These examples seem quite ordinary, but may take years of thinking, talking, and planning to be realized. To begin to accomplish these goals, students and their support teams must look at both non-traditional as well as traditional resources in a community. Very often, it is the community-based, generic programs that provide the best information and assistance in achieving community outcomes. To rely solely on adult human services agencies who often maintain a “slot mentality” is often a dead end and may result in less than inclusive outcomes. Successful transition means that the outcomes for the student with the disability are the least restrictive, most community inclusive situation based on the student’s own dreams and choices. Successful transition is not entering a work program and a living situation where there is a spot available that the student has not chosen, seen or is interested in.

What Is “Good Transition?”

It is difficult to define what “good” transition planning will look like for schools. It will vary from each district based on the needs and individual makeup of the schools in that area. What is most important is that transition planning and information about transition become integral parts of schools’ general information for all educators. Like any new program or requirement in a school, making sure that someone from the school take responsibility for disseminating information and educating the school community is essential. To facilitate change, it is important that administrators, including principals, department heads and superintendents, send the message that transition planning and documentation become routine in their school communities.

Outcomes of Transition Planning

The following outcome areas highlight issues and areas of concern when planning for transition.

Housing

Finding a place to live is a very important and often one of the most difficult outcomes in transition planning. There are very few living arrangements that are accessible for people with disabilities and that are integrated into the community. In addition, there is a general lack of affordable housing and individualized supported housing options. It is necessary to become familiar with the various kinds of housing that exist and with the supports that are available. Resources in the community of choice must be considered as well. Proximity to work, recreation and shopping facilities all play a part in deciding where individuals choose to live. Often, individuals are concerned about the cost of living in independent housing due to un- or under-employment. (But, living in more independent situations can increase social security benefits because the amount of the benefit is partially based on an individual’s living situation. In addition, an individual may become eligible for benefits like food stamps, fuel assistance, lower electric rates and a discounted phone bill.)—is this true??

Supported living may be another approach an individual may wish to pursue. A person can request services that are sensitive to individual preferences from agencies who provide living services, or be eligible for vouchers that will enable the purchase of the needed services and supports.

Employment

In order to prepare for the world of work, students must develop skills before they leave school. These skills include: resume writing, interviewing, how to dress for work and interviews, physical stamina, promptness, problem

solving, personal hygiene, following directions, accepting criticism, completing tasks in a timely fashion, working cooperatively and independently, developing social relationships and understanding how job accommodations can assist them. This is a large list of skills to master, however, the better a student is at these individual areas, the more employable she/he can be. Students can get involved in high school in school-based work programs, talk to guidance counselors about career exploration, or secure paid work experiences like afterschool jobs in order to begin to prepare for the world of work and begin to make choices based on these experiences.

Post-Secondary Education

Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many colleges and universities have developed programs, supports and/or special services for students with disabilities. Services offered vary among schools. Some colleges recruit individuals with disabilities or with specific kinds of disabilities. Supports for students with cognitive disabilities are generally more difficult to find. Students must be able to advocate for the accommodations that they need. It is up to the student to know what accommodation is needed and make it known to the administration and/or individual instructors. Students must learn their rights and responsibilities under the different laws, such as the ADA, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, before they leave high school and begin college.

Gathering information that is pertinent to college prior to leaving high school is a great help in the admissions process and while in school. In a student's personal file, there may be information that verifies a disability, which is what most schools require prior to providing accommodations. Other items in a personal file might be a student's most recent IEP, a doctor's letter verifying disability, school transcripts, portfolio of previous work, transition plans, learning style inventory and immunization records. Post secondary institutions are only legally obligated to

provide accommodations to students with disabilities when the accommodations are requested and documented. Students must know which academic tasks are difficult and then ask for assistance.

Community Living

Living in and participating in one's community is an important part of adult life. Individuals with disabilities must realize that they have the same rights and responsibilities as do all law abiding citizens. Participation in the community can take many forms. Voting, helping out a neighbor, participating in a town sports league, and shopping are but a few activities we take for granted in our community. It is necessary that students leaving high school become aware of the activities available in their community of choice and seek out the places/activities that interest them. Since the passage of the ADA, all options that are available to individuals without disabilities are available to individuals with disabilities. One need not consider only the "special" activities, but rather consider the array of available community options.

It is ideal for someone or a group of people from a school to become "information brokers" to the school community about transition and planning for life after high school for students with disabilities — brokering between students and schools; families and schools; and schools and the adult service community.

Some schools are communicating the importance of transition planning in school. There is not one approach that dictates how transition planning information should be disseminated throughout the school community. Each school has unique characteristics and the person(s) responsible for sharing the information must adapt to their schools' own needs.

Although transition planning is mandated by federal law for students with disabilities, this kind of planning makes sense for all students. The more that the whole school takes on the

issues of transition planning for all students, the better likelihood that good transition planning will occur for students with disabilities.

Schools must be sure that there is a place where students can get information about transition planning, where they can learn about their rights and responsibilities and feel empowered to make their own decisions about what they want to do as they prepare for the adult world. Schools must try to disseminate information — schedule information sessions for students and families in order to help them understand the transition process. Someone from the school who may have contact with outside adult service agencies and know who to call with specific questions is also important. People in the business community who can be available for students as they begin to make linkages in the local community for jobs, places to live and other community activities is helpful for students as well. Having parents and students who are knowledgeable about transition lends the “consumer voice” to the issue — parents talking to other parents, students with other students.

Outreach

It is important that a school conduct outreach to as many people as possible, especially students. The more information students have, the more they are encouraged to attend their IEP and transition planning meetings, and the more they are encouraged to speak up for their choices and preferences will they become active participants in deciding their futures. They must feel comfortable to articulate their dreams and vision. Students who are empowered and feel good about themselves will, in turn, become citizens who can advocate for themselves and become responsible adults after high school. A school must look at the students they serve and determine what kinds of outreach will work best to reach the largest population of the student body.

How will the topic of transition and transition planning sustain itself? One answer is that it must become as integral to the IEP process as the

IEP is now. Different schools have interpreted this responsibility in different ways:

One school put together a manual — a how-to guide for transition planning in an attempt to institutionalize various policies and procedures regarding transition planning in the school. This guide was incorporated into the school’s policy manual that is disseminated to the entire school community.

Another school linked transition planning into an already existing committee that deals with the School to Work Opportunities Act. The kinds of linkages they make in the work world for the “non-disabled” students can also assist students with disabilities in finding work in the community. The more integrated transition planning is into larger school initiatives, the better likelihood of it continuing .

All students require assistance and support when leaving high school. By linking all students into transition planning processes, more students can access resources. School wide activities to keep students, parents, and teachers informed is crucial. Again, commitment on the part of a school’s principal and other school personnel will also sustain transition planning as a viable resource in a school.

Students, parents, and teachers must know who and where to go for information. They must be aware of the adult service agencies in their local areas, and at the least, know who to call when they do not have the information they or someone else may need. Transition planning documentation requires that there be linkages to appropriate adult service agencies in order to assist the student in reaching their goals and vision. Networking to find resources (on local and regional levels if necessary) that consumers need is important in order to get good transition outcomes.

Success Stories

Jim, a 17 year old boy with Tourette's Syndrome, is on his way to plan for life after high school. Jim has attended his education planning meetings for the last 2 years and is an active participant in writing his transition plan. At his last meeting, Jim stressed that he would really like to live out of his home after he graduates from high school. Currently, Jim has chosen to work at a pet store, where he is exploring whether he wants to pursue a career working with animals. He realizes that he will probably have to make more money if he wants to live out of his parents' home, and will begin to explore creating a budget and learn about banking and money management in school. He will enroll in an accounting class in school, both for money management and career possibilities. He intends on graduating at next year when he's 18.

Chris is a 25 year old man who works as a custodian at a local high school. Chris has a significant seizure disorder and is labeled as mentally retarded. He is a client of the Department of Mental Retardation. His transition plan is a success because many people, including Chris, participated in his planning process. Chris was involved in a process called "person centered planning" where he gathered a group of family and friends and he explored many areas of his life, such as his living situation, his work situation and the kinds of community experiences he wanted to have. Chris was mainly interested in making money and didn't care a lot about what he did for a living, as long as he made at least \$100.00 a week. He found the custodian job where he works four days a week, 7 hours a day. He needed a job coach for the first 6 months of the job, but was gradually faded until a point where he can now work independently. He spends other time during the week doing activities like banking and shopping. A worker from a local community agency coordinates his work schedule and serves as liaison between the job and Chris. Chris has an active social life, he plays softball in the summer in a men's league, with his personal care attendant

(PCA), and enjoys "hanging out" in local restaurants and shops in his town. He lives with a friend and a PCA in an apartment near the high school. Chris considers his planning process as very successful — he received a great deal of support from his high school teachers and his caseworker from DMR, who knew about Chris and some of his needs prior to Chris' graduation from high school when Chris was 21.

?Have You Thought About....?

Below are 4 checklists that can help students prioritize and think about what they want to do with their lives after high school. These questions may be a starting point for students as they begin to think about what is important to them and how they can make informed choices about their future.

Housing Checklist

- Do you want to live alone or with other people?
- Do you want to live close to family? friends?
- What kind of housing do you want? (unit in apartment complex; multi- / single family home; etc.)
- How will you pay for housing?
- Do you need financial assistance to live where you choose?
- Do you need accessible parking?
- Do you want to live near work? school?
- Where will you shop, do laundry, socialize?
- Do you want to live in a rural, urban or suburban setting?
- What kinds of support will you need to live in your place of choice?(person care assistant, financial, modification to dwelling?)
- Will your living situation need any accommodations on the inside or outside?

Employment Checklist

- What are your interests?
- What kinds of work/activities do you enjoy?
- What are your skills?
- How much money do you need to earn to support your lifestyle?
- Where do you want to work?
- Where is work located in relation to transportation and where you live?
- Do you need further education and training?
- How many hours are you willing to work?
- What does the job pay?
- Does the job have benefits?
- Will having a job affect social security benefits?
- Will the job provide flexibility for ongoing medical needs?
- How flexible are the hours?
- Does the job fit your work style? (noisy, quiet, casual, formal)
- Is the job challenging enough?
- Is there room for advancement?
- What kind of supervision is needed?
- Does the job offer any staff development opportunities?
- Do you have any physical requirements? (need to sit for periods of time, etc..)

Post-Secondary Education Checklist

- What kind of college/university do you want to attend?
- Do you need an admission test? (SAT, ACT)
- Are there other requirements for admission? interviews, GPA)
- Do you have alternative admissions policies for students with disabilities?
- How will you pay for tuition?
- Do you want to live on campus?
- What kind of assistance do you need to meet college requirements?(reading, note taking, getting to & from classes, personal care, recreation)
- Will you be able to complete college work in given amount of time?
- Are there support groups/services available for students with disabilities throughout the duration of college?
- Does the school have tutoring services? is tutoring available?
- Are note takers available?
- What special equipment is available?

Community Living And Recreation/Leisure Checklist

- What kind of social situations do you prefer?) large groups, small groups, one to one, nightclubs, sports)
- Do you enjoy certain activities more than others?
- What type of budget do you have?
- If there were no financial restrictions, what would you choose to do?
- Have you tried a wide array of activities such as organized groups(aerobics/drama class), informal groups(going to the mall with friends), independent activities (music lesson, gardening...)
- Do you need accommodations, or specialized equipment?
- Do you need assistance in registering for certain activities?
- Do you know where to register to vote?
- Are you able to vote independently?
- Will you need assistance to vote?
- Do you know where your polling place is?
- Is there someone to explain issues to you when they are not clear?
- Do you know where local stores are for food and clothing?
- Do you know where public transportation is if you need it?
- How do you prefer to meet people? (recreation activities, work, being introduced, want ads in the newspaper)

Massachusetts Transition Initiative

In Massachusetts and in 36 states across the country, schools are participating in federally funded grants aimed at assisting schools in getting information and learning about transition planning. In this state, the Massachusetts Transition Initiative (MTI), conducts training and technical assistance to schools on topics related to transition such as relevant laws, forming effective committees, person centered planning, data collection, linking with adult service agencies, resource gathering and how to fill out the Statement of Needed Transition Services that accompany the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This is sponsored by the MA Department of Education in conjunction with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Institute for Community Inclusion.



The Massachusetts Transition Initiative (MTI) is a five year systems change grant in conjunction with the Department of Education (DOE) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). Other participating agencies include the Department of Employment and Training, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the Service Delivery Areas of the JTPA and the Institute for Community Inclusion. The purpose of the grant is to assist school districts, students, families, adult service agencies, and community-based providers to develop strategies that support youth with disabilities as they move from school to meaningful outcomes in adult life. The MTI provides training and technical assistance to schools across Massachusetts on issues of transition including person centered planning, student empowerment, organizing local transition planning committees, finding and sharing resources and facilitating linkages on local and regional levels for schools and human service agencies.

Resources

Various state and local agencies in Massachusetts can be resources for transition related issues and transition planning. The MA Department of Education provides information on how schools can participate in the grant and information on the new IEP and its accompanying document, The Statement of Needed Transition Services. Staff from the DOE conduct trainings and information sessions in these areas throughout the state.

The MA Rehab Commission

(MRC) can provide information on adult service agencies and how to best contact certain area offices for information. All agencies in the state are receiving training and information about transition in the hopes of anticipating consumer concerns and questions.

The Federation for Children with special needs is an advocacy organization who can assist students, their parents and others with information on advocacy, the laws and other issues related to transition.

Community colleges throughout the state have disability services there to assist students with disabilities get the supports and services they need to be successful in post secondary school. They can help with information on figuring out what students need before they go to school.

Other state and local agencies can give help and information:

The Department of Employment and Training (DET)

The Department of Mental Health (DMH)

The Department of Mental Retardation (DMR)

MA Commission for the Blind (MCB)

MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request

The mission of the Institute for Community Inclusion is to work to create and preserve a quality life for people with disabilities and their families through training, research, information sharing, and service with and for individuals with disabilities and their family members, community members, service providers, and policy makers. For further information, please contact:

Dr. William E. Kiernan, Director
Institute for Community Inclusion
Children's Hospital
300 Longwood Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
617/735-6506
617/735-6956 TDD
ICI@a1.tch.harvard.edu Internet

Contributors to this issue:
Rachel Nemeth Cohen
Debra Hart
Ashley Hunt

This issue of *The Institute Brief* is supported in part by grant # 90-DD-0299 from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities; and by grant # H 133B 300 67-NIDRR from the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research.



File number:

11233

Author: Michael Kendrick

Title: SRV As A Resource for Seeking and Shaping the Good Life

Original Source: Families for Change

Publication date: Spring 2008

Publisher information: *Families for Change*, Spring 2008, Volume 3, Issue 7, pages 3 - 5, Family Advocacy, Australia

Abstract:

Social Role Valorisation or SRV is a theory that the majority of people have not encountered. Michael Kendrick observes that those who have been fortunate enough to immerse themselves in SRV find it very helpful in assisting people with disability to have a good life and describes some of the potentially positive impacts.

The theory of Social Role Valorisation (SRV) is not one that families and most ordinary citizens will have come across, quite apart from seeing its usefulness and applying it. In fact, even a majority of professionals in the sector may have only heard about it and may themselves lack any meaningful comprehension of or competence with it. However, those that have had the good fortune to have been able to immerse themselves in it, typically find it to be hugely helpful to their efforts in regard to assisting people with disability to create and obtain a good life for themselves. In the interests of helping curious people gain the beginnings of an appreciation for what SRV can do to help with 'life building', a series of brief descriptions of the ways that SRV theory can help people make progress are offered. Each of these draws upon specific elements of the theory of SRV and illustrates how it can help impact on 'life-making' in practical ways. Nonetheless, what is offered here is a description of its potentially positive impacts, not a description of the theory itself.

The Importance Of Acquiring And Being Supported In Valued Social Roles

The world is full of experiences, opportunities and possibilities that, if they are properly tapped into, can mean that a person gets to enjoy life more richly and to fulfil their greater potential. However, if they cannot get to these experiences, then all of this will be lost. The means to get to these life giving experiences and opportunities are valued social roles. Roles are the vehicle through which a person gets to be part of community life and enjoy what community life might offer. These roles can include, for example, friend, neighbour, club member, employee, sports fan, adventurer, athlete, relative, companion, travel mate and so on. These roles are usually not available, or in extremely short supply, in segregated settings for people who have disability. Consequently, a person who is segregated will never have the extent of life opportunities that one who is out and about in the larger community will have. Such roles can be consciously created for a given person even if they do not exist at present, as long as there are people who are supportive of this happening. The more one has a diversity of valued social roles, the more of life they can taste, embrace and reject depending upon whether these experiences are to their liking.

Being Granted Full Humanity And Personhood

One of the ways that people with disability get cheated out of a good life is that we act as if they do not deserve nor want *as full a life* as their non-disabled peers. Though we may be unaware of it, we extinguish countless life possibilities for people when we set our expectations for them too low because this conveys and confirms the message that 'less than' will have to do for them because, after all, they have a disability and the bottom line is that they should settle for less. This constitutes a profound and damaging mistake because it crushes a person's life and possibilities. On the other hand, if one starts from the assumption that, irrespective of the person having disability, this person is as fully human.... in all ways..... as anyone alive today, then we can properly appreciate all of the hope and possibility that comes when the fullest potential of all of life awaits to be tasted.

**This information is made available by the
Institute for Family Advocacy and Leadership Development
and cannot be used except for the sole purpose of research and study.**

It is important to not forget that being fully a person is a great gift, because it means that it is always possible to conceivably enjoy and appreciate any aspect of life providing that the appropriate support to do so is present. Taking up this view, that a person with disability is fully capable of enjoying any aspect of life that suits them, is much better than to take the opposite view that they should give up on life and settle for less. One road leads to a narrow diminished life and the other leads to the hope of a daily richness in living.

Proactively Pursuing Life Possibilities; Not Over-Fixating On The Person's Impairments

When we focus on what people are not, or on what they cannot do, it blinds us to who they are and, even more importantly, who they might yet be. Most impairments that people live with can be offset to a large degree by good supports that take care of the things that the person cannot do for themselves. So, while people may be constrained to some extent by their disability, it is important to not become overly focused on this, as it will make it hard to concentrate on what could be possible in life for the person, particularly if the person gets the support they need. By focusing on a person's gifts, assets, potentials, capacity to enjoy life and their many passions and interests, it is only a matter of time and diligence before some kind of lifestyle will begin to emerge for the person. On the other hand, by constantly using the presence of disability as an excuse for not having or expecting a good life, we will talk ourselves and others into a self-defeating hopelessness. This is why it must become a habit with us to not give undue energy to the ways that disability creates limits for a person and instead shift our focus and energy towards what is still possible in the person's life and what we can do about realising that potential. By doing so, life and its many enjoyments become closer rather than farther away.

Seeing And Meeting The Person's Needs In Typical Ways

A great danger exists when we make the mistake of believing that people with disability cannot get their needs met in largely the same way that other people do. This is because it leads to us setting people with disability aside from others in so-called 'special' places and programs, as if these are the only way that they will get what they need in life. More often than not, they will get much less. Further, they will be harmed if they are denied the chance to get the 'real thing'. Why we must look to using the same resources as people without disability, is that these actually do meet the needs of countless ordinary people. It is true that people with disability may require some support to take advantage of these, but this should not be a reason not to take advantage of them. For instance, we do not need special clothing stores for people with disability when we have perfectly good shops already. The same could be said about 'regular' gyms, choirs, sports leagues, knitting groups, churches, airlines, homes, jobs and all manner of other 'regular' solutions to our needs and that of millions of others. This is because they can actually meet our needs and so, therefore, it is crucial that people with disability get to take full advantage of these.

**This information is made available by the
Institute for Family Advocacy and Leadership Development
and cannot be used except for the sole purpose of research and study.**

Undoubtedly some of these regular and normal ways of meeting one's needs will lead us to some people who are less accepting and welcoming of people with disability, but these kinds of people can change in time as they relax and come to be more comfortable with the newcomer who happens to have disability.

Sharing Life With All People

There is a theory that claims that people with disability could only be comfortable and secure if they lived out their lives 'with their own kind'. This overlooks the fact that most people with lifelong disability actually grow up and live quite comfortably within families in which they are the only person with disability. They most certainly can and do enjoy their lives and relationships not only with family, but also with all manner of people that they like and feel comfortable with. So, the real issue in whether people can get along with others is not disability, but rather compatibility. People with disability are people like everyone else and so will quite naturally feel comfortable with and enjoy people that they find likeable and good company.

The more we emphasise this, the more we will begin to realise that it is the qualities of people that matter in congenial relationships, not whether they have or do not have disability. Whether these relationships occur in work, leisure, home or community groups may not matter as long as the time spent with people is pleasant and supportive. In fact, there are all sorts of instances where people with disability do not get along with other people with disability. This is not because of their disability at all, but rather their lack of compatibility. So, when we focus on this, we will see that congenial and friendly people of all kinds are actually 'their own kind' if they end up getting along well. Since there is obviously a wealth of lovely people in this world, it is important to be sure that people with disability get all the chances possible to meet people whose company they enjoy.

Belonging To Groups That Share One's Interests And Passions

People with disability can usually have and enjoy any life interest that others also are attracted to. Similarly, when people share in a common passion or interest, they naturally gravitate to groups that are engaged in that interest. In the process, they not only get to share a passion, they also form bonds of friendship and comradeship stemming from the things they love and place considerable personal importance on. In this way, they find a place of belonging amongst others and the ability to say that they are a member and one of many. This helps form identity, can often provide status and typically, leads to various valued social roles within the group - and possibly in relation to others who are not part of the group. Further, others will also get to know and appreciate them and this will provide for all manner of relationship ties, including many lasting friends. It is true that

**This information is made available by the
Institute for Family Advocacy and Leadership Development
and cannot be used except for the sole purpose of research and study.**

facilitating such opportunities has its challenges, particularly in regard to groups that are wary of newcomers and slow to welcome them, but these are natural enough inhibitions that may be overcome with time and dedicated facilitation.

Contributing To Life

Life need not only be about what others may do or not do. It can also be about discovering within yourself ways that you can give back to life and to the people and communities with whom you live. When we concentrate upon the gifts of people, we enable these to be noticed and to find expression in everyday life. All people have qualities and capacities that can add value and enrichment to the lives of others. When these gifts of people with disability are overlooked or remain undernourished and underdeveloped, we will be the poorer for it. So, it is important that we focus on people with disability and the contributions that they both want to and can make to life.

Having A Unique Life, Well Suited To The Person

It is a paradox that we are all so similar as human beings and yet, at the same time, we are all distinctly unique people. People with disability are every bit as unique and diverse and when their uniqueness is fostered and allowed its natural expression, then it becomes possible for a person to seek out and embrace a life and lifestyle that most optimally suits them as a person. Of course, the better the fit of one's lifestyle to one's personality and preferences, the happier most people will be. It is important to most people to be the designers and decision-makers of their own lives and to be able to pursue the directions in life that most closely align with one's ultimate purposes in life. It is no different if you have disability and the satisfactions are exactly the same when you can be your own person.

Not Allowing Vulnerabilities To Be The Reason To Deny A Person A Good Life

It is true that many people with disability may live with vulnerabilities that are more intense and worrisome than others might face. It would also be irresponsible to neglect these vulnerabilities. Fortunately, it is also possible to constructively offset such vulnerabilities with intentional safeguards that are well matched to the precise concerns that are present. Should this happen, then most of normal life can and should go on for the person much as it does for others. However, if such vulnerabilities are ignored, supported poorly or are overly emphasised, there is a risk that the healthy, satisfying and vibrant lifestyles that can be lived, even if one lives with serious vulnerabilities, will be threatened. Vulnerability is not a reason to not pursue a full life, as the enjoyment of life is the same in its essence whether you have or do not have vulnerabilities to contend with.

SRV Theory As A Guide To Assembling A Good Life

SRV theory is not a panacea, nor was it ever said to be. Life will be a challenge whether one has disability or not. However, if one is poorly advised on what it takes to make a good life, then it is possible to miss many of the real opportunities that exist to do this. So, the best way to see the role of SRV, is as a body of advice about how people with disability can obtain fulfilling lives and address their diverse and unique potentials as human beings. In this, SRV theory has much to offer, as can be seen in the results it can lead to if employed properly. In this way, SRV theory is wise counsel.

Michael Kendrick is an independent, international consultant in human services and community work. He has worked in the disability, mental health and aged care fields for nearly thirty years and occupied a variety of roles. He is an active public speaker and trainer as well as evaluator, consultant, and advisor to advocates, governments, agencies and community groups. He also writes extensively and many of his articles are available through Family Advocacy's Inclusion Collection Library. He resides in Massachusetts.



INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNITY
INCLUSION

Tools for Inclusion

family and consumer series

From Stress to Success: Making Social Security Work for Your Young Adult

by Danielle Dreilinger and Jaimie Ciulla Timmons

INTRODUCTION

How does Social Security affect families as their children move into adulthood? The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) conducted a study with parents of high school students with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a Social Security benefit for people who have disabilities and meet income guidelines. This brief shares their experiences and suggests ways that your family can manage SSI and use it to help your young adult plan for a career.

THE FAMILIES

The ten parents who participated in this study came from four ethnically diverse communities across Massachusetts. Their children, ages 16-21, had a wide range of disabilities: learning, cognitive, physical, behavioral, sensory, and psychiatric. Each parent participated in an interview that lasted approximately 45 minutes.

STRESSES OF DEALING WITH THE SYSTEM

While the Social Security Administration (SSA) offers many benefits and opportunities for recipients, dealing with SSA - or any - government agency can be confusing. Parents named **three main challenges** that blocked their ability to plan ahead.

1

SSI CHECKS ARE SMALL.

Parents found SSI helpful in meeting their children's basic needs. However, saving for the future was often impossible because there was no money left over to save.

"I have to tell them there's no bank account 'cause there's not enough there to put away."

2

SAVINGS RESTRICTIONS AND THE REQUIREMENT TO "SPEND DOWN" EXCESS CASH.

Families who tried to save money were frustrated by SSA's restrictions on how much money they were allowed to keep. Since SSI is designed for people who have little or no assets, a high level of savings conflicts with SSA requirements. Parents explained that they were required to "spend down" excess savings. When the money was gone, so were any plans they had for that money, such as using it for job training.

"I was reporting... what he had in [his savings account] and all of a sudden they called and took it away from him. I had to reapply, get rid of all the money and they cut him over \$200 after that."

"[I wish] we could have... saved more towards the future rather than to spend it all like that."

3

COMMUNICATION WITH THE SSI SYSTEM CAN BE CHALLENGING.

While the complexity of the system requires solid communication between families and SSA, paperwork, inconsistent staff knowledge, and bureaucratic "red tape" made it difficult for parents to get their questions answered.

"You talk to another person and you get a different answer... they are not coming out with the same answers."

WHAT DO THESE FRUSTRATIONS MEAN FOR FAMILIES?

On a practical level, the financial realities of SSI make it tough for families to budget for the future. On an emotional level, the energy that these parents used in managing SSI took away from the energy they had to support their children's plans for the future. Just being a recipient and dealing with immediate challenges took up a lot of time and kept families from planning for the future in a confident, proactive way.

STRESS-FREE SSI

Try using the following strategies to manage SSI. Then, use SSI as a creative tool for planning and go from stressed and reactive to positive and planful!

SAVVY STRATEGIES TO SIMPLIFY SSI

- 1. Keep it on file.** Keep records of everything in a special notebook. Photocopy everything you send to SSA, including pay stubs.
- 2. Report changes in income immediately.** This is especially important if the monthly income from a job is inconsistent, as it often is for teenagers (if, for instance, they work a different number of hours every week or get paid biweekly).
- 3. Anticipate potential overpayments.** If you know an SSI check has not been adjusted to reflect a change in income, set aside some money to cover the upcoming overpayment so you don't feel squeezed when it happens.
- 4. Set up a meeting.** Sometimes it's easier to work out problems face-to-face. Meeting with a staff member at your local SSA office also allows you to develop a relationship with a person you can call on in the future.
- 5. Stick with the slow times.** Try not to contact SSA during busy periods, especially the beginning of the month (until the 5th or 6th). Early afternoons in the middle of the week and Friday mornings are often quieter. Check with someone at your local office for the best times.
- 6. Put it in writing.** After you talk to someone, write down their name, the date, what you discussed, and what you decided to do. That way, if there are complications down the road you can point to "hard evidence." For particularly important issues, you may wish to follow up your conversation with a letter that confirms what you discussed.
- 7. Prepare for possible complications.** The Social Security Administration is a big and complex system. It can make the whole process a lot less stressful simply to realize that while problems do happen, they can also be solved. Make sure that you ask to speak to someone about SSI, as not all local office staff has the same knowledge. In the event that efforts at problem solving are unsuccessful, you can always appeal a decision. Appeals are often effective.
- 8. Find an expert.** Many schools, human services organizations, and state agencies have experts who specialize in Social Security planning. For more information, see the "Resources" section.

FIGURING OUT THE FUTURE

Unsure about how to **"get there from here"**? Consider using a **formal planning process** to help your young adult develop dreams and action steps for adulthood.

In "person centered planning," a young adult with a disability gathers together family, friends, teachers, and service providers to discuss work and life goals. This group brainstorms ideas, resources, and steps the young adult can take to figure out what they want to do and how to do it. Having a plan can reduce stress and help you decide how to use SSI funds.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

Feeling frustrated by **savings restrictions and spend downs**? Try using SSI to teach your young adult **independent living skills** and money management.

△ Teach the value of work and responsibility by having your young adult help out around the house. Use a small percentage of the monthly check to reward them for their hard work.

△ Use a portion of the young adult's check to start a checking account in their name. Practice withdrawing and depositing money, and balance the checkbook together.

"He knows he has the money in the checking account and if he needs anything... we just go and get it. I charge it and pay it off with his money."

Under your supervision, they can write checks for necessary items such as clothes. One family in the study used SSI money as a "bank account." When her son wanted something, the mother reported, they would discuss it together and then use his money for the purchase.

△ Have your young adult participate in family bill-paying. For instance, use a percentage of the young adult's check to purchase groceries together. Show them the prices. Have them pay and collect the change. This way, they will learn the cost of housing necessities in preparation for living independently some day. At the same time, they will be contributing to the family.

△ Begin to have your young adult keep information for SSA. Show them your SSA notebook and what records you save. Photocopy pay stubs or other records together and mail them in. Have them accompany you to appointments and make or listen in on phone calls.

SAVING THE SSI WAY

Feeling the pinch as you try to save for your young adult's plans? **Make the most of the money** by using *Work Incentives* to save for career goals.

Parents in ICI's study thought that a person could either work or get SSI, not both at the same time. Their information came from other parents, not Social Security.

"If [my child] makes too much they will cut it out. I know that for a fact.... You make anything extra they take it away."

The above "fact" is actually a myth. Your young adult can work and continue to receive SSI. Receiving SSI does not mean that a person is incapable of contributing to their community. The reality is that income from a job results in a very gradual decrease in SSI checks. SSI checks are reduced only \$1 for every \$2 earned.

Furthermore, you can use Work Incentives to lessen the effect of earned income on benefits. SSA calls Work Incentives "special rules [that] make it possible for people with disabilities receiving SSDI or SSI to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid."

In almost every case, students will have more income by working. And your young adult can always use volunteering and unpaid internships to build their resume with no effect on SSI checks at all.

Two Work Incentives: IRWE & PASS

IRWE: Work-related expenses that are specific to disability can be **deducted** from the income that SSA "counts."

PASS: Allows recipients to **save** for big career expenses.

CONCLUSION

These families' experiences show how the stresses of dealing with the system and limited awareness of resources can make it difficult to plan ahead. We hope that by considering these tips and tactics, your family can take advantage of the opportunities that SSA provides. People with all levels and kinds of disabilities do satisfying work in their communities and have fulfilling adult lives. **Your teenager can too!**

RESOURCES

Social Security and Youth with Disabilities

- Contact SSA for basic rules and eligibility.
- **The Work Site** promotes employment for beneficiaries with disabilities. www.ssa.gov/work
- Focus on youth with disabilities: www.ssa.gov/work/Youth/youth2.html
- **Graduating to Independence (GTI)** is an SSA multimedia package that guides young people with disabilities through the transition from school to work. www.ssa.gov/work/Youth/gradind.html

Contact SSA

1-800-772-1213 (voice)
1-800-325-0778 (TTY)
www.ssa.gov

Work Incentives

- SSA information on Work Incentives: www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/workincentives.html
- A free online training course on SSI Work Incentives is available at www.vcu.edu/rrtcweb/witn/product.htm. Contact Teri Blankenship at the Work Incentives Transition Network:
(804) 828-1851 (voice)
(804) 828-2494 (TTY)
tcblanke@saturn.vcu.edu (e-mail)
- Each region of the country has one or more SSA experts on Plans for Achieving Self Support, called **PASS cadres**. They can help you develop a PASS and give constructive feedback. Contact SSA or check online at:
www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/cadre.html
- For **sample PASS plans** and a manual on Understanding Social Security Work Incentives, contact Gail McGregor at the Rural Institute on Disabilities: (406)-243-2348, gmcgrego@selway.umt.edu, www.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/rises
- Cornell University's Program on Employment and Disability has an **online tutorial** on how to complete a PASS application: www.passonline.org
- **Benefit Counselors** are SSA specialists who can help families understand benefits and employment. These experts will become available in every state over the course of 2001. You can reach them through your local SSA office.
- **ICI Publications**
 - Helpful Hints: How to Fill Out a Winning PASS Application (July 1999, #TO9)
 - Understanding the SSI Work Incentives (updated Nov. 2001, #TO8)

Person Centered Planning

- Training Resource Network publishes materials on person centered planning, including More Like a Dance: *Whole Life Planning for People with Disabilities* (manual and video). 1-866-823-9800, trninc@aug.com, www.trninc.com/index.html

For more information or to order ICI resources:

Danielle Dreilinger
Institute for Community Inclusion
300 Longwood Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
(617) 355-6506 (v)
(617) 355-6956 (TTY)
danielle.dreilinger@tch.harvard.edu
www.childrenshospital.org/ici



INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNITY
INCLUSION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank colleagues Elena Varney, John Butterworth, David Hoff, Sheila Lynch Fesko, Mairead Moloney, and Jennifer Schuster at ICI; Dick Brophy; Joyce Lehrer; and the families who participated in the research.

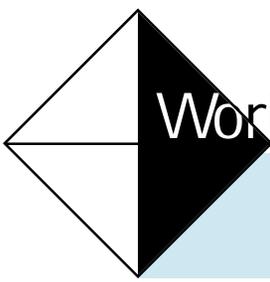
This is a publication of the Center on State Systems and Employment (RRTC) at the Institute for Community Inclusion/UCE (#H133B980037), which is funded, in part, by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) of the US Department of Education. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantees and do not necessarily reflect those of the US Department of Education.

Institute for Community Inclusion/UCE
Children's Hospital
300 Longwood Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

NON PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 59240

www.childrenshospital.org/ici

This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.



Work Incentives Transition Network (WITN)

Transition Age Special Education Students and SSI: What Parents Should Know

Introduction

If you are the parent of a student with a disability age fourteen or older, you are involved in planning for your child's transition from school to adult life, including employment. Together with school personnel, you and your child are exploring educational and adult service options that will provide your child with opportunities and supports in the community.

Your child may be receiving or may be eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits administered by the Social Security Administration. SSI is an income support program that provides monthly payments to persons with disabilities who have limited income and resources. You can be considered for SSI regardless of your age. In addition to monthly cash benefits, almost everyone who receives SSI is eligible for health coverage under Medicaid.

Every student receiving SSI benefits is eligible for SSI Work Incentive Programs. Work Incentives allow a student to participate in paid employment while maintaining his or her SSI benefits. Incorporating Work Incentives into your child's IEP/transition plan may increase his or her employment and independent living options after completing high school.

Who is Eligible for SSI Benefits?

SSI eligibility is a gateway to a variety of services for transition students with disabilities. The requirements are established by the Social Security Act and its regulations. A student must meet both income and disability eligibility requirements to receive SSI benefits.

Income Eligibility differs according to the age of the student. If a student is younger than 18, his or her parents' income and resources are considered in determining financial need. Income requirements vary depending on the number of parents and children in the household.

Once a student is 18 years old or older the parents' income no longer matters. A number of students with disabilities who do not receive SSI will

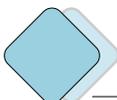
become eligible on their eighteenth birthday. *If your child applied for SSI benefits before age 18 and was turned down because of family income, you should reapply when your child is 18.*

Disability Eligibility is determined by SSA based on established criteria. These are not necessarily the same as the criteria schools use in identifying students requiring special education. If you think your child qualifies for SSI you should contact your local Social Security Office.

Redetermination for eligibility is periodically required by SSA for all individuals receiving SSI benefits. All individuals who receive SSI payments prior to their 18th birthday will go through a redetermination of eligibility at age 18. If your child is receiving SSI benefits under SSA's childhood eligibility criteria, be prepared for redetermination at age 18. You can assist SSA in the redetermination process by maintaining all of your child's medical and school records, including information from physicians and all documentation of disability. It will be helpful if you provide SSA with information on your child's work-related skills and behaviors. If your child is participating in work experience (paid or unpaid) as part of a transition program, school personnel can help you gather this information.

If you think your child is eligible for SSI benefits, will be eligible at age 18, or if you have questions about redetermination, you can contact SSA for additional information at **1-800-772-1213**. SSA generally recommends that you call the 800 number rather than your local SSA office. The number is available from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. each business day. The best times to call are before 9:00 A.M. and after 4:00 P.M. A taped message will ask you to select among information options. You may stay on the line without selecting any options and a service representative will eventually come on the line. If you press 6 and then 1, you will reach a representative. Pressing 5 will provide you with the location of your local service office.

You also have the right to appeal SSA's eligibility decision. Many people are initially denied



eligibility. Across the nation, 70% of original applications are denied. *These decisions can be overturned on appeal.* There are four levels of appeal. If you believe that your child has incorrectly been denied SSI eligibility contact SSA immediately for complete information on filing an appeal.

What are SSI Work Incentives?

SSI work incentives allow students to participate in paid work situations and maintain their SSI benefits. They are a valuable resource for students, parents, school personnel, and adult service providers when developing transition plans that include continued employment or further education or training when a student completes high school. Through the use of Work Incentives a student can:

- Engage in paid employment.
- Increase income without loss of cash benefits or eligibility for other benefits such as Medicaid.
- Offset expenses incurred as a result of their work.
- Save for further postsecondary education and training or to start a business.

In order for a student to benefit from SSI Work Incentives, the student must be receiving SSI benefits and engaged in work experiences. Incorporating SSI Work Incentives into a student's IEP/Transition Plan can provide excellent opportunities for students, parents, and other members of the planning team to explore employment opportunities while the student is still in school.

SSI Work Incentives available to transition students include: Earned Income Exclusion (EIE), Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE), Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), and Blind Work Experience (BWE). Each of the Work Incentives is an income or resource exclusion that assists individuals with disabilities in maintaining necessary SSI benefits until they are self-sufficient. These incentives can be particularly helpful in designing community-based paid employment programs for students without decreasing their cash assistance benefits.

Earned and General Income Exclusions apply to all SSI recipients, including any student earning

wages from a school-sponsored employment program or other employment program. Under these exclusions up to \$85 a month (\$20 general income exclusion and \$65 earned income exclusion) is not counted toward the specified SSI income limit. For many students with disabilities, the Earned Income Exclusion alone will ensure that most or all SSI benefits are maintained while a student participates in school-sponsored paid employment.

Student Earned Income Exclusion allows a person with a disability who is under age 22 and regularly attending school to exclude up to \$400 of earned income per month before applying the Earned and General Income Exclusions. The maximum annual Student Earned Income Exclusion is \$1620.

Impairment-Related Work Expense allows the costs of certain impairment-related items and services to be deducted from gross earnings. Such expenses may include attendant care, transportation, assistive devices, or job coaches.

The Plan for Achieving Self-Support allows an individual to set aside income and/or resources for a specified period of time to achieve a work goal. For example, an individual may set aside money for postsecondary education, the purchase of job-coaching, personal transportation, job-related equipment, or to start a business.

Blind Work Experience provides that any earned income of a person who is blind which is used to meet expenses needed to earn the income is not counted in determining SSI eligibility and the payment amount.

For more detailed information about Work Incentives and how they may help your child, contact your child's teacher, transition coordinator, or SSA.

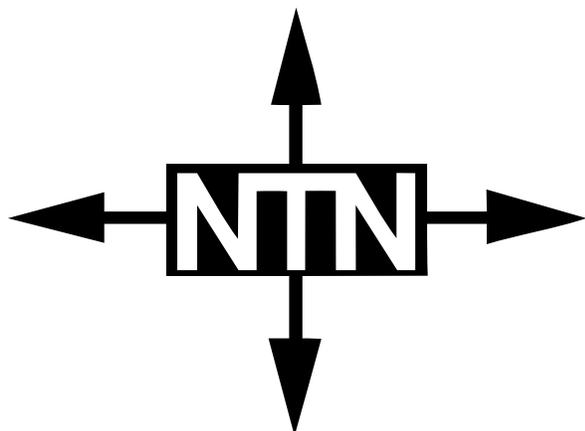
What Parents Can Do

- ⇒ Inform your child's teacher, transition coordinator, and other members of the IEP/Transition Team if your child is receiving SSI benefits. Make sure the team considers SSI benefits, including Work Incentives, during transition planning.
- ⇒ If your child is not currently receiving SSI benefits and you believe he or she may be eligible or will become eligible at age 18, contact SSA and talk with school personnel

knowledgeable about the application process.

- ⇒ As your child approaches high school graduation or completion, discuss SSI and Work Incentives with potential adult service providers. Work Incentives apply to individuals with disabilities of any age. Even if Work Incentives are not helpful or appropriate during the high school transition year, they may well become important when a student exits school.
- ⇒ Be sure that the information that you receive regarding SSI benefits and employment is correct. It is very common to receive inaccurate and contradictory information about the SSI program, its purpose, availability, and all its processes and procedures. Remember,
 - Individuals receiving SSI benefits, including students, can work for pay.
 - Work goals are feasible for all students, including those with severe disabilities.
 - SSI benefits, including work incentives, can be incorporated into a student's IEP/transition plan.
 - Any individual, including a student, receiving SSI benefits can earn more than \$700 per month and maintain SSI and health benefits.

Through the use of accommodations, technology, training, and support, many work goals can be reached that may not have been possible in the past. SSI can help transition-aged students obtain paid employment while in school, get appropriate job training and vocational experience, prepare to start work, or continue their education after high school.



For Additional Information

A more in-depth discussion of SSI Work Incentives is available in *Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbooks on Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students*, which is available from the National Transition Network at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota at the number listed below. Further information about SSI Work Incentives is contained in the publication *Red Book on Work Incentives: A Summary Guide to Social Security and Supplemental Income Work Incentives for People with Disabilities*. You can get a copy free from your local Social Security Office or by calling SSA at 1-800-772-1213.

The following web sites may also be helpful:

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

WITN

www.vcu.edu/rrtcweb/witn/ssi.htm

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

www.bu.edu/sarpsych/ssawork.html

Program on Employment and Disability,

Cornell University

www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped

This summary was developed by:

Michael Norman
The Study Group Inc.
209 Sir Walter Raleigh Drive
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948
(252) 441-2788
in partnership with:

The Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 627-4135
(612) 627-4030 (fax)

The Work Incentives Transition Network (WITN) is a collaborative effort of four projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs to examine strategies for increasing the use of the SSI work incentives by transition age young adults. The four projects, along with an additional partner funded by the Social Security Administration, include:

Institute for Community Inclusion

Children's Hospital, Boston

Institute on Community Integration

University of Minnesota

Rural Institute on Disability

University of Montana

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

Virginia Commonwealth University

Employment Support Institute

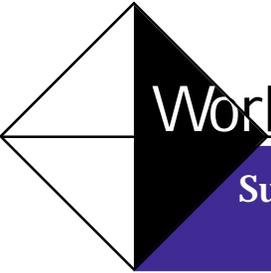
Virginia Commonwealth University

This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

This publication was supported by the US Department of Education, grant #HO23D970306, Project Officer, Dr. William Halloran

**Institute on Community Integration/UAP
University of Minnesota
102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455**





Work Incentives Transition Network (WITN)

Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students: The Role of School Personnel

The successful transition of students with disabilities from school to work and independent living is a focal point of the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA). Transition planning for students with disabilities is a critical element of each student's IEP beginning at age 14 (or younger, if appropriate). IDEA 97 defines transition services as

“a coordinated set of activities that is designed within an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.”

A number of transition age students receive or may be eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits administered by the Social Security Administration. Providing monthly cash payments, SSI can be a valuable resource to eligible students and their families. The SSI program can also assist school personnel in meeting their responsibility to link transition students with adult service providers and support systems that will enhance a student's post secondary opportunities to participate in employment and independent community living.

SSI Work Incentives

All students receiving SSI benefits are eligible to participate in SSI work incentive programs. SSI work incentives allow individuals with disabilities, including students, to deduct certain work related expenses from their income in order to maintain SSI eligibility. SSI work incentives available to transition age students with disabilities include Earned Income Exclusion (EIE), Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE), Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), and Blind Work Expenses (BWE). While not as applicable to secondary education students, the work incentive Property Essential for Self-Support (PESS) may also be considered in the transition planning process as a postsecondary option.

For a student with a disability to benefit from these work incentives, she/he must be receiving or eligible to receive SSI cash benefits and engaged in

work experience as part of the transition plan. Planning for the use of SSI benefits and incentives early in the transition process can provide excellent opportunities for students, families, school personnel, and other IEP/transition team members to identify and explore employment opportunities while a student is still in school.

SSI work incentives can be an important source of support for individuals making the transition from school to employment, yet they are underutilized. There are estimates that as many as one half the students with significant disabilities over the age of 18 are not receiving SSI benefits. School personnel can play an important role by assisting eligible students and families to secure SSI benefits and access the work incentives.

The Role of School Personnel

School personnel responsible for the successful transition of students from school to work and independent living can perform several functions to support the use of SSI work incentives as a viable part of transition planning. Specifically they can:

1. Identify students who are currently receiving SSI benefits and students who may or will be eligible.
2. Inform students and parents about SSI program benefits, eligibility requirements, and work incentives when transition planning begins and throughout a student's transition program.
3. Incorporate SSI work incentives in the IEP/transition planning process.
4. Assist students and parents in the SSI application process and provide appropriate documentation on a student's disability, limitations, performance, and behaviors that will help SSA in determination or redetermination of eligibility.
5. Establish a close relationship with local SSA staff to facilitate communication among students, parents, school personnel, adult service providers, and SSA staff.
6. Link SSI work incentives to the transition curriculum, including teaching self-advocacy.

1. Identify Potentially Eligible Students

SSI eligibility is a gateway to a variety of resources for transition students with disabilities, including Medicaid. Eligibility requirements of SSI benefits are established by the Social Security Act and its regulations. A student must meet both income and disability eligibility requirements to receive SSI benefits.

Income Eligibility. SSA income eligibility is based on the age of the student. If a student is under the age of 18 his/her parent's income and resources are considered in establishing eligibility for SSI. Income requirements vary depending on the number of parents and children in the household. A general estimate is that two parents with one child with a disability and another who is not disabled can earn about \$34,000 before their child with a disability is ineligible for SSI benefits.

If a student is 18 years old or older his/her parents' income and resources are no longer a consideration. As a result, a number of students will become eligible for SSI benefits when they reach the age of 18.

Disability Eligibility. SSA has criteria for deciding if a person is disabled under the requirements of the SSI program. These are not necessarily the same as the criteria applied by schools in the identification of students requiring special education services: a student may be considered as disabled under IDEA but not under the Social Security Act. Some disabilities (e.g., blindness, hearing impairments, significant speech impairments, mental retardation and autism as measured by an IQ less than 60, Cerebral Palsy with severe motor involvement) can be assumed to meet SSA's criteria. Students who exhibit cognitive and emotional problems that will interfere with their ability to work may also be eligible.

For each student engaged in transition activities, school personnel should always know whether a student is:

- ◆ currently receiving SSI benefits.
- ◆ potentially eligible for SSI benefits but not receiving them.
- ◆ eligible for SSI benefits at age 18.

2. Inform Students and Parents of SSI Program Benefits and Eligibility and Work Incentives

School personnel can introduce and explain SSI

work incentives to students and parents during the early stages of transition planning. Successful transition planning requires that school personnel, students, parents, and adult service providers work together to design a sequence of activities that will lead toward community participation and employment when a student exits school.

Typically community-based vocational education will be a focus of the initial transition discussions. Introducing work incentives early in the transition process establishes paid employment as a viable transition goal and allows students, parents, and other IEP/transition team members to broaden their collective thinking regarding available resources and the potential benefits of work incentives. Just as school personnel inform students and parents about vocational rehabilitation and other adult services, so should they inform parents and help them gain knowledge about the SSI program eligibility requirements, benefits, and work incentives.

3. Incorporate SSI Work Incentives Into the IEP/Transition Planning Process

Incorporating SSI work incentives into a student's IEP/transition plan can provide excellent opportunities for students, parents, and other IEP/transition team members to explore employment opportunities while the student is still in school. These incentives can also benefit students after they are out of school. To be eligible for SSI work incentives, a student must be receiving SSI benefits and be engaged in **paid employment** as part of their transition program. It is important to explore and include work incentives into a student's transition plan. This will assist students and parents in identifying specific steps that will be required to allow students to establish postschool goals and objectives and participate in school-sponsored employment opportunities. The use of work incentives will help assure parents that a student's working for pay will not endanger his/her SSI status. SSI work incentives can also help students plan for and save money toward a future career goal. Participating in SSI work incentives may allow students in paid employment to increase their monthly income while retaining their SSI benefits.

4. Assist Students and Parents in Applying for SSI Benefits

Many students and parents are unfamiliar with the SSI program and its application procedures and requirements. School personnel can refer students and parents to appropriate SSA representatives and assist them in completing the SSI application. It

is **very important** that school personnel respond to SSA's request for information on students. SSA Disability Determination Offices contact school personnel seeking assistance in gathering school records and other data that they feel will be helpful in making eligibility determinations. Parents have given SSA permission to request this information and if it is not provided it can cause untimely delays for the student and their families.

5. Establish a Cooperative Relationship with the Local SSA Staff

SSA staff are experienced in assisting youth with disabilities and their families in applying for SSI benefits and work incentives. Many SSA offices have specific staff assigned to work with transitioning youth and the SSI program. It is important for school personnel to establish a rapport with these individuals. This will assist school personnel, the student and his/her parents in incorporating SSI benefits and work incentives into the transition program.

Summary

Current studies indicate that fewer than one-half of transition-age students eligible for SSI benefits, including work incentives are participating in the program. SSI benefits and work incentives can provide valuable supports to transition students both while in school and after graduation. Work incentives enable students to be pro active in obtaining training, support, or services critical to enhancing their employment opportunities.

To profit from work incentives students must be receiving or eligible to receive SSI benefits and be involved in employment as part their transition program. It is important that school personnel understand SSI eligibility requirements so they may assist eligible students and parents in securing SSI benefits, including work incentives, and incorporate work incentives into the transition planning process. School personnel can provide valuable assistance to students and parents in promoting self-advocacy and paid employment through the use of SSI work incentives.

Further Information

A more in-depth discussion of SSI work incentives is available in *Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbook on Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives and Transition Students* which is available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

Further information about SSI and work incentives is contained in the publication *Red Book on Work Incentives: A Summary Guide to Social Security and Supplemental Income Work Incentives for People with Disabilities*. You can get a copy free from your local Social Security Office, or by calling the Social Security Administration's toll-free number: 1-800-772-1213.

The following web sites may also be helpful:

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

WITN

www.vcu.edu/rrtcweb/witn/ssi.htm

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

www.bu.edu/sarpsych/ssawork.html

Program on Employment and Disability, Cornell University

www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped

This summary was developed by:

Michael Norman
The Study Group Inc.
209 Sir Walter Raleigh Drive
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948
(252) 441-2788
in partnership with:

The Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 627-4135
(612) 627-4030 (fax)

The Work Incentives Transition Network (WITN) is a collaborative effort of four projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs to examine strategies for increasing the use of the SSI work incentives by transition age young adults. The four projects, along with an additional partner funded by the Social Security Administration, include:

Institute for Community Inclusion

Children's Hospital, Boston

Institute on Community Integration

University of Minnesota

Rural Institute on Disability

University of Montana

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

Virginia Commonwealth University

Employment Support Institute

Virginia Commonwealth University

This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

This publication was supported by the US Department of Education, grant #HO23D970306, Project Officer, Dr. William Halloran

**Institute on Community Integration/UAP
University of Minnesota
102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455**



Issue Brief

Examining Current Challenges in Secondary Education and Transition



National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Creating Opportunities for Youth
With Disabilities to Achieve
Successful Futures

A partnership of —

Institute on Community Integration,
University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis, Minnesota

National Center for the Study
of Postsecondary Education
Supports (RRTC), University
of Hawai'i at Manoa

TransCen, Inc.,
Rockville, Maryland

PACER Center,
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Institute for Educational
Leadership, Center for Workforce
Development, Washington, DC

National Association of State
Directors of Special Education,
Alexandria, Virginia

U.S. Department of Education,
Office of Special Education
Programs, Washington, DC

Quality Work-Based Learning and Postschool Employment Success

By *Richard Luecking and Meredith Gramlich*

The Problem

Many students with disabilities continue to struggle to successfully make the transition from school to employment. Despite advances in employment rates for students with disabilities who have exited school, their employment rates still lag significantly behind their nondisabled peers (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). For decades, research has shown the strong relationship between work experience during secondary school and postschool employment for youth with disabilities (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Hasazi, Gordan, & Roe, 1985). However, as the continuing disappointing postschool employment rates for youth with disabilities suggest, there remains a critical need to expand work-based learning opportunities for these youth and to integrate these experiences into secondary education. This brief highlights the benefits of work-based learning, what constitutes quality work-based learning, and selected evidence-based models of work-based learning.

Benefits of Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning has been shown to improve students' self-esteem, to teach and reinforce basic academic and technical skills, to promote an understanding of workplace culture and expectations, and to develop a network for future job searches (Bailey & Hughes, 1999; Hoerner & Wehrley, 1995; Wehman, 2001). Such experiences also serve to expose students to work and career options that would otherwise be unknown to them. This is especially critical to youth with disabilities for whom the exposure to the range of career options is often very limited. Further, these experiences serve as opportunities to identify the particular workplace supports that youth with disabilities may require as they pursue later employment and career prospects (Hughes & Carter, 2000).

Examples of work-based learning include: a planned program of job training and work experiences such as job shadowing, informational interviews, and workplace tours; workplace mentoring; and work experience including apprenticeships, volunteer work, service learning, school-based enterprises, on-the-job training, and paid employment. Each of these may contribute to the career development, career choice, and career success of individuals with disabilities (Benz & Lindstrom, 1997). There is a strong relationship between paid work experience during high school and postschool job success (Colley & Jamison, 1998; Luecking & Fabian, 2000). There is, then, an obvious benefit to all youth

Table 1. Benefits of Work-Based Learning

Students who participate in work-based learning can benefit by having the opportunity to:

- Identify career interests, skills, and abilities;
- Explore career goals;
- Identify on-the-job support needs;
- Develop employability skills and good work habits;
- Gain an understanding of employer expectations;
- Develop an understanding of the link between school and work;
- Gain work experience, generally connected to a specific job function; and
- Develop an understanding of the workplace and the connection between learning and earning.

with disabilities who participate in a range of work-based experiences throughout the secondary school years, especially when paid jobs are featured as educational adjuncts. **Table 1** summarizes research-supported benefits associated with work-based learning.

Quality Work-Based Learning

In order to ensure that students with disabilities get the maximum benefit from their work-based learning experiences, there are several factors that require consideration. Among these are connections between job and school-based learning, clear expectations of student activity at the workplace, clearly defined roles of teachers and worksite supervisors, and well-structured feedback on student performance. It is additionally important for students with disabilities to have appropriate supports and accommodations in place (Benz, et al., 1997). Providing training and technical assistance for workplace personnel is also an important feature of creating a welcoming and supportive environment in which students can thrive. **Table 2** summarizes characteristics of quality work-based programs that are supported by research (Benz & Lindstrom, 1997; Haimson & Bellotti, 2001; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997; Hoerner & Wehrley, 1995).

Models That Work

There are a host of models throughout the country that feature successful implementation of work-based learning. Two widely replicated models that represent many of the features identified above are the *High School/High Tech* model and the *Bridges... From School to Work* program.

High School/High Tech was originally developed by the former President's Committee for Employment of People With Disabilities as a way of encouraging careers in technology fields in which people with disabilities are underrepresented. It features opportunities for secondary-aged youth with disabilities to spend time (through visits, job shadowing, internships, and/or paid employment) at participating high-tech companies and workplaces. These experiences, coordinated by designated staff, are accompanied by support at the workplace and in the classroom. Reports from companies that have participat-

Table 2. Quality Work-Based Learning Characteristics

- Clear program goals;
- Clear roles and responsibilities for worksite supervisors, mentors, teachers, support personnel, and other partners;
- Training plans that specify learning goals tailored to individual students with specific outcomes connected to student learning;
- Convenient links between students, schools, and employers;
- On-the-job learning;
- Range of work-based learning opportunities, especially those outside traditional youth employing industries (e.g., restaurants);
- Mentor(s) at the worksite;
- Clear expectations and feedback to assess progress toward achieving goals;
- Assessments to identify skills, interests, and support needs at the worksite;
- Reinforcement of work-based learning outside of work; and
- Appropriate academic, social, and administrative support for students, employers, and all partners.

ed and from professionals who have facilitated these experiences demonstrate the eventual career success of youth who have participated (Mundy, in press).

Bridges... From School to Work, developed by the Marriott Foundation for People With Disabilities, created paid internships in local companies for youth with disabilities who are in their last year in high school. The program features standardized pre-internship orientation for participants and internship placement support by designated staff. Serving the entire spectrum of special education students, the program boasts a typical placement rate of almost 90%, regardless of primary disability label, gender, and race of the participants. Follow-up studies of participants also demonstrate a high rate of postschool employment among the participants (Luecking & Fabian, 2000).

Improving the Quality and Availability of Work-Based Learning

Positive public perceptions of work-based learning, better connections to employers, and integration with school learning are necessary for wider adoption and implementation of quality work-based learning for students receiving special education services. First, there is often tension between time at the worksite and time in the classroom because of the concern that time away from classroom learning will negatively impact academic success. Thus, work-based learning will need to be seen as academically rigorous to be more widely supported by parents and educators (Bailey & Hughes, 1999; Haimson & Bellotti, 2001).

Second, school personnel often struggle to find time to establish and maintain relationships with participating employers. Employers, for their part, require convenient ways to link with students. Thus, mechanisms for linking students with employers will need to be created and/or expanded in most school systems (Benz, et al., 1997). Potential resources for facilitating such links include youth employment programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act. In many communities these programs often create work experiences for a range of youth, including those with disabilities. Also, disability specific resources, such as those funded by state vocational rehabilitation agencies, are important pre-gradua-

tion links to jobs and work experiences that lead to eventual successful adult employment.

Finally, work-based learning and academic coursework need to be integrated to allow students to understand the value and application of their education and experience (Bailey & Hughes, 1999; Benz, et al., 1997; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997). Work-based learning can contribute to a student's overall academic development through journal-writing, formalized training plans, participation in internship seminars or classes for debriefing, planned learning experiences at work, and final reports or presentations. **Table 3** provides a list of basic responsibilities of students, teachers, and employers that contribute to the effectiveness of work-based learning experiences.

Conclusion

Research has consistently demonstrated that education and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities can be significantly improved by frequent and systematic exposure to a variety of real work experiences. The persistently low employment rates of youth and young adults with disabilities suggest that these types of experiences should be integral to secondary education for students with disabilities, regardless of the nature of the disability or the need for special education services. This brief provides a rationale for work-based learning, indicators of quality for such experiences, and examples of work-based learning models that have proven effective in boosting the career development of youth with disabilities.

References

- Bailey, T., & Hughes, K. (1999). *Employer involvement in work-based learning programs*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
- Benz, M., & Lindstrom, L. (1997). *Building school-to work programs: Strategies for youth with special needs*. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.
- Benz, M., Yovanoff, P., & Doren, B. (1997). School-to-work components that predict postschool success for students with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63(2), 155-165.

Table 3. Shared Responsibility for Work-Based Learning Success***Student Responsibility in Work-Based Learning***

- Perform job responsibilities
- Communicate needs and suggest support strategies
- Follow-through on commitments
- Adhere to workplace guidelines and procedures
- Comply with expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
- Show respect, be responsible, and follow through on commitments
- Learn as much as possible about the work environment and the job

Teacher Responsibility in Work-Based Learning

- Orient students to the workplace
- Orient students to their roles and responsibilities
- Communicate expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
- Explain consequences for inappropriate behavior
- Orient employers to their roles as mentors and supervisors
- Help students communicate their support needs and strategies
- Help employers capitalize on students' learning styles and identify support strategies
- Communicate with students and employers on a regular basis
- Link work-based learning experiences to classroom learning and academic curriculum

Employer Responsibility in Work-Based Learning

- Model expectations
- Give clear, detailed, and repeated directions
- Communicate expectations for job performance, behavior, and social interactions
- Explain consequences for inappropriate behavior
- Identify the best methods of communication for each student
- Capitalize on each student's learning style and identify support strategies
- Discuss progress and improvements in performance
- Teach skills needed for successful job performance
- Communicate with students on a regular basis
- Communicate with school liaisons on a regular basis

[Adapted from Gramlich, M. (1999). *How to facilitate workplace mentoring: A guide for teachers to support student workers*. Rockville, MD: TransCen, Inc.]

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the national longitudinal transition study. *Exceptional Children*, 62(5), 399-413.

Colley, D., & Jamison, D. (1998). Postschool results for youth with disabilities: Key indicators and policy implications. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 21(2), 145-160.

Haimson, J., & Bellotti, J. (2001). *Schooling in the workplace: Increasing the scale and quality of work-based learning. Final Report*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Hamilton, M., & Hamilton, S. (1997). *Learning well at work: Choices for quality*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Hasazi, S., Gordan, L., & Roe, C. (1985). Factors associated with the employment status of handicapped youth exiting high school from 1979 to 1983. *Exceptional Children*, 51, 455-469.
- Hoerner, J., & Wehrley, J. (1995). *Work-based learning: The key to school-to-work transition*. New York, NY: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.
- Hughes, C., & Carter, E. (2000). *The transition handbook: Strategies that high school teachers use that work*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.
- Luecking, R., & Fabian, E. (2000). Paid internships and employment success for youth in transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Children*, 23(2), 205-221.
- Mundy, D. (in press). Preparing for tomorrow's technological workforce: Florida High School/High Tech. In R. Luecking (Ed.), *Voices from the Field: Employer Perspectives on Youth with Disabilities in the Workplace* (pp. 140-145). Minneapolis, MN: National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- Wehman, P. (2001). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Print Resources

- Hamilton, M., & Hamilton, S. (1997). *Learning well at work: Choices for quality*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press.
- This guide is written for people in workplaces and schools that plan, direct, or evaluate work-based learning opportunities for youth.
- Siegel, S., Robert, M., Greener, K., Meyer, G., Halloran, W., & Gaylord-Ross, R. (2003). *Career ladders: Transition from high school to adult life*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED, Inc.
- This manual is designed to help special education teachers, counselors, and transition specialists connect students to the community, including workplaces.

Web Resources

Jobs for the Future (JFF)

<http://www.jff.org/jfff/>

JFF seeks to accelerate the educational and economic advancement of youth and adults struggling in our economy.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)

Topic: Work Based Learning

<http://www.ncset.org/topics/wblearning/default.asp?topic=19>

This topic explores the benefits of providing youth with opportunities to learn at job sites in their communities through the use of workplace mentors, internships, combining community service with academic learning, and other strategies.

National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC)

<http://www.nyec.org/>

NYEC is a nonpartisan national organization dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers, and self-sufficient citizens.

Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html>

The OVAE Web site has information, research, and resources to help prepare young people and adults for postsecondary education, successful careers, and productive lives.

Authors Richard Luecking and Meredith Gramlich are with TransCen, Inc.



NCSET Web — a National Resource Coordination Tool
<http://www.ncset.org>

Here's what you'll find —

▶ **Topical Information**

Information on over 26 diverse topics in secondary education and transition including an overview, answers to commonly asked questions, research abstracts, emerging practices, and more!

▶ **E-News**

NCSET's online newsletter loaded with information and links to publications, events, funding opportunities, Web sites, and other useful national resources — all searchable and at your fingertips!

▶ **Publications**

Full text of all NCSET publications available for quick and easy download!

▶ **Events**

Event registration, pre-event community circles, and online learning resources.

▶ **And More!**

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD),
 University of Minnesota, 6 Pattee Hall,
 150 Pillsbury Dr. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Tel: 612.624.2097; Fax: 612.624.9344

Web: <http://www.ncset.org>

E-mail: ncset@umn.edu

This report was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, (Cooperative Agreement No. H326J000005). Although the U.S. Department of Education has reviewed this document, the contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of other organizations imply endorsement by those organizations or the U.S. Government.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer. This publication is available on the Web at <http://www.ncset.org>, and is available in alternate formats upon request. To request an alternate format or additional copies, contact NCSET at 612.624.2097.



U.S. Office of Special Education Programs



The College of Education & Human Development

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Non-profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Mpls., MN
 Permit No. 155

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
 Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD)
 University of Minnesota
 6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive, SE
 Minneapolis, MN 55455

