

## **CEC's DCDT FAST FACTS: Transition Programs** **Prepared by the DCDT Publications Committee**

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center has identified evidence-based predictors of post-school success for students with disabilities based on a systematic correlational literature review (Test et al., 2009). Findings indicated that students with disabilities who participated in comprehensive and quality youth transition programs in high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and education (Halpern, Yovanoff, Doren, & Benz, 1995; Heal & Rusch, 1995). Recently, Rowe et al. (2013) conducted a Delphi study to add specificity to the existing predictor definitions identified by Test et al. (2009) and operationally defined the predictors to help local educators understand the components necessary to develop, implement, and evaluate secondary transition programs based on predictor research.

Transition programs have been operationally defined as programs that “prepare students to move from secondary settings (e.g., middle school/high school) to adult-life, utilizing comprehensive transition planning and education that creates individualized opportunities, services, and supports to help students achieve their post-school goals in education/training, employment, and independent living” (Rowe et al., 2013, p. 13).

Comprehensive and quality transition programs should include providing the following essential program characteristics (Rowe et al., 2014):

- Systems level infrastructure (e.g., highly qualified staff and administrators with defined roles and responsibilities, sufficient budget) to monitor and guide students to obtain post-school goals.
- Integrated instruction in all areas of independent living (e.g., community living, transportation, recreation leisure, self-advocacy, goal setting, decision making) for all students with disabilities.
- Individualized transition focused curriculum and instruction based on students’ postsecondary goals in postsecondary education, employment, and independent living (e.g., self-determination, financial planning).
- Instruction and training in natural environments supported by classroom instruction.
- Individualized transition services based on students’ postsecondary goals in postsecondary education, employment, and independent living (e.g., self-determination and financial planning).
- Provide opportunities for engagement with peers without disabilities in the school and community.
- Use interagency collaboration with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to provide coordinated transition services (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health) at multiple levels (i.e., student, school, districts, region, state) to assist students in meeting their postsecondary goals.
- Monitor and assess students’ progress in the domains of academics, daily living, personal and social, and occupational.

- Use multiple strength-based assessments across multiple domains at different points in time to assist student and IEP teams in post-school planning.
- Provide training and resources to families to involve them in transition planning and connect them to adult agencies and support and information networks.
- Conduct program evaluation to assess effectiveness of transition program

### **Application to Teachers**

- Evaluate transition programs to ensure essential program characteristics are included.
- Ensure students have access to a array transition services, including those provided by adult services.
- Ensure students have access to transition supports, such as counseling and parent education.
- Work with families to ensure they have knowledge of transition services and supports available to them and ensure transition programming matches with their family needs.
- Ensure that instruction and transition services relate to student post-school goals (Mazzotti, Test, & Mustian, 2014)

### **Application to Administrators**

- Identify transition programs that may be a good match with your school. NSTTAC has compiled a list of comprehensive transition programs, which can be accessed here: <http://www.nsttac.org/content/comprehensive-transition-programs>
- Identify components of transition programs your school is currently implementing that may need improvement by using the predictor implementation self-assessment, which can be accessed here: [http://www.nsttac.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/pdf/ebps/Predictor\\_Implementation\\_Table.pdf](http://www.nsttac.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/pdf/ebps/Predictor_Implementation_Table.pdf)
- Develop effective interagency collaboration through the development of interagency agreements and state transition teams.

### **Application to Families**

- Ask your IEP team what transition programs are available for your son or daughter.
- Work with the IEP team to ensure transition programming is individualized to what you and your son or daughter needs and will benefit from.

### **Where to Go for Additional Information**

#### **Websites**

- National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (2009). *Predictors of Post-School Success*. <http://www.nsttac.org/content/predictor-resources>
- Oregon Youth Transition Program. <http://www.ytporegon.org/>

#### **Books, Materials, and Research Articles**

Benz, M. R., Lindstrom, L., & Yovanoff, P. (2000). Improving graduation and employment outcomes of students with disabilities: Predictive factors and student perspectives. *Exceptional Children*, 66, 509-529.

Halpern, A.S., Yovanoff, P., Doren, B., & Benz, M.R. (1995). Predicting participation in postsecondary education for school leavers with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 62, 151-164.

Heal, L. W., & Rusch, F. R. (1995). Predicting employment for students who leave special education high school programs. *Exceptional Children*, 61, 472-487.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D., Fowler, C., Kellems, R., & Test, D. W. (2014). A delphi study to operationalize evidence-based predictors in secondary transition. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 1-14.

Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L. J., & Kohler, P. H. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 160-181.

While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be:

Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Career Development and Transition Publications Committee (DCDT; 2014). *Fast Facts: Transition Program*.

This document was developed jointly with the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT). It was originally produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H326J050004 - the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center in 2011. The document was updated under U.S. DOE, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Cooperative Agreement Number H326E140004. Production of this document has been approved by the OSERS. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. OSEP Project Officer: Dr. Selete Avoke. RSA Project Officer: Kristen Rhinehart-Fernandez.