

Transition Service Integration Seamless Transition through Interagency Collaboration

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Transitions Scenarios

- Youth exits school with no work experience.
- Youth exits school with work experience, but no post-school supports available.
- Youth exits school with work experience and seamless linkage to adult system supports.

What We Know

- Work experience is valuable for all youth with disabilities.
- Youth with any disability can perform work that is valuable to employers.

What We Know

- Successful high school work experience higher adult employment rates.
- Continued post-school support is necessary for some youth in order to sustain employment success.

What is Possible?

- Work experience success for all students receiving secondary special education.
- Post secondary employment success for nearly all youth exiting special education.

What is the Norm?

- Sporadic or episodic work experiences during secondary school.
- Poor post-school employment success, especially for:
 - Youth with developmental disabilities.
 - Youth with significant support needs.

Why the Disparity?

Educational and adult service systems are seldom in synch.

- Entitlement vs. eligibility is only part of the story.
- Early, pre-exit collaboration between systems is not common.
- Resource integration is rare.

Minimizing the Disparity

- Leadership, accountability, and willingness to systemically “blend” services and “braid” resources.

One Proven Approach

Transition Service Integration for youth with significant support needs.
Transition Service Integration Pilot in Leon County Florida.

Target Group

- Students who have exited or are within two years of exiting high school.
- Students eligible to receive APD services (on med-waiver or wait list)

- Students' transition goals include integrated work.

Transition Service Integration Pilot in Leon County Florida Partnerships

- Leon County Schools (LCS)
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)
- Adult service provider/hybrid agency (HP)

Transition Service Integration Pilot in Leon County Florida

- Community-based transition class
- Housed at Lively Vocational Technical Center on the Campus of Tallahassee Community College
- Customized Employment and Discovery
- Paid employment, integrated workplaces
- Non-work activities in normalized settings

Transition Service Integration Pilot in Leon County Florida

- Individual choice of schedules and employment options.
- Representational Portfolio that helps assure the attainment of a customized job.
- Adult agency employment specialists (APD, DVR and HP) working with school personnel.
- Cost-sharing resources of LCS, DVR, and APD.

Transition Service Integration Pilot in Leon County Florida

- Customized Employment and Discovery
 - This model addresses an approach to customized employment that utilizes a comprehensive process that links each step to the next, and results in a person-directed planning process and a customized job match between a student and employer or work experience site.

Transition Service Integration Pilot in Leon County Florida

- Customized Employment and Discovery process includes:
 - An overview of Customized Employment strategies
 - Individualized discovery using the Discovery Strategy
 - Development of a narrative or visual document called a Profile that captures the information of Discovery
 - Facilitation of a Customized Employment Planning Meeting that develops a blueprint for job developers
 - Development of a Representational Portfolio that helps assure the attainment of a customized job
 - Provision of job development strategies for successfully negotiating customized job descriptions with employers

Transition Service Integration Intended Outcomes

- No Service Disruption: first day after school exit looks the same as last day of school
 - Same jobs
 - Same community activities
 - Same staff support

What these are NOT

- Unpaid work experiences
- Jobs they later gave up when they left school
- Jobs they obtained after entering the adult service systems (VR and/or DD system)

BUT, they are jobs they got while in publicly supported special education, and kept when they exited

Outcomes in Similar Pilots

- 60% employed at school exit
- 71% employed one year after school exit
- 89% experienced seamless transition to adult system

What Does it Take?

- Blending services and braiding resources
- Identifying points of success for all elements of the collaborating systems
- Flexible applications of governing regulations of collaborating systems
- An intermediary (i.e., Office of Interagency Programs) to bring collaborators together

Blending Services and Braiding Resources

- Map processes and develop practices for blending services and braiding resources
 - Decide roles and responsibilities of adult service providers (DVR, APD) and local school district (LEA)
 - Decide which agency will pay for what services and when. (What are the criteria for payments?)
- Choose a hybrid adult service provider (HP)
- Develop contracts between the hybrid and appropriate agencies (DVR, APD, LEA) which reflect the above processes and practices

Implications for Practice

- Identifying Points of Success for all Elements of the Collaborating Systems
 - Identify what success looks like at each point of the transition process for the student, the system and the stakeholders
 - Determine criteria and methods for measuring success
 - Choose a third party evaluator

Implications for Practice

- Flexible Applications of Governing Regulations of Collaborating Systems
 - Identify and mitigate barriers to seamless transition services

- Train personnel within the collaborating systems in newly developed processes and practices for blending of services and braiding of resources.
- Develop an advisory group (which meets regularly) to monitor processes and practices and make recommendations for modifications

Implications for Practice

- Develop curriculum that includes opportunities to develop and internalize work behaviors throughout secondary school years
- Increase opportunities for employer-based, paid work experiences prior to school exit
- Adopt a Customized Employment and Discovery process

Collaborations:

What do Funding Entities Need?

- DVR: Rehabilitation closures
- APD: Supported employment goals met
- LEA: IDEA compliance

Collaborations:

What Do Adult Agencies Need?

- Advance referrals –well before school exit
- Opportunity to get to know youth before school exit

IDEAL:

- Employment and supports in place for youth BEFORE school exit

What do Youth and Families Need?

- Opportunities for self-directed IEPs and IPEs
- Individualized, person-centered service
- Responsive support
- JOBS!

The Ideal

Youth are jointly served by school and adult rehabilitation systems BEFORE school exit.

The Result

Seamless transition from students to employed adults.

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