

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITION FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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Importance of Transition

- Great challenge when leave school and face adult service systems and programs
- Success enhanced with plan to move from school to adulthood.
- Age 14, 15, 16 plan needed to move to work, live and participate in community
- Transition IEP is essential
- Need to understand how transition relates to "whole life" for all young people



Types of Transitions that Lead to Whole Life



- No perfect way to perfect life; are ways to help get there
- Family
- Culture
- Appetite to grow
- Plan and supports
- Many require more supports than those without disability

Transition to Adulthood #1: Employment in the Community

- Real work for real pay
- Work opportunities are everywhere...sky's the limit
- Capitalize on positive attributes rather than deficits or problems
- Project SEARCH replication in hospitals
- Before leaving school student should be employed in real work for real pay
- Do not have to go to sheltered workshop or day activity center
- They will have vocational capacity and competence



Transition to Adulthood #2: Living and Participating in the Community

- Right supports allows living in community apartment or small group home
- Number of community living arrangements exists but hard to find because limited options
- Active community participation includes shopping, eating out, recreating in community
- Students need experience to learn how to participate
- More competence increases comfort, acceptance and moves student closer to whole life



Transition to Adulthood # 3: Getting Around the Community

- Ability to navigate in community
- Take bus
- Ability to pay friend to get from point A to B
- Walk around without getting lost
- Getting around community; inside and outside of stores
- Without training may get lost, run away, make others nervous
- Learnable skills that need to be taught



Transition to Adulthood #4: Financial Independence

- Help to manage benefits
- Maximize use of work incentives
- Help with medical assistance and other plans
- Know what to do with paycheck
- Basic math skills
- Learn to use technology like calculator to help



Transition to Adulthood #5: Making Friends

- Helps build networks
- Segregation diminishes opportunities
- Working and participating in community increase opportunities to meet people
- Living in community offers opportunities to develop friendships
- Skills should be focused and worked on
- Some behaviors accepted; others may not be tolerated
- Need to learn when can do certain things and when can not
- Requires customized, highly skilled, individualized instruction



Transition to Adulthood #6: Sexuality and Self Esteem

- Relate to others
- Feel good about way look; take care hygiene
- Teenagers change and develop in many ways
- Needs to be attended to and can lead to friendships and community participation



Transition to Adulthood #7: Having Fun

- Kick back
- Play sports, games, recreate
- Do things want to do; not what others want him or her to do
- Spend time on computer
- Work more hours
- Enjoy life as part of whole life



Transition to Adulthood: Summary

- Employment in real work for real pay
- Live and participate in the community
- Get around the community
- Financial literacy
- Friendships
- Sexuality, self esteem and sense of personal identity
- Fun
- Look back and consider highs and lows in your own life
- All students need a community life



Competencies

What are the Competencies Needed to Move Students to a Whole Life?

Skills needed by parents, teachers, transition specialist, rehabilitation counselors
 Knowledge and clinical skills to move from heavy to less support and whole life



Competency #1: Ability to Develop and Implement Individual Plan

What is a person centered plan?
 Are there players that planning table?
 Is a plan or blueprint in place?
 Do players know what they are suppose to do?
 What are the strategies?



Competency #2: Increase Independence

Do we know how to plan for independence and reduce need for one to one assistance?
 Do we know how to gradually reduce need for one to one assistance over time?
 Are we allowing opportunities for person to demonstrate increasing levels of independence?



Competency # 3: Applied Behavior Analysis

Do we have tools, techniques and strategies to reduce inappropriate behavior and take advantage of abilities?
 Goal is not to teach every skill; but to unleash student's potential
 Much is unknown
 Need meaningful targets such as employment, community mobility, financial literacy



Competencies #4: Build Networks (A Way of Life)

Create networks in neighborhood, friends, community college, at work
 Need to be with people from different networks in a meaningful way
 Get out in community beyond family
 Let out capacities
 True for all young people



Transition

Positive movement and growth
 Fantastic candidates for growth and development
 Plan can lead to whole lives
 Not so different from other young people
 May have greater challenges and support needs
 Burden is to find capacity and release it

