

TRANSITIONS TO AND FROM HIGH SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SKILLS, AND SELF-DETERMINATION

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I am (please select all that applies)

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Academic/Researcher
- ☐ Principal or other member of school leadership team
- ☐ SLSO

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My level of familiarity with transition planning is:

Low

High



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Transitions for Students with Disabilities

- Transition pathways for students and young people with disabilities are “typically complex and constrained”
- Disappointing outcomes in the areas of employment, postsecondary education, community participation, and social relationships

What Does Research Tell Us?

- Investigating these transitions can better inform schooling practices and assist students, families and educators to plan post-school options.
- For each of the different transition stages, collaboration between school and home is crucial to ensure the individual needs of students with disabilities are met.
- These needs include academic, social, vocational, community and family goals.

(Strnadova & Cumming, 2014; Strnadova & Evans, 2014)

What Does Research Tell Us?

- Each new environment brings a new set of challenges for all involved, thereby requiring different types of school-home collaboration, and because no two families are alike, professionals must take an individualised approach to collaboration and transition planning.
- This includes empowering an active role for parents (and the student with a disability) in the decision-making process during the different transition stages.

(Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2005)

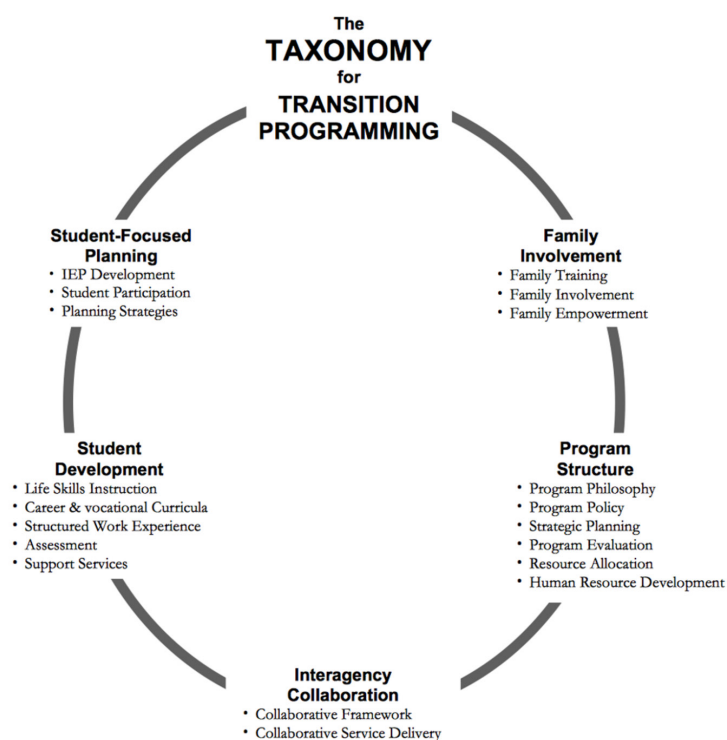
Australia – Current Status

- Transition planning is not federally mandated (unlike the U.S.A.)
- Timely and careful planning of schooling transitions for students with disabilities is considered to be best practice (NSW Parliament, 2012)
- The Standing Committee on Social Issues (NSW Parliament, 2012): one of the major recommendations was “that legislation be introduced to mandate transition planning for students with additional or complex needs” (2011, p. xi).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989)

- Changing disabling public attitudes towards disabilities,
- Making environments accessible,
- **Participation of students and families in setting goals, making decisions and shaping services**
- Support services should be provided within the student’s community

What can we do to support successful transition to post-school life for this population?



Evidence-based Predictors for Transition Program Implementation

- Career awareness
- Community experiences
- Inclusion
- Paid work experience
- Academic skills training
- Vocational assessment
- Individual transition plans
- Student and parent involvement
- Self-advocacy/ self-determination

(Mazzotti, Test, & Mustian, 2014)

At what age should transition planning for post-school environments begin?

☐ 14

☐ 15

☐ 16

☐ 17

☐ 18

☐ As early as primary school

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When should transition planning begin?

(from ascd.org)

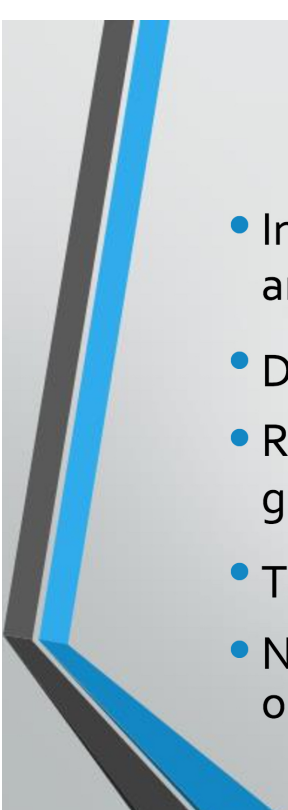
- Ideally families and students should start thinking about secondary school options in Year 5 and,
- Should visit local high schools during their open days, request school tours and have meetings with high school executive to discuss the child's strengths and needs
- Leaving it to Year 6 is too late

Transition portfolios

- A user-friendly guide to assist receiving school teachers in understanding the strengths and learning needs of the student with special needs
- Created by sending school personnel
- Can include: information of medicines and possible side effects, gestures and behaviours to look out for that indicate stress or excitement, likes and dislikes, basic behaviour management plan, accommodation and adaptations that work well for the student

- 
- Does not replace transition activities, it is a tool to assist information sharing between schools
 - This is not an ITP
 - Students should and can be involved in the creation of them
 - A great resource [website](http://lifeafterieps.com/transition-portfolios/) with many examples created by school districts in the USA: <http://lifeafterieps.com/transition-portfolios/>

K-6 Strategies

- 
- Include activities that focus on “Who I am” and “What I want to be when I grow up”
 - Discuss what family members do for a living
 - Read books about various careers in a non-gender specific way
 - Talk about interests, preferences, and talents
 - Note different jobs when reading books, out on excursions, etc.

Grades 7-9

- Expectations for social behaviours change
 - Peer issues and peer conformity
- Possible involvement of Juvenile Justice
- Increased independence
- Achievement loss during the transition from primary to middle/high school
- Start focusing on drop out prevention
- Planning for this transition should begin two years before it actually occurs

Year 7-9 Strategies

- Have students become involved in the community
- Research and study various jobs, careers, and volunteer opportunities
- Use the Internet to explore job and career ideas
- Plan author, artist, and performer visits
- Job shadowing activities
- Visit job sites; Visit TAFE
- Attend job fairs



Transition Assessment

- **What do we already know** about the student's strengths, preferences & needs in employment, education, living?
- **What do we need to know** about the student's employment, education and living strengths, preferences & needs?
- **What methods and sources** will provide the information we need?
- **Who will gather the information** & what role will the student play in the assessment process?
- **When will the assessment data be collected** and used for transition planning?
- **Is the student making progress** toward his/her specific post-secondary goals (employment, education, living)?

Identifying career requirements

- In Australia, students can use <http://joboutlook.gov.au> to explore careers and requirements – this site link to O*Net
- Occupational Information Network [O*Net](#) for descriptions of occupations and skills needed
- Once students have undertaken career exploration, it is important to look at the inherent skills, dispositions, and training that is required

The screenshot shows the O*NET OnLine website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the O*NET OnLine logo, a 'Click to activate.' button, and an 'Occupation Quick Search' field. Below the navigation bar, there are links for 'Help', 'Find Occupations', 'Advanced Search', 'Crosswalks', 'Share', and 'O*NET Sites'. The main content area features a large banner with a construction crane and the text 'Build your future with O*NET OnLine.' Below the banner, there is a 'Welcome' message and a 'What is O*NET?' button. To the right of the banner, there is a 'What's New?' section with a 'Learn More' button. Below the banner, there is an 'Occupation Search' section with a search bar and a 'Find Occupations' button. To the right of the search bar, there is a 'Crosswalks' section with a 'Connect' button. Below the search bar, there is a 'Find Occupations' section with a 'Browse' button. To the right of the 'Find Occupations' section, there is a 'Crosswalks' section with a 'Connect' button. Below the 'Find Occupations' section, there is a 'Bright Outlook' section with a 'Browse by O*NET Data' button. To the right of the 'Bright Outlook' section, there is a 'Crosswalks' section with a 'Connect' button. Below the 'Crosswalks' section, there is a 'Hot Technologies' section with a 'Learn More' button.

O*NET OnLine Click to activate. Occupation Quick Search:

Help Find Occupations Advanced Search Crosswalks Share O*NET Sites

Build your future with O*NET OnLine.

Welcome to your tool for career exploration and job analysis!

O*NET OnLine has detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more!

What is O*NET?

What's New?

Enhancements made to O*NET OnLine

Learn More

Get O*NET news by email or RSS.

I want to be a...

Start the career you've dreamed about, or find one you never imagined.

Find It Now at My Next Move

ATTN: VETERANS

Put your military skills and experience to work in civilian life. Learn how at:

MY NEXT MOVE

Get Started

Hot Technologies are frequently included in employer job postings.

Learn More

Occupation Search Keyword or O*NET-SOC Code:

Find Occupations

Browse groups of similar occupations to explore careers. Choose from industry, field of work, science area, and more.

Bright Outlook

Focus on occupations that use a specific tool or software. Explore occupations that need your skills.

Browse by O*NET Data:

Crosswalks

Connect to a wealth of O*NET data. Enter a code or title from another classification to find the related O*NET-SOC occupation.

Apprenticeship

Individual Transition Plan

- **The purpose:** to promote the successful movement from one environment to another
- Often embedded in an IEP
- The IEP goals assist in fulfilling the ITP
- A good ITP shows what, who is involved, and by when

- **The PDHPE syllabus:** useful interpersonal and physical outcomes and objectives that school-aged students should be working towards
- Often academic IEP goals are focused on **reading, writing, and numeracy skills** so the **NSW BOSTES syllabus documents** provide outcomes and indicators that can assist you in designing your goals
- Need to consider what accommodations or modifications are required
- For students in high school, **the life skills syllabus may be appropriate**

Transition outcomes

- Post-high school education (colleges, four-year universities, trade schools and technical schools)
- Vocational training
- Employment
- Independent and community living

[http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/downloads/english/dis-Transition 20to 20Adult 20Life 20Students 20w-Disabilites 208-07.pdf](http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/downloads/english/dis-Transition%20to%20Adult%20Life%20Students%20w-Disabilites%208-07.pdf)

Transition plans

- Instructional programming decisions based on the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs
- **Students MUST be involved in the planning process**
- The transition plan:
 - (a) employment,
 - (b) education,
 - (c) housing/living arrangements,
 - (d) social/community life domain

Stewart, et al. (2010)

Student and family involvement

- **A person-centred approach:** the individual and his or her family at the centre of the planning process
- **Students' self-determination and self-advocacy skills:** part of effective transition preparation
- Educational agencies need to ensure that students and their parents:
 - ✓ Understand the transition processes,
 - ✓ Are given all documents well ahead of meetings,
 - ✓ Have support in participation.

Importance of developing and supporting students' self-determination in the context of transitions



Research says...

- Students with disabilities who are more self-determined are twice as likely to be employed one year after high school.
- Three years after graduation, these students are more likely to have employment that includes benefits and are more likely to be living somewhere other than the family home.

Wehmeyer (2002)

Self-determination Assessment

- Important to include multiple stakeholders
- Possible tools: The AIR Self-Determination Scale (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug, & Stolarski, 1994), The Arc's Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995)
- **Personal futures planning (PFP) process:** mapping (a) one's current situation, (b) relevant past experiences, (c) positive and not so positive experiences, (d) one's social network and resources, (e) goals, dreams, and wishes, (f) challenges or possible roadblocks, and (g) detailed steps - action plan.

Cheney, 2012

Self-Determination Skill	Definition
Choice-making	Involves the indication of a preference from a group of two or more options Includes allowing for mistakes and natural consequences Potential link between choice and problem behaviour
Decision-making	Selecting which of a set of potential solutions is best
Problem-solving	Identifying and defining a problem, then generating potential solutions to the problem
Goal setting	Identifying a goal, developing an action plan, and evaluating one's progress toward achieving the goal

Self-Determination Skill	Definition
Self-regulation	Examining one's possible responses to a situation and revising one's response as necessary
Self-advocacy	Having the knowledge and skills to speak on one's own behalf
Self-awareness	Knowing one's strengths and limitations Teaching youth about their disability
Self-efficacy	Believing in one's ability to engage in a specific behavior or task

Self-Advocacy

- The ability to speak up for what we want and need,
- An expectation for success in both college and employment
- Components: self-awareness and self-realization,
- Is built first upon “basic understanding of one’s individual strengths, abilities, limitations, and unique learning needs” and then upon “knowing how to use one’s unique attributes to enhance one’s quality of life” (Doll et al., 1996, pp. 70–71),
- Must be taught explicitly

Promote Self-Advocacy

- Praise all efforts of assertiveness and problem solving,
- Provide opportunities for leadership roles at home and in school,
- Encourage self-advocates to speak in class,
- Teach about appropriate accommodation needs,
- Practice ways to disclose disability and accommodation needs,
- Create opportunities to speak about the disability in school, home, church, business and community.

Self-management skills

Post-secondary education

- Requires young people to be able to organise their time, tasks, resources and communicate at a proficient level, problem-solve, and seek out supports (formal and informal)
- Less teacher contact time, guidance, increased competition between students

Transitions of students with developmental disabilities (DD)

- Research project: **Transitions of students with developmental disabilities: Fostering School-Home Partnerships**; University of New South Wales approval No. HC13021 SERAP Approval No. 2013076

Methodology

- **Surveys:** 107 NSW mainstream primary schools, mainstream high schools, and special schools
- **Interviews:** 47 interviews with parents and teachers of students with developmental disabilities

Key Findings – Existing Transition Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

- Work experience
- Career awareness (work expositions; career advisors)
- Community experiences
- Academic skills training



... it comes down to curriculum, so we need to be focused on the end result. What do we want our kids, at post-school option age, to be able to do? What does that look like? And backwards map it. So, from day dot, when we receive these kids, we can say, "Where are they at? What do we have to build on? Is it travel training? Is it getting them out in the workforce in work experience settings that are authentic to them?" (TSSP7)

Key Findings – “Emerging” Transition EBPs

- Developing individual transition plans (ITPs),
- Parents’ active involvement in developing IEPs/ITPs
- Interagency collaboration
- Age-appropriate transition assessment

“I’m very passionate about the IEP process, and I think that’s one of the best things you can do to try and engage parents with what’s happening here at school.” (TSSP7)

“... if you’ve got an individual education plan, that should direct your discussions about where that child’s going to be, what’s going to be working for that child in the transition. (...) ... in terms of planning, if at all possible, actually formulate an individual plan and then implement it.” (PSSP6)

Key Findings – Missing Transition EBPs

- Development of students' self-determination and independence
- Students' active involvement in developing IEPs/ITPs
- Coordinated interagency collaboration



Rank these missing practices in order of ease of implementation from easiest to most difficult:

- 1 Development of student's self-determination and independence ^ v
- 2 Student's active involvement in developing IEPs/ITPS ^ v
- 3 Coordinated interagency collaboration ^ v

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“... although we’ve had some students contributing to this meeting, it was many years ago that we’ve last had a student come into that meeting, because we’ve just got to show dignity for the person themselves, with the intellectual disability, and to talk about them in front of them, particularly in negative terms, we just feel is not appropriate, so the student generally stays in class.”
(TSSP₁)

Evidence-based Instructional Strategies

- Whose future is it anyway?
- Computer-assisted instruction
- Self-advocacy strategy
- Self-directed IEP
- Peer-assisted instruction
- Self-management instruction
- Video-modeling

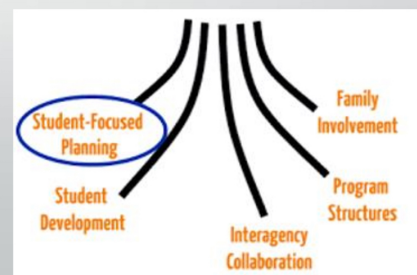
Other Issues

- Lack of information about post-school options

"I also believe there needs to be more government services that you can access, whether it's online, so that everyone can access and have a look at what your options are rather than just waiting for someone to tell you where you can and can't go." (PSSP12)

What Do We Need to Do?

- Need to begin transition planning early
- Student-focused transition planning (development of self-determination and self-advocacy)
- Family-focused transition planning
- Implementation of evidence-based transition practices



Where to go from here?

- Advocacy/lobbying for IEPs/ITPs as mandatory requirement
- Provide funding for:
 - Workload allocations for teachers to conduct transition-related activities
 - Transition specialists to liaise with school, parents, students, outside agencies and employers
 - Support personnel to accompany students to job sites

Where to go from here?

- Research focused on transition EBPs on a state and national level
- Teacher pre- and in-service training





Thank you for your attention.



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