The Transition Process: A View of Post Secondary Education that Begins in Middle School

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Overcoming barriers to PSE may require years of planning and instruction.

- Financing Post Secondary Education
- Improving Academic Skills
- Gaining Everyday Life Skills
- Maintaining Physical and Mental Health
- Overcoming Social Isolation
- Exercising Increasing Freedom and Choices
Why Start in Middle School?

- Students may need extra time to explore employment and other post school options and gain needed experiences.
- Transition team members need this extra time to learn about student support needs and how to meet those needs.
- Middle school offers lots of opportunities to build competence, teach social skills, and foster independence.
Why Start in Middle School?

- Kids without disabilities typically gain their first employment experiences at this age (chores, volunteering, pet and child care, newspaper routes, etc.)
- The transition planning process may help kids stay interested in school – it may make school activities seem more relevant
Interagency Linkages
Transition Services

Course of Study

Transition Service & Support Needs
What skills and experiences do they need to prepare them for High School and PSE?

Present Levels of Academic & Functional Performance

Identify PS Goals – Vague, Messy, Outlandish is OK

Dreams Goals for the Future
Despite recent national and state efforts to develop and recruit few parents know about PSE options

Increasing awareness of PSE programs must begin earlier than HS

Think College Self Paced Modules:

- [http://www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn](http://www.thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn)
Preparation

- Review entrance requirements for PSE Programs (both explicit and hidden)
- Clemson University LIFE Program
  - “Applicants must have a strong desire to become an independent adult, possess sufficient emotional stability and maturity to successfully participate in the program.”
- Develop IEP/Person Centered Plan goals to prepare students for PSE environment
Eligibility: Graduated or exited from high school
Age: 18 years of age
Students are not required to take placement or ability-to-benefit test
Students must be able to live in student housing during non-service hours.
Students must have basic safety skills in unsupervised settings.
Students must have support from family, a personal desire to gain skills in self-determination, independent living, and employment.
Begin to Plan Connections

- What services might the student eventually need?
- How, when and where are those services accessed?
- Is there information that should be captured and compiled now to facilitate the application process later?
Example: DD Services & Programs

- Does the student already have DD services as a child?
- If not, who are the local case managers to whom the student may eventually be assigned?
- How are DD services accessed in our community (phone numbers, addresses, Web sites, staff names)?
- Begin the paperwork so it is ready to go when the student turns 16.
EXAMPLE: Social Security Benefits

- Is the student receiving SSI or other Social Security benefits?
- If not, apply.
- Begin learning about Social Security work incentives such as the Student Earned Income Exclusion and Plans for Achieving Self Support.
- Exercise caution when considering putting assets in the student’s name.
Example: Workforce Investment Act

- At age 14, the student can apply for WIA Youth Employment programs/funds.
- Services can include assistance with such things as learning job skills (résumé writing, interviewing, etc.); developing and funding wages for work experiences; and monies to purchase work related necessities (special clothing, tools, etc.).
Other Connections

- Centers for Independent Living
- Advocacy and Self-Advocacy Groups
- Parent Support Groups
- Recreational and Leisure Skills Programs
- Weight Management and other Wellness Programs
Use Transition Assessment Data

- Measurement to identify abilities, interests, capabilities, strengths, needs, potentials, and behaviors within the areas of
  - personal/social,
  - functional/academic,
  - community/independent,
  - employment and employability areas.

- Initial testing appropriate for middle school; more involved analyses appropriate for high school and beyond (Neubeert, 1985).
Sample Transition Assessments

- Informal: Dream Sheet
- Formal: Support Intensity Scale for Children (in development)
Infuse Life Skill Instruction into Core Academics

- NCLB requires schools to provide access to the standard curriculum so that students participate and make progress in the same curriculum as their non-disabled peers.
- Skills to Pay the Bills
- Career Start
- Unique Learning System – [https://www.n2y.com/unique/](https://www.n2y.com/unique/)
Partnership between UNC–Chapel Hill Schools of Education & Social Work, WSFCS & Piedmont Triad Council of Government

- Mini lessons in core subjects (ELA, Math, Sci., & SS) that infuse career related concepts
- 1/3 of lessons require a parent engagement activity
Online, dynamic, standards–based curriculum specifically designed for special learners.

Subscribers download monthly instructional thematic units of study. Each unit contains 30 lesson plans and downloadable materials that teachers can readily implement into classroom learning activities.

The unit lesson plans define three levels of differentiated tasks to accommodate the diversity of learners with significant disabilities.
Skills to Pay the Bills

“A curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching "soft" or workforce readiness skills.
Targeted for youth ages 14 to 21 in both in-school and out-of-school environments.


Focus on six key skill areas:
- communication,
- enthusiasm and attitude,
- teamwork,
- networking,
- problem solving and critical thinking, and
- professionalism.
Self-Determination

- Promote Choice and Decision Making Skills
- Use Direct Instruction to teach Self-Advocacy and other Self-Determination skills
- Promote student’s “social identity”
  - Conceptualize current groups and networks
  - Help the adolescent fit into the group and understand the group and others
  - Help the adolescent become a contributing member of the group
  - Allow the group time to develop an identity
Self-Determination

- Find age appropriate material to introduce the concepts of self-determination
References