



Dream Big! Plan Smart: A guide to transition from school to work

Technical
Assistance

St Croix

St.
Thomas

Families

Youth &
Children

A Collaborative Partnership Among the Following Agencies

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Our Goals for today are:

- To share a best practices in Transition related to employment for people with disabilities.
- To discuss ways in which this practice can impact on the post secondary outcomes of youth exiting the school system

What happens to our children after High School?

- **Until recently we never knew.....**

National Transition Follow up study (DB) Dr. J. Petroff 1999

- **We can expect children w/ Deaf Blindness will:**
- **NOT go on to participate in post secondary education**
- **Experience high rates of UNEMPLOYMENT**
- **Have limited community experiences**

A Closer look

WORK EXPERIENCES

- 8% are in competitive or supportive employment
- 82% are unemployed

- “Real work for real pay is not being considered as a possible outcome for the majority of youth who are deaf – blind” -Petroff

A CLOSER LOOK

- **TRANSITION PLANNING**
- **40% have no written transition plan**
- **23% never engaged in formal transition planning**
- **Only 40% of students and/ or parents interests and preferences were identified as a component of transition planning**
- **Only 12% engaged in Person Centered Planning**

What do young adults value?

- Want to be more involved in decisions that effect their lives
- Want to be perceived by others as being capable and independent
- Want to be given the dignity of risk
- Want to contribute and be a part of mainstream society

What challenges do Youth Face?

- Perception of employers about people with disabilities
- Transportation
- Limited community experiences
- Social life and relationships
- Communication Barriers

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

Customized Employment is a strategy that provides persons with disabilities an alternative to traditional, competitive jobs. Customized employment relies on a negotiated rather than a competitive approach to employers.

Four key elements to success :

- 1) Meeting the job seeker's **individual** needs and interests.
- 2) The use of a **representative** to assist and potentially represent the individual.
- 3) **Negotiating** successfully with employers
- 4) Building a system of **ongoing supports** for the job seeker

Individualization :

- The job seeker drives the Customized process
- The customized plan is based upon experiences, goals, interests and abilities.
- A good place to start is to ask the question, of who is this person really....?

Representation :

- The person who assists in identifying the job seekers strengths, interests and goals.
- This representative considers employment opportunities from the job seeker's perspective.
- The representative is NOT the decision maker
- Who might be a good representative?

TEACHERS:

- Connect learning to real life experiences



FAMILIES



Friends :

funnyanimalpictures.net



Community



Discovery :



Now that you have established a body of information about the job seekers goals, experience, abilities and interests you have the foundation for the next step.....

Negotiation :

- Build a knowledge base about the company
- Staffing needs
- Establish relationships
- Determine if there is an opportunity for work
- Develop job proposal
- Establish negotiating points

Ongoing Supports

- What type of accommodations and supports?
- Transportation
- Environmental concerns
- Communication
- Adaptive equipment
- Natural supports

Blend of strategies:

- 1) Supported employment services
- 2) Supported entrepreneurship services
- 3) Individualized job development
- 4) Job carving and restructuring

Beliefs and Assumptions for Transitioning Youth Jerry Petroff, Ph.D. 1999

- All students should leave school equipped to be successful, interdependent adults.
- Adult life is more than work and care.
- All students can and have the right to become adult citizens of their community.
- Each student's voice must guide the transition process.

Beliefs and Assumptions for Transitioning Youth

Jerry Petroff, Ph.D. 1999

- Families are a critical component to the planning and success of any youth's transition from school to adult life.
- Each family has its own unique culture that must be respected as a factor in the planning and support of youth in transition.
- Quality of life is defined by the individual.

So what can you do?

- Let educators, civic organizations, and others know of your interest in bringing school-to-work opportunities to your community.
- Volunteer to help build the system and keep it going!

So what can you do?

- Urge your employer, place of worship or community organization to provide work experience for students and volunteer to be a mentor or supervisor for them.
- List 10 places in the community you frequent. These are all potential sites!

So what can you do?

- Help your children understand the relationship between learning and earning. Teach them that doing a job well counts, both in school and on the job.
- Encourage local schools and employers to require and reward achievement!
- Parent planning booklet
- Student planning booklet

And remember...

- *“The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold up a person’s foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher.”*
 - Aldous Huxley

Dream BIG! Plan Smart!

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