Reimagining the College Experience: Transitioning to Independence

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Acknowledgement

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Overview

- Setting the Stage: Transition planning in high school (and before)
- Self-determination and goal setting in Postsecondary Settings
- Making healthy choices on campus
- Technology to promote success and independence
Autism Spectrum Disorders

Prevalence On the Rise: Facts from the CDC 2012

50% of those with ASD with average or above average IQ

CDC Prevalence Statistics for ASD
### Autism Impacts Individuals, Families, and Society

#### Average Lifetime Cost for One Individual with Autism

- **3.2 Million**


Competitive employment has financial benefit for individuals with disabilities and society, due to the increase in salary for the individual, reduced societal costs for medical benefits, and an increase in revenue from taxes paid through employment.


According to the NLTS-2, only 22% of those with ASD and 28% of their parents believe they will attend postsecondary education, but 66% have a transition goal related to postsecondary education, but only 28% having services related to postsecondary education.

### Postsecondary Outcomes Facts

- Attend Postsecondary 2 or 4 year college: 34%
- Complete Postsecondary 2 or 4 year college: 14%
- Employed: 37%
- Competitively Employed: 6%
- Not Employed or in Postsecondary Education: 50%


Improving the Outcomes

Early Transition Services (prior to age 16) for individuals with ASD results in:

- Improved Rates of Employment
- Higher Salaries
- Savings in Costs of Vocational Services

$5,164 > $3,560


3.7

How much more likely a young adult with ASD to attend college if parent expects them to
Presently, federal law defines transition for students with ASD (and all other disabilities) as a “results-oriented process . . . focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to postschool activities, including

- post-secondary education,
- vocational education,
- integrated employment (including supported employment),
- continuing and adult education,
- adult services,
- independent living, or
- community participation”

(IDEA, 2004, § 300.43).
## Predictors of Postsecondary Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor/Outcome</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Independent Living</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Awareness</td>
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<td>Community Experiences</td>
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<td>Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma Status</td>
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<td>Inclusion in General Education</td>
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<td>Interagency Collaboration</td>
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<td>Occupational Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid Employment/Work Experiences</td>
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<td>Parental Involvement</td>
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<td>Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination</td>
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<td>Vocational Education</td>
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<td>Work Study</td>
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Transition Planning During High School

- **Indiana**
  - Enters in grade 9 or becomes 14 years of age
  - Prior to the last year of school, a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor is encouraged to participate

- **Some components of a transition plan**
  - Present levels of performance
  - Appropriate and measurable postsecondary goals
  - Diploma vs. Certificate of Completion
  - Service linkage
  - Annual goals that meet the student’s needs given disability
  - Related services
  - Least restrictive environment
Considerations for Transition Planning

- Self-advocacy, decision making, and problem solving
- Address social and communication needs
- Identify college as a goal in the transition plan
- Address potential problems early in planning process
- Consider independent living skills and transportation
- Research college options, plan to visit colleges, and meet with representatives from disability services
- Explore college programs for individuals with ASD
Useful Transition Resources

- Transition Tool-Kit: www.autismspeaks.org
- Indiana Department of Education www.doe.in.gov
  - Navigating the Course: Finding Your Way Through Indiana’s Special Education Laws
  - Article 7
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services: www.in.gov
- College Programs:
Setting the Stage for Promoting Self-Determination

- Person Centered Planning
  - Make ongoing support and coordination of supports among adult agency providers such as vocational rehabilitation, college personnel

- Conduct transition Assessments
  - Use technology to promote independence
  - Travel training
  - Career and learning style and personality assessments
  - Participate in paid employment
Setting the Stage: Promoting Self-Determination in the Home

- Chores
- Independent cooking
- Independent cleaning
- Money Management
What Is Self Determination

A combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society.

Definition of Self Determination?

- Self-Determination refers to “acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions regarding one’s quality of life voluntarily, free from undue external influence or interference”

- A causal agent is someone who makes or causes things to happen in his or her life.

- Self-determination contributes to a person’s overall quality of life (Schalock, 1996).
Why is Self Determination Important?

- Individuals who score higher on measures of SD have more positive adult outcomes (e.g., better employment, better living situations)
- Research is emerging regarding the relationship between SD and positive school experiences (e.g., higher grades, attendance, fewer behavior problems).

Wehmeyer & Schwartz (1997)
Components of Self-Determination

- **Choice making**: appropriately choosing between a finite number of choices
- **Problem-solving**: weigh pros & cons of potential actions, identify barriers to success
- **Decision making**: involves choosing between unlimited options
- **Goal setting and attainment**: ability to set appropriate goals for self and achieve the goals with actions
Components of Self-Determination

- **Self-regulation**: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-management (controlling own behavior by being aware of one’s actions and providing feedback)
- **Self-awareness**: awareness of own individuality, strengths, and areas for improvement
- **Self-efficacy**: understanding that own actions have an impact – you are a causal agent in your life
- **Self-advocacy**: have knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication skills, and leadership ability.
What Students Need to Know and Do

1. *Know yourself.*
   - A person knows their strengths/weaknesses, needs, preferences, and options.

2. *Value yourself.*
   - A person accepts and values themselves, recognizes rights and responsibilities, admires unique strengths, and takes care of themselves.

   - A person sets goals, plan actions to reach goals, and anticipates results.
   A person communicates, takes risks, searches resources/supports, and deals with conflicts/criticism.

5. Experience outcomes and learn.
   A person compares results and anticipated results, realizes success, and makes changes according to the outcome (adapted from Wehmeyer, 1996).
What Colleges need to Know and Do

- Establish dual enrollment or early experience programs
- Create learning communities and peer mentoring opportunities
- Utilize visual aides to support organization, communication, and learning
- Facilitate students developing a circle of support
- Utilize universal technology to manage daily personal and academic activities
What Colleges Need to Do

• List of how you do common college tasks (order books, parking pass, registration etc)
• Include list of questions and nonquestions to ask faculty
• Utilize academic and ability advising to support problem identification, problem solving, and goal setting skills
• Establish partnerships with employers and community organizations to support students making informed career choices
What Faculty and Staff Need to Know and Do

- Display important points visually (make them stand out), avoid unrelated images
- Use calendars to support organization (e.g., deadlines, appointments, assignment submission, or activities procedures)
- Establish consistent routines
- Consider the instructional environment (sound, sight, and location of activities)
- Post and review rules frequently (send electronic reminders)
- Establish consistent meeting times for individual support and feedback
Wellness Issues

- Individuals with ASD exhibit gross motor skill (GMS) and physical activity (PA) deficits when compared to their same aged peers without disabilities (MacDonald, Lord, Ulrich, 2013; Berkeley, Zittel, Pitney, & Nichols, 2001).

- Food preferences of individuals with ASD tend to be more selective than their same aged peers without disabilities (Schreck & Williams, 2006).

- Social-emotional well-being is an essential aspect of preventing comorbidities for young adults with ASD.
Stodden et al., (2008) proposed that a relationship exists between children’s experiences in being exposed to and master fundamental motor skills and their engagement in physical activity later in life.

- Social deficits and the relationship to physical activity opportunities
- Comorbidities and relationship to overall well being and quality of life.

Transitioning to independence and maintaining PA
Eating Habits and Food Preferences

- Selectivity of food choices
- Implications to comorbidities (e.g., obesity)
- Family influences
Social-Emotional Wellbeing

- Community involvement and engagement is an essential piece to the social-emotional and workforce success of individuals with ASD post secondary (Carter, Harvey, Taylor & Gotham, 2013).
Ways to Incorporate Wellness into College Life

- Set workout plan, time to go to the gym or get moving, register for classes (based on PA preference)
- Dietician or Nutritionist services on campus
  ○ [http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/workingwell/dieteticscounselingservices](http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/workingwell/dieteticscounselingservices)
  ○ Snack choices and meal suggestions
- Social and Peer Groups
  ○ Get out and explore campus
  ○ Student Services and Student Union events: [http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/studentcenter](http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/studentcenter)
- Disability service opportunities
  ○ [http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/disability-services](http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/disability-services)
Technology Supports: Focus on Mainstream Technology if Possible

- Rationale for focus on mainstream technology (Think Mobile if Possible)
  - Availability—Typical students, along with individuals with ASD integrate technology into every area of their lives already
  - Socially Appropriate
  - Adaptable

- Specialized technology when necessary—But consider navigation requirements, size, social appropriateness, training requirements
Mainstream Technology for Academics

- Writing emails
- Structure for a paper
- Effective Powerpoint
- Why hacking is bad
- Responding appropriately to visuals and technology professor uses
Apps for Academics

- Built in Features
  - Read Aloud on iPad (Speak It)
  - ibooks
  - Web Reader

- Writing
  - Dragon
  - Typo HD
  - SIRI
  - Word Prediction Keyboard—IOS 8
  - Kurzweil 3000
Apps for Academics

- Study Skills
  - Quizlet
  - EverNote
- Organization
  - Complete Class Organizer
  - SIRI
  - Reminders
Self-Determination

- Goal Setting
- Self-Management
  - 10+2x5
Health

- iPhone-Healthkit
- Meal Planners
- MyNetDiary
- Medication Reminders
- Map My Run
- Fooducate
Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders-Ball State University

Research for 18-29 year olds focusing on
* Learning Employment Tasks
* Self Determination and Career Development Curriculum
* Physical Stamina

Please email jmcullen@bsu.edu if interested in more information