

Prism Series  
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# TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

## Work, Community, and Educational Success

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# Introduction

The Prism series, developed by the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, is a collection of volumes that highlight evidence-based research-to-practice teaching strategies and interventions geared toward supporting students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities (DD). The volumes in the Prism collection address interventions in the classroom, home, and community and focus on how to help students build needed skills.

Prism Volume 11 focuses on the transition from being a student in high school to an adult functioning in society. The eight chapters in this volume, written by 20 authors, highlight preparation for and transition from the secondary environment to postsecondary education, employment, and community involvement. The target population highlighted in this volume is individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with ASD and intellectual disability (ID). The target audience for this volume include special education teachers, general education teachers, secondary school professionals, transition personnel, Department of Education personnel, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and individuals with disabilities along with their families. The authors discuss a range of approaches and models currently being used, and the current status on postschool life for young people with developmental disabilities.

**Chapter 1** (“A Framework for Supporting Transition-Age Students”) provides readers with a background on the topic of transition as it relates to youth with DD, including those with ASD and ID. The authors present data and information in support of the transition initiative, illustrating its value to young persons in the target population and the educators and others who play supporting roles in this process. This chapter highlights the history of advocacy and legislative efforts that drove the creation of the transition planning and preparation requirements in the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, within the historical context of this initiative.

**Chapter 2** (“Transition Assessment”) provides a historical lens to better understand students with disabilities and the grassroots philosophical undertaking prompting the transition movement. The authors offer guidance on principles that inform the transition assessment process for youth with DD and an overview of some of the most commonly used assessment approaches and tools.

**Chapter 3** (“Transition-Focused Program Plans”) illustrates how transition plans can be used to support youth with DD as they move from school to the

adult world. The authors take a closer look at transition planning and introduce evidence-based strategies that enhance the planning process.

**Chapter 4** (“Person-Centered Planning, Summary of Performance, and Guardianship”) highlights the essential elements of person-centered planning, summary of performance, and guardianship practices. The authors provide information to assist readers in playing a key role in these processes and enhance the successful transition from high school to adult functioning for individuals with DD.

**Chapter 5** (“Preparing Students for Inclusive Postschool Settings”) focuses on the importance and significance of inclusive settings in and beyond high schools for youth with DD. The authors present a best-practice framework to support transition to inclusive postschool options, and suggest strategies that lead to inclusive skill development and successful transition to postschool settings.

**Chapter 6** (“Preparing Students for Employment”) describes the central collaborators who provide employment services and should be involved in the planning and service provision process. The authors provide an overview of evidence-based strategies and best practices that promote and support competitive integrated employment outcomes for students with DD.

**Chapter 7** (“Preparing Students for Postsecondary Education”) describes some of the benefits of participation in continuing education for individuals with disabilities and a variety of higher education options. The authors discuss some of the barriers to success and highlight effective practices to prepare students with disabilities for higher education.

**Chapter 8** (“Community Participation and Supports”) focuses on the topic of community-based instruction and the real-life skills that youth with DD need to master in order to live as independently as possible and function successfully in an inclusive society. The authors discuss community-based instruction as a format to bridge community participation with instructional preparation and have individuals learn skills in natural settings.

# CHAPTER 1

## A Framework for Supporting Transition-Age Students

Robert A. Stodden, Leslie K. O. Okoji, and Sean Nagamatsu

### Objectives:

- Introduce the topic of transition.
- Provide background and rationale concerning transition.
- Present key terms and legislation supporting transition initiatives.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the topic of postsecondary transition as it relates to youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability, and the role of educators and others in this process. This chapter provides historical background and information regarding the transition initiative, illustrating its value to individuals with disabilities, and the history of advocacy and legislative efforts leading to the transition planning and preparation requirements of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2006).

Key Terminology	
Autism spectrum disorder	A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with ASD are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. (See 34 CFR § 300.8[c][1].)

# CHAPTER 2

## Transition Assessment

Joshua M. Pulos and James E. Martin

### Objectives:

- Define transition assessment and legal requirements.
- Identify resources for transition assessments.
- Define formal and informal transition assessment.
- Present repeated measures situational assessment steps.

“We study the past to understand the present; we understand the present to guide the future” (William Lund, 1886–1971, as quoted by Webster, n.d., p. 2). Chapter 2 provides a historical lens to better understand students with disabilities and the grassroots philosophical undertaking prompting the transition movement. This chapter also reviews guiding principles that inform the transition assessment process for youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability.

Key Terminology	
Formal assessment	A standardized instrument for measuring an array of items that includes descriptions of their norming process, reliability, validity, recommended use, reading level, and direction of administration (see National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, 2016; Neubert & Leconte, 2013).
Informal assessment	A nonstandardized instrument lacking formal norming processes, reliability, and validity information (Neubert & Leconte, 2013).

# CHAPTER 3

## Transition-Focused Program Plans

Kathryn M. Burke, Karrie A. Shogren, and Michael L. Wehmeyer

### Objectives:

- Identify key components of program plans for transition-age students.
- Describe evidence-based practices for transition planning.
- Describe the importance of student involvement and self-determination in transition planning.

Chapter 3 introduces the topic of transition-focused program plans, and how these plans can be used to support youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability, as they transition from school to the adult world. The transition from school to the adult world is an exciting, complex, and potentially overwhelming experience for a young person. Although students with disabilities move from school to adulthood just like their peers, they often need unique services and supports during this time. The key to providing those supports and services lies in comprehensive, thoughtful planning. This chapter takes a closer look at transition planning and introduces evidence-based strategies that effectively enhance the process.

Key Terminology	
Individualized plan for employment	A written document that identifies a chosen employment outcome for an individual and the specific vocational rehabilitation services to achieve that outcome. The IPE also indicates who will provide the vocational rehabilitation services and the criteria to evaluate progress toward the employment outcome, as well as information on supported employment and post-employment services (if determined appropriate or necessary; see 29 U.S.C. § 722[b](3).)

# CHAPTER 4

## Person-Centered Planning, Summary of Performance, and Guardianship

L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, Shannon L. Sparks, Debra L. Cote, and Terri Vandercook

### Objectives:

- Define the concept of person-centered planning.
- Describe the development and use of the Summary of Performance.
- Review guardianship options.
- Highlight the benefits and effective implementation of person-centered planning, Summary of Performance, and guardianship practices to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

This chapter provides an introduction to the topics of person-centered planning, the Summary of Performance, and guardianship as they relate to youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability. Educators and others play a key role in these practices and the successful transition from high school to adult functioning for individuals with disabilities. Thus, this chapter provides information illustrating the essential elements of these three practices.

Key Terminology	
Guardianship	The legal process where a person or company petitions the court to be assigned to make decisions on behalf of a person who is perceived incapable to do so (see Jameson et al., 2015; Millar, 2014; Quality Trust for Individuals With Disabilities, 2014).



# CHAPTER 5

## Preparing Students for Inclusive Postschool Settings

Leslie K. O. Okoji, Sean Nagamatsu, Robert A. Stodden, and Eric Folk

### Objectives:

- Highlight the importance and significance of inclusive settings.
- Present the framework for supporting youth with disabilities in transitioning to inclusive postschool settings.
- Provide best practices focused on inclusive skill development and meaningful strategies that lead to a successful transition to inclusive postschool settings.

This chapter focuses on preparing students for transition into inclusive postschool settings, and the importance and significance of inclusive settings in and beyond high schools for youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of a best-practice framework to support transition to inclusive postschool options, and provides strategies that lead to inclusive skill development and successful transition to postschool settings. Secondary schools are the ideal setting to provide support and services that focus on the acquisition and use of skills and knowledge that build on independence and sustainability. Incorporating a person-centered approach to transition planning for life after high school (see Chapters 3 and 4) creates an opportunity for educators to foster high expectations and seek out ways to create more meaningful, inclusive experiences for students.

Key Terminology	
21st-century skills	Skills that promote a self-determined and meaningful life. These skills consist of essential content knowledge (core academic subjects), as well as (a) learning and innovation skills; (b) information and technology skills; and (c) career and life skills. (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015).

# CHAPTER 6

## Preparing Students for Employment

Kathryn K. Yamamoto, Nancy Farnon-Molfenter, and Evan Nakatsuka

### Objectives:

- Introduce key concepts regarding the employment of youth with disabilities.
- Describe central collaborators who provide employment services and who should be included in the planning and service provision process.
- Provide an overview of evidence-based strategies and best practices that promote and support competitive integrated employment outcomes for students with disabilities.

This chapter focuses on preparing transition-age youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability, for employment. Work has been a necessary component of the human existence throughout history. In fact, work has been found to be the central activity in all civilizations and provides the context for fulfilling three basic human needs: (a) survival and power, (b) social connection, and (c) self-determination and well-being (Alsaman & Lee, 2017). Work may be even more beneficial for persons with disabilities who often experience greater social isolation and stigma in combination with higher rates of poverty when compared to their peers without disabilities (Blustein, 2008, as cited in Alsaman & Lee, 2017, p. 98).

# CHAPTER 7

## Preparing Students for Postsecondary Education

L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, Marc Ellison, and Dedra Hafner

### Objectives

- Outline the benefits of postsecondary higher education for students with disabilities.
- Present two higher education models for inclusion of students with disabilities.
- Discuss barriers to higher education success, both institutional and directly related to disability characteristics.
- Highlight effective practices that prepare students for postsecondary education settings while they are still in high school.
- Highlight effective practices to meet the needs of students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings.

This chapter focuses on the topic of postsecondary education (PSE) for youth with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability (ID). In the postsecondary setting, students who previously received special education support under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2006) can be covered by the civil rights protections of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (2009) and the Americans With Disabilities Act (1990; ADA Amendments Act [ADAAA], 2009). Whereas the IDEA mandates a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), the ADA and Section 504 protect against discrimination and ensure students accessibility (Griffin & Papay, 2017; Madaus & Shaw, 2004). Per Section 504, qualified individuals may not be denied or subjected to discrimination in admission or excluded from participation in activities such as academics, athletics, recreation, or other extracurricular activities on the basis of a disability (Connor; 2012; Zager & Smith, 2012). The ADAAA protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination in postsecondary education settings by requiring access to reasonable accommodations, but does not require modifications that would alter fundamental requirements of an academic course.

# CHAPTER 8

## Community Participation and Supports

Emily C. Bouck and Erik W. Carter

### Objectives:

- Define community-based instruction and how to teach real-world skills (e.g., community participation; personal health and safety; home living; travel and mobility; socialization, recreation, and leisure).
- Discuss how to increase the capacity and commitment of communities to meaningfully include students with disabilities, as well as interventions that engage partners (e.g., parents, community leaders, congregations) in community change efforts that enable students to live rich and personally satisfying lives after high school.

This chapter focuses on community-based instruction and strategies—such as real-life skills—to prepare youth and young adults with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability, to live as independently as possible and function successfully in an inclusive society. Community-based instruction is an instructional format that bridges community participation with instructional preparation. In other words, this type of instruction involves students learning skills in natural settings. In this chapter, we discuss the real-life skills required for successful integration and functioning within natural environments.

Key Terminology	
Real-life skills	Authentic skills needed for real-life involvement, participation, and success in one’s current and subsequent environments (Bouck, Taber-Doughty, & Savage, 2015).