



Transition-Related Planning, Instruction, and Service Responsibilities for Secondary Special Educators

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Overview and Research

Over the last several decades, our field has investigated secondary education practices that improve post-school outcomes of students with exceptional learning needs. DCDT has been extensively involved in this work and many promising practices have been described in the Division's journal, *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*. An important means to link effective practices information with secondary education practice is through transition-related professional development at both the inservice and preservice levels (Morningstar & Mazzotti, 2014).

This Fact Sheet summarizes research-identified practices that have emerged through research for which secondary special educators should be responsible and are organized according to the five categories in the Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016). These practices form a foundation for transition-related skill development for secondary special educators. We encourage professional development regarding these practices, in addition to competencies described in *What Every Special Educator Must Know: International Standards for the Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators* (CEC, 2015) and the *Advanced Preparation Standards for Special Education Transition Specialists* (DCDT, 2013).

Student-Focused Planning

- Identify and document students post-school goals, learning preferences, and need for accommodations.
- Use a variety of comprehensive, age-appropriate transition assessment information as a basis for the individual education program.
- Include at least one formal transition assessment as part of a comprehensive transition assessment battery
- Prioritize needs identified through transition assessment and team member input
- Create measurable transition-related post-secondary goals and objectives that focus on post-secondary education or training, employment, independent living.
- Develop educational experiences that correspond with post-school goals and objectives, such as participation in college preparatory curricula and/or in vocational and technical education.
- Through the individual education program plan, specify responsibility for transition-focused instructional activities or services.
- Develop students' abilities to participate meaningfully in the IEP development process and meeting.
- Utilize a planning process that is student-centered and facilitates students' self-determination, including student decision-making and students learning to facilitate their own IEP meeting.
- Provide appropriate accommodations that facilitate student and family engagement in the individual planning process, and specifically in the IEP meeting.
- Evaluate the progress or attainment of student goals at least annually, including student evaluation of his or her progress.
- Ensure that every opportunity is provided for students to earn a standard diploma.



Student Development

- Use assessment data to drive instruction and inform curricular and instructional decisions.
- Ensure access to course and curricula to prepare students for college and careers.
- Promote development of self-determination skills and create opportunities for practice.
- Promote development of social skills for school, work, and community living.
- Promote development of academic strategies and behaviors (e.g. learning strategies and study skills).
- Promote development of independent living, interpersonal, leisure, and transportation skills.
- Promote development of employment-seeking and occupation-specific skills in authentic settings.
- Provide work experience, including paid work experience, prior to school exit.
- Develop accommodations, adaptations, and natural supports that meet student needs across a variety of settings, such as academic, vocational, home, and community.

Interagency Collaboration

- With appropriate authorization from students and families, coordinate collection and use of student assessment information with relevant service providers.
- Interact effectively with vocational rehabilitation (VR) and community service providers to identify and address students' service and support needs.
- Coordinate collaboration among special, general, career technical, and vocational educators regarding students learning needs and instructional programs.
- Establish methods of communication among all service providers.

Family Engagement

- Provide planning activities for parents before individual education program meetings.
- Provide preparation for families to participate in the transition-related planning process.
- Facilitate parent attendance at individual education program planning meetings.
- Actively include parents and family members in planning and decision making.
- Capitalize on families' cultural background and knowledge of their child to inform the IEP.

Program Structure

- Develop and implement outcome-oriented programs that reflect high expectations for all students.
- Provide flexible programs to meet individual student needs.
- Provide curricular options that meet student needs and reflect the community's cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity.
- Participate in program and curriculum development and evaluation.
- Address transitions across all educational levels (pre-school to high school) and relevant systems in integrated settings.
- Develop clearly defined graduation options and present those to parents prior to 9th grade along with further implications and multiple pathways.

Application to Teachers

- Use the above list of research-identified practices to ensure adequate transition-related preparation and ongoing professional development to support students in transition.

Application to Administrators

- Recruit, hire, and retain staff with transition-related planning skills in all instructional, supervisory, and support roles.



- Provide ongoing professional development to ensure teachers and other staff build and maintain current knowledge and skills in transition-related planning.

Application to Families

- Understand the important role that the student and family members have in transition-related planning
- Use the above list of research-identified practices to ask questions of teachers involved in transition-related planning regarding their use of these practices and to request support in using them in your child's transition.

Where to go for Additional Information

Websites

Division on Career Development and Transition – Council for Exceptional Children

<http://community.cec.sped.org/dcdt/cec-transition-standards>

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

www.transitionta.org

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