



RRTC on Employer
Practices for

Individuals with

Research Summary

June 2018

Post-Secondary Apprenticeships for Youth: Follow-up Case Studies

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Wilson, P. G., Killam, S. G., Griffiths, L., Stazio, L. C., Ellis, R. B., Esta, M., & Ukachu, A. N. (2019). Post-secondary apprenticeships for youth: Follow-up case studies. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 50 (3), 279-284.

A quick look: ■

Recently, the initial cohort of participants completed the Post-Secondary Apprenticeship for Youth with disabilities program in New Orleans. The program is designed to assist youth with disabilities (18-21) in transitioning from the high school environment into the community. The program curriculum includes self-advocacy, independent living, social skills instruction, and job/work-readiness training. It is a collaborative effort between state vocational rehabilitation agencies (VR), community colleges and universities and disability advocacy/service agencies. Case studies were done on two individuals who completed the program to help describe the outcomes and lessons learned from this cohort.

Key Findings: ■

- ▶ High school teachers of the participants questioned many aspects of the program, but by the end of the program, stopped questioning practices.
- ▶ Program participants who consistently attended class and completed assignments earned above average grades.
- ▶ Significant discussions and collaborations with families was needed for success.
- ▶ Disabilities were not obstacles as much as poverty, homelessness, and family issues were, as well as poor diets and lack of adequate sleep.
- ▶ Seven out of eight program completers were employed in natural community settings by the end of the program.

Putting It into Practice: ■

Transition programs for youth with disabilities should offer a variety of services that will help these individuals gain the skills necessary to integrate into the community. Some of the recommendations for employers, VR practitioners, and VR agencies include:

- ▶ Programs should include components such as:
 - Career awareness and community experience.
 - High school diploma attainment and work-based training/certifications.
 - Interagency collaboration and parent/family involvement.
 - Training the individual in self-advocacy, self-determination, and self-care.
- ▶ Employment components of these programs should include:
 - Wages at or above minimum wage.
 - Support in identifying career interests.
 - Job searching assistance, resume development, and assistance with applications.
 - Interviewing preparation and practice.

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