

# Effective Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Youth with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities are at a disadvantage in the workforce due to limited work experience, low motivation, lack of self-confidence, and unrealistic expectations about work. Additionally, career exploration, preparing for an occupation, and establishing a career are key developmental tasks during this stage. The focus of this study is to identify vocational rehabilitation services that have demonstrated to promote employment outcomes of youth with disabilities.

## Key Findings

- Job placement, on-the-job support, college training services, job search assistance, and vocational training services were associated with successful employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.
- There were mixed findings in terms of the relationship between provision of services for youth with disabilities and employment outcomes.
- There are concerns regarding the existing gaps in the training of vocational rehabilitation counselors.
- Gender and race/ethnic disparities were observed, with male White youth being more likely in attaining competitive employment.
- Youth that received vocational rehabilitation services at age 14 had better employment outcomes than those that began services at a later age.
- Receiving disability benefits and having a more severe disability were associated with low employment rates.

## Recommendations

Rehabilitation professionals can better support employment outcomes for transition-age youth with disabilities by:

- Providing job placement and occupational training services to youth to enhance employment outcomes.
- Promoting service equity to help reduce disparities youth from diverse backgrounds experience in successful employment outcomes.
- Implementation of training for rehabilitation counselors relating to service provision to transition-age youth with disabilities needs

## More About The Research

- Findings are based on 35 studies collected from a systematic review with a criterion that involved gathering studies from 8 databases and a three phase reviewal to ensure studies were related to disability, transition-age youth, self-advocacy, workplace readiness, work-based learning, and job exploration.

**Additional information on this topic can be found at <https://transition.vcurrtc.org/>**

## Recommended readings:

- Neubert, D. A., Luecking, R. G., & Fabian, E. S. (2018). Transition practices of vocational rehabilitation counselors serving students and youth with disabilities. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education*, 32(1), 54-65. DOI:10.1891/2168-6653.32.1.54
- Nevala, N., Pehkonen, I., Teittinen, A., Vesala, H. T., Pörtfors, P., & Anttila, H. (2019). The effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions on the employment and functioning of people with intellectual disabilities: a systematic review. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation*, 29(4), 773-802. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-019-09837-2>

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