



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 rate.

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 transition.vcurrctc.org or contact us at rrtc@vcu.edu

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>

transition.vcurrctc.org

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number #90RTEM0002). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.