

# Effective Secondary Services for Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Transition-age youth with disabilities are less likely to be employed, have fewer work experiences than youth without disabilities, and face multiple barriers in obtaining of employment. Secondary education services that have been found to be effective in improving transition to work of youth with disabilities were identified as well as contextual factors that play a role in the success of the associated services.

## Key Findings

- An increase in research on secondary services was observed, particularly as a result of the passing of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.
- Youth that had work experience and participated in work programs or service learning were more likely to be employed.
- Interventions such as the video activity schedule (VidAS) and usage of assistive technology services demonstrated to increase youth's independence and employment outcomes.
- Barriers and lack of active participation from youth and parents in IEP meetings and transition planning process were observed.
- For youth with Autism, family income, identifying as part of a racial/ethnic minority group, and having a low-income were predictors of employment outcomes.
- Occupational and physical therapy had a positive impact on youth's functionality supporting a successful transition to employment post-high school.

## Recommendations

Rehabilitation professionals can better support transition-age youth with disabilities in their transition from high school to employment through:

- Begin student-centered transition planning and services at an early age such as 13 and 14 years old.
- Ensuring IEPs include transition goals that are meaningful to youth, strengths-based, and incorporates independence, autonomy, and self-determination.
- Connect with community businesses/organizations that may be interested in having student volunteers, interns, or employees.
- Provide regular community meetings where students and families can meet and ask questions regarding transition planning.

## More About The Research

- Findings are based on 30 studies collected from a scoping review with a criterion that involved gathering studies from 8 databases and a three phase reviewal to ensure studies were related to disability, youth in transition, employment, and secondary services.

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

## Recommended readings:

- Cavendish, W., & Connor, D. (2018). Toward authentic IEPs and transition plans: Student, parent, and teacher perspectives. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 41(1), 32-43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948716684680>
- Eilenberg, J. S., Paff, M., Harrison, A. J., & Long, K. A. (2019). Disparities based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status over the transition to adulthood among adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum: A systematic review. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 21(5), N.PAG-N.PAG. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-019-1016-1>

**Contact us at: [rrtc@vcu.edu](mailto:rrtc@vcu.edu)**