



Collaborations to Support Employment Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities have a higher likelihood of being unemployed and having less work experiences than youth without disabilities. The passing of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014 led to an increase of evidence-based practices for youth with disabilities. Effective collaboration efforts that have improved transition to work of youth with disabilities were identified.

Key Findings

- Collaboration efforts demonstrated to increase youth's readiness to work by improving youth's attitude toward employment, access to services from adult service providers, and increase of work-based learning experiences.
- Youth's participation in collaborative programs had a greater likelihood of obtaining employment, job retention, better earning outcomes, and weekly hours worked.
- Project SEARCH and Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) were among the most cited effective collaboration efforts in improving employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.
- Gaps between disability-related services were observed such as understaffed offices and limited collaborations among professionals working on individualized education plans (IEPs) with youth at schools.

Recommendations

Rehabilitation professionals can better engage in collaborative efforts to improve employment outcomes for transition-age youth with disabilities by:

- Focusing on three critical elements that include addressing employer needs, engaging job developers, and developing strategic innovations.
- Establishing the collaboration program's mission and goals with all members of the team.
- Providing disability and legislation related training to employers, teachers, and university disability services staff.

More about the Research

Findings are based on 27 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, employment, and collaborations.

Additional information on this topic can be found at transition.vcurrtec.org or contact us at rrtc@vcu.edu

Recommended Readings

Henry, A. D., Laszlo, A., & Nicholson, J. (2015). What does it take to build an employment collaborative for people with disabilities? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 43(1), 1-15. DOI:10.3233/JVR-150750

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