

VCU-RRTC-Transition
VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Collaborations to Support Employment Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities

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Introduction

- Youth with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and have fewer work experiences as compared to youth without disabilities (SCHELP, 2012). Having work experiences in high school has shown to be one of the best predictors of employment in adulthood; youth with disabilities who have at least one paid work experience during high school are more than twice as likely to be employed after high school (Carter et al., 2011; Test & Cease-Cook, 2012).

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- There has been some research specifically done on evidence-based practices in transition and predictors of improved post-school outcomes (Test et al., 2009; Test & Cook, 2012) especially with the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014

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WIOA

- Fosters regional collaboration: states must identify economic regions among their state and local areas in each of the regions must coordinate planning and service delivery strategies.
- Emphasizes employer engagement: particularly in ensuring workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers, support regions economic growth through collaboration and coordination among employers, economic entities, and service providers.
- Section 223 of WIOA: agency collaboration to occur whenever possible to avoid duplication of services and be able to expand the impact of such collaborations and/or activities provided.
- WIOA mandates collaboration among employment, educational, and other human resource program to integrate service delivery to enhance better long-term employment outcomes for individuals who are receiving such services

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- WIOA updates in 2014 continues to advocate for a strong interagency collaboration between state-federal (VR) programs and schools: mandate that youth between the ages of 14 and 24 that are transitioning from school to employment must work with VR agencies
- VR agencies and schools are required to work together to provide the needed Pre-ETS youth may need along with reaching out to parents and students to assist with the transition from school to employment

(Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2016)

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to conduct a scoping review to identify effective practices for improving transition to work of youth with disability.

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Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- What collaborations between services providers (e.g., secondary education, vocational rehabilitation, other providers) are found to be scientifically valid and effective for improving transition to work of youth with disability?

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Research Design and Procedure

- We chose to conduct an in-depth scoping review as it allows for a wider range of research questions and topics to be investigated while still being an effective way to determine gaps in research or areas for future research (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Plow et al., 2011).

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Methodological Framework

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five stage methodological was utilized for this study

- Identified the research questions
- Identified relevant studies that utilize various sources including databases and reference lists
- Selected studies that are relevant to the research questions to be included and documented the interrater reliability
- Organized and synthesized the data
- Summarized and reported the results of the scoping study

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Methods

Research Team

The research team included two professors with expertise in youth with disabilities in transition and secondary services and three project assistants (graduate students in the rehabilitation counselor education program). At the beginning of the scoping review, after identifying the research questions, the professors provided training on the basics of scoping reviews and gave feedback on concept maps and search terms with the scoping review team.

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Methods (cont.)

Database Search

- Databases used were (a) Education Research Complete, (b) ERIC, (c) Family and Society Studies Worldwide, (d) Family Studies Abstracts, (e) Social Work Abstracts, (f) APA PsycInfo, (g) APA PsycArticles, and (h) CINAHL Plus with Full Text.

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Methods (cont.)

Key words consisted of five structures

1. **Disability keywords:** Disab* OR handicap* OR impair* OR behavior disorder OR behavioral disorder OR autism OR emotional disorder OR learning disorder OR developmental disorder OR mental ill* or intellectual disorder
2. **Youth in transition keywords:** Youth OR transition* OR teenag* OR adoles* OR “high school” OR student
3. **Employment keywords:** Job OR work OR employ* OR hire OR hiring OR career OR intern*
4. **Collaboration:** collabor* OR coordinat* OR MOU OR partners* OR cooperat*

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Reviewing Process

The reviewing process consisted of three phrases –

- 1) Title review
 - 2) Abstract review
 - 3) Full-text review
- In the first two phases, each article was reviewed by two members of the research team who were trained on how to determine inter-rater reliability using Cohen’s Kappa statistic and articles were removed when both raters agreed that the article did not meet the inclusion criteria.

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Inclusion Criteria

- The filtering out of articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria was conducted in three phases.
- Those phases included: 1) title review, 2) abstract review, and 3) full-text review. Inclusion criteria for title review required that articles must relate to “youth in transition with disabilities” and “collaboration” and “work” or “employment” and the scoping team eliminated articles that were not related to “youth”, “work”, “employment”, and “disability”.
- These criteria were also implemented in the abstract review as well as the full-text review where the scoping team kept only the articles related to 1) youth with disabilities and 2) collaborations to support employment outcomes of youth with disabilities

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Reviewing Process

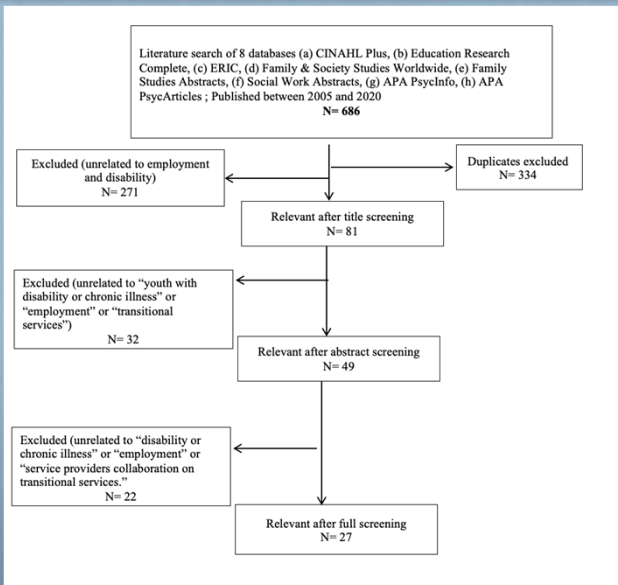
- For the full-text reviews, due to the high inter-rater agreement during the title and abstract review process, only one reviewer assessed if the article met the inclusion criteria.
- Lastly, a research expert in the area of collaboration, youth in transition, and employment was asked to review the references to ensure that all articles were appropriate and that no critical articles were missing from the scoping review literature.

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Results



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Potential Benefits of Collaboration



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Potential Benefits to Collaboration

- Increase involvement of different networks
- Increase youth's readiness to work
- Increase youth's work attempts and retention
- Facilitate policy changes

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Increased involvement of different networks

- Efforts to increase collaborations can result in increased:
 - Interagency collaborations
 - Engagement between employers and communities
 - Connections between schools and adult service providers
- Strengthened connections among partners
- Establishment of cross-system accountability
- Changes of partners attitudes, knowledge, and awareness of employment for youth with disabilities

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Increased Youth's Readiness to Work

- Positive changes to youth's attitude and awareness of employment
- Increased youth's confidence in seeking employment
- Better understanding and relationships with adult service providers
- Youth received more services from adult service providers
- Meetings with case managers and self-determination training predicted long-term employment for youth with SSI
- Significant progress of youth's specific entry level job skills and workplace behaviors
- Increased work-based learning experiences
- Exposure to career assessments

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Increased Youth's Work Attempts and Retention

- Youth engaged in more work attempts after participating in collaborative programs
 - Greater likelihood of obtaining job after school exit
 - Attainment of competitive employment (part- and full-time)
- Higher earning outcomes, job retention, and number of hours worked per week
- Removal of systemic barriers
- Development of practices supporting competitive integrated employment through partners engagement
- Increased likelihood of youth maintaining job
 - Increased youth' ability in completing job tasks more satisfactorily
- Employment outcomes are improved when VR professionals and school staff coordinate school curriculum related decisions

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Facilitated Policy Changes and Policy Climate

- Resulted in development and changes of policy
 - Competitive integrated employment for youth with disabilities
- Changes in government and agencies policies and procedures
 - Enhance programs and services for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)
 - Restructuring Medicaid rate reimbursements to better support youth seeking employment
- Changes in policymakers' attitudes, knowledge, and awareness of employment of youth with disabilities

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Collaborations Supporting Employment Outcomes
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Existing Collaborations

- Project SEARCH
- Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE)
- Partnerships in Employment (PIE)
- California Employment Consortium for Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (CECY)
- Paid Apprenticeship and college for Youth with disabilities (PAY check) Program
- Jobs by 21 Partnership Project
- Indiana School-to-Work Collaborative Transition Model
- New York State Model Transition Program (MTP)
- Guided Group Discovery
- Transitional Workforce Project

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Project SEARCH

- Employer-based education and employment transition program
- Primary partners include VR counselors and businesses
- 9-month job training program
 - Youth with IDD
 - In their last year of high school
- Participate in a 10-to-12-week internship in a community business and daily classroom instruction
- Transition program can also be applied with additional supports
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) supports

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Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE)

- Collaborative effort that promotes positive outcomes for youth with disabilities that receive supplemental security income (SSI) and their families
- Projects in 11 states
- All projects include:
 - Partnerships between state agencies
 - Family outreach, recruitment, and involvement
 - Variety of services
 - Case management, benefits counseling, career and work-based learning experiences, and parent/guardian training and information
- Multi-agency collaborators:
 - Department of Labor
 - Department of Education
 - Department of Health and Human Services
 - Social Security Administration

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Barriers to Collaboration



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Barriers to Collaboration

- Duplication of tasks
- System costs
- Employers and providers attitudes
- Gaps between services

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Duplication of Tasks

- Students, directors, and coordinators associated with a disability services office at a post-secondary institution reported need for service providers to eliminate duplication of efforts
- Thus, calling for better coordination and collaboration among service providers to deliver better services
 - Requires much higher levels of trust
 - Sharing of risks, resources and rewards among partners

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System Costs

- Time demanding
- Ongoing effort needed for relationship building
- Intensive case management services cost too much
 - Key predictor of employment and core feature of PROMISE projects

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Employers and Providers Attitudes

- Employers having concerns regarding:
 - The qualifications of youth with disabilities
 - 33% work being too difficult for youth
 - Business liability
 - Impact on coworkers' performance
- Attitudinal barriers in disability services office staff

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Gaps Between Services

- Shortage of VR professionals and staff members at post-secondary disability services offices
 - Gap between policy and practice at educational institutions
- Parents recognize need for collaboration among various stakeholders in setting transition goals and advocacy for long-term employment success
- Teachers schedule conflicts
 - Unable to meet with service providers outside of school
 - Limited knowledge on transition related services
 - Have too many responsibilities outside of those relating to transition

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Strategies to Develop Collaborations



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Strategies to Develop Collaborations

- Elements and vital characteristics needed in collaborators to effectively accomplish the set goal(s):
 - Build trust and respect
 - Do business differently
 - Having effective structures and processes
- Can be implemented in training curriculums for providers

Adapted from (Henry, Laszlo, & Nicholson, 2015) | More information and materials can be found [here](#)

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Strategies to Develop Collaborations

- Three critical elements for employment-focused collaboration:
 - Addressing employer needs
 - Engaging job developers
 - Strategic innovations

Adapted from (Henry, Laszlo, & Nicholson, 2015) | More information and materials can be found [here](#)

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Strategies to Develop Collaborations

- Collaborative team establish a common mission and goals
 - Incorporation of a leadership entity (e.g., University Center for Excellence in Disability) that can support the team
- Providers coordinate employer outreach and candidate referral through regional account managers to provide an initial point of contact for employers
- Provision of disability and legislation related training to employers, teachers, and university disability services office staff
 - Address disability myths, important legislations, process of provision of accommodations, transition related services, etc.

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Checklist for engaging in collaborations

Steps for engaging in collaboration:

1. Identify specific goals for collaboration
2. Conduct an environmental scan to identify necessary partners and other key stakeholders
3. Conduct outreach to partners
4. Meet with partners and stakeholders to identify mutual goals, tasks, and bonds
5. Identify partner responsibilities
6. Develop timeline of collaborative efforts
7. Identify team meetings for check-ins
8. Implement activities across collaborators

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Conclusion

- This scoping review identified various collaborations that have demonstrated to successfully enhance employment outcomes for transition-aged youth with disabilities.
- About a total of 10 collaborative programs/projects were identified in our search.
- Additionally, barriers to collaboration were identified which included duplication of tasks, system costs, employers and providers attitudes, and gaps in services.
- This study demonstrates the relevance and importance collaboration among service providers in order to better support TAY with disabilities employment outcomes. Findings of this study can then help rehabilitation professionals and service providers develop better strategies in how to improve collaborative efforts.

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Thank you!



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