

## **CEC's DCDT FAST FACTS: Inclusion in General Education**

Prepared by the DCDT Publications Committee

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center has identified evidence-based predictors of post-school success for students with disabilities based on a systematic correlational literature review (Test et al., 2009). Findings indicated that students with disabilities, who participated in academic courses in regular education placements, had high academic skills, and/or were integrated in regular education settings, were more likely to be engaged in post-school education, employment, and independent living (Baer et al., 2003; Blackorby et al., 1993; Halpern et al., 1995; Heal & Rusch, 1994; 1995; Leonard et al., 1999; White & Weiner, 2004). Recently, Rowe et al. (2013) conducted a Delphi study to add specificity to the existing predictor definitions identified by Test et al. (2009) and operationally defined the predictors so local educators understand the components necessary to develop, implement, and evaluate secondary transition programs based on predictor research.

Inclusion in general education has been operationally defined as providing “students with disabilities access to the general curriculum and be engaged in regular education classes with peers without disabilities” (Rowe et al., 2013).

Inclusion in general education should include the following essential program characteristics as identified by Rowe et al., 2013:

- Provide administrative support (e.g., professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals, common planning, providing paraprofessionals) to teachers for students with disabilities included in general education classrooms.
- Provide specific instruction to support students with disabilities who are included in general education (e.g., differentiated instruction, learning strategies, study skills, organizational skills, personal management skills).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive programming by using formative assessment to identify when adjustments are needed to accommodate all students’ learning differences (e.g., pace, communication skills).
- Develop a receptive school atmosphere for including students with disabilities in general education by educating administrators, teachers, other staff, and students about person-first language and disability rights.
- Observe and assess integrated environment to identify and provide interventions for needed academic, social, behavior, and communication skills to ensure a conducive learning environment for all students.
- Use diverse instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of all students including universal design for learning, technology, and linking instruction to student interests.
- Provide professional development for secondary personnel to ensure personnel are qualified to use universal design for learning and evidence-based instructional strategies.
- Engage students as active participants in general education instructional processes utilizing multiple models of inclusive learning.



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## **Application to Teachers**

- Evaluate inclusion in general education experience for students to ensure essential program characteristics are included.
- Special and general educators must integrate transition goals and skills with common core standards, and vice versa, to ensure students' post-school goals are attainable.
- Expect success; partner with colleagues to develop inclusive programming for individual students in their least restrictive environment.
- Use program evaluation and action research strategies to systematically identify and remove barriers to inclusive programming at the classroom and school levels.
- Learn effective inclusive programming strategies by reading professional journals, attending professional development opportunities, and talking with colleagues who successfully developed integrated and inclusive programs.
- Explore a variety of technologies that enable students with varying abilities to be successful in the regular education classroom; for example, using calendaring 'Apps' to connect students, families, and teachers of assignments and important dates.
- Ensure students have access to general education settings as a first option for least restrictive environment
- Be sure accommodations and modifications are sufficiently provided to ensure students with disabilities succeed in inclusive settings.

## **Application to Administrators**

- Use the Predictor Self-Assessment to evaluate inclusion in general education located here:  
[http://psocenter.org/content\\_page\\_assets/content\\_page\\_3/Predictor\\_Self-Assessment.final\\_06\\_24\\_13.pdf](http://psocenter.org/content_page_assets/content_page_3/Predictor_Self-Assessment.final_06_24_13.pdf)
- Create a supportive, inclusive school environment where all students are welcomed, valued, and educated by highlighting a variety of student accomplishments in the arts, personal character, behavior, social skills, as well as sports and academics through school newsletters, posters, and the school's website.
- Provided research-based professional development to general and special educators on the importance of, and implementation strategies for, including students with disabilities in the general curriculum.
- Encourage and support collaboration between general and special educators by celebrating successes and problem-solving difficulties.
- Provide resources to support inclusion by building or strengthening parent volunteer programs, peer-to-peer learning programs, and hiring support staff that are highly qualified.
- Provide professional development opportunities to general and special educators to learn strategies needed to support children with disabilities in all aspects of the school community.
- Ensure students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum regardless of class placement

- Create an environment that is accepting to students from diverse backgrounds

### **Application to Families**

- Ask *how*, not *if*, your child will be included in the general curriculum.
- Share with school personnel strategies that help your child be successful in a variety of settings; for example, ways to make transitions within class easier, or time management strategies.
- Schedule regular check-ins with all teachers and support staff to see how things are going in inclusive settings.

### **Where to go for Additional Information**

#### **Websites**

#### **National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center Students w/ Disabilities and College/Career Readiness: 101 Documents**

- <http://nstattac.org/content/students-w-disabilities-and-collegecareer-readiness-101-documents>
  - College and Career Ready Standards and Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: 101
  - High School Redesign and Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: 101
  - Tiered Interventions and Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: 101
  - Universal Design for Learning and Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: 101

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (2009). *Predictors of Post-School Success*.

- <http://www.nstattac.org/content/predictor-resources>

#### **Books, Newsletters, and Research Articles**

- Halpern, A.S., Yovanoff, P., Doren, B. & Benz, M.R. (1995) Predicting participation in postsecondary education for school leavers with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 62, 151-164.
- Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D., Fowler, C., Kellems, R., & Test, D. W. (2013). *Operationalizing evidence-based predictors in secondary transition: A Delphi study*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L. J., & Kohler, P. H. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 160-181.
- White, J., & Weiner, J. S. (2004). Influence of least restrictive environment



and community based training on integrated employment outcomes for transitioning students with severe disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 21, 149-156.

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