



CEC's DCDT FAST FACTS: Interagency Collaboration

Prepared by the DCDT Publications Committee

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) 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 indicate that students with disabilities, who receive services from community service providers while in high school, are more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and education experiences (Bullis et al., 1995; Repetto, Webb, Garvan, & Washington, 2002). Recently, Rowe et al. (2014) 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.

Interagency collaboration has been operationally defined as “a clear, purposeful, and carefully designed process that promotes cross agency, cross program, and cross disciplinary collaborative efforts leading to tangible transition outcomes for youth” (Rowe et al., 2014, p. 10).

Interagency collaboration includes the following essential program characteristics identified by Rowe et al. (2014):

- Develop a wide reaching state interagency team that includes disability related and non-disability related agencies (e.g., Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor, Social Security Administration) with a common interest in transition service delivery.
- Develop and implement formal and informal agreements between agencies responsible for delivering transition services.
- Develop an agreed upon vision and mission of transition services and programs.
- Develop an organizational structure that includes a process for identifying membership (e.g., criteria for membership), terms of services, procedures for replacing members, orientation for new members, and web-based and print membership directories.
- Coordinate the development of policies and procedures for service delivery and sharing resources by both school and community agencies.
- Implement a state-wide plan that (1) addresses gaps, (2) includes strategies for blending and braiding funding of other resources, (3) streamlines the transition process, and (4) eliminates duplication of service delivery.
- Conduct asset/resource mapping to identify all community agencies that support youth with disabilities in the area, as well as gaps in service delivery.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of each organization as part of the interagency agreement.
- Schedule regular times for planning, developing, and measuring the progress and effectiveness of implementing a shared transition service delivery system at all levels (e.g., individual student, school, local, region, state, and nation).
- Develop procedures for shared problem-solving to address needs of students with disabilities and the barriers they may face during transition process.



- Develop procedures for school staff to have systematic way to include students, families, community members, and agencies at different levels of the transition process (e.g., when to invite to IEP meetings, when to refer families to meet with agency, when to provide information sheet to family).
- Establish multiple methods of communication and information sharing across agencies.
- Provide cross-discipline professional development opportunities for all members of interagency council to ensure members are knowledgeable about services and eligibility criteria.

Application to Teachers

- Promote active involvement of families, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, throughout the transition decision-making and implementation processes.
- Communicate with employers and other professionals to develop and monitor natural support networks.
- Disseminate transition information and resources to stakeholders.
- Implement student and family referrals to postsecondary and community services.
- Participate in individual, school, community, and state-level transition teams.
- Raise awareness of existing transition programs and services at school events attended by parents of students with disabilities.

Application to Administrators

- Participate in individual, school, community, and state-level transition teams.
- Coordinate interagency agreements and partnerships to use and share data to achieve postsecondary outcomes.
- Ensure compliance with federal and state policies affecting transition (e.g., Fair Labor Standards Act).
- Raise awareness of existing transition programs and services at school events attended by parents of students with disabilities.
- Identify family members of youth with disabilities in direct or indirect contact with your organization that would consider participating in a stakeholder group.
- Identify ways to encourage participation in school, community, and/or state-level teams (e.g., consider when and where meetings will be held; identify ways to provide stipends to cover childcare or transportation expenses; send a personal invitation to potential committee members).

Application to Families

- Participate in individual, school, community, and state-level transition teams.
- Learn about opportunities for families and other stakeholders to provide input and feedback on transition planning and instruction.



- Encourage your state to hold public events to present transition data and provide stakeholders with opportunities to discuss ways to improve transition policies/practices. Offer to help plan such activities for parent audiences.
- Volunteer for ad hoc committees related to the state's secondary transition initiative, implementation, and evaluation.

Where to go for Additional Information

Websites/Webinars

- Communicating Interagency Relationships and Collaborative Linkages for Exceptional Students (CIRCLES)
 - <http://circles.uncc.edu/>
- Interagency Collaboration Annotated Bibliography
 - <http://nstattac.org/content/interagency-collaboration-annotated-bibliography>
- Deciding when Enough Collaboration is Enough: Measuring Collaboration for Understanding and Improvement (Webinar)
 - <http://measuringcollaboration.events.tadnet.org/pages/782>

Books, Newsletters, and Research Articles

- Bullis, M., Davis, C., Bull, B., & Johnson, B. (1995). Transition achievement among young adults with deafness: What variables relate to success? *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 39, 130-150.
- Noonan, P. (2014). *Transition teaming: 26 strategies for interagency collaboration*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- Repetto, J. B., Webb, K. W., Garvan, C. W., & Washington, T. (2002). Connecting student outcomes with transition practices in Florida. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 25, 123–139.
- Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D., Fowler, C., Kellems, R., & Test, D. W. (2014). A Delphi study to operationalize evidence-based predictors in secondary transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/2165143414526429
- 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.

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