Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

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Current State of Postsecondary Education Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Postsecondary Options in the US

- 149 currently listed in the ThinkCollege Programs Database
- In 37 states
- Countless individuals accessing typical services

The Vision

- Social connections with family and friends
- Living as independently as possible
- Paid employment in an integrated community setting with appropriate supports
- Connected to adult support systems
- Increased independence & responsibility
- Access to postsecondary education or adult learning
New Federal Initiatives

- The Higher Education Opportunity Act Amendments 2008-Allows students with ID, attending postsecondary programs to be eligible for Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and the Federal Work-Study Program. (IHE’s need to apply)


- The National Consortium of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities to Enhance Postsecondary Education for Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities-5 year Project by ICI/UMASS Boston with UCEDD Partners nationwide.

New Federal Initiatives

- Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID): Federal money through OPE was awarded to 27 IHE’s or IHE consortia to create or expand inclusive PSE experiences for SWID

- National Coordinating Center: ICI at UMASS-Boston was awarded money to support these TPSID awardees, developing standards, best practices and evaluation systems

Current Forms of Access

- Dual enrollment (18-21)

- Full or Part-time access to existing PSE options

- Full or part-time enrollment in special program sponsored by IHE or agency

Focus of Services

- Course Access

- Independent Living

- EMPLOYMENT

- Community/Social Access

General Outcomes
• 30% of people with disabilities report being employed full or part-time, compared to 70% of those who do not have disabilities (NOD/Harris, 2004)

• Youth with MR exiting high school are the only disability category not experiencing an increase in earnings above minimum wage (NLTS2, 2004)

• 34% of individuals with disabilities say they are satisfied with life, compared to 61% of individuals without disabilities

The Importance of Employment

• For youth with disabilities, one of the most important research findings shows that work experience during high school helps them get jobs at higher wages after they graduate. NCWD/Youth, Hot topic: Work-Based Learning, 2003 Volume 2

• Secondary school students with disabilities who worked for pay outside the home in the preceding year before exit and/or have participated in a work-study program at school, have an increased chance for employment in their post school years. Changes over time in the Early Postschool Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities: A Report of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the NLTS2.

NLTS2

Employment of Youth with Intellectual Disabilities in their last year of Secondary School:

• 50.9% earned less than $5.15 per hour
• Only 15.2% earned over $7.00 per hour
• 43.8% worked 5 hours per week or less
• Only 17.6% worked 15-20 hours per week

NLTS2 Wave 3 (2005) Parent/Youth Survey

NLTS2

Employment of Youth with Intellectual Disabilities in their last year of Secondary School:

• 17.6% work in janitorial or maintenance jobs
• 0% worked in clerical/computer jobs
• 23% worked in food service
Impact of Postsecondary Education on Employment for Students with ID

Data from the national vocational rehabilitation database (RSA 911) show that youth with ID who participated in postsecondary education were 26% more likely to leave vocational rehabilitation services with a paid job and earn a 73% higher weekly income.


PSE CAN Increase Employment

Review of RSA 911 data (from VR) showed:

- Of Youth with ID who did not receive PSE services, 32% acquired paid work at $195 per week on average
- Of Youth with ID who DID receive PSE services, 48% acquired paid jobs at $316 per week on average
- Of Youth with ID who, after PSE service attained a higher level of education, 58% acquired paid jobs at $338 per week on average


Promising Practices in Post Secondary Education

HANDOUT –
Postsecondary Education Services for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Case Study Research

The PERC Project in Maryland and Connecticut
The PERC Project

The purpose of the PERC Project is to demonstrate and research exemplary practices supporting students with intellectual disabilities ages 18-21 in postsecondary settings.

Mixed or Hybrid Model

Program Center and Coordinator

- Dual Enrollment
- EMPLOYMENT (defined as competitive, community-based, employer paid - at least minimum wage)
- Course access
- Individualized planning and support

PERC Data

- Project 2005-2010
- 2 States
- 3 School Systems
- 5 Program Sites
- 36 High Schools
- 112 students

Data in Maryland and Connecticut:

5-year research study of 5 PSE Programs

- 91 of 112 students were employed in 122 different paid jobs during their PSE program
- After exit, 83% of students in CT and 72% of students in MD were engaged in paid work
- Variables that contributed:
  - Expectation of work
  - Trained job developers w/dedicated time
Flexible staff scheduling

Person-centered career discovery


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**Percentage of PERC Students Working**

Percentage of Students Employed Total of All Sites by Year

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**Average Hourly Wages and Hours worked for PERC Students**

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**Percent PERC Students exiting with Paid Job**

National Longitudinal Transition Study, Wave 2 and 3 of Parent and Student Interviews in 2003 and 2005

Types of Jobs of PERC Students Compared to Commonly Held Jobs

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**PERC Students Taking College Classes**

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**PERC Students’ Plans for Further Education**

Percent of PERC Students Intending to Take More courses

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**PERC Students Exiting to Adult Service Providers**

Percent of PERC Students Exiting with CRP:

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**Discussion Points**
• PERC Students work more hours
• PERC Students make more money
• 22.5% of PERC Students worked in retail sales, compared to 2% NLTS2 data
• Only 2.9% of PERC Students worked in cleaning jobs, compared to 8 & 16% in NLTS2 data
• 11.6% of PERC Students worked in clerical jobs, compared to 4 & 6% in NLTS2 data

NLTS2 Wave 3 (2005) Parent/Youth Survey

Critical Elements

• Connecting college experience with employment
• Providing access to college coursework
• Connecting the experience to real outcomes

Employment Success

• Paid work is the goal from day one
• Hire dedicated, trained staff person for job development
• Practice customized employment strategies where appropriate
• Include in job description specific duties and flex time
• Ensure that students understand and can communicate their support needs.

Person Centered Planning

• Student-driven goals
• Careers based on student interests, strengths and support needs
• Students monitor own progress
• Eliminate barriers to desired experiences
• Help students connect achievement in college with adult outcomes
• Plans change! Allow room for that change and adjust future plans
Positive Outcomes for Students

- Ability to access adult learning opportunities
- Expanded social networks
- Opportunity to connect learning to personal desired outcome
- Individualized and Enhanced Employment outcomes
- Socially valued roles and experience

Positive Outcomes for IHE’s

- Mission of Diversity
- Enhanced collaborations
- Increased revenue
- Student Opportunities
- Opportunities for faculty and staff
- Funding opportunities

PERC Postsecondary Program Evaluation Tool

A Self-Assessment for College and Community-Based Services

Scores in categories; produces Action Plans

- Program Planning
- Staffing
- Administration
- Student Planning
- Student Activities (courses, employment)
- Self-Determination
- Interagency Collaboration
- Monitoring
Evaluation

www.thinkcollege.net

www.transitiontocollege.net

Just Out!

- Think College! Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities by Meg Grigal and Debra Hart

Additional Books


Going to College - Getzel & Wehman (2005)

http://www.brookespublishing.com/

Comments & Questions

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THANK YOU!

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