



Families Ability to Support Their Youth With Disabilities in Preparing for Post-School Transitions: Strategies and Challenges

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Background

- ▶ In the United States, the federal government estimates that only 20% of adults with disabilities are currently participating in the labor market compared to 68% of adults without disabilities (ODEP, 2014).

	Labor Force Participation	Unemployment Rate
People with Disabilities	19.3%	12.9%
People without Disabilities	69.3%	6.1%

- ▶ Young people with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be unemployed, twice as likely to drop out of school, and twice as likely to attend a postsecondary school, as compared to their peers without disabilities (National Organization on Disability, 2004; Power, Geenen, & Powers, 2009). **Caroline helps this**

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to learn about the ways in which parents conceptualize career development for their children with disabilities. Ultimately, the results of the study will assist parents to serve as strong advocates for their child and understand the ways in which they can be actively involved in transition planning.

Research Methods

- ▶ Modified grounded theory
- ▶ Semi-structured interview
30-60 minute face-to-face interview

Add

Participants

7 family members (N = 7)

Participant	Relationships	Gender of the child	Ages	Disability
1	Mother	Girl	20, 19, 17	NVLD and other disabilities
2	Mother	Boy	20	Cerebral Palsy
3	Mother	Boy	15	Autism
4	Adoptive father	Boy	14	Language based learning disability
5	Father	Boy	20	Autism
6	Mother	Girl	19	Down Syndrome
7	Mother	Girl	15	Dual diagnosis

Data Analysis

- ▶ Five researchers independently coded and met to create a unified list of codes
- ▶ Codes were then grouped into six domains and sub-categories

Results

Parents identified these six categories as influential factors in their child's career development across all seven interviews

Parents

- Personal characteristics/ experiences
- Knowledge of the child
- Knowledge of rights/resources
- Expectations
- Beliefs of career development
- Challenges/ concerns
- Perceptions of/and involvement in school/transition
- Perceptions of and involvement in outside services/ society
- Parent advocacy/ parent driven research

Students with disabilities

- Self advocacy
- Importance of fit
- Involvement in career exploration
- Self awareness/self-expectations
- Personal characteristics
- Transition skill development
- School transition support
- Outside transition support
- Career development challenges

School

- School-based transition services
- School-based career development services
- School academic support
- Role of school personnel
- Divergent school/ parent perspectives & conflict
- Outplacement
- School environment
- School-community collaboration
- School Challenges

Outside Agencies

- Networking
- Agency Services & Support
- Non-agency support
- Services eligibility and availability
- Importance of fit
- Challenges & concerns
- Collaboration

Society

- Social awareness of career development
- Role of policy & government
- Transition challenges
- Resource challenges
- Support network for transition & employment

Transition Process

- Transition driver
- Programs offered by school
- Programs offered by outside agencies
- Effectiveness of transition services
- Transition challenges inside and outside school
- Transition activities students involved in the past

Results

- ▶ A number of influential factors play roles in shaping the career development process for youth with disabilities
- ▶ Our domains reflect that the variety of important factors: parents, schools, outside agencies, society, and students themselves
- ▶ These sources of influence are multidirectional and interactive
- ▶ Parents conceptualize career development as a social ecology in which their children are the of the systemic levels

Examples For Parent Domain

Parent Advocacy

“I think some ways that might be easier as parent it would be very sad but easier if I thought he couldn't learn, I mean I would be sad, but I could just give up. But I can't give up because I know that he can learn and he will learn. You know, I need to advocate for him to learn at the rate and level of complexity that is possible at any given time”

Parent-driven research

“I don't know how to say it.. the legitimacy of services that are available.. You have to see like what somebody's offering and then really research it and see its successful”

Examples For Parent Domain

Involvement in the Disability Community

“You know there are families um.. listsev, that's how I found this opportunities. But there is you know, um.... the Arc Mass where they collaborate with everyone. Um...you know, as a parent you just need to make sure that you're signing up for information. Um... and the provider, the family support provider agencies, which is under the state agency the department of developmental services DDS, provider agencies also share with families. So, um..., just, there are various ways of getting information. Newsletters, there is no reason why families shouldn't be able to get information, but the networking, when your networking is strong, then you know, that right there is a plus.”

“You know I feel very very ignorant about the reality in the world for people with intellectual disabilities. I don't know anyone beside my son in my family who has intellectual disabilities. I don't know anyone..”

Discussion

- ▶ Need for expertise in both areas of vocational development AND special education

“Because you know they fill out all these things, they take all these surveys, and that’s really, that’s fine but they really need to get their hands in and see what these things are like, job shadows or I mean Sarah would’ve never known um about the animal research thing (smiling) if she had not been in there and had that happen and I didn’t...I guess in my mind I didn’t realize that it was um a team sort of environment doing research and that really wasn’t a good fit for her, she was just thinking of working with animals so you know it really was never discussed with us. “

References

ODEP. (2014, June). *United States Department of Labor*. Retrieved July 5, 2014, from Office of Disability Employment Policy: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>

Collaborators

