

Secondary Transition Programing: For Young Adults with Autism



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Are Current Secondary Transition Programs Effective?

CT CORE Standards...

The CT CORE Standards for Secondary Transition Programming provide a brief list of loosely outline skill-sets that individuals who participate in secondary transition program should acquire to the maximum extent possible.



Among the standards on this list are:



- Participating PPT Meetings
- Access and use community resources
- Demonstrate skills related to college and career readiness
- Development of social skills
- Develop self-determination skills
- Demonstrate self-care skills (physical, mental)
- Describe their rights and responsibility under IDEA

Literature Review:

Peer Reviewed Articles:

Overarching themes...

- Acquisition of more abstract concepts such the self-actualization skill set similar to individuals with intellectual disabilities - if not more so
- Instruction needs to be different and more intentional for this population
 - A need for increased efficacy in the promoting self-determination



Transition Programing in the Context of Autism:

Self-Determination Skills:

a combination of skills, knowledge and beliefs that enables a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one's strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective is essential to self-determination.



Individuals on the Autism Spectrum:



Autism Cognitive Areas of Deficit:

- Theory of Mind - mind blindness
- Central Coherence - integration of sensory information to form concepts
- Executive Function - organization, working memory, self-management, and more

Recent studies show that individuals with autism are as impaired in the area of developing self-determination skill as an individual with an intellectual disability is, if not more so.

Parent Interviews:

Both parents had similar experiences: Young adult child exited the public school system not being fully equipped to hand adult life.



- Instruction not always at an appropriate level
- Lack of flexible programing to meet individual needs
- Lacked needed skills after completion of program



Common Issues

- Instruction not always appropriate level
- One-size fits all programing - lack of flexible programing to meet individual needs
- Lacked needed skills for entering adult work and postsecondary world

Outcomes:

- Years spent in isolation - affects self-esteem
- Increased likelihood of not progressing - not obtaining employment, not being independent
- Not reaching point of self-actualization

Community Stakeholder Interviews:

Interviewed 4 Community Stakeholder; all from the organization my school is part of.

- Co-founders: committed to improving life of young adults with autism - development of group homes, advocating for improvement in state funding and programing
- Support Service Coordinator: oversees support services for the young adults in groups homes
- Transition Coordinator: runs Transition Program at the Fresh Start School



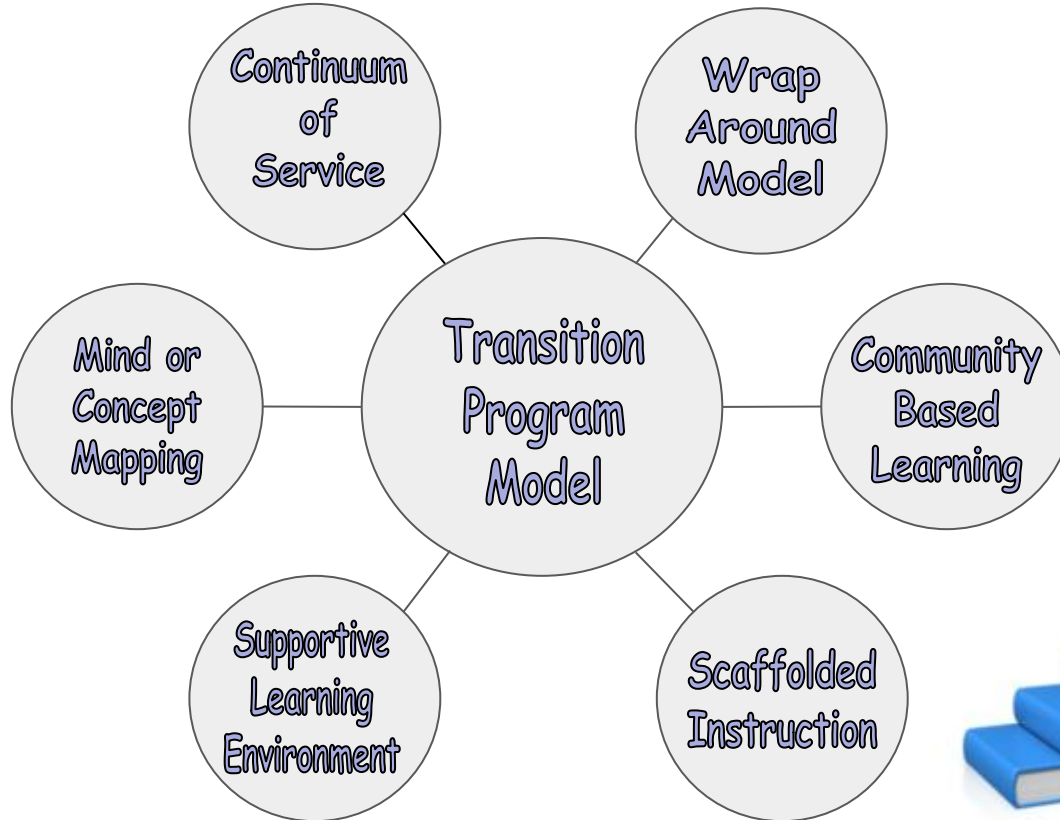
Common Issues

- CT CORE Standards:
 - Better defined
 - Trajectory that evolves over time
- Improved Programing:
 - Wrap-around services
 - Involvement in community
 - Involvement of family

Outcomes:

- Better defined standards:
 - Leads to better developed programing
 - Trajectory can then have a vertical alignment from year to year
- Wrap-around programing:
 - Increases generalization of skills
 - Involvement in community - practice in using taught skills in different environments
 - Involvement of family - increases use of common language

Optimal Transition Program Model for Autism



References:

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