Considerations in Transition Preparation for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Caroline I. Magyar, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor & Director  
Rochester Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Learning Objectives

• Increase understanding of …
  – considerations in transition planning and preparation practices for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Transition Planning

• Refers to a coordinated set of activities.
  – Results oriented.
  – Student and family focused.
  – Collaborative.
Transition Planning

• Transition planning and preparation are instrumental to improving outcomes in the areas of…
  – Post-secondary Education
  – Employment
  – Independent Living
• Best outcomes require…
  – participation in the planning & preparation process.
  – opportunity to learn and apply needed skills.

Transition Planning

• The nature of ASD can affect both participation and opportunity.
  
• Therefore, students with ASD are likely to require enhanced transition planning and preparation to improve outcomes.

Transition Age Students with ASD

Understanding Adolescent Development in Students with ASD
Adolescent Development

- Adolescence is a period of rapid brain development.
  - Physical.
  - Cognitive.
  - Emotional.
  - Social.
- Also marked by changing **expectations**.
  - Increased independence and autonomy.

Adolescents with ASD

- ASD is a *neurodevelopmental* disorder….
  - Atypical development in multiple areas….
  - May see uneven development throughout the adolescent age range.
- High rate of co-occurring conditions.
  - Emotional (mental health) and behavioral.
  - Medical conditions.
  - Sleep and eating.

Adolescents with ASD

- Delays/impairments and co-occurring conditions can affect the development of….
  - Self-awareness
    - Self Determination & Self Advocacy
  - Self-management
    - Independent Living Skills
- ASD features may limit the number of opportunities to learn and practice important life skills.
Adolescents with ASD

ARE THEY DEVELOPMENTALLY READY FOR TRANSITION?

POST SECONDARY & TRANSITION PLANNING OUTCOMES

Post-Secondary Outcomes

- Poor outcomes compared to other disability groups.
  - Un-or-under-employed.
  - Job instability.
  - Low wages.
  - Less likely to complete college.
Transition Practices Outcome

- Examination of transition practices in ASD finds….
  - Students may not be actively engaged in the transition planning process.
  - Parents may not be actively engaged in the transition planning process.

Transition Practices Outcomes

- Transition professionals may not be knowledgeable of more effective transition practices in ASD.
  - Teaching participation skills so student can participate in his/her planning meetings.
  - Dedicated transition planning meetings.
  - Linking transition goals to IEP goals/learning objectives etc.
  - Implementing transition preparation activities using effective instructional methods.

Transition Practices Outcomes

- Transition teams may not include representation from post-secondary settings.
- May not be aware of resources/partners needed for transition planning.
  - College representation.
  - Recruitment and disability services.
  - Adult agency.
  - Residential.
  - Community integration.
  - Vocational training.
Transition Practices Outcomes

- Transition teams may not include representation from post-secondary settings.
  - State-supported post-secondary disability programs.
    » ACCES-VR.
  - Business representation.
    » Employment/workforce agencies.
    » Human resource representation.

Transition Practices Outcomes

- Parents may not see value in their child's transition planning process.
  - May not receive education about the process.
  - Transition personnel may not facilitate a collaborative relationship.
  - May not be connected with needed transition resources.
    - Needed resources may not be recommended because transition teams not familiar.
    - Needed resources may not be available in the community.

Implications

- Current transition planning models may not be effective due to these various factors.

- Therefore, need to consider enhancing and/or modifying transition planning practices to improve outcomes.
Considerations in Transition Planning in ASD

Considerations

• Transition planning should improve student outcomes in...
  – Post-secondary Education.
  – Employment.
  – Independent Living.

• Transition planning should assist in reducing barriers to participation & increase opportunities for learning and applying skills.

Considerations

• Begin Early.
  – Maximize participation in planning.
    • Student, parent, community representatives.
  – Maximize opportunity for learning needed skills, across settings/contexts.

• Assessment.
  – Assessment of student & context.
    • Identify areas where student requires training to meet contextual expectations.
Considerations

• Develop Preparation Plan.
  – Identify skills needed.
    • ASD, co-occurring & post-secondary areas.
  – Select curriculums and evidence-based instructional methods.
  – Identify personnel/collaborators
    • Define roles and responsibilities.
  – Detail preparation activities.
    • Person, place, time etc.
  – Ensure alignment with IEP.
    • Course of study.

Considerations

• Provide parent education & professional development.
  – Roles and responsibilities.
  – Creating opportunities for learning.
  – Strategies and methods used.
  – Identifying and accessing needed resources.
  – Collaborative planning and problem-solving
Considerations

- Implement and Evaluate Plan.
  - Instruct in typical environments (where possible).
  - Multiple skills and opportunities.
- Routine progress monitoring.
  - Regular team meetings for...
  - Evaluation of progress and on-going planning.
  - Problem-solving learning difficulties and plan implementation difficulties.
- Revise plan as needed.

Transition Planning

For Students with ASD

PREPLANNING
Pre-Planning

- Pre-planning meetings are needed to prepare student (and parent) for the formal planning meetings.
  - Increase student and parent participation.
    - Individual meetings with student and parent.
      - Purpose of transition planning.
      - Format of meetings.
      - Roles & responsibilities.
    - Use Social Story (Stories) to assist with increasing understanding and participation.
- Individual meetings with student and parent.
  - Purpose of transition planning.
  - Format of meetings.
  - Roles & responsibilities.
- Use Social Story (Stories) to assist with increasing understanding and participation.

Pre-Planning

- Pre-planning meetings are needed to prepare student (and parent) for the formal planning meetings.
  - Interview student for general interests/preferences.
    - Visual representation (Choice Board).
    - Communication scripts to bring to formal Transition Planning meetings.

Pre-Planning

- Draft an initial Transition Plan.
  - Potential preparation activities.
    - Resources.
    - Collaborators.
  - Visual supports.
    - Transition Plan & Communication Scripts.
    - Choice Board.
  - Identify Transition meeting accommodations.
    - Sensory supports.
    - Format (frequency, number of people, duration, location, etc.)
Pre-Planning
- Preparing for the formal Transition Planning meeting.
  - Student
    - Social Skill Story.
    - Social/communication scripts.
    - Exposure to meeting room and people.
    - Rehearsal.
    - Reinforcement system for participation.
  - Personnel
    - Communicate the format that is best for student participation.

THE TRANSITION PLAN

Transition Plan
- Transition Plan should detail....
  - Student goals for each post-secondary area.
    - Post-secondary Education
    - Employment
    - Independent Living
  - Skills needed to achieve goals.
    - Interventions for skills.
      - Curriculum and instructional methods.
      - Instructional supports and accommodations.
  - Preparation plan for maximizing opportunity for learning and using skills.
    - Intervention methods and support strategies
Transition Plan

• Transition Plan should detail….
  – Roles and responsibilities.
    • Student.
    • Parents.
    • School Personnel.
    • Collaborators.
  – Professional development needed.
  – Parent education and/or training needed.
  – Resources needed.

Transition Plan

• Transition Plan should detail….
  – Progress monitoring plan.
    • Team meetings-planning and problem-solving.
      – On-going assessment: Data-based decision making.
    • Revisions to plan.
    • Follow-up for additional resources.

THE PREPARATION PLAN:
SKILLS TRAINING
Transition Preparation

- Skills training needed on…
  - ASD related skill areas.
  - Co-occurring conditions skill areas (if applicable).
  - Post-secondary goal areas.

Transition Preparation

- ASD and co-occurring conditions…
  - Functional Communication.
  - Social Interaction.
  - Behavior Regulation.
    - Repetitive Behavior/circumscribed interests.
    - Disruptive behavior problems/disorders.
  - Emotional Regulation.
    - Anxiety
    - Depression
    - Adjustment reactions

Transition Preparation

- Multiple strategies can be used for skills training…
  - Functional communication training.
    - Direct instruction
    - Joint Action Routines.
    - Incidental teaching methods.
    - Communication scripts, AAC.
  - Social skills and interaction training.
    - Direct instruction.
    - Social stories and social scripts.
    - Peer modeling and networks.
Transition Preparation

- Multiple strategies can be used for skills training…
  - Behavior Regulation training.
    - Contingency management.
    - Other reinforcement systems.
  - Emotion Regulation training.
    - Coping skills training and scripts.
    - Problem-solving training and social autopsies.
  - Train across settings/context.

Transition Preparation

- Post-secondary education.
  - College/Technical School skills.
    - Entrance/selection.
    - Self-advocacy.
      - Disclosing disability and accessing supports/accommodations.
    - Study skills.
    - Self-management of workload.
      - Organization and time management.
    - Independent living skills.

Transition Preparation

- Employment.
  - Career selection.
  - Job interview and acceptance procedures.
  - Self-advocacy for accommodations.
  - Job specific skills.
  - Social-communication skills.
  - Emotional-Behavior regulation skills.
Transition Preparation

• **Independent Living.**
  – Personal care.
  – Domestic skills.
  – Consumer behavior.
  – Community integration.
    • Including travel training.
    • Recreation and leisure.

  ** need to reduce ‘screen’ time

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Transition Preparation

• **Independent Living.**
  • Money management.
  • Safety skills.
    – Physical.
    – Media.
  • Sexuality/Intimate social relationships.
    – Dating.

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Transition Preparation

• Multiple **strategies** can be used for skills training…
  – Direct instruction
  – Task analysis & Activity schedules
  – Coaching
  – Social Stories & Social Skill Stories
  – Verbal & Social Scripts
  – Reinforcement system to improve motivation and learning.

• Train across settings/contexts.
• Consider assistive technology.
Select Resources

Resources

• New York State Education Department
  – Transition Regulations:
  – This is the link to the NYS Education Department’s Transition Requirements & Guidelines for students classified with a disability.
  – Contains wide variety of resources.

• Autism Speaks
  – Multiple resources including a Transition Toolkit, Visual Supports, & an Autism Apps listing.
    • [http://www.autismspeaks.org/](http://www.autismspeaks.org/)

• Organization for Autism Research
  – Multiple resources including a Guide to Transition (search site for Transition Guide).
Resources

• Geneva Center
  – Various tip sheets for visual supports and choice board (see Resources Tab and select Visual Aids Gallery or use 2nd link listed below).
    • http://www.autism.net/
    • http://visuals.autism.net/visuals/main.php

Resources

• Rochester Regional Center for Autism
  – See Community Education & Technical Assistance Activities tab for …
    • Information Sheet on Transition.
    • Training DVDs for Daily Visual Schedules & Direct Instruction for Social Skills.
    • Various links to other resources.