Transition: Facing the challenges of achieving independence after completing a secondary education

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Barriers to Graduation

• Failure to achieve a diploma.
• Unprepared for continuing education, employment, or independence.
• Lack of vocational resources available to students with disabilities to become employable and self empowered.
• Drop out rate disproportionate to students without disabilities.
Costs associated with non completion of a secondary education

- Unemployment
- Underemployment
- Higher rates of incarceration
- Possible loss of monetary benefits
- Reliance on social service programs for food, clothing shelter, and health care.
- Costs will extend to the community when reliance for monetary support falls on the county tax base.
An introduction to “Transition” services as defined as by the state education system

• Dropout prevention was a critical issue for State Education Agencies

• To address dropout prevention effectively, schools and states realize the need to assess the magnitude of the problem

• The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) enacted to address a consistent evaluation of dropout prevention.
IDEA (2004) evaluation methods

• Now incumbent on states to track percentage of Students with Disabilities (SWD) who drop out compared to nondisabled peers who drop out.
• Under the law, states must identify improved dropout rate targets and oversee performance of each local educational agency (LEA) towards meeting this goal.
• The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs use data to evaluate state’s performance in the area of dropout rates.
Challenges facing IDEA (2004) methodology

• Definition of “dropping out” may vary from state to state
• Some special education students are excluded from dropout rate calculations
• Greatest challenge is the capacity of the state to use the data collected for alternate program planning for educational improvement.
Need for Transition resources for SWD for career development

• Transition services are defined as “a coordinated set of activities” and implies collaboration between schools and diverse agencies

• Transition is a “results oriented process” and should result in improved like skills such as working, employment, post secondary education, community living and participation, and recreation and leisure activities.
Effective Transition Planning should include:

- Students should develop self determination
- Students self evaluation is emphasized
- Post-school outcomes or goals should be consistent with the self evaluations
- Students should select educational experiences to fit the desired transition outcomes.
Delivery of Transition Services

• Program should be based on student’s interests, preferences, or skills while looking to the future
• Inclusion in general school programs is emphasized
• Community-based programs are emphasized as learning environments
• Vocational linkages should be promoted as needed
Targeted goals of the Transition program – See handout

• Needs should be assessed at age 14 to 16
• Students will develop their own goals
• Students will attain knowledge of their own abilities and interests
• Students will be able to realize their goals through information and referral, independent living skills, peer counseling, vocational and post secondary education opportunities.