

Section II: Transition Services

Content and Activities that Build Students' Skills

Under IDEA Transition Services are meant to provide coordinated experiences and skill development that prepare students for success in postsecondary education or training, a career of their choice and participation in their community. Once the IEP team begins to include transition services in the IEP the purpose of planning shifts from simply developing annual goals to now including post school goals. These goals are developed to facilitate the movement from school to post school activities including postsecondary education, integrated employment and independent living. Activities necessary to achieve the student's post secondary goals will occur both in the school and community. The opportunity for students to participate in pre-employment transition services offered in collaboration with vocational rehabilitation will provide greater access to experiences that lead to the outcome of CIE that reflects a student's strengths, preferences, and interests.

Transition services are best delivered in a framework where there is coordination between education and VR that actively involve the student and family and are focused on the outcome of CIE. The following transition services can assist in preparing the student for CIE.

1. Job Exploration Counseling

Job Exploration Counseling, or Career counseling/ guidance includes a wide variety of activities which help students explore career options and opportunities available. Job exploring options are intended to foster motivation, consideration of opportunities and informed decision-making. Specific to students, real-world activities ensure that students recognize the relevance of a high school and post-school education to their futures, both in college and/or the workplace. Job exploration activities can be provided in conjunction with private, for-profit, public or nonprofit businesses in your community and/or through web-based resources.

Job exploration and career development activities should be individualized and give students an opportunity to be exposed to a number of different experience to assist them in making informed decisions on careers which align with their preferences, interests and skills. Activities at each grade level should promote a natural progression with the goal being the student is employed after high school or after completion of their post-secondary training/education program

Research indicates that students who have participated in career exploration and other transition services in a quality learning environment have higher career search self-efficacy (Solberg, Howard, Gresham, & Carter, 2012). This study also found that students with greater career search self-efficacy were more engaged in setting their goals, which further predicted their motivation to attend school.

If provided as pre-employment transition services, job exploration counseling may be provided in a group setting or on an individual basis and may include information regarding in-demand industry sectors, and occupations, as well as non-traditional employment, labor market composition and vocational interest inventories to assist with the identification of career pathways of interest to the students.

Examples of Job Exploration Counseling Activities

(Note: An asterisk * denotes examples of job exploration counseling that can be provided by VR under pre-employment transition services)

- *Career (Vocational) Assessments*

Career Assessments are tests that come in a variety of forms and rely on both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Career assessments can help students identify and better articulate their unique interests, personality, values, and skills to determine how well they may match with a certain career. Some skills that career assessments could help determine are job-specific skills, transferable skills, and self-management skills⁴. Career assessments can also provide students the opportunity to discover the tasks, experience, education and training that are needed for a career they want to pursue (WINTAC, 2016)

- **Career Speakers*

Career Speakers provide an overview of a specific job or career area. The speaker typically presents to a class, large group or small group of students for a short period of time. Artifacts and or photos are used to enhance the presentation. These sessions are typically informative, motivational, and provide recommendations for additional career exploration activities (WINTAC, 2016).

- *Career and Technical Student Organizations*

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are vocational organizations primarily based in high schools and career technology centers. Often, on the State level, they are integrated into Departments of Education or incorporated as nonprofit organizations

- *Course of Study Alignment with Career*

Course of study refers to a series or selection of courses that all students are required to complete before they can move on to the next level in their education or earn a diploma. Students should take and complete courses that are considered to be academically and culturally essential—i.e., the courses that teach students the foundational knowledge and skills they will need in college, careers, and adult life.

- *Discovery*

The Discovery process is an evidence-based alternative to comparative, standardized assessments, and evaluations. Discovery is a person centered planning process that involves getting to know a person before supporting them in developing a plan for employment (Callahan, 2001)

- Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a work experience option where students learn about a job by walking through the work day as a shadow to a competent worker. The job shadowing work experience is a temporary, unpaid exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest to the student. Students witness firsthand the work environment, employability and occupational skills in practice, the value of professional training and potential career options. Job shadowing is designed to increase career awareness, help model student behavior through examples and reinforce in the student the link between classroom learning and work requirements. Almost any workplace is a potential job shadowing site.

- Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in a career area/job that interests the student, who can provide them with information and advice. It is an effective research tool in addition to reading books, exploring the Internet, and examining job descriptions. It is not a job interview, rather a way the student can learn specifics about a particular business or job. (WINTAC, 2016)

- *Interest and Ability Inventories

Career interest inventories typically describe or illustrate (often with pictures and videos) many occupations and job tasks and ask students to rate how much they would enjoy doing each job or task. By rating their level of interest in a wide range of occupations, these inventories help young people recognize their predominant interests and preferences (Timmons, Podmostko, Bremer, Lavin, and Wills, 2004). Career interest inventories can be used in school classes, in afterschool and community youth programs, in workforce development programs, and at home. (NCWD)

- * Labor Market Statistics and Trends

Labor market statistics and trends are occupational requirements, and other labor market information that provides information about employer, business practices, and employer personnel needs in their local area and elsewhere, such as data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Department of Labor's O*NET occupational system. Labor Market Information can assist students in discovering career opportunities, as well as make informed career decisions.

2. Work Based Learning

Work Based Learning (WBL) is an educational approach or instructional methodology that uses the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities. It is essential that direct employer or community involvement be a component of the WBL to ensure in-depth student engagement. These opportunities are meant to engage, motivate, and augment the learning process and should be provided in the most integrated setting possible.

WBL opportunities can be done in conjunction with private, for-profit, public or nonprofit businesses in the community, and/or through web-based resources. In addition, work-based learning can be used both as an evaluation of student skill attainment as well as a way for the student to evaluate the job to determine if the job was actually what they thought it was or if they liked it or parts of it.

Programs that include real work experience as a key intervention component are found to have higher rates of students transitioning into integrated, paid employment. (Gold, Fabian & Luecking 2013; Getzel, Rachel, Lau, 2013; Luecking & Luecking, 2015; Test, Mazotti, et. al., 2009). Adult employment is more likely when students have work experiences and jobs during their secondary school years and when families expect and support employment. (Sima. et al, 2014; Farker, et.al., in press; Carter, et.al., Fabian, 2007). These findings are consistent regardless of disability category, where one lives, or their socio-economic status (Gold, Fabian, & Luecking, 2013).

If provided as pre-employment transition services, work based learning may be provided in a group setting and may include a school-based program of job training and informational interview to research employers, work-site tours to learn about necessary job skills, job shadowing or mentoring opportunities in the community . Work-based learning experiences on an individual basis could include paid or unpaid work experience, internships, apprenticeships, short-term employment, fellowships and on-the job trainings in the community.

Examples of Work Based Learning:

(Note: An asterisk * denotes examples work based learning that can be provided by VR under pre-employment transition services)

- ***Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeship is a federally recognized training system for occupations requiring a wide and extensive range of skills and knowledge. It involves on-the-job training combined with related (i.e., classroom) instruction. In the United States alone, there are currently more than 800 different occupations with apprenticeships. Apprentice wages are based on the level of their skills and increase incrementally to the journeyman level upon successful completion of the apprenticeship. Pre apprentices and registered apprentices through the Department of Labor are not included as allowable pre-employment transition services.

- ***Business Mentors**

Business Mentors are experienced individuals who can explain and provide information about the facets of owning or managing a business such as: understanding and conducting markets research, creating a business plan, securing financing, hours of work required, etc. to students so they can have a better understanding of the requirements and demands of owning and running a business.

- ***Career Mentoring**

A career mentor teaches or provides guidance and advice to a less experienced and often younger person. A career mentor focuses on helping a student understand the work environment and tasks of a specific career

- **Career Related Competitions*

Career related student competitions are work-based learning activities that require students to demonstrate mastery of career-related skills through presentations or competitions that are judged by professionals. Presentations demonstrate culminations of student effort over time, often involving teamwork. Career technical student organizations sponsor such competitions in the fields of agriculture, business, health, hospitality and industrial technology (WINTAC, 2016).

- **Informational Interviews*

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in a career area/job that interests you, who will give you information and advice. It is an effective research tool in addition to reading books, exploring the Internet, and examining job descriptions. It is not a job interview, rather ways a student can learn about a specific business or job. (WINTAC, 2016)

- **Internships*

An internship is a temporary position emphasizing on-the-job training, and it can be paid or unpaid. An internship is an opportunity to learn the actual nature of a real job and to develop specific job related skills before you are qualified for an actual job (WINTAC, 2016).

- *Job Clubs*

Job Clubs can be school or community based groups that aim to help to equip students with skills and resources to be successful in finding and keeping a job.

- **Job Shadowing*

Job shadowing is a work experience option where students learn about a job by walking through the work day as a shadow to a competent worker. The job shadowing work experience is a temporary, unpaid exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest to the student. Students witness firsthand the work environment, employability and occupational skills in practice, the value of professional training and potential career options. Job shadowing is designed to increase career awareness, help model student behavior through examples and reinforce in the student the link between classroom learning and work requirements. Almost any workplace is a potential job shadowing site.

- **Non-paid Work Experience*

Work experience offers students the opportunity to explore careers and understand the nature of work through first-hand exposure to the workplace. Non-paid work experience is exploratory in nature and its intent is to expose an individual to a variety of occupations for the purpose of building basic workplace competence and for purposes of informed choice.

- **On-the-job Training*

On the job training is a form of training taking place in a normal working situation and is one of the earliest forms of training. It is a one-on-one training located at the job site, where someone who knows how to do a task shows another how to perform it.

- **Paid Employment*

Paid Work Experience can be general or vocational, focusing respectively on general workplace skills or career preparation activities within a specific industry or career area (WINTAC, 2016).

- **School-based Work Experience*

A work experience that is arranged and occurs in a school setting which can include student-led enterprises. Student led enterprises are school based enterprises that produce goods or services for sale or to be used by people other than the participating students. This also provides students the opportunity to learn employability skills.

- **Service Learning*

Service learning is a work-based learning activity that integrates meaningful community service with classroom instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities (WINTAC, 2016).

- **Volunteering*

Volunteering is when a person donates his/her time or efforts for a cause or organization without being paid. It may be a one-time only or an on-going commitment. It should directly or indirectly benefit people outside the family or household or else benefit a cause, even though the person volunteering normally benefits as well. Most volunteer sites are non-profit organizations (WINTAC, 2016).

- **Work-site tours to learn about necessary job skills*

Work –site tours are group excursions for the purpose of first-hand observation to specific work sites. Students learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions and observe work in progress

3. Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Education Programs

Maximum flexibility in the career decision making process is important in the early phases of post-secondary education (PSE) planning. This includes gaining an awareness of the wide range of career pathway options and labor market realities and projections. The U.S. Department of Labor has created clusters of careers to help schools to provide instruction and monitor student experience ¹

Even in absence of earning diplomas, people exposed to postsecondary education are more likely to find jobs that pay better wages compared to their peers who did not have postsecondary education experiences (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003; Leonhardt, 2011;

Marcotte, Bailey, Borkoski, & Kiensl, 2005). Findings show that students who exited the VR program after receiving postsecondary education services reported higher weekly wages compared to their peers who did not receive any postsecondary education services (Gilmore et al., 2001; Migliore, Butterworth, & Hart, 2009).

VR agencies may provide counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education in a group setting or on an individual basis. These services may include information on course offerings, career options, the types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace, and postsecondary opportunities associated with a career field or pathways. It may also include advising students and parents, or representatives on academic curricula, college application and admissions process, completing the free application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and resources that may be used to support individual student success in education and training, to include disability support services.

Examples of Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Education Programs

(Note: An asterisk * denotes examples of counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary education programs that can be provided by VR under pre-employment transition service)

- **Academic Planning*
Academic planning is the process of setting your educational goals and determining the best path to meet them.
- **Information on Accommodations and Services in Post-Secondary Education*
Providing information on disability support services and linking families and students to such services.
- **College Affordability Planning*
A process that includes evaluating the cost of attending and identifying resources available for post-secondary education that includes both personal finances, benefits planning, grants, and loans (Federal and private).
- **College and Career Exploration and Selection Process*
The process of exploring post-secondary education and training programs and identifying ones that match identified career goals and personal requirements. This process may also identify whether programs under consideration have an office of disability services.
- **Post-Secondary Education Application and Admission Process*
Understanding, completing and filing the required materials within required timeframes needed to participate in post-secondary education and training programs.

4. Workplace Readiness Training to Develop Social Skills and Independent Living

Workplace readiness traits describe a number of skills that employers expect from most employees. Workplace readiness skills are a set of skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job, such as how to interact with supervisors and co-workers; and the importance of timeliness. These skills are sometimes called soft skills, employability skills, or job readiness skills. These abilities help employees learn and build an understanding of how we are perceived by others. Employers value employees who can communicate effectively and act professionally. No matter what technical skills a job may require every job requires good social skills/interpersonal skills (Test, Mazotti, et.al., 2009).

VR agencies may provide workplace readiness training to students with disabilities as a required activity under pre-employment transition services. As such, workplace readiness training may include programming to develop social skills and independent living, such as communication and interpersonal skills, financial literacy, orientation and mobility skills, job-seeking skills, understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance, as well as other “soft” skills.

Examples of work place readiness training:

(Note: An asterisk * denotes examples of work-based readiness training that can be provided by VR under pre-employment transition service)

- ***Communication**

Communication skills in the workplace is the ability to convey information to people clearly and simply, both verbal and non-verbal, within an organization.

- ***Financial Literacy**

Financial literacy is ‘the ability to use knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively for a lifetime of financial well-being’ (2008 Annual Report to the President). It includes skills like long-term vision and planning for the future, and the discipline to use those skills every day.

- ***Networking**

Networking is the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically, the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business (Miriam-Webster, 2014).

- ***Orientation and Mobility Skills**

Orientation and Mobility skills teach students the skills and concepts they need in order to travel independently and safely to access their community, school and worksite.

- **Problem Solving and Critical Thinking*

Problem solving and critical thinking is the process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution. Problem solving may include mathematical or systematic operations and can be a gauge of an individual's critical thinking skills.

- **Professionalism*

Professionalism, in and of itself, is not one skill but the blending and integration of a variety of skills.

Employers want workers to be responsible, ethical, and team oriented, and to possess strong communication, interpersonal, and problem solving skills. When professionalism is demonstrated, it tends to be thought of as the entire package.

- **Teamwork*

Teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. Teamwork is often a crucial part of a business, as it is often necessary for colleagues to work well together, trying their best in any circumstance.

5. Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy refers to: an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his/her own interests and/or desires. Self-determination means that individuals with disabilities have the freedom to plan their own lives, set goals and pursue the things that are important to them and to experience the same life opportunities as other people in their communities. It means understanding one's disability and taking the responsibility for communicating one's needs and desires in a straightforward manner to others. The development of self-advocacy skills should be started at an early age. These skills will be needed in education, workplace and community settings.

VR agencies may provide or arrange for the provision of instruction in self-advocacy as a required activity under pre-employment transition services. This instruction may be provided in a classroom or on an individual basis in which students learn about their rights responsibilities, and how to request accommodations or services and supports needed during the transition from secondary to postsecondary education and employment. Students may conduct informational interviews or mentor with educational staff or individuals employed by or volunteer for employers, boards, associations or organizations. These acquired self-advocacy skills will enable students to advocate for any support services, including auxiliary aids and services and accommodations that may be necessary for training or employment.

Examples of Instruction in Self-Advocacy:

(Note: An asterisk * denotes examples of instruction in self-advocacy that can be provided by VR under pre-employment transition service)

- *Requesting and Utilizing Accommodations

Students' ability to request and utilize accommodation in the classroom, work site, or other settings in order for them to be able to learn, work, or receive services. Accommodations are designed not to lower expectations for performance in school or work but to alleviate the effects of a disability. (NCWD, 2016)

- *Decision making including supported decision making

Supported decision-making is "A process of supporting and accommodating an student with a disability to enable the student to make life decisions, including decisions related to where the he/she wants to live, the services, supports, and medical care they want receive, and where they want to want, without impeding the self-determination of the student.

- *Disability Disclosure

Disclosure is the act of opening up, revealing, or telling. With regard to individuals with disabilities, it refers to the act of informing someone that an individual has a disability, including self-disclosure. It is often associated with a person's need to request accommodations (NCWD, 2016)

- *Goal setting and attainment

Goal setting and attainment is the skill of determining how a student plans to accomplish what they want - setting the goal, plan for implementation and measuring success.

- *Leadership Skills (taking a leadership role)

Leading is the area of development that centers on creating positive skills, attitudes, and behaviors around civic involvement, work and personal goal setting. Students may participate in youth leadership activities offered in educational or community settings,

- *Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is a form of mentorship that usually takes place between a person who has lived through a specific experience (peer mentor) and a person who is new to that experience (the peer mentee). Mentorship relationships can take different forms such as peer mentoring, disability mentoring, group mentoring or e-mentoring. (WINTACT, 2016)

- *Personal Rights and Responsibilities

Knowledge and opportunities to learn about laws and regulations regarding education and employment, including those specific to disability.

- *Self-awareness and knowledge

The ability to understand oneself separate from the environment and other individuals.

It is having a clear perception of your personality, including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation, and emotions. Self-awareness allows you to understand other people, how they perceive you, your attitude and your responses to them in the moment.

- *Self-determination

The right and ability of all persons to direct their own lives, as well as the responsibility to accept the consequences of their own choices. Some of the skills that make someone self-determined or a successful self-advocate are the following: knowledge of one's strengths and limitations, belief in one's ability to achieve goals, ability to start and complete tasks, ability to assertively assert one's wants needs, and concerns, and the ability to make decisions and see other options.