National Events

Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (CEC), 17th International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability & Developmental Disabilities Research-Informed Practice
January 20 – 22, 2016
Honolulu, HI
Visit the DADD website for more details.

Ready by 21 National Meeting
March 29-31
Baltimore, MD
See the website for more details.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
Annual Convention and Expo
April 13 - 16
St. Louis, MO
See the website for more details.

NTACT Capacity Building Institute
May 3 - 5
Charlotte, NC
Registration and agenda available in late January under Events at www.TransitionTA.org

Update from NTACT

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition began its work in January, 2015. Since then we have organized a structure for reviewing and identifying effective practices in transition education and services, school completion, and work and postsecondary education preparation. The Knowledge Development team has spent several months meeting with other researchers, national organizations, federally funded centers, and practitioners in the field and recently released 127 Practice Descriptions and 19 Predictor Descriptions.

NTACT also completed a process for reviewing applications from states interested in receiving intensive technical assistance from the Center. Alaska, Nevada, and North Dakota entered into Partnership Agreements in the fall of 2015 for work to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in those States. NTACT Staff will partner with implementation teams in these three states, representing Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as other stakeholders such as family members, to build capacity locally and improve practices and outcomes through December 2019. Additionally, NTACT will identify seven more states for intensive technical assistance in the spring of 2016. NTACT has also partnered with more than a dozen states in targeted, or time limited, activities during 2015. More detailed information on these levels of technical assistance offered by the center is available here.

NTACT’s website, www.TransitionTA.org, launched in the summer of 2015 and serves as our primary method of sharing resources and communicating with the field. Please tour the resources on Transition Planning, Education, and Services; Graduation and Re-Engagement; Preparing for Post-School Success; and Data Analysis and Use for state and local use and let us know what you think! We will continue to expand these resources in 2016, including a “State Map” of activities and resources related to these topics and additional toolkits for practitioners and family members.

NTACT’s purpose is to assist state education and vocational rehabilitation agencies to assist local level practitioners and family members to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities.
Our staff at the University of North Carolina Charlotte, University of Oregon, Western Michigan University, TransCen, Inc., and the Transition Coalition at the University of Kansas – along with our project officers from the Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration - are committed to being responsive to your needs and providing you resources and tools that are developed from the best available evidence for practices that will improve the skills of students with disabilities and programs to improve their in and post-school outcomes. Please continue to keep in touch with us at ntactmail@uncc.edu. Also, engage with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest!

**Featured National Center or Organizational Partner:**

**Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center**

The Job-Driven VRTAC strives to identify, adapt, embed, and sustain job-driven practices that lead to improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Our center supports businesses to find and retain productive workers. The center creates VR-specific sustainable models of job-driven practices. Outcomes and strategies from the Job-Driven VRTAC will develop a knowledge base on the four topic areas of 1) labor market information, 2) services to employers, 3) building and maintaining employer relations, and 4) services to training providers.

The project activities focus on:

- Building state VR agencies’ capacity to improve and expand job-driven employment practices for consumers;
- Using and building upon promising and emerging job-driven strategies;
- Providing three types of technical assistance (TA): intensive TA, targeted/specialized TA, and universal/general TA; and
- Disseminating materials pertaining to the use of job driven strategies.

**Project partners include:**

- Jobs for the Future (JFF)
- The University of Arkansas (UA) CURRENTS
- The University of Washington (UW)
- The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN)
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
- Bobby Silverstein at Power, Pyles, Sutter & Verville

**Funder Information:** The Job-Driven VRTAC is funded by Rehabilitation Services Administration Grant #H264A140002.
School Completion

NTACT recently posted Practice Descriptions, based on the IES Practice Brief and additional findings of the What Works Clearinghouse regarding effective practices (promising and research-based practices) to increase school completion, progress in school, or reduce dropout. Take a look at these new resources and a complete list of Effective Practices (always developing with new research) at www.TransitionTA.org under Effective Practices.

College and Career Readiness

A new report from Achieve suggests many states fall short of reaching college and career ready (CCR) goals. Key findings from Achieve’s analysis include:

• In many states, students have multiple options to graduate, many of which fall short of CCR expectations in ELA/literacy and mathematics.
• Because of these options that fall short of CCR expectations, a state’s graduation rate may not match how many students graduate ready for college and careers.
• In most states, despite offering many pathways to graduation – which vary in rigor – states do not report which students complete which requirements.
• When students walk across the graduation stage and are handed a high school diploma, they (and their parents) believe they earned a passport to further learning. Yet in too many states, for too many students, the diploma is not as valuable as it needs to be.
• Only nine states who offer multiple diplomas currently publicly report the percentage of students earning the CCR-level diploma: California, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia.


Vocational Rehabilitation

ExploreVR is a web application providing state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies easy and convenient access to a range of VR and related data for planning, evaluation, and decision-making.

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, administrators, and others who work in job development and preparation for students/ youth with disabilities may view these 4 toolkits at ExploreVR.
Professional Development Opportunities

University of Kansas offers an online Master’s in Secondary Special Ed & Transition. The program helps educators prepare secondary special education students and young adults with disabilities who are making the transition to adult life.

See the KU website for more information about this innovative program.

Webinars

NTACT’s Webinar Series in 2016 will continue to address five areas: (a) rigorous academic preparation; (b) career-related curricula; (c) quality secondary transition planning and services; (d) strategies to reduce dropout and increase graduation for students with disabilities; and (e) data-driven decision making. Each one will be hosted by NTACT on a Thursday (once each month) from 2:00 – 3:00 PM (Eastern). Additionally, an “Ask the Expert” webinar on a specific aspect of the topic presented in the monthly webinar will be presented one week later (usually), followed by two weeks of facilitated online discussion with the “Ask the Expert” webinar presenter. See below for a schedule of topics through August, 2016:

Meaningful Family Engagement to Improve Transition Planning and Services
January 21, 2016, 2:00 -3:00 PM
Presenter: Josie Badger, Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment (RAISE) and Debra Jennings, Center for Parent Information and Resources RAISE

NOTE DATE CHANGE
Register Now

Developing and Implementing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
February 11, 2016, 2:00 -3:00 PM
Presenter: Andrea Guest, Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Ask the Expert on Peer Assisted Strategies and Students with High Support Needs*
Erik Carter, Vanderbilt University
March 10, 2016, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM (and two weeks online discussion) - NOTE DATE CHANGE

Resources for Practitioners

NTACT recently updated and posted Practice Descriptions related to School Completion, Transition Planning, Education, and Services, and for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Administrators that were developed from the research for these effective practices. Within each practice description is a link to a Lesson Plan Starter or other more detailed information noted as “the best place to find how to do this practice”.

Please take a look at each of these resources in the Evidence-Based, Research-Based, and Promising Practices sections of NTACT’s website and tell us what you think!

The Community of Practice on Transition meets the second Wednesday of each month online. This community of practice was originally developed through the IDEA Partnership at NASDSE. Now it is led by representatives from state and local districts and communities from special education, vocational rehabilitation, community agencies, national organizations, youth, and family members. It focuses on issues facing the field of transition and members take on the role of researching and developing tools that are useful for others.

NOTE DATE CHANGE
Register Now
Peer Assisted Learning Strategies to Support Academic Content Acquisition*
March 10, 2016, 2:00 – 3:00 PM
Presenters: Sharon Vaughn and Colleen Reutebuch, The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk

* note that these two webinars are on a related topic of effective practices for peer supports; however, have distinct differences in the focus student populations and the practices presented. Join us for both!

Early Warning System Foundations: Practice of Developing & Implementing and Early Warning and Intervention Systems
April 14, 2016, 2:00 -3:00 PM – NOTE DATE CHANGE
Presenter: Attendance Works

Ask the Expert on the NTACT Risk Calculator with Matthew Klare, NTACT
April 21, 2016, 2:00 – 3:00 PM (and two weeks following online discussion) - NOTE DATE CHANGE

Providing Competitive Integrated Employment Experiences Prior to High School Graduation
May 12, 2016, 2:00 -3:00 PM
Presenters: Dale Verstegen and Amy Dwyre, TransCen, Inc.

Non-Academic Skills for College and Career Readiness: Growth Mindsets
June 9, 2016, 2:00 -3:00 PM
Presenter: Project for Education Research That Scales (PERTS), Stanford University

Ask the Expert on Self-Determination
June 16, 2016, 2:00 – 3:00 PM (and two weeks following online discussion)
Presenter: Michael Wehmeyer, University of Kansas

Effective Service Delivery Models that Improve Postsecondary Outcomes
July 14, 2016, 2:00 – 3:00 PM
Presenter: NTACT

Attendance Matters
August 11, 2016, 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Registration for each of these webinars will be online at www.TransitionTA.org one month prior to the webinar and will be shared via NTACT’s listserv. Join us!

In recent months they have shared resources regarding developing youth leadership and valuing youth as partners in program improvements – as well as how to use data to inform secondary transition program improvement. You may contact chfowler@uncc.edu or jkester@gwmail.gwu.edu to be added to the listserv for this group. The next call will be on January 13, 2016 at 11:30 AM (Eastern).

Resources for Researchers
Researchers may also be interested in the recently updated resources at www-transitionTA.org. The criteria, descriptors, and Effective Practices Matrix at represent NTACT’s initial work to identify and organize these resources. The center intends to be transparent in its efforts and while the current criteria and definitions reflect the best work in the fields of special education and vocational rehabilitation to define effective practices and NTACT has received feedback from its advisory board and expert panel members along the way, this effort is an evolving field. We welcome your feedback.

NTLS2 Secondary Analysis Community of Practice will meet on January 26 from 3 – 4 PM (Eastern). Please contact David Test, dwtest@uncc.edu or Bradley Stevenson bsteve23@uncc.edu, if you are interested in participating in this research community of practice.
ExploreVR is a web application providing state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies easy and convenient access to a range of VR and related data for planning, evaluation, and decision-making. Overall, this data-sharing effort seeks to increase knowledge about the public VR program and its role within the larger employment and disability service system within and across states and territories. Visit Explore VR’s Open Data Lab, an interactive web portal that offers access to a range of Vocational Rehabilitation and related data, of interest to leaders, consumers, and researchers.

Contact Us!
Email us at [ntactmail@uncc.edu](mailto:ntactmail@uncc.edu).
Call us at 704-687-8606.
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Disclaimer: This newsletter was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Rehabilitative Services, Grant No. H326E140004 from January 2015 through December 2019. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned herein is intended or should be inferred. This product is public domain. Dr. Selete Avoke serves as the project officer from OSEP and Dr. Kristen Rhinehart-Fernandez is the project officer from RSA. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2015). NTACT Notes, Charlotte, NC, NTACT.