

Improving Post-School Education Outcomes: Evidence-Based Secondary Transition Predictors

One of the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center’s (NSTTAC) tasks is to identify the evidence-based practices for the field of secondary transition. To do this, NSTTAC’s review of literature has been conducted in two parts. In Part I, evidence-based practices based on quality experimental (both group and single subject designs) studies were identified. However, while the evidence-based practices were designed to teach students specific transition-related skills, to date, the experimental literature has not attempted to measure the impact of these skills on post-school outcomes. As a result, in Part II, the review was expanded to include rigorous correlational research in secondary transition to identify evidence-based predictors that are correlated with improved post-school outcomes in education, employment, and/or independent living.

In order to systematically evaluate each correlational study, quality indicators for correlational research developed by Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder, and Snyder (2005) were adapted for this review. Decision rules for determining levels of evidence for correlational research based on Thompson et al. and the United States Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences (IES) were also established. While correlational research examines relationships among variables, it is unable to reveal causality (although in many cases the direction of the relationship is hypothesized). Therefore, according to IES, the evidence provided by correlational research may only be established as moderate levels of causal inference. NSTTAC then added the potential level of evidence.

Levels of Evidence of Causal Inference	Correlational
Strong	N/A
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 a priori (planned, hypothesis stated) studies with consistent significant correlations between predictor and outcome Can include <i>exploratory</i> studies only when paired with <i>a priori</i> significant correlations Must include effect size calculations or the data to calculate effect size
Potential (needs additional research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 a priori (planned, hypothesis stated) study Two or more exploratory (no specific hypothesis) studies with significant correlations between predictor and outcome

This fact sheet includes in-school predictors of positive post-school education outcomes for students with disabilities, please visit <http://www.nsttac.org/ebp/PredictorResources.aspx> for detailed information. Predictor categories were created based on consensus by researchers, and researchers classified each predictor to reflect a comprehensive term to support each description. The descriptions of each predictor were taken directly from the findings in the studies reviewed. Currently, there are 11 predictor categories for post-school education, which are presented in alphabetical order. Following the predictor categories and descriptions, a table is provided of the predictor categories and levels of evidence for post-school education.

1. Career Awareness

Description:

- Students in the School to Work Transition Program who exited school with high career awareness skills were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education (Benz et al., 1997)

Level of evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

2. Inclusion in General Education

Description:

- Students who participated in regular academics were 5 times more likely to participate in post-school education (Baer et al., 2003)
- Students who took academic courses in regular education placements were more likely to be engaged in post-school education, employment, and independent living (Blackorby et al., 1993)

- Students with high performance in five areas, including reading, writing, math, behaving responsibly, and problem solving skills were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)
- Students who passed more than half or all courses across 8 curriculum areas (remedial academics, traditional content classes, personal finance, community access, behaving responsibly, goal-setting or problem solving, specialized vocational education, regular vocational education) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)

Level of evidence: *Moderate* with all disability categories

3. Interagency Collaboration

Description:

- Students who received assistance from 3 to 6 community-based agencies (as compared to students with assistance from 0 to 2 agencies) were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education (Bullis et al., 1995)
- Students who participated in a transition program comprised of specific interagency council characteristics (i.e., agency directories, agreements, councils, general information, local business advisory boards, parent network, statements) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Repetto et al., 2002)
- Students who participated in a transition program that comprised specific types of transition services (i.e., Association of Retarded Citizens, Department of Children and Families, Developmental Services, Division of Blind Services, DVR Rehab, Easter Seal, Job Service of FL, Job Training, Mental Health, Social Security Initiatives, United Cerebral Palsy) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Repetto et al., 2002)
- Students who participated in a transition program comprised of specific transition support characteristics (i.e., Agency Referral FU, Case Management, Community Services; Employment Spec., Equipment, Family Services, Financial, Guardianship, Guidance/Counseling, Living Arrangement, Medical, Parent Information, Referral, Social/Leisure, Support Service, Teacher Resources, Transition Spec., Transportation) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Repetto et al., 2002)

Level of evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

4. Occupational Courses

Description:

- Students who passed more than half or all courses across 8 curriculum areas (remedial academics, traditional content classes, personal finance, community access, behaving responsibly, goal-setting or problem solving, specialized vocational education, regular vocational education) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)

Level of evidence: *Potential* for post-school education and employment with all disability categories

5. Paid Work Experience

Description:

- Students who participated in the Youth Transition Program with 2 or more paid jobs during high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education (Benz et al., 2000)
- Students who had year round paid job for one full year during high school were 5 times more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and education (Bullis et al., 1995)

Level of evidence: *Moderate* with all disability categories

6. Self-Advocacy/ Self-Determination

Description:

- Students who passed more than half or all courses in 8 curriculum areas (remedial academics, traditional content classes, personal finance, community access, behaving responsibly, goal-setting

or problem solving, specialized vocational education, regular vocational education) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)

Level of evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

7. Self-Care/ Independent Living Skills

Description:

- Students who had high self-care skills were more likely to be engaged in post-school education, employment, and independent living (Blackorby et al., 1993)

Level of Evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

8. Social Skills

Description:

- Students who passed more than half or all courses across 8 curriculum areas (remedial academics, traditional content classes, personal finance, community access, behaving responsibly, goal-setting or problem solving, specialized vocational education, regular vocational education) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)

Level of Evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

9. Student Support

Description:

- Students who indicated high levels of satisfaction with instruction received (reading, writing, math, behaving responsibly, and problem solving) during high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)

Level of Evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

10. Transition Program

Description:

- Students who participated in the Youth Transition Program with four or more transition goals met were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education (Benz et al., 2000)
- Students who received transition planning services during the year prior to leaving school were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)
- Students who participated in a transition program comprised of specific interagency council characteristics (i.e., agency directories, agreements, councils, general information, local business advisory boards, parent network, statements) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Repetto et al., 2002)
- Students who participated in a transition program that comprised specific types of transition services (i.e., Association of Retarded Citizens, Department of Children and Families, Developmental Services, Division of Blind Services, DVR Rehab, Easter Seal, Job Service of FL, Job Training, Mental Health, Social Security Initiatives, United Cerebral Palsy) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Repetto et al., 2002)
- Students who participated in a transition program comprised of specific transition support characteristics (i.e., Agency Referral FU, Case Management, Community Services; Employment Spec., Equipment, Family Services, Financial, Guardianship, Guidance/Counseling, Living Arrangement, Medical, Parent Information, Referral, Social/Leisure, Support Service, Teacher Resources, Transition Spec., Transportation) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Repetto et al., 2002)

Level of Evidence: *Moderate* with all disability categories

11. Vocational Education

Description:

- Students who passed more than half or all courses across 8 curriculum areas (remedial academics, traditional content classes, personal finance, community access, behaving responsibly, goal-setting or problem solving, specialized vocational education, regular vocational education) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995)
- Students with vocational education credits in high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and post-school education (Harvey, 2002)

Level of Evidence: *Moderate* with all disability categories

Note: Complete references for all citations can be found on the NSTTAC website at:

<http://www.nsttac.org/ebp/ReferenceListPredictorCategories.aspx>

Predictors/Outcomes	Education
•Career Awareness	P
•Inclusion in General Education	M
•Interagency Collaboration	P
•Occupational Courses	P
•Paid Employment/Work Experience	M
•Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination	P
•Self-Care/Independent Living	P
•Social Skills	P
•Student Support	P
•Transition Program	M
M = Moderate; P = Potential	

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