

Improving Post-School Independent Living 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 independent living outcomes for students with disabilities, please visit <http://www.nstattac.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 4 predictor categories for post-school independent living, 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 independent living.

1. Inclusion in General Education

Description:

- 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 who had high adaptive and academic skills, high self-care skills, high GPA on academic activities, higher IQs, and received a diploma, as reported in school records or by parents, were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment (Heal & Rusch, 1994)
- Students who participated in more highly integrated and less highly specialized school programs were more likely to be living independently (i.e., high independence defined as: (a) parent’s prediction of youth’s future home independence, sum of cooking, shopping, washing, and cleaning skills; (b) sum of phone, time-keeping, counting, reading skills; (c) sum of dressing, feeding, and

going out skills; (d) respondent's claim of youth's ability to respond on a follow-up questionnaire; Heal et al., 1997)

- Students who spent more hours in regular education courses were more likely to be living independently (i.e., high independence defined as: (a) parent's prediction of youth's future home independence, sum of cooking, shopping, washing, and cleaning skills, (b) sum of phone, time-keeping, counting, reading skills; (c) sum of dressing, feeding, and going out skills; (d) respondent's claim of youth's ability to respond on a follow-up questionnaire; high esteem defined as: (a) respondent's or school's claim of therapeutic counseling for youth; (b) number of developmental disabilities services attributed to the youth; (c) youth used some developmental disabilities prosthetic device in the past year; (d) youth worked for pay in the past year; (e) youth worked with or without pay in the past year; (f) educational status, dropout to college graduation; Heal et al., 1997)

Level of evidence: *Moderate* with all disability categories

2. Paid Work Experience

Description:

- Students who had worked for pay during high school were more likely to be living independently (Bullis et al., 1995)

Level of evidence: *Potential* with all disability categories

3. Self-Care/ Independent Living Skills

Description:

- Students who had high adaptive and academic skills, high self-care skills, high GPA on academic activities, higher IQs, and received a diploma, as reported in school records or by parents, were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment (Heal & Rusch, 1994)
- 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)
- Students with high daily living skills (based on teacher and student ratings from the Life Centered Career Education rating scales) were more likely to have a higher quality of life (independent living) and be engaged in post-school employment (Roessler et al., 1990)

Level of Evidence: *Moderate* with all disability categories

4. Student Support

Description:

- Students who spent more time per week with friends or family (i.e., days per week that youth interacted socially with friends or family members) during school were more likely to experience higher quality of life (i.e., independence defined as (a) self-sufficiency, (b) community living skills, (c) youth has post-high school education, (d) youth has checking/savings account, and (e) adaptive behavior; social relationships defined as (a) how well youth gets along with others, (b) days per week youth sees friends or family, (c) whether youth attending social groups in past twelve months, (d) if parent says youth is not socially isolated, and (e) days per week youth usually sees family; Heal et al., 1999)
- Students with high occupational guidance and preparation (based on teacher student ratings from the Life Centered Career Education rating scales) were more likely to have a higher quality of life (independent living) and be engaged in post-school employment (Roessler et al., 1990)

Level of Evidence: *Potential* 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	Independent Living
•Inclusion in General Education	M
•Paid Employment/Work Experience	P
•Self-Care/Independent Living	M
•Student Support	P

M = Moderate; P = Potential

DRAFT

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