

Research Highlights

Topic: Person-Centered Planning and Friendships

Kyeong-Hwa, K., & Turnbull, A. (2004). Transition to adulthood for students with severe intellectual disabilities: Shifting toward person-family interdependent planning. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 29(1), 53-57.

BOTTOM LINE

The transition from high school to adulthood can be a very worrying time for young people and their families. This stage of life can be even more stressful for young people with disabilities and their families. Adequate planning is required to address the challenging impact of the stage of life on families. This paper provides an overview of person-centered planning and family-centered planning and to suggest merging these two approaches into person-family interdependent planning to better meet the needs of this challenging time.

KEY FINDINGS

- For young people with severe disabilities transitioning to adulthood can be especially stressful and chaotic. Adequate planning for and by families and the individual is needed to overcome this challenging stage of life.
- The focus on the person-centered planning approach stems from the individual quality of life movement.
- In person-centered planning, the adult with disabilities, his or her family, friends and other supporters plan together to develop a system of supports which fit the person's needs, strengths and preference to promote self-determination and community integration.
- To be "self-determined" or to participate as much as possible in the decision-making process, individuals with severe cognitive disabilities need ongoing support from those that know them best and have their best-interest at heart.

KEY FINDINGS cont.

- The culture of person-centered planning differs from many human service agencies, in that human service agencies may value uniformity and predictability more than individual need.
- The family centered approach sees the family as the unit of attention and organizing assistance in a collaborative fashion and in accordance with the needs of each individual *family member's* wishes, strengths and needs.
- Considering that most young people with severe disabilities live with their families and that the transitioning process therefore affects them also, the strengths of both approaches need to be combined in a new approach.
- This new approach, termed person-family interdependent planning, is grounded in the following premises: 1. Families are affected by the transitioning, but each family is affected differently, 2. Young adults with severe intellectual disabilities have choices concerning their lives, 3. No person is fully competent in all life decisions are influenced by others particularly family members, 4. Both family and individuals' "needs" should be considered, 5. Comprehensive programs and policies that provide all types of supports should be implemented.
- Both family members and individuals with disabilities' quality of life are important outcomes of human services and therefore a transition plan that incorporates both outcomes should be implemented.

METHOD

- The article reflects the expert opinion, gathered through the historical research and experience of the authors.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Accreditation Council on Service for People with Disabilities (1995). *Outcome measures for early childhood interventions services*. Landover: MD: The Accreditation Council.
- Allen, R.I. & Peter, C.G (1996). Toward developing standards and measurements for family-centered practice in family support programs. In G.H.S. Singer & L.E. Powers (Eds.) *Redefining family support: Innovations in public-private partnerships* (pp. 57-86). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Bailey, D.B., McWilliam, R.A., Darkes, L.A., Hebbeler, K., Simeonsson, R.J., Spiker, D., et al. (1998). Family outcomes in early interventions: A framework for program evaluation and efficacy research. *Exceptional Children*, 64 (3), 313-329.
- Bailey, D.B., Simeonson, R.J., Winston, P.J., Huntington, G.S., Comfort, M., Isbell, P., et al. (1986). Family-focused intervention: A functional model for planning, implementing and evaluating individualized family services in early intervention. *Journal of the Division for Early Childhood*, 10, 156-171.

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