

Perspectives of Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Transitioning to Employment

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Background

- Having students involved as an active participant in the process of transitioning to employment after high school leads to favorable work outcomes¹²³
- One major attribute of successful adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is having a strong sense of control over their lives and decisions surrounding major events²
- Students who are supported in pursuing their own interests and goals experience greater job satisfaction and higher wages³
- Inclusion through meaningful employment benefits not only the individual with IDD, but also society as a whole through the contributions of citizens working in the community and contributing to the economy⁴

Methods

- Study Design: Collective Case Study
- Participants: Four current high school students with IDD between the ages of 18 and 21 from school districts in central North Carolina. All students were in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS). Three participants were male and one participant was female and all four were of Caucasian descent
- Data Collection: One semi-structured interview per participant
- Data Analysis: Thematic coding analysis

Research Question:

What are the perspectives of high school students with IDD that are transitioning to employment?

Findings

Preparation

“As far as how prepared I am, I feel really good.”

Supports

“I like having people to help me, like my mom and teachers.”

Interests

“I love talking about weather, so I want to be a meteorologist.”

Uncertainty

“Only caveat is, I think I’ll need an assistant at work at all times.”

Discussion

- Overall, students feel they are prepared for starting employment
- Students feel confident in their job skills, but uncertain about many logistical aspects of employment
- Student interests were considered by parents for volunteer opportunities, but not by the school system
- Discrepancies exist between the job the student expected to have post graduation and the student’s stated career goal

Implications

- Student-centered transitions could cater more to the career interests and goals of the student
- Self advocacy training could help students guide their own transition toward a career related to personal interests¹. Occupational therapists can fill this void in the transition planning process
- Further research in this area is necessary in order to gain the perspectives of a larger and more diverse demographic of students with IDD that are planning to transition to employment after high school

References

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