



How do Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Their Families Experience Post-Secondary Transition?



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Background & Significance

- ❖ Transition can create both internal and external conflicts for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) as they encounter novel experiences and roles thrust upon them when they begin the process of phasing out of the public high school system into community and work life.¹
- ❖ Understanding both the experience of individuals with IDD during this transition process and the perspectives of their family members is important, as it is often determined within the family context.²
- ❖ Few studies have investigated transition experiences of individuals with IDD from the perspectives of the student and their parents.¹
- ❖ Transition programs that emphasize skills training and prevocational guidance through a client-centered, experiential approach correlate with positive outcomes for individuals with IDD and their family.³
- ❖ **TRACKS** is a pilot transition program that provides opportunities for individuals with IDD to develop life skills, participate in work site trainings, cultivate social interactions, and practice community mobility on a local university's campus to facilitate preparation for post-secondary community life integration.

Methods

- ❖ **Study Design:** Qualitative case study.
- ❖ **Participants:** 1 high school senior from the local community participating in the PATHSS program and his mother.
- ❖ **Data collection:** 2 semi-structured interviews with student and parent and 2 naturalistic observations of PATHSS.
- ❖ **Data analysis:** Thematic analysis entailing review of observational field notes and verbatim interview transcription, generating codes, and analyzing themes.

Tracks to Transition for High School Students (TRACKS)

Holistic approach promoting job skills, social engagement, & community access.

"Every single skill, just everything about him has improved because of TRACKS."

Finding meaningful occupations through career exploration.

"I'm working with athletics. I love sports like basketball and swimming."

Program staff's guidance is foundational to student's success.

"Dr. B's knowledge and her beliefs about what the students can do is what makes this possible."

Key Findings

- ❖ TRACKS promotes a holistic approach to transition that provides appropriate supports to teach job skills, social skills, and community mobility.
- ❖ Finding meaningful occupations through job exploration and multiple opportunities to participate in work and community life is important to both student and parent, and positively impacts student's quality of life.
- ❖ Program staff's expectations for students and provision of work site guidance serves as the foundation for student's success.

Discussion & Implications

- ❖ **Study Limitations:** study design's focus on one family's experience of a specific transition program lacks generalizability, as it may not be representative of all individuals with IDD and/or parents' perspectives on the transition process.
- ❖ Findings indicate benefits of implementing specialized transition programs like TRACKS for better long-term outcomes and occupational opportunities for individuals with IDD.
- ❖ **Future Research:** More research is needed to gather evidence of program model's success and long-term outcomes for students and their families, and to determine how occupational therapy might play a role in this process.
- ❖ Understanding the family's experience as they undergo this transition process can benefit occupational therapists in treating clients within this context (individual & the family).⁴

References

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4. Michaels, C. A., & Orentlicher, M. L. (2004). The role of occupational therapy in providing person-centered transition services: Implications for school-based practice. *Occupational Therapy International, 11*(4), 209-228.