

## Transition Planning for Middle School Students with Disabilities

A teleconference training sponsored by the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities, the University of Montana Rural Institute's Transition Projects and PLUK (Parents Let's Unite for Kids)

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### Goal:

To provide listeners with ideas to help them support students with disabilities in grades 6-8, their parents, teachers, and community-based service providers to be informed and well-equipped to successfully navigate the transition process. This will lead to increased post-school success for these students.

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## What is Partnerships for Transition?

- A collaboration between PLUK and the Rural Institute
- Funded by the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Designed to increase local capacity in six Montana communities (Miles City, Helena, Missoula, Butte, Billings, and Kalispell) in the area of transition planning for middle school students

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## PFT Activities Include:

- Quarterly teleconference trainings
- Creation of a “transition forum tool kit”
- Hosting of transition forums in the target communities
- Engaging in “Discovery” activities with ten middle school students with developmental disabilities
- Capturing the Discovery information in Transition Portfolios

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## Discovery

The process of gathering information about a person for the purposes of:

- Planning relevant curriculum
- Identifying necessary skills to be taught
- Developing IEP goals
- Gathering information for eventual job development

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## Why Do Discovery?

- To understand how the student's disability impacts her or his life
- To identify what supports are needed in order for the student to be successful
- To develop a support plan
- To identify the student's interests and contributions
- To guide curricular content and volunteer/work experiences

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## Why Start in Middle School?

- Students with disabilities may need extra time to explore employment options and gain work experience
- Transition team members may need extra time to learn about student support needs and how to meet those needs
- Middle school offers lots of opportunities to build competence, teach social skills, and foster independence

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## Why Start in Middle School?

- Kids without disabilities typically gain their first employment experiences at this age (chores, volunteering, pet and child care, newspaper routes, etc.)
- The transition planning process may help kids stay interested in school – it may make school activities seem more relevant

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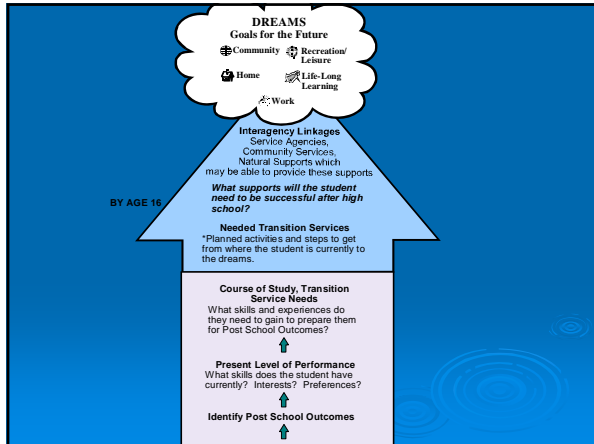
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## Begin to Plan Connections

- What services might the student eventually need?
- How, when and where are those services accessed?
- Is there information that should be captured and compiled now to facilitate the application process later?

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## Example: Developmental Disabilities Programs

- Does the student already have DD services as a child?
- If not, who are the local case managers to whom the student may eventually be assigned?
- How are DD services accessed in our community (phone numbers, addresses, Web sites, staff names)?
- Begin the paperwork so it is ready to go when the student turns 16.

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### Example: Social Security Benefits

- Is the student receiving SSI or other Social Security benefits?
- If not, apply.
- Begin learning about Social Security work incentives such as the Student Earned Income Exclusion and Plans for Achieving Self Support.
- Exercise caution when considering putting assets in the student's name.

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### Example: Workforce Investment Act Programs

- At age 14, the student can apply for WIA Youth Employment funds.
- Services can include assistance with such things as learning job skills (résumé writing, interviewing, etc.); developing and funding wages for work experiences; and monies to purchase work-related necessities (special clothing, tools, etc.).

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### Other Possible Connections

- Tribal programs
- Centers for Independent Living
- Advocacy and self-advocacy groups (People First, for example)

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## Through Discovery...

- We learn information that helps us start to think about where the student might be going...



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## We use this information...

- To develop IEP goals and curricular content

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## Through Discovery...

Students learn about their interests, strengths and support needs --- they can use this information to help guide their own IEPs

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We use this information...

- To assign chores at home

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We use this information...

- To create volunteer and in-school work experiences

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We use this information...

- To develop community-based work experiences

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## We use this information...

- To look at self-employment exploration possibilities

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## We use this information...

- To help students develop self-advocacy skills



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## Transition in Action – Hamilton YCP

- Youth Corps Project
- Through Denver Options, Inc.
- Corporation for National and Community Service project
- Goal is to provide service opportunities for young people with disabilities
- Hamilton is a pilot site

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## YCP – Who is served?

- 7 middle school students are currently enrolled
- Any disability qualifies a student for participation
- 2 current participants have cognitive delays

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## Transition in Action – Glasgow “Bare Books”

- Developed by teachers in Glasgow as part of Linkages project
- Linkages targeted high school students...teachers saw need to start in middle school
- Incorporated the Discovery and early transition planning activities into curriculum

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## Bare Books - Development

- Started with students designing their own book covers
- Next, they completed interest inventories (introduced as a way for students to get to know themselves better)
- Then students were given a series of worksheets with easy check-off answers
- Students typed the answers into the computer, printed out the documents, and glued them into the Bare Books

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## Bare Books - Contents

- Cover
- Introduction
- Detailed introduction
- Family
- Home
- Daily Routine
- Friends, Connections

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## Bare Books - Contents

- School
- Work
- Recreation
- Preferences
- Customized Planning Exercise
  - Ideal workplace conditions
  - Interests and preferences
  - Contributions
  - Job tasks

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## Bare Books – Where did they fit?

- Social Studies
- Computer
- Transition
- English

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## Transition in Action – Transition Portfolios

- Currently in development as part of Partnerships in Transition project
- Will be used as a way of capturing Discovery information to help guide IEPs, curricular content, volunteer and work experiences, etc.
- Portfolios will include both text and photos of the student

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## Opening Photo of Student



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## Introduction

- Student's full name
- Grade in school
- Current school year (e.g., 2006/2007)
- Name of current school
- Hometown



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## Family



- Who lives in your home with you?
- If you have brothers and sisters, how old are they and what grades are they in?
- Where do people in your house work?

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## Home

- What are your favorite things to do when you are at home? How often do you do them?
- What are things that your family says that you need to learn to be more independent at home?
- What does your family say you are really good at?

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## Daily Routine

- Describe your typical school day, from the time you get out of bed in the morning until the time you go to sleep at night.
- Describe your typical non-school day (like a weekend or summer day).



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## Community

- Where are places that you go in the community?
- What activities do you do there?
- How often do you go? And who do you go with? How do you get there?

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## Friends

- When you aren't in class, with whom do you like to spend time?
- What kinds of things do you like to do with them?
- Where do you go with different friends?



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## School



- What are your favorite classes and parts of the school day?
- What are your least favorite classes?
- What subjects are harder for you?
- What subjects are easier for you?

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## Work



- What chores do you have to do at home?
- What other work do you do around your house?
- Have you ever helped someone else (friends, neighbors, etc.) do a chore, like stacking firewood, mowing grass, babysitting?
- Have you ever been paid to do any work?

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## Questions and Answers?



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