PLAN YOUR WAY OK

Predictors of Post-School Success Guide

Oklahoma's Secondary Transition Framework

Data-Driven Secondary Transition Planning
Collaborative Systems and Sustainable Teaming
Evidence- and Research-Based Practices

The ***Predictors of Post-School Success Guide*** is part of **Oklahoma's Secondary Transition Framework** developed through the Oklahoma Pathways to Partnerships Project (OP2P). The Framework outlines how to support students with disabilities as they move from high school to adult life. It includes high-quality training based on proven practices, expected outcomes, guides, resources, and practical tools to engage youth, families and community partners to improve transition outcomes across the state.

Guides

The Transition Framework Guides connect directly to the Framework and give local teams step-by-step tools to review their current services, improve collaboration, and plan for stronger post-school results.

- *Oklahoma Secondary Transition Framework Guide*
- *Oklahoma Transition Teaming Guide*
- ***Predictors of Post-School Success Guide***
- *ASAP Assessment and Planning Guide*
- *Resource Mapping Guide*
- *Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Collaboration Guide*
- *Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) and LEAs Collaboration Guide*

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Visit PlanYourWayOK.com to access Oklahoma's Secondary Transition Framework materials and additional resources to support successful secondary transition planning! The Plan Your Way OK website is a central hub designed to inform and support students with disabilities and their families as they prepare for life after high school.

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Introduction

The Predictors of Post-School Success Guide provides transition professionals with research-based, evidence-based, and promising practices useful for educators and young adult service professionals to equip youth with the skills and resources needed for adult living and working in the community. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) identified sets of practices and predictors based on high-quality research. The NTACT:C website provides supporting literature, research methodology and several tools, additional links, and information about the Practices and Predictors. This guide was adapted from Ohio's Predictors of Post-School Success framework, originally developed through the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and the Predictor Implementation School or District Self-Assessment developed by NTACT:C. **Learn more about NTACT:C** (transitionta.org).

What are predictors?

Predictors include a multitude of various kinds of services, programs, structures, and activities that do not fit neatly into any one type of entity. Some predictors represent activities, programs, and services that are provided to groups or available schoolwide. Other predictors pertain to experiences afforded to individual youth, based on their needs.

Families and youth can gain information to share with team members about possible programs and services to build community capacity and investment in serving transition youth. Multi-agency teams can plan for engaging youth in predictor activities that begin while the youth is still in school and continue into adulthood. Teams can also consider how to institute and improve access to predictor activities throughout a school district, community, or county.

Predictors of Post-School Success reflect activities, services, and supports that are:

- **initiated during the school years,**
- **associated with higher rates of success as youth enter adulthood, and**
- **critical to make available to transition youth.**

In essence, predictors are about getting the conditions right for students to become productive adults, equipped with everything they need to live meaningful, satisfying lives as workers and community members.

IMPORTANT: These predictors are only as effective as the fidelity with which they are implemented and the degree of match with the youth's learning styles and needs. **Learn more about predictors at NTACT:C** (transitionta.org).

What makes predictors important?

Research shows that youth who engaged in predictor activities improved the likelihood that they learned new skills or achieved desired adult life outcomes, or both.

The likelihood for improvement is enhanced by the degree of match or 'fit' between the chosen predictor and the individual. There are several items to consider in creating an effective match:

- **the person's profile as a learner –** How does the person prefer to learn new information or skills, or apply their knowledge and skills to a task?
- **the purpose –** Is the person learning something new? Applying their skills to a new situation? Looking to improve performance?
- **the environment or context –** Is the person in a learning setting? On the job? At home? In the community? Participating in leisure or recreational activities?

These questions, and more, are useful for planning to engage young people in predictor activities at the right time, in the right situation to work toward meaningful adult life outcomes. Transition assessment data and information provide the foundation for addressing questions such as those above.

Who can use predictors?

All professionals, family members and youth can make use of the predictors. A multi-agency team that includes the youth, family, educators, and adult service representatives creates a broader perspective of the possibilities and potential for the youth's future than when a single agency or family works alone. Adult service partners, such as Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), can leverage services for eligible youth still in school.

How are predictors reflected in services and planning?

The predictors represent an eclectic assortment of types of services, supports and programs. In planning, educators, the youth, family, community, and agency partners

need to consider how, at a regional or community level, the capacity exists to ensure the predictors are accessible and available to individual youth.

What is the value of planning with partners?

The predictors represent a mixture of items to make available to youth. An alliance among families, schools and agency professionals creates the infrastructure that makes a wide array of the predictors possible.

Collaborative planning among regional and community partners helps to extend the resources that any single agency contributes toward development and implementation of predictors. Planning as a multi-agency team increases the resources available to serve individual youth across systems.

The purpose of transition planning is to determine, for an individual youth, the services, supports, instruction, experiences, and linkages to community and adult-serving agencies that position them to achieve their desired adult outcomes. Comprehensive transition planning considers whether and how predictors will benefit the individual.

Planning decisions made by the team require:

- an individualized approach, keeping the youth, and not agency procedures, at the center of all decisions;
- a multi-agency team focused on the strengths, preferences, interests and needs of the youth; and
- transition assessment data and information that creates a rich profile of the youth as a future adult.

How are the predictors organized in this guide?

NTACT-C has organized the 23 predictors into four clusters, detailed in this document. The clusters group the predictors by similar topics or themes.

The Predictor Clusters are:

- **Collaborative Systems for Youth Support**
- **Youth Skills**
- **Career Development**
- **Policy**

Cluster One: Collaborative Systems for Youth Support

Predictors in Cluster One

- **Interagency Collaboration**
- **Parental Involvement**
- **Transition Program**
- **Youth Support**
- **Parent Expectations**

Collaborative systems designed to support youth are associated with better adult life outcomes. Collaborative Systems are most effective when it works “top down” as well as bottom up. This means that the system to facilitate collaboration among transition professional across systems is designed with leadership approval, support, and resources to encourage active participation by the youth, families, educators, adult agency partners, and members of the community, school, or agency.

Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration is a clear, purposeful, and carefully designed process. It promotes cross agency, cross program, and cross disciplinary efforts leading to tangible transition outcomes for youth. A variety of agencies, organizations, and people with a common interest in transition service delivery can become members of transition teams. Interagency teams become ‘collaborative’ when their central purpose is to coordinate across agencies to improve adult life outcomes for youth. Such networks provide continuity for the youth as they move from school based to adult agency services.

Parental Involvement in Transition Planning

Parental involvement means parents, families, or guardians are active and knowledgeable participants in all aspects of transition planning such as decision-making, providing support, attending meetings, and advocating for their child.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines parent involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities that focus on a wide array of roles through which families might be involved in planning and delivering individual and community-level transition education and services, such as assessment, decision-making, policy development, and as trainers.”

Transition Program

A transition program prepares students to move from secondary settings, such as middle or high school, to adult life, utilizing comprehensive transition planning and education that creates individualized opportunities, services, and supports to help students achieve their post-school goals in education or training, employment, and independent living.

Some characteristics of transition programs found to be effective include:

- systems-level infrastructure, such as highly qualified staff and administrators with defined roles and responsibilities and access to sufficient budgets, to monitor and guide students in achieving post-school goals,
- integrated instruction in all areas of independent living, including community living, transportation, recreation and leisure, self-advocacy, goal setting, and decision-making,
- individualized, transition-focused curriculum and instruction based on students' postsecondary goals, and
- instruction and training in natural environments supported by classroom instruction.

Youth Support

Youth support refers to a network of people, including family, friends, educators, and adult service providers, who provide services and resources in multiple environments to prepare students to achieve transition and postsecondary goals aligned with their strengths, preferences, interests, and needs. Interagency collaboration strengthens the impact of support to the student by broadening the circle of people to include those with firsthand experience in providing adult-based services. Making linkages with the service system that will take over responsibility for ongoing support creates conditions for the youth to move successfully into adult living and working. Student support includes both formal and informal networks. Youth success is enhanced by a network, regardless of whether it is formal or informal. These networks promote individualized planning and services to prepare students for adult life.

Parent Expectations

The aspirations that families have for the adult lives of their children have an impact on that young person's outcomes. There are many dynamics within a family that affect how

much parents think in specific terms about their child's future. There may be concerns about safety, health, independence, or any number of other areas. Especially when the young person has complex or significant needs, families can struggle to see beyond the current day. The benefit of families holding high expectations for their son or daughter's future is significant. There is no downside to expecting youth to achieve at high levels.

Examples of Collaborative Systems of Supports in Action

- A region of several counties creates a transition council. Membership includes educators, families, disability services, mental health, vocational rehabilitation, adult service providers, community colleges, and universities. They meet regularly, formalizing their council with an interagency agreement.

- The OK Family Network annually hosts the Joining Forces: Supporting Family-Professional Partnerships Conference. Joining Forces brings together local, state, and national leaders to discuss best practices and promising practices around family-professional partnerships. Participants gain knowledge and practical tools to use as they work together in support of a good life for the person with special health care needs, intellectual disabilities, and other Oklahomans. The conference also offers opportunities for making connections with professionals, families, and others for future partnership activities.

- A model for increasing parent involvement includes ongoing, two-way communication, using brief texts, notes home, formal and informal reports regarding successes and issues; planning for youth-led meetings; assisting youth to present plans and progress at parent conferences; acknowledging, supporting, and encouraging the continued role parents play in the lives of their adult children.

- A collaboration of several districts in developing transition planning training for families to increase parent knowledge and involvement. It is offered online and in person at varying locations in the county. Area parents are among the developers and presenters of the training.

- Being sensitive to the idea that families perceive transition through three lenses: bureaucratic (What agency? What do they do? How do we apply?); family life (Change to daily routines or work schedules? Getting around?); and adult status (Will they be safe? Ready to be more independent? How will services change?).

- Ensuring transition planning addresses common concerns of families, such as leaving the structure and support of the school system for the unknowns of adult

services, fears about waiting lists for residential and employment services, and a lack of social networks for their child.

- Addressing possible differences in expectations for adult life between families and their child, with young adults wanting community employment and the lives of typical young adults, while family members are concerned with safety and security. Often, adult providers, school personnel, and families hold more restrictive expectations for the future than those held by young people.

- There is strong evidence that when parents participate routinely in individualized education program (IEP) meetings during the 11th and 12th grade years, it is more likely that their child will be engaged in stable post-school employment.

- Comprehensive and quality youth transition programs in high school are highly correlated with youth being more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and education.

- Students who received some or all these support services while in school were more likely to be employed or attending postsecondary education: receiving career counseling, obtaining help finding a job, training for job skills, and acquiring vocational education services at any time during high school.

Resources

Plan Your Way OK is a one-stop shop for students, families, professionals, business partners, and statewide agencies. It offers resources, partner agency access, a statewide events calendar, and more, simplifying connections and providing everything needed to engage, collaborate, and stay informed about transition services. **Visit the Plan Your Way OK website** (planyourwayok.com).

Oklahoma Secondary Transition Planning Folders for Elementary, Middle and High School are a great resource for all transition stakeholders! Collaboratively developed by the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC), Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services (DRS), and the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), the folders are available in English, Spanish, Standard Print, Large Print, and in a Braille-ready document, with printed options available by emailing **TransitionFolders@okdrs.gov** or download the

information on the folders on **Plan Your Way OK website** (planyourwayok.com/resources) or visit the DRS Brochures and Resources webpage.

Oklahoma Transition Council (OTC) is focused on improving transition education, planning, and services through stakeholder partnerships that lead to successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, including education or training, employment, independent living, mental health services, and community participation. Members represent various organizations, including the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Works, public school educators, parent and advocacy organizations, institutes of higher education, and many more. **Learn more about the OTC** (planyourwayok.com/partners).

Oklahoma Transition Teams (OKTT) are local or regional groups supporting youth with disabilities in their transition to adult life. Composed of educators, administrators, families, students, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and community partners, OKTTs collaborate to set goals, provide transition education, and connect individuals to services. Supported by the Oklahoma Transition Council (OTC) through the annual Oklahoma Transition Institute (OTI), these teams help coordinate secondary transition services and foster community connections. **Read more about Transition Teams** (planyourwayok.com/partners).

The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) has developed Fast Fact Sheets to provide teachers, administrators, and families with information about and ideas for incorporating secondary evidence-based predictors of post-school success into the transition planning process. There are fast fact sheets for areas such as transition-related planning, instruction, and service responsibilities for special educators, parental involvement, transition programs, non-academic behaviors associated with post-school employment and education, transition assessment, community experiences, paid employment and work experience, workplace behaviors, and more. Each fact sheet includes research-based essential characteristics associated with each topic and recommendations for implementation. Organization members have access to all DCDT Fast Facts Sheets through their website. **Visit the DCDT website to access Fast Fact Sheets** (dcdt.org).

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) provides information, tools, and supports, to assist multiple stakeholders in delivering effective services and instruction for students and out-of-school youth with disabilities. **Read more on the NTACT:C website** (transitionta.org).

Cluster Two: Youth Skills

Predictors in Cluster Two

- **Community Experiences**
- **Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy**
- **Goal Setting**
- **Social Skills**
- **Travel Skills**
- **Technology Skills**

The transition skills youth acquire position them to achieve their adult life ambitions. These skills are directly linked to success in adulthood, particularly when efforts are focused on maximizing each youth's skill development. Some skills pertain to personal growth, while others are related to learning, living, and working in the community. Skill development in these areas is lifelong. The foundations are established during the school years, but continue as new experiences or challenges emerge, such as job changes, relocation, meeting new people, health or mobility issues, or family changes.

Fostering the development of youth skills presents an excellent opportunity for collaboration between educators and adult service personnel. The team can work together to create practice sites in the community or workplaces, for example. The skills in this cluster are naturally interconnected, and teaching one skill often leads to improvements in other skill areas. Additionally, many of these skills are supported by research as evidence-based practices.

Community Experiences

Community experiences are activities that occur outside of school, program, or institutional settings, supported by classroom instruction, where students apply academic, social, and general work behaviors and skills. These experiences focus on activities with planned, intentional learning outcomes. The "community" is defined as commercial businesses, workplaces, and community services and spaces such as stores, gyms, banks, restaurants, and parks.

Some students may excel in applying their knowledge within the relatively controlled environments of school, programs, or home. However, the community provides opportunities to observe youth in settings with elements of unpredictability which can reveal areas needing further attention, such as additional skills, coping mechanisms, sensory sensitivities, or behaviors.

The community offers real-life opportunities for observation, assessment, and instruction. Any team member, especially the youth, their families, and adult service providers, can teach, assess, and coach youth in practicing these skills.

Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

Self-determination and self-advocacy encompass skills that are essential for a meaningful adult life. Self-determination refers to the ability to make choices, solve problems, set goals, and accept the consequences of one's actions. Self-advocacy involves the ability to speak up for oneself and communicate what is important.

This includes:

- asking for what one wants and expressing thoughts and feelings,
- knowledge of one's rights and responsibilities,
- the difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness,
- communicating effectively, including negotiation, compromise, and persuasion,
- practicing effective listening, and
- developing leadership and teamwork skills.

These two skill areas encompass several closely related skills defined as follows:

Psychological Empowerment: An innate belief in and understanding of the relationship between one's actions and the outcomes they experience.

Youth Autonomy and Decision Making: The degree to which a person acts based on their own preferences, interests, and abilities, includes taking a leadership role in the transition planning process and using a structured approach to make decisions.

Self-Realization: Understanding one's strengths and support needs and effectively communicating them to others.

Self-Care and Independent Living: Possessing functional living skills necessary for managing personal self-care and daily independent living. This includes personal management skills for interacting with others, daily living tasks, financial management, and self-management of healthcare and wellness needs. It also involves knowing when and how to seek assistance or access emergency, medical, community, and commercial services.

Self-determination and self-advocacy skills are all closely related and interconnected. People continually strive to develop these skills throughout their lives. While there is some foundational knowledge associated with these skills, they are primarily context-based and most effectively developed through practice and experience in the environments and situations where they will be applied. These skills, when practiced together are frequently referred to as common sense.

Goal Setting

Goal setting involves applying various self-determination and self-advocacy skills to thoughtfully develop both short- and long-term goals for adult life. Setting goals empowers youth to take ownership of their transition planning and activities while fostering motivation and success. Regular feedback from the team on goals and progress helps youth stay focused and on track to achieve their objectives.

Youth are taught a structured process for goal setting, which may include:

- establishing long-term goals first,
- breaking down long-term goals into more manageable steps, and
- setting benchmarks to measure progress and maintain pacing along a timeline.

Social Skills

Social skills refer to behaviors and attitudes that promote effective communication and cooperation. These include social conventions, social problem-solving during social interactions, understanding body language, speaking, listening, responding, and both verbal and written communication.

Social skills are often context-specific, requiring an understanding of the social norms expected in various environments and situations, including behaviors in an employee break room, at a rock concert versus a church service, or during a job interview. While some foundational knowledge about social skills can be taught in a classroom setting, practicing these skills in authentic environments and situations is the most effective way to learn and refine them.

Travel Skills

Traveling independently, whether as a pedestrian, by public transportation, or by driving, is essential for maintaining quality of life and participating fully in the community. Access to transportation, whether by car, cab, ride-share services, or public transit

systems, enables individuals to attend work, school, training programs and classes; visit friends; complete daily errands such as grocery shopping; and engage in recreational activities.

Transportation is a gateway to broader societal opportunities, including employment, post-secondary education, job training programs, recreation, social activities, medical appointments, classes, job interviews, vacations, and more.

The travel skills required vary based on the geographic area in which youth will be travelling. The type of community, whether urban, suburban, or rural, significantly influences the transportation options that are available.

In some rural and suburban areas, transportation options may include county-based, on-demand, or scheduled public transit. In contrast, most urban areas typically offer public transportation routes in addition to on-demand and specialized transportation.

Technology Skills

The capacity to use appropriate and functional technology, such as computers, tablets, and phones, in a way to accomplish goals or have access to information and social interactions.

Examples of Youth Skills in Action

- A special educator provides direct instruction to high school youth in self-determination. Students participate in goal setting sessions where they set their own short- and long-term goals using person-centered planning and the I'm Determined Goal Plan.

- Conducting ecological assessments across various environments provides valuable insights into youth transitions and highlights essential skills they need to develop. These assessments help identify where young people feel most comfortable, including social, or recreational settings, and where they are most productive such as workplaces or classrooms. This information is instrumental in shaping and refining their adult life goals.

- A collaborative team works with partner agencies to create community sites where youth can practice skills and behaviors in real-world settings. These community sites offer valuable opportunities for both assessment and instruction, supporting skill development in practical contexts.

- A local transition team has set a goal to ensure that all youth with disabilities have a functional communication system. This includes voice communication, electronic aids, adaptive or alternative methods including sign language and braille, or assisted technologies. The team collaborates with speech-language pathologists from schools, agencies, and private practices to explore communication modes, therapies, and technologies. Equipped with an effective communication system, youth can progress in learning and practicing the skills necessary for adult living, learning, and working.

- Mobility trainers use a straightforward 4-step process to teach travel skills.

    - **Plan for the travel:** Determine where, when, and how to travel.

    - **Review transportation options:** Consider driving, public transportation, cabs, or ride-share services.

    - **Teach and practice travel behavior:** Focus on appropriate conduct and social norms during travel.

    - **Teach and practice staying safe:** Emphasize avoiding problems and managing unexpected situations.

- The high school curriculum includes lessons designed to teach and practice the knowledge and skills necessary for safe travel. These lessons cover essential topics such as responding to lures from strangers, handling situations where they are lost in the community, road safety, addressing bullying, basic first aid, and emergency response.

    - Youth may also need additional instruction and practice in:

        - accessing and using maps and ride-share apps,

        - practicing pedestrian safety,

        - reading and using bus schedules, and

        - maintaining a list of emergency contacts and important phone numbers.

These skills equip students to travel independently and confidently while prioritizing their safety.

- A summer self-advocacy program teaches youth an effective decision-making process and provides opportunities for practice. The process includes the following steps:
    - **Listing relevant action alternatives:** Identify possible courses of action.
    - **Identifying potential consequences:** Consider the outcomes associated with each action.
    - **Assessing the probability of each consequence:** Evaluate how likely each outcome is to occur if the action is taken.
    - **Establishing relative importance:** Determine the value or utility of each consequence.
    - **Integrating values and probabilities:** Combine the assessed importance and likelihood to identify the most appealing course of action.

This structured approach empowers youth to make informed and thoughtful decisions.

- At a regional team meeting, a DRS counselor observes that many of the youth on her caseload lack decision-making and problem-solving skills. She suggests sharing information about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) with teachers and offers to conduct brief informational sessions for staff to address their questions and provide guidance.
- A school collaborates with families to teach, assess, model, and provide practice for self-care and independent living skills at home. These skills include:
    - cooking,
    - housekeeping and home maintenance,
    - using transportation,
    - clothing care,
    - accessing community services,
    - time and organizational management,
    - understanding social roles and practicing citizenship, and

- critical thinking and problem-solving.

This partnership helps equip youth with the essential skills needed for independent and successful adult living.

- The Developmental Disabilities Services offers a summer transition bootcamp for eligible youth. The bootcamp provides instruction in various life skills, which are practiced in community settings such as banks, libraries, and restaurants. Youth also visit a variety of worksites and have the opportunity to return to selected locations for one-on-one job shadowing experiences.

Resources

The Zarrow Institute on Transition and Self-Determination at the University of Oklahoma strives to promote successful transition outcomes for all by implementing innovative research, applying findings in practice, and disseminating knowledge through high-quality products and professional development opportunities. **Explore the Zarrow Institute's resources** (ou.edu/education/zarrow).

OK STABLE provides individuals with special needs more independence and financial security for their future. These accounts offer individuals an opportunity for a tax-free savings plan for disability-related expenses, allowing individuals to save and invest money without jeopardizing need-based benefits. **Check for OK STABLE eligibility** (okstable.org).

EnvisionIT (EIT) is a teacher-guided digital curriculum designed for students with and without disabilities in grades 8 to 12, focusing on developing key literacy and career skills essential for success in the 21st-century workplace. **Review the EIT curriculum** (nisonger.osu.edu).

I'm Determined offers resources for youth, families, and educators around self-determination. Self-determination is about youth with disabilities taking control of their lives. Resources include videos, modules, a transition guide, downloadable brochures, and more. **Access resources at the I'm Determined website** (imdetermined.org).

Moving Students Forward provides templates for students to create presentations for their transition IEP meetings, highlighting their **Strengths**, **Preferences**, **Interests**, and **Needs** (SPINs) for life after high school.

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) is designed to guide teachers in supporting students to achieve their self-set goals and develop skills associated with self-determination, such as problem solving and self-evaluation. The SDLMI supports

teachers in learning to shape their practices to provide students opportunities to develop and practice self-determination skills. The SDLMI is intended to be used by general and special education teachers and school professionals across a variety of academic and non-academic areas, such as coursework and social, behavioral, and transition planning, to enable students to become more effective at initiating and self-regulating their actions as they work toward self-selected goals. **Access the SDLMI Teacher's Guide - PDF (4.1 MB)** (kucd.ku.edu).

Oklahoma Mobility Management is a transportation program that focuses on meeting community needs through the coordinated use of various transportation providers. It aims to enhance transportation for veterans, older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and others, improving access to healthy living resources through various transportation coordination activities. Through regional Mobility Management Programs, Managers, and Navigators, the program focuses on meeting individual customer needs by offering a wide range of transportation options, service providers, and coordination to achieve a more efficient transportation service delivery system. **Connect with transportation options in Oklahoma** (okmm.multiscreensite.com).

Transportation Education Curriculum is available through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center and was previously disseminated through Easter Seals Project ACTION. The curriculum provides educators, transit professionals, families, and others with strategies for integrating transportation content, including travel instruction, into the educational experience for students, including individuals with disabilities. The curriculum consists of an introduction and nine modules covering content to help learners understand why public transportation education is critical to students' postsecondary success; provide a framework for transportation education from student assessment though the provision of travel instruction; demonstrate how transportation and education professionals can work together to address student transportation needs; offer best practices for engaging students, families, transit professionals and the community in transportation education; provide resources to help educators and transportation professionals succeed in meeting student educational needs; and learn about transportation resources, such as mobility management systems. **Download the complete curriculum and modules** (nadtc.org).

Overcoming Obstacles provides educators worldwide with tools to teach their students how to communicate effectively, achieve meaningful goals, make informed decisions, and more. They offer a free library of life skills curriculum for grades K-12. **Access the free life skills library** (overcomingobstacles.org).

The Watson Institute offers free PowerPoints on social skills in special education that were developed in response to current social research in the field of autism spectrum disorders, the difficulties these students experience with writing skills, the need for curriculum for students at the middle and high school level, and decreased planning time afforded to special education professionals. In addition, staff at Watson Institute, including consultants, social workers, psychologists, and special education teachers, shared their observations from years of work in the field and research settings to determine a medium that would meet the needs they viewed as important to students with social challenges. **Download the free social skills presentations** (thewatsoninstitute.org).

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is a nonprofit organization that helps educators use technology to revolutionize learning. **Explore the ISTE standards and resources for educators** (iste.org).

The Oklahoma State Department of Education's (OSDE) Educational Technology Standards and Resources supports Oklahoma teachers and school districts with the successful implementation of education technology. Oklahoma resources include virtual professional development modules and access to instructional communities for professional growth. **Learn more about Oklahoma's Educational Technology Standards and Resources** (oklahoma.gov/education).

Cluster Three: Career Development

Predictors in Cluster Three

- **Career Awareness**
- **Occupational Courses**
- **Paid Employment and Work Experiences**
- **Work Study**
- **Career-Technical Education**

Career development is a cornerstone of successful adult outcomes for youth. It offers families and transition professionals the opportunity to help youth explore their career interests and begin to see themselves as workers and adult consumers.

Transition services focused on career development play a vital role in fostering self-sufficiency during a critical period in a young person's growth and development. Building a sense of identity as an adult in the workforce is developmental, with each component built upon the previous one, and, for many, it is a life-long journey.

Career development encompasses more than simply obtaining an occupation; it requires a comprehensive, whole-life planning perspective. Achieving successful career development and transitions necessitates interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration, as well as fostering new connections between parents and professionals in education, community services, and employment sectors.

Career Awareness

Career Awareness involves learning about the opportunities, education, and skills required for various occupational pathways, enabling youth to choose a career that aligns with their strengths and interests. Youth and their team collaboratively begin building a profile of SPIN, which is their **Strengths**, **Preferences**, **Interests**, and **Needs**.

A youth's SPIN profile will evolve as transition activities, services and assessments provide experiential learning and expand their knowledge. Each member of the team, including the youth, family, educators, and adult agency personnel, brings a unique perspective to transition planning. This collaboration helps youth explore career paths and options that align with their SPIN profile.

Career awareness not only develops a youth's self-awareness but also deepens their understanding of various occupations and their requirements.

Occupational Courses

Occupational courses are individual courses designed to support career awareness, enable students to explore various career pathways, and develop occupationally specific skills through instruction and experiences aligned with their desired employment goals.

These occupational courses may be offered as part of the high school curriculum or through community colleges, career-technical adult education programs, and other training entities.

Paid Employment and Work Experiences

Work experience refers to any activity that places youth in an authentic workplace environment. This may include work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, or paid employment.

Paid employment can consist of standard jobs within a company or organization, or customized work assignments negotiated with an employer. These opportunities always feature competitive pay, receiving at least minimum wage, paid directly to the student

by the employer. Engaging in paid employment of any kind while in high school is the strongest predictor of post-school employment success.

Work Study

A work study program is a structured sequence of work skills instruction and experiences designed to develop students' work attitudes and general workplace behaviors. These programs provide students with integrated academic and vocational instruction that mutually support their overall development.

Key features of effective work study programs include:

- opportunities for both paid and unpaid work experiences, both in school and within the community;
- options for earning high school credits and fulfilling graduation requirements;
- classroom instruction on employability skills and workplace attitudes;
- practice and simulation of job-seeking skills, such as interviewing, interpersonal relationships, and résumé building;
- career exploration activities, including both online and in-person experiences; and
- development of adult living skills, such as:
    - technology use and safety,
    - written and verbal communication, and
    - problem-solving and decision-making.

These programs prepare students for future employment and adult responsibilities, bridging academic knowledge with practical, real-world applications.

Career Technical Education

Career Technical Education (CTE) consists of a sequence of courses that prepare students for specific jobs or careers, ranging from trade and craft positions to technical, business, and professional roles.

Concentrated CTE programs are available for high school students, allowing them to earn both an industry-recognized credential and a high school diploma. Additionally, CTE programs of varying lengths are offered for adults through CTE Adult Education programs, community colleges and other postsecondary training providers.

Examples of Career Development in Action

- Twice a year, high school students in the district participate in a day-long visit to a Career Technical Center, where they can tour several programs. The school provides

transportation for all students, including those with disabilities, ensuring an inclusive experience.

- A student with a strong interest in auto mechanics enrolls in a semester-long class at the technology center focused on small engine repair. This experience helps the student gain deeper insight into the field of mechanics and evaluate how well it aligns with their SPIN profile, or their Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs.

- Middle school teachers regularly connect academic lessons to careers that require those skills. Additionally, students have assignments to discuss with family members about their jobs and the skills needed to perform them.

- In collaboration with the school's assigned Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) counselor, the special educator helps students develop the skills needed to participate meaningfully in summer work experiences. Teachers, families, and the youth work closely with the counselor to determine the optimal timing for each student to gain the most benefit.

- Students and their families receive information about programs offered at the local Career Technical Center (CTC). Interested students are supported in further exploring various programs, including the required skills and academic background, as well as the employment prospects within those fields.

- In a Career Exploration class, students coordinate a family visit to the Career Technical Center (CTC). They then share the information they gathered during the visit with the class, fostering discussion and further learning.

- Students interested in summer work experience can apply for BEST STEP, a summer job readiness program that combines skill-building and paid work opportunities. This program is designed for students aged 16 and above with a documented disability, who are eligible or potentially eligible for DRS services and plan to return to school in the fall. Students gain valuable work skills while learning from instructors during the week-long Building Employment Skills Today (BEST) component of the program. Participating youth then have the opportunity to work part-time up to 25 hours per week as paid interns in a community business through the Summer Transition Employment Program (STEP) for a 4-week period. This statewide initiative is made possible through a collaboration between DRS, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and local Workforce Boards.

Resources

Oklahoma CareerTech connects students and businesses with training opportunities that help Oklahomans find rewarding careers and support Oklahoma industries. Their goal is to develop a world-class workforce for Oklahoma employers and to prepare Oklahomans to succeed in the workplace, education, and life. Career Tech serves students through 20 tech centers on 60 campuses, 397 PK-12 school districts, 16 Skills Centers campuses, 31 Adult Education and Family Literacy providers across 116 sites, with enrollments nearing 490,000 in past years. Special Populations are served through Oklahoma Career Tech's division of Counseling and Career Development which offers a wide range of resources for students, parents, counselors, and businesses, such as professional development, and grants. **Find resources for Special Populations from Oklahoma CareerTech** (oklahoma.gov/careertech).

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services offers many resources, including:

- Transition for Youth with Disabilities, which provides pre-employment transition services to youth and helps individuals with disabilities gain employment. **Explore DRS Transition services for youth** (oklahoma.gov/okdrs/students/transition).

- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), which offer career-focused preparation activities for youth with documented disabilities aged 14 to 21 provided through DRS and a contract with the University of Oklahoma's National Center on Disability Education and Training (NCDET). Activities in the five areas of Pre-ETS include Job Exploration, Work-Based Learning, Workplace Readiness, Self-Advocacy, and Post-Secondary Counseling, which can be provided to youth to enhance the development of employment readiness skills through various delivery methods. **Review Pre-ETS activities and opportunities** (outreach.ou.edu).

- BEST STEP, or Building Employment Skills for Today (BEST) and Summer Transition Employment Program (STEP), helps eligible participants gain summer work experience and improve their employment readiness among youth aged 16 to 21 with disabilities. **Learn more about the BEST STEP program** (oklahoma.gov/okdrs).

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) College and Career Readiness and Oklahoma Edge provide resources for career planning across elementary, middle, and high school, through web resources to help prepare students or children for next steps and their path to success after high school graduation, whether college or career. With resources for Business and Community, K-12 Educators, and Students and Families, Oklahoma Edge is OSDE's commitment to ensure all students have the opportunity and support to successfully secure a postsecondary degree or industry certification that

reflects each individual's passions and skills, with resources for the Individualized Career Academic Plan (ICAP), College and Career, Scholarship Opportunities, and Financial Aid. **Get resources for ICAP and College Readiness** (oklahoma.gov/education). **Explore career pathways on Oklahoma Edge** (okedge.com/about).

Oklahoma Association of People Supporting Employment First (OK-APSE) is the Oklahoma chapter of a national organization committed to improving and expanding integrated employment opportunities, services, and outcomes for people experiencing disabilities. **Learn more about OK-APSE's mission and vision** (ok-apse.org/about-us). **Read Noah's success story - PDF (482 KB)** (apse.org).

Oklahoma Works helps residents find jobs, make informed career decisions, and access training to build the state's workforce by collaborating with job seekers, employers, and partners to implement activities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. **Connect with Oklahoma Works' services and resources** (oklahoma.gov/workforce).

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on job accommodations and disability employment issues. Serving customers across the United States and around the world for over 35 years, JAN provides free, one-on-one practical guidance and technical assistance on job accommodation solutions, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation, as well as self-employment and entrepreneurship options for people with disabilities. JAN provides individualized consultation to assist:

- employers seeking guidance on practical ways to engage in the interactive process, provide job accommodation solutions, and comply with ADA;
- individuals with medical conditions and disabilities seeking information about job accommodation solutions, employment rights under the ADA, and self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities; and
- family members and rehabilitation, medical, educational, and other professionals in their effort to support successful employment outcomes for individuals with medical conditions and disabilities. **Get accommodation guidance on JAN's website** (askjan.org).

Cluster Four: Policy

Predictors in Cluster Four

- **Exit Exam Requirements and High School Diploma Status**

- **Inclusion in General Education**
- **Program of Study**

Policies are rules, principles, guidelines, or frameworks that an organization adopts to achieve its long-term goals. In the context of predictors, agency or school policies related to transition planning are designed to guide and influence decisions within the organization, ensuring activities are implemented that improve adult life outcomes for youth.

Policies that support the implementation of the predictors grant professionals the necessary permission to use these strategies for the benefit of the youth they serve.

CCRA Requirements and High School Diploma Status

College and Career Readiness Assessments (CCRAs) are divided into two parts. For a standard diploma, eleventh-grade students are required to take either the ACT or the SAT, including the writing section, as well as two state-created assessments in science and US History. For an alternate diploma, students must participate in the OK Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP).

To earn a standard high school diploma in Oklahoma, students must meet the state's requirements for a standard diploma, including the completion of all necessary curriculum credits for a standard diploma. Students participating in the OAAP must meet all the requirements to earn an alternate diploma.

Although CCRAs and earning a high school diploma occur at the conclusion of K-12 education, the policies enabling students to achieve these milestones have a profound impact from the very start of formal education. Foundational academic concepts, knowledge, and skills are introduced as early as preschool, where young learners also become familiar with the norms and expectations of social behavior in school, as well as the routines and strategies for academic learning.

Policies that emphasize learning the standard curriculum within general education classrooms for **all** students strongly align with this predictor.

Policies on remediation, test preparation, and determining appropriate learning and test-setting accommodations significantly influence whether and how students achieve these endpoint goals.

Inclusion in General Education

Inclusion in general education ensures that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum and participate in regular education classes alongside peers without disabilities. This approach applies the principle of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to determine the most appropriate classroom setting for each student to make meaningful progress in learning.

The LRE is a legal requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and requires that students with disabilities be placed in the most regular setting where they can receive necessary special education services and demonstrate progress. Inclusive education emphasizes the availability of a continuum of educational settings, ranging from the least to the most restrictive, that are flexibly implemented throughout the school day to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Effective inclusion policies encompass fostering a receptive school climate, implementing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and utilizing frequent formative assessments to inform the provision of targeted interventions for social, behavioral, communication, and learning needs.

Inclusive practices also rely on policies that promote collaboration among general education, special education, and therapy staff. These policies may include provisions for common planning time, professional training, structured assessment processes, and models for co-teaching, among other collaborative approaches.

Program of Study

Program of study refers to an individualized set of courses, experiences, and curriculum tailored to develop students' academic and functional achievement, supporting their attainment of desired post-school goals. Policies supporting this definition emphasize flexibility in student course and program selections. Such flexibility might include providing multiple pathways for earning credits, including career technical education, community-based work experiences, independent living skills development, community access programs, school-based enterprises, or dual-credit opportunities through cooperative agreements. These opportunities enable students to meet diploma requirements and transition smoothly into postsecondary education or employment.

Effective policies for this predictor would also establish a structured planning process to guide students in developing a personalized program of study, ensuring it aligns with their post-school aspirations and provides optimal preparation for achieving their goals.

Examples of Policy in Action

- A large urban high school has implemented policies aimed at improving graduation rates and reducing dropout rates among ninth- and tenth-grade students. One key strategy involves reorganizing staff and students into “families.” Each “family” includes a team of general education content area teachers, at least one intervention specialist, several paraprofessionals, and a guidance counselor. Students are assigned to these “families” to create a diverse and varied mix across several variables, including academic performance, attendance patterns, socioeconomic background, and disabilities.

- The “families” remain intact throughout the academic year, offering students a consistent support system. As students advance to the next grade level, new “families” are formed to accommodate their progression. Feedback from students indicates they feel more valued and supported within this structure. Notably, students with disabilities spend more than 80% of the school day in general education classrooms, reflecting the school’s commitment to inclusive practices.

- Students are regularly provided opportunities to practice formal test-taking procedures. The school continues to review district test data to evaluate whether this strategy contributes to improved test scores. Staff report feeling less stressed during test weeks, noting that students are more accustomed to the formal test environment. Similarly, students and their families have expressed that familiarity with the formal test setting helps students feel more confident and perform better on the tests.

- A county-based, regionally focused multi-agency transition team is dedicated to improving adult life outcomes for youth with disabilities. After analyzing adult life outcome data and examining access to and utilization of the predictors by high school students in the region, the team developed a set of recommendations for school districts. These recommendations focus on enhancing access to Career-Tech courses and work experiences, ensuring that students have equitable opportunities to engage in activities that support transition to successful adult life.

- School districts adopt a policy focused on transition planning meetings for students with disabilities. According to this policy, meetings are held for students as they enter ninth grade and include a guidance counselor. The counselor provides guidance on class selection, course of study, and Career-Tech options that align with the student’s post-school aspirations. Additionally, the guidance counselor advises students and families about colleges, adult training programs, and other pathways to support their transition to adult life.

- A large suburban district implements a policy to ensure a variety of learning setting options are available to all students. These options include individual and group tutoring, quiet rooms for focused study, the ability to request meetings with a counselor or social worker, and course sequences tailored to individual progress. Students can attend “grade-up” or “grade-down” classes for specific subjects as needed. The policy allows students to initiate requests while teachers actively collaborate with them to encourage and guide appropriate choices. Flexible options also include co-taught classes led by general educators and intervention specialists, ensuring equitable access to supportive learning environments for all students.

Resources

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Academic Advisement and Policy Guidebook outlines graduation and assessment requirements in Oklahoma for students on the standard diploma pathway. **Access the guidebook - PDF (536 KB)** (oklahoma.gov).

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Alternate Diploma details graduation and assessment requirements for students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP), which is aligned with alternate achievement standards and follows the alternate diploma pathway. **Review the requirements for the OSDE Alternate Diploma** (oklahoma.gov/education).

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Assessment – State Testing Resources compiles information and resources related to the Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) and the College- and Career-Readiness Assessments (CCRAs). **Access the State Testing Resources** (oklahoma.gov/education). Relevant to the assessment of students with disabilities, there is a section for all OSTP accommodations, including those outlined in the IEP or 504 Plan. **Get the OSTP Accommodations Manual - PDF (1.3 MB)** (oklahoma.gov).

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Special Education Services – Special Ed Assessment provides information about the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP), a component of the Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP), designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. OSDE Special Education Services ensures that all students with disabilities and their unique needs are considered as they participate with their peers in the assessment process, including students who meet the criteria for participation in the OAAP, which is aligned with alternate achievement standards. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandates that no more than 1% of all tested students may participate in an alternate assessment. IEP teams should discuss the accommodations needed for students to participate in the

general assessment before considering eligibility for the alternate assessment. **Review the OAAP eligibility criteria** (oklahoma.gov/education)

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Special Education Services – Least Restrictive Environment describes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provisions for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and the continuum of placement and services that applies to all students with disabilities of all ages eligible for special education services. **Read the LRE policies and procedures - PDF (4.5 MB)** (oklahoma.gov).

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Academic Advisement contains information and links to resources for high school graduation, including core curriculum, high school graduation checklists, and academic, testing, and remediation resources. **Explore academic advisement and graduation resources** (oklahoma.gov/education).

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) College and Career provides information and links to resources for college and career readiness, including Oklahoma Edge, ICAP, OK Career Guide, OK College Start, scholarship opportunities, financial aid, and many other additional resources. **Find resources for college and career readiness** (oklahoma.gov/education).

The Individual Career Plan (ICAP) is detailed in the ICAP FAQs for the IEP, which outlines how the ICAP works in coordination with the IEP. **Read the ICAP FAQs for the IEP - 2024 - PDF (348 KB)** (oklahoma.gov).

ICAP for Students with Significant Needs outlines how students with significant disabilities participate in and benefit from Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) activities. However, ICAP is not required for students who receive an alternative diploma. **Learn how ICAP can benefit students with significant needs - PDF (89.4 KB)** (oklahoma.gov).

OSDE Special Education Services Policies & Procedures for Special Education establishes the legal requirements for the State Education Agency (SEA), local education agencies (LEA), and other public agencies involved in providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. **Review the Policies and Procedures manual - PDF (4.5 MB)** (oklahoma.gov).

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