Practical Transition Strategies to Heighten Expectations, Engagement, and Empowerment for Students with Disabilities

Smart Beginnings – Teachers & Administrators
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What is the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C)?

→ Jointly funded center: The US Department of Education - The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

→ Helps state and local schools and agencies to better support students and youth in making successful transitions to adult life

→ Builds on history of:
  ✓ WINTAC (RSA)
  ✓ YTAC (RSA)
  ✓ NTACT (OSEP & RSA)
NTACT:C Staff
NTACT:C Website – www.transitionta.org

- Live and Pre-recorded Webinars
- Watch Parties
- Transition Life Hacks (videos)
- Online Modules & Mini-modules
- FAQs
- Presenter guides, videos, documents, toolkits, data resources, etc.
- Sign up for our weekly email News Blast
- Email: ntact-collab@uncc.edu
Presentation Take-Aways

→ Key commonalities and considerations for life transitions
→ Collaboration and student engagement are key
→ Resources for K-12 Planning
Life Stage Transitions

- Transitions occur from one life cycle stage to the next.
- Transition times often are the most challenging periods for families.
- In families with a child with a disability, life cycle changes may be more stressful.
- Key points that indicate transitions for youth without disabilities may be blurred or non-existent for youth with disabilities.
Transition Covers All Of Life’s Stages:

A “Transition” is any time an individual moves from one placement into another and are an ongoing process throughout an individual’s life.

- From Birth to 3 into Pre-School
- From Pre-School into Kindergarten
- From Kindergarten into Elementary School
- From Elementary School into Middle School
- From Middle School into High School
- From High School into College or Post Secondary Education
- From College/Post Secondary Education into Adult Living
Key Commonalities in Life Transitions

→ Embrace change and recognize the stress
→ Prepare and understand the next environment
→ Build support networks and understand community and agency supports
→ Explore, understand, and access tools and resources
→ Practice self-care
→ Be patient and allow time for success – celebrate the small gains
How Can We Make This Transition Easier on All Concerned?

✓ Presume competence
✓ Begin planning early and maintain consistency
✓ Involve ALL of the necessary players
✓ Provide professional development at all levels regarding the transition process and involve inter-educational and interagency partners in this training
✓ Each year have a “move up” day where the students and the families can meet the new teachers and staff
How Can We Make This Transition Easier on All Concerned? (continued)

→ Develop a plan where everyone knows their responsibilities
→ Observe stressors/pressures/situations beyond academic and connect with support
→ Coordinate the transfer of relevant information to the next placement
→ Link families and youth with other families and youth
→ Remember the three Cs – Communication, Coordination, Collaboration
Collaboration is Essential

Thoughtful and engaging collaboration is key to ensuring “seamless” transitions

Each team member:

 ✓ Brings unique **insights and expertise** to the table
 ✓ Considers **needs, interests and preferences** of the student
 ✓ Determines **how to support students** as they transition
 ✓ **Works together** to plan services that lead to a successful transition
Student Participation and Engagement is Key

→ Hold high expectations
→ Provide choices and ways to communicate
→ Encourage decision-making, expression of preferences, and participation in planning
→ Provide opportunities to practice self-advocacy and independent living skills in a variety of settings
→ Arrange learning and skill building tasks to be challenging, but not impossible – not boring or irrelevant!
→ Assist the student with identifying and arranging for appropriate:
  ✓ Natural supports
  ✓ Accommodations
  ✓ Assistive technology (AT)
Resources for K-12 Planning

✓ Maryland Career Development Framework for College & Career Readiness Grades Pre-K – Postsecondary/Adult

✓ National Center for College & Career Transitions – Career Development Competencies and Activities for the K-12 System

✓ Pennsylvania K-12 Guidance Plan
Thank you!