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Good Idea:

Since enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, the subsequent revision in 1997 and the final Federal regulations published in March of 1999, students with disabilities from age 14 onward were required by law to have as part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) a plan that provides for the services they will need to make a successful transition from school to the community.



Past experience has shown the importance of preparing children with disabilities for adult life. Today, one-half of adults with disabilities are not working and are not participants in the labor force. In contrast, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, almost four-fifths of all non-disabled adults are in the labor force. Furthermore, even with the support of Social Security Disability Income and other government programs, almost 20% of working age adults with disabilities have household incomes beneath the poverty line. Many families do not realize that there are no guarantees for life after school, and do not plan for the transition from school to life after school.

Leap:

This outreach effort promotes advocacy at the national, state, community, and family levels and encourages early transition planning for youth with disabilities for life after high school. Partner organizations will sponsor events that engage a full range of people involved in the life of youth with disabilities. This alliance of the outreach partners provide a vital link to the communities they serve. The campaign uses *Graduating Peter* (the HBO broadcast sequel to the Academy Award winning *Educating Peter*) and *My Future My Plan: A Transition Planning Resource for Students with Disabilities and their Families* to build awareness about early transition planning for students with disabilities.



Thus far, the campaign has leveraged exposure from the HBO television broadcast of *Graduating Peter* and the release of the *My Future My Plan* materials to build awareness about early transition planning for students with disabilities. The recent appearance of Peter (who is profiled in *Graduating Peter* and in *My Future My Plan*) and his family on the Oprah Winfrey show has provided another

opportunity to promote this important message.

Change:

A quantitative evaluation of the *My Future My Plan* materials showed that students who were exposed to the educational video and resource book had higher mean scores on favorable Attitudes toward IEP Meetings, Self-Efficacy, and Information Seeking Behaviors than students who were in the control group and thus not exposed to the educational video and resource book. Younger and lower grade intervention students had significantly higher improvements in the levels of their favorable Attitudes toward IEP Meetings. Intervention students who had parents with lower levels of education had significantly higher improvements in Self-Efficacy Beliefs than those whose parents had higher levels of education.



For the parents, intervention parents had higher mean scores on favorable Attitudes toward IEP Meetings and Information Seeking Behaviors but lower mean scores on Emotional Regulation Coping than control parents. Declines overtime in Parental Emotion Regulation Coping could bear a positive interpretation as they may indicate a healthier approach to transition planning and imply an increased trend toward strategic problem management.

The researched yielded promising results. In particular, outcomes revealed:

- 1) Positive attitudinal changes toward the IEP meetings
- 2) Increased self-efficacy related to managing transition planning tasks
- 3) Desired behavior changes such as increased information seeking about transition planning.

Video, Print, and Online Resources

Educating Peter

This HBO prime-time documentary tells the story of Peter, a third grader with Down syndrome, as he experiences his first year of being included in a typical classroom. Both Peter and his classmates go through a difficult and rewarding process of adjustment as he becomes a regular third grader. In addition to its broadcast schedule, this program is available to education and community groups interested in exploring innovative approaches to integrating children with special needs into public schools. Academy Award for Best Achievement Documentary Short Subject in 1992.

Graduating Peter

This feature documentary is a continuation of our documentary *Educating Peter*. Before third grade, Peter was educated only in classes for children with disabilities. At his new elementary school, Peter was the first child with severe disabilities to be included with regular students. When Peter entered Middle School, we continued to film him at

school, at home, and in his community, until he graduated from high school with a certificate of attendance. Over these years, his family worked to have him attend his local school, to develop friendships, and a future. This is the story of a family's struggle to build the best future for their son. Released on HBO.

My Future My Plan

This transition plan package includes a video, a video discussion guide, a student resource workbook, and a parent/teacher guide. The video uses a documentary approach that follows the real-life stories of several youth with disabilities who share their goals for the future and how they are overcoming barriers with support from their families and from education and transition professionals. The *My Future My Plan* student resource workbook and parent/teacher guide provide comprehensive information on transition planning including how to use the IEP as a tool to drive the transition process. The student resource workbook is written directly to the student even though they may not be expected to navigate it without the support of their family members and educators. The parent/teacher guide encourages everyone to be on the same page and promotes an open dialogue between all the players in the student's transition.



Outreach Partners

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)
The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies
The ARC of the United States
The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, a Division of the American Library Association
Council for Exceptional Children
Family Voices
Learning Disabilities Association of America
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports, University of Hawai'i at Manoa
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
Pacer Center
PEAK Parent Center
TASH: Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities since 1975

Funding

This project was supported by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Development was also supported in part by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education and the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.