



The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Transition Technical Assistance Center

A five state cooperative to improve transition services for students with disabilities

Fall 2001

Transition In Practice Sheet

Interagency Collaboration

What are the Benefits of Interagency Collaboration?

Interagency Collaboration is one of the keys to promoting a smooth transition from high school to adulthood for students. Interagency collaboration allows school system personnel, community service providers, students, and parents to work together to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Some of the benefits that can occur as result of interagency collaboration include:

-Sharing resources offers effective ways to bring together students, parents, educators, and employers without putting the full financial expense and responsibility on one party.

-Transitioning to adult service providers prior to graduation provides increased opportunities, fuller understanding, and increased supports and success for the student.

-Having communication networks and relationships established that are open and supportive of the student, school faculty, and adult service agencies.

-Providing students and families with the opportunity to learn about and connect to services prior to exiting school.

-Increasing and broadening the knowledge base of available services and community resources for entire team.

-Providing a vehicle for service coordination by sharing resources and reducing duplication of services (Thomas, F., Schaff, L., Grossi, T., Steigerwald, M., 2001)

The purpose of this TIP Sheet is to describe the approach to interagency collaboration used by the Shelby City/Cleveland County Schools (NC) that involves three-levels, including a Community Level Team, School Level Team, and an Individual Level Team.

Community Level Team

The purpose of the Community Level Team is to set the mission for meeting the transition services needs of the community's students, provide administrative leadership for developing and implementing transition services across different agencies, focus on solving problems and eliminating barriers, establishing policies and procedures for service delivery and coordination, and allocating personnel and funding resources to address needs. **Community Level Team membership includes** Exceptional Children's Coordinator(s), Director(s) of local group homes and other residential living arrangements, Director of the Employment Security Commission, Director(s) of

Workforce Development (Vocational Education), Principals, Director of Developmental Disabilities (Local Mental Health Authority), Arc president and other local advocacy groups, Administrator of the Local Chamber of Commerce, Transition Coordinator, Vocational Rehabilitation School Counselor and Adult Service Counselor, Representative from Social Security Program, Representative(s) from post-secondary education, Director(s) of Community Rehabilitation Agencies, Parent Representative School Board Representative, Business Representative, Director of Department of Social Services, and Director of Local Transportation Authority.

Community Level Team responsibilities include:

1. Identifying community resources.
2. Clarifying roles of service providers.
3. Developing and update interagency service agreements.
4. Coordinating community awareness.
5. Seeking new funding and support existing programs.
6. Coordinating job development and placement among service providers.
7. Developing strategies for overcoming barriers.
8. Establishing a network among service providers.
9. Coordinating staff development activities.
10. Making data-based future projections.
11. Sharing information related to employment of individuals with special needs.
12. Identifying community needs in employment and related adult services.
13. Assisting with program evaluation.

School Level Team

The School Level Team provides each student with access to a wide array of representatives from community agencies for services that they may want to assist them in achieving their transition goals. The School Level Team assists students and their parents with all aspects of the transition process. Team members work together to implement a person-centered and student-driven planning process. Students who use the services of the school level team include students who exhibit a specific need which would be helped by more than one agency in the team of collaborating community services. Parent and student involvement with the School Level Team is crucial. Team members must understand that all transition planning is focused on meeting the desires and needs of the student. To accomplish this, it is critical that the student is involved as an active member of the team and involved in all decision-making.

School Level Team membership includes Student and Parent(s) Transition Coordinator, Transition Teachers from the High Schools, Special Populations Coordinator (Vocational Education), Social Security Administration, Regular education representative, Director of Compensatory Education at the Community College and/or other relevant representatives, Program Director, Medicaid case manager and job coaches from the local agencies, Military Recruiter (when needed), Case Worker from DSS (a standing member) and other case workers from DSS if student is already involved with DSS, Recreational representative(s), CAP-MR case managers (when appropriate), In-take Counselor and/or representative from the DD Division of the Local Mental Health Authority, Parent Representative (standing member), Director or representative from the local group homes, and Private Therapy Representatives Planning.

School Level Team responsibilities include:

1. Projecting post-graduate needs for individual students with parental and student input.
2. Addressing issues for individual transition team meetings and determine additional involvement of team members needed at this level.
3. Identifying areas of responsibility for team members.
4. Developing strategies for solving problems or removing barriers to the successful delivery of transition services.
5. Developing timelines for the delivery of services.
6. Transferring case management from school to other agencies.
7. Providing team members with information about adult service agencies.
8. Assisting in resolving individual problems in service delivery.
9. Recommending changes in programming.
10. Collecting and disseminating information.
11. Evaluating transition program effectiveness.
12. Conducting pre-planning transition meetings.
13. Conducting exit meetings.

Individual Level Team

The Individual Level Team writes the IEP including the transition component. If a student also accesses the School Level Team, transition planning occurs at the pre-planning level at the School Level Team meetings. Then, at the Individual Level Team meeting, a smaller group of individuals use the

information gathered at the school level team meeting to develop the IEP. In some cases where more details are needed, a member of the School Level Team may be designated to attend the Individual Level Team meeting to participate in a more in-depth discussion on a given topic. For example, if a student and his or her parent are interested in living in an apartment after graduation, a developmental disabilities representative may attend the Individual Level Team meeting to bring more specific information regarding residential supports that might be accessed

Individual Level Team responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring input from parents and students into the transition planning process.
2. Reviewing all information relevant to student's present status and future goals.
3. Developing the individual transition plan and individual education plan.
4. Providing additional information about the transition planning process.
5. Addressing other student issues that may or may not be directly related to transition.

For more information see:

Aspel, N., Bettis, S., Quinn, P., Test, D.W., & Wood, W. M. (1998). A collaborative process for planning transition services for all students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 22*, 21-42.


Thomas, F., Schaff, L., Grossi, T., Steigerwald, M. (2001) *Seeds of success: Growing transition services for young adults*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community.

TTAC Project

The Transition Technical Assistance Centers Project (TTAC) is a three-year project awarded to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Through the TTAC Project, UNC Charlotte has identified six local education agencies in five different states to become transition technical assistance centers (TTACs). The TTAC sites are:

- Alabama: Scottsboro City Schools
- Indiana: Central Special Services District
- North Carolina: Shelby City Schools
- Ohio: Dublin City Schools
- Ohio: Franklin Heights High School
- South Carolina: Lexington School District Two

Over the three years of the project, UNC Charlotte will work with the TTAC sites to improve their own transition practices and to help them offer training, technical assistance, and support to other LEAs in their home states. Each TTAC site has demonstrated an array of transition "best practices" many of which are based on the TASSEL (Teaching All Students Skills for Employment and Life) model developed by the Shelby City/Cleveland County Schools in North Carolina in the 1990s. Please visit us at www.uncc.edu/ttac.



The TTAC Project is funded by Special Education Programs, OSERS, US DOE, Grant #H324R00092

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