

All Means All: Moving from Expectation to Employment for Students with Complex Support Needs

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Today's Objectives

- 1 Share tools and strategies for supporting students with complex needs to become contributing members of the workforce and their communities
- 2 Discuss strategies for promoting the idea and creating an expectation for *Employment*
- 3 Learn to use community-based settings to explore and build employability skills for students with complex needs
- 4 Learn to use person-centered "strength-based" approaches to encourage the idea of work and identify employment opportunities



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Why is WORK important?

- MONEY
- Make Friends
- Learn new things
- Something to do, sense of structure to the day
- Self-worth, pride
- Help others
- Support or impact my community
- It is how we define ourselves



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Social Inclusion: A sense of belonging

Belonging requires more than being present. It takes engagement with others in a meaningful, goal-oriented way.

It is one of the rewards of working.



Image: Erick W. Carter, Baylor Center on Developmental Disabilities

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Yet employment is not always seen a priority for students with complex needs

How often is "employment" the expected outcome for students with complex needs?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Not sure

Why is WORK not ALWAYS the expectation? What do you see as the barriers for these students?

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Starts with an All Means All Mindset

How do we define "complex needs"?

What makes Students with complex needs different?

- Communication methods
- Learning differences
- Different level of support
- Low expectations/self-doubt/system bias
- Need for customization (and *out of the box* thinking)
- Personal or medical care needs
- Multiple disabilities

GOOD TEACHERS ADDRESS THESE THINGS

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How do we support- and ENSURE- that students with complex needs become part of the workforce?



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All Means All

Reframing expectations



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Reframing How We See Students with Complex Needs

- Our focus has been on assessing and evaluating a student's "ability to work"
- We tend to focus on Disabilities: what is wrong or broken- what needs fixing
- Employment is about adding value. It is about Strengths, not deficits
- Our focus must be on identifying a student's strengths, skills and interests

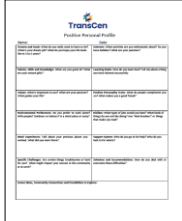


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Positive Personal Profile

- Simple one-page form or *Picture Profiles*
- An encouraging, empowering document. Focused on strengths, values and interests
- Reframes how we see students and how they see themselves
- A starting point for community engagement and Job Development



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For students with complex needs, Transition Planning requires a different approach



- Learning to listen- not lead
- Engaging with the student and their family
- Focusing on "exploring", and identifying the student's strengths and interests
- Building employability skills and increasing self-reliance
- REAL world work experiences vs. classroom curriculums



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Where can we learn the most about a person?

Where are we at our best? Where are we most relaxed?



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WORK?!? My Kid- No way! Addressing Family Concerns

- Listen, acknowledge and "unpack" the family's concerns
- Demonstrate the student's competence using photos/videos
- Engage more, teach in student's community
- Address a goal that will directly impact the family/caregiver's quality of life
- Ask "big", then compromise



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Building Skills, Confidence and Self-Reliance

Setting Students up for Success



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Set Students up for Success in the Real World

- Start early!
- Build endurance/stamina, mobility, range of motion
- Build confidence and self-reliance; put accommodations in place: power chairs, transfer boards, communication devices, iPads,
- Stop "over-helping"; teach initiative, choice-making, travel skills, problem-solving, asking for assistance
- Focus on communication, social skills and appearance



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Building Range of Motion, Stamina and Endurance



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Increasing Self-Reliance



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Teach Communication & Social Skills

85% of employers surveyed said "soft skills," not technical skills, are the critical factor in job success
Stanford Research Institute

Interaction	+	-	0
1. Greeting	10/10	0/0	0/0
2. Responding	8/8	2/2	0/0
3. Following	10/10	0/0	0/0
4. Sharing	5/5	5/5	0/0
5. Cooperation	10/10	0/0	0/0
6. Turn-taking	10/10	0/0	0/0
7. Listening	10/10	0/0	0/0
8. Eye Contact	10/10	0/0	0/0
9. Following Directions	10/10	0/0	0/0
10. Problem Solving	10/10	0/0	0/0
11. Self-Expression	10/10	0/0	0/0
12. Self-Advocacy	10/10	0/0	0/0
13. Self-Regulation	10/10	0/0	0/0
14. Self-Motivation	10/10	0/0	0/0
15. Self-Reflection	10/10	0/0	0/0
16. Self-Improvement	10/10	0/0	0/0
17. Self-Management	10/10	0/0	0/0
18. Self-Organization	10/10	0/0	0/0
19. Self-Direction	10/10	0/0	0/0
20. Self-Initiation	10/10	0/0	0/0
21. Self-Termination	10/10	0/0	0/0
22. Self-Regulation	10/10	0/0	0/0
23. Self-Motivation	10/10	0/0	0/0
24. Self-Reflection	10/10	0/0	0/0
25. Self-Improvement	10/10	0/0	0/0
26. Self-Management	10/10	0/0	0/0
27. Self-Organization	10/10	0/0	0/0
28. Self-Direction	10/10	0/0	0/0
29. Self-Initiation	10/10	0/0	0/0
30. Self-Termination	10/10	0/0	0/0



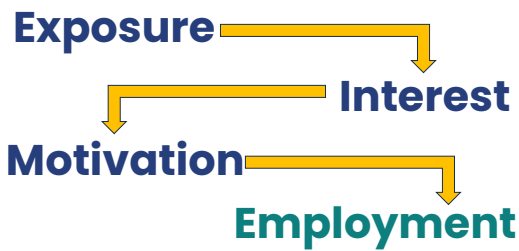
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Exploration and Discovery



- Get them out in the world
- Try new things: Let's give this a go!
- Help them to build a profile of themselves:
 - Likes/dislikes
 - Strengths and interests
- Help them to Dream BIG!

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Everybody can work



*chose to share his story, but not his name and picture

MEET T
 Success came from asking the RIGHT questions, not making assumptions, and finding the right fit.

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Job site shadowing/Volunteering

- Develop volunteer opportunities based on student's profile
- Building self-confidence and a professional network
- Assessing and addressing support needs
- You don't have to do it alone:
 - Speech/OT/PT
 - Assistive Tech
 - Vocational Rehabilitation



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Treat it Like a Job ~ Not a Field Trip

- Consistent schedule, same group
- Timecards: teach "time management skills"
- Teach "Public Transit"
- Focus on Hard and Soft skills
- Trying things; Informed choices; Document skills/interests

TransCen Volunteer							
Name							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Date							
Check In							
Check Out							
Total							

Timecard for Volunteer sites



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Soft Skills: Work Ethic, Attitude, and Initiative

Michael's Chore List

- Check the Trash: Take it out if full
- Wash the dog
- Unload the dishwasher
- Enter the papers in the book case
- Get your laundry: bring down stairs
-
- Wash Teeth/Get shoes for 100 min to bed by 10:00 on work nights

- I'm a "Helper" vs. the one being helped
- Responsibility: People rely on me
- Professionalism: Inside voice, good hygiene, fist bump, "Are you busy?"
- Teach initiative: "I'm done- what's next?"
- Work Ethic: "Let's get the job done."
- Teamwork: "Can I help you with that?" "Let's do this together."
- Chore lists school/home



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Documenting Success

- Profile is a "living document"
- Portfolio update annually: Vision statements; Visual Resumes; Photos; videos; certificates; awards
- Share student's progress, success and ideas with families, teachers and employers



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Embracing Risk, Failure & Problem Solving

Learn from those "Teachable Moments"

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Foster Independence/Self-Reliance: Support the Dignity of Risk & Failure



Think *How*, not *Can't*

- Focus on the student's skills, not deficits
- Think "tasks" not "jobs"
- Ease people into community settings, partial days, quick trips
- Look for ways to supplement staffing
- Unexpected situations or issues: What is the plan?



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Student is Reticent or Scared?

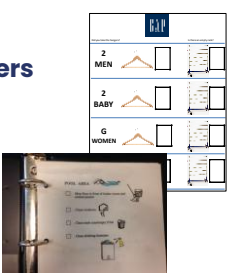
- Start with highly *motivating* activities in *forgiving* environments
- Preface trip with pictures and videos
- Desensitize the student: quick visits, short tasks, slowly increase time and expectations
- Give the student a way to say "need a break" or know when the job will be finished
- Reward students for "a job well done"



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Communication: Reporting to Managers, Engaging with Co-workers

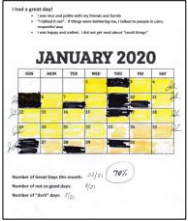
- Share effective strategies for working with individual
 - "How-to guides"/"At a glance"
- Create ways for worker to directly report and engage:
 - Fist bumps
 - Picture/iPad Checklists
 - Job assignments on Whiteboards



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Managing Behavioral Needs

- Behaviors are a form of communication- Are you listening?
- Create ways to express needs appropriately, teach social skills
- Identify triggers; ABC charting
- Prep/train staff
- Safety may require extra staffing
- Develop a *Quick Response* team and an "exit strategy" prior to Day 1



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Everybody Can Work



MEET SARAH
Success came from asking "What is working now", and "What supports do we need to make it sustainable".

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Addressing Medical Needs

- "Go-bags" with supplies student may need
- Map community: Identify (or create) "Respite Stops"
- Para's trained on care techniques by nursing staff
- *Personal Care Vehicles* for school nurses.
- Find the right environment and build natural supports



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Worst Case Scenario: What is the plan to mitigate Risk?

*Be prepared for
minor issues and
major disasters*



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Customized Employment

Identifying Strengths and
Creating Opportunities



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What Is Customized Employment?

...an individualized approach to employment planning and job development — one person at a time--one employer at a time. It is about building new positions based on the needs of an employer and the strengths of the job seeker. It is an effective way to assist people with more significant disabilities to become contributing members of today's workforce.

US Department of Labor,
Office of Disability and Employment Policy



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When to use a Customized Approach

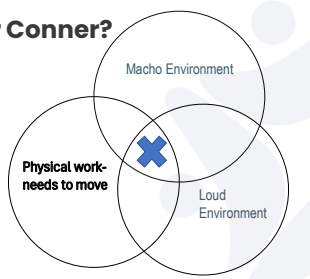
- When you need to design a job, rather than fill an existing job
- When a student is "uninterested" or scared of the idea of work
- When a student has a history of failure
- When a student has significant disabilities, limited endurance or a limited skill set
- When a student lives in a rural area



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What's a good job for Conner?

Use VENN diagrams to target employment settings based on Conner's unique characteristics and skills.



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Customized Employment: Everyone can work



CONNOR@ the foundry

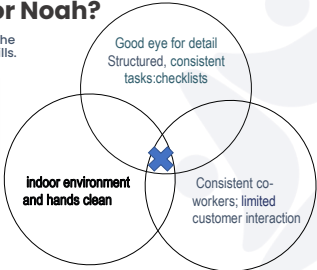
Connor's success wasn't about changing Connor—it was about finding a workplace where he could belong, contribute, and thrive exactly as he was.

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What's a good job for Noah?

Target employment settings based on the student's unique characteristics and skills.





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Customized Employment: *Everyone can work* NOAH @ Autozone



Employment is about fit & supports, not "readiness" Success comes from experiences & collaboration



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What does Customized Employment teach us?

- There is a job for everyone
- Finding the "right fit" is critical. Where will this person SPARKLE?
- Looking at the job seeker's strengths and interests will lead you down the right path.
- Employers hire motivated people who are excited about their business- and can help solve a problem.



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Lessons Learned

- Employment is expected- not optional
- Employment success is built through *intentional*, student-driven experiences
- Start early- Make it real
- Students need exploration, exposure and practice
- Build a team of support- and work together. Collaboration is essential for good outcomes
- Never assume what students can or cannot do
- Focus on each student's strengths- not deficits



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"Take-aways" from Today for YOU?

What is one thing you will do differently in your classroom to improve employment outcomes for your students with complex needs?



Type your answer into the chat.

Any Questions?



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"The greatest danger may not be that our aim is too high and we miss it, but rather that it is too low and we reach it."

- Michelangelo



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Conference Evaluation

Please remember to complete the Virtual Conference Evaluation! We would appreciate your feedback!



About TransCen

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