What are the Characteristics of Adjudicated Youth with Disabilities?

Youth with disabilities are disproportionately represented within correctional facilities with nearly four times as many students requiring special education and related services in the adjudicated population versus the general population (Quinn, Rutherford, Leonie, Osher, & Poirer, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, & U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Between 40% and 70% of incarcerated youth have disabilities (Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller, & Havel, 2002). However estimates are not usually exact because of undiagnosed disabilities and many times an individual’s parents initiate diagnostic testing and youth offender status is associated with lower or inconsistent parental involvement (Burrell & Warboys, 2000). The most common disabilities experienced by youthful offenders are emotional and behavior disorders and learning disabilities (Smedley, Levinson, Barker, & DeAngelis, 2003).

Additionally, it is estimated about 86% of incarcerated youth are males (Bullis et al., 2002). Individuals from minority backgrounds are represented in disproportionately high numbers. For example, 16% of school-age youth in the United States are African American, but 40% of youth detention centers are African American (Keith & McCray, 2002).

Why is Transition Planning for Adjudicated Youth Important?

Adjudicated youth are at an increased risk of committing future crimes (Bullis et al. 2002; Doren, Bullis, & Benz, 1996). Also, poor academic performance has been linked to a higher probability of dropping out of school and higher rates of criminal involvement (Atkins, Bullis, & Todis, 2005; Jenkins, 1997). Adjudicated youth with disabilities may be at a higher risk for negative in-school and post-school outcomes.

Test et al. (2009) and Mazzotti et al. (2016) found transition planning to be a predictor of post-school success for students with disabilities. Griller-Clark and Mathur (2010)
suggest that beginning transition planning the day youth arrive at a correctional facility can promote successful outcomes for adjudicated youth. A transition component of students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) is an example of transition planning that is student centered and based on the student’s needs, abilities, interests, and preferences. In addition, it is recommended that the IEP should address special education and related services mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) for youth with disabilities age 16 and older; as well as, include a re-entry, parole, or probation plan.

**What Does the Literature Say About Transition Planning for Adjudicated Youth?**

Youth who have been adjudicated face the unique challenge of transitioning from facility to community while also transitioning from adolescence to adulthood (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Although many juvenile justice facilities seek to provide effective transition and aftercare services, researchers have demonstrated high levels of recidivism among formerly incarcerated youth. Because of these high levels, many researchers are seeking to identify aftercare programs that can be implemented with fidelity to reduce recidivism rates. Further, many incarcerated youth have disabilities and are eligible for special education services under IDEA (2004). The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to provide a listing of articles, reports, and other resources published since 1984 examining the issue of transition of youth ages 11-26 from the juvenile justice system. Resources in the bibliography are divided into five categories: Overview of Issues, Promoting Successful Community Transitions, Preventing Recidivism, Youth with Disabilities, and Additional Resources.

**References**


Transition Planning for Adjudicated Youth Annotated Bibliography


Overview of Issues

• Qualitatively investigated perceived and experienced barriers of 10 youth ages 13 to 19 years who were transitioning from a 12-month therapeutic correctional institution and 6-week transition period (lived in supervised cottages and went to work and/or school during the week and lived at home on the weekends) to their communities.

• Interviews were conducted over 3-6 months.

• Reported youth prepared themselves for the transition through a variety of logistical tasks and mental preparations such as managing an unsupervised life and not being tempted by opportunities to reengage in crimes by peers.

• Reported youth expressed barriers post-transition including lack of resources to sustain living arrangements, transportation to work and school, and providing for others; made choices to limit the type of involvement with certain peers such as avoiding temptation of poor decisions.

• Reported family support was the most important factor positively impacting their transition.

• Recommended transition programs that are supportive and involve their families to help youth navigate all the influences they may face post-incarceration.


• Outlined the theoretical framework behind the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP), including strain, social learning, and social control theories.

• Described the three program elements: organizational structures and characteristics, case management, and management information and program evaluation. Case management is the overarching program component, which includes: assessment and classification, individual case planning, surveillance/service mix, incentives/consequences, and brokerage/linkages.

• IAP model include nine areas of services provision: (1) residential shelter and transitional services, (2) residential treatment services, (3) residential substance abuse services, (4) residential pregnancy and postpartum services, (5) residential conservation services, (6) day support services, (7) evening support services, (8) psychological and psychiatric services, and (9) nonresidential substance abuse treatment and urinalysis services.


• Summarized the IAP model, which includes pre-release preparatory planning while incarcerated, structured transition prior to and after community reentry, and long-term reiterative activities.
• Described implementation of IAP model in Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, and Virginia


• Outlined the Intensive Aftercare Program, which includes services provided at the point of commitment, point of release, and successful termination of aftercare in order to facilitate a potentially successful transition from the institution to the community.
• Described level of implementation of program in Colorado, Nevada, and Virginia.
• Outlined tangible outcome measures for youth involved in IAP program


• Outlined the specific aim of the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP), an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded program
• IAP model consists of three phases: (1) institutional services and programming, (2) structured transition experiences, and (3) longer-term support in the community
• IAP model consists of continuity of five dimensions: (1) control, (2) range of services, (3) service and program content, (4) social environment, and (5) attachment
• Reports current research base in implementing aftercare programs is currently limited in terms of methodology used as well as integrity of implementation. However, current research suggests potential effectiveness and future research in this area should be continued


• Described Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model for providing support for adjudicated youth prior to and upon release to reduce recidivism
• Summarized practices used by five aftercare programs currently being implemented, including: the Philadelphia Intensive Probation Aftercare Program, Juvenile Aftercare in a Maryland Drug Treatment Program, the Skillman Intensive Aftercare Project, the Michigan Nokomis Challenge Program, and the OJJDP’s Intensive Aftercare Program (in Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, and Virginia)
• Recommended reform efforts based on current findings from the aforementioned programs. Some of those include careful preparation for aftercare, improved funding, intensive aftercare as opposed to “standard” aftercare, reduction in caseload size and a reintegration model.


• Identified potential challenges of reentry programs, including
  o Reentry within a broader “reintegration” paradigm
  o Mission and purpose of institutional and community corrections
  o Intersection of chronological age and legal status
  o Risk and protective factors
  o Specific domains of reentry

• Described the seven specific domains of reentry that should be considered: family and living arrangement, peer groups, mental and physical health, education, vocational training and employment, substance abuse, and leisure/vocational interests

• Noted important consideration youths are facing in two separate and equally important transitions: from youth to adulthood and from life in a correctional facility to community living


• Examined the influence of adverse parent and child experiences, including foster care, early mental health problems, conduct-related disorders, diagnosed learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities on juvenile recidivism and delinquency.

• Using a matched-control group design, researchers analyzed data from a state’s department of juvenile justice to evaluate the role of early adverse experiences, mental health issues, and disabilities on the individual’s involvement with the juvenile justice system.

• Results indicated preexisting mental health issues, particularly with aggressive behavior, was associated with a greater likelihood of involvement with the juvenile justice system and recidivism.

• In addition, early adverse experience in the family including child mistreatment and school related learning and emotional problems could also contribute to increased involvement in the juvenile justice system and recidivism.

- Evaluated data from Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and Children in Custody Census, to determine demographic make-up youth participating in the juvenile justice system
  - 88% were male
  - 19% were 14 or younger; 36% were 17 or older
  - 39% where White, 39% where Black, and 17% were Hispanic
  - 38% committed a violent offense, 33% committed a property offense, 11% committed a drug offense, and 5% committed a status offense


- Explored attitudes of youths about perceived barriers and aids to successful re-entry into the community
- Discussed the effects of peers, family, community, employment, and independence

Promoting Successful Community Transition


- Described the Arizona Juvenile Aftercare Decision Tree, which was formulated in 1987
- Provided a decision-rule model for making placement and supervision decision for juvenile offenders
- Established decision rules for determining the level of community restrictiveness needed
- Employed a broad range of criteria for making supervision decisions


- Examined the service delivery, intermediate and short-term recidivism outcomes for youth who participated in a unique juvenile offender reentry program, which was a hybrid of the Intensive aftercare program (IAP) and the serious and violent offender reentry initiative (SVORI) models with youth not receiving reentry services. The program included a strong mentoring component
• Resulted in intermediate change and modest effects in reducing recidivism likelihood, as well as time to recidivism


• Reported data from Violent Juvenile Offender Program, a series of interventions for chronically violent youth offenders, including reintegration, case management, social learning processes, and a phased program of reentry from secure facilities to intensive supervision in the community
• Implemented Violent Juvenile Offenders Program with 122 youth in Boston, Detroit, Memphis, and Newark
• Results showed two sites had stronger implementation of the program and yielded the following results: lower risks of criminal activity, fewer rearrests, and a longer interval until the first arrest


• Reported results of an intensive aftercare program implemented in Philadelphia with 64 youth receiving treatment and 50 youth serving as a control group
• Results showed while implementation was variable, with changes in staffing and funding impacting outcomes, the treatment group displayed more successful outcomes post-treatment (e.g., keeping probation appointments, progressing in appointment goals, successful completion of probation)
• Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model provides support for adjudicated youth prior to and upon release to reduce recidivism


• Reported results of a 3-year study following youth release from correctional high schools
• Results included implications for transition practices including the provision of life and work competency training rather than a more traditional high school curriculum.


• Summarized the practices of three programs that have been successful in promoting their youth's reenrollment in school after leaving juvenile detention facilities

- Conducted a survey and held focus groups with personnel from several agencies providing services to youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system and interviewed youth with disabilities involved in the juvenile justice system to identify barriers to the transition process.
- Participants included three groups: (a) members of Project RISE Advisory Board (i.e., Agency, school district, community service members); (b) transition staff; and (c) youth with disabilities including learning disability (23%) and emotional behavior disorder (77%) involved in the juvenile justice system.
- Findings suggested juvenile justice personnel should consistently collaborate with community partners to increase sustainability of resources and the awareness needed to improve reentry outcomes.
- Results from the focus groups defined community engagement as “an ongoing relationship that involves planning and collaboration to achieve a shared goal.” p. 726.
- Additional results indicated barriers to achieving reentry goals included (a) lack of parental involvement, (b) lack of transportation, (c) lack of sufficient life skills programming, (d) problems with records transfer, and (e) lag time between release and onset of other services.
- Implications for practice included providing professional development to increase staff and stakeholders’ awareness about education, reintegration practices, and implementation.


- Examined effects of the Intensive Aftercare Demonstration Project on the relationship between youth and service providers
- Survey instruments were used to measure youth’s perceptions of their relationships with their mentors as compared to controls
- Results suggested participation in the intervention resulted in positive relationships between youth and mentors.


- Provides best practice guidelines for transition including implications for special education teachers, coordinators, and transition coordinators for collaboration
wit correctional facilities in order to assist juveniles with disabilities reenter the community successfully.

- Guiding principles and recommended actions include:
  - During the intake stage, conduct a comprehensive assessment, coordinate with all service providers, and contact the community school to request records within the first week.
  - During the rehabilitation and education stage, design and implement an individualized program coordinated by a multidisciplinary team, develop a portfolio for transition, provide access to mental health and substance abuse services, involve the student and their family, create a system of accountability for service providers for transition goals.
  - During the transition stage, determine the most appropriate educational and vocational placement in the community, conduct prerelease meeting 60 days before release, assess the family and living environment the juvenile will be released to, visit the community school with the juvenile, finalize an education plan from facility to school at least 3 weeks before transition, conduct a formal exit interview at least 10 days before release, and finalize the portfolio including achievements, growth, and accomplishments.
  - During the post-release stage, reengage youth in school and or employment immediately upon release, send records to school, provide services for student, create support system for positive peer connections, connect student with a mentor and job coach, and monitor student reintegration process.


- Provides a brief case study of a student recently released from a youth correctional facility planning to return to school after being incarcerated for five months.
- Describes how educators can support youth transitioning back to their school after incarceration by teaching them to problem-solve the disclosure of their past offenses.
- Discusses two lessons to help adjudicated youth with disabilities take responsibility for past mistakes, use discretion when discussing their history, and communicate their future goals to potential employers.

Examined employers’ perceptions on whether, and when, juvenile offenders should disclose their records during the process of seeking employment.

Results indicated three out of five employer recommended disclosure during the job interview process.

Some employers recommended disclosure because they wanted to discuss the nature of the crime and assess the fit between the job position and the individuals previous offense; and others preferred disclosure because they did not want to hire anyone with a juvenile record.


Evaluated effectiveness of an intensive aftercare program for students receiving probation services following incarceration.

Results suggested program was effective in reducing the frequency of recidivism, but not the incidence of recidivism.


Included recommendations for effective reentry services, including community-based interventions and functional supports.

Described need to focus on the individual identity of the student, including role of race/ethnicity and social class. Failure to consider role of these factors may undermine the effectiveness of programs found effective in research.

Discussed need to consider an individual’s developmental needs using a conceptual framework, such as the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory.


Bulletin is a part of a series form the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) Youth Out of the Education Mainstream (YOEM) program initiative.

Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) funded by the OJJDP outlines critical elements for successful transition from secure facilities:

- Risk assessment and classification for establishing [program] eligibility
- Individual case planning that incorporates a family and community perspective
o A mix of intensive surveillance and services
o A balance of incentives and graduated consequences coupled with the imposition of realistic, enforceable conditions
o Service brokerage, with community resources linked to social networks
o Reported the most common finding across 20 years of research is that youth who participate in education programs are more likely to be employed upon transition and less likely to return to secure facilities
o Provides summaries of transition programs from across the country, such as the:
  ▪ Cluster Group Model: New Jersey Gateway Academy
  ▪ Kentucky Youth Assistance Alliance
  ▪ Arizona Department of Corrections: Pathfinder Project
  ▪ The following steps can be taken to promote successful return to the school environment:
    ▪ Curriculum coordination
    ▪ Prerelease information sharing
    ▪ Prerelease visit
    ▪ Admission interview
    ▪ Transitional counseling
    ▪ Violence elimination contracts
    ▪ Plans and curriculum


• Outlined barriers common to juvenile reintegration programs by evaluating one state’s efforts to implement Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) and Multidimensional Family Therapy program (MDFT)
• Conducted 40 discussion groups with staff and supervisors and identified positive and negative attributes of transition models in the following categories: external environment, missing and strategy, leadership, organization culture, structure, management practices, systems, motivation, job/skills match, individual needs and values, and work unit climate

Preventing Recidivism


• Examined records of 505 adjudicated males aged 12-18 years of age, serving time in a state correctional facility over seven years (1991-1997).
Researchers identified three groups during the seven years including (a) a group receiving remediation in mathematics, (b) a group receiving remediation in reading, and (c) a group not receiving remediation in any area.

Researchers analyzed student achievement scores, IQ, and race across all three groups and their recidivism rates and parole violations.

Results indicated members of the remedial groups were twice as likely to be recidivists or violate their parole compared to those in the non-remedial group. Additionally, factors associated with those in the remedial groups included race, age of first commitment, and a lower verbal IQ.

These findings extend previous studies findings on the link between lower academic achievement and incarceration, implications for practice include schools and correctional facilities designing programs to meet the needs of students who are struggling academically.


- Investigated predictive validity of the Wisconsin Juvenile Probation and Aftercare Risk Instrument in predicting recidivism among juvenile offenders
- Measure contained eight variables and only one, age at first arrest, was a reliable predictor of recidivism.
- Suggested future researchers should continue to seek to validate measures for assessing risk of recidivism for transitioning juvenile offenders


- Examined community reintegration of 531 youth from Oregon’s juvenile justice system at six months and one year after exiting
  - 13% of the participants were never engaged at either time point.
  - 21% were engaged only at six months after exit.
  - 12% were engaged only one year after exit
  - 54% were engaged at both time points.
- Results indicated services focusing on educational placement and securing employment for youth exiting juvenile justice are helping upon reintegration to the community

Examined aftercare services that provide youth with healthcare, mental health, education, family and vocational services


- Discussed treatment of juvenile homicide offenders
- Described use of a three component treatment plan emphasizing trauma recovery, correcting developmental deficits, and dealing with consequences
- Discussed termination of treatment, aftercare and transition, and prediction of future violence


- Described Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Student Transition Program Model, which has four stages: intake review, ongoing assessment, pre-release review, and exit interview. Staff responsibilities and a timeline are included at each stage
- Reports suggested the transition program model is successful. Correctional staff report changes in youth attitudes and outcomes are reported


- Examined pre-release/transition programs in various states and identified common/essential components with an emphasis in determining appropriate programming for the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Moose Lake (MCF-ML)
- Recommendations for MCF-ML:
  - Keep a transition specialist who can assist in successful transitions
  - Gain commitment and supports from community resources
  - Develop a mission, vision, and goals for pre-release/transition
  - Determine a organizational structure or identify an institution-run program
  - Develop/coordinate activities, events, and courses among all institutional areas
  - Constantly re-evaluate pre-release/transition program offerings, methods of delivery, available resources, and tracking systems

• Examined patterns of repeated offenses committed by youth with and without disabilities.
• Researchers analyzed data to compare recidivism using the following variables: (a) demographic (i.e., race, gender, criminal history, family income, drug use history); (b) offense variables (i.e., age of first referral, severity of offense, number of adjudications, number of commitments, length of first commitment, total number of probations); (c) risk for recidivism; and (d) patterns of recidivism.
• Results indicated demographic differences between youth offenders with and without disabilities. Youth with disabilities had a higher representation of African Americans, males, families with a criminal history, and low-income families. Additionally, youth with disabilities were less likely to have a drug use history than those without disabilities.
• Findings related to offense variables indicated adjudicated youth with disabilities were committed for longer periods of time, referred more often, had more adjudications and probations, had fewer commitments, and were referred at an earlier age. Additionally, adjudicated youth with disabilities were referred for more severe offenses than those without disabilities.
• Implications for practice included job placement and support services upon parole and community-based support systems like wrap-around services.

Youth with Disabilities


• Defines transition as it applies to youth with disabilities
• A coordinated set of activities for a juvenile offender, designed within an outcome oriented process, which promotes successful movement from the community to a correctional setting, from one correctional setting to another, or from a correctional setting to post-incarceration activities including public or alternative education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing education, adult services, independent living, or community participation
• Reviewed intervention and descriptive studies conducted at Arizona State University over a period of 12 years
• Concentrated on successful and unsuccessful transition plans for youth moving from incarceration to schoolwork and community.

• Discussed youth attitudes concerning available family support and school support and positive and negative thoughts about post-release outcomes
• Discussed youth perceived barriers, such as a lack of family and home school support in school, employment, family, and living arrangements
• Recommendations made by youth to indicate that they needed resources to facilitate a successful transition. For example, youth felt that employment, counseling, and drug programs would assist in successful transition.


• Collected student information from parole officers for six months after students’ release from secure facilities
• Found 33% of youth were enrolled in an educational program, 33% of youth were employed, and 76% had no further court involvement
• Students who were identified as having special needs and who were drug abusers were more likely to recidivate than others.
• Results indicated academic and vocational education are efficient methods of reducing recidivism


• Reported effects of recidivism during a 24-month period for 73 participants, 85 students not receiving treatment and 34 untreated subjects in a matched group
• Treatment involved psychosocial, education, and vocational interventions. All intervention procedures were based on a review of literature from the field of learning disabilities
• Results indicated participants who completed treatment had a significantly lower recidivism rate over 20 months when compared to no completers and untreated youth


• Provided seven recommendations for providing comprehensive aftercare for high-risk youth, which include considerations for mental health services
• Recommended for services to be both effective and long-lasting, they must address critical elements such as education, vocational education, training in social, community, and functional skills, and residential care (in transition from more secure facilities)
In addition, communication and coordination between programs should be established upon entry into secure facilities.


- Described need to focus on the individual identity of the student, including role of race/ethnicity and social class. Failure to consider role of these factors may undermine the effectiveness of programs found effective in research.
- Discussed need to consider an individual’s developmental needs using a conceptual framework, such as the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory.


- Data collected from the Transition Research on Adjudicated Youth in Community Settings (TRACS) longitudinal study conducted with the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA).
- Explored the link between employment and recidivism during a 12 month period following a youth’s release from the OYA.


- Reported data from Transition Research on Adjudicated Youth in Community Settings (TRACS) longitudinal study conducted with the Oregon Youth Authority
- Interviewed participants prior to release and every six months after release about perceived barriers to re-entry into the community
- Discussed the relationship between immediate and continued community engagement and reduced recidivism


- Summarized the results of the Transition Research on Adjudicated Youth in Community Settings (TRACS), a five-year longitudinal study examining the facility-to-community transition for youth in Oregon
- Results suggested that youth who were employed within six months of leaving secure facilities were more likely to remain engaged and less likely to recidivate
Students with disabilities represented 58% of the participants
40% of participants returned to adjudication within 12 months
47% of participants were employed or in school at six months after adjudication
31% of participants were employed or in school at 12 months after adjudication


- Examined academic characteristics of adjudicated youth with and without disabilities and determine education-related outcomes of youth 3 years after release from juvenile justice facilities in Florida.
- While committed, youth with disabilities earned high school credits and grade point averages similar their peers without disabilities.
- However, only 44% of youth with and without disabilities returned to school after being released.
- Youth with emotional and behavioral disorders and learning disabilities returned to school at higher rates; however, they were unable to maintain gains made during their time in the juvenile justice system and were unable to obtain their high school diploma.
- Implications for practice included increased interagency collaboration between schools and juvenile justice facilities.


- Explored the effect of basic transition versus enhanced transition services on the recidivism of youth with disabilities.
- Discussed challenges of community re-entry for adjudicated youths
- Provided details of an advanced transition model for adjudicated youth with disabilities.
- Results showed that youths participating in the treatment group had a 64% lower chance of returning to detention at 30 days post release.


- Discussed current gaps in service coordination for adjudicated youth.
• Outlined steps to improve re-entry outcomes through coordination of transition services.
  o Effective Facility Transition:
    ▪ Individualized Transition Plans
    ▪ Student Education Records
    ▪ Interagency Linkage and communication
    ▪ Funding and Staff
  o Effective Community Transition
    ▪ Enhanced self regulatory and problem solving skills
    ▪ Competitive employment
    ▪ Flexible education opportunities
    ▪ Social Skills training
    ▪ Family Involvement
• Briefly discussed project STAY OUT – Strategies Teaching Young Offenders to Use Transition Skills.


• Summarized literature on effective practice in juvenile justice settings from 1980-1992, analyzing topics of interest
• Provided 15 best practices based on the review of the literature including
  o Effective transitional services
  o Pre-release educational programs
  o Non-educational support services
  o External resources, such as speaker and mentors
  o Special funding
  o Library access
  o Interagency awareness
  o Interagency agreements
  o Planning and placement decision process
  o Individual education plan
  o Pre-placement planning team
  o Students schedule and placed prior to re-entry to community schools
  o Maintenance of communication between agencies after youth release
  o Adjudicated youth assigned specially trained counselor in public schools
  o Periodic evaluations of transition programs

- Using an ecological framework, researchers reviewed studies to determine individual factors, as well as, micro, meso, exo, and macro factors that impact individuals with developmental disabilities in the JJ system’s development and functioning.
- Implications for each factor included:
  - **Micro implications** included:
    - (a) addressing inappropriate and aggressive behavior,
    - (b) a functional behavior assessment if the child’s behavior results in chronic school disciplinary issues,
    - (c) individual level intervention with the child and family to address problems and conflicts at home,
    - (d) parent training focused on stress, enhancing discipline, and improving positive interactions.
  - **Meso implications** included:
    - (a) teachers, principals, probation officers, court officials and social workers should model structure and positive relationships in order to provide strong supports for youth with developmental disabilities involved in the JJ system;
    - (b) schools should consistently use culturally responsive and evidence-based interventions to address behavioral challenges;
    - (c) professional development for all staff working with this population to ensure they understand how to meet their needs;
    - (d) effective communication and collaboration across systems through interagency collaboration to support the student’s’ emotional, social, and physical well-being.
  - **Exo implications** included:
    - (a) early assessment for trauma symptomology;
    - (b) training for school, JJ, and community practitioner to recognize and address trauma and disability related behaviors;
    - (c) support and advocacy for parents on how to navigate multiple systems;
    - (d) wrap-around and home-based services for the youth and their family.
  - **Macro implications** included:
    - (a) prioritizing culturally competent and preventive programming in order to reduce the number of youth with disabilities entering and re-entering the JJ system;
    - (b) changing the way youth with disabilities in the JJ system are portrayed in the media;
    - (c) JJ practitioners should appropriately identify youth in need of mental health or special education intervention and provide the required services under IDEA (2004) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
    - (d) JJ staff should be trained to recognize students who may have disabilities and take steps to initiate a referral for evaluation.

- Nokomis Challenge Program is designed as an alternative to extended residential placements, which has significant cost-saving potential
- Results suggested there were few differences in outcomes between the program and traditional residential placements. Youth participating in the Nokomis Challenge Program experienced failure more quickly following release, which suggest the need for more intensive aftercare following short-term programs


- A trainer’s guide available at www.edjj.org, which provides guidelines for conducting needs assessments, designing instruction, and evaluating outcomes.


- Described outcomes of Project RENEW on transitioning youth with detention into the Community
- Project RENEW uses person-center planning, support for high school completion, career preparation, employment support, interagency coordination, and mentoring
- Interviews showed positive attitudes about person-centered planning, school completion support, career preparation, interagency coordination and mentorship


- Examined transitional needs of youths with developmental delays, learning disabilities, emotional and behavior disorders, and other disability categories

• Evaluated the reentry program Lifeskills ‘95 by comparing 115 youth receiving the intervention with 115 youth in a control group released from the California Youth Authority
• Results suggested the intervention was highly successful. Notable results include: members of the control group were three times as likely to use illicit substance than the treatment group, 35% of the control group experienced a successful parole compared to 53% of the treatment group, and individuals in the treatment group completed an average of 80% of their parole days and the control group completed an average of 60% of their parole days


• Evaluated the effectiveness of a youth reentry specialist (YRS) implemented at Lincoln Hills School (LHS), a Wisconsin Division of Corrections institutional school
• Program transitioned youth with disabilities from LHS into Special Education units
• Using a logit approach they compared outcomes for youth who did and did not receive YRS services, and found that special education reentry services are essential for adjudicated youth with disabilities
• Results showed use of the YRS position was effective in transition youths with disabilities into special education programs


• Reviewed the literature in three areas including: (a) prevalence and impact of maltreatment victimization, learning and academic-related disabilities, and mental health problems on offending behaviors; (b) comorbidity across child and adolescent difficulties and the risk for offending behaviors and incarceration; and (c) challenges of collaboration across systems.
• Results indicated significant numbers of comorbidity within the juvenile justice population indicated that an individual who experiences more than one of the factors investigated were most at-risk for incarceration as a juvenile and future involvement in the adult criminal justice system.
• Implications for practice included improving coordination and collaboration across youth-caring systems in order to improve outcomes for youth through increased understanding and a systematic system for interagency collaboration.

- Discussed perceived failings of services offered to vulnerable populations during the transition to adulthood
- Service agencies discussed are mental health services, foster care, juvenile justice, and special education
- Described ideas designed to expand and extend services provided to vulnerable populations from youth into adulthood
  - Increasing funding to involved agencies
  - Coordination across agencies
  - Training on developmental issues for services professionals
  - Introduced ideas to improve services offered
    - Improving existing system
    - Addressing the loss of access to services at age of majority
    - Coordinating today’s multiple systems into a single coherent system


- Used Delphi research methodology to elicit opinions from a national panel of experts on the major services and strategies for adjudicated youth with disabilities that are most effective, and should be given highest priority
- Participants identified the following services and strategies (in order of priority), but noted that all were essential and determining rank order was difficult:
  1) Family involvement/support
  2) Social/living skills
  3) Interagency collaboration
  4) Basic academic skills
  5) Assessment/evaluation
  6) Formal transition plan
  7) Community support
  8) Vocational/job search skills
  9) Job placement
  10) Support/ancillary services
  11) Career exploration/education

• Collected information on the current strategies and services provided to youth with disabilities in correctional settings to promote successful transition
• Results suggested five themes (11 major areas) that are essential components of transition programs for adjudicated youth with disabilities:
  o Instructional content and focus
  o Career exploration and vocational preparation activities
  o Community involvement and collaboration
  o Family involvement and support
  o Use of a formalized transition plan
• Results suggested a clear majority of programs provided intervention in three areas:
  o Individualized assessment and evaluation
  o Basic academic skills instruction
  o Social and independent living skills
• Results suggested barriers to effective transition programs:
  o Returning the youth to the home/neighborhood environment
  o Lack of support personnel and resources
  o Lack of family and community support
  o Interagency collaboration


• Surveyed school personnel to examine their perceptions on available transition services, school climate, self-efficacy, barriers faced during re-entry, and supportive strategies for youth with disabilities returning to high school from the juvenile justice system.
• Results indicated personnel believed (a) they could have a positive influence on students returning, (b) transition services were implemented inconsistently, and (c) low expectations for student outcomes after graduation.
• Implications for practice included (a) schools should evaluate current procedures in place for when students return from the juvenile justice system, (b) schools should evaluate current transition services and ensure students are engaged in those services and on track to achieve their post-school goals, (c) schools and districts should provide professional development on the importance of having high expectations for students with disabilities, and (d) teachers should provide instruction in academic and key non-academic skills (e.g., social skills, self-management) in order to assist students in gaining skills needed for positive in-school and post-school outcomes.

- Recommended certain factors should be considered when planning a youth’s reentry into the community after incarceration, including:
  - Differences in the degree of prior criminal involvement
  - Education
  - Mental Health
  - Nature of the crime committed
  - Continuity and change in social relationships
  - Community of reentry
- Results showed significant individual variation within each of these factors that may impact the success of a youth’s reentry into the community


- Provided results from a nationwide survey of the current transition practices juvenile justice facilities.
- Discussed characteristics and goals of these programs


- Reported results of a 5-year examination of resilience among adolescents transitioning from correctional facilities back into the community
- Results suggested several implications for practice in transition, including assistance with employment, housing, counseling, and drug treatment. In addition, transition services should include time with an adult mentor


- Investigated use of community-based services of youth with a mental illness diagnosis after release from detention
- Data were collected through a review of existing data and post release interviews with youth and family members
- Indicated youth with mental illness diagnoses rarely (no specific data) utilized available community services

- Used logistic regression to analyze five years of data (background characteristics) for 348 offenders (276 males/72 females) with a mean age of 17+ years who were identified with a special education diagnosis or DSM mental disorder who participated in Project SUPPORT (service utilization to promote positive outcomes in rehabilitation and transition) in which they received pre-release training and coordinated planning through education and/or employment by a transition specialist
- Reported barriers to transition including the general areas related to person, disability, employment, education, family/social, and criminal history
- Reported females were more likely than males to have parenting responsibilities, and histories of running away/residential placement, suicidal risks, and physical/emotional abuse
- Reported females were less likely than males to have a serious learning disability, retained in school, have ADD/ADHD, and unable to maintain a job prior to incarceration
- Recommended prevention be the focus for young women to prevent escalation of criminal activity; that gender-specific programming be part of the transition planning and implementing; transition start at entry to juvenile justice; and focus on young women to live independently
- Recommended four aspects to be included in transition: 1) assessment for histories of abuse, suicide, or emotional and behavioral disorders; 2) a plan matched to the assessment results; 3) a strong academic program; and 4) transition prior to release


- Examined data from the Transition Research on Adjudicated Youth in Community Settings (TRACS) on fathers and non-fathers reintegrating in society
- Identified explanatory factors for successful community reintegration: person-related, family-related, and social context-related
- Identified community adjustment variables, including: employment, school/training-related, social adjustments, and use of community services
- Results supported the need for individuals with multiple problem behaviors (delinquency coupled with adolescent fatherhood) are in need of more intensive structure of services that is put into place while the youth is still in the correctional facility

- Described Project SUPPORT (Service Utilization to Promote the Positive Rehabilitation and Community Transition)
- Program provides incarcerated youth with disabilities, with either a designated special education and/or mental health disorder, with pre-release training and coordinated planning to support a program participant’s re-entry and successful community adjustment
- Described state wide re-entry intervention focusing on lowering the recidivism rates of youths with mental health diagnosis and special education eligibility
- Results showed recidivism rates increase at 10-24 months as intervention support tapers


- Examined patterns of recidivism associated with youth with disabilities involved in the juvenile justice system by analyzing data from eight cohorts of juvenile offenders with disabilities to determine what factors contributed to repeated referrals into he juvenile justice system or youth with disabilities.
- Disabilities included (a) learning disability (35%), (b) emotional disorder (20%), and intellectual disability (15%).
- On average they were initially referred at age 13 and the majority had more than one referral (i.e., 18.4% had one referral, 16.87% had two referrals, 64.7% had three or more referrals).
- Results indicated African American males from delinquent families had more referrals than youth from poorer families with fewer family problems.
- Implications for practice included the implementation of wraparound and family empowerment services.

Additional Resources

The following resources have information on juvenile justice, as well as resources regarding the transition of youth from secure facilities.

- American Institutes for Research (AIR) [http://www.air.org](http://www.air.org)
- Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) [http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/resources/publications/](http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/resources/publications/)
• Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) http://www.juvjustice.org

• The National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability (NCCJD) http://www.thearc.org/NCCJD

• The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ) http://www.edjj.org/

• National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) http://www.ncjj.org

• National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice http://www/ncmhjj.com


• The Iris Center Modules
  o Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections (Part 1) Improving Instruction https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/jj1/
  o Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections (Part 2) Transition and Reentry to School and Community https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/jj2/

• The Iris Center Vignettes
  o 15 to Life: Kenneth’s Story http://www.pbs.org/pov/15tolife/video/juvenile-justice-and-rehabilitation/
  o Education: The Key to Lowering Recidivism? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUfLtZYkRG4
  o Juvenile Corrections: PBIS Impact https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Vo0U43LtlI
  o Juvenile Corrections: PBIS Obstacles https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rifYXsZKFU0

• U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov

• The National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth (NDTAC) resources:
  o Transition Toolkit 3.0: Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth Exposed to the Juvenile Justice System: https://www.neglected-delinquent.org/resource/transition-toolkit-30-meeting-educational-needs-youth-exposed-juvenile-justice-system


Webinar on Interagency Collaboration: https://www.neglected-delinquent.org/events/inter-agency-collaboration-innovative-transition-practice


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