TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

A Model for Planning, Organizing, and Evaluating Transition Education, Services, and Programs

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Additional resources are available at: [www.transitionta.org](http://www.transitionta.org) and from the first author at Western Michigan University, 3530 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo MI 49008-5259, (269) 387-6181.

Over the past three decades, transition practices research has demonstrated that post-school outcomes of students with disabilities improve when educators, families, students, and community members and organizations work together to implement a broad perspective of transition planning, more appropriately referred to as transition-focused education. In general, this concept represents the perspective that “transition planning” is the fundamental basis of education that guides development of students’ educational programs— including strategies that keep them in school— rather than an “add-on” activity for students with disabilities when they turn age 14 or 16. The impact of transition-focused education is greatly enhanced when service systems and programs connect and support the implementation and application of such learning. The *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, and Coyle, 2016) builds upon the earlier *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* (Kohler, 1996) and provides concrete practices— identified from effective programs and the research literature— for implementing transition-focused education.

As indicated in the references at the end of this document, the *Taxonomy 2.0* brings in the latest literature regarding predictors of post-school success, strategies to increase graduation and reduce dropout, school climate, and vocational rehabilitation services focused on fostering successful transition of youth with disabilities in college and careers. The model continues with five primary practice categories: Student-Focused Planning, Student Development, Interagency Collaboration, Family Engagement, and Program Structure. It includes additional practices in the areas of student supports and the instructional context within Student Development, as well as school climate in Program Structure. Within Family Engagement, a focus on cultural relevancy, empowerment, and family preparation are emphasized. Across categories, collaboration with service agencies, especially vocational rehabilitation, emphasize the importance of such connections prior to and during school and post-school transitions.

Finally, we acknowledge Drs. Matthew Klare and David Test at the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Karen Devries at Western Michigan University for their contributions to this work.
TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

Student-Focused Planning
- IEP Development
- Planning Strategies
- Student Participation

Family Engagement
- Family Involvement
- Family Empowerment
- Family Preparation

Program Structures
- Program Characteristics
- Program Evaluation
- Strategic Planning
- Policies and Procedures
- Resource Development and Allocation
- School Climate

Student Development
- Assessment
- Academic Skills
- Life, Social, and Emotional Skills
- Employment and Occupational Skills
- Student Supports
- Instructional Context

Interagency Collaboration
- Collaborative Framework
- Collaborative Service Delivery
## Student-Focused Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IEP Development</th>
<th>Planning Strategies</th>
<th>Student Participation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student interests and preferences are documented</td>
<td>• Transition-focused planning begins no later than age 14</td>
<td>• Planning team includes student and family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Progress or attainment of goals is reviewed annually</td>
<td>• Cultural and linguistic considerations embedded throughout the planning process</td>
<td>• Students are prepared to actively participate in the IEP development process and meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Options identified for each outcome area</td>
<td>• Planning team leader identified</td>
<td>• Students evaluate their progress on previous IEP goals and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Postsecondary education or training goals and objectives specified (e.g., voting, driving)</td>
<td>• IEP meeting time and preparation are adequate to conduct planning that engages relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>• Self-determination is facilitated within the planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Occupational goals and objectives specified</td>
<td>• Planning and meeting time and place support student and family engagement</td>
<td>• Students express their interests, preferences, and limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community-related and residential goals and objectives specified (e.g., voting, driving)</td>
<td>• Planning process is student-centered planning (e.g., applies person-center planning; MAPS, PATH, PFP)</td>
<td>• Planning decisions are driven by students and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recreation and leisure goals and objectives specified</td>
<td>• Comprehensive age-appropriate transition assessments are used for transition planning (e.g., achievement, intelligence, behavior, career, aptitude, skills, interests, preferences, readiness)</td>
<td>• Accommodations are made for communication needs (e.g., interpreters)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Educational program corresponds to specific goals, including elective courses</td>
<td>• Referral to adult service provider(s) occurs prior to student’s exit from school</td>
<td>• Students evaluate their participation in the planning process and meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pathway to diploma or other exit document identified and aligned with postsecondary goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Goals are measurable</td>
<td>• Planning process considers integrated developmental and service settings with appropriate supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personal needs are addressed in planning (e.g., financial, medical, guardianship)</td>
<td>• Responsibility of participants or agencies specified</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Specific goals and objectives result from student choices</td>
<td>• Evaluation of participant fulfillment of responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Planning process considers integrated developmental and service settings with appropriate supports</td>
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## TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

### STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Academic Skills</th>
<th>Life, Social, and Emotional Skills</th>
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</table>
| › Formative assessment data drive academic instruction  
› Career interest and aptitude assessments are used to inform curricular and instructional decisions  
› Accommodations on assessment or alternate assessments are provided as needed  
› Assessment results are shared regularly with students and used to assist in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified  
› Remediation and multiple testing opportunities offered for high stakes testing                                                                                                                 | › Courses and curricula prepare students for college and careers  
› Students understand by 9th grade what constitutes college-ready curriculum  
› Academic skills development (e.g., decoding, comprehension, computation, interpretation, etc.)  
› Academic strategies development (e.g., learning strategies, study skills, and test-taking skills, etc.)  
› Academic behaviors development (e.g., going to class, participation, organization, doing homework, studying, etc.) | › Self-determination skills development (e.g., goal setting, decision making, problem solving, self-advocacy, etc.)  
› Independent living skills development (e.g., financial, first aid, safety, cooking, etc.)  
› Interpersonal skills development  
› Leisure skills development  
› Transportation skills development  
› Classroom behavior development  
› Social skills development  
› Youth autonomy fostered and supported                                                                                                                                                       |
### Employment and Occupational Skills
- Career planning is embedded in or aligned with core academic instruction
- Career and technical education is provided including entry level and advanced skill completion options
- Employment seeking skills development
- Occupation-specific skills development
- Soft skills development
- Employment skill development is provided in authentic settings including:
  - school-based enterprises
  - on-site structured work experiences
  - career academies
- Career awareness opportunities provided (e.g., industry tours, guest speakers, career fairs, etc.)
- Local businesses provide opportunities for work-related experiences (e.g., simulated job interviews, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, work-study, long-term employment, etc.)
- Graduation credit provided for work experiences
- Paid work experience provided prior to school exit
- Job placement services provided prior to school exit

### Student Supports
- Related services are provided (e.g., OT, PT, speech therapy, transportation, assistive technology)
- Functional communication systems are provided as needed, including augmentative communication or assistive technology
- Identification and development of environmental adaptations, natural supports, and accommodations needed for success in school and community settings
- Academic support and enrichment provided to improve academic performance (e.g., test-taking skills, study skills, targeted subject area skills, etc.)
- Opportunities given for credit recovery and acceleration (e.g., after school, Saturday school, summer enrichment, etc.)
- Counseling services provided for college and career readiness
- Adult advocates help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks
- Adults and peers build and support student’s college and career aspirations
- Information given on postsecondary education supports
- Students supported to complete critical steps for college entry
- Students supported through partnerships established with community-based program providers (e.g., social services, welfare, mental health, law enforcement, etc.)

### Instructional Context
- Co-curricular activities are used to support student development (e.g., band, forensics, poetry slams, quiz bowl, writing competitions, yearbook, etc.)
- Extracurricular activities are used to support student development (e.g., clubs, Junior Achievement, Junior ROTC, school or intermural sports, student council, theater, etc.)
- Community activities are used to support student development (e.g., 4H, church groups, community festivals, community government, scouts, social activism, volunteering, etc.)
- Service learning used to engage students in their school and community by applying skills to solve real-world problems
- Education and services are provided in integrated and least restrictive environments with preference given to placement in the general education setting 80% or more of the time, as appropriate
- Education and instruction are provided in community-based settings
- Instruction is rigorous and relevant
- Instruction embeds Universal Design for Learning
- Student accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
### TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

#### INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Framework</th>
<th>Collaborative Service Delivery</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‣ Interagency coordinating body that includes students, parents, educators, service providers, community agencies, postsecondary institutions, employers, and other relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>‣ School staff, VR counselors, and community service providers engage in planning meetings with students and families</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Lead agency identified</td>
<td>‣ Coordinated requests for information (e.g., to parents, employers, agencies, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Designated transition contact person for each agency</td>
<td>‣ Coordinated collection and use of assessment data for EDP, IEP, and IPE</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Formal interagency agreement(s)</td>
<td>‣ Collaborative funding and staffing of transition services (e.g., braided funding, blended staff, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Roles and responsibilities clearly articulated</td>
<td>‣ Collaborative consultation between special, general, career technical, and vocational educators</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Shared understanding of educational and agency policy and procedures</td>
<td>‣ Collaborative program planning and development, including employer involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Systems barriers to collaboration are minimized</td>
<td>‣ Collaborative delivery of transition-related services by school, VR, and other relevant stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ Established methods of communication among all service providers</td>
<td>‣ Student and family linked with appropriate provider to assist with financial planning, health care system navigating, adult disability or mental health services, and transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Data shared among agencies via established procedures (with appropriate release of information and confidentiality)</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Cross-agency professional development provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Interdisciplinary and interagency policy and procedures are evaluated annually</td>
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### Family Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Involvement</th>
<th>Family Empowerment</th>
<th>Family Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Families’ cultural background and intimate knowledge of and experience with their child informs the IEP.</td>
<td>- Transition information provided prior to student’s age 14.</td>
<td>- Family learning and preparation provided for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Families provide information about their child either orally or in writing.</td>
<td>- Information provided in their ordinary language and shared in culturally responsive and respectful manner.</td>
<td>- transition-related planning process (e.g., IEP, ITP, IPE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Families participate in the entire transition planning process including:</td>
<td>- Structured method to identify family needs.</td>
<td>- empowerment strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- student assessment</td>
<td>- Pre-IEP planning activities specific to families.</td>
<td>- setting high expectation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- evaluation of student’s program</td>
<td>- Child care and respite care provided for transition-related meetings.</td>
<td>- promoting child’s self-determination, with respect for cultural views and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- IEP and other individual program planning meeting</td>
<td>- Supports provided for families to engage youth in community experiences.</td>
<td>- advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- decision making</td>
<td>- Students and families linked with adult service providers during transition planning.</td>
<td>- natural supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Families participate in service delivery.</td>
<td>- Students and families are assisted to apply for college.</td>
<td>- agencies and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Families participate in natural support network as trainers, mentors, peer advocates, or community liaisons.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- facilitating community experiences for youth with disabilities (e.g., safety, transportation, social skills, mobility).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Families participate in program policy development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- legal issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Families concerns and needs are represented in school governance.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Non-family member interpreters provided</td>
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- **Family Involvement**
  - Families’ cultural background and intimate knowledge of and experience with their child informs the IEP.
  - Families provide information about their child either orally or in writing.
  - Families participate in the entire transition planning process including:
    - student assessment
    - evaluation of student’s program
    - IEP and other individual program planning meeting
    - decision making
  - Families participate in service delivery.
  - Families participate in natural support network as trainers, mentors, peer advocates, or community liaisons.
  - Families participate in program policy development.
  - Families concerns and needs are represented in school governance.
  - Non-family member interpreters provided.

- **Family Empowerment**
  - Transition information provided prior to student’s age 14.
  - Information provided in their ordinary language and shared in culturally responsive and respectful manner.
  - Structured method to identify family needs.
  - Pre-IEP planning activities specific to families.
  - Child care and respite care provided for transition-related meetings.
  - Supports provided for families to engage youth in community experiences.
  - Students and families linked with adult service providers during transition planning.
  - Students and families are assisted to apply for college.

- **Family Preparation**
  - Family learning and preparation provided for:
    - transition-related planning process (e.g., IEP, ITP, IPE).
    - empowerment strategies.
    - setting high expectation.
    - promoting child’s self-determination, with respect for cultural views and values.
    - advocacy.
    - natural supports.
    - agencies and services.
    - facilitating community experiences for youth with disabilities (e.g., safety, transportation, social skills, mobility).
    - legal issues.
## Program Characteristics

- Transitions are addressed across educational levels (preschool - high school) and relevant systems (e.g., mental health, vocational rehabilitation)
- Program options are flexible to meet individual student needs
- Programs are outcome-oriented and reflect high expectations for all students
- Programs rely on a tiered philosophy, viewing general and special education as a unified system offering increasingly intensive support, as needed
- Programs reflect the community’s cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity
- Students with diverse needs have access to all educational opportunities (academic, college-prep, work-based, extracurricular, etc.)
- Graduation requirements are clearly defined
- Parents are given graduation requirements and exit options with future implications prior to 9th grade
- Multiple pathways provided for satisfying standard graduation requirements
- Every opportunity provided to students to receive a standard diploma until age 21

## Program Evaluation

- Evaluation is part of an ongoing cycle of program development and improvement
- Clear vision is established for system-wide evaluation and data use
- Data-driven culture supported at all levels
- Data systems are used to monitor and to assess progress toward graduation including:
  - dropout risk
  - attendance
  - behavior
  - course completion
  - course performance
  - social performance
  - CTE enrollment and completion patterns
  - office referrals, suspension, expulsion
  - truancy
  - retentions
  - support needs
- Student-level data are reviewed to identify students at risk of dropping out before key grade-level transitions
- Student withdrawal data are collected and reviewed
- Post-school data are collected and used for program planning
- Students and families participate in program evaluation

## Strategic Planning

- Strategic planning
  - is conducted on a regular basis
  - includes multiple stakeholders from relevant education, agency, and community partners
  - is driven by evidenced-based and promising practices for transition education and services
  - uses needs assessments to provide the basis for secondary-level education and post-school community programs and services
  - includes evaluation planning
- Strategic planning document is evaluated for technical soundness (measurable goals, sufficient tasks, tangible outputs, anticipated outcomes, sound evaluation, etc.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies and Procedures</th>
<th>Resource Development and Allocation</th>
<th>School Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Policies and procedures support the implementation of evidence-based and promising practices (EBPP) for transition</td>
<td>• High quality staff in all instructional, supervisory, and support roles are recruited, hired, and retained</td>
<td>• School climate supports a sense of trust and fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies and procedures foster a positive school climate</td>
<td>• Implementation of evidence-based and promising practices (EBPP) is supported and facilitated through professional development, coaching, and feedback systems</td>
<td>• School has a clearly defined set of expectations, procedures for teaching expectations, and procedures for encouraging expected and school-appropriate behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic and social performance are monitored</td>
<td>• Employee relations services are provided to ensure continuing quality of the workforce and the workplace (e.g., appointment status, benefits, and other transactions for all employees)</td>
<td>• Programs implemented to improve students’ classroom behavior and social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies and procedures provide the structure and process for systemic and ongoing program improvement regarding transition education and services</td>
<td>• Personnel development is provided for: - knowledge and skill development - culturally responsive planning with families - creating a welcoming school climate</td>
<td>• Students are provided a personalized learning environment and instructional process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies and procedures are aligned with those of other providers as much as possible to address gaps and reduce duplication of transition services</td>
<td>• Multiple measures are used when building and implementing administrator and teacher evaluation performance index formulas</td>
<td>• School climate is welcoming to students, families, staff, and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• School climate provides a safe and nurturing environment for students and adults to feel connected to the school (safe from physical or emotional harm, respect for diversity, fair and supportive practices)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Environment is culturally responsive to students, families, staff, and other stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students’ sense of engagement and belonging in school is monitored</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff and students interact outside the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adult advocates are assigned to students identified as at risk of dropping out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Bibliography

Note – the references included here are those from which we drew information to build the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0*. The sources used to develop the original *Taxonomy* (Kohler, 1996) are available at [http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED399722](http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED399722)


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