



# Exploring Seamless Transition: A Collaborative Model for Student Success

New York NEON

August 14, 2025

MEANINGFUL  
**WORK**  
+  
COMMUNITY  
**INCLUSION**

# About TransCen

- TransCen, Inc. is a national organization offering web-based and in-person training for state agencies, school districts, provider organizations, and others interested in meaningful work and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.
- Learn more about our work: [www.transcen.org](http://www.transcen.org)
- Contact us at [inquiries@transcen.org](mailto:inquiries@transcen.org) for more information!

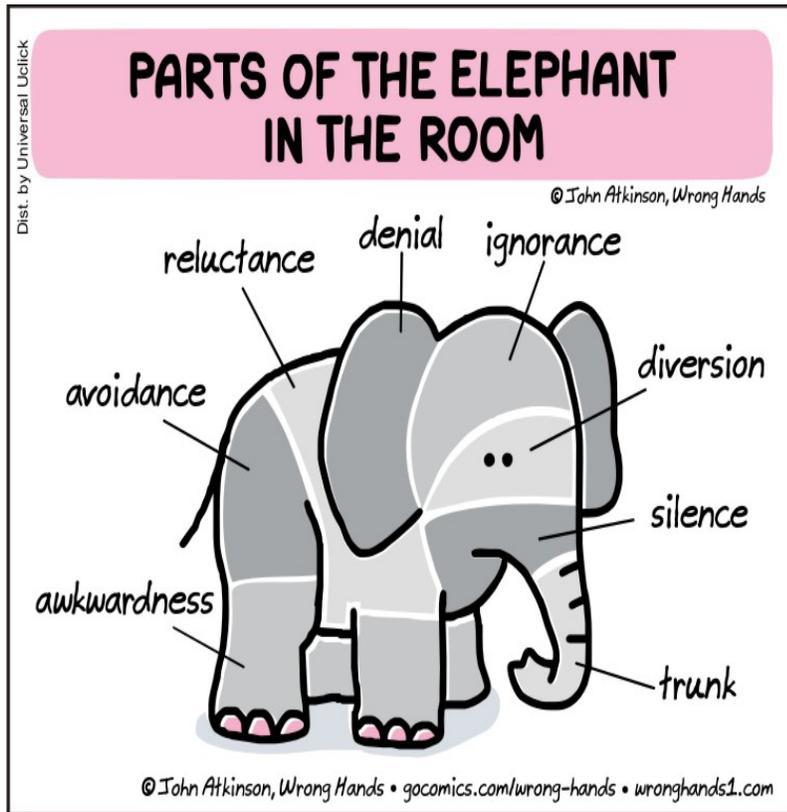


**MEANINGFUL  
WORK**



**COMMUNITY  
INCLUSION**

# What are the Issues?



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Collaboration

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Opportunity

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Families and Employers

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Current Practices

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Outcomes

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# Possible scenarios

- Youth are well prepared by schools for transition, but no connection to post-school support – lifetime of unemployment or underemployment likely
- Youth are not well prepared by schools for transition, post-school support must start from scratch – employment may or may not happen
- Youth are well prepared by schools for transition, post-school support in place prior to school exit – seamless transition to employment occurs

# Seamless Transition!

The culmination of special education services for all youth with disabilities should be paid employment or being on a clear path to a career.

# In Other Words...

For students with disabilities, we want their first day of “adult life” to look like their last day of high school.

- Employment or postsecondary education
- Connected to supports
- Opportunities to engage in interests
- Opportunities to be connected to their communities

# Why?

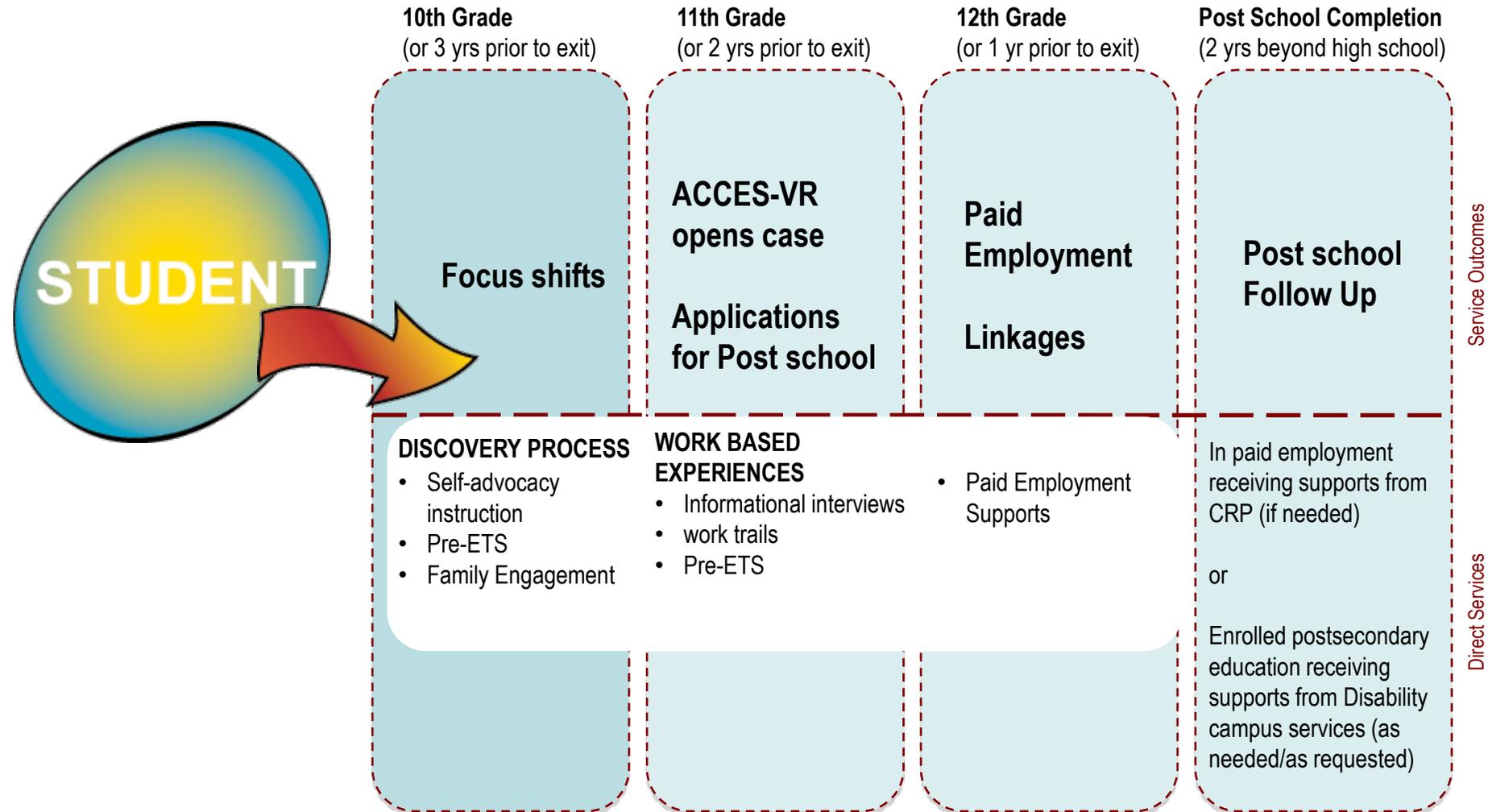
## What we know

Student work experiences lead to improved employment success as adults.

## What we believe

Promoting and supporting employment earlier can be an effective strategy to address the stubborn employment rate.

# Flow of Student Services



# The Vision



Having the capacity to be responsive to individual student job preferences and to provide workplace supports focused on skill building and fading.

# How Do We Do This?

1. Train to a strengths-based approach
2. Model respectful and intentional family engagement
3. Model effective employer engagement
4. Promote collaboration and clarification of roles and responsibilities at all levels

# Employment: Core Concepts

1

Everyone can work!

2

Work looks differently for everybody

3

Employment should be rooted in what your family member wants to do

# Positive Personal Profile



## Positive Personal Profile

Name:

<p>Dreams and Goals: What do you really want to do? What is your dream job? What would be fun to do?</p>	<p>Interests: What activities are you enthusiastic about? Do you have hobbies?</p>
<p>Talents, Skills and Knowledge: What are you good at? What are your natural gifts?</p>	<p>Learning Styles: How do you learn best? Tell me about a thing you had learnt successfully</p>
<p>Values: What is important to you? What things guide your life?</p>	<p>Positive Personality Traits: What have you done successfully? Why do you think you had succeed in it?</p>
<p>Environmental Preferences: Do you prefer to work alone? With people? Outdoor or indoor? In a silent place or noisy?</p>	<p>Dislikes: What type of jobs would you not like to do.</p>
<p>Work Experiences: Tell me about your previous work places what have you learnt there?</p>	<p>Support System: Who helps you when you face difficulty? Who might give you an advice?</p>
<p>Specific Challenges: Do you have specific difficulties that might impact your process?</p>	<p>Solutions and Accommodations: Have you tried to deal or overcome these difficulties?</p>
<p>Career Ideas and Possibilities to Explore:</p>	

# **Personal Positive Profile**

## **How can we use it?**

Planning meetings  
Career portfolio  
Resume development  
Interview preparation  
Personal essay

# Empowering the Youth Voice

- Student-led IEP meetings
- Assistive technology
- Person-centered planning tools (such as Charting the LifeCourse)
- Visual portfolios

# Building a Vision Statement

[Supported Employment Training Project Employment Checklist](#)

Scroll down to “Vision Statement Template”



Andy Meredith, High School Senior

## Strengths

*Social  
Determined  
Shows initiative  
Hard working  
Independent  
Musical  
Creative*

**Vision Statement:** I get my own studio. My job is taking pictures. I get a small house. I get married to Maggie. I also work at Publix. It is really fun. I keep my money in the bank. I want to go to college and live in a new house by myself. My friends will come to my new house.

## Accomplishments:

- Worked at Publix since April 2017
- Earned Eagle Scout Award 2018
- Worked on Yearbook staff and lettered in Woodstock High School Mountain Bike Team
- Photography exhibited at Anna's Angels benefit auction and Russian Medical Colleges

## What works for me:

*Peer modeling and support  
Age-appropriate awards: breaks, money, music,  
Specific explanations*

## What doesn't work for me:

*Babysitting  
Removing me from friends*

## Areas I need help:

*Reading  
Math  
Counting money  
Managing time  
Keeping track of a schedule*

# Role of Families and Caregivers

Families can be a valuable partner in the job search process.

- Setting or reinforcing the expectation
- Contributing to assessments
- Tapping into networks
- Practicing soft skills
- Teaching real things



# Reasons for Apprehension

- Fear of disruption of routine and services
- Fears over vulnerability
- Questions about ability to work
- Fear of losing benefits



**DON'T JUDGE  
MY CHOICES  
WITHOUT  
UNDERSTANDING  
MY REASONS.**

# The Family Interview

A well-executed, respectful family interview can accomplish many things:

1. Solidify family/professional relationship
2. Set the expectation of employment as the goal
3. Energize family around employment possibilities
4. Identify key roles and needed supports
5. Identify specific businesses or career areas to explore

# Setting Up the Interview

Invite key contributors and create a safe environment.

- No more than an hour
- During a time that works best for the family
- Not a huge group, just those who will help facilitate and support work experience
- At least one staff member the family is comfortable with



# Compliance vs. Connection

## Typical School Meeting

- Compliance
- Jargon
- Time crunch
- Professionals in the lead
- Confusing
- Intimidating

## Family Interview

- Possibilities
- Intuitive questions
- Relaxed
- Families voice paramount
- Common goal
- Inspiring

# Asking the Right Questions

- What does a good life look like?
- Greatest skill or attribute?
- Greatest concern?
- On Social Security benefits?
- What type of job do you think they would be successful at?
- Do you have any contacts at local businesses we could speak to?

# What Do You Do With Information?

- Transfer info to combined PPP. Remember to color code.
- Brainstorm potential employment situations, settings, job tasks that match preferences and skills- What “work” could the job seeker do? Where would this happen? Is self-employment, micro-business a desired path?
- Venn diagrams are a great tool to get the group “out of the box” and keep them focused on the job seeker

# The Goal: A Good Job Match

How often do we:

- Pick jobs “nobody else wants”
- Pick convenient options
- Offer same job year after year
- Exclude certain populations



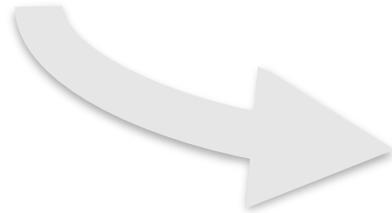
# Job Development Process

Employer Contact



Informational Interview

Presentation



Negotiation

**Job**



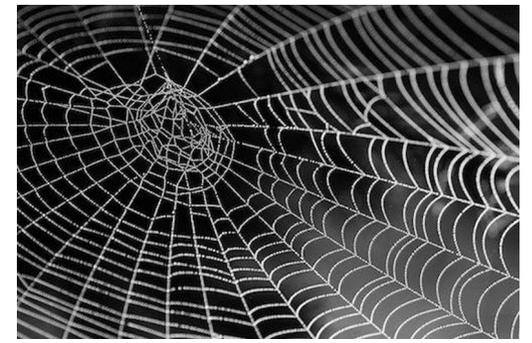
# Build Employer Relationships

## Strategies

- Get to know employers in your community
- Determine their business and labor needs
- Emphasize services you provide and the benefit to the employer



# Web of Opportunities!



## Informal Networks

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Neighbors
- Religious organizations
- Dentist, Doctor, Beautician, Banker, Health clubs...

## Formal Networks

- Past/present employers
- Tuesday morning clubs/Toast Masters
- Rotary/Lions clubs
- Local town officials
- School faculty/staff
- Companies you purchase from
- Board of Directors...

# Informational Interview

- Gives you access to the business
- Low pressure
- Start of working relationship
- Learn about their culture and work environment
- Uncover possible opportunities
- Chance to make a great first impression

# Informational Interview

**“I’d like to learn  
more about your  
company”**

“Do you have  
any jobs?”

# Make The Request Easy To Say “Yes” To!

“I work with job seekers interested in your industry. I’d like to see what your do and talk to you about your future employment needs are so I can better prepare them to be successful in your industry? I’m available next week, what times would you have open?”



# Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

- Who takes the lead?
- Who works with the student (doing what?)?
- Who communicates with everyone?
- Who communicates with family?
- Who interfaces with employers?
- Who pays for what?

## Whose JOB is it?

*This is a story about four people named :*

**EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY and NOBODY.**

THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT JOB TO BE DONE AND **EVERYBODY** WAS SURE THAT **SOMEBODY** WOULD DO IT. **ANYBODY** COULD HAVE DONE IT, BUT **NOBODY** DID IT. **SOMEBODY** GOT ANGRY ABOUT THAT, BECAUSE IT WAS **EVERYBODY'S** JOB. **EVERYBODY** THOUGHT **ANYBODY** COULD DO IT, BUT **NOBODY** REALIZED THAT **EVERYBODY** WOULDN'T DO IT. IT ENDED UP THAT **EVERYBODY** BLAMED **SOMEBODY** WHEN **NOBODY** DID WHAT **ANYBODY** COULD HAVE DONE.

*John 14:12*

# Flow of Services Map

Flow of Services Map



	Age 13	Age 14-16	Age 16-18	Age 18-21	Age 26
Student Outcomes					
Student Services					
Roles & Responsibilities of:					
MRS					
Education					
BSBP					
CMH					
Other					

# Clarifying the Role of Pre-ETS

## Notice of Interpretation

“Pre-employment transition services represent the earliest set of services available for students with disabilities under the VR program, are short-term in nature, and are designed to help students identify career interests.”

[Federal Register / Vol. 85, No. 40](#)

# Clarifying Pre-ETS (Con't)

Pre-ETS was not designed to pay for an individualized job development process.

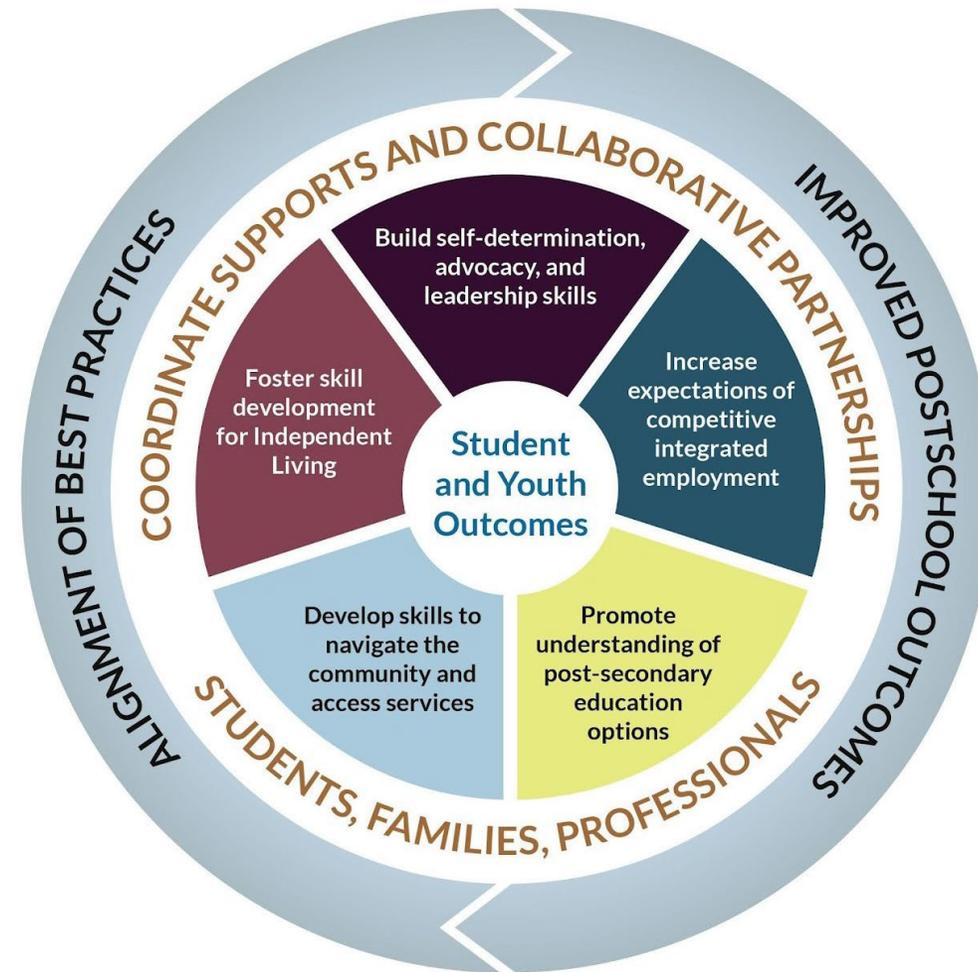
“Students with disabilities do not need to apply and be determined eligible for the VR program to receive pre-employment transition services. However, these students may not receive any VR services other than pre-employment transition services until they apply, and are determined eligible, for VR services, and have an approved IPE (81 FR 55629 at 55691).”

# Flexible Intervention Model

Seamless Transition can be used as a catalyst to organize groups and focus attention on a state level. (Ex. Forming a statewide interagency transition council)

The model can also be used to assist local interagency teams to collaborate and engage. (Ex. Conducting local pilot projects)

# State Level Intervention



# Local Level Coaching

- Gather interagency team. Training done at school but point agency can also be VR or community provider
- Use real student case student case studies
- Foundational training on employment process
- Model family and employer interview
- Facilitated work around roles and responsibilities
- Can be linked to an ongoing Community of Practice

# Examples



# Testimonial

“Thank you for your leadership in organizing the training and sharing your tools and resources. I am confident we will be doing even better work in the future with job shadows, work experiences, and competitive employment opportunities for and with our students because of our participation in Seamless Transition Pilot.”



# What Resonated?



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The presumption of employment and the responsibility to follow through

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The strengths-based approach (PPP)

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Partnering with families becomes focused

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Engaging employers becomes purposeful and less scary

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The need to maintain and grow collaborative relationships

# Now What?

Given the information shared in this presentation, what can the New York disability employment and education community do to promote “Seamless Transition” and improve employment access for ALL students?

# Contact Information

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Can also connect with me  
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