Module 6, Interagency Collaboration and Transition, has been developed to increase the knowledge of transition stakeholders regarding the importance of collaboration and the development of interagency agreements. Increasing transition stakeholders’ ability to use effective strategies and implement research-based models will support and empower communities to come together as collaborative partners on behalf of youth with disabilities and their families to facilitate smooth, seamless and successful transitions.
Transition Outreach Training for Adult Living
Interagency Collaboration and Transition

Objective

The objective of this training is to increase the knowledge of transition stakeholders regarding collaboration, interagency agreements and increase their ability to use strategies and implement models that will support and empower communities to come together as collaborative groups on behalf of youth with disabilities and their families to facilitate smooth, seamless and successful transitions.

Key Learning

At the end of this training, participants should be able to:

• Be familiar or reacquainted with the basic transition requirements that guide implementation of best practices.
• Define collaboration; be able to identify who is involved in collaborative transition relationships, the barriers to effective collaboration and strategies to overcome those barriers.
• Understand the importance of collaborative relationships in achieving successful outcomes for students with disabilities.
• Understand what an Interagency Agreement is as well as its essential features.
• Use the six-step collaborative group process to develop and implement an Interagency Agreement.
• Understand the importance of families and students as collaborative partners, strategies for successful family involvement and the indicators of success.

Materials

• Resources/Readings (may also be copied to handout at the discretion of the trainer)
• Trainer note pages with slides
• Handouts for training participants
  o Slide handout pages for note-taking

Trainer Preparation

1. Review trainer reading
2. Review trainer note pages and overheads
3. Duplicate handouts
Training Guide

1. Introduce training topic and learning objectives
2. Present the training with corresponding activities by following the trainer note pages
3. Conclude by disseminating and collecting workshop evaluation forms.

Curriculum Resources


Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004.


The Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Act (20 ILCS 2405/13a, from Ch. 23, par. 3444A)

94% of TOTAL funds come from federal sources.
Collaboration is a mindset that says, of course I’m going to need the help of others to do my job well!”

Sidney I. Gardner
Transition Planning

- A dynamic process involving a partnership of consumers, school-age services, post-school services, and local communities that results in maximum levels of employment, integration, and community participation for youth with disabilities.
a) Transition services means a **coordinated set of activities** for a child with a disability that:

1. is **designed within a results-oriented process**, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate movement from school to post school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation…

(IDEA 2004, 602(34)(A))
Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16 . . .

- each student must have included in the IEP appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based on age appropriate transition assessments related to:
  - training,
  - education,
  - employment, and, where appropriate independent living skills.

IDEA 2004, 614(1)(VIII)(aa)
Transition
Changing Systems ↔ Changing Laws

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004)
  - Schools’ responsibility
  - Least restrictive environment (LRE), quality, and free appropriate public education
  - Availability of federal funds
  - Individualized planning and related services
  - Applies until student graduates or reaches the age of 21
  - Transition services

- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
  - Individual responsibility
  - Focus on accommodations
  - Focus on nondiscrimination, reasonableness and undue hardship
  - Institutions and employers responsible for cost of assistance provision
  - No link between Federal funds and compliance with the law
Gaps and Inconsistencies

- Roles and responsibilities
- Process of determining assistance
“If …one cannot change a situation that causes his suffering, he can still choose his attitude.”

Viktor E. Frankl
Man’s Search for Meaning. pg. 172
Collaborative relationships are the only vehicle that can support and build the necessary bridge for children with disabilities to successfully move from school to adult life.
What is collaboration?

“Collaboration involves parent and professional, professional and child, parent and parent, professional and professional, agency and parent, federal and state administrators, and others. Collaboration will not look the same for all families and professionals. Some collaborative relationships will be simple to develop, others will be much more complex and demanding. Collaboration must be developed between and among all of us.”

More on collaboration …

- Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to:
  - define mutual relationships and goals;
  - jointly develop structure and shared responsibility;
  - implement mutual authority and accountability for success; and,
  - share resources and rewards.

What makes it work?

- Mutual respect, understanding and trust
- Diverse membership
- Open and frequent communication
- Sufficient funds
- Skilled facilitator/leader
- Members share a stake in process AND outcome
- History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
- Members see collaboration as in their self-interest

“It is much easier to make symbolic change through a project than to change the system in any depth - to cooperate rather than to collaborate.”

Michael Kirst
Stanford University
Please remember –
Keep your eye on the prize!

Collaboration is not the prize – the purpose is to better serve people needing services.
Barriers to Effective Collaboration

- Transition literature indicates a consensus on four barriers to effective service coordination and collaboration:
  - Few partnerships establish interagency collaboration at the state and local level
  - Uncoordinated mechanisms for communicating, sharing information and coordinating services and supports
  - Lack of resource mapping and alignment
  - Lack of identification of service gaps and the development of services to address those gaps

Whelley, T., Hart, D. & Zafft, C. (2003). Coordination and management of services and supports for individuals with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education and employment. White paper. Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa and University of Massachusetts, Boston
What can we do?

- Build partnerships focusing on interagency collaboration
- Develop and implement strategies for information sharing, communication and coordination of services and supports
- Engage in activities to map and align resources
- Identify and develop strategies and services to address gaps

Whelley, T., Hart, D. & Zafft, C. (2003). Coordination and management of services and supports for individuals with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education and employment. White paper. Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa and University of Massachusetts, Boston
Community Transition Teams

- A foundation of community transition teams and team activities are the cornerstone of real change in transition programs and this must occur at a local level.
  - IEP team
  - Community and/or regional transition teams
  - State-level transition team

Illinois Transition Planning Committees

- Identify current transition services, programs, and funding sources provided within the community for secondary and post-secondary aged youth with disabilities and their families as well as the development of strategies to address unmet needs.

- Facilitate the development of transition interagency teams to address present and future transition needs of individual students on their individual education plans.

- Develop a mission statement that emphasizes the goals of integration and participation in all aspects of community life for persons with disabilities.
Illinois Transition Planning Committees

- Provide for the exchange of information such as appropriate data, effectiveness studies, special projects, exemplary programs, and creative funding of programs.

- Develop consumer in-service and awareness training programs in the local community.

- Assist in staff training for individual transition planning and student transition needs assessment.

The Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Act
(20 ILCS 2405/13a, from Ch. 23, par. 3444A)
What is an Interagency Agreement?

“An interagency agreement is a commitment of shared responsibility for student learning and a plan for the school, community and family to collaborate in achieving positive adult outcomes for youth with disabilities.”

What does IDEA 2004 say about interagency agreements?

- IDEA 2004 Section 612(a)(12) outlines “obligations related to and methods of ensuring services” and requires the use of interagency agreements or other mechanisms for interagency coordination to ensure services such as transition services are available to transition-aged youth with disabilities.
Essential Features of Effective Interagency Agreements

- Stakeholder responsibility and ownership
- Buy-in of participating agency directors
- Direct service staff participation
- Regular meetings
- Openness to learn from each other
- Active involvement of agency representatives in a strategic planning process
- Utilization of data
- Dissemination of the agreement
- Technical assistance provided regarding implementation

Steps to Develop an Interagency Agreement

Step One

- Form a committee responsible for developing the Interagency Agreement.
  - Include a variety of stakeholders
  - Don’t forget parents and students – their insights are critical
  - Create a shared vision
The passion created by shared vision creates synergistic empowerment, it unleashes and combines the energy, talent, and capacities of all involved.

Covey, Merrill and Merrill, 1994
Steps to Develop an Interagency Agreement

Step Two

- Develop an action plan outlining all steps to be accomplished. The action plan should:
  - prioritize and divide responsibility;
  - be focused on the goal of developing an Interagency Agreement;
  - be brief; and,
  - be distributed to ALL committee/group members.
Steps to Develop an Interagency Agreement

Step Three

- Reach consensus on the purpose of the Interagency Agreement.
  - Why are we writing an Interagency Agreement?
  - How will it help us accomplish our goals?
Steps to Develop an Interagency Agreement

Step Four

- Identify key items to include in the Interagency Agreement.
  - Keep it short and sweet!
  - Stick with user-friendly language.
  - Include a place for key members to sign off.
Steps to Develop an Interagency Agreement

Step Five

- Develop a rough draft of the Interagency Agreement.
  - Use key ideas as your section headings
  - Develop, expand and explain each element
Steps to Develop an Interagency Agreement

Step Six

- Develop the final Interagency Agreement.
  - Use the rough draft as a guide.
  - Use the comments from the full committee to revise and edit as necessary.

- Be brief! Be creative! Be accessible!
Families as Collaborative Partners

For students with disabilities, family involvement during transition is not important, it is essential. Supportive families, actively involved in their young member’s transition to the world of work, greatly increase the chances for successful transitions.

- 26th IRI, The Family as a Critical Partner in the Achievement of a Successful Employment Outcome, 2000
Family/Professional Collaboration

Why is family participation in transition planning so critical?

- Families bring a wealth of information to the transition planning process.

- Families participation helps prepare them to assume new roles as their young adults move into adulthood.

Strategies for Successful Family Involvement

- Family involvement must be proactively supported!
  - Written policies
  - Administrative support
  - Ongoing training
  - Joint planning, goal setting, policy development and evaluation
  - Communication between home and school
  - Inclusion of regular evaluation activities

Indicators of Success

Caring Partnerships in the Transition Process

What would it look like to families?

- Listening and cooperative identification of supports
- Flexibility of times and locations for IEP/transition planning meetings
- Demonstrated belief in the young adult with a disability
- No judging, no blaming
- Families understand the intentions of service policy and procedures
- Family feedback used to improve the system

Developing Collaborative Transition Partnerships

- True partnerships are developed intentionally!
- Emphasis must shift back to the family and their transitioning son or daughter.
Building Bridges

Sometimes Difficult ...
Always Important
## Purpose of Interagency Agreement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Resources Needed to Complete</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Items to be included in rough draft (develop, expand, explain)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pull together pieces for a rough draft.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Review by full committee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Edit and revise Interagency based on input from committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transition Outreach Training for Adult Living (TOTAL) Project, Interagency Collaboration and Transition Module. Sue Walter, 1/05.