Transition- The Impact on Students in Schools and Communities

Overview

Learning Objectives:

After reading this powerpoint you should be able to

- Describe two goals of transition services for autistic learners

- Detail some of the current barriers facing transition planning

- Describe three ways schools and communities can support transition

Transition

- Transition is the term schools use to describe the period when students begin to think about and plan for their life after high school

- Transition services start at age 14 and continue until the student graduates or ages out of their programming at age 22

- During this time, schools, parents, therapists, educators, and students ideally work together to plan for the future

- Student goals and coursework may change to target life skills as opposed to academic skills
    - Possible vocational interests and post-secondary opportunities should be explored

Promoting Self-Advocacy

- Self-advocacy is a person's ability to communicate their wants and needs and is a major goal for students in transition

- Incorporates taking on more responsibility for themselves

- It encompasses any topic in any setting

- Many autistic people have communication challenges, so self-advocacy can be a long-term work-in-progress

Self Determination

- A broader topic related to self-advocacy is self-determination, which is defined by a person's ability to set their own goals and work to meet them

- Example: When a person decides to buy a new phone; they decide which phone to purchase, earn and save the money, and then spend the money on the phone when they are ready.

- Self-determination is another goal educators, parents, and students strive toward during transition

What Does Research Say About Current Transition Plans?

- Students are frequently not taking part in meetings to determine their goals

- Amount of time they spend in community settings is minimal

- Schools are not educating learners in the ways that support their self-advocacy and self-determination goals

- Employment rates for autistic adults to be somewhere between 4%-11% which is a **testament to many system failures**, including transition planning

Downfalls of Ineffective Transition Plans

- Leads to hundreds of thousands of students who are unprepared for young adulthood

- Dismal transition planning outcomes contribute to autistic adults who are unable to access employment, earn a wage, and support themselves

- Autistic individuals face further social isolation and exclusion when they can't participate in their communities

- This is harmful at the individual level and at the community level

Changes Needed to be Made

1. **Schools should expand their definition of self-advocacy**
    1. Includes students giving their views, being listened to, making their own choices and mistakes, and improving their lives to be more independent
    2. Make goals for students more holistic

2. **Prioritize autistic students working in an inclusive, diverse and natural environment**
    1. Take students out of special education classrooms
    2. Job training within the context of an actual work environment

3. **Encourage independent decision making**
    1. Students learn about their own strengths, preferences, and dislikes
    2. Take action based on what they know about themselves

Final Takeaways

- Transition programs need community partners who will open their venues and workplaces to autistic students who are still learning how to participate in community environments.

- As communities and schools each grow to adapt to the needs of autistic people in the most effective ways possible, they must remember to grow together, too.

- An approach that dovetails the needs of autistic people, with the goals of transition programs, and the inclusive initiatives of community partners is the approach that has the most potential to substantially improve outcomes for autistic students and their communities.

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