**Running Project: Part 2**

**Domain: Family Involvement**

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**ABSTRACT:**

This Running Project: Part 2, will highlight the research in three separate articles that provide insight and/or common viewpoints on the value of family involvement throughout a student’s academic career, especially in the transition planning phase. The articles all support the foundational premise that family involvement is at the center of a student’s successful transition into post-secondary goals, self-determination, self-advocacy, and independence. Additionally, findings for each of the three articles are discussed, as well as the highlights of three additional websites that support the subject matter of family involvement in transition planning.

**RUNNING PROJECT: PART 1 RATIONALE:**

Family involvement plays a crucial role in the success and attainment of a student’s post-secondary goals, and the involvement of family members creates a foundational structure for any student transitioning out of education and/or services, and such involvement should be factored into and fundamentally applied throughout the entirety of a student’s academic career, and not just in the latter years as they begin to near transition out of services. [As a note, some studies look at family involvement in the early years of education, including preschool, asserting the importance of family involvement at such a pivotal time in a student’s first transition into education, and how crucial family involvement is to determinants such as what supports and interventions a student may need before transitioning into kindergarten from preschool.]

The support structure that family involvement creates influences positive decision-making, self-determination, self-advocacy, and the independence a student will rely upon as they evolve in their own manner and gain self-esteem and confidence and independence. Pang (2010) articulated quite effectively in an article addressing “*Facilitating Family Involvement in Early Intervention to Preschool Transition*” how “active family involvement and important family roles in the early intervention to preschool transition have been mandated by laws, recognized by the position statements of professional organizations, and validated through evidence-based research” and by involving “families in this process, reduce stresses, and conquer the challenges families may encounter; professionals who serve families in this process should seek to fully understand families’ needs and priorities and to establish collaboration with them to design appropriate transition goals and effective strategies.” These same fundamentals should apply to all stages of transition, especially in the process of transitioning out of services. Pang (2010) literally hit the proverbial nail directly on its head with her assertion of how important family involvement is at the early intervention to preschool transition stage and utilizing that very same framework in application to elementary school, middle school, and high school, creates a profound foundation for student success throughout their academic career and beyond into post-secondary goal attainment. Pang (2010) asserted that “the application of a conceptual framework of family systems theory and family-centered practices can fulfill this task” and the rationale for my Running Project: Part 1, was specifically to isolate how family involvement throughout the academic career of a student, especially as they transition out of services, is the most foundational element to their future post-secondary goal success.

A successful transitionary outcome relies on many things, most of which focuses on seven domains within the transition process, with family involvement and planning being crucial to all stakeholders and a surety to eventual success. When we examine the primary stakeholder in transition, we must recognize that regardless of family involvement and the desires, hopes, wishes, and dreams of family members, the only stakeholder with a personal stake in transition planning are the students themselves. The goal of transition planning, and family involvement, is to ascertain the post-secondary goals of a student who is transitioning out of services and determine how to better establish the most feasible and attainable level of independence and quality of life, with consideration of available resources and individual limitations. Self-determination should be the pivotal cornerstone of transitioning philosophy and methodology in equitable application, when working with students who must advocate for themselves in order to attain a level of functional independence.

Applying the analysis below, provided in the Running Project: Part 1, establishes the rational for selecting “family involvement” as the domain to analyze in Running Project: Part 2, primarily due to its low QI-2 Survey score as well as the district-level deficits perceived throughout my time with Yelm Community Schools.

**Summary and Analysis Domain 7:** Family Involvement: 2.63

**What is Family Involvement:**

“Of all the factors that determine student outcomes, family engagement is at the top of the list. Partnerships between schools and families can improve students’ grades, attendance, persistence, and motivation. Research shows that this is true regardless of a family’s race or income” (Understood.com; 2023).

**KEY:** **RED = NO**

**YELLOW = SOMETIMES**

**GREEN = ALWAYS**

**BLACK = CURRENT INDICATOR FOR STRENGTH 1 OR 2**

**Strength 1: Score of Quality Indicator: 2.63**

**15. Family members (including extended family, friends, or legal guardians) regularly participate in transition planning**

**and IEP meetings.**

**16. The family’s needs and supports are taken into consideration during transition planning.**

**17. Information and training are provided to families about transition.**

**18. Preplanning activities are in place so families can provide input prior to transition meetings.**

**19. Family members are actively involved throughout the transition planning process.**

**20. Supports are in place to involve family members in transition planning meetings (e.g., flexible time and location,**

**language interpreter).**

**Strength 2: Score of Quality Indicator: 2.63**

**15. Family members (including extended family, friends, or legal guardians) regularly participate in transition planning**

**and IEP meetings.**

**16. The family’s needs and supports are taken into consideration during transition planning.**

**17. Information and training are provided to families about transition.**

**18. Preplanning activities are in place so families can provide input prior to transition meetings.**

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**20. Supports are in place to involve family members in transition planning meetings (e.g., flexible time and location,**

**language interpreter).**

**What does this look like at Yelm Community Schools:**

I would like to argue that our district does an amazing job at engaging families in the education of their students, but unfortunately, not all families engage. When communication failures occur, engagement suffers. I believe we have supports in place, and great intentions along with preplanning activities, but I do not believe that all educators in current play understand the severity of constant communication failures and how that impacts a family’s involvement, or even considers the economic impacts, or socio-cultural impacts of family involvement, including diversity and language and cultural barriers.

**KEY:** **RED = NO**

**YELLOW = SOMETIMES**

**GREEN = ALWAYS**

**BLACK = CURRENT INDICATOR FOR WEAKNESS 1 OR 2**

**Weakness 1: Score of Quality Indicator: 2.63**

**15. Family members (including extended family, friends, or legal guardians) regularly participate in transition planning**

**and IEP meetings.**

**16. The family’s needs and supports are taken into consideration during transition planning.**

**17. Information and training are provided to families about transition.**

18. Preplanning activities are in place so families can provide input prior to transition meetings.

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**20. Supports are in place to involve family members in transition planning meetings (e.g., flexible time and location,**

**language interpreter).**

**What does this look like at Yelm Community Schools:**

I believe that there are drastic failures currently in the communication process with families and those communication failures correspond directly to failures in information and training being provided to families about transition and taking into consideration the needs of families and what supports they may need. Our current teacher cannot even email and follow up with our families on an end-of-the-year field trip permission slip. I believe that just because a system is in place, and that there are many hands in the proverbial cookie jar, no amount of planning or preparation can convince or force a family to choose to become involved, or when speaking to diversity, learn and understand the English language in a manner that will allow them to effectively communicate and actively listen to all of the information needed for a parent or family to understand transition services or end of services. Furthermore, cultural differences (yet another issue directly rooted in diversity) play a pivotal role in how families engage and interact in a student’s academic career, and how much involvement educators will get from families through the transition planning phase as the move towards end of service occurs.

With a current focus on Special Education at the middle school level, I am working towards creating methods of more furtive and functional communication with families that cross the lines of diversity and culture and make the process more inviting and alleviate the stress of the transition planning process. Creating more informal methods of communication, to slowly work toward eventual, more formal meetings on transition planning, would greatly benefit families and prompt greater family involvement. My ability to speak multiple languages has helped greatly in communicating with families that struggle with diversity, or economic status or culture differences. Gaining the confidence and trust of families who do not understand the process or recognize that supports and resources exist is by far the greatest hurdle we have as educators in special education, but also by far the most rewarding end game to achieve for our students.

**LITERATURE REVIEW TABLE:**

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| **STUDY (APA CITATION)** | **RESEARCH PURPOSE** | **KEY FINDING** |
| Hirano, K.A., Rowe, D., Lindstrom, L. *et al.* (2018). *Systemic Barriers to Family Involvement in Transition Planning for Youth with Disabilities: A Qualitative Metasynthesis.* Pg. 3440-3456 | 1.       This study utilized qualitative synthesis methods to investigatebarriers to school-based involvement in transition planning and preparation for families of adolescents with disabilities. | * Studies included in this synthesis employed qualitative research methods as a primary methodology and focused on obtaining perceptions and experiences of the transition planning process and the transition to adulthood from parents and caregivers of adolescents with disabilities ages 14–25 who had received or were receiving services under IDEA.
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| 2.      The particular focus on barriers is part of a larger study examining family involvement in transition planning. In particular, this study used metaethnography (Noblit and Hare 1988; Major and Savin-Baden 2010), an interpretive approach, to synthesize the findings from studies reported in 22 manuscripts conducted by 66 researchers involving interviews with 405 parents.3. Two theories, Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) model of ecologicaldevelopment and Bourdieu’s (1977, 1996) theory of social and cultural reproduction, were utilized to guide identification of codes and interpretation of data. Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) model of ecological development provides a holistic view of students, acknowledging the multifaceted influences on human development. | * Papers were assessed for quality using quality considerations outlined by Brantlinger et al. (2005) and Trainor and Graue (2014). Trainor and Graue (2014) expanded the work of Brantlinger et al. (2005) by providing additional indicators of quality (e.g., transparency and the role of theory) and strengthening the connection to quality as assessed in the broader scope of qualitative research across the social sciences.
* Families described barriers related to their own contexts that prevented them from being engaged and involved participants in planning and preparing for their young adult’s transition to adulthood. These barriers included stress, limited resources, lack of cultural capital, and low self-efficacy.
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| Anguiano, R. P. V. (2004). Families and Schools: The Effect of Parental Involvement on High School Completion. Pg. 61-85 | 1.     This study examined European American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American parental involvement and their children’s high school completion. | * An examination of how different family structures have an influence on a student’s education was conducted with an outcome determining that family involvement creates avenues of success in post-secondary goals.
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| 2.     This study used the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1988 and utilized a hierarchical linear model (HLM) for the statistical analysis. | * Findings demonstrated that different types of parental involvement were important in a student’s high school completion, depending on ethnicity.
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| 3.  Social capital theory and a family ecological approach were used as the theoretical foundations.  | * School involvement was not significant in influencing the level of parental involvement and the relation to high school completion. Future research should focus on understanding the ways in which a stronger relationship between families and educational systems could be developed.
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| Lipscomb, Stephen & Haimson, Joshua & Liu, Albert & Burghardt, John & Johnson, David & Thurlow, Martha. (2017). *Preparing for life after high school: The characteristics and experiences of youth in special education. Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012.* Volume 1: Comparisons with other youth: Full report. | 1. Policymakers and educators have long recognized the importance of addressing the needs of youth in special education, who today account for 12 percent of all youth in the United States. | * This volume, the first from NLTS 2012, examines the characteristics of youth in special education overall and how these youth are faring relative to their peers.
 |
| 2.     The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) 2012 provides updated information on youth with disabilities. The study offers a current picture of the backgrounds of secondary school youth and their functional abilities, activities in school and with friends, academic supports received from schools and parents, and preparation for life after high school. | * Comparisons are made between youth with and without an IEP, and within the latter group, those with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
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| 3.     Comparisons are made between youth with and without an IEP, and within the latter group, those with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. | * The findings highlight the distinctive features of the characteristics and experiences of youth with an IEP.
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**WEBSITE ABSTRACTS, LINKS, AND INFORMATION:**

 

1. **POWERSCHOOL [Information taken from website]**

https://www.powerschool.com

**ABSTRACT:** Powerschool claims to be the “leading provider of cloud-based software in K-12 education, and that they connect students, teachers, administrators, and parents with the shared goal of improving student outcomes.” Powerschool is “driven to improve student outcomes” and with Powerschool “parents/guardians can access vital information about their children quickly and accurately” where “they can see the results of tests and assignments as soon as they are recorded” which “enables parents/guardians “to intervene quickly if necessary. Powerschool streamlines the communication and transfer of information between educators and parents/guardians, which further positively facilitates communication and thereby transitionary-based conversations as students move towards the end of services and planning post-secondary goals.

**About us:** “As the leading provider of cloud-based software in K-12 education, we connect students, teachers, administrators, and parents with the shared goal of improving student outcomes.”

**Why Powerschool:** “Our award-winning K-12 software solutions serve over 45 million students globally.” Statistically claims to serve 15,000 customers, and 90/100 top districts by student enrollment in the United States, and boasts over 300,000 active members in their helpful, supportive Powerschool community, with service in 90+ countries and territories.

**Why Powerschool is the Proven Leader:** We’re driven to improve student outcomes. As the leading provider of cloud-based software for K-12 education in North America, we deliver by providing best-in-class solutions to over 13,000 K-12 organizations.

https://www.waukeeschools.org/ [Utilizing Powerschool for their school district.]

With PowerSchool, parents/guardians can access vital information about their children quickly and accurately. They can see the results of tests and assignments as soon as they are recorded, enabling them to intervene quickly if necessary. Parents can check the latest homework assignments and offer their children help with their schoolwork.

**Benefits of the PowerSchool Public Portal:** [According to Waukeeschools.org]

**Ensure Up-to-the-Minute Data:** PowerSchool is a web-based student information system with a centralized database. This ensures that data is exchanged in real-time and as a result delivers the most current information available on a student. When teachers enter grades and attendance information for their class, that same data is immediately available to the school, district administration, parents, and students.

**Increase Parental Involvement:** With PowerSchool, parents/guardians can access vital information about their children quickly and accurately. They can see the results of tests and assignments as soon as they are recorded, enabling them to intervene quickly if necessary. Parents can check the latest homework assignments and offer their children help with their schoolwork. Day in and day out, PowerSchool helps parents help their children achieve their potential.

**DIVERSITY:**

PowerSchool is Dedicated to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The power to create energy and connectivity. At PowerSchool we unite together, with curiosity and passion, to celebrate, support and encourage a diverse and inclusive work force.

**EEO Commitment:** PowerSchool is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace. PowerSchool is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, disability, age, or other legally protected status. Our inclusive culture empowers PowerSchoolers to deliver the best results for our customers. We not only celebrate the diversity of our workforce, we celebrate the diverse ways we work.

**PowerSchool Employee Resource Groups:** Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are employee-led groups formed around common interests, common bonds, or similar backgrounds, such as gender, ethnicity, or religious affiliation with a common goal, acting together for a specific purpose. PowerSchool aims to foster a positive environment by supporting the diversity of our workforce, and creating inclusive groups that can continue to support, and advocate for, employees from a multitude of backgrounds.

**BAEC (Black and Allied Employees for Change) Mission:** The Black and Allied Employees for Change Employee Resource Group’s mission is to educate the PowerSchool Organization around the culture and experiences of Black people. We seek to support and encourage the Black community within PowerSchool by influencing change in the following ways: 1) Build community to enable open feedback from members about their PowerSchool experience, 2) Share information relevant to the Black community with the greater organization, 3) Raise awareness around the challenges within the Black community, 4) Partner with internal groups to drive change within PowerSchool.

**Prism (LGBTQ+) Mission:** We envision a PowerSchool in which all LGBTQIA+ employees can live safely and openly as our whole selves in the communities we call home. We strive to help our employee community better reflect and represent the students, teachers, and admins we support. We 1) Create a better work environment for LGBTQIA+ persons to strive towards a feeling of inclusion among employees, 2) Share information to help normalize a group that is often isolated due to a lack of understanding, 3) Empower allies who may not identify within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum through education, celebration, and open discourse, 4) Support our local LGBTQIA+ communities through outreach and education.

**Women in Tech Mission:** Women in Tech (WIT) has the mission to connect, inspire, and empower our colleagues to grow and succeed together, at all levels of their education and career. Our aim is to educate, equip, and empower female-identifying individuals and their allies with the necessary skills and confidence to succeed in non-traditional career fields through leadership development, community outreach, technology education, networking, and mentoring opportunities.

**LatinX Mission:** To promote cultural understanding, and celebration of diversity within the LatinX community, and across the workplace. We want to share more about how our culture can attract and support personal and professional growth with a focus on community connection.

**Diverse Abilities Mission:** To raise awareness to the experiences of those with diverse abilities and to educate those in the PowerSchool organization on the impact those abilities can have on both people who possess diverse abilities and those who are in relationships with those with diverse abilities and help to provide accommodations, to create positive change in the way people view, interact with, and support those individuals.

**Veterans and Family Support Mission:** To create a network of PowerSchool employees that share an interest in the military community, and support PowerSchool employees that serve in the military and their family members during service member’s deployment. We partner with PowerSchool Talent to enhance recruitment of candidates with military experience.

**India: Women @ PowerSchool Mission:** The Women @ PowerSchool Employee Resource Group aims to promote a culture of Diversity & Inclusion within PowerSchool and be a sounding board around strategic diversity objectives to help create a more inclusive environment for Women by providing leadership with advice, guidance, and recommendations towards this cause.

**India: Health & Wellness Mission:** To guide and encourage employees’ personal and professional productivity, and physical and mental well-being. The mission of the Wellness committee shall be to foster a worksite culture that supports anyone’s desire to make healthy lifestyle choices.



1. **IRIS CENTER [with links] [Information taken from website]**

https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tran/cresource/q2/p07/

**ABSTRACT:** Iris Center’s program is supported by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs and located at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College. The IRIS Center develops and disseminates free, engaging online resources about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices to support the education of all students, particularly struggling learners and those with disabilities. These resources, designed to bridge the research-to-practice gap, are intended for use in college teacher preparation programs, in professional development (PD) activities for practicing professionals, and by independent learners.

Developed in collaboration with nationally recognized researchers and education experts, our free online resources address instructional and classroom issues of critical importance to today’s educators: classroom behavior management, secondary transition, early childhood, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and many others.

In addition to our free resources, IRIS offers online professional development options: [PD Certificates for Educators](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/pd-hours/earn-pd-hours/) and [School & District Platform](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/pd-hours/school-district-platform/).

**Mission & Vision Statements:** Our Vision and Mission statements are expressions of the center’s goals and aspirations, as well as general overviews of how we plan to go about achieving them.

**Vision Statement:** The IRIS Center is a national leader supporting the increased use of evidence-based practices by educators to improve outcomes for all students, especially struggling learners and those with disabilities.

**Mission Statement:** The IRIS Center offers high-quality online, open educational resources (OERs) that translate research to practice for use in personnel preparation and ongoing professional development so that educators have the knowledge and skills they need to use evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for all students, especially struggling learners and those with disabilities.

**What We Do:** The IRIS Center offers a wide variety of resources and services to suit a diverse set of instructional needs and circumstances. In this section, you will learn more about those services and resources, including how they are created and disseminated to IRIS users and educational programs in the United States and around the world.

**Our Resources:** Developed in collaboration with nationally recognized researchers and education experts, our center’s resources about evidence-based instructional and intervention practices—modules, case studies, activities, and others (including a number of Web-based tools)—are created for use in college instruction, professional development activities, and independent learning opportunities for practicing educators. Our center also offers resources to facilitate the use of IRIS materials by college faculty, professional development providers, and independent users.

**IRIS Resources on the IRIS Resource Locator (IRL):** STAR Legacy**Modules:**The signature products of the IRIS Center, these resources offer in-depth looks at topics like response to intervention, classroom behavior management, secondary transition, student diversity, and many others of importance to educators in today’s classrooms. Our modules offer their content in a variety of formats: text, video demonstrations, audio interviews with experts and practicing educators, and interactive activities. Based on the adult learning theory developed by Dr. John Bransford and his colleagues, IRIS Modules make information on evidence-based practices more accessible and easier to learn than is otherwise possible for many busy educators. [Click here to learn more about adult learning theory](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research-evaluation/iris-and-adult-learning-theory/).

**Case Studies:**These multi-part resources ask users to analyze and respond to a number of problem-based classroom issues and challenges—for example classroom norms and expectations, algebra instruction, or classroom arrangement—through increasing levels of complexity and detail.

**Course/PD Activities:**Looking for handy, focused resources for use as independent assignments or to promote classroom discussion? IRIS Course/PD Activities cover a diverse range of topics, including behavior management, language disorders, disability related language in federal law, and many others.

**Fundamental Skill Sheets:** Practical and informative, Fundamental Skill Sheets offer educators quick primers (or reminders!) about discrete skills and practices indispensable to their role as effective classroom teachers. Fundamental Skill Sheets cover everything from specific praise to proximity control, telling teachers What It Is, What the Research & Resources Say, Steps for Implementation, Tips for Implementation, Implementation Examples (including demonstration videos of both correct and incorrect implementation), Things To Keep in Mind, and References & Resources for further study.

**Information Briefs:**These online resources developed by other programs and centers are collected and curated by IRIS as supplemental materials. Information briefs cover everything from accommodations for students with disabilities to Universal Design for Learning and peer-assisted interventions.

**Video Vignettes:**These annotations of and links to videos about individuals with disabilities, their families, advocates, teachers, and service providers includes videos about the history of disabilities, as well as depictions of the application of evidence-based practices in educational settings. (Note that some of the videos in this collection might make use of terminology that is no longer current. The inclusion of a video does not necessarily reflect endorsement by the IRIS Center.)

**Other IRIS Web-based Instructional Resources:** The IRIS Center produces Web-based tools to support and be used in personnel preparation activities. These resources are available under the Resources menu of this Website.

[Evidence-Based Practice Summaries](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ebp_summaries/) include annotations of research about the effectiveness of instructional strategies and interventions. This growing collection contains annotations and links to research reports and includes information about an intervention’s level of effectiveness and the age groups for which they are designed.

Our[HLP High-Leverage Practices (HLP) Alignment Tool](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/high-leverage-practices/) makes identifying which IRIS Modules and Case Studies align with which HLPs a snap. Developed by the Council for Exceptional Children and the CEEDAR Center, high-leverage practices are 22 essential special education techniques that all K­-12 special education teachers should master for use across a variety of classroom dimensions and circumstances. The tool, which allows IRIS users to search or filter information via a user-friendly interface, also provides links to more detailed information for those who wish to learn more.

Curated in conjunction with Mary Anne Prater, a leading expert in the field today, [Books: Portrayals of People with Disabilities](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/books/) contains information and synopses of children’s and young adult literature about or having to do with people with disabilities. This information includes the name of the author and illustrator, year of publication, publisher, appropriate grade level, and award status.

Our search tool [Films: Portrayals of People with Disabilities](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/films/) represents an attempt to catalogue the representation of people with disabilities in motion pictures. Many of those representations are inaccurate, and some are offensive. Their inclusion in this tool is intended to stimulate discussion and should by no means be considered an endorsement of their accuracy or appropriateness.

The [Web Resource Directory](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/web-resource-directory/) is a list of other federally sponsored projects and centers that provide resources and information useful for educational professionals.

Use our online [Glossary](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/glossary/) to look up definitions for the disability related terms that are covered in many of our resources.

**IRIS Resources To Support Coursework and Professional Development:** The IRIS Center develops resources for college faculty and professional development providers. These resources, located in the Using IRIS section of our Website, are designed to facilitate the incorporation of information about evidence-based practices into personnel preparation.

Our [Sample Syllabi Collection](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/faculty/sample-syllabi/), found under [For Faculty](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/faculty/), offer examples of the components that should be included in the coursework typically found in credential programs for initial teacher licensure.

[Coursework Planning Forms](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/faculty/planning/), also found under [For Faculty](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/faculty/), are designed to help faculty as they revise either their individual courses or overall curricula for the initial preparation of education professionals.

Our [Learning Pathways Collection](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/pd-providers/learning-pathways/) is designed to help states and districts develop a structured plan for ongoing professional development as well as professional development and personalized learning opportunities for early career professionals and paraeducators. These tools identify resources in high-need topic areas (e.g., behavior management, IEPs) and demonstrate how they can be sequenced and bundled to produce engaging activities to improve educators’ knowledge and skills.

[Tips for Professional Development Providers](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/pd-providers/tips/), found in the [For PD Providers](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/pd-providers/) section under Using IRIS, contains a wealth of suggestions about how IRIS Modules can be integrated into professional development activities.

[Planning Forms](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/pd-providers/planning/), specifically created [For PD Providers](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/pd-providers/), are designed to help PD providers develop and revise activities used to upgrade the skills of practicing education professionals.

Finally, [Standards](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/standards/) show how specific IRIS resources cross-reference with specific standards and should be useful in designing curricula for credentials and licensure.



1. **AMERICAN AUTISM ASSOCIATION [with links]**

**[Information taken from website]**

https://www.myautism.org/about-us

https://www.myautism.org/resources-for-adults/transition-to-adulthood?rq=transition

**ABSTRACT:** The American Autism Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people with autism and their families. They offer educational resources, personal support for families, and therapeutic athletic programs. Their unique recreational programs deliver community-based sports and physical activity programs for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The American Autism Association encourages healthy lifestyles, fosters independence and inclusion, and promotes personal empowerment to better the quality of life for people with autism.

Since 2010 the American Autism Association has been devoted to our mission, helping thousands of families each year through our Autism Help Hotline, therapeutic recreational programs, and parenting workshops. Our philosophy is what drives our programs and our work. We are so proud of what we have been able to accomplish for the autism community and look forward to expanding this success in the years ahead.

**Our Vision:** Our vision is to offer support and guidance as we help families through their journey with autism. It is our hope that one day, no child or individual with autism will go unserved, that everyone has equal access to helpful interventions, and that individuals with autism have the ability to live their lives free of judgment or misunderstanding. By providing educational resources, free of cost athletic therapeutic programs, and acting as advocates in our local community – we hope to make this vision a continuing reality.

**Out Approach:** The American Autism Association hosts a number of therapeutic athletic and recreational programs for people with autism, ranging from basketball to ballet. Our programs are tailored to provide unique learning approaches in combination with an affirming environment to encourage healthy lifestyles, foster independence, and promote personal empowerment. Each and every program aims to nurture positive development in social skills, motor coordination, communication, behavior, and most importantly – fun!

**Transition to Adulthood:** The transition from being a young adult to an adult can be very overwhelming. There are many things to think about when entering the “adult” world, such as housing, jobs, possibly continuing education, and so much more. This guide is to help ease the transition process. Keep in mind that everyone will have different needs during this life stage, and the below items may not be applicable for everyone in their planning. The most important thing is to start planning early. Once the needs are reviewed and goals are set (and remember, they can change), a transition plan will be developed that builds the skills necessary for your child to be able to achieve these goals in adult life.

**Knowing Your Rights:** Under the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/) (IDEA), it is required that those with disabilities are provided with a variety of resources as they go throughout school, such as an[Individualized Education Plan](https://www.myautism.org/informational-kits/what-is-an-individualized-education-plan) (IEP). An IEP is a plan that provides a layout of the program for special education, the services needed, and the supports that will be needed. One of the many things provided by an [IEP](https://www.myautism.org/informational-kits/what-is-an-individualized-education-plan) during high school is transition planning, developed by a personalized team for what services may be needed to achieve goals after post-graduation. This transition plan is started once a student hits age 14, or whenever it is deemed suitable. Transition services and a plan are determined by age 16. Once the student graduates, the IDEA is no longer offered, as it is only for primary education, meaning that those services are no longer provided by the state. There are also other government funding that can help to provide services and there are also state-provided services.

**Housing:** At the age of 18 years old, the United States legally recognizes an individual as a legal adult that can make their own decisions. As a legal adult, then, they are eligible to sign a lease or buy a home. There are a variety of options when it comes to deciding where you would like to live. See a list of housing options available to those with disabilities at this [link](https://www.myautism.org/resources-for-adults/housing-options-for-adults-with-autism).

**Higher Education:** You may decide that you would like to further your education. There are important factors to consider when deciding to further your education. First, it is important to decide what you want to study. Consider things you enjoy and things you have priorly been interested in learning about. Once you decide your area of study, you can then begin to look into the programs offered by the schools. Some things to consider are the location, services, and accessibilities of the school itself. Visit the campus and reach out to the admissions office and the office of disabilities. Ask questions you may have regarding the campus, student life, and/or courses. They will be able to provide information about support services and specific financial opportunities for students with special needs. Note if the school has accommodations as you may find the accommodations would benefit you. Second, consider how you will pay for tuition and other charges. We have a list on our website of[grants and scholarships](https://www.myautism.org/financial-resources) available to those with disabilities that plan to further their education. Some schools even offer programs specifically for people with autism, which we have a [list](https://www.myautism.org/informational-kits/college-programs-for-students-with-autism) of on our website.

**Day Habilitation Programs:** Day programs are a great option for furthering independent living skills, money managing, safety tips, and job readiness. They often run 5 days a week for 5 hours per day and typically have access to transportation. Most states offer these programs to those with disabilities. Evaluations are done to personalize the program to better one’s skills, such as meal prepping, housekeeping, social skills, employment training, and many more.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** Once out of school, all states have vocational rehabilitation agencies that can help to plan and set in motion gaining employment, getting training for jobs, finding support services, and finding diagnostic services for medical, psychological, and audiological examinations. This is a great resource provided to those with disabilities to enter the workforce efficiently. Find your state's vocational rehabilitation agency information [here](https://www.biausa.org/brain-injury/about-brain-injury/nbiic/how-do-i-contact-the-vocational-rehabilitation-vr-agency-in-my-state).

**Jobs:** During high school, there is the opportunity to enter the workforce. On our website, we have [tips for applying to jobs](https://www.myautism.org/resources-for-adults/tips-for-applying-to-a-job-as-an-person-with-autism) to assist in the process of acquiring a job. In applying for jobs, it is also important to consider if you want to disclose your diagnosis with your employer. We have an information kit that goes over [disclosing your autism with your employer](https://www.myautism.org/resources-for-adults/disclosing-your-autism-in-the-workplace) to provide guidance in how to best approach the conversation should you choose to disclose your diagnosis.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:**

**ARTICLES:**

The research studies focused on the impacts of family involvement throughout the process of transition from early intervention to end of services. What was definitively important was how fundamental to the success of post-secondary goals, as well as effective and functional transitioning relied so heavily on how involved family members were in the process of self-determination and working towards post-secondary goals and independence.

Throughout the research, the key phrase that was recognized and repeated throughout Hirano, et. al. (2018) when discussing the findings of their study titled “*Systemic Barriers to Family Involvement in Transition Planning for Youth with Disabilities: A Qualitative Metasynthesis*” was the term “barriers.” The fact that nearly every participant interviewed conveyed some form of a barrier that prevented them from participating or being involved, or feeling as though they could have had a voice in the process of transitioning and planning post-secondary goals for their child is veritably heartbreaking.

Hirano, et. al. (2018) asserted that there were “barriers to involvement in transition planning” and that throughout their study, the those “themes fell into three broad categories of barriers including family, school, and adult service barriers.” Furthermore, Hirano, et. al. (2018) asserted that “family involvement is particularly important to the postschool success of young adults with disabilities who typically experience fewer education and employment opportunities after leaving high school than their same age peers without disabilities [yet] despite mandates for family involvement, school-home partnerships remain elusive, particularly for low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse families.”

Additional barriers were outlined by Hirano, et. al. (2018), including but not limited to the following:

1. Stress and lack of resources: with “many caregivers describing multiple stressors impacting both their time and emotional resources [and] with resources devoted to other stressors, caregivers were often forced to meet the most pressing needs first.”
2. A lack of supports: “without this support, [families] were required to enact multiple roles including provider, advocate, case manager, and teacher, leaving little time for long-term planning as they focused on meeting their own needs and those of their children [and] other families described the struggle of caring for a child with individual support needs despite contextual advantages.”
3. “Regardless of having additional family support, flexibility with work schedules, and financial resources, some families expressed being overwhelmed with just meeting the day-today needs of their children [and] oftentimes this meant they were unable to engage in school-sanctioned transition planning activities [with] other families focused on resolving crises [and] therefore, planning for the future meant resolving critical issues first.”
4. A “lack of cultural capital affects self-efficacy [and] families also described how a lack of cultural capital impacted their ability to effectively navigate school and adult systems.”
5. “Without knowledge of the school system, special education law, or student rights, families had difficulty engaging in transition planning and securing services for their children [and] lack of cultural capital also impacted family member’s self-efficacy, or their optimism that their efforts would affect desired results with the school and adult service systems.”
6. “Across studies, families described limitations, stressors, and barriers to school-based involvement in transition planning, and emphasized their desire for school professionals to understand these contextual factors [and] through understanding their context, some families felt that school professionals would better be able to understand their limited or lack of involvement in transition planning.”
7. “Additionally, families described barriers such as transportation, work schedules, and lack of information and contacts that limited their ability to effectively engage in transition planning [and] similar to barriers related to lack of cultural capital, these barriers are actually school-based barriers that could be addressed or eliminated with changes in typical practices, which is noted in the next section on school barriers.”
8. School barriers: “Families also described schools erecting barriers to effective family involvement in transition planning and preparation [and] these barriers include school staff attitudes, behaviors, and practices.”
9. Racism and discrimination: “Families described the effects of racism and discrimination that affected the services and supports their students received.”
10. “Families also shared examples of racism and discrimination affecting collaboration [and] in some cases, these manifested in low expectations for advocacy and involvement.”
11. “Schools were further perceived as disempowering families in IEP and transition planning meetings as their input was often devalued or ignored.”
12. Schools prevent families from becoming empowered: “Families also perceived school staff did not really want them to be knowledgeable and empowered participants.”
13. Poor transition programming: “Families also identified poor transition programing resulting from late planning and development of transition plans not aligned with family values or based on student strengths and interests as another school-based barrier to transition planning [and] some families verbalized a wish that transition planning would start earlier because planning late in high school did not allow enough time to develop a solid, individualized plan.”
14. Low expectations and deficit-based view of students: “For families, adult service providers inhibited transition planning and successful post-school outcomes when they failed to see their child’s strengths and held low expectations for their child’s future [and] some families described providers who did not get to know the young adult as an individual.”
15. Lack of viable postschool options: “Families also described a lack of viable options shaping not only their expectations for their child’s future but also postschool outcomes.”

All of these barriers discussed in the study prepared by Hirano, et. al. (2018) isolates nearly every plausible and perceptible deficit within special education. As an educator of more than five years, I have personally witnessed every one of the barriers at every level of education from early intervention to transition planning. If nothing more, Hirano et. al. (2018) provides the reader with in-depth insight as to the verifiable deficits which occur in special education, and thereby provides us with a pathway to the foreseeable solutions we must somehow find a way to carve out into a successful path forward. While Rome was not built in a day, it was brought to its knees in one day, and the paving stones of our path forward must meet the demands of the students who place their future independence and self-determination into our guiding hands, lest we fall as our predecessors and fail beyond any hope of survival.

**WEBSITES:**

The websites evaluated for this Running Project: Part 2, were informative and applicable to the subject matter of family involvement as well as providing supports and resources not only to parents and family, but also to educators and administrators and entire districts. The information accessible via multiple links which guides the user to user-friendly pages with links and data and downloadable content and training is limitless and capable of providing immeasurable guidance and direction to families who may be struggling with understanding what comes next in their student’s transition, especially when dealing with post-secondary goals and the exit of services.

**CONCLUSION:**

 As an educator, having resources to provide to parents and families, that can better explain the pathway to success, and provide interventions and supports, and guidance and even more resources is an obligatory part of being a special education teacher. Some families struggle with understanding what the future for their child will look like, and educators are bound by so many constraints, that when outside resources can be used to help and guide families in their transition planning, they will potentially find more data and more resources than a single teacher can provide, and at the end of that journey, be grateful for the support and the guidance and direction a good educator provided, as they say goodbye to those amazing students on that last day of school, with dreams for them to live the most amazing lives possible, through their own self-determination.

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