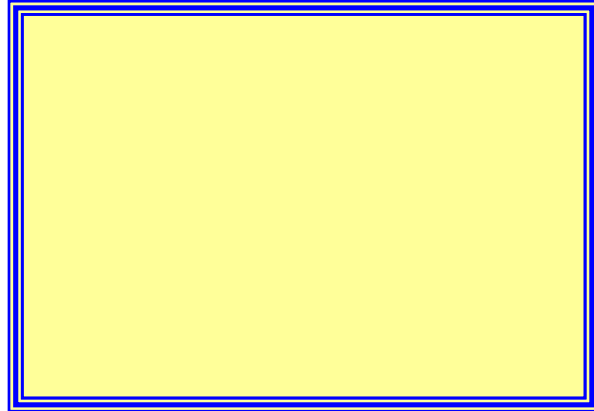


coordinators in the two largest detention centers in Arizona in order to:

- **Develop Individualized Transition Plans** - obtain and implement or modify immediately the individualized education program (IEP), including the transition plan, of all youth with disabilities in the detention centers;
- **Develop and Implement a Student Education *Passport*** - establish a comprehensive portfolio for all youth with disabilities; which contains the student's current or amended IEP, educational assessment data, and student products;
- **Establish a Seamless Transfer of Educational Records and Services** - ensure reliable and timely exchange of *relevant* education records from the public schools to the detention centers to subsequent placements in the community or juvenile and adult corrections;
- **Increase Interagency Linkages and Communication** - coordinate with parents and family members, public and alternative schools, the detention centers, community and employment agencies, and, if necessary, the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections education transition coordinators to ensure a seamless continuum of services; and
- **Establish a Youth Tracking System** - track and monitor the educational progress of all youth with disabilities upon release from detention centers for the length of time they are on probation.



Youth Transition

By Megan McGlynn

A single day count in 1999 revealed that approximately 105,790 youth between the ages of 14 and 24 were held in correctional facilities.¹ Most of these youth were held for less than one year before they left corrections. Youth released from correctional facilities face many difficulties as they attempt to successfully transition back into their communities. It is often assumed that these youthful offenders can successfully reintegrate if only they are willing. However, in most instances, these youth return to the same environment with the same influences (e.g., family stress, poverty, peer pressure) to participate in a delinquent lifestyle that initially contributed to or supported their delinquency.² They are often expected to handle these difficult situations with little or no support. Youth with disabilities are often faced with additional challenges during this transition.

Correctional facilities struggle with how to implement effective transition and special education services. Many juveniles, both with and without disabilities, released from correctional settings have not received adequate vocational training, education, and other supports necessary to succeed in the community.³ Transitional programming is usually the most ignored

component of correctional education programs and those transition programs that do exist, often do not have data to support their effectiveness. Research is needed to help determine what components are most likely to support successful reintegration of youth back into the community.

Recommended transition practices, based on the limited research base for youth exiting both short-term and long-term correctional facilities.⁴ Despite a general consensus on recommended transition services, many barriers exist to actual implementation of these practices. Barriers include: (a) lack of transition planning; (b) inadequate professional development and specialized transition training for service providers; (c) lack of interdisciplinary collaboration; (d) lack of communication, coordination, and commitment among agencies that serve at-risk and delinquent youth; (e) delayed transition planning due to difficulty obtaining previous educational records and inconsistent forwarding of institutional records to aftercare programs once youth return to the community; and (f) lack of family involvement.⁵

The research that exists regarding transition often relies on recidivism data, which is failure-based and does not examine youth successes. It is necessary to step away from this deficit model and examine not only the factors that contribute and support delinquent behavior, but also the positive influences the youth have during their transition from a secure care facility to the community. These positive influences may include family members, the school, and after-care service providers such as a counselor. This alternative approach would highlight successful experiences during the reintegration of youth from secure care to the community. Once successful supports are examined, it may be possible to replicate more successful reintegration practices.

Two research assistants from EDJJ are conducting complementary studies to determine factors that contribute to the successful reintegration of youth with disabilities from secure care to the community. Both studies define successful reintegration as engagement in school, employment, community programs or any combination of the three. Quantitative data currently being collected include age of first incarceration, family status, history of drug use, and educational attainment. Qualitative data include interviews with the youth, the youth's family, parole officers, and people identified as influential by the youth.

The first study focuses on how the immediate transition supports and services offered by secure care facilities affect youth success. The first researcher is tracking 50 general and special education students under the age of 18 released to Maricopa County from Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) during a five-month period. All students participate in a pre-release interview with the researcher and monthly parole office reports are used to collect post release quantitative data. Ten students (i.e., 5 general education and 5 special education students) will be interviewed bi-weekly after release in an open format. This allows the student to share information about what has happened for a time period of two months after release.

The second study examines the level of engagement youth with disabilities achieved following their release from a juvenile corrections facility in 2001. Initial inquiry into the re-arrest status of 58 youth with disabilities released from the state juvenile corrections system in Arizona in 2001 revealed an alarmingly high rate of return to custody. Through file review, interviews with adults involved with the youth, and the completion of a resiliency assessment, this study considers the life situations of

incarcerated youth with disabilities in an effort to address what combination of individual, agency, cultural, and emergent factors increase the likelihood that a youth with disabilities will achieve successful engagement after release from juvenile corrections.

Identification of common themes among those youth who successfully transition will provide important implications for supporting youth as they exit secure care. For example, if more students who enroll in a public school immediately after release are successfully transitioning, a correctional facility may increase pre-release meetings with the local school districts. Certain types of post-release counseling may also be more successful than others and this could be incorporated into pre-release planning. Some existing components of transition programs may prove to be unsuccessful for reasons such as cultural barriers and family perceptions. These programs could be modified accordingly. It is anticipated that this research will shed light on current transition practices and provide information critical to effective development of transition services for youth.

¹Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2000). *Juvenile arrest 1999*. Washington, DC: Author.

²Dembo, R., Williams, L., & Schmeidler, J. (1994). Psychosocial, alcohol/other drug use, and delinquent differences between urban Black and White males high risk youth. *The International Journal of Addictions*, 29(4), 461-483.

³Hosp, M., Griller-Clark, H., & Rutherford, R. (2001) Incarcerated youth with disabilities: Their knowledge of transition plans. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 52(3), 126-130.

⁴Coffey, O. D. & Gemignani, M. G. (1994). *Effective practices in juvenile correctional education: A study of the literature and research, 1980-1992*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. The National Office for Social Responsibility.

⁵National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (2002). *Transition planning services*. Retrieved January 21, 2003 from <http://www.edjj.org/TransitionAftercare/transition.html>

Research to Practice

Technology-Based Practices for Youth with LD

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1997) guarantees youth with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum. This holds true for students with learning disabilities (LD) in juvenile corrections. Technology is one approach that shows great promise for assisting these students.

Recently, a review of research was conducted on effective technology-based practices for secondary youth with LD.¹ Several recommendations may be helpful to educators in juvenile corrections:

- Use hypermedia, hypertext, and computerized study guides to improve student comprehension of social studies texts. Such programs promote active participation for a group of students who are commonly considered passive learners.²
- When using hypermedia and multimedia, integrate effective instructional practices within the instructional cycle. Specifically, activities should (1) plan for instruction; (2) create a learning set; (3) present content and guided practice; (4) provide independent practice; and (5) assess students.
- Provide systematic instruction to students on how to use the technology.
- Provide activities that combine videodisc-based instruction within real-world problem-solving activities.
- “Incorporate effective instructional design variables within computer-based instruction to reduce student confusion

and mathematical errors. For example, computer software should incorporate a wide range of examples and nonexamples for discrimination practice and generalization and pictorial representations to enhance concept development” (p. 260).³

Use of technology holds great promise for youth with LD in juvenile corrections. However, implementation must include empirically-validated instructional practices for maximum student benefit.

^{1,3} See Maccini, P., Gagnon, J. C., & Hughes, C. A. (2002) Technology-based practices for secondary students with LD. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 25, 247-261.

² Lewis, R. B. (1998). Assistive technology and learning disabilities: Today’s realities and tomorrow’s promises. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31, 16-26.

EDJJ National Videoconference

The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ) plans to hold a live 2-hour satellite/internet videoconference on **March 6, 2003 from 1:00-3:00 ET** entitled, *Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice*. The videoconference will highlight "promising" programs that utilize effective practices in prevention, education services and transition/aftercare.

Youth with disabilities are over-represented in the juvenile justice system. Factors associated with the disproportionate representation of youth with disabilities in juvenile corrections are complex – but the best evidence suggests that school failure, poorly developed social skills, and inadequate school and community supports greatly increase the risks for arrest and incarceration. This national videoconference will detail the significance of prevention, education programs, and transition/aftercare

services in reducing the risk that youth with disabilities will be involved in the juvenile justice system.

The videoconference will feature three juvenile justice programs and highlight their work in the area of prevention, education programming, or transition and aftercare services. Representatives of those programs will discuss their successes, challenges, and answer participants’ questions.

The live videoconference is designed to be viewed by everyone interested in youth with disabilities in correctional settings including: correctional educators and administrators; legislators and policy makers; juvenile justice professionals and youth service workers; attorneys and judges; probation and parole professionals; transition and aftercare professionals; and child and family advocates.

Videoconference Registration

To register for the
videoconference or obtain
additional information, visit
www.edjj.org
OR

Working with Upset Parents

Understandably, parents of youth that are detained or committed may be upset when they talk with teachers, administrators, correctional professionals, and advocates. This can be a difficult situation for the professionals. However, there are several procedures that may be helpful:¹

- *Stay calm.* It can be difficult maintaining composure when a

parent is shouting. Take a deep breath and remind yourself to be calm before engaging in conversation.

- *Talk to the parent in private.* Ask the parent to join you in a vacant classroom or office to talk. Remember the importance of nonverbal cues including a calm voice and nonconfrontational stance.
- *Listen and be aware of nonverbal cues.* Be aware of parent body language. A calm demeanor may be an indication that the parent is ready to listen and discuss the issues.
- *After listening to a complaint, attempt to restate the parent's comments.* "Restating what the parent said gives you time to think and possibly break the parent's pattern of irate communication" (p. 183).²
- *Question for specifics.* This may promote a rational response from the parent. Ask open-ended, structured questions (e.g., Could you explain why you think these test questions are unfair?) and avoid judgmental comments.
- *Keep communication simple.* Avoid long explanations. Be specific, brief, and focus more on listening than explaining.
- *Try not to take the action personally.* Understand that parents may be under a tremendous amount of pressure. Although yelling is not acceptable parent behavior, try to put the behavior in context and focus on redirecting the conversation to

constructive problem solving.

- *Be assertive.* If your attempts are unsuccessful, reschedule the meeting and get additional assistance. A third person acting as a mediator can often reduce tensions.

Collaborating with parents is an important component of effective educational services for detained and committed youth. Positive and planned response to upset parents will assure that open and constructive communication is maintained.

^{1,2}See Olson, J. L. & Platt, J. M. (1996). *Teaching children and adolescents with special needs* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) has announced new web resources for teachers, administrators, parents, and others who support youth with disabilities in transition. NCSET has developed an improved website (www.ncset.org) that provides information and resources including:

- Topical information: 26 diverse topics in secondary education and transition including answers to commonly asked questions, research abstracts, emerging practices, and Web links;
- E-News: NCSET's online newsletter is loaded with information and links to publications, funding opportunities, Web sites, and national resources;
- Publications: Full text of all NCSET publications including recurring

briefs – such as the Parent Brief, Research to Practice Brief, and Policy Update; and

- Events: National events calendar and registration and online learning resources for NCSET events (e.g., monthly teleconference calls, institutes, summits).

EDJJ NOTES

Vol.2, No. 2, January 2003

A free bi-monthly on-line newsletter of the National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ). EDJJ is a technical assistance, training, research, and dissemination center that is jointly funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice. This publication is supported by Grant No. H324J990003, U.S. Department of Education.

Editor: Joe Gagnon
George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
4400 University Ave. MSN 4B3
Fairfax, VA 22030

Project Director: Peter Leone
University of Maryland
Department of Special Education
1308 Benjamin Building
College Park, MD 20742

To subscribe to EDJJ Notes or for change of address, visit www.edjj.org

Disclaimer: The opinions stated in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not represent the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, or U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Policy (OJJDP). No endorsement of the Office of Special Education Programs, the U.S. Department of Education, or OJJDP should be inferred.