

## TRANSITION OF YOUTH FROM JUVENILE JUSTICE TO SCHOOL, WORK, AND COMMUNITY

As students with disabilities leave a correctional facility, they not only need support to help them make the transition to post-school activities, they also need support to keep them from returning to incarceration. These represent the different definitions associated with the term *transition* for youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system. On the one hand, transition refers to the coordinated set of activities that are designed to promote movement from school to post-school activities for a student with a disability. The term transition also refers to the passage of a student from the community (home, school, or work) to a correctional setting (jail, detention center, residential treatment facility, or long-term juvenile correctional facility) and back to the community again. In addition, it can refer to the passage of a student from one correctional setting to another.

When developing *transition plans* for students with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, we must consider the additional services and skills needed to be successful in the community. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), transition is defined as a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed as outcome oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. These post-school activities include: post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing education, adult services, and independent living or community participation. These activities must be based upon the individual student's needs, preferences, and interests and include instruction, community experiences, post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills.

Although many of the requirements may be the same, transition from a correctional facility to the community needs to include additional supports. A transition plan for an incarcerated youth should include all of the IDEA requirements along with these additional supports which are designed to facilitate the youth's transition back into the community.

- Promising Practices

The body of research in juvenile correctional education is slim and does not always meet scientific or social science research criteria. However, we agree with Coffey and Gemignani (1994) that many effective practices have been identified. We have identified effective or promising transition practices for both short-term and long-term correctional facilities. To view these promising practices click on either short-term or long-term.

- [Short-term \(jails and detention centers\)](#)
- [Long-term \(residential treatment centers, state run youth facilities, or youthful offender programs in adult prisons\)](#)

- Transition Topics

The following four topics, related to transition, were addressed at the EDJJ Regional Forum on Transition of Incarcerated Youth to Home, School, and Community. Click on each title for the information presented on that topic at the forum.

- [Planning Transition in the Institution](#)
- [Public Schools/ Charter Schools/ Alternative Schools](#)
- [Developing Community-Based Networks for Transition](#)
- [The Role of Parents and Families in the Transition Process](#)

- Transition Survey

In order to ensure a systematic transition planning process for youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, the EDJJ research team has developed a transition need assessment survey. An extensive review of the literature pertaining to promising transition practices for youth with disabilities was conducted (Coffey & Gemignani, 1994). Research indicates that effective transition programs include: preplacement planning, interagency coordination, transfer of records prior to the student's move from one placement or service to another, and specific pre-release transitional programs including social skills, independent living skills, and vocational skills. The EDJJ research team developed this survey to understand the transition planning process within the system and perceptions of youth in secure care systems regarding transition priorities. The EDJJ research team evaluated the survey instrument to ensure clarity and overall consistency with respect to language, content, and format and piloted it in one of the secure care systems of Arizona. This survey can be used with all incarcerated or detained youth prior to release. The results of this survey may assist in providing consultation, training, and technical assistance for staff to help them develop, implement, and evaluate successful transition for students in secure care systems.

We encourage you to become part of EDJJ's national transition survey. If you are interested in collecting data at your site please contact [srmathur@apollogrp.edu](mailto:srmathur@apollogrp.edu) or [hqclark@qwest.net](mailto:hqclark@qwest.net)

- [EDJJ Training Module #8 - Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System](#)

This module is one in a series of training packages that have been designed by EDJJ for working with youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system. This particular module focuses on the transition services needed for youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system. The complete set of EDJJ Training Modules will be available on the EDJJ website in the future. These modules include information on the following topics:

- Module 1: Correctional Education and the Criminal Justice System
- Module 2: Characteristics of Exceptional Populations
- Module 3: Overview of Special Education
- Module 4: Overview of IDEA and IEPs

Module 5: Assessment of Exceptional Individuals

Module 6: Curriculum for Exceptional Individuals

Module 7: Instructional Methods and Strategies

[Module 8: Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System](#)