



Evidence-based Practices for Individuals with Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Related Disabilities

The Taxonomy for Transition



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Transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are defined as “a coordinated set of activities that are designed for the individual student as a means to improve both academic and functional outcomes and facilitate movement from school to postsecondary life” (IDEA, 2004). The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Taxonomy) is a useful framework of evidence-based practices for educators, teams, and administrators to use to support successful transition (Kohler et al., 2016).

Taxonomy for Transition Programming

The Taxonomy guides transition teams in embedding evidence-based interventions into everyday practice, decision making, and program evaluation. Use of the tool helps transition teams to consider the current environment, as well as the future environment in which the student will be living, working, and continuing their education. Figure 1 shows the cyclical nature of transition planning across categories and outlines the evidence-based interventions housed within each category of the Taxonomy: family engagement, program structures, interagency collaboration, student development, and student-focused planning. Evidence-based interventions are aligned within each category.

Implementing the Taxonomy assists teams in building appropriate comprehensive transition-focused planning of supports before the student leaves the K–12 public school system.

Research Base

Thirty-two evidence-based practices have been identified in secondary transition (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009). Sixteen evidence-based predictors have been identified that correlate with positive postsecondary outcomes (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009). Incorporating the predictive activities and implementing EBPs in transition has been shown to increase student outcomes in education, employment, and independent living (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009). The Taxonomy (Kohler et al., 2016) organizes the identified evidence-based practices (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009) and the evidence-based predictors (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009) into one tool. Table 1 provides an overview of the Taxonomy aligned with identified evidence-based practices and related predictors of success in transition.

Utilizing the Taxonomy

Transition teams can use the Taxonomy in various ways. The following outlines ways in which the Taxonomy can be utilized

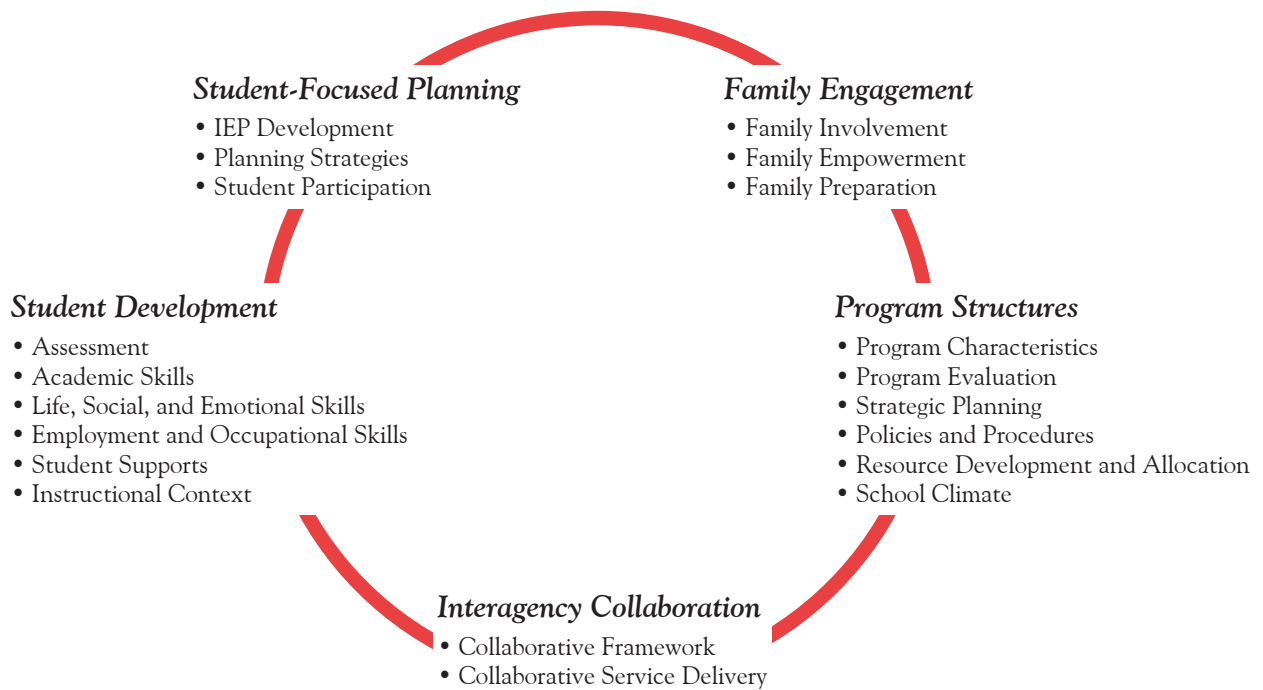


Figure 1. Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Kohler et al., 2016, p. 3)

effectively by special educators, transition teams, and school/district leaders.

Special Educators

Teachers should be encouraged to use the Taxonomy to assess the extent to which their approach is comprehensively addressing transition planning. The Taxonomy helps special educators focus on development of student skills, but it is also a reminder of the importance of promoting and assessing family engagement, building collaborative interagency and interdisciplinary partnerships, and advocating for school policies and procedures that support overall student success. Thus, the Taxonomy helps teachers remember to use a variety of tools across the various categories supportive of effective transition.

Transition Teams

The role of IEP teams is to make student-focused decisions on educational programs and, at least by student age 16, transition planning based on progress data, and to provide expertise and experience for the student, their family, relevant professionals, and other community partners. The Taxonomy helps to focus teams on the most critical elements of planning for

student learning, designing of interventions, supporting student development, involving families and collaborative partners, and building necessary systems and structures. Such focus can help to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Further, having an external framework to guide the process can help a team through difficult or complicated conversations. Finally, a review of the framework can be used as an assessment of the team’s effectiveness not only for one student but across students, which can help inform school and district leaders in their support of that team’s work.

School and District Leaders

The Taxonomy clarifies for school and district leaders the practices, structures, systems, and supports most likely to lead to effective transition planning and the outcomes desired by the student and their family. School and district leaders should consider conducting a school- or district-level needs assessment of transition programming for students with disabilities using a framework so that all students have access to effective planning and teaching. To do so, school and district leaders could gather transition teams to assess their levels of implementation, identify examples of practices being implemented, determine strengths

Table 1. Predictors and Evidence-Based Practices Aligned with Taxonomy for Transition

Taxonomy 2.0 (Kohler et al., 2016)	Predictors of Successful Transition (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009)	Evidence-based practice in Transition (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009)
Student-focused planning	Student involvement in IEP Self-advocacy strategy Self-directed IEP	Self-advocacy Student support
Family engagement	Family education on transition	Parental involvement
Program structures	Community-based instruction Instruction beyond secondary school Check and connect	Career awareness Community-based instruction Exit exam/diploma Inclusion Paid work experiences/work study Program of study Transition program
Interagency collaboration	N/A	Interagency collaboration Work study (Bridges to Work)
Student development	Teach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills • Banking • Purchasing • Employment • Job applications • Grocery shopping • Food preparation • Functional math and reading • Home maintenance • Leisure • Self-management • Employment skills • Purchasing • Restaurant skills • Safety • Self-advocacy • Self-determination • Social skills • Job-related communication 	Teach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career awareness • Occupational courses • Paid employment • Work experience • Self-advocacy • Self-determination • Self-care • Independent living skills • Social skills • Vocational education

specific to transition as well as areas of need, and develop an action plan for addressing these areas. Of particular salience for school and district leaders are the primary practice categories of program structures and interagency collaboration. While all areas of practice described in the Taxonomy rely on school leader commitment, these two areas offer opportunities for leadership in cultivating community partnerships and ensuring that barriers to effective transition are minimized. Finally, district and school leaders have a needs assessment and planning tool that directly aligns with the Taxonomy available through the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition website (see www.transitionprogramtool.org). This framework and tool provide practical, systematic support for building and reinforcing school systems necessary for effective transition.

Conclusion

Given the number of children with autism and developmental disabilities who will exit school-based services, the need for quality transition services focused on positive post-school outcomes is critical. It is essential that special education teachers employ EBPs while teaching transition skills and provide stu-

dents with the predictive activities that lead to positive post-school outcomes. The Taxonomy offers a framework to connect evidence-based interventions and services for transition into planning and practice. ■

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