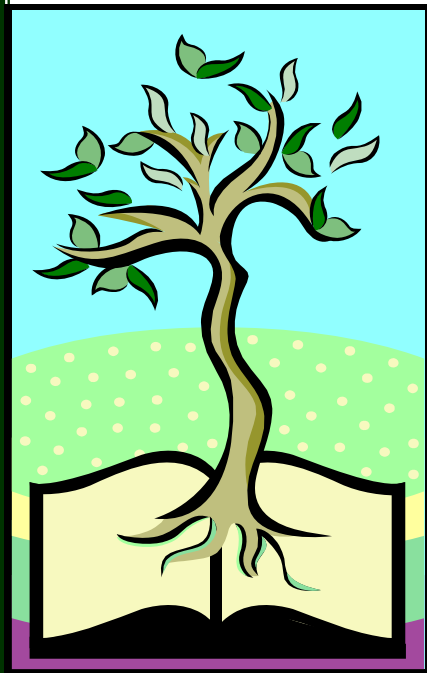


VIBRATIONS

NEWSLETTER OF COLORADO SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAFBLIND
Serving Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (Deafblindness),
Their Families, and Service Providers

Modified Fall 2004 Edition: Focus on Transition - 2

This is an edited version of the original newsletter. Only articles pertinent to secondary transition have been retained as resource information. If you copy any of the content of this modified newsletter, please credit the original source.



TRANSITION: HOW PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN HELP

EDUCATION SHOULD TRAIN THE CHILD TO USE HIS BRAINS, TO MAKE FOR HIMSELF A PLACE IN THE WORLD, AND MAINTAIN HIS RIGHTS EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS THAT SOCIETY WOULD SHOVE HIM INTO THE SCRAP HEAP.

HELEN KELLER

Everyone of us experiences transition as we move from one environment or time in our lives to the next. The change from school to adult life can be one of the most important, and exciting periods in a young person's life. For students who are deaf and blind, this change can be not only frightening, but absent of any real plan for the future. Parents and teachers can assist in making sure the students receives proper transition planning in their IEP starting at age 14 (which is now required by law).

According to a study by Dr. Jerry Petrof, the sad statistic is this: Most deaf blind youth who leave the safety of the school and home environment begin a life where they are not working, or area underemployed, live with their parents with little hope for independent living in the near future and have a narrow span of participation in community activities. The most remarkable of these result show that half of the youths studied had no friends outside their families and/or have people that are paid to be with them.

So what can teachers and parents do to help? The following is a list of suggestions to "get

the ball rolling” for our kids to ensure a successful and meaningful future for all.

- ☞ Begin transition planning at age 14 and make it part of the student’s IEP. The student should be part of this process and involved in the decisions as much as is possible.
- ☞ Invite representatives from adult service models to these IEP’s. Some examples might be; Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Center, Developmental Disabilities, and the Helen Keller National Center.
- ☞ Develop and clarify the student’s interests and abilities. Complete a Personal Futures Map for the student annually.
- ☞ Focus on independent living skills in the home, classroom and community. Many deaf blind students miss the everyday activities that take place in these environments and therefore have no concept of how things happen in their world.
- ☞ Develop a strong plan for social interactions to take place. The PFP process can help in this crucial area.
- ☞ Help the student practice self-advocacy skills and to be involved in the choices that are being made. Self determination is the key.
- ☞ Allow the student to experience a variety of employment settings and work activities. Think globally and creatively. Stay away from the “jobs” that are meaningless babysitters.
- ☞ And finally, expect more from your student and dream of endless possibilities that await them.

Maureen McGowan

Regional Representative, Helen Keller National Center

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COLORADO
Assistance for those
SERVICES TO
with both vision
CHILDREN WITH
and hearing loss
DEAFBLINDNESS

Fact Sheet

Suggestions for Creating Successful Transitions From School to Adulthood

By Maurice Belote, Director of CA Deafblind Project

While this is not an exhaustive list of steps toward successful transitions, it represents a few of the things I’ve learned over the years.

Mind the gap. The subways of London remind you, as you step off the trains, to mind the gap – the space between the subway car and the platform. In the same way, mind the gap between the end of a school career and the



beginning of adult services. We know that the longer the gap in services, the greater the likelihood that persons who are deafblind may not have meaningful employment, adequate housing services, and/or community access to recreational and social opportunities.

For example, if you can find a permanent job placement for an individual a few months before that person would otherwise age-out of special education services, why not take it? If the IEP can be modified, so that services can be provided in this new environment, all the better. But if it can't, don't regret the little bit of missed school. A seamless transition into adult services may be more important than those last few weeks of school. Of course, major transitions cannot be rushed, but must be thoughtfully planned so the individual has time to prepare for the changes.

Plan early. The law states that at age 14, IEPs must include transition service needs and at age 16, IEPs must contain needed transition services. (Yes, even educators are confused by this wording.) Don't let this requirement be satisfied with the attachment to the IEP of a single sheet of paper with a few boxes checked. By this time in students' lives, educational programs should be leading to clearly defined outcomes. All components of educational programs should be preparing students for success beyond school – at home, at work, and in the community (see next paragraph).

Does every step lead towards the desired outcome? Ask yourself at IEP meetings: does each goal and objective move this child towards a concrete and functional outcome? If a student is 20 years old and hasn't mastered tying shoelaces after years and years of trying, let it go; the student will probably be just as relieved as you are. The same goes for writing a signature, spreading on bread, or any other skill that has been worked on for years with little or no success. There may be other things for the child to learn that are more important, such as personal hygiene skills. Employment and housing personnel report that this is one area they would really like the persons they serve to take care of themselves – if they can. And remember the importance of cleanliness when it comes to social interactions (see next paragraph).

The importance of social skills. Social skills are just as important – if not more important – than competence. People will put up with a lot of incompetence if you have good social skills. Think about your own experiences. Have you ever worked with someone who, although he or she wasn't the hardest worker at your place of employment, was friendly, brought fresh-baked cookies on Fridays, told good jokes, or pitched in for the office parties? Imagine that same person, who wasn't the hardest worker, if he or she hadn't contributed positively to the work environment. Stopping at the donut shop once a week on the way to work to bring a box of donuts to the office may contribute more to longevity and social relationships than performing flawless work tasks day after day.

Document everything. It is important to document everything that might someday be necessary to know. This includes tasks at which the person who is deafblind excels; their expressive and receptive communication systems, preferences and dislikes, favorite leisure time activities, etc. This documentation will be useful as video resumes and/or personal communication dictionaries are compiled.

Consider the following example. A student paddles a kayak across a lake at age 16, has a great time, is good at it, and then doesn't have the opportunity to do it again for years. By the time the student is 22 years old; will anyone remember this event and the fact that kayaking might be a great recreational activity for this person? They will if it has been documented. This can be accomplished with videotape, photographs, journal entries, or any other method that works for those involved.

The "readiness model" might impede success. There was once a belief that students had to prove they were ready for jobs, living situations, etc. by demonstrating readiness. Consider the following example. Under the readiness model, the student would have to prove his or her readiness

by successfully watering plants in the classroom for a period of time, which would then be followed by a trial placement watering plants on the school grounds. If all of this goes well, the student would then graduate to watering plants at an actual nursery. The problem with the readiness model is that the student may never get past watering in the classroom for reasons that have nothing to do with the ability to water plants. Perhaps the student is bored with the classroom because he or she has spent too many years there. The student may be loud and unfocused while watering in the classroom, and the assumption is that the student will behave in a similar way out in the real world. But given the opportunity to do this job in a natural environment, the same student might very well succeed. The student's behavior might have been saying "I'm sick of the classroom", but in a real environment with natural motivators and consequences, the student may pleasantly surprise the doubters.

It's all about who you know. It's true that much of what we have in life, e.g., jobs, apartments, significant others, we got through someone we know, or through someone who knows someone we know. For example, when considering work experience placements for students, think about people you know who have small businesses such as restaurants, hair salons, offices or warehouses. When looking for apartments, think about people you know who live in desirable buildings and may know of unpublished vacancies, or people you know who work as property managers or real estate agents. Even if it's a friend who knows someone, have him or her make an initial call on your behalf. It will make your subsequent call much easier and will probably make the person more interested in what you have to say because they know you're a friend of a friend. This is something we need to learn from people in the private sector who practice this well: never underestimate the power of personal contact and connections.

Get the relevant facts. Make sure you know everything there is to know about the individual who is deafblind: likes, dislikes, activities in which he or she excels; dreams, fears, social connections, and anything else that might impact future success. Gathering this information might be accomplished through processes such as personal futures planning, MAPS, person-centered planning, etc. parents, siblings, extended family members, neighbors, and former teachers are all vital sources of useful information. These same people are also vital sources of information about interpreting the individual's wishes if the person has limited formal communication skills.

For more information contact:

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Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss
Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203



Fact Sheets from the Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss are to be used by both families and professionals serving individuals with vision and hearing loss. The information applies to students ages birth through 21 years of age. The purpose of a Fact Sheet is to give general information on a specific topic. More specific information for an individual student can be provided through personalized technical assistance available from the Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. For more information call (303) 866-6681 or (303) 866-6605 or go to <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.htm>

Information for this Fact Sheet kindly supplied by California Deaf-Blind Services (8/04)



LESSONS FROM A CHAMPION

By Tanni L. Anthony

Our project was fortunate to have David Wiley as its featured speaker at the 2004 Summer Institute on Deafblindness. David is a transition specialist who works with the Texas Deafblind Project. He is a warm, caring man who has a profound clarity of what is important in not only his life, but the lives of people with deafblindness. Over the course of the summer institute, I found myself nodding in agreement, smiling to his wisdom, and being continually thankful for the chance to learn from a real champion.

David has a talent for finding the simplicity in a complex task. To plan for the future, he believes, one must first have a shared dream. The dream should involve a shared appreciation of the individual and a shared vision of the future. This sounds simple enough. But for many educators, we might need to admit that we have never asked a family what their dream for their child is - nor have we asked this important question of the student him or herself.

David shared stories of families who did not know what to hope for, what to aim for, and where to begin on the journey of planning for life after school. Once they were asked and given a chance to hope and think out loud, a picture began to emerge on what needed to be in place in order for the dream to become a reality.

*When you know what to dream, you know what to teach.
(David Wiley, June 28, 2004)*

True dialogue between the student, the family, and school personnel is key to successful transition planning. Time must be taken to ask questions that result in meaningful discussion such as, "Where will the student live, what will the ideal day be when he is 30 years old, what will his or her adult leisure activities be?" There is no right or wrong answers to such questions - they simply offer a platform of discussion and foundation to create a shared vision. The goal is to get people thinking about life beyond getting up and going to school

David showed a number of videos of adults with combined vision and hearing loss. The videos offered a real life picture of a number of individuals and helped us understand how every student can have a meaningful adult life. Too often, parents and educators do not know an adult with deafblindness. Most people have a sense of "life beyond school" for students without disabilities, but may lack a real example of a future for their child or student. It is important to know what is the same (e.g., need for shelter, food, clothing, friends, meaningful volunteer or paid work, etc.) and what is different (e. g., possible need for ongoing supervision, provided transportation, assistive technology, etc.). As with each of us, every life on the videos was different. There were varying levels of support and independence, different styles of "work," and unique personal preferences for free time. Each, however, had common themes.

One theme was the importance of routines. Routines offer consistency, predictability, and purpose. They also offer a foundation for a successful life - we all have daily, weekly, even monthly and annual routines. We need build routines into a child's home and school educational programs. Routines should include meaningful free time activities, as well as those associated with daily care, work, and socialization.

Another theme was each person had someone who advocated for them; people who worked together to create a lifestyle for the individual. A starting place was to look at the person's individual preferences - what did the person like to do and what would be helpful to accomplish in the future. One student's appreciation for candy led ultimately (over time) to independent business owning a couple of vending machines. This person had ample support for this endeavor, but the IEP team's acknowledgement of "this is a strong preference" led to a direction and implementation of a shared dream.

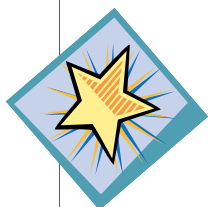
The theme of "understanding options" was paramount. David gave the example of a friend of his who was a missionary and had the opportunity to work in either Uganda or Madagascar. The friend asked David the question of where he thought he should go - what David realized was that without experience or knowledge of either, he could not make a recommendation. The same is true when we ask parents and students questions about the future - without experience, it may be an impossible question. We need to continually provide experiences to parents and students so they have *informed* experiences. This highlights the need for the learner who is deafblind to have an experientially based education.

David stressed that we don't often talk about the "right to be competent" when we talk about people with disabilities. Competency gives us status and identity. We need to be careful that we do not define competency or success as simply as being employed. One does not always need to have a paycheck to have a sense of purpose, have social relationships, and so on. The IEP should address what can be put in place to highlight the student's competency in personal, social, recreation, and paid or unpaid work arenas.



Finally, David has found that recreation and leisure is often the most neglected area with students who are deafblind. The team should look at what the individual seeks out on his or her own and finds pleasurable. Down time can be a very tough area to fill in the blanks - schools are often good at teaching certain skills and getting things organized - but are we encouraging self initiation and offering choices for down time both at home and at school?

Is your head spinning yet? There is so much to think about when it comes down to planning for the future. It begins with honest discussion with families and the students themselves, building a shared vision for the future, and understanding of what to teach in order to accomplish the vision. For more information on the content of the 2004 Summer Institute on Deafblindness, you may check out the conference notebook from our lending library.



Colorado thanks David Wiley for his humor, experience, and wisdom. He is truly a champion of persons with combined vision and hearing loss.

IMPORANT TRANSITION RESOURCES – CHECK THEM OUT!

Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

Our grant offers free technical assistance to families of children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss and their school district providers. Someone can come to your home or to a student's school to meet with staff about appropriate transition planning. Further, the project has library materials to help the IEP team plan for a learner's future. Contact Tanni at (303) 866-6681 or Gina Quintana at (303) 866-6605 for further information.

Colorado School Districts

Every school district has trained staff on the secondary transition process. Planning for "life beyond the school years" is everyone's responsibility. When a student has vision and hearing loss, it is important that the team have representation by a teacher certified in the area of visual impairment and a teacher certified in the area of deafness.

Colorado's School to Work Initiative

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) provides states with funds for designing a seamless system to better prepare all youth for future careers and education. Information on Colorado's School-to-Career Initiative can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schooltocareer>

DB-LINK

DB-Link is a national information clearinghouse on children who are deafblind. This is a free service to interested persons. DB-LINK has articles on transition planning specific to youth who have combined vision and hearing loss.

Helen Keller National Center

The Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths & Adults (HKNC) offers intensive and comprehensive rehabilitation training to individuals who are deafblind. The rehabilitation and personal adjustment training program at HKNC's headquarters in Sands Point, NY provides evaluation and training in communication skills, adaptive technology, orientation and mobility, independent living, work experience, and other support services. Maureen (Mo) McGowan is the regional service representative for the Rocky Mountain HKNC office. Mo can be contacted at (303) 934-9037 or hknemo@tde.com

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition seeks to increase the capacity of national, state and local agencies and organizations to improve secondary education and transition results for youth with disabilities and their families. The Center is headquartered at the University of Minnesota, and is a partnership comprised

of six organizations currently involved in a wide range of efforts focused on the secondary education and transition of youth with disabilities. (<http://www.ncset.org>)

Secondary Transition Services Team at CDE

The CDE Secondary Transition Services Team has put together a series of great Fact Sheets on the topic of transition. You can download these fact sheets, along with other great resource information at this web address: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/transresources.htm>
T-TAPS (Transition to Adult Program Services)

The T-TAPS Program is located at the School for the Blind on the campus of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (see separate article on next page).

The transition to adulthood is perhaps the most complex of any we encounter. The paths we select have consequences for the remainder of our lives. For youth with disabilities and their families planning for a successful transition can pave the way for fulfillment of a young persons lifelong dreams. The **CDE Secondary Services Team** is committed to "Supporting comprehensive systems that ensure positive post-school outcomes for all learners to be successful in their adult lives." Please visit our website to access FAST FACTS about the transition process as well as resources for educators and families. Our team members welcome your questions and invite you to contact us. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Transition.htm>
The website has direct links to our email as well as telephone contact information.



Training for Transition Conference

Puzzled by the maze of information and regulations regarding **transition** into adult life for students with disabilities? Here is a great way to address your questions! Attend a *Training for Transition Conference (T4T)*. The Colorado Department of Education in collaboration with Easter Seals of Colorado and the ARC of Jefferson County sponsor weekend seminars for parents, youth, family members and professionals using the IEP process for students ages 14-21. The seminars are designed for participants to gather information, learn about resources and share with one another strategies for successful transition. Seven conferences are planned for the 2004-2005 school year. For registration information contact: Easter Seals of Colorado 303-233-1666 x237.

Books and Videos on Transition in Our Lending Library



If you would like to order any of these materials, please contact Gina Quintana at (303) 866-6681 or quintana_g@cde.state.co.us For a complete listing of the library's inventory, please go to our website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.htm>

- G60** Choosing Employment Goals, by Laura Huber Marshall, James E. Martin, Laurie Maxson, and Patty Jerman, Sopris West, 1997. (book, video, and protocols)
- G61** Person-Centered Planning with MAPS and PATH: A Workbook for Facilitators by John O'Brien and Jack Pearpoint, Inclusion Press.
- G62** PATH: A workbook for Planning Positive Possible Futures (2nd Edition), by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsh Forest, Inclusion Press, 2001
- A7** Assessing the Transition Needs of Young Adults with Dual Sensory and Multiple Impairments, by Jane Everson, Vol. III, GLARCDB, Columbus, OH, 1996.
- D19** Transition Devices for Youths Who Are Deaf-Blind: A "Best Practices" Guide for Educators, edited by Jane Everson, Helen Keller National Center Technical Assistance Center, Sands Point, NY, 1995.
- D98** Transition Planning: creating a Future for Deafblind Learners, 2004 Summer Institute on Deafblindness, by David Wiley. Conference Notebook.
- G21** Transition Requirements: A guide for States, Districts, Schools, Universities and Families, by Jane Storms, Ed O'Leary, Jane Williams, Western Regional Resource Center, University of Oregon, 2000.
- G35** The Transition Handbook: Strategies High School Teachers Use that Work!, by Caroly Hughes & Erik W. Carter, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company, 2000.
- G50** Cooperative Services Handbook for Youth in Transition, CDE and CDVR, Summer 2002.
- G52** Colorado Options: A Handbook of Post-Secondary Education Services for Students with Disabilities, CDE, 2003
- G60** Choosing Employment Goals, by Laura Huber Marshall, James E. Martin, Laurie Maxson, and Patty Jerman, Sopris West, 1997. (book, video, and protocols)
- V72** 2000 Colorado Conference on Visual Impairment: "Moving on Out: Transition Planning and Vocational Preparation", Presenter: Dr. Karen Wolffe, September 2000. Conference packet includes information on transitions at all levels
2. Transition Connections: Planning Today - Creating Tomorrow, by Janet Steveley, (et al.), Helen Keller National Center and the Blumburg Center, 1996, 24:40 min. Includes guide.
- 10.** You And Me: A Five Part Video Series about Educating Children Who Are Deaf-Blind, Teaching Research Division, Monmouth, OR, 1997: **10-6**. Vol. 6 – Transition (2002)



T-TAPS

Transition to Adult Program Services School for the Blind at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

By Ann Hicks

The T-TAPS Program at the School for the Blind on the campus of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is a program to help young adults who are blind or visually impaired as well as those with additional disabilities transition from their high school experience into adulthood. Students who are deafblind are also invited to attend. This program will focus on daily living skills, Orientation and Mobility skills, self determination and self advocacy skills, technology skills, vocational skills, organizational skills, recreational and leisure skills. Students may enter the program after they have finished their high school curriculum and before they reach the age of 21.

Students will usually fit into one of three levels of service: advocacy students who will always need some sort of advocacy help throughout their lives, intermediate students who are independent in some areas yet may need more instruction and experience in order to move to an independent status, and independent students who may still need a little more support before living completely on their own, holding down a competitive job or attending an institute of higher learning on their own.

Students may be residential or day students; they may be involved in classroom activities as well as work related experiences. Some will be attending local institutions of higher learning with our support. Others may choose to live in their own apartment.

Each student's program is based on their IEP (Individual Education Plan) goals and objectives and may change as the student grows in his/her skills. It is our hope that students who have met their graduation requirements but who have not received their high school diploma will not only grow in self-confidence, learn new skills to help them become more independent in their daily lives, improve their academic skills, develop a positive work attitude, learn work skills, participate in a variety of work sites, but that they will also have fun learning all these new skills in the T-TAPS program at CSDB.

.For additional information or if you have any questions, please contact Ann Hicks at (719) 578-2195 or ahicks@csdb.org. I can also be contacted at Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, 33 N. Institute Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80911.

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