

Individualizing the Transition Process for Youth with Autism



Why Individualization Matters

- Every student has unique strengths, needs, and goals
- Autism impacts individuals differently
- Planning must reflect the whole student - not just the disability



Student Voice at the Center

- Watch and learn from the student first – what can you see and hear that the student cannot tell you? What does the loud silence say?
- Be selective with Secondary Transition Assessments. Ask yourself:
 1. What do we already know about the student?
 2. What more do we need to know?
 3. What's the best way to learn that information?
- Encourage and teach self-advocacy
- Incorporate student choices in all planning



Key Secondary Transition Domains

- **Education/Training** – What learning comes next?
- **Employment** – What work experiences are possible?
- **Independent Living** – What daily living skills are needed?



Data to Guide Planning

- What you learn from the student first!
- Academic & functional performance
- Communication & social-emotional needs
- Career assessments & work-based experiences
- Family input

Strengths-Based Approach

- Remove the deficit - Identify what the student **can do!**
- Build supports around challenges
- Be purposeful with instruction for our students with Autism to prepare them for their individual challenges and obstacles in the adult world
- Celebrate progress

Individualize Supports and Strategies

- Visual supports & structured routines (or supports to learn how to be successful outside of the structured routine)
- Social narratives & role-play
- Job coaching or mentoring
- Assistive technology
- The key is to ask...
 - what will this student need to be as independent as possible when they leave the walls of K-12?
 - Can the supports and strategies carry over into the next environment based on their postsecondary goals?

Collaboration is Key



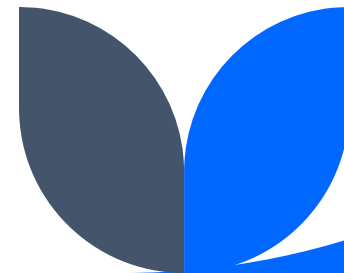
Ongoing & Flexible

Include:

- Student
- Family
- Educators
- Essential school partners
- Community & adult service providers

Think Outside of the Box:

- Transition is not “one-time” planning
- Adjust goals as the student grows
- Provide opportunities for real-world practice



Final Thought...

Individualization = Empowerment

Secondary Transition planning should equip every youth with Autism to move forward toward their own meaningful future.

Questions and
Discussion



Thank you

Feel free to connect!

Kacy Little Owl

Secondary Student Success Specialist

Colorado Department of Education

Little_owl_k@cde.state.co.us