

Effectiveness of School-to-Work Programs for Students With Intellectual Disabilities: A Systematic Review

Colleen Sunderlin¹, Melanie Powers, Olivia Kodsy, Nicole Herringshaw, Ashley Pomponio

¹Utica College, Utica, NY, USA

DOI: 10.5014/ajot.2022.76S1-PO231

Date presented: April 1, 2022

Primary Author and Speaker: Colleen Sunderlin, csunder@utica.edu

IMPORTANCE: Employment is a meaningful occupation with benefits in well-being, quality of life, independence, and social engagement. School-to-work programs are one method to prepare students with Intellectual disabilities (ID) as they transition from education to employment. Students with Intellectual disabilities (ID) report lower rates of obtaining and maintaining jobs. They also report lower job satisfaction, living independently, and being socially engaged.

PURPOSE: To determine the effectiveness of school-to-work transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities in the areas of employment, independent living skills, and social participation.

DESIGN: Systematic review examining school-to-work programs and their reported outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities.

METHOD: A search of four databases (MEDLINE, ERIC, PsycINFO, and CINAHL) was conducted with the search terms “students with intellectual disabilities AND school-to-work programs.” Articles, in the final analysis, were assessed for quality and risk of bias using the AOTA CAP Quality Review Form and McMaster Review Tool.

RESULTS: Outcomes were coded in the domains of employment, independent living skills, and social skills.

CONCLUSION: This review suggests that school-to-work transition programs are an effective intervention in the areas of employment and social skills. It was inconclusive whether STW programs are effective in increasing independent living skills. The role of OT in transition is expanding. Occupational therapists can collaborate with school-to-work programs to enhance their outcomes in all of these domains.

References

- Almalky, H. A. (2020). Employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A literature review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 109. <https://doi-org.felix.albright.edu/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2019.104656>
- Helbig, K. A., Radley, K. C., Schrieber, S. R., & Derieux, J. R. (2021). Vocational social skills training for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A pilot study. *Journal of Behavioral Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-021-09445-2>
- Müller, E., VanGilder, R., & Kiasi, D. (2018). Employer satisfaction with project SEARCH INTERNS, hires, and support received from project search teams. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 49(3), 339–350. <https://doi.org/10.3233/jvr-180978>
- Orentlicher, M. L., Case, D., Podvey, M. C., Myers, C. T., Rudd, L. Q., & Schoonover, J. (2017). Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): What is Occupational Therapy's role in transition services and planning? Bethesda, MD: American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. Retrieved from <https://www.aota.org/~media/Corporate/Files/Secure/Practice/Children/FAQ-What-is-OTs-Role-in-Transition-Services-andPlanning-20170530.pdf>