Helping Families Hold High Expectations for Employment and Postsecondary Education

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Foundation Idea

Youth with significant disabilities can work and attend postsecondary education, but low expectations is a significant barrier to this happening.
Impact of High Expectations

• Students with one or more parents who participated in IEP meetings during the 11th and 12th grade year were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment

• Students with parents who had high expectations were more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education and employment

www.transitionta.org
How Are Low Expectations Created?

• Disability = altered expectations (at first)
• Society views of disability
• Medical model
• Service models based on deficits lead to negative messages
• Other ideas?
Large Group Question: Employment

What are some strategies you would use to help families have high expectations for employment success?
“Viewing your young person through a new lens.”

It is important that we set employment as the 
**expectation**, and help families see the possibilities.

- Redefine employment and supports
- Create environments of hope, not deficit (IEPs and other meetings)
- Use profile tools that map out strengths and supports (PATH, MAP, Positive Personal Profile)
- Give youth a voice
The Power of Stories, Proof and Connections

Seeing proof that people with significant disabilities can work is the most powerful persuader.

- Success stories ("you don’t know my son")
- Video evidence
- Connections to other families
Dual Capacity – Everyone Focuses on High Expectations

Overall, expectations for people with disabilities can only change if stakeholders are trained on holding and conveying, and are held accountable to making it practice.

• Staff training
• Parent training
• Giving youth their voice
Current Environment

268 Colleges & Universities Programs in the US

www.thinkcollege.net
Large Group Question: Post Secondary Education

What are some strategies you would use to help families have high expectation for access to postsecondary education?
Dignity of Risk

• Opportunities for growth
• Mistakes are OK!
• Negotiation of Risk
• NOT Reality police
• Autonomy
Strategies to Improve Success

- Increase opportunities for student voice
  - Student Led Meetings
  - Student Portfolios
- Align IEP goals with desired outcomes
- Schedule College & University Visits
Related Reading

Promoting High Expectations for Post-School Success by Family Members: A “To-Do” List for Professionals

Resources

- YES! Center website: yestoeplayment.org
- PACER.org/transition
- TransCen
- ThinkCollege.net
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