CITY+ Project: Promoting Successful Employment of Youth with ASD

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CITY+ Project

- Project initiated, based upon needs and low success rates of transitioning youth, especially those with ASD
- Partners:
  - GW
  - DC RSA (Voc. Rehab.)
  - DC Employment Service, Summer Youth Program
  - DC Public Schools/Cardozo High School
  - Job Coaching Agencies
  - SchoolTalk
CITY+ Aligning Research to Project Design: Factors Contributing to Successful Post-School Outcomes

- Family supports & expectations
- Transition & career assessment
- Self-determination skills
- Individualized, strength-based transition services and supports
- Positive career development and early work experiences
- Meaningful collaboration and interagency involvement
- Professional Development & TA
- Effective employment practices

Successful Post-School Employment Outcomes
Emphasizing and aligning with age-appropriate transition assessment:

Transition services must be individually designed to reflect the unique needs, strengths, interests, and preferences of each student.

(Lee & Carter, 2012)
CITY+ Transition & Career Assessment

• Ongoing process of collecting information on the youth’s needs, strengths, preferences, and interests as they relate to goals.

• Careful match between the characteristics of the youth and the requirements of secondary environments and postsecondary environments along with recommendations for accommodations, services, supports, and technology to ensure the match.
“Correlational research strongly associates indicators of self-determination with an array of positive employment- and transition-related outcomes” (Cobb et al., 2009; Test et al., 2009; Wehmeyer et al., 2010; as cited in Lee & Carter, 2012, p. 993).
Research affirms the strong contributions parents can make toward career development and improved employment outcomes for their transition-age children.

– For example, Carter et al. (2012) found that parents’ work-related expectations were a significant predictor of whether young adults with disabilities found paid community jobs in the first 2 years after leaving high school.
CITY+ Positive Career Development and Early Work Experiences

*Emphasizing and aligning with career development:*

Access to a **combination of career development experiences during middle and high school** can provide adolescents with **authentic opportunities** to acquire important work skills and values, inform their vocational decision making, and shape their career aspirations for the future (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2006)
“Findings indicate that students with disabilities, who participate in paid employment and work experiences in high school, are more likely to be engaged in post-school employment, education, and independent living experiences (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Bullis et al., 1995; Doren & Benz, 1998; Rabren, Dunn, & Chambers, 2002)” (p. 1)

The data analysis showed that around 43% of students with autism with post-secondary education goals participated in postsecondary education.

The study also found that the most significant predictors of a student’s participation in postsecondary education were family characteristics, student characteristics and transition planning factors (Chiang, et. al, 2012).
“Cultivating strong linkages between students and needed services—as well as among various service providers themselves in a given community—can ensure that the needs and opportunities identified during transition planning are adequately addressed and delivered in coordinated ways” (Lee & Carter, 2012, p. 992).
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  - Self-determination skills
  - Family supports & expectations
  - Professional Development & TA
  - Effective employment practices
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