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Similarities in Reentry Planning of Students Involved in the Juvenile Justice System and Postsecondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

The field of special education has developed evidence-based practices (EBPs) to promote positive postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. Postsecondary transition planning is comparable to the planning processes needed for reentry of previously incarcerated youth to educational and community settings. Common practices for transitioning students with disabilities and for those returning to the community setting include career/technical/vocational education, interagency collaboration, career assessment and exploration, student-centered planning, high expectations, real-life problem solving, and assessment-driven goals. Transition planning has the potential to reduce recidivism, the key measurement of successful programs and interventions in the carceral setting. There is little empirical evidence of best practices in correctional education; however, there are some programs and resources within special education transition literature that may be useful in the development of prerelease planning for adjudicated youth. Programs focused on improving self-determination skills such as being aware of abilities, needs and preferences, problem-solving, self-control, cognitive reasoning to address problems, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy can increase the level of preparation youth have for returning to the community. Other efforts geared at systemic change can be beneficial, as well, including improvement of interagency collaboration, enrollment/re-enrollment requirements, training for educators and administrators to prevent stigma, and hiring one person in charge of the prerelease planning and records. Resources and suggested applications are included in summary.

KEYWORDS: Juvenile Justice, Postsecondary Transition Planning, Prerelease Panning, Correctional Education, Special Education

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INTRODUCTION

Reentry planning for juveniles from secure settings back to community and school can improve student outcomes including improved academic attainment, future employment, and lower rates of recidivism (Kubek et al., 2020). However, the process is fraught with barriers including lack of adequate training for professionals in the facility, communication within and from outside the facility,

and coordination between outside agencies (Miller, 2019). To compound these issues, there is an over-representation of youth with disabilities having complex needs. Prevalence studies suggest as many as 70% of youth in juvenile justice facilities have a mental disorder and almost 50% have a conduct disorder (Skowyra & Cocozza, 2006).

Juveniles with disabilities are at greater risk for recidivism and have more negative post release outcomes in adjusting back to work and school (Griller Clark & Unruh, 2010). In addition, common characteristics of some disabilities (i.e., impulsiveness, and difficulty considering consequences) make the reentry planning processes even more vital. Even so, there is sparse juvenile justice literature on how best to support youth reentering schools and communities. There are similarities between reentry planning and postsecondary transition planning for students with disabilities suggesting EBPs in the transition field could be applicable to reentry planning (Bullis et al., 2004; Cole & Cohen, 2013). In fact, Cole and Cohen (2013) reported research on transitional programs for young offenders connects institutional research within juvenile justice facilities and public schools.

The purpose of this article is to identify EBPs in postsecondary transition for youth with disabilities that can be applied to the reentry process for juveniles leaving secure facilities back to community and school. First, we look at current reentry practices and postsecondary transition practices for youth with disabilities, followed by a brief review of the literature provided to develop a rationale for using postsecondary transition EBPs to model reentry planning and programming. Four major concepts are presented as beneficial practices within transition to support reentry: Interagency Collaboration, High Expectations, Student and Family Involvement, and Educational, Transitional, and Vocational Skills Training. Suggestions for best practices are included.

ABREVIATIONS

EBP (evidence-based practice)
IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
NJJN (National Juvenile Justice Network)
JJS (Juvenile Justice System)
CIRCLES (Communicating Interagency Relationships and Collaborative Linkages for Exceptional
Students)
NCSET (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition)
NTACT (National Technical Assistance Center on Transition)

Reentry: Transitioning Back to School and Community

The successful reintegration of justice-involved juveniles back into society is of utmost concern for the juvenile justice community (Bureau of Justice Assistance, n.d.; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, n.d.). Reports indicate most youth do not make successful transitions back to school and frequently recidivate (Hart, 2019; Steinberg et al., 2004). Effective reentry planning, including transition services for students with and without disabilities has been well-documented and can positively impact graduation rates, employment levels, school re-enrollment levels, and independent living conditions (Bullis et al., 2004, Houchins, 2001; Puzzanchera et al., 2022; Steinberg et al., 2004; Young et al., 2017).

The positive effects of reentry planning are so substantial, Miller & Thierren (2018) argue for the development of transition plans for all adjudicated youth with disabilities, irrespective of age. They posit that effective transition planning and implementation significantly enhance the likelihood of community engagement post-release. Furthermore,

such planning can also lead to reduced recidivism rates by facilitating prompt engagement in education or employment (Miller & Thierren, 2018).

Reentry planning involves a holistic approach including assessment, case management, counseling, education and vocational training, and community-based support programs, preparing and supporting juveniles during their transition from correctional facilities to the community (National Institute of Justice, 2023; Office of Justice Programs, n.d.). This all-encompassing approach allows for the dynamic factors affecting successful reentry, including health, employment, housing, skill development, mentorship, social networks, and organizations to be effectively addressed (Harvard Kennedy School Policy Program, 2019). It is crucial to recognize that such planning can significantly reduce recidivism by promoting successful transition and community engagement (Bureau of Justice Assistance, n.d.; National Institutes of Health, 2022).

Numerous interventions have been found effective in improving reentry outcomes. These include (a) family interventions that foster pro-social development; (b) the identification of a broader network of family support to provide short- and long-term assistance; (c) prioritization of education and employment; and (d) the provision of stable, well-supported transitions with ongoing support and connections to facilitate positive outcomes (BJA, n.d.; Council of State Governments, 2014, CSG; National Institutes of Health [NIH], 2022). Utilizing transition specialists to increase engagement in school, employment, and community is also predictive of improved outcomes and reduced recidivism (Sinclair et al., 2020). Transition specialists play a vital role in youth reentry planning, and increasing engagement in school, employment, and community, which are strong predictors of reducing recidivism for youth involved in the juvenile justice system (Sinclair et al., 2020).

Similarly, the National Reentry Resource Center's Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice identified five emerging practices that promote successful reentry (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2020). These practices encompass incorporating research on adolescent brain development, crafting initiatives that build on youths' strengths and assets, actively involving families and community members throughout the reentry process, prioritizing education and employment, and providing a stable, well-supported transition to adulthood that nurtures meaningful life connections (CSG, 2014; OJJDP, 2020).

The existing body of knowledge on the efficacy of specific models for youth reentry is somewhat limited (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2019; NIJ, 2023). However, it is imperative that we recognize the importance of transition planning for all students, especially those at-risk. Whether they have disabilities or not, every student requires a well-designed transition and post-secondary plan before their release.

Community-based interventions have been shown to be the most effective overall in reducing recidivism and promoting successful reentry (BJA, n.d.; NIJ, 2023; OJJDP, 2019). Programs that place a strong emphasis on family engagement, mentoring, and workforce development have demonstrated positive results (NIH, 2022). Two models that highlight the significance of community-based interventions are the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Youth Reentry Model and the Michigan Youth Reentry Model (OJJDP, 2019). These models underscore the value of collaborative planning, family engagement, and skill development in supporting youth during their crucial reintegration into the community.

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Youth Reentry Model, for instance, places a focal point on family engagement, mentoring, and workforce development (OJJDP, 2019). This model

incorporates a multi-disciplinary team meeting within 60 days of detention (OJJDP, 2019), employs evidence-based programs and practices, and provides a framework for mentoring and workforce development (OJJDP, 2019). Similarly, the Michigan Youth Reentry Model mandates a multidisciplinary meeting within 60 days of detention. Further, this model emphasizes the importance of community-based interventions and provides a framework for addressing housing, employment, family unification, and mental and physical health treatment (OJJDP, 2019).

Importantly, effective reentry planning holds significant relevance for youth with disabilities leaving juvenile justice facilities (BJA, n.d.; OJJDP, 2019). Such planning can effectively address dynamic risk factors, build on existing transitional support services, and ensure that promising practices are implemented in a coordinated and effective manner (BJA, n.d.; OJJDP, 2019). Conversely, ineffective reentry plans have the potential to erode the academic and behavioral progress made during incarceration (OJJDP, 2019).

The barriers to reentry are multifaceted, encompassing issues such as a lack of parental involvement, transportation challenges, and deficiencies in life skills (Mathur et al., 2018). There are also problems with records transfer and information sharing in a timely manner (Hirschfield, 2014; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller, 2019), lag time between release and the onset of services (Mathur et al., 2018), lack of student motivation and skills (Hirschfield, 2014), returning to unwelcoming /unsympathetic environments (Hirschfield, 2014) and a history of poor school attendance (Mathur et al., 2018). Please refer to Table I for a comprehensive list of identified barriers.

Crucially, effective transition planning (BJA, n.d.) emerges as a key strategy to overcome these barriers and facilitate a smoother reentry process for all students, thereby promoting their successful transition and reducing recidivism.

Postsecondary Transition

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legally requires provision of a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). Initially established in 1990, IDEA sought to improve post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. Over the past three decades the law has undergone two revisions, during which transition planning requirements and best practices have evolved significantly. The most recent revision in 2004 outlines transition services and expectations as:

> … a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that (1) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (2) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests (IDEA, 2004).

The law further stipulates that transition services encompass instruction, related services, community experiences, development of daily living skills, provision of a functional vocational evaluation, and independent living skills, when appropriate. Crucially, transition planning must commence no later than an individual's sixteenth birthday (IDEA, 2004), and it involves a collaborative process led by a multidisciplinary team. This team, with the active participation of the student and their family, school representatives, and relevant community agencies (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, social security), collectively formulate specific goals and objectives tailored to the student's long-term life plans.

Transition planning is the process used to identify and develop the strengths and needs of students with

Table I.

Identified Barriers to Successful Reentry

Barriers at the Individual Level	**Citation(s)**
Attitudes of Juvenile	Baglivo et al., 2017; Hawkins & Novy, 2011; Hirschfield, 2014; Nance, 2016; Unruh et al., 2009b
Antisocial Peer Relationships	Baglivo et al., 2017; Unruh et al., 2009b
Family Relationships/Environment	Grigorenko et al., 2019; Hirschfield, 2014; Mathur et al., 2018; Unruh et al., 2009b
Low Academic Achievement	Grigorenko et al, 2019; Hirschfield, 2014; House et al., 2018; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller, 2019; Unruh et al., 2009b
Social and Life Skills	Baglivio et al, 2017; Hirschfield, 2014; Mathur et al., 2018; Unruh et al, 2009b
Self-Determination Skills	Baglivio et al., 2017; Unruh et al., 2009b
Substance Abuse	Grigorenko et al, 2019; Unruh et al., 2009b
Barriers at the Systems Level	
Lack of uniform processes, policies, and procedures across JJS	Grigorenko et al., 2019; Hirschfield, 2014; Hart, 2019; Kubek et al., 2013; Miller, 2019; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016
Lack of prompt record sharing	Cole & Cohen, 2013; Kubek et al., 2013; Mathur et al., 2018
Unwelcoming/Unsympathetic Environme attitudes of teachers	Cole & Cohen 2013; Hawkins & Novy, 2011; Hirschfield, 2014; Kubek et al, 2020; Miller, 2019; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Nance, 2016
Lack of Education, Employment, and Treatment Options in the secure facility or community	House et al., 2018; Hirschfield, 2014; Hart, 2019; Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur et al., 2018; Ochoa, 2016
Lag time between release and onset of services	Hirschfield, 2014; Mathur et al., 2018; Ochoa, 2016

disabilities as they move from high school to postsecondary endeavors. While academic skills are an important component, mounting evidence suggests that solely focusing on academic skills falls short in preparing students for post-school success (McConnell et al., 2013; Mazzotti et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009b). For instance, Test et al. (2009a) identified 32 evidence-based, in-school predictors of postsecondary success. Building upon these initial predictors, additional correlational research resulted in 16 predictors of positive postschool employment, education, and independent living outcomes (Test et al., 2009b). These include (a) career awareness; (b) community experiences; (c) exit exam requirements and high school diploma; (d) inclusion in general education; (e) interagency collaboration; (f) occupational courses; (g) paid employment and paid work experience; (h) parent involvement; (i) program of study; (j) self-care and independent living skills, and (k) self-determination and self-advocacy. A more recent study identified four additional predictors including (a) parent expectations; (b) youth autonomy and decision-making; (c) travel skills, and (d) goal setting (Mazzotti et al., 2021).

Application of research-based strategies has been slow (Cushing et al., 2016), but there is a growing literature base on the importance of postsecondary transition planning and services for students with disabilities. Recently, there has been an increase in transition articles being published, as well as an increase in the number of journals they are being published in (Cushing et al., 2016). Nevertheless, a disconnect between research findings and practical implementation persists (Cushing et al., 2016). Alarmingly, only a third of special education teachers receive coursework dedicated to transition planning in their teacher preparation programs (Williams-Diehm et al., 2018) and many graduate with minimal exposure to transition-related topics embedded into other coursework (Anderson et al., 2003; Morningstar et al., 2018). Given the limited preparation educators receive in transition planning (Morningstar et al., 2018), it is no surprise students with disabilities, particularly those who are in juvenile justice centers, often fail to achieve positive post-school outcomes (Wolfe et al., 1998).

Comparing the Transition Literature to Reentry Practices

Drawing a parallel between the transition literature and reentry practices, it becomes evident that conventional education systems grapple with the challenges of transition planning and provision of adequate transition services. Juvenile detainment centers, by extension, experience similar hurdles in this regard. Youth involved in the justice system have historically received subpar education due to a variety of factors, including lack of funding and a shortage of educational staff (National Juvenile Justice Network [NJJN], 2016). Notably, transition planning was identified as a critical component of correctional special education as far bask as 1985; however, Miller & Thierren (2018) stated that "the current status of transition practices in the juvenile justice system is ineffectual" (p. 109). This is especially concerning given the persistent over-representation of youth with disabilities within the juvenile justice system (Skowyra & Cocozza, 2006). This is the same population identified by IDEA as needing transition planning to be successful after high school (IDEA, 2004). A substantial portion of these students are categorized as having a learning disability (Quinn et al., 2005) or an emotional/ behavioral disorder (Gagnon et al., 2000; Skowyra & Cocozza (2006). Reportedly juveniles in the justice system are six times more likely to have an emotional/behavioral disorder than their non-adjudicated peers (Gagnon et al., 2000). Estimates by Skowyra & Cocozza (2006) suggest as many as 60-70% of adjudicated youth have mental health disorders. Furthermore, Pyle et al (2016) reported adjudicated youth were often victims of trauma and likely to experience conduct disorder, anxiety, depressions, substance abuse, and have histories with abuse, neglect, and interactions with the child welfare system. Given the heightened likelihood of disability and other compounding factors, it becomes crucial that adjudicated youth are provided appropriate supports, services, instruction, and meaningful planning processes like transition planning to pave the way for more positive post-school outcomes, encompassing employment, independent living, decreased recidivism, and postsecondary education attendance (OJJDP, 2022).

Implementing effective reentry planning is hampered with a historic lack of funding and systemic barriers. Although empirical research on adherence to IDEA in juvenile justice system (JJS) facilities is scant, it is evident that transition programming often remains neglected for incarcerated individuals (Mathur et al., 2018). Additionally, successful reentry to school following containment in a secure setting is a pressing need for students with disabilities (House et al., 2018). Inadequacy in reentry planning contributes to negative post-release results and contributes to a return to the school-to-prison pipeline (Bullis et al., 2004). Deficits in transition and reentry planning are particularly concerning because youth with disabilities are at greater risk for recidivism and nega-

tive post-release outcomes when trying to adjust back to school and work (Griller Clark & Unruh, 2010).

While additional empirical research is needed to identify EBPs for reentry, Cole and Cohen (2013) indicate the research on transitional programs for young offenders can connect institutional research within juvenile justice facilities and public schools. Miller and Therrien (2018) report the utilization of transition practices could alter the negative trajectory most incarcerated juveniles are on. In their discussion article, they recommend using a Multi-phase Transition Model, based on the work of Unruh et al (2009a). This model consists of three phases of transition including initial intake, residency, and after-release. Within this framework, Miller and Therrien (2018) promote wraparound services by first establishing a transition plan during intake consisting of assessments, GED preparation, and vocational education and training. During residency and post release, students should be provided continuing education and employment support along with sufficient mental health services (Miller & Therrien, 2018).

Shared Best Practices

Although research into best practices for postsecondary transition planning is relatively new, it is more advanced than research into reentry planning. Nonetheless, the transition literature offers valuable insights, reflecting numerous parallels with ideal reentry practices. EBPs in post-secondary transition planning share some common principles with reentry programming and others that are remarkably similar. For instance, the importance of continued support in vocational education and training, academic support, and mental health supports following transition/reentry have been identified in both educational and juvenile justice literature (Hardman & McDonnel, 1987; Mazzotti et al., 2014; NIH, 2022; NTACT, 2016; OJJDP, 2019). Additionally, several other recurring themes resonate between these domains including interagency collaboration (The ARC, 2015; Cole & Cohen, 2013; House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller & Thierrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016), parental/familial involvement (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Mazzotti et al., 2014; NTACT, 2016; Test et al., 2009; Test et al., 2018), and educational, transitional, and vocational skills training (Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller & Thierrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016; Unruh et al., 2009b). See Table II for a comparison chart of reentry and postsecondary transition practices.

Integration of Education into the Facility Culture

A lack of cohesion among the personnel within the facility can result in a breakdown in communication. Typically, various professionals work in these facilities (e.g., security officers, school psychologists and psychiatrists, medical providers, school principals, transition coordinators, and special education coordinators). Each has an important and specific role in the rehabilitation and education of juveniles however, they often seem to work independently of one another (Cole & Cohen, 2013; Miller, 2019; Ochoa, 2016). These different teams may hold varying values and expectations regarding the juveniles in their programs. For example, the goal of security officers is to keep residents and staff physically safe, while the education staff aims to foster academic potential (Ochoa, 2016). Security staff may emphasize discipline and control while the education staff may prioritize empathy and support (Cole & Cohen, 2013; Miller, 2019). Such divergent approaches can exacerbate existing issues stemming from a lack of collaboration and communication, ultimately leading to conflicts and misunder-standings that hinder the successful rehabilitation and education of juveniles.

One aspect of establishing successful educational programs within confinement facilities is to integrate education seamlessly into the facility's culture (Farmer, 2014). Confinement facility administrators and staff should wholeheartedly support the school program and school staff as integral parts of the total

Table II

Similar reentry and postsecondary transition practices

Identified Best Practices and Guiding Principles	Citations
Assessments for Planning	Hirschfield, 2014; Houchins, 2001; House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Kubek et. al., 2020; Hart, 2019; Mathur & Clark, 2013; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016; Test et al., 2009
Employment Experience	House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Test et al., 2009
Engagement in School/Employment	House et al., 2018; Mathur et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Ochoa, 2016; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009; Unruh et al., 2009b
Family Relationship/Involvement	Houchins, 2001; House et al., 2018; Hart, 2019; Kubek et al., 2020; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Miller, 2019; Ochoa, 2016; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009; Unruh et al., 2009b
Follow-up and Continued Supports	Cole & Cohen, 2013; Houchins, 2001; House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Hart, 2019; Mathur et al., 2018; Test et al., 2009
Goal setting	Hirschfield, 2014; House et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009
Instruction In Transition/Vocational Skills	Hosp et al, 2001; Houchins, 2001; House et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009
Interagency Collaboration	Hosp et al., 2001; Houchins, 2001; House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Miller, 2019; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009; The ARC, 2015
Individualized Educational and Vocational Planning	House et al., 2018; Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur & Clark, 2013; Mathur et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Ochoa, 2016; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009; Unruh et al., 2009b
One Person in Charge (i.e., caseworker, special education teacher)	Cole & Cohen, 2013; Hirschfield, 2014; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller, 2019; Ochoa, 2016
Personnel Training	Hosp et al., 2001; Johnson et al., 2017; Kubek et al, 2020; Mathur & Clark, 2013; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller, 2019
Positive Peer Support	Kubek et al., 2020; Ochoa, 2016; Test et al., 2009; Unruh et al., 2009b
Self-Determination Skills Instruction	Hosp et al., 2001; House et al., 2018; Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur & Clark, 2013; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Ochoa, 2016; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009; Unruh et al, 2009b
Standardized Processes	Hirschfield, 2014; Johnson et al., 2017
Student Involvement in Planning	Kubek et al., 2020; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009
Supports for Social, Education, Occupation, Health, and Community	Houchins, 2001; House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur & Clark, 2013; Mathur et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Ochoa, 2016; Rowe et al., 2021; Test et al., 2009; Unruh et al., 2009b

facility program (Farmer, 2014). Confinement staff should emphasize and prioritize education programs over other daily activities except for legal proceedings or medical or mental health crises (Farmer, 2014). Relevant information should be shared between confinement facility staff and school staff, including observations of behavior in other parts of the facility, which can facilitate better outcomes (Farmer, 2014).

Interagency Collaboration

Several of the barriers to successful transition programming fall under the umbrella of interagency collaboration. For instance, a deficit in communication and coordination often exists between community schools and secure care facilities, sometimes leading to facilities being uninformed of a juvenile's disability status (Cole & Cohen, 2013; Farmer, 2014; Miller, 2019). Prompt records exchange between schools and facilities is one of the most insidious barriers to successful reentry. The school is expected to provide a juvenile's academic records to the secure facility as quickly as possible to ensure academic and special needs are met (Cole & Cohen, 2013; Miller, 2019) and vice versa.

Strategies for Improving Interagency Collaboration

One way to remediate this lack of continuity is to designate one person responsible for connecting all the service providers, both those in and those outside of the facility. Several articles recommend one person be trained and appointed to act as liaison with outside agencies to provide prompt exchange of information, develop relationships and encourage community engagement (Cole & Cohen, 2013; House et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller, 2019). In the context of a school system, this role is often filled by a special education provider or transition specialist. Additionally, this teacher leader should actively participate in confinement administrative team meetings (Farmer, 2014).

Another avenue for improving service delivery for juveniles with disabilities involves enhancing communication across agencies and interagency collaboration between schools and JJS (Farmer, 2014; Povenmire-Kirke, et al., 2015). In post-secondary transition there are few service delivery models focusing on interagency collaboration, but Communicating Interagency Relationships and Collaborative Linkages for Exceptional Students (CIRCLES) is one that has been gaining recognition (Povenmire-Kirke, et al., 2015). The CIRCLES model is a three-level, multi-agency transition planning process. The first level team, the community team, involves the leaders of community agencies who can make policy changes or designate funds for programs. The second level team consists of representatives from community agencies, families, and the individual student, making direct interaction with families and their needs with the agencies who can address those needs. The third level team is the team most of us are familiar with, the IEP team. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte provides a home for information about CIRCLES at https://circles.charlotte.edu/. The CIRCLES model addresses interagency collaboration with schools and other agencies, as well as containing a strong element for family- and person-centered planning.

High Expectations and Active Participation

Another crucial and beneficial practice centers on active participation in educational planning. This encompasses the attitudes and expectations of the individual involved, as well as the people in their immediate environment (Hirschfield, 2014; Mazzotti et al., 2021; Rowe et al., 2021). It is important to underscore that family expectations significantly impact transition outcomes. Parental and familial involvement is a legal requirement of any educational planning and has also been identified for both postsecondary and reentry success (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Mazzotti et al., 2014; NTACT, 2016; Test et al., 2009; Test et al., 2018). Studies indicate family participation in planning correlates with numerous benefits, including higher rates of

students attending postsecondary education and career/training courses, higher grade point averages, better employment outcomes, and a better quality of life in general (Newman, et al., 2016; Wehman, et al., 2014). In addition to family inclusion, both educational and criminal justice literature emphasize the significance of person-centered planning as paramount to success (Kubek et al., 2020; Rowe et al, 2021). Furthermore, they underscore the importance of including young individuals in the planning for their own lives, emphasizing the need for self-advocacy and self-determination skills (Mazzotti et al., 2014; NTACT, 2016; Test et al., 2009; Test et al., 2018).

Despite limited research on family involvement in the educational planning of justice-involved juveniles, existing literature suggests that having high expectations and engaging students and their family in educational planning may not occur naturally. Even with clear evidence of the importance of active family involvement in planning (Coalition for Juvenile Justice [CJJ], 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2014; Test et al., 2018), there continues to be a divide between families and education agencies. Often families don't believe they have the knowledge and skills needed to make useful contributions (CJJ, 2016). Some families may need little support, while others will need extensive, repeated information delivery on identifying transition goals, steps needed to reach those goals, resources needed, and the people and supports available. Additionally, there appears to be a racial component to family involvement, with White youth reporting more family contact during incarceration than youth of color (Tolou-Shams et al., 2022). To better engage families, education, corrective, and other involved agencies should provide information and materials in easy-to-understand and easily accessed formats (CJJ, 2016). Furthermore, Mazzotti et al. (2014) suggests providing extensive, ongoing support and training to help families become and stay involved.

The expectations of the people in the environment other than family members also have a significant impact. Having high expectations for students is a proven best practice in the transition literature, but Sinclair et al., (2017) reported most public-school teachers had lowered expectations about academic capabilities and futures of juveniles returning from secure settings. Cole and Cohen (2013), take lowered expectations further by suggesting schools appear to continue punishing youth, even though they have served their time, with labeling and even refusal of some teachers to allow the student into their classroom. Negative attitudes and stereotypes result in stigma and discrimination that extends beyond individual teachers to include peers and other members of the community, making reintegration into school and society even more problematic (CJJ, 2016). Further, youth who have been involved in the justice system are often academically and developmentally delayed due to a lack of access to quality education, mental health, support services, and opportunities for positive youth development (CJJ, 2016). Success is further hindered by a lack of coordination and communication between agencies.

Strategies to Increase Student and Family Expectations and Participation

Various resources are available to inform students and family members of the transition process. The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET; www.ncset.org) has a Parent Brief on Person-Centered Planning with references to IDEA requirements, suggestions on developing person-centered meetings, and additional resources. Another excellent website with person-centered planning tools and resources is the Project 10 Transition Education Network (www.project10.info) This website covers everything from student engagement and success to legislation and policy. There is also a resource locator which can be used for searches at the regional or state levels. Some ways to provide this information is through a special services webpage at the agency website, through development and distribution of brochures or tip sheets, short videos, or learning modules for families to work through. There are many free resources education agencies can access to build knowledge and participation of families during transition planning. The IRIS Center (www.iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu) has training modules for families and individuals, as well as practitioners. The resources available include

learning modules on EBPs, films, books, and much more. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) Collaborative has several useful resources including PDFs and trainings on ways to engage families, interagency collaboration, community engagement and independent living (www.transitionta. org). The West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities is another excellent website (www.cedwvu.org). This website has resources on self-determination, advocacy, resource library.

Educational, Transitional, and Vocational Skills Training

Individualized instruction of vocational and employment skills is found with reentry and transition literature, with specific concerns about the educational, transitional, and vocational skills training juveniles receive while incarcerated (Kubek et al., 2020; Mathur et al., 2018; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016; Unruh et al., 2009b). Providing real-life training in employment, such as workplace etiquette and social involvement, are critical to successful post-high school or post-incarceration transition. Training should include social, educational, occupational, health and community supports access. Transitional education services such as career exploration, financial literacy, and job seeking skills have also been beneficial to incarcerated students in building real-life skills for future success (Hosp et al., 2001; Johnson et al., 2017; Miller & Therrien, 2018; Ochoa, 2016; Unruh et al, 2009b). As a rule, individualized training for employment should be based on a juvenile's goals, interests, skill level, and needs, all of which are highlighted through multidisciplinary assessments (IDEA, 2004; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Hirschfield, 2014).

Vocational Programming

Successful vocational programs designed to improve the employability of justice-involved youth can provide frameworks for other facilities to emulate. For instance, in a study of vocational programs in juvenile correctional schools, Gagnon et al. (2009) found successful programs include individualized instruction, community-based work experiences, and collaboration among agencies. The development of vocational skills programming in juvenile justice settings is often hampered by a lack of funding and security concerns (NIJ, 2023). Lack of funding limits resources available for training, while security concerns make it difficult to implement vocational training in secure facilities (NIJ, 2023). There have been a handful of states that provide vocational training and job placement services to youth in facilities. One successful vocational program is the Utah Community-Based Transition Project, which provides vocational training during the transition period following release from incarceration (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987). California, Florida, and Texas have also reported on successful implementation of programs reducing recidivism in justice-involved juveniles (NIJ, 2023). The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation provides state-funded vocational training programs during incarceration, while both Florida and Texas Departments of Juvenile Justice provide state-funded vocational training programs during and after incarceration (NIJ, 2023). Additionally, there is evidence that implementing security assessment and planning, secure training areas, staff training and supervision, development of an emergency response plan, and continuous improvement and evaluations of prog-ramming can help facilities ensure the safety of students while providing vocational education (OJJDP, 2019; NJJN, 2016).

Resources to Increase Educational, Transitional, and Vocational Skills

Building individualized programming includes realistic career exploration, self-determination skills, and goal setting. These and other transition skills (i.e., resume building, job seeking skills, interview skills, how to get a job, how to keep a job) can be accessed through websites such as Zarrow Institute on Transition and Self-Determination, the PACER's Organization, and the IRIS Center. The Zarrow Institute (https://www.ou.edu/education/zarrow) is located at the University of Oklahoma and has a

wealth of information and resources, most easily modifiable for individual needs. Through Zarrow, there is access to transition education resources (including for youth with significant disabilities), self-determination assessments, self-determination lessons, lesson plans for teaching students to lead their own IEPs, and a timeline of transition activities beginning with infancy and moving to adulthood. Teachers within secondary schools and JJS can utilize these resources and facilitate the process of career/college exploration. In addition, many of the websites include pre-made lessons to help teachers instruct these important skills—many of which are connected to academic skills as well.

Another great source for information for and about people with disabilities including a section about public policy and legislation at state and federal levels is PACER Center (pacer.org). The PACER website has a Learning Center for practitioners with sections on Juvenile Justice, Family Engagement, and Special Education, to name a few. Another nice aspect of the website is PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment page, which provides a tremendous number of resources based on a familial perspective. In addition, there are resources for students and young adults, newsletters, events, and ways to get involved.

Lastly, The IRIS Center is another one-stop resource site. https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ This national organization is supported by the U. S. Department of Education's Special Education Programs and is located at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College. The IRIS Center attempts to narrow the research-to-practice-gap, by providing evidence-based instructional and behavioral resources for struggling students and those with disabilities. In addition to the free resources, IRIS also has options for professional development including a certificate of completion for the IRIS training modules. This website also has a Resource Locator with a variety of audio, video, or activities (i.e., modules, case studies, skill sheets, vignettes, and additional resources) divided into topics such as Behavior and Classroom Management, Collaboration, Diversity, Juvenile Corrections, and Transition. There is even a section for parents on how to support learning during COVID-19.

CONCLUSION

There are several ongoing research projects aimed at building evidence for what does and does not work for the reentry of justice-involved juveniles (NIJ, 2022), but as of now empirical evidence of best practices for reentry programming is limited. This has resulted in a dearth of materials and resources available to be used in helping youth transition back to community and school. In contrast, the literature on postsecondary transition planning for youth with disabilities is much more comprehensive. Similarities in postsecondary planning and reentry programmming (e.g., strong interagency collaboration, development of high expectations, involvement of student and family, and educational, transitional, and vocational skills training) suggest EBPs used in postsecondary transition programming could be beneficial for teaching reentry skills. In fact, Mathur and Griller-Clark (2013) indicate transition programs and supports can promote growth during the period of incarceration and enhance transition back to school or community (Mathur & Griller-Clark, 2013). There are a variety of online transition resources available. Most platforms are extremely user-friendly and designed with accessibility in mind. In addition, many are free and available for download and modification. Please see Table III for additional postsecondary transition resources that could be useful in reentry planning and the postsecondary success of all juveniles.

Table III

Postsecondary Transition Resources to Use for Reentry Planning

Name of Resource	Description	Where to find it
A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities	Definitions, legal requirements, programs of study, employment options, examples of individualized transition services, coordination, and collaborations,	https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/postsecondary-transition-guide-may-2017.pdf
Beach Center on Disability	A multidisciplinary center providing international, state, and local services for collaborating with individuals with disabilities and their families	https://beachcenter.lsi.ku.edu/beach-home
Casey Life Skills	A free assessment tool for youth to self-evaluate social, employment, and independent living skills	https://www.ou.edu/education/zarrow/resources/assessments
ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Curriculum	Curriculum addressing education, employment, and personal factors involved in transition with a focus on goal setting and attainment.	https://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transition-education-materials/choicemaker-curriculum
I'm Determined	Assessments, evidence-based practices in self-determination, self-advocacy, and goal setting	https://imdetermined.org/
IRIS Center	Resources, professional development, articles, and reports; has an excellent Resource Locator	https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/
Jump$tart's Reality Check	Students choose preferences in postsecondary education, employment and living to see the income they need to make	https://www.jumpstart.org/what-we-do/support-financial-education/reality-check/
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)	Postsecondary education and employment, transition planning, and community and family resources	https://ncset.org
National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)	A resource with training options, news, and a variety of different topics with links to laws, FAQs, guides, and providers guidebooks	https://transitionta.org/topics/pre-ets/
O*NET	Career exploration and job analysis tool to explore career paths and required training or education	https://www.onetonline.org/
PACER Center	Resources for students, families, and professionals; learning center, resources center, newsletters, events	https://www.pacer.org/learning-center/
Project10 Transition Education Network	Resources and tools for capacity building, interagency collaboration, legislation and policy, and student development and outcomes	https://project10.info
Transition to Adulthood-Center for Parent Information and Resources	Definitions, examples, and activities (also in Spanish)	https://parentcenterhub.org/transition/adult/
What Works Clearinghouse	Evidence based practices in everything from K-12 education, literacy, behavior, and postsecondary options	https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
Zarrow Institute on Transition and Self-Determination	Transition resources, assessments, lesson plans, presentations	https://www.ou.edu/education/zarrow

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