

**NOTICE:** This is an ODEP Archive Document. Information contained in this document may be out of date or not reflect current policies.

# GUIDEPOSTS FOR SUCCESS 2.0

A Framework for Successful Youth Transition to Adulthood



**NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON WORKFORCE AND DISABILITY FOR YOUTH**

May 2019

# INTRODUCTION

## About the Guideposts for Success 2.0

“What do all youth need to make a successful transition to adulthood?” This is the central question that the Guideposts for Success is designed to answer. Two characteristics set the Guideposts for Success apart from other frameworks and resources pertaining to youth transition. First, it recognizes that youth in the transition-to-adulthood age group (defined as ages 12 to 25) benefit from many of the same opportunities, services, and supports, regardless of their disability status and other individual differences. Second, it explicitly identifies additional opportunities, services, and supports that may be required or beneficial for youth who have disabilities. In this way, the Guideposts for Success serves as a guiding resource for ensuring that all youth, including those with disabilities, have full access to high quality services in integrated settings to gain education, employment, and independent living.

It has been over a decade since the Guideposts for Success was first introduced as a national youth transition framework by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), with support from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Published in 2005, the original Guideposts for Success framework was developed in concert with the National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition (NASSET), then funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), and based upon a common literature review conducted by NASSET and NCWD/Youth. Since it was created, the Guideposts for Success has become nationally recognized as a valuable research-based framework to inform policies and practices designed to prepare and support youth in transition to adulthood.

In 2012, NCWD/Youth began an in-depth process aimed at updating the Guideposts for Success to reflect the latest research studies and current professional standards of practice for supporting youth in transition to adulthood across multiple service systems and sectors. Several factors guided the development of an updated version. This included the recognition that the definition of youth in transition to adulthood should include those as young as middle school as well as older young adults up to age 25. Other factors were the accumulation of new lessons centered on implementation of services over the years since the Guideposts was originally developed and the need to incorporate findings and strategies from a full range of service systems that influence youth transition (i.e., education, workforce development, child welfare, corrections, health and mental health), recognizing the interdependency across the programs within these systems that strongly affect the support systems that youth need to succeed. With these factors in mind, NCWD/Youth conducted a 50-state review of state agency efforts related to youth transition and reviewed literature from multiple disciplines to produce the *Guideposts for Success 2.0 Research Base Paper*. Subsequently, the Guideposts for Success 2.0 was written using key findings from the research base and input from various subject matter experts, including five young adults, who provided feedback on the initial draft.

Individuals already familiar with the original Guideposts for Success will find that the Guideposts 2.0 is similar in many ways. The contents of the Guideposts 2.0 maintains the same organizing structure, outlining what youth need within five major areas: 1) School-based Preparatory Experiences; 2) Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences; 3) Youth Development and Leadership; 4) Connecting Activities; and 5) Family Engagement (formerly called Family Involvement and Supports). Within each of these areas, the Guideposts 2.0 continues to identify what all youth need to make a smooth transition into adulthood, as students, employees, and members of families and communities. It also continues to identify the additional supports, opportunities, and services that youth with disabilities may need to achieve independence.

There are also a few ways in which the Guideposts 2.0 is distinct from the original version. First, NCWD/Youth added a “Youth Competencies” section in order to make explicit what knowledge, skills, and attitudes are valuable for youth to develop as they journey into adulthood. Second, subsections were added to certain Guidepost areas, particularly the lengthier ones, in order to improve the user’s understanding and ease of reading the framework. For example, Guidepost Area 1 pertaining to “School-based Preparatory Experiences” covers a wider array of topics and educational settings, extending into postsecondary education, compared to the original version. As a result, this section has been organized into more subsections.

Another distinction in the Guideposts 2.0 is the way that Guidepost Area 5 on “Family Engagement” has been organized according to “what families need to know and do” as well as “actions for professionals supporting families.” This change was made in order to emphasize the dual significance of what families do to acquire knowledge and take certain actions as well as what organizations and professionals need to do to assist and support families.

## Principles and Purposes

In keeping with the first iteration, the Guideposts for Success 2.0 provides a statement of principles to guide decisions about youth transition policies as well as practice. It also provides guidance on research-based strategies for achieving better outcomes for all young people, including those with disabilities. As a result, the Guideposts suggest a way to organize policy and practice.

### Principles

The Guideposts for Success 2.0 is based upon many of the same principles as the original Guideposts. These principles are:

1. High expectations for all youth, including youth with disabilities;
2. Equality of opportunity for everyone, including nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion, and integration;

3. Full participation through self-determination, informed choice, and participation in decision-making;
4. Independent living, including skills development and long-term supports and services;
5. Competitive employment and economic self-sufficiency, which may include supports;
6. Individualized, person-driven, and culturally and linguistically appropriate transition planning; and
7. Universal Design of environments, programs, and services to enable all individuals to access and participate in opportunities.

### Who should use them and how?

*Youth and families* should seek out and advocate for access to programs and activities that provide the opportunities, services, and supports described in the Guideposts. Youth with disabilities should use the Guideposts in developing any individualized plans, such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE), and service strategies as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

*State level policy makers* should use the Guideposts as a strategic organizational framework which can assist them in increasing the cross-systems coordination of youth transition-related services and strategies.

*Administrators and policy makers at the local level* should use the Guideposts in making decisions regarding funding, in setting and establishing local priorities related to transition-age youth, and in evaluating the work of agencies supported by that funding.

*Youth Service Professionals* should use the Guideposts, and other tools that NCWD/Youth has developed to implement research-based strategies in their work.

## YOUTH COMPETENCIES

The following competencies have been identified as valuable for achieving goals related to economic success and participation in community life during adulthood. Developing these competencies can equip youth for smooth transition to adulthood. However, it is important to note that young people can successfully transition without having all the competencies outlined here when they have sufficient supports in place.

### Competencies that Equip Youth for Smooth Transition

#### School-based Preparatory Experiences

- Ability to perform academically at or above proficiency for grade level
- Ability to perform academically at levels equivalent to college readiness standards by the time of high school completion (e.g. requiring no remediation upon postsecondary enrollment)
- Motivation and persistence toward academic goals
- Knowledge about education and career options and ability to make informed decisions about academic courses and postsecondary plans to achieve individualized academic, career, and life goals
- Ability to manage academic and non-academic challenges that impede learning using competencies such as social and emotional learning skills, self-direction and learning habits, self-determination, and self-advocacy
- Social and emotional skills including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, problem solving, conflict resolution, and responsible decision-making
- Skills and knowledge needed to effectively use technology for a variety of purposes, including test-taking, online classes, organization, time management, or performing tasks in one's field of study or career path
- Ability to advocate for oneself in secondary and postsecondary planning processes and learning environments

#### **Additional competencies that maximize success among youth with disabilities:**

- Knowledge of what accommodations and supports, including assistive technology, one needs in education settings and how to use them
- Ability to self-advocate for accommodations and supports in education settings

#### Career Preparation & Work-based Learning

- Understanding of the role that employment plays in economic self-sufficiency and the motivation to build skills, explore careers, and seek employment to live the life a youth desires
- Self-exploration skills that enable youth to identify interests, skills, and values

- Career exploration skills that enable youth to identify how various career options match their interests, skills, and work preferences
- Ability to make informed choices about their long-term career interests and the corresponding secondary and postsecondary coursework and industry-recognized credentials necessary to pursue these interests
- Career-specific work skills and knowledge as well as employability or “soft” skills such as communication, leadership, decision-making, and conflict management skills
- Career planning and management skills, including academic planning, decision making related to postsecondary pathways, career readiness skills, job search skills, and financial literacy

**Additional competencies that maximize success among youth with disabilities:**

- Knowledge of what accommodations and supports, including assistive technology, one needs in the workplace and training settings and how to use them
- Ability to self-advocate for accommodations and supports in the workplace and training settings

**Youth Development & Leadership**

- Self-efficacy or belief in one’s capabilities
- Self-determination skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behaviors
- Agency or the ability to make choices about and take an active role in one’s life path
- Interpersonal skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Self-advocacy skills including knowledge of self, knowledge of civil rights, communication, and leadership
- Leadership skills and initiative

**Additional competencies that maximize success among youth with disabilities:**

- Knowledge of if, when, and how to disclose, including an understanding of disability history, culture, and disability public policy as well as their rights and responsibilities
- Knowledge of oneself and sense of identity related to having a disability, including knowledge of one’s strengths and what accommodations and supports enable participation and success in various situations
- Ability to effectively self-advocate for accommodations and supports in various settings including in educational, work, social, recreation, community, and other developmental contexts

**Connecting Activities**

- Skills for navigating through the health care system to access medical, mental, behavioral, and reproductive health services
- Skills for self-care, health care decision making, and self-advocacy

- Ability to choose and engage in recreation and leisure activities that promote health and well-being
- Knowledge and skills to find, secure, and maintain safe, stable, and accessible housing
- Ability to secure reliable, accessible transportation (public or personal)
- Skills and confidence needed to travel independently throughout one's community
- Ability to secure sufficient nutritious food and recognition of the benefits of choosing healthy foods
- Knowledge and skills to secure quality childcare
- Ability to responsibly parent a child
- Ability to access contraception and sexual health information
- Independent living and life skills
- Ability to manage financial resources effectively
- Ability to make decisions and develop a plan for continuing one's education and training, including pursuing postsecondary education and occupational credentials
- Knowledge about one's rights and ability to find and utilize legal and advocacy services appropriate to one's needs and age (e.g. services specific to English Language Learners (ELL) and migrant youth, veterans, LGBT youth, court-involved youth, foster care youth, and those with mental health challenges)

**Additional competencies that maximize success among youth with disabilities:**

- Ability to find and utilize disability-related services such as assistive technology, benefits counseling, and personal assistance services
- Ability to advocate for oneself and manage disability-related services

## GUIDEPOSTS FOR SUCCESS IN BRIEF

See pages 13-22 for the detailed version.

### SCHOOL-BASED PREPARATORY EXPERIENCES

#### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

❖ Rigorous, relevant, and inclusive academic curricular and program options that employ high quality and engaging instructional practices tailored to the needs of diverse learners.

- Rigorous courses
- Applied learning
- Progress assessments
- Interventions to reduce barriers
- Personalized instruction
- Career guidance and skill-building
- Social-emotional learning integrated with academics
- Internet and technology access
- Re-engagement options

❖ A safe and supportive learning climate and environment characterized by:

- High expectations
- Small, personalized communities
- Participatory climate that promotes safety and belonging
- Inclusive school practices

❖ Access to effective educators, demonstrated by the following attributes and practices:

- Appropriate qualifications and professional development
- Educator externships and co-learning
- Communicate support, respect, high expectations, and positive regard
- High quality instructional practices and positive behavioral supports
- Engaging and responsive to diverse learners
- Skilled use of technology and other resources

❖ Postsecondary education success strategies:

- Multiple measures of postsecondary readiness
- Comprehensive advising services
- Comprehensive, integrated supports
- Co-requisite course options for developmental education

#### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Individualized transition planning and services
- Youth-led individualized education program (IEP) and transition planning process
- Understanding of accommodations relevant to youth's needs in education
- Access to specific and individualized learning accommodations
- Effective teachers and transition staff

## CAREER PREPARATION & WORK-BASED LEARNING

### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- Career pathways aligned with industry-recognized credentials
- Career assessment and exploration strategies
- Work-based learning and service experiences
- Career and technical education and other career-related applied learning
- Training in social skills, self-regulation, and other employability skills

### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Access to accommodations and supports in career pathway programs
- Accessible technology in employment training settings and the workplace
- Training on rights to disability-related accommodations
- Training on disability disclosure decision-making
- Training on how to approach employers about accommodation requests
- Assistance finding and performing work in competitive, integrated employment settings

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- Challenging activities that promote positive growth and development
- Formal and informal mentoring experiences with adults and peers
- Opportunities to develop agency, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills
- Formal and informal experiences that develop initiative and leadership skills
- Opportunities to build interpersonal skills
- Opportunities to build social capital<sup>1</sup> and connections to peers and role models
- Opportunities to develop critical thinking skills

### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Accessible programs and environments to engage in youth development and leadership
- Mentors and role models with and without disabilities
- Training on disability-related rights and responsibilities, policies, history, and culture

## CONNECTING ACTIVITIES

### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- Health care services, including:
  - Health promotion and sexual and reproductive services
  - Mental health and behavioral services
  - Assistance with additional costs associated with accessing health care
  - Health insurance
  - Physical health and mental health education
  - Information and support for pediatric to adult healthcare transition
- Assistance with securing basic needs, including:
  - Accessible, safe, stable, and affordable housing
  - Accessible transportation
  - Nutritious and affordable food
- Training or coaching in various life skills
- Financial literacy education
- Accessible and universally designed<sup>ii</sup> recreational and leisure activities
- Access to other services appropriate to one's needs, such as:
  - Maternal and child health care services for young parents
  - Information and assistance obtaining childcare
  - Parenting skills education and other support for parenting
  - English language instruction, interpretation, and translation services
  - Reintegration and employment assistance for veterans
  - Information and support relevant to immigrant status and/or family circumstances
  - Information about legal rights and access to legal and advocacy services
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender supports and services

### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Connections to adult service agencies for assistance with independent living, employment support services, and other post-school services
- Connection to parent training, information, and resource centers
- Peer-to-peer support with individuals with same disability
- Assistive technology and training on how to use it
- Benefits counseling
- Personal assistance services and other long-term services and supports
- Travel training
- Training in functional life skills
- Vocational rehabilitation counseling for individuals with disabilities, including veterans
- Supported decision-making and other alternatives to guardianship

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

### What families need to know and do:

- Communicate and model high expectations for what youth can do and achieve
- Support youth's learning through active involvement in their education
- Participate with the youth in youth-led individualized planning and transition meetings
- Build skills in youth and support their ability to advocate for services and opportunities
- Shift gradually from youth's advocate to youth's coach
- Develop own and youth's understanding of
  - high school, postsecondary, and employment requirements and expectations
  - relevant policies, rights, and responsibilities
- Assist youth in:
  - understanding their disability and implications in various settings
  - exploring interests and options and accessing resources and supports for postsecondary education, competitive integrated employment, and community living
  - identifying and participating in career preparation, work-based learning, and paid employment
  - developing employability skills and other competencies
  - developing self-determination skills
  - voicing their preferences and building and using social capital
  - developing financial capability
- Develop the family's own social capital and knowledge to navigate transition

### Services, Supports, & Opportunities for Families

#### Professionals, educators, and service providers need to:

- Communicate and model high expectations for what youth can do and achieve
- Work in partnership with families to promote youth's academic learning, career development, health, access to community supports, and transition to adult life
- Engage families and youth as partners in transition assessment and individualized planning
- Include all families of youth, including culturally and linguistically diverse families, in the process of collaboration, planning, and implementation for transition
- Strengthen and practice cultural competency
- Recognize and respect differences among family environments
- Assist families with accessing and learning how to use technology
- Coordinate and integrate services across multiple service systems
- Provide families with:
  - Training and follow-up support to families on communicating and modeling high expectations for youth and developing youth autonomy
  - Training and information on financial capability

- Opportunities for families to connect to people, institutions, and resources
- Peer-led programs/support networks for families and youth
- Community-based wrap-around<sup>iii</sup> programs as needed
- Benefits planning assistance, including long-term services and supports
- information on:
  - how to access opportunities, resources, and supports
  - evidence-based and promising practices for transition
  - relevant policies, rights, and responsibilities that apply to adulthood
  - health care transition, supported decision-making, and other alternatives to guardianship and long-term services and supports

# GUIDEPOST AREA 1

## SCHOOL-BASED PREPARATORY EXPERIENCES

Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- ❖ **Rigorous, relevant, and inclusive academic curricular and program options that employ high quality and engaging instructional practices tailored to the needs of diverse learners. This includes the following:**
  - Opportunities to take rigorous academic courses that prepare youth for postsecondary-level course work
  - Opportunities to participate in career and technical education programs, “Linked Learning” programs, and other opportunities that apply academics in real-world career and life contexts
  - Ongoing assessments of academic progress that are accessible and universally designed
  - Interventions to address academic and other barriers to school attendance and achievement, including intensive individualized support and dropout prevention strategies as needed
  - Personalized instruction tailored to an individual youth by using multiple learning approaches that vary by time, place, and pace
  - Career guidance and career development skill-building, starting no later than middle school, and individualized learning plan activities (e.g., career and academic plan) to prepare for success in a variety of settings
  - Integration of social and emotional development with academic instruction to ensure opportunities to develop non-academic competencies, such as self-direction, self-determination, social problem solving, and self-advocacy
  - Access to internet service and technology in and outside the classroom
  - Individualized and supportive options to re-engage in and complete secondary education credentials in case youth become disconnected or drop out
  
- ❖ **A safe and supportive learning climate and environment. This includes the following:**
  - A school climate that promotes high expectations for pursuing more education, training, and a career after high school along with multiple and varied opportunities for students to explore interests and supports
  - Small personalized communities within schools to address the needs of struggling students
  - A participatory school climate in which youth contribute, along with teachers, staff, peers, and families, to creating a positive and supportive environment where everyone feels a sense of safety and belonging

- Inclusive school practices that ensure everyone has equal access to social and academic opportunities and learns in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supports

❖ **Access to effective educators, demonstrated by the following attributes and practices:**

- Educators have appropriate qualifications and receive ongoing professional development in various topics (e.g., instruction, curriculum, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support<sup>iv</sup>, trauma-informed practices)
- Educators participate in externships to learn skills and expectations for different career pathways and co-learning opportunities between general education and special education teachers
- Educators' attitudes and behaviors communicate support, respect, high expectations, and positive regard for youth and families
- Educators utilize high quality instructional practices and positive behavioral supports to engage youth in learning, manage the classroom, and create safe and enriching environments
- Educators are responsive to the needs of diverse learners and utilize Universal Design for Learning and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to effectively engage all youth in learning
- Educators have access to and are skilled at using technology and other resources for assessment, personalizing learning, and providing youth with appropriate supports such as assistive technology

❖ **Postsecondary education success strategies, including the following:**

- Assessment of postsecondary readiness and placement based upon multiple measures, during and after in high school
- Comprehensive advising services in high school and at the postsecondary level that are personalized, holistic, and guide youth through sequential coursework and skills attainment necessary to pursue their postsecondary and career goals
- Opportunities for youth to receive comprehensive, integrated supports (e.g. tutoring, success skills, peer support, financial assistance, performance-based incentives for meeting specific benchmarks) in postsecondary education
- Opportunities to simultaneously take a developmental and a credit-bearing course in the same subject if developmental education at the postsecondary level is deemed necessary

**Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:**

- Individualized transition planning and services aligned and coordinated with the youth's individualized learning plan (e.g. career and academic plan) and work-based learning activities

- Opportunities to lead one's own individualized education program (IEP) process and have a voice in planning transition services that drive their personal instruction and facilitate achievement of personal post-school goals
- Opportunities to learn about and utilize necessary accommodations relevant to their needs which they can request and control in educational settings, including assessment accommodations and assistive technology
- Access to specific and individualized learning accommodations while they are in high school and postsecondary education, including assistive technology as needed
- Access to effective teachers and transition staff with appropriate qualifications for working with youth with disabilities

## GUIDEPOST AREA 2

### CAREER PREPARATION & WORK-BASED LEARNING

#### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- Awareness of and access to career pathways that are designed in response to current labor market information and provide a clear sequence of educational coursework aligned with industry-recognized credentials
- Accessible career assessment and exploration strategies and tools, including career information systems that ensure accessibility for diverse users
- Work-based learning (e.g., internships, short-term or summer employment, apprenticeships, fellowships, and entrepreneurship), service learning, and volunteering experiences during secondary school and beyond
- Opportunities to participate in career and technical education programs, “Linked Learning” programs, and other opportunities that apply academics in real-world career and life contexts
- Training in social skills, self-regulation, and other employability skills

#### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Access to the necessary accommodations and supports that facilitate full participation in career pathway programs, including in postsecondary education and training
- Accessible technology in employment training settings and the workplace
- Training on rights to disability-related accommodations in different settings
- Training on disability disclosure decision-making including benefits and limitations of disclosure
- Training on how to approach employers about accommodation requests
- Access to assistance for finding and performing work in competitive, integrated employment settings (e.g. supported employment, customized employment, other forms of assistance tailored to individual’s needs)

## GUIDEPOST AREA 3

### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

#### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- Opportunities to participate in challenging activities that promote positive growth and development in a supportive and fully-inclusive environment, including various activities that take place during and after school as well as in the summer
- Formal and informal mentoring experiences that cultivate developmental relationships with adults and peers
- Opportunities to develop agency, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills, enabling youth to self-direct their own lives
- Formal and informal experiences that develop initiative and leadership skills, including sports and other extracurricular activities, civic engagement, volunteering, and service learning
- Opportunities to build interpersonal skills, including training in social skills and self-regulation
- Opportunities to build social capital and connect to positive peers and adult role models
- Opportunities to develop critical thinking skills

#### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Accessible programs and environments for participating in youth development and leadership opportunities that ensure those with disabilities are fully included and receive appropriate accommodations and supports
- Mentors and role models (e.g., employers, peers) who have disabilities in addition to mentors and role models without disabilities
- Opportunities to learn about disability-related rights and responsibilities, disability history and culture, and public policies relevant to individuals with disabilities

## GUIDEPOST AREA 4

### CONNECTING ACTIVITIES

#### Services, supports, & opportunities all youth need:

- Health care services, including:
  - Health promotion and sexual and reproductive services
  - Mental health and behavioral services
  - Assistance with additional costs that are associated with accessing health and mental health care (e.g. transportation)
  - Health insurance that covers health care and mental health care costs
  - Physical health and mental health education
  - Information and support for planning and preparing for transition from pediatric to adult health and mental health systems
- Assistance with securing basic needs, including:
  - safe, stable, and affordable housing that is accessible for self and/or family
  - accessible transportation, including subsidized public transportation or transit vouchers
  - nutritious and affordable food
- Training or coaching in various life skills such as conflict resolution, time management, and healthy relationships
- Financial literacy education and conversations with family members on financial literacy topics
- Opportunities to participate in accessible and universally designed recreational and leisure activities
- Access to other services appropriate to one's needs, such as:
  - Maternal and child health care services for youth who are parents
  - Quality childcare information and assistance with applying for publicly or privately funded childcare subsidies and other forms of childcare assistance
  - Parenting skills education and other forms of support for parenting role and responsibilities
  - English language instruction, interpretation, and translation services
  - Reintegration and employment assistance for veterans
  - Information and support relevant to immigrant status and/or family circumstances (e.g. legal challenges, coping with trauma, living in poverty, language barriers)
  - Information about legal rights and access to legal and advocacy services
  - Services and support for youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

### Additional services, supports, & opportunities youth with disabilities may need:

- Connections to adult service agencies for assistance with independent living, employment support services, and other post-school support services
- Connection to parent training and information centers and community parent resource centers
- Opportunity for peer-to-peer support with individuals with same disability
- Assistive technology and training on how to use it
- Benefits counseling
- Personal assistance services and other long-term services and supports
- Travel training
- Training in functional life skills such as explicit instruction on leisure, self-care, social skills, and other adaptive behavior skills
- Vocational rehabilitation counseling for individuals with disabilities, including veterans
- Supported decision-making and other alternatives to guardianship

### Cross-cutting practices critical to implementing the connecting activities include:

- Interagency collaboration that increases communication and coordination among service providers and systems when they are simultaneously serving common youth
- Individualized or person-centered planning that values youth input
- Consistent, high quality one-on-one support of the youth by trusted youth service professionals

## GUIDEPOST AREA 5

### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

**All youth need the support and engagement of their families throughout transition to adulthood. To equip youth for a smooth transition, families need to be knowledgeable about the many aspects of transition. They also need to be engaged in various ways with their youth and in partnership with service providers in schools and community organizations to support and assist youth in defining and pursuing their goals. Likewise, service providers need to partner with and assist families in multiple ways in order to support their efficacy and enable them to meet their needs.**

#### What families need to know and do:

- Communicate and model high expectations for what youth can do and achieve in employment, training, education, and in living a life of their choosing
- Support youth's learning by playing an active role in their education including encouraging achievement, monitoring learning and progress, and collaborating with school staff and education leaders
- Understand and teach youth at an early age about requirements and expectations for high school graduation and entry into postsecondary education and employment
- Develop knowledge of relevant policies, rights, and responsibilities that apply as youth reach the age of adulthood (e.g. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, how rights under ADA and 504 differ from rights under IDEA for youth with disabilities)
- Assist youth in understanding how their disability may affect their education, employment, and daily living options
- Build skills in youth and support their ability to advocate for appropriate academic curriculum, career development opportunities, transition services, and social services that meet the strengths, preferences, interests, and needs of the youth
- Shift gradually from youth's advocate to youth's coach as young person increases autonomy
- Participate with the youth in youth-led individualized planning and transition meetings at school (e.g. ILPs, IEPs) and social service settings
- Assist youth in exploring interests and options and accessing available resources and supports for postsecondary education, competitive integrated employment, and community living
- Support youth in identifying and participating in career preparation, work-based learning experiences, and paid employment opportunities
- Assist youth in developing employability skills and other competencies essential for college and career readiness using everyday situations

- Assist youth in developing self-determination skills using everyday situations and encourage youth autonomy, using supported decision-making as appropriate
- Assist youth with voicing their preferences and building and using social capital to achieve personal goals
- Develop the family's own social capital and knowledge to navigate the transition out of high school to ensure connections to people and resources needed for furthering youth and family's goals
- Assist youth with developing financial capability

## Services, Supports, & Opportunities for Families

### Professionals, educators, and service providers need to:

- Communicate and model high expectations for what youth can do and achieve in employment, training, education, and in living a life of their choosing
- Work in partnership with families to promote youth's academic learning, career development, health, access to community supports, and transition to adult life
- Engage families and youth as partners in transition assessment, individualized planning, and transition meetings, soliciting their input and encouraging their advocacy for individual needs and goals
- Include all families of youth, including culturally and linguistically diverse families, in the process of collaboration, planning, and implementation of secondary transition-related activities
- Strengthen and practice cultural competency, recognizing diversity in language, socioeconomics, work schedules, family structure, values, views, and other cultural components
- Recognize and respect that family environments differ in how they promote advocacy and self-determination and be sensitive to cultural and gender differences during youth transition
- Assist families with accessing and learning how to use technology that enhances communications and engagement with the school, educators, and other professionals
- Coordinate and integrate services across multiple service systems to prevent barriers to access and improve service navigation for families and youth
- Provide families with:
  - Training and follow-up support on communicating and modeling high expectations for youth; assisting youth with developing autonomy, self-determination skills, and relationships; and using supported decision-making as appropriate
  - Training and information on financial capability and how to assist youth with developing financial competencies
  - Opportunities to connect to people, institutions, and resources relevant to the youth and family's goals and needs
  - Peer-led programs/support networks for families and youth

- Community-based wrap-around programs as needed
- Benefits planning assistance, including long-term services and supports
- Information on:
  - How to access opportunities, resources, and supports for postsecondary education, competitive employment, transition to adult healthcare, and community living
  - Evidence-based and promising practices that support youth's success in secondary academic courses, postsecondary settings, transition to adult healthcare, and employment
  - Relevant policies, rights, and responsibilities that apply as youth reach the age of adulthood (e.g. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, how rights under ADA and 504 differ from right under IDEA for youth with disabilities)
  - Health care transition, supported decision-making, and other alternatives to guardianship and long-term services and supports

## RELATED RESOURCES FROM NCWD/YOUTH

### Literature Review

Guideposts for Success 2.0 Research Base Paper, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/guideposts-2-0-research-base-paper/>

### School-based Preparatory Experiences

Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans throughout the Lifespan, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Promoting-Quality-ILPs-Throughout-the-Lifespan-WEB.pdf>

Personal Competencies for College & Career Success: What Colleges Can Do, [http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Personal-Competencies-for-College-and-Career-Success\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Personal-Competencies-for-College-and-Career-Success_0.pdf)

Learning How to Learn: Successful Transition Models for Educators Working with Youth with Learning Disabilities, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/learning-how-to-learn-successful-transition-models-for-educators-working-with-youth-with-learning-disabilities-2/>

### Career Preparation & Work-based Learning

Designing Statewide Career Development Strategies & Programs, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/designing-statewide-career-development-strategies-programs/>

By Youth, For Youth: Employment, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/by-youth-for-youth-employment/>

Engaging Youth in Work Experiences, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/engaging-youth-in-work-experiences-an-innovative-strategies-practice-brief/>

Career Exploration in Action, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/innovativestrategy/career-exploration-in-action-an-innovative-strategies-practice-brief/>

### Youth Development & Leadership

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure>

Paving the Way to Work: A Guide to Career-Focused Mentoring, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/paving-the-way-to-work>

Making My Way through College: A Guide for Students with Disabilities, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/PostsecondaryGuide>

### Connecting Activities

Supporting Student Success through Connecting Activities: An Info Brief Series for Community Colleges, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/Connecting-Activities>

Transition's Missing Link: Healthcare Transition, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/transitions-missing-link-health-care-transition/>

Taking Charge of Your Money: An Introduction to Financial Capability (Brief for Youth), <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/FinancialCapabilityYouth>

## Family Engagement

The Family Guideposts: Engaging in Youth Transitions, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/the-family-guideposts/>

Understanding the New Vision for Career Development: The Role of Family, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/understanding-the-new-vision-for-career-development-the-role-of-family/>

Helping Youth Develop Soft Skills for Job Success: Tips for Parents and Families, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/helping-youth-develop-soft-skills-for-job-success-tips-for-parents-and-families/>

Supporting Families of Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education, <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/supporting-families-of-students-with-disabilities-in-postsecondary-education/>

For more related resources, visit [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth). Preparation of this item was 100% funded by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy under Cooperative Agreement No. OD-23804-12-75-4-11 (\$6,585,661.56). This document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Individuals may produce any part of this document. Please credit the source and support of federal funds.

This publication was written by Mindy Larson and Alicia Bolton at the Institute for Educational Leadership in collaboration with Taryn Williams at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. NCWD/Youth wishes to thank the following subject matter experts who provided feedback on the initial draft: Myriam Alizo, Rhonda Basha, Michelle Boyd, Melissa Carney, Ellen Cushing, Jennifer Kemp, Joan Kester, Nancy Korloff, Jennifer Brown Lerner, Deborah Leuchovius, Rich Luecking, Marie Mann, Mary Morningstar, Sarah Oberlander, Fernando Olivarez, Jose Rosales Ovalles, Laura Owens, Ebony Rempson, Sean Roy, Erin Seiler, Brandon Stratford, Pauline Thompson, Johan Uvin, Corinne Weidenthal, and Joan Wills. NCWD/Youth also thanks the following staff and consultants who contributed significant time and knowledge in development of the research base paper that informed this publication: Rhonda Basha, David Brewer, Heidi Booth, Janet Brown, Nathan Cunningham, Thomas Golden, Chonlada Jarukitisakul, Mindy Larson, Kirk Lew, Helen Malone, Kathryn Nichols, Chris Opsal, Kate O'Sullivan, Sarah Pitcock, Matthew Saleh, Jessica Queener, Scott Robertson, Donna Walker-James, and Joan Wills.

NCWD/Youth is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. NCWD/Youth assists state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. To obtain this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email [contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info).

This publication is part of a series of publications prepared by the NCWD/Youth. All publications are available on the NCWD/Youth website at [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info).

National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth (NCWD-Youth)

c/o Institute for Educational Leadership, 4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20008

## END NOTES

---

<sup>i</sup> Social capital refers to person-to-person connection such as professional contacts, durable networks, employment leads, and social relationships (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2013,

[https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/employment\\_research\\_report.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/employment_research_report.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Universally designed refers to “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” (Center for Universal Design, 2008,

[https://projects.ncsu.edu/design/cud/about\\_ud/about\\_ud.htm](https://projects.ncsu.edu/design/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm))

<sup>iii</sup> Wrap-around refers to “comprehensive, holistic, youth and family-driven way of responding when children or youth experience serious mental health or behavioral challenges” (National Wraparound Initiative, 2019, <https://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-basics/>).

<sup>iv</sup> Multi-Tiered Systems of Support refers to “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions” (Batsche et al., 2005, cited by Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center, <https://www.pbis.org/school/mtss>).