School Based Occupational Therapy and Transition Services: A Review

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Learning Objectives

• Define transition services and transition plans
• Understand occupational therapy’s role in transition services
• Possible evaluation options to complete in the school system
• How to implement OT support with these services
• Barriers and Limitations to Success
• Implications for occupational therapy practice
Transition Services and Plans

- Designed to Facilitate the student’s movement from school to post-school activities
- Include instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment
- Best Practices are described as those that lead to successful outcomes & are consistent with special education mandates
- Goals must be derived from age appropriate transition evaluations related to training, education, employment and independent living skills
- IDEA states that services should be in place by 16 years of age, or earlier if deemed appropriate. VDOE states that services should be in place within the IEP where the student turns 14.

(Kardos, White, 2006)
School-Based Occupational Therapy

• “Support academic achievement and social participation by promoting occupation within all school routines, including recess, classroom and cafeteria time.”

• “They help children fulfill their role as students and prepare them for college, career, and community integration. They utilize prevention, promotion, and intervention strategies for mental and physical health, and well-being.” AOTA, 2018

• School-based practice has traditionally been heavily focused on early intervention and the development of sensorimotor skills, with many school-based therapist focusing on younger children and handwriting

(Summers, 2015; Kardos, White, 2005)
School-Based Occupational Therapy

- School-based therapists spend little time involved in transition-related activities.

- Inge (1995) conducted a national survey (unpublished dissertation) of occupational therapists (N=755) working with students with severe disabilities who were of transition age.

  - 38% of respondents reported working with students 14-22 years of age.
  - 60% responded that they never assessed students in their homes.
  - 40% responded that they never assessed students in the community.
  - 67% responded that occupational therapy was not identified in students’ transition plans as a needed service to promote functional outcomes.

(Kardos, White, 2005; 2006)
School administrators refused to increase OT role for financial reasons

Parents did not demand OT for older students

Therapists thought special education teachers were handling it

One does not simply explain what occupational therapy is

School administrators did not value occupational therapy’s role in transition services

(Kardos, White, 2005)
School-Based Occupational Therapy

• A study completed by Kardos and White in 2005 investigated school-based occupational therapists’ knowledge of transition planning, degree of participation in assessment and intervention of students requiring transition services.

• Therapists’ agreement to knowing the terms associated with transition services ranged from 50% to 88% and only 47% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the overall intent of transition services.

• Fewer than half of therapists surveyed, reported that they were conducting assessments that contributed information to the development of transition goals/objectives across the four transition areas (16% residential outcomes, 30% post-secondary employment, 36% community participation, 45% post secondary education). Assessments used, were primarily reported as being informal.

• Activities of daily living were the areas of occupation most frequently assessed and treated across the four transition areas.

(Kardos, White, 2005)
Now What???

How do we become a more integral part of transition services?
Evaluations

• **The Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale Form (ESTR-R)**
  - Criterion-referenced, nonstandardized transition rating scale designed for learners with mild to moderate disabilities, from 14 to 21 years of age
  - Contains 136 statements relative to a student’s performance in each of these categories and they are scored according to the student’s performance (consistently and independently, performs with assistance, does not perform at all)
    - Jobs and job training
    - Recreation and leisure
    - Home living
    - Community participation
    - Post-secondary training and learning opportunities

(Kardos, White, 2006)
Evaluations

The Transition Behavior Scale, 2nd Edition (TBS-2)

- Standardized survey of 62 items using a Likert Scale (0-5) as a direct observation screening measure of behavioral characteristics most predictive of behavior in society and employment.

- Areas covered include “Work Related,” (responsibility, productivity and dependability) “Interpersonal Relationships,” (cooperation, communication, and behavioral stability) and “Social/Community Expectations” (compliance, flexibility, and self-control).

- Can be completed by school personnel, student or parents.

The Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS)

- Standardized criterion-referenced assessment that can only be administered by an occupational therapist who is calibrated to administer it.

- Measures a person’s ability to complete ADL and IADLs.

- 83 personal and domestic ADL tasks from simple to complex, appropriate for ages 3 to 99.

- Tasks include home maintenance, meal prep and laundry management.

(Kardos, White, 2006)
In the case study, all three assessments were completed, and the results were utilized to make a unique and valuable contribution to the student’s transition plan. Baseline knowledge and experience in transition areas were revealed which assisted in the creation of goals to address transition.

Questionnaire format of ESTR-III and the TBS-2 may contain language that is subjective or poses a language barrier.

Some items in questionnaires may be scored differently by different people.

Standard scores obtained through the use of the TBS-2 are limited through the age of 18 years old, use thereafter should not be scored.
School-Based Occupational Therapy & Transition Services/Planning

• Fit4Work: Fitness for Vocational Tasks for Youth with Disabilities by Connie C. Johnson PT, DScPT, PCS

• Top 5 Interventions include: PE Support: Collaboration, Education, Program Development, Consultation; School Based Program Support; Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines; Job Site Observation; Work on Squat

• Based on 3 key concepts: decreased physical fitness is a significant health problem in all people and especially youth with disabilities; models of inclusive work settings are replacing sheltered work settings therefore increased physical demands in work settings and competitive work; stakeholders supporting vocational training needs of high school students should develop programs which build capacity in their students by maximizing fitness levels and physical attributes of students

(Johnson, 2017)
School-Based Occupational Therapy & Transition Services/Planning

- Contextual and Collaborative Services
  - Therapist are able to model the accommodations and interventions
  - More likely to have carryover into workplace/home setting
  - Learned skills are used more frequently
  - Shared decision making for planning goals and measuring progress
  - Greater teacher AND PARENT satisfaction
  - Stakeholders have an improved understanding of OT’s role; seeing the value of OT more clearly!

(LeCompte, Laverdure, 2017)
AOTA’s provided “Sample of Occupational Therapy Activities Provided Under Transition Planning and Services” includes:

- Promote student development of self-advocacy skills
- Use prevocational modalities in service provision
- Enhance development of functional skills
- Conduct activity analysis for job requirements and internships in both school programs and community-based partnerships
- Provide job coaching
- Participate in curriculum development and instruction for life skills or transition classes
- Conduct assessments that support transition and life skills to promote independent living
- Develop portfolios of skills, abilities, interest areas, aptitude, and necessary transition information
- Measure progress and establish goals collaboratively with the team that have functional life skill outcomes
- Collaborate with community agencies
- Facilitate development of social communication skills and peer relationships
- Recommend accommodations to physical and social environment to enhance participation and accessibility
- Provide expertise in AT to promote student access, participation and progress

(AOTA, 2008)
Barriers and Limitations

• In the 2005 Kardos and White survey, the top perceived barriers to participation in secondary transition services were: Transition services are primarily handled by another professional (74%), Lack of understanding of the role of occupational therapy on the part of transition team members (47%), and Lack of funds on the part of the school system to utilize occupational therapy services to the maximum potential (44%)

• Minimal evaluation options with specific parameters as well as subjective language in questionnaires

• Lack of parent participation and/or knowledge

• Lack of qualified personnel

• Inconsistent transition practices

• Transportation

• Role of OT is NOT understood

(Kardos, White, 2005; Kardos, White 2006; Spencer, Emery, Schneck, 2003)
Implications for School-Based Occupational Therapy

• Occupational Therapy practitioners can help student develop important occupational performance skills through instruction, accommodations, and other supports and strategies

• Practitioners must advocate for and promote the role of occupational therapy to help secondary and postsecondary students to develop adaptive behavior, self-advocacy, self-determination, employment skills and life skills

• Promote the scope of occupational therapy in school-based setting to move away from a “motor therapist” mind set and increase services across age ranges

(Berg, Jirikowic, Haerling, MacDonald, 2017)
Real Life Application

• Virginia Department Of Education
  • http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/
  • http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/resources.shtml
  • http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/organizations.shtml

• Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services: DRS School to Work Transition

• The College and Career Academy at Pruden (CCAP): “The mission of The College & Career Academy at Pruden is to provide students with career opportunities designed to promote personal and professional development, life-long learning experiences and enhanced quality of life via career and technical instruction for preparation and integration into the global economic community.”

• Four students on caseload, altered goals to transition based.
ANY QUESTIONS?
References


