

Redefining Social Skills: The Move to the Adult World

**Transition to Higher Education
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Why Social Skills?

- Transfer to a variety of work and community settings
- Establish and maintain relationships
- Communicate at home, work, and in the community
- Feel more satisfied with life
- Positive perception of self

Why Now?

- Develop skills for postsecondary education
- Develop “soft skills” for employment
- Create confidence and competence in a variety of setting



The Transition IEP

- The transition IEP provides an opportunity to plan for effective social skills:
 - The student is an active participant of the transition IEP team
 - The team provides discussion on interest, goals, existing strengths and identified needs
 - Goals written based on documented need to strengthen existing social skills, develop new skills, and provide opportunities to practice skills

In the Post-Secondary Setting

- Ability to navigate
- communication various social settings
- Navigate in a more independent setting
- Problem solve in the setting

In the Post Secondary Setting

- Identify services available and practice advocating for self
- Recognize boundaries and have a safety plan
- Have a plan for managing materials and money



Charting the Course

- Individual Development Strategies
 - Self-determination
 - Self-awareness
 - Goal setting
 - Self-advocacy
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Interpersonal relationships
 - Problem solving
 - Self-management
 - Ethics and integrity
 - Customer service
- (Timmons, Wills, Kemp, Basha, & Mooney, 2010)

The Guideposts for Success

- The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD/Y, 2011)
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Decision-making skills
- Lifelong learning skills



Helping with Communication Skills

- Practice skills using a cell phone or flip camera
- Word of the Day
(<http://dictionary.reference.com/wordwordoftheday>)
- Mentoring to support individual
- Participation in activities
- Discuss communication/environment fit
- Five Point Scale
- Practice school or work related phrases

(National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability ,2010)

Helping with Interpersonal Skills

- Encourage practice through volunteering
- Play games and participate in sports
- Create environments for practice at home and in the community
- Start a discussion about differences
- Teach skills such as problem solving

Helping with Decision Making Skills

- Build planning through use of agendas or list of key task
- Practice goal setting skills
- Identify decision maker helpers
- Practice in real life settings



Helping with Life Long Learning Skills

- Transition classes
- Feedback, demonstration, reflection
- Opportunities for practice
- Real life experiences
- Technology with planning and practice



Challenges

- Social skills cannot be taught in isolation from other skills
- A change in the conditions of the interaction may require a change of response

Five Practical Strategies

- Prepare for social events through priming
- Teach assumed or expected knowledge using hidden curriculum
- Teach social problem-solving
- Teach self-advocacy and awareness
- Teach self-regulation

Community and Family Responses

- Learn about community members
- Practice small talk
- Provide unstructured time with peers
- Encourage journal writing/list making
- Provide opportunities to participate in activities
- Offer feedback
- Show interest and respect for interaction
- Make a point of connecting and providing feedback

Community and Family Responses

- Provide information and resources
- Participate in side-by-side coaching
- Offer community members cues and responses
- Create a comfort zone

Effective Social Skills

- Socially relevant
- Usable in a variety of situations
- Self-reinforcing
- Maintained over time (Hansen, Nagel, & Meyer, 1998)



References and Resources

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Contact Information

Institute on Community Integration

University of Minnesota

<http://ici.umn.edu/>

<http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/241/>

Sharon Mulé

(612) 626-0335

ssmule@umn.edu