

Research and Standards

An educator's ultimate goal is for his or her students to be successful after they leave the formal school setting. However, over the past 25 years, researchers have determined that "young adults with disabilities are often unemployed, isolated, and in trouble with the criminal justice system. Thus, schooling has failed many of our students" (Greenawalt and McAfee, 2001).

Additional research indicates that "Studies examining the post-school results of students with disabilities (such as post-secondary education, employment, living arrangements, mobility and leisure) have found that a large proportion of these students do not go on for further training. In addition, they do not receive needed post-school supports and services, and as adults are not as successful when compared to the general population. These findings have led to the conclusion that in order to improve post-school results of these students, the student's educational program can no longer be provided in isolation from the student's community, living, working and social environments" (Storms, O'Leary and Williams, 2000).

In response to such research, U.S. legislators passed the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 10 1-476) and the 1997 Amendments (P.L.105-17), with educators given the responsibility to implement this legislation. Even though IDEA 1997 provides specifics about what should be considered as an Individual Education Plan for 14- and 16-year-old students, confusion and uncertainty as to how to implement the law remains among educators.

Building Your Future was developed in response to and to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This program acknowledges the research citing devastating consequences for students with disabilities if they do not have a coordinated set of transition activities. Therefore, *Building Your Future* provides a complete transition curriculum to encourage students to think about their goals for life after high school, develop a long-range plan, and gain the knowledge and skills needed to achieve their post-school goals.

James K. McAfee and Christopher Greenawalt, "IDEA, the Courts, and the Law of Transition," *Preventing School Failure*, Volume 45, No. 3, Spring 2001, pp. 102-107.

Jane Storms, Ed O'Leary, and Jane Williams, "Western Regional Resource Center Transition Requirements: A Guide for States, Districts, Schools, Universities and Families," National Transition Network Institution on Community Integration, May 2000.