

# EFFECTIVENESS OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING AND TRANSITION PLANNING ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

By Jennifer Law

and

Ivonne Montgomery

OT Knowledge Broker Presentation

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**BRIEF EVIDENCE-  
INFORMED ASSESSMENT  
OF THE RESEARCH  
(BEAR)**



## BEAR Rapid Clinical Query Worksheet

The Brief Evidence-Informed Assessment of the Research (BEAR\*) process guides you in quickly integrating evidence into clinical decisions by:

1. Identifying and quickly answering clinical questions that arise in your daily practice
2. Reflecting on the clinical applicability of those answers

Note: A BEAR should take less than an hour to complete.

**Name:** Ivonne and Jennifer

**Program/Discipline:** OT School Therapy

**Date:** April 18, 2016

**Clinical Question:** Effectiveness of Life Skills Training and Transition Planning on students with Disabilities



**Sources of Evidence to Search:**

☐ [TRIP Database](#)

☐ [Rehab Reference Center](#)

☐ [PubMed Clinical Queries](#)

☐ [McMaster Plus/Rehab+](#)

☐ [SUMSearch](#)

☐ Discipline-specific synopsis database (e.g. [PEDro](#), [OTSeeker](#), [SpeechBITE](#), [PsycBITE](#)): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ [Diagnostic-specific source:](#) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ [Primary lit database\(s\):](#) [PubMed](#), [ERIC](#), [CINAHL](#) and

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of resources (e.g. guidelines, articles, etc.) reviewed:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <a href="#">Best Evidence</a><br>(Top 3) | Type of Evidence<br>( <a href="#">Pyramid Level</a> ) | <a href="#">Rapid Appraisal</a><br>(include <a href="#">clinical applicability</a> ) |                   | <a href="#">Key Message(s) for Action</a>   |
|--|---|--|-------------------|---|
|  |   | Strengths  | Weaknesses        |   |
| Kingsnorth, S., Healy, H., &             | S3 (Systematic Review)                                | - Research question and  | - This systematic | Focused programs may have short term impact |
| Cobb, B., & Alwe                         | S3 (Systematic Review) (Mixed)                        | - Research question and  | This systematic   | Some evidence that student focused planning |
|  |   |  |                   |   |

\*Optional resources for Rapid Appraisal: [Step 3 Flowchart](#) & [Clinical Applicability Form](#)

**Clinical bottom line:**

Research suggests that targeted intervention and student focused planning is correlated with short term improvements in life skills and transition related outcomes, however more research is needed. If life skill intervention is prescribed, careful evaluation and monitoring should be put into place. Transition focused

**Based on these findings and on [current practice](#), what degree of change is required?**

☐ Significant

☐ Moderate

☐ Minimal

☐ None

☒ Unsure

**Recommended actions for [practice change](#) (if warranted):**

- Share findings with School Aged Therapy Interest Group and OTs at Sunny Hill.
- Ideally an survey or environmental scan of current school based practice related to life skills and transition programs by educators and school staff including OTs is recommended. This would inform practice change.

# CLINICAL QUESTION

- What is the Effectiveness of Life Skills Training and Transition Planning on Students with Disabilities?

# DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS

- The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life.  
(Gillespie et al., WHO, 2003)
- These include: problem solving, decision making, goal setting, critical thinking, communication skills, assertiveness, self awareness and skills for coping with stress.

# DEFINITION OF TRANSITION

- Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community ( Cobb & Alwell, 2009)
- These roles include employment, participating in postsecondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships
- Ideally transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult service agencies, and natural supports within the community

# SEARCH

## SEARCH SOURCES:

- PubMed
- ERIC
- CINAHL
- Google Scholar

## SEARCH TERMS:

life skills intervention; adolescents; youth; disabilities;  
transition planning

# BEST EVIDENCE

## BEST EVIDENCE - TOP 2

## TYPE OF EVIDENCE

Kingsnorth, 2007

S3 Systematic Review

Cobb & Alwell, 2009

S3 Systematic Review  
(mixed method)



# KINGSNORTH

## Purposes

1. To determine the effectiveness of life skill programs on independent functioning for adolescents with physical disabilities in preparation for adulthood
2. To summarize the current empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of programs that target life skill development and encourage independence among youth and young adults with physical disabilities

# KINGSNORTH

## Population

Youth and young adults (aged 12-21) with primary diagnosis of physical abilities e.g. visual impairments, chronic physical or cognitive disabilities, chronic illness, craniofacial disfigurements

# RAPID APPRAISAL - KINGSNORTH

## Strengths

- Comprehensive literature search was preformed (1985-2006)
- AMSTAR 8/11- High Quality
- Only included studies that had a comparison group and targeted life skills. Only 6 met criteria
- Used empirical research designs in evaluation of life skills program.
- 5/6 studies reported significant short term improvements in targeted life skills

# RAPID APPRAISAL - KINGSNORTH

## Weaknesses

- Only 2/6 studies were randomized controlled design
- A range of outcome measures used: not standardized and relied on self report
- Studies with small sample size (n=10-23)
- Only 2 studies included follow-up
- Not able to conclude re: long term effectiveness of interventions

# KEY MESSAGES FOR ACTION - KINGSNORTH

Focused programs may have a short term impact on the life skills for youth and young adults with disabilities

# COBB & ALWELL

## Purpose:

- To examine the relationship between transition planning/coordinating interventions and transition outcomes for secondary-aged youth with disabilities
- To provide implications for practice as well as effective interventions associated with student-focused planning and student development that can be implemented in secondary educational environments

# COBB & ALWELL

## Population:

- Youth and young adults (aged 13-25) with a wide variety of disabilities were reviewed including Acquired Brain Injury; Behavior Disorders; Cerebral Palsy; Emotional Disturbance; Learning Disabilities; Mental Retardation & Traumatic Brain Injury

## RAPID APPRAISAL-COBB & ALWELL

### Strengths

AMSTAR 8/11- High Quality

- Research question and inclusion criteria were established a priori
- There was duplicate study selection and data extraction
- A comprehensive literature search was performed (1984 to 2004)
- Characteristics of studies were provided and the scientific quality of included studies was assessed and documented, and used appropriately in formulating conclusions
- A range of skills was examined all relevant to school-based OT
- Qualitative findings were included and very relevant



## RAPID APPRAISAL-COBB & ALWELL

### Weaknesses

- Most of the included studies were of a weak study design (one group pre-post designs). Therefore conclusions regarding program effectiveness are limited
- Heterogeneity of populations & interventions.
- Measures used were NOT clearly described nor listed.
- Did not evaluate long terms effects
- No conflict of interest stated

## KEY MESSAGES FOR ACTION- COBB & ALWELL

- Some evidence that student focused planning and student-development interventions improve the transition related outcomes for youth with disabilities
- More research is needed including longer term studies

## CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE

- Research suggests that targeted student-development intervention and student-focused planning is correlated with short term improvements in life skills and transition related outcomes, however more research is needed.
- If life skill intervention is prescribed, careful evaluation and monitoring should be put into place.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION PRACTICE

- Personalized student-focused programming and holistic *transition-focused education* for all youth with disabilities
- Transition planning should begin no later than age 14
- Student involvement in transition planning is essential (in meetings and through use of peer advocates, friends and mentors) - students should be encouraged, to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for such planning
- Collaborative service delivery and transition supports
- Family Involvement

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION PRACTICE

- Well-designed program structure with adequate time to implement
- More training for school staff is needed to increase expertise and use of evidence -based systematic instruction across all schools
- Vocational training should include work experience in real jobs with a focus on socialization with co-workers and access to mentors to help adolescents maintain their jobs

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-BASED OT PRACTICE

- Survey or environmental scan of current school based practice related to life skills and transition programs to inform practice and need for change
  - Educators and school staff
  - OTs and PTs
  - Families

## SD43 PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- Preliminary Findings:
  - **SD43 Programs and Resources:**
    - **Transition Facilitators:** Christine DeLancey and Cindy Lee
      - Available to work with teachers
      - Run Yearly Workshops:
        - Step Up to Secondary
        - Making the Most of Secondary

## SD43 PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- **Volunteer Work Experiences:**
  - 1-2; ½ year each occur in the school district
- Plus, have worked successfully with **WorkBC Training Innovations.**
  - Contact Information: AVIA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam Work BC Agency)



## SD43 PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- **Post Secondary Transition Programming:**
  - SD43 also works closely with Douglas College – Transition Program
    - 1/2 year at school and 1/2 year at Douglas College
    - Examples of training include: cashier training, forklift operator etc.
    - Placed in work placements such as a Pet Store, A & W or RONA

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TRANSITION SERVICES

- **Research/ Evidence re Transitions:**

<https://www.canchild.ca/en/research-in-practice/transitions>

- **The KIT: Keeping it Together <sup>TM</sup>**

<http://www.canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/kityouthkit.asp>

- **Cross Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs (2009)**

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/pdf/transition\\_planning\\_protocol.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/transition_planning_protocol.pdf)

- **Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs A Resource Guide for Schools (2001)**

[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe\\_clt\\_resource\\_rb0144.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TRANSITION SERVICES

- **Community Living BC (CLBC)**

<http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/about-us/>

- **ON TRAC (Transitioning Responsibly to Adult Care)**

<http://ontracbc.ca/>

- **WorkBC**

<https://www.workbc.ca/Resources-for/People-with-Disabilities/People-with-Disabilities.aspx>

- **SFSCL Transition to Adulthood: Planning Information and Resources**

<https://www.sd43.bc.ca/District/Departments/LearningServices/Documents/Transition%20to%20Adulthood%20handbk%20Dec10.pdf>

- **SD38 Transition Binder:**

<http://www.sd38.bc.ca/lsd/documents/transitionbinderNew.pdf>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TRANSITION SERVICES

- **Tri City (Local) Resources:**
  - **Simon Fraser Society for Community Living**
    - Serves the communities of New Westminister, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra.

## REFERENCES

- Cobb, B., & Alwell, M. (2009). Transition planning/coordinating interventions for youth with disabilities: A systematic review. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 70-81.
- Gillespie, A., Jones, J. T., Clarke, D., Bundy, D., & Lee, S. (2003). Skills for health. Skills-based health education including life skills: an important component of a child-friendly/health-promoting school. World Health Organization. Dept. of Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.
- Kingsnorth, S., Healy, H., & Macarthur, C. (2007). Preparing for adulthood: a systematic review of life skill programs for youth with physical disabilities. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(4), 323-332.