Pathways to Inclusion: A Framework for Transitioning Students to the Least Restrictive Environment

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Ädelbrook

- 125 year old organization

- Educational services, residential programs and in-home/community services

- Private non-profit placement

  - Five schools serving students ages 3 to 22

  - Serves children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other behavioral and development challenges

Problem of Practice

The existing placement framework lacks a comprehensive, standardized, and data-informed intake process that fosters cross-disciplinary collaboration to effectively facilitate student transitions from out-of-district placements to the least restrictive environment (LRE), in alignment with best practices in inclusive education.

Vision and Mission

VISION: Every student in our outplacement setting will have a clear, supportive path towards returning to public school or their least restrictive environment (LRE), when appropriate. When returning is not the determined goal, this process then also includes the identification of other supports that can be faded to support future independence.

MISSION: We will design and implement a collaborative, data driven intake process for students that fosters student success in their least restrictive environment (LRE) and with the least restrictive supports.

Goal #1: Build a Collaborative Team for Effective LRE Implementation

- **Objective #1:** Define team roles and responsibilities to support student needs
  - **Activity #1:** Gather team input to inform transition planning and support strategies through survey
    - Surveys provided to parent/guardians, districts and LEAs, current program team members
    - Interest, current practices, barriers, roles needed, recommendations
  - **Activity #2:** Create team roster and roles chart to clarify responsibilities for LRE implementation
- **Objective #2:** Train staff on LRE principles, inclusive practices, and compliance
  - **Activity #1:** Offer ongoing training and resources on LRE principles and inclusive practice

Goal #2: Create a Checklist for LRE Transition Criteria and Support Fading

- **Objective #1:** Choose tools and assessments to Monitor LRE Transition and Support Fading
  - **Activity #1:** Establish clear exit and entry criteria during intake for successful LRE transition
  - **Activity #2:** Identify key student data to track readiness for LRE transition
  - **Activity #3:** Set regular team meetings to review progress and coordinate LRE transitions

Outcomes

▶ **A standardized, collaborative intake and discharge framework** that clearly defines team member roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols.

▶ **Established criteria and benchmarks** for determining when students are ready to transition to their newly determined least restrictive environment (LRE) or have supports faded.

▶ **A comprehensive data tracking system** that monitors student progress, support utilization, and readiness for transition over time.

▶ **A formalized timeline and schedule** for team check-ins and collaborative decision-making to ensure consistent monitoring and adjustment of supports.

Outcomes

- **Increased staff awareness and training** related to LRE principles and data-driven decision-making.

- **Enhanced student outcomes** through more structured and supportive pathways toward reintegration or independence. This includes data to support an increase in student's transitioning back to their district schools.

- **A written, accessible plan** that guides teams and constituents in making informed, coordinated decisions about transitions and support fading.