

Outcomes of Approved Special Education Programs in the Private Sector

Plans for Exiting Students: 2013-2014

Report Number 13, NAPSEC Outcomes Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For over a decade, NAPSEC, a national association of private special education centers, has examined the discharge plans for the students with disabilities enrolled in members' intensely therapeutic special education programs. The organization has supported this task because few studies, including the National Longitudinal Transition Studies (1993, 2004, 2010), ask:

What happens to the students with the most unique/intensive service needs who are not able to be successfully educated in classrooms within the local public school district?

The series of exit studies sponsored by NAPSEC have consistently reported the plans made by students at the time they were discharged from a NAPSEC-member's facility due to transferring, graduating, and/or reaching the legal age limit for receiving educational services. Below are the highlights of the current study, which examined the plans of students who were discharged during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Transfer Students

During the 2013-14 school year, NAPSEC-member schools provided sufficient educational remediation and support within a reasonable time-frame to the students who transferred from their programs to enable these students, upon discharge, to enter or re-enter educational programs within their local public school districts:

- 55% of the transfer students planned to enter or re-enter an educational program within their local public school district.
- 19% of the transfer students planned to enter or re-enter regular education settings, including regular education classrooms, in their home districts.
- 94% of the transfer students were enrolled in the NAPSEC-member program for 5 years or less.

Graduates/Aged-Out Students

During the 2013-14 school year, NAPSEC-member schools provided sufficient instruction, support, and guidance to students making the transition to adulthood to enable these graduate and/or "aged-out" students to make plans, upon discharge, to productively engage, in accordance with their individual capabilities and capacities, in their communities:

- 88% of the graduates/aged-out students left a NAPSEC-member program with plans to enter productive and/or engaged adult roles.
- 45% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a community activity. This included 31% with plans to enroll in post-secondary 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school; and 14% with plans to join the competitive employment workforce or military.
- Almost 22% had plans to enter vocational rehabilitation, including vocational rehabilitation training, supported employment or sheltered employment.
- More than 21% made plans to enter an appropriate adult program in the community, including adult partial care or non-vocational day programs.
- Graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs (97%) were the most likely group to make plans to enroll in postsecondary education, obtain a competitive job, or enlist in the military.
- Graduates/aged-out students from Developmental Disorders programs were the most likely group to plan to participate in vocational rehabilitation (33%) as well as community-based programs (42%).
- 57% of graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, a population often associated with poor outcomes, had plans to enroll in a 4-year college/2-year college (30%), trade/technical school (7%), or to enter the job market or the military (20%).

Conclusion

NAPSEC-member programs continue to educate and support students with disabilities by offering the individualized, intensive special education programs needed to gain access to the curriculum. In partnership with the local public schools, these schools continue to fill a critical role in special education. When the local school district partners with the private special education programs offered by members of NAPSEC, the complex individual needs of the students with disabilities can be met and remediated. Such a partnership reflects a clear vision of IDEA, one in which children with disabilities receive appropriate services along the continuum of special education.