

Licensed Child Care Employment Opportunity Program for Youth with Developmental Disabilities

**ADDPC Integrated Employment Standing Committee
Presentation of Transition Planner Survey Results
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Presentation Agenda

- ▶ **Project Background & Research Objectives**
- ▶ **Participating School Districts & Transition Planners**
- ▶ **Key Insights**
 - Successful Employment Programs
 - Internship/Certification Employment Programs
 - Possible Student Candidates for Certification Program
 - Valued Program Components
 - Perceived Program Barriers & How Best to Address Them
 - Accessing the Program Curriculum
- ▶ **Implementation in Districts**
- ▶ **Recommendations**

Project Background & Research Objective

- ▶ The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Bureau of Child Care Licensing (BCCL) and ADDPC met to discuss the possibility of creating a Licensed Child Care Employment Opportunity Program for youth with developmental disabilities.
- ▶ The Licensed Child Care Employment Opportunity Program would provide youth with developmental disabilities the opportunity to:
 - Gain work experience
 - Develop progressive skills that lead to sustainable, part or full-time employment
 - Possible certification as child care assistant that would be accepted within Arizona and other states
- ▶ Research was needed to determine interest in this type of program among transition planners at Maricopa County high schools.

Methodology

- ▶ PIB worked with ADDPC to design and implement survey of transition planners at Maricopa County school districts, with focus on:
 - Unified school districts with established transition-planning processes for youth with disabilities
 - Districts with enrollments of 10,000 students or more
- ▶ PIB implementation steps included:
 - Pre-testing questionnaire with current director of special education services from Cave Creek Unified School District; discussed recommended revisions with ADDPC.
 - Created and sent e-mail invitations to potential participants; ADDPC team provided recommendations on primary invitees.
 - Reminders sent to those who hadn't yet participated and follow-up calls.
 - Paid honorarium of \$50 to each individual who completed survey.
 - Developed and presented to ADDPC final report on key findings and actionable recommendations and proposed next steps for consideration.

Participating School Districts

- ▶ The 14 identified target districts are listed below. For each district, one or more potential participants were identified. The general preference was for only one participant for each district, and the ADDPC team provided recommendations on the primary invitees. The exception was Gilbert Unified, with two JOBS coordinators invited to participate in the survey, for a total of 15 invitees. The responding districts are shown in blue, with Cave Creek serving as an advisor in the development of the survey.

Cave Creek Unified	Mesa Unified (Mesa Public Schools)
Chandler Unified	Paradise Valley Unified
Deer Valley Unified	Peoria Unified
Dysart Unified	Phoenix Union High School District
Gilbert Unified	Scottsdale Unified
Glendale Union High School District	Tempe Union High School District
Higley Unified	Tolleson Union High School District

Participating School Districts & Transition Planners

- ▶ A total of 9 individuals completed the survey, representing the following 8 districts:
 - Deer Valley Unified – 34,663
 - Gilbert Unified (2 participants) – 38,311
 - Glendale Union – 15,000
 - Peoria Unified – 36,620
 - Phoenix Union – 25,881
 - Scottsdale Unified – 25,762
 - Tempe Union – 13,865
 - Tolleson Union – 9,766
- ▶ Nearly all the participants (7 of 9) had more than 10 years of experience in transition planning for youth with disabilities.
- ▶ In reporting findings from this survey, we have noted the author and/or school district when the information is relevant and will assist ADDPC's efforts in designing and implementing the program—e.g., a response explaining the district's process for implementing this type of program.

Successful Employment Programs

- ▶ Planners identified their most successful transition programs involving employment. Responses included:
 - *WorkBridge* and VR; currently we have a TSW (Transition School to Work) contract with VR – this is new for this year.*
 - *Jobs-In-Industry at Phoenix Union; helping students with IEPs find and keep a job.*
 - *JOBS Program – training in vocational skills; transition to paid positions; students ages 18 to 22.*
 - *RSA referrals.*
 - *Partnership with VR for our 18-21 program; outreach to businesses for development of enclaves and independent work sites.*
 - *Project Search partnering with local businesses and agencies for work skills preparation.*

WorkBridge (Temple School District)



▶ WorkBridge serves more than 20 students among 7 high schools in Tempe Union High School District. Program aims to transition qualified high school juniors and seniors into jobs or service. Through their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), students can work or volunteer in a field they're interested in after graduation, and are then paid through district grants for their work. Student placements have included child care centers, cafes, food banks, school cafeterias, resource and fitness centers, libraries, and boutiques. 8

Successful Employment Programs – Type of Business

- ▶ Planners selected all business/industry types where successful employment programs had been implemented.
- ▶ The table shows in descending order of frequency (multiple selections were permitted).

Business/ Industry	Frequency		Business/ Industry	Frequency	
	#	%		#	%
Food services	9	100	Laundry/drycleaning	4	44
Child care services	7	78	Repair, maintenance	4	44
Arts, entertainment (e.g., movie theaters, museums)	5	56	Data processing / other information services	3	33
Hotels/motels	5	56	Financial services	2	22
Trade (wholesale, retail)	5	56	Transportation	2	22
Education	4	44	Manufacturing	1	11
Personal services (e.g., pet care, housecleaning)	4	44	Other	1	11

Internship/Certification Employment Programs

- ▶ Only 2 districts participating – Tolleson Union and Deer Valley Unified -- had programs involving internship or certification:
 - *The district participates in WEST-MEC, a county-wide career and training opportunity with a variety of options. (Tolleson Union)*
 - *CTE (career & technical education) (Deer Valley Unified)*
- ▶ All respondents expressed interest in a new program with internship or certification component, generally because it would lead to more employment opportunities for youth with developmental disabilities:
 - *I think it would be beneficial to have an internship or certificate program for **early childhood education, caregiver's certificate for the nursing homes.***
 - *Internships and certifications would be exciting – disabled are loyal workers who offer longevity, consistency, and good work ethic to businesses.*
 - *The community currently has a lack of opportunities with true support.*

Possible Student Candidates for Certification Program

- ▶ **7 planners** currently working with students with disabilities who would be possible candidates for the program.
- ▶ **8 planners** anticipate working next year with students who are possible candidates.
- ▶ Planners estimated total number of **possible candidates for the program** as 55 currently and **58 next year**.

District	Current	Next Year	District	Current	Next Year
Deer Valley Unified	20	20	Phoenix Union	4	6
Gilbert Unified	6	7	Scottsdale Unified	10	8
Glendale Union	5	2	Tempe Union	0	Unknown
Peoria Unified	10	10	Tolleson Union	0	5

Most Valued Program Components

- ▶ Planners rated six program components as 1 to 7 -- 1 was *not at all valuable* and 7 was *highly valuable*.
- ▶ Top two were *work experience through internship* and *access to mentor/coach*; least valued was *online curriculum*.

Component	Rating of 6	Rating of 7
Work experience through internship	0	9 (100%)
Access to mentor/coach	0	9 (100%)
Assessment of progress	1 (11%)	7 (78%)
Certification upon program completion	2 (22%)	6 (67%)
Family/caregiver information packet	3 (33%)	3 (33%)
Online curriculum	1 (11%)	0

Perceived Program Barriers

- ▶ Majority of planners (5 of 9) cited **transportation** as potential problem. Other possible barriers:
 - *Hours of internships*
 - *Specific job descriptions*
 - *Safety concerns of parents*
 - *Understanding long-term effects (outcomes) of the program*
 - *Availability of coaching staff*
 - *Academic standards might limit time spent outside the school day*
- ▶ One planner saw the August 2015 launch date as a problem due to various approval levels that would be needed.
- ▶ Also, a number of planners thought that portions of the curriculum being provided online might be a problem.
 - *Many of our students with disabilities have difficulty navigating around a computer.*
 - *Need more information on the level of reading comprehension required, would it interface with Kurzweil?**

* Kurzweil is a developer of literacy technology for people with learning difficulties and those who are blind or visually impaired.

Student Supports for Accessing Program Curriculum

- ▶ Student would be able to access the curriculum both during and after school hours in majority of participating districts.
- ▶ Planners' estimates of time they can personally give to job coaching (soft skills) had wide range, from 40 minutes to 500+ minutes per week – average of 3 hours per week.
- ▶ 5 districts have current relationship with Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) – RSA could provide job coaching.
- ▶ Anticipated needed accommodations to ensure that students with disabilities can interact with curriculum include:
 - *Text-to-speech and voice-to-text capabilities*
 - *6th-8th grade readability, pre-teaching of vocabulary, real-life application of coursework interspersed with the write/read aspect of the curriculum*
 - *Reading, written assignments, more time, test questions explained, hands-on task performance*
 - *Coaching, support staff per IEP*

Implementing the Program in Districts

Authority

- ▶ Planners in 3 of the districts reported they had the authority to implement this kind of program in their district. The others provided the name and/or title of the appropriate individual to contact for follow-up.

Interest & Advocacy

- ▶ The planners rated how interested ***they thought*** their school or district would be; 1 was *not at all interested* and 7 was *extremely interested*. The results are shown in the table.

RATING	1 Not at all interested	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely interested
Frequency of rating	0	0	0	2	2	1	4
District name				Peoria Tempe	Glendale Phoenix	Tolleson	Deer Valley Gilbert Scottsdale

- ▶ Regardless of the rating given to the perceived school or district interest level, **nearly all the planners said they could see themselves as advocates or champions of the program.**



Yes. I believe many of our students are capable of working in early childhood education as well as in nursing homes. These businesses are always looking for employees. Our students are capable of working, they just need some supports in place.

Absolutely – I have participated in talking meetings about this kind of program with state licensure agencies, state developmentally disabled agency representatives, my school district, Special Ed leaders... I think it is a marvelous opportunity for businesses and youth with developmental disabilities.





Yes, as I am always looking to explore new options and pathways for students to access authentic opportunities for career and college readiness.

Implementing the Program in Districts (cont'd)

Process

- ▶ Planners described the various steps needed for approval at their districts, with most estimating a several-month process.
- ▶ One key insight came from Peoria Unified:
 - *If a course, it needs to be developed and the framework would need to be board approved. If it's **programming** that fits with in our already established transition classes, could take as little as 4-6 weeks.*

Suggestions to Facilitate Implementation

- ▶ Clear timeline, specific guidelines regarding roles and responsibilities of the teachers and the child care facilities.
- ▶ Involve parents, caretakers early on; identify and address their concerns.
- ▶ Develop course outline and syllabus; determine staffing, budget, and resource requirements.
- ▶ Resolve any liability concerns for the facility and the district.
- ▶ Address biggest potential barriers – transportation and scheduling.

Implementing the Program in Districts (cont'd)

Suggestions to Facilitate Implementation

- ▶ Roll it out as pilot in 1 or 2 schools or districts.
- ▶ Work with local special education (SPED) and career and technical education (CTE) directors; many high schools already offer early childhood programs, and some students with disabilities are already taking some of those classes.
- ▶ Develop a continuing funding source through an outside agency.
- ▶ Ideas for reaching, educating, and motivating others involved in transition planning :
 - Develop literature – brochure or fact sheet – with specifics on curriculum, logistics, example of typical week in the program, etc.
 - Include “effectiveness data” – if no similar programs in existence elsewhere, include data on employment rates for individuals with this certification.
 - Present to special education teachers.
 - Develop a streamlined process to get students involved; teachers are already stretched pretty thin.
 - Have process in place for regular (e.g., quarterly) meetings of involved parties to brainstorm solutions, share ideas, refine strategies, etc., to build on lessons learned.

Recommendations – Short-Term

- ▶ Several participants particularly enthusiastic and definitely saw themselves as potential program advocates or champions. **Launching a pilot program in one of these districts – e.g., Deer Valley, Gilbert, or Scottsdale** – would likely receive solid support.
- ▶ **Clearly define the roles and expectations** of the school district, transition planner / teacher, participating student, family members, and those **supports and resources to be provided** by Arizona Department of Health Services the Bureau of Child Care Licensing (BCCL) and ADDPC.
- ▶ Establish **program evaluation plan** prior to implementation to track and record outcomes.
- ▶ Develop a **Transition Planner Advisory Panel** to consult during program and curriculum design, implementation of pilot, periodic reviews, etc. Several of the survey participants would be good candidates for inclusion.

Recommendations – Longer-Term

- ▶ **Recruit mentors** – individuals working in the child care industry – to work with students in the program. The survey found that access to a mentor/coach was one of the two most highly valued program components, with the other being the work experience itself.
- ▶ For program launch, **select a district that is perceived by other districts throughout the state as a leader** in employment programs and opportunities for youth with developmental disabilities.
- ▶ Because implementation process varies greatly among districts and appears to be significantly lengthy in some – with multiple levels of oversight, approval, etc. – it is important to **understand each district’s process and modify its implementation timetable as needed** to accommodate the time needed to secure approvals.

Recommendations – Longer-Term (cont'd)

- ▶ In developing and promoting the program:
 - **Frame it in the context of *job training*** and use a term such as *learning module* to refer to the content. **Eliminate references to academic terminology like *curriculum***, which carries with it numerous requirements related to aligning content to nationally recognized standards.
 - Give **serious consideration to eliminating the use of online curriculum** altogether, or offering it only as an option for content that is also provided through another, non-digital medium. A number of transition planners perceived potential difficulties associated with their students with developmental disabilities being able to access online curriculum—whether related specifically to a student’s specific disability, the school’s available technology, need for staff to be present, etc.
- ▶ Consider making a presentation on the program at **Arizona’s Transition Conference**, which is held annually in August.

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THANK YOU & QUESTIONS



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