

## **Services and Outcomes for Transition Age Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Secondary Analysis of the NLTS2 and RSA 911**

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Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) experience challenges in adulthood that include unemployment or underemployment, difficulty sustaining employment, social isolation and dependence (Billstedt & Gillberg, 2005; Frith, 2004; Howlin, Goode, Hutton, & Rutter, 2004; Hurlbutt & Chalmers, 2004). While a limited literature makes recommendations for secondary education and transition supports for young adults with ASD (e.g. Myles, Grossman & Aspy, 2007; Wehman, Datlow Smith & Schall, 2009), there is insufficient information about the experiences of young adults with ASD and the relationship between personal, educational, and rehabilitation supports and post-school outcomes.

The proposed project will conduct descriptive and predictive analyses of the factors associated with and influencing a successful transition into adulthood for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) using secondary data sources. A successful transition into adulthood for the purposes of this proposal is characterized by participation in one or more of the following: postsecondary education, integrated employment, and independent living. The goal of this project is to support the design of effective transition services and supports for students with ASD by identifying personal and programmatic factors that are related to positive postsecondary outcomes and understanding the differences in services and supports used by young adults with ASD compared to other young adults with disabilities.

The project will explore and document the experiences of adolescents and young adults with ASD during the transition from secondary education to adult life using data from the National Longitudinal Transition Survey 2 (NLTS2) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 database (RSA 911). The NLTS 2 is a 10-year longitudinal study of students who receive special education services, and provides a broad array of data on individual characteristics, school experiences, and goals and expectations from the perspectives of the individual, family, teachers and administrative sources. The RSA 911 provides data on individual characteristics, services, and employment related outcomes for all individuals whose cases are closed by the state/federal vocational rehabilitation system. The project will conduct descriptive and predictive analyses to describe the experiences and characteristics of young adults with ASD, the relationships between educational and vocational rehabilitation supports and post-school outcomes, and the relationships between personal characteristics and post school outcomes. Personal characteristics available in both databases include race and ethnicity, family and personal income, health insurance coverage, and co-morbidity with other disabilities. The NLTS2 also includes a wide array of variables that address student and family goals, life planning, self-determination, social supports and expectations for the future.

*Key Words. Youth in transition, post-school outcomes, secondary data analysis, autism spectrum disorder, employment, postsecondary education, community living*