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Improving the transition experience of students with the most significant physical disabilities from P-12 to higher education

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An implementation program evaluation sought to understand the way transition services are provided by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) to students who have the most significant physical disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation Services are specifically available to assist students who have disabilities with navigating the transition between high school and higher education in order to achieve employment goals. This student population faces additional challenges when participating in the educational process than typically-developed peers. The implementation program evaluation was conducted using data from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services including survey data; participant interviews; and student case reviews. The focus of the implementation program evaluation was on the transition experiences of students aged 19 to 27. Findings suggested the need for the transition process to be more collaborative with parents, educators and rehabilitation professionals to assist the students with the most significant physical disabilities to develop adult-oriented life skills prior to exiting high school. Recommendations for future practice included: (a) utilizing independent living specialists and rehabilitation technology specialists early in the developmental process of each student with the most significant physical disabilities in order to promote better adult outcomes; and (b) providing annual training to transition counselors, students, parents, P-12 educators and higher education staff to improve communication and collaboration.

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Child and adolescent neuropsychological assessment: Integrating child neuro development and psychological testing for best picture of our young patients

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Neuropsychological assessment is the process of utilizing psychological testing techniques to understand brain-behavioral relationships. In the practice of child psychology, it becomes increasingly important to have a solid understanding of brain functioning in relationship to development. There continues to be considerable need for mental health practitioners working with children and teens to have an understanding of neuropsychological assessment techniques in an effort to provide more accurate diagnoses and treatment plan strategies. In addition, pediatric neuropsychologists are tasked to integrate traditional neuropsychology techniques with an understanding of brain development between the ages of 0 to 25 years. Further, factors, such as attachment, early childhood relations and experiences can have profound impacts on how the brain develops and performs its functions. How do we assess a brain that is constantly changing over time? What sorts of predictions can we make about a child or teen's brain and behavioral functioning based on history and performance on psychological tests? The presenter will discuss strategies to apply levels of neuro-anatomy understanding into general testing practices, as well as discuss the relative importance of psychological testing or at least being able to interpret and understand a psychological testing profile. In addition, the presenter will discuss the importance of utilizing a domain of functioning approach to neuro-psychological testing to offer a comprehensive understanding of a youth patient's patterns of strength and difficulty. Further, the presenter will discuss how testing practitioners can function as an invaluable consultant to schools, psychiatric and medicine practices to ensure the best care for their young patients.

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