



# Effective Practices: Supporting Youth In School, In the Community and On the Job

Ohio Employment First Transition Framework Effective Practices Tool

Methods and strategies for teachers, job coaches and all practitioners to prepare youth to work in the community.

## Practices and Predictors

**Effective Practices: Supporting Youth In School, In the Community and On the Job** and **Predictors of Post-School Success** provide transition professionals with research-based strategies useful for building youth skills for adult living and working in the community. [The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: Collaborative \(NTACT:C\)](#) and [The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder \(NPDC\)](#) identify sets of effective practices and predictors based on high quality research. Both Centers provide supporting literature, research methodology, tools, and additional links and information about the practices and predictors on their websites. See the **Predictors of Post-School Success** tool on the Employment First website for detailed information about the predictors.

This tool focuses on **Effective Practices**.

### What Are Effective Practices?

Effective Practices are:

- Instructional methods and strategies proven through research to be effective to teach youth specific transition-related skills.
- Used in a variety of settings, such as classrooms, worksites, community environments and social settings.
- Useful to teach a variety of skills, such as those associated with employment, daily living, communication, academics, job routines and tasks, independence and workplace behavior.

**IMPORTANT:** These practices are only as effective as the integrity with which they are implemented and the degree of match with the youth's learning styles and needs. Not all Effective Practices are necessarily suitable for all youth in all situations.

### Why Are Effective Practices Important?

With the passage of No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001, Congress began to view adult outcomes for all youth through an economic lens – how well prepared are youth for adult living, given the significant financial investment in education? As a result, the legislation required that educators use only strategies and methods for teaching that were proven through scientifically based research to be effective. Over time, other human service systems have adopted similar standards – to use systematic approaches to determining and providing services.

Currently, there continues to be much room for improvement in the adult outcomes of youth with disabilities as they are integrated into their communities as employees, neighbors and citizens. All professionals across systems working with transition age youth need to have the knowledge and skills to implement Effective Practices at the core of the services they provide.

Teachers, job coaches, job developers, and others need to know about these Effective Practices. The skill comes in knowing how to select the right practice for the instructional situation and the strengths and needs of the youth.

To be competitive in the job market, all youth needs to have the skills and qualities valued by employers – general worker skills as well as specific occupational skills. Today's work force needs to perform multiple tasks within a single job.

### Who Can Use Effective Practices?

These practices are equally useful for teachers, job developers, paraprofessionals, employment navigators, transition coordinators and other professionals to teach and support transition youth in multiple environments as they traverse the path to employment and adult life.

### How Are Effective Practices Implemented?

Effective Practices work when the right practice is selected to teach the youth a specific skill. It is important to match a strategy with the strengths and needs of the youth and the context of the environment where the skill will be needed or performed.

Selecting the right Effective Practice requires three basic pieces of information:

- What specific skill does the youth need to learn?
- Where will the youth need to use this skill?
- What are the youth's learning preferences and strengths? Challenges and needs for support?

The key to effectively teaching youth new skills to manage new activities in new environments is to look to the past. What has been effective for prior learning? What sources of data and information already exist that are helpful to matching the right Effective Practice with how the youth learns? What types and levels of support have proven necessary for the youth to be successful while providing for him/her to maximize independence?

Data about past learning and performance assists the instructor or service provider to answer these questions and to match the Effective Practice with the learning modality of the youth and the environment in which the skills are to be learned. For

example, if a youth is a visual learner, a job coach would be less likely to have success in using verbal directions as prompts for a youth to follow a series of steps for completing a production task on the job.

## How Are the Practices Organized in This Tool?

This document provides information and resources for 18 practices organized into five clusters. The clusters group the practices by similar topics or themes. The Practice Clusters are:

- Fundamental Instructional Strategies
- Community Based Instruction
- Organizers and Memory Aids
- Social Skills
- Autonomy Development and Support

The Effective Practices Tool has two main sections:

- Section One: information detailing the practices in each cluster, including definitions, examples and resources for each practice and cluster
- Section Two: a Team Review and Planning tool to help identify target areas for improvement in individual youth plans and programs

# Practice Cluster: Fundamental Instructional Strategies

## Practices:

- Task Analysis
- Chaining
- Prompting
- Reinforcement
- Modeling/Video Modeling
- Simulation
- Computer Assisted Instruction

These practices are useful for providing instruction to learners on specific tasks and skills. Fundamental Instructional Strategies are just that – basic to learning as a youth or adult – and as such, many of these foundational practices are often used in conjunction with other Effective Practices. It is also common to incorporate many of these strategies naturally and spontaneously when providing instruction. However, by intentionally planning which strategies to use, being specific about how and when they will be implemented, and documenting results and progress, teams can better ensure that instruction is provided consistently and methodically, which will increase the likelihood of success.

## Task Analysis

Task Analysis is a process in which an activity or behavior is divided into small, manageable steps in order to assess and teach the targeted skill. When conducting a task analysis, it is important to consider the learner's individual needs and learning style. Some youth may be able to learn by 'chunking' steps together, while others will need instruction on each discrete step. For instance, when teaching how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, one student may be able to follow the instruction "put each of the ingredients on the counter" while another student will need instruction for each item – "get the bread from the cupboard," then "get the jelly from the refrigerator," and so on. It is also important to consider all precursor skills that the learner needs to complete the task. In the example of making the sandwich, there is the presumption that the learner already knows how to identify the correct jars when looking in the refrigerator or cupboard. If the student does not yet have that skill, the instructor will need to include it in the teaching plan.

## Chaining

Chaining strategies are a way for the instructor to organize and guide learners through the steps of a task. There are three main types of chaining:

**Backwards Chaining** – The instructor completes all of the steps identified in the task analysis except for the final step. When the learner accurately performs the final step, reinforcement is provided and the next-to-last step is introduced.

**Forward Chaining** – Steps identified in the task analysis are taught in their naturally occurring order. Initially, reinforcement is provided when the learner accurately completes the first step or skill in the sequence. The next time the skill is taught, the second step becomes the one that is reinforced.

**Total Task Chaining** – This is a variation of forward chaining in which the learner receives instruction and reinforcement on each step of the task each time it is being taught.

In determining which chaining strategy to use, consider the nature of the task and the youth's baseline performance. For example, if a task has a strong natural reinforcer at the end (e.g., tying shoelaces before going out to play), then using backward chaining would capitalize on the natural reinforcer. On the other hand, if a youth at baseline is most successful with the first few steps of a task, forward chaining would most likely result in higher success and motivation.

## Prompting

Prompting is the use of verbal, gestural, visual or physical assistance provided to learners to support them in acquiring or engaging in a targeted behavior or skill. When developing a prompting strategy, it is important to determine the type of prompt that matches the youth's learning preferences and styles.

Prompts are most commonly used to initiate steps of a task or skill but may also be used to interrupt learners when a step is performed incorrectly or an interfering behavior is occurring. In this case the introduction of a prompt or other distractor is designed to divert the youth from the incorrect performance or interfering behavior and redirect them to the target skill.

Prompting strategies are most effective when used systematically within a Prompting Hierarchy, deciding at what level of intensity the youth will need prompting to successfully learn or perform a task or behavior. As youth become less dependent on prompts, the evidence based practice of Time Delay can be used to systematically fade the use of prompts during instructional activities by using a brief delay between the initial instruction and any additional instructions or prompts.

## Reinforcement

Reinforcement is the application of a consequence following a learner’s successful use of a response or skills that increases the likelihood that the learner will use the response/skills in the future. Some tasks have natural reinforcers; for instance, when learning to prepare a favorite meal, the reinforcer is the learner’s enjoyment of the food after it is successfully prepared. For other tasks, there may not be a natural reinforcer for the learner, and the instructor will need to develop reinforcement strategies for the teaching plan. Reinforcement methods should take the learner’s preferences into account and should vary to match the intensity and/or difficulty of the skill being taught. For example, when working with a student who enjoys receiving praise and recognition, providing verbal reinforcement such as “great job!” or “you did that perfectly!” after each step would be a suitable reinforcement strategy. For a more significant achievement, such as reaching a weekly goal or learning a difficult skill, the instructor or coach could provide recognition on a larger scale, such as sending a personalized card to the student’s family praising their achievements or choosing the youth as a Student of the Month at their school.

## Modeling/Video Modeling

Modeling is the demonstration of a target behavior or skill that assists the learner to engage in and acquire the target behavior/skill. Modeling can be provided in various formats, including in-person demonstration and modeling via video. As with other practices such as prompting, it is important to consider the youth’s preferences and needs when determining which type of modeling to use.

## Simulation

Simulation uses materials and situations in instructional settings that approximate the natural conditions and the expected responses associated with applying skills and behaviors expected in community and work settings. Simulation helps to bridge the gap between the abstract concepts presented in an instructional setting and the application of those concepts in real settings, situations and environments. Youth can engage in simulations to rehearse routines, procedures, social responses, etc. in a ‘safe’ environment as preparation for performing in community, home or work sites.

## Computer Assisted Instruction

Computer Assisted Instruction is the use of a computer or other similar technology with the intention of improving students’ skills, knowledge or academic performance. This strategy offers an interactive format that can provide examples and feedback to students, while including multiple components such as graphics, photographs, audio, text and video.

## Examples: Fundamental Instructional Strategies in Action

### Combined Strategies: Amina in the Office

Amina is learning how to make various types of copies on the machine at her job site. The task analysis identifies multiple steps that include loading paper in the correct drawer, loading staples, putting a password in on the keypad and choosing the correct settings. The job coach creates a checklist for all of the steps and demonstrates for Amina how to do each step. The job coach then employs the backwards chaining strategy: she completes each step until the last one, which is pushing the print button. The job coach prompts Amina to complete the chain by pointing to the button, which Amina then pushes. The coach provides verbal praise for Amina’s success, then begins the process again, only this time prompting Amina to complete the last two steps. She successfully completes both and again is reinforced with verbal praise. The backwards-chaining process continues in this manner until Amina is completing all of the steps independently, accurately and consistently. Once Amina no longer needs hands-on modeling and instruction, her job coach begins to fade her supports by coaching Amina via video chat on her tablet. Amina sets the tablet up on a table near the copy machine so that her coach can see her perform the task, and the coach only provides prompts as needed if Amina needs help remembering how to complete a step. Having her job coach available on the tablet helps Amina feel supported while building her confidence toward being at the workplace on her own.

### Combined Strategies: Step-by-Step Oil Change

Jade has been working at the front desk at an auto repair shop and she has become increasingly interested in learning how to be a mechanic. Her supervisor at the shop tells her that he could offer some additional shifts if she would like to do oil changes, and she is excited about the opportunity. However, she has no prior experience in this area and even though she has watched videos and others do it, she is concerned she will make a mistake that will ruin the car. She is also nervous about learning how to complete an oil change in the loud, fast-moving garage environment. Her job coach asks the career tech teacher at Jade’s school if he could teach her how to do an oil change in the quiet environment of the auto repair classroom, and the teacher agrees to help. The teacher decides to use a total task forward-chaining process to help Jade be successful.

The teacher prompts Jade through each specific step, pausing for her to complete the step. Additionally, to motivate and build confidence, the teacher provides praise, elbow bumps and high-fives as positive reinforcement for each step completed. Jade is able to complete her first oil change successfully and is ready to try again with fewer prompts. After she has mastered the task, she is much more confident to begin performing oil changes at the busy auto repair shop.

## Resources

### [What Works for Work](#)

This project is a 12-session professional development series to improve practitioners' knowledge and skill of effective practices and predictors. Each session includes a PowerPoint slideshow that provides the user with information about an effective practice or a planning process. Additional handouts or links to resources are offered in each session. Notes and activities offer more information for greater understanding, as well as to facilitate the presentation of the materials.

### [Autism Internet Modules](#)

Designed for those who support, instruct, work with or live with someone with autism, the Autism Internet Modules (AIM) guide users through case studies, instructional videos, pre- and post-assessments, discussion questions, activities and more. The modules that provide instruction on Fundamental Instructional Strategies are:

- [Computer-Aided Instruction](#)
- [Modeling](#)
- [Prompting](#)
- [Reinforcement](#)
- [Task Analysis](#)
- [Time Delay](#)
- [Video Modeling](#)

### [Last Things First: The Power of Backwards Chaining](#)

This article discusses the advantages of using backwards chaining for certain types of tasks and situations.

### [Response Prompting](#)

This webinar from the Transition Coalition provides instruction on how to provide effective, high-quality prompting in employment settings.

### [Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules](#)

These modules guide learners through four lessons to acquire basic knowledge about each effective practice and to learn how to apply the practices in activity-based scenarios to promote real-world application. The modules that provide instruction on Fundamental Instructional Strategies are:

- [Modeling](#)
- [Video Modeling](#)
- [Prompting](#)
- [Reinforcement](#)
- [Task Analysis](#)
- [Technology-aided Instruction and Intervention](#)

### [Video Modeling](#)

This webinar from the Transition Coalition provides information about different types of video modeling and step-by-step instructions from experts.

## Practice Cluster: Community Based Instruction

### Practices:

- Naturalistic Strategies & Interventions
- Service Learning
- Internships

Community Based Instruction is training, teaching or coaching that takes place in the community in the location where the skills are expected to be performed.

Community venues such as banks, grocery stores, post offices, etc. are ideal locations for teaching skills needed to access everyday services. Procedures and protocol can differ across locations and type of business. Learning skills at a specific location in their community affords youth independence.

### Naturalistic Strategies & Interventions

Naturalistic Strategies & Interventions are embedded in typical activities and/or routines in which the learner participates to naturally promote, support and encourage target skills and behaviors.

### Service Learning

Service Learning activities integrate meaningful community service with classroom or other separate instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience and teach civic responsibility.

### Internships

Internships are formal arrangements whereby a youth is assigned specific tasks in a workplace over a predetermined period of time.

## Examples: Community Based Instruction in Action

### Naturalistic Strategies & Interventions: Miguel on the Move

Miguel works at a restaurant several miles away from his home and his mother usually drives him to and from work. He wants to learn how to use the bus so that he can commute on his own and be able to go out to other places he likes on his days off. He works with an instructor to learn basic rules of the bus, how to plan a route and how to purchase fare, and then they practice riding the bus together. The instructor knows that Miguel is highly motivated by his desire for independence and lets him take the lead during their trip. The positive interaction that Miguel has with the bus driver and his feeling of accomplishment on arrival at his selected destination are natural reinforcers for his targeted skill use.

### Service Learning: Sarah to the Rescue

Sarah loves animals and would like to learn how to become a dog groomer. Through the service learning program at her school, she is matched with a local animal rescue organization. Sarah works with another volunteer at the shelter to bathe and brush dogs waiting for adoption, and also learns how to use some of the tools that a groomer would. She completes journal entries each day that she volunteers and shares reflections with her classmates in guided classroom discussions each week. The experience provides valuable PINS data (preferences, interests, needs and strengths/skills) to help guide and refine her employment goals: Sarah confirms that she is skilled at working with all types of dogs and is able to complete many typical grooming tasks independently, but she learns that she would prefer a job that is less messy and physically demanding.

## Resources

### [Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules: Naturalistic Intervention](#)

This module guides the learner through four lessons to acquire basic knowledge about naturalistic intervention strategies and to learn how to apply the strategies in real-world scenarios.

### [Work-Based Learning Experiences](#)

This resource from NTACTION provides information about a variety of work-based learning experience types, including internships and service learning.

**Using Project SEARCH to Teach Employment Skills**

This resource from NTACT:C provides information about Project SEARCH, a school-to-work transition model which includes rotating internships for a school-year; experiences combining real-life work; employment and independent living skills training; assistance with vocational placement through active collaboration with employers, school systems; and vocational rehabilitation; and entire school-days spent in the workplace.



## Practice Cluster: Organizers and Memory Aids

### Practices:

- Visual Supports
- Mnemonics
- Mobile Technology

Everyone uses organizers and memory aids in daily life and work. They are valuable tools to increase independence, efficiency and productivity. Many memory aids are built into personal technology devices such as smartphones and tablets, making the use of memory aids 'typical', accessible, and non-intrusive as a support in daily life.

### Visual Supports

Visual Supports are tools used to organize and simplify regularly used information. Examples include schedules, lists, diagrams and maps.

### Mnemonics

A Mnemonic is a memory device that can take many different forms including keywords, acronyms and visual or acoustic cues. The 'alphabet song' is an example of a commonly used mnemonic.

### Mobile Technology

Mobile Technology options expand and change rapidly, but generally include a variety of devices and apps that allow people to access information and/or assistance from wherever they are.

## Examples: Organizers and Memory Aids in Action

### Visual Supports + Mobile Technology: Eric's Desire for Independence

Eric recently started a new job at a fitness center. He is very good at his assigned tasks, but has been having some difficulty transitioning from one task to the next without the job coach or supervisor telling him what to do and when. He becomes frustrated, and the supervisor does too. The job coach helps Eric to create a simple visual checklist of his daily tasks, including breaks and lunch, using an app on his smartphone. The app also has a visual timer to show Eric how much time he needs to work on each task and helps him keep track of when the next transition will be.

### Mnemonics: George on the Job

George works at a large warehouse. One of his duties is to pull items from various places in the warehouse to fill orders. He has been struggling to remember where items are located and it slows down his work pace. His job coach teaches him a mnemonic to remember Toys, Electronics, Appliances, Clothing and Hardware are all located in Sector 1 of the warehouse. The first letters of each word spell the acronym 'TEACH'.

### Mnemonics: Kelly's Internship

Kelly is completing an internship as a receptionist at a sales office. She is having difficulty remembering her coworkers' names, so she and her job coach work together to develop mnemonics using alliteration with first names and visual references.

- Cathy keeps candy on her desk
- Fred sits by the filing cabinets at the front of the office
- Gayle has green eyes and wears glasses

## Resources

### What Works for Work

This project is a 12-session professional development series to improve practitioners' knowledge and skill of effective practices and predictors. Each session includes a PowerPoint slideshow that provides the user with information about an effective practice or a planning process. Additional handouts or links to resources are offered in each session. Notes and activities offer more information for greater understanding, as well as to facilitate the presentation of the materials.

### **Autism Internet Module: Visual Supports**

Designed for those who support, instruct, work with or live with someone with autism, the Autism Internet Modules (AIM) guide users through case studies, instructional videos, pre- and post-assessments, discussion questions, activities and more.

### **Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules: Visual Supports**

This module guides the learner through four lessons to acquire basic knowledge about visual supports and to learn how to apply the strategies in real-world scenarios.

### **Visual Supports Learning Links and Templates**

The University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies compiled these resources to provide information about visual supports as well as templates and suggestions for creating visual support materials.

### **Classroom Strategies: Mnemonics**

This resource from All About Adolescent Literacy (AdLit) provides an overview of different types of mnemonics and examples of how to use them.

### **Nine Types of Mnemonics for Better Memory**

This article from The Learning Center Exchange describes and illustrates nine types of mnemonic devices.

### **GO 4 IT... NOW!**

GO 4 IT... NOW! is a mnemonic writing strategy that encourages students to increase the content and quality of their writing. This webinar from the Transition Coalition provides an overview of the strategy, step-by-step instructions for implementation and examples of the strategy in use.

### **SIFTS**

SIFTS is a web-based tool designed to help match a person's needs with the appropriate assistive technology.

## Practice Cluster: Social Skills

### Practices:

- Social Skills Training
- Social Narratives

Social Skills are behaviors that facilitate communication and cooperation. Some social skills are general, while others are more context specific. Knowing and practicing the social norms that are expected in various environments and situations is an important component to youth success in the workplace and other community settings.

### Social Skills Training

Social Skills Training is group or individual instruction designed to teach learners ways to appropriately and successfully participate in their interactions with others. Some skills may be taught in a classroom or simulated environment, but continued practice in natural environments is crucial to success. Social skills training generally targets one or more of the following skills: perspective-taking, conversation skills, friendship skills, problem-solving, emotion recognition and theory of mind. It may also help with specific interaction skills such as initiation, responding, greeting, turn taking, and asking for or offering help. Once target skills have been identified, the teaching strategy is developed to include modeling of the skill (by the instructor and/or helpers, or via video), practice for the learner to use the skill through role-playing, prompts as needed and time for feedback and problem-solving based on skill demonstration.

### Social Narratives

Social Narratives are short stories that describe social situations in order to highlight features of a target behavior or skill and offer examples of appropriate responding. Social narratives target similar skills and behaviors to those addressed in Social Skills Training; the difference is the method of instruction. Developing a social narrative first requires identifying a target behavior skill in a way that is specific, observable and measurable. Next, the instructor develops a short social narrative (usually just a few sentences) describing the situation and desired behavior in language that the learner will be able to understand. The narrative may be presented to the learner in written form or as audio, and may include images depending on the student’s needs, preferences and learning style. The instructor then helps the learner to incorporate the narrative into their routine, usually inserting it just before the time when the targeted skill is to be used.

### Examples: Social Skills in Action

#### Social Skills Training: Tanya at the Register

Tanya loves her job as a cashier at a grocery store, especially when the store is busy as she enjoys talking with customers. Some of the customers seem to enjoy Tanya’s endless questions and small talk, but her job coach notices that many seem to feel uncomfortable or annoyed, especially when she asks a question that might be too personal. Tanya’s supervisor has also mentioned to the coach that some of Tanya’s coworkers have been avoiding her because they get overwhelmed by how much she talks. Tanya’s coach develops some guidelines to help Tanya monitor her own talking and to observe how the other person is reacting:

#### Is this person interested in the conversation?

- | Yes   | No  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person is making eye contact</li> <li>• They are smiling</li> <li>• The person is asking me questions</li> <li>• The person answers questions with more than just “yes” or “no”</li> <li>• We are talking about equal amounts of time</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person is looking away</li> <li>• The person looks annoyed or upset</li> <li>• The person seems to be in a hurry</li> <li>• The person does not answer my questions</li> <li>• I am talking much more than they are</li> </ul> |

In private, the coach models how to use the guidelines and how to adjust her behavior based on what she observes as she is self-monitoring. Tanya then tries out the guideline tool with her coach in the role play, and they review the conversation together afterward. After a few more practice sessions, Tanya feels ready to start implementing what she has learned while at work. The coach continues to observe from a short distance away, and Tanya is able to look to her for visual prompts when she is not sure what to do. Tanya notices that many customers smile more and seem happy to talk with her when she is using her guidelines, and soon she is able to use her new skills without the coach’s support.

### **Social Narrative: Paul Is Polite**

Paul has been working at his new job in a manufacturing plant for two months and is excelling at his assigned tasks. His supervisor is very pleased with his work but has been experiencing interruptions in his office from Paul on an almost daily basis. He has asked Paul to be more considerate, but Paul does not understand what he means. Paul's job coach talks to the supervisor and learns that Paul is good about alerting him to issues that need his attention and asking questions when problems arise that he can not handle on his own; the only problem is that Paul starts talking as soon as he is in the supervisor's office and becomes agitated if the supervisor is on the phone or already talking to another employee. The job coach observes Paul at work and talks to him to understand what is happening. He observes that when Paul encounters a situation that requires his supervisor, he seems to become anxious that he needs to let the supervisor know right away. The job coach develops a social narrative to help remind Paul that being polite is more important in these situations than being urgent. He reviews the narrative with Paul and prints it on a card for him to keep in his pocket. The job coach instructs him that when he needs to talk to his boss, he should first look at his card and review the social narrative:

Sometimes when you go into Mr. Jordan's office, he is on the phone or talking to a coworker. If he is talking with someone, you must wait quietly. It is okay to wait. Waiting for your turn is polite. When Mr. Jordan greets you and says "Hi Paul", it is your turn to talk.

Paul uses the card as instructed, and after several weeks he is able to remember what to do without it and no longer needs it as a support.

## **Resources**

### **[Autism Internet Modules](#)**

Designed for those who support, instruct, work with or live with someone with autism, the Autism Internet Modules (AIM) guide users through case studies, instructional videos, pre- and post-assessments, discussion questions, activities and more. The modules that provide instruction on Social Skills are:

- [Social Skills Groups](#)
- [Social Narratives](#)

### **[Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules](#)**

These modules guide learners through four lessons to acquire basic knowledge about each effective practice and to learn how to apply the practices in activity-based scenarios to promote real-world application. The modules that provide instruction on Social Skills are:

- [Social Narratives](#)
- [Social Skills Training](#)

### **[Using Working at Gaining Employment Skills \(W.A.G.E.S.\) to Teach Social Skills and Occupational Skills](#)**

W.A.G.E.S. is a social skills curriculum consisting of lesson plans in four domains: self-regulation, teamwork, communication and problem solving. Lessons are designed to be implemented in classrooms and are guided by a cognitive-behavioral approach.

## Practice Cluster: Autonomy Development and Support

### Practices:

- Self-Determined Learning
- Self-Advocacy
- Self-Management

Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination Skills are related skill sets that provide the means for youth to take charge of their own lives. A person with a disability may call upon the support of others; however, the individual is entitled to be in control of their own resources and how they are directed. All people have the right to make life decisions without undue influence or control by others.

Self-Monitoring and Self-Management Interventions provide youth the strategies to become less dependent of 'in-person' assistance, such as aides and coaches. Such strategies provide the youth with skills to become aware of their own needs and level of performance.

### Self-Determined Learning

The Self-Determined Learning model of instruction teaches students to engage in self-directed and self-regulated learning through a consistent series of planning and problem-solving steps. The student is assisted to set a goal, take action and adjust the goal or plan as needed. Students are guided through the following problem-solving steps: 1) identify the problem; 2) identify potential solutions; 3) identify barriers to solving the problem; 4) identify consequences of each solution.

### Self-Advocacy

Self-Advocacy development strategies prepare individuals to participate in transition and adult life planning. Learners are supported to identify their preferences, interests, needs and strengths/skills, and to effectively communicate their desired outcomes. Additionally, components of self-advocacy and self-determination skills include: choice making; decision making; problem solving; goal setting and attainment skills; independence; risk-taking and safety skills; self-observation, evaluation and reinforcement; self-instruction; leadership; self-awareness; and self-knowledge.

### Self-Management

Self-Management instruction focuses on supporting learners to identify the occurrence or nonoccurrence of behaviors that meet an external standard or criteria. Tools are provided to assist the learner to accurately monitor and record their own behaviors, and to provide positive reinforcement to themselves for success.

## Examples: Autonomy Development and Support Practices in Action

### Self-Management: Smartphones are Smart Self-Monitors

John is learning to stay on task with his job. He sets his smartphone to a silent alarm that alerts him every 15 minutes. When the alarm signals, if John is working and has not used his phone to play games or check his social media accounts since the previous alarm, he gives himself a checkmark. If he is not working or has used his phone for non-work purposes since the previous alarm, he does not earn a checkmark. At the end of the day, if he has checkmarks for at least 75% of the opportunities, he rewards himself by playing his favorite video game when he gets home.

### Self-Determined Learning + Self-Advocacy: Brianna Speaks Up

Brianna has been involved in a self-determination/self-advocacy skill-building group that meets during the lunch break two times per week. She has been helped by her peers to recognize that when things don't go as she plans, she generally gets upset and withdraws. The group has helped Brianna to improve her problem-solving skills by reviewing hypothetical situations and practicing how to problem-solve to figure out how to react or respond. During one lunch when the group was not meeting, Brianna found herself in a real situation. The cashier in the cafeteria become distracted and said that Brianna had not paid for her lunch when she actually had! Brianna began to get upset and decided to just pay again, but then she stopped and remembered her group discussions and role-plays. She asked the teacher behind her in line if she had seen her pay, and the teacher confirmed that she had, helping the cashier to realize her error. Brianna felt validated and was proud of the way that she responded to the situation.

## Resources

### [Autism Internet Modules](#)

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- [Self-Management](#)
- [Social Supports for Transition-Aged Individuals](#)

### [What Works for Work](#)

This project is a 12-session professional development series to improve practitioners' knowledge and skill of effective practices and predictors. Each session includes a PowerPoint slideshow that provides the user with information about an effective practice or a planning process. Additional handouts or links to resources are offered in each session. Notes and activities offer more information for greater understanding, as well as to facilitate the presentation of the materials.

### [Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules: Self-Management](#)

This module guides the learner through four lessons to acquire basic knowledge about self-management strategies and to learn how to apply the strategies in real-world scenarios.

### [Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction \(SDLMI\)](#)

This webinar from the Transition Coalition provides an overview of SDLMI and instructions from experts on how to support students to set and work toward their own goals.

### [The "My Life" Model](#)

In the My Life Self-Determination Model, youth are supported to identify and pursue transition goals that they prioritize as most important, and in the context of activities to pursue their goals, they learn and apply key self-determination skills relating to achievement (e.g., decision-making), building allies (e.g., negotiation), and self-regulation (e.g., managing stress).

### [SOS: Helping Students Become Independent Learners](#)

This online module from the IRIS Center describes how teachers can help students stay on task by learning to regulate their behavior. The four strategies discussed are self-monitoring, self-instruction, goal-setting, and self-reinforcement.

### [Self-Monitoring for Older Students](#)

This resource provides directions for implementing self-monitoring strategies, templates for data collection and examples of how to use the strategy effectively.



# Effective Practices: Supporting Youth In School, In the Community and On the Job

Transition Plan Review Tool of Effective Practices

**Identify Target Areas for Improvement in Individual Youth Plans and Programs.**

# Transition Plan Review Tool of Effective Practices

## Identify Target Areas for Improvement in Individual Youth Plans and Programs

Teams may use this tool to assess how well Effective Practices are identified, supported and implemented in a youth's plan.

### How to Use the Effective Practices Review and Planning Tool

1. **Understanding the Practices.** Review the information in the Effective Practices tool.
2. **Review the student IEP, transition plan and other related documents.** Review the student's services, instruction and supports to identify what Effective Practices are currently reflected in the plan and which are not being used.
3. **Select a rating or action for each Practice Cluster in relation to the specific student.**
  - **"YES – Included and Individualized."** This means that the practice is being used and the student data indicates that the implementation is effective. Current implementation continues as planned.
  - **"Needs REVISING or Need MORE INFORMATION."** This means that the student data indicates a need for review and revision of the practice and implementation. OR the team needs more information about the practice or implementation in order to determine an action.
  - **"Consider Adding to Plan."** This means that the team review of the practices and the youth's plan and profile indicate the likelihood that this practice would be useful to teach skills and knowledge important for future success. The team would like to add this to the youth's plan.
  - **"Not a priority strategy to include at this time."** This means that the team review of the practices and the youth's learning profile and plan indicate that this practice would not be as effective as other practices or strategies. The team does not recommend implementation at this time.
4. **Summary Worksheet.** Use the summary worksheet and guiding questions to organize ideas for gathering new information, revising the current plan and adding new strategies that reflect Effective Practices to the youth's plan.



# Transition Plan Review Tool of Effective Practices

**Directions:** Review the detailed information about Effective Practices on the preceding pages. Select a youth and review the youth’s IEP and other transition plans and programs. Use the reflection questions below to review the degree to which Effective Practices are included and individualized to the unique needs of the youth. Summarize your review and action plans on the Worksheet.

## Fundamental Instructional Strategies

Strategies	Considerations
<p>Prior to teaching a new skill, are task analyses completed to identify where the youth may need targeted support, intervention or instruction?</p> <p>Are chaining strategies used as a way to teach each step of a task or activity in a sequential manner that includes all steps?</p> <p>Do the chaining and prompting strategies selected match the youth’s way of learning and following direction (and not selected based on instructor preference)?</p> <p>Are current prompting strategies used to teach skills strategically planned and implemented reliably?</p> <p>Is there a prompt hierarchy identified, understood and implemented by all team members so that the right strategy is used at the right time?</p> <p>Do the prompting levels used provide for maximum independence? Is there a plan to systematically fade prompts as the youth gains proficiency in the skill being taught?</p> <p>Are reinforcement strategies meaningful to the youth and based on their preferences?</p> <p>Do the youth’s learning preferences indicate that computer assisted/multimedia instruction could benefit and enhance the youth’s ability to achieve goals?</p> <p>Are there areas of the plan in which multimedia examples and immediate feedback provided through computer assisted instruction could enhance the youth’s skills, knowledge or academic performance?</p> <p>Does the youth attend to videos, movies, etc.? If so, has video modeling been considered or implemented as an instructional strategy?</p> <p>Are simulations included in the youth’s plan as a strategy to teach desired behaviors or targeted skills? Where could simulation be used to support less concrete instruction, such as lecture, worksheets and discussion?</p> <p>Do simulation activities and materials closely resemble the actual materials and situations that the youth will encounter in the community?</p>	<p>YES – Included and Individualized</p> <hr/> <p>Needs REVISING or Need MORE INFORMATION</p> <hr/> <p>Consider Adding to Plan</p> <hr/> <p>Not a priority strategy to include at this time</p>

## Community Based Instruction

Strategies	Considerations
<p>Does the youth's transition plan include opportunities to learn important life skills in authentic community environments where they are expected to be performed?</p> <p>Are the community sites selected for instruction the ones that the youth will naturally be using in course of everyday working and living?</p> <p>Has the Community Based Instruction been systematically and intentionally planned?</p> <p>Does the school partner with community and adult agencies to expand and enrich the experiences?</p>	<p>YES – Included and Individualized</p>
	<p>Needs REVISING or Need MORE INFORMATION</p>
	<p>Consider Adding to Plan</p>
	<p>Not a priority strategy to include at this time</p>

## Organizers and Memory Aids

Strategies	Considerations
<p>Does the youth attend to music, rhythm or rhymes? This may indicate that mnemonics could be effective for tasks requiring memory and recall of facts, lists, sequences, etc.</p> <p>Could mnemonics be used on the job and/or in academic settings to improve task completion, increase independence and decrease the need for adult assistance?</p> <p>What do assessments indicate would be the most successful visual support options? Words? Photos? Pictures? Objects? Color-coding? Mobile tech?</p>	<p>YES – Included and Individualized</p>
<p>How are visual supports used to promote learning, task completion and independence?</p> <p>Are the visual supports designed or identified specifically for the youth? Or have they been selected based on a pre-determined program plan?</p> <p>Has transition assessment identified the potential support uses of mobile technology to achieve post school outcomes?</p> <p>Does transition assessment identify the features and types of mobile technology that provide a match for the youth's learning style, the environment and the task?</p>	<p>Needs REVISING or Need MORE INFORMATION</p>
	<p>Consider Adding to Plan</p>
	<p>Not a priority strategy to include at this time</p>

## Social Skills

Strategies	Considerations
<p>Is teaching and supporting social skills intentional and planned as part of the youth's education? Or is it assumed that the youth will figure it out?</p> <p>What is the baseline of the youth's current level of skills related to social behaviors and situations? How is that information used to develop plans?</p> <p>Are social skills taught in a comprehensive manner, infused in the learning process across settings?</p> <p>Is social skills instruction combined with self-monitoring and self-management strategies?</p>	<p>YES – Included and Individualized</p>
	<p>Needs REVISING or Need MORE INFORMATION</p>
	<p>Consider Adding to Plan</p>
	<p>Not a priority strategy to include at this time</p>

## Autonomy Development and Support

Strategies	Considerations
<p>Does the youth currently receive assistance from aides, teachers or job coaches to manage and monitor behavior? If so, how and where could self-monitoring and self-management practices be incorporated?</p> <p>Self-management interventions are intended to improve self-determination. Where and how could self-monitoring and self-management interventions be included in the self-determination plans?</p>	<p>YES – Included and Individualized</p>
<p>Is teaching and supporting self-advocacy and self-determination intentional and planned as part of the youth’s education?</p> <p>What is the baseline of the youth’s current level of skill related to self-advocacy and self-determination, and how is that information used to develop plans?</p>	<p>Needs REVISING or Need MORE INFORMATION</p>
<p>Are self-advocacy and self-determination skills taught in a comprehensive manner, infused in the learning process across settings?</p>	<p>Consider Adding to Plan</p>
	<p>Not a priority strategy to include at this time</p>

# Summary Worksheet

Upon review of \_\_\_\_\_'s IEP and Transition Plans, the following ideas, potential interventions and strategies were identified.

## Fundamental Instructional Strategies

- Task Analysis
- Chaining
- Prompting
- Reinforcement
- Modeling/Video Modeling
- Simulation
- Computer Assisted Instruction

Which Effective Practices have we already included and individualized in the plan?

Which Effective Practices do we want to revise or fine-tune? Ideas for the revisions?

## Community Based Instruction

- Naturalistic Strategies & Interventions
- Service Learning
- Internships

## Organizers and Memory Aids

- Visual Supports
- Mnemonics
- Mobile Technology

Do we want or need any additional information on any of the practices we reviewed or identified? Which ones?

## Social Skills

- Social Skills Training
- Social Narratives

What additional Effective Practices do we want to add to the plans?

## Autonomy Development and Support

- Self-Determined Learning
- Self-Advocacy
- Self-Management

How will we know that the current and additional practices identified are effective for \_\_\_\_\_? What is the schedule for review?