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TRANSITION POLICY COMPLIANCE AND BEST PRACTICE: PERCEPTIONS  
OF TRANSITION STAKEHOLDERS (162 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to identify transition practices related to policy compliance and best practice occurring as perceived by Ohio's transition stakeholders. In addition, this study examined the relationships and predictors of transition policy compliance and best practice. Questions related to policy compliance were translated from the IDEA of 1997 and concerned parent notification, participation in meetings, the content of the IEP, and agency responsibility. Questions related to best practice were considered above and beyond the scope of the law and included those related to self-determination, parental empowerment, and interagency transition teaming.

The participants for this study included stakeholders who serve transition-aged (ages 14-22) youth with disabilities. Stakeholders included special education teachers, coordinators, administrators, and transition coordinators (including vocational special education coordinators, workstudy coordinators, and job training coordinators), and related professionals whose purpose was to prepare students with disabilities for adult roles upon graduation. A total of 251 surveys were completed through the Center for Innovation in Transition and Employment's website. The *Survey of Transition Practices* contained 22 questions related to policy compliance

and best practice. The respondents were asked to rate questions on a Likert-like scale that allowed them to choose from one of four ratings.

Based on the perceptions of the respondents, policy compliance with the IDEA of 1997 was occurring with regularity. Those practices considered best or exemplary were reported as occurring less often. Of the correlations identified, the strongest relationships existed with those questions related to student, parent, and agency preparation and involvement in the transition process. In addition, the existence of interagency transition teams were found to be the strongest predictor of both policy compliance and best practice suggesting that collaboration among all transition stakeholders can increase the likelihood of compliance with the transition mandates of the IDEA and the implementation of those practices considered above and beyond the legal requirements.

The importance of stakeholder participation in the transition process is a critical aspect of successful planning for adult life. An effective system of transition services views the educational planning of students with disabilities as a process involving comprehensive multi-year planning and the development of activities with a variety of stakeholders. The findings of this study suggest a need for continued preservice and inservice training concerning collaboration and the importance of teaming activities as a vehicle for regular contact, information sharing, cross-training, and problem solving among the disciplines related to transition.