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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Advances and gaps in policy, practice, and research in transition for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities across four countries

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Abstract

The difficulties faced by youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) and their families as they move into adulthood are widely documented. The aim of the paper is to explore the current situation in terms of transition processes and outcomes in four countries (the US, UK, Australia and Czech Republic) and identify commonalities and differences that help elucidate what might determine different outcomes. Two research methods—expert knowledge and rapid literature review—were combined to identify sources from which information on transition policy, processes, support practices and outcomes was extracted and synthesised. This review identified gaps in the research evidence including inadequate collection and use of data to drive policy and determine effectiveness, limited evidence-based models or frameworks for successful transition. There was little transition research that included the voices of young people with IDD. More research is necessary to study the practices of highly successful programmes, and to explore the impact of transition programmes and disability support services on a broader range of outcomes, capturing the experiences of young people themselves and identifying factors that determine successful outcomes.

KEYWORDS

intellectual and development disabilities, policies, social inclusion, transition

Abbreviations: CR, The Czech Republic; CTE, career and technical education; EU, European Union; IDD, intellectual and developmental disability; OECD, the organisation for economic co-operation and development; UK, The United Kingdom; US, The United States of America.

INTRODUCTION

Driven by international policy, research and the activism of individuals with disabilities and their families, governments have reorganised systems and practices to better support the transition of youth with disabilities from education to adulthood. The challenges faced by youth with

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IDD and their families as they move into adulthood are widely recognised. These challenges include absence of support for parents and their distress, lack standardisation, consistency, and a strong evidence base transition services for youth with IDD, a job seeker with a disability ending up employed in a readily available position that turns out to be a poor fit (McKenzie et al., 2017; Rosner et al., 2020; Wehman et al., 2018).

Research suggests that transition programmes lack coordination throughout the process (Poirier et al., 2020). Policies have failed to address the ‘unique social, psychological, educational, social and economic needs of youth’ (United Nations, 2014). As a result, compared to individuals with other disability types, people with IDD more likely follow segregated life trajectories through special education, sheltered employment and institution type of living (Šiška et al., 2017).

Limited literature exists analysing transition from an *international perspective*. Most transition literature is from the United States. Much less is known about transition in other countries. We aim to better understand the nature, outcomes and experiences of transition programmes for youth with IDD in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Czech Republic (CR), to identify evidence-based strategies for successful transition, and to explore contextual factors that impact transition. These countries were selected based on the involvement of the co-authors in transition projects (research and demonstration) in their respective countries. These four countries evidence similarities and differences in educational systems, welfare and IDD supports. It is important to note that availability of literature and data was not balanced across the topics explored and for respective countries. Therefore, the picture for all four countries is not comprehensive.

In the context of the four selected countries, we used a broad definition of transition as a ‘phase in the life of youth with an intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) as they are preparing for and adjusting to life after school’. We considered transition age as 14–26 years. Common transition indicators concern educational experiences and attainment, and employment. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides some useful data in this context. On average, one in five young people with disabilities across disability categories aged 15–29 leaves school without a secondary qualification (OECD, 2022). The four countries studied have fewer early school leavers: CR (14%), Australia (11%) and UK (6%) (OECD, 2022), and US 10.7% (McFarland et al., 2018). It should be noted that different countries use different terms to describe this group of students. It is usually associated with terms, such as: dropout, drop-out, ease-out, fadeout, fade-out,

opt-out, pullout, pull-out, pushout, push-out, not in education, employment or training. The OECD report also clearly indicates that, across all countries, the percentage of students with disabilities in inclusive education decreases significantly in secondary school, especially for youth with IDD.

Transition of persons with disabilities from school is often associated with employment as a positive outcome (e.g., European Union, 2021). Employment is understood in this the article in general terms, not specifically related to sheltered, open-labour market or other employment types.

We aim to synthesise findings from the literature review to learn from different approaches to post-secondary transition, not to directly compare countries. We examine the processes identified in the literature that perpetuate social inequalities, social exclusion and segregation and those that promote active citizenship, employment, autonomy, community living and social inclusion.

METHODS

We combined two research methods—expert knowledge and a rapid literature review. Expert knowledge involves using an individual's professional expertise as a source of data (Bogner et al., 2018). The authors possess expertise in the field both locally and internationally. Each author used their existing knowledge of policy, practice and research on transition and conducted a rapid literature review to identify relevant resources for each country. The rapid reviews for each country were guided by Tricco et al. (2015) who define this method as ‘a form of knowledge synthesis in which components of the systematic review process are simplified or omitted to produce information in a timely manner’ (p. 1). The authors identified the most important literature for the particular countries utilising their professional expertise in the field and country, using the appropriate literature search tools for that country and language. This approach potentially accentuates disparities between countries in terms of the number of academic publications included.

The guiding question was: What are the practices, and research used to support transition-aged youth and youth with IDD in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and the Czech Republic? Four co-authors conducted the search, one for each country. Countries were divided based on co-authors' country of residence/background. We used the following search terms: transition, youth with IDD (or intellectual disability; learning disability—UK term; mental disability—Czech term), young adult with IDD (or intellectual disability; learning disability—UK term; mental disability—Czech term),

model, support, system, experience, policy, research, 'name of country'. We searched the following databases: Academic Search Premier, APA PsycINFO, APA PsycARTICLES, ERIC and Google Scholar. For articles in Czech, the co-authors searched in specific Czech journals relevant to transition. We considered only peer-reviewed articles published after 2004 (IDEA reauthorisation), including literature reviews.

To summarise the information, we developed a framework and completed a template for each country. The framework and template included the following categories: how transition is conceptualised; models that support successful transition; whether programmes and outcomes are monitored/evaluated; a description of typical transition process and how it differs for youth with IDD; research on transition within each country; whether the experiences of youth and families are captured in the research; and barriers and facilitators identified.

One team member reviewed all four templates and extracted key information for synthesis. Information gaps were identified, and the experts (co-authors) were asked to add missing information specific to the gaps.

RESULTS

Conceptualising transition

Conceptualisation of transition varies across countries. There is a consensus, however, that it involves the period when youth are moving from school to post-school life, with a strong focus on employment preparation and outcomes. There is shared recognition that the post-school outcomes for people with IDD are often poor, which has resulted in policy changes, funding, services and supports intended to improve this situation.

There are notable differences between countries in transition legislation and policy. In the United States, transition is defined federally within the transition services section in the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA, 2004) primarily as educational activities to improve academic and functional skills to facilitate post-secondary and vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living and community participation.

In England and Wales, the definition of transition included in *The Care Act 2014* (UK Government, 2014) focuses on youth who use services and encompasses: (a) education and employment, (b) good health, (c) independent living and (d) friends, relationships and community. However, transition is also applied to the move from child to adult-focused supports by young people using UK health and social care services

(Department of Health/Child Health and Maternity Services Branch, 2006).

Australia does not currently have a legislative definition of transition, and unlike the United States, there is no requirement to provide individualised transition plans and supports, although some have called for such legislation (O'Neill et al., 2016).

Legal definitions and federal transition policies are largely absent in the CR, where the primary focus is on transition from school to employment. Policies such as the *National Education Strategy 2020* and *Education Strategy 2030+* address after-school employment but few other issues. Czech disability scholars (Černá et al., 2015) have proposed a broader definition of transition covering overall independence.

Models for 'successful' transition to guide practice

Within all four countries, approaches to transition supports vary with no single model predominating. Some approaches and models were developed to be used across disability categories in education. Others were developed specifically for those with IDD but across settings, including education. US transition services are delivered through the educational system (local school districts), vocational rehabilitation services or human services at the state or agency levels. Some transition models are specific to individual states, including *The Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative* (MSTC; Luecking & Luecking, 2013) and the State of Tennessee's *Supporting Strong Transitions for Youth with Disabilities Program* (Carter, 2021). Other frameworks have a thematic focus, such as the *Framework for Research in Transition* (Trainor et al., 2020), *CIRCLES* (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015), models focused on culture (e.g., Rueda et al., 2005, focused on Latinx experiences), and *Charting the Life Course* (Reynolds & St. John, 2015). However, other than *The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (Kohler et al., 2016) the models have little evidence of effectiveness. *The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* is based on the assumption that the impact of transition-focused education is enhanced when service systems and programmes connect and support the implementation and application of learning. It offers concrete practices identified from effective programmes and the research literature for implementing transition-focused education. In the United Kingdom, no specific transition model is used. Various tools exist for families, schools and services, including: (a) *NICE Guidance* (National Institution of Clinical Excellence [NICE], 2016) on 'Transition from children's to adults' services for young people

using health or social care services', (b) *the Preparing for Adulthood Guidance Programme* (the National Development Team for Inclusion, n.d.) and (c) *Transition into adult services* (Mencap, n.d.).

Transition for Australian students with IDD may include unpaid school-organised placements or paid work after school hours (Bigby & De Losa, 2021). However, the availability of each is limited. Australia's larger-scale transition models, serving people with all types of disability, primarily involve post-school programming intended to support integrated employment. The main models, *Disability Employment Services—DES* (Australian Government, Department of Social Service, n.d.) and *School Leaver Employment Supports —SLES* (NDIS, n.d.) differ, with SLES focusing on school leavers whereas DES serves job seekers/workers with disability of all ages (Brotherton & Tuckerman, 2022). Both are federally funded, separate from the education system, and delivered by non-government organisations, with some operating both types, thus providing the opportunity for SLES graduates to be supported by the DES to get and keep a job. Australians with IDD may also transition from school to a segregated disability work or activities programme.

Australian students with developmental disability (e.g., autism, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment) who enrol in a university, participate in mainstream university education with some accommodations and supports if desired provided by the university's disability service. Supports can include assessment and exam modifications, alternative formatting, timetable variations, assistive technology, lecture support and library services. Similar supports are available in the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector. Thoresen et al. (2021) reported longitudinal findings for a large group of apprentices and trainees with disability (40% had intellectual/learning disability) and found encouraging employment and wage outcomes. Through specific programmes at a few universities, a small number of Australians with intellectual disability are experiencing university life with support. Typically, they audit courses (i.e., are not formally enrolled and receive no formal qualification) and other nondisabled students provide mentoring in courses and supports in other aspects of university life (Gadow & Macdonald, 2019; Gobec et al., 2022; Rillotta et al., 2020).

In the CR, the *Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education* (2007; Czech Republic. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2007) provides a general framework, but schools have autonomy over curriculum, so no model dominates. Transition for Czech students with IDD traditionally includes guidance for future employment provided by an assigned teacher

during the final school year. Less attention is given to other domains, such as community participation.

Topics explored in research

Most of the transition studies included here are from US literature reviews (Mazzotti et al., 2021) and meta-analyses (Haber et al., 2016) that synthesise existing research. Many US studies are based on secondary analysis of national data sets that are now outdated (e.g., the National Longitudinal Transition Study, NLTS; Newman et al., 2010). Transition research across all four countries included the use of strategies, such as: goal setting (Mazzotti et al., 2021), transition planning (Leonard et al., 2016), participation in review meetings (Kaehne & Beyer, 2014); active citizenship, including community living and voting (Šiška et al., 2018); and transition from child to adult healthcare services (Colver et al., 2018).

Experiences of youth and families during the transition process

Research focusing on transition experiences among youth and family members is sparse, with most conducted in the United Kingdom. Results highlight the poor experiences of youth with IDD and their families regarding physical (obesity) and emotional well-being (anxiety, problem behaviours) (Young-Southward et al., 2017). Anxiety due to a lack of meaningful activities after leaving school, lack of support during transition and difficulties related to 'growing up' were noted (Biswas et al., 2016; Young-Southward et al., 2017). Involvement of young people in the transition process is limited in general (Hetherington et al., 2010). For example, in Australia less than 60% of young people were directly involved in transition planning (Leonard et al., 2016). US research indicated poorer transition experiences and outcomes for females and their families (Hogansen et al., 2008).

Families often report transition stress and lack of support (Biswas et al., 2016; Codd & Hewitt, 2020; Jacobs et al., 2018; Leonard et al., 2016) as critical issues, especially where parents had to drive the transition process (Buchner et al., 2015). Family members also encountered barriers adjusting to their child becoming an adult and faced uncertainty about their role. A study from the United States that explored the lived experience of parents of adolescents with IDD participating in the transition process reported on parent perceptions related to the use or lack of person-centred practices, needing more communication from the team, frustration with being the

driving force of the progress, feelings of defeat, gaps between programming options, positive team collaboration and planning for the future (Benson et al., 2021). For the CR, parents of young persons with IDD in transition benefited from their engagement in the transition planning process. This helped parents perceive their children not only through their limitations due to their disabilities, but primarily through their individual strengths (Maštaliř, 2021).

Barriers and facilitators of successful transition

Barriers to and facilitators of *successful* transition vary based upon country and investigative focus. Analysis identified barriers and facilitators at different levels impacting different transition areas. These were organised under six key themes.

The transition process: Planning, preparation, collaboration and support

Starting early (not leaving planning until just before moving from school) is critical for successful transition (Kerr et al., 2020). Having a transition plan, goal setting and being involved in planning meetings with parents and teachers were important in both individual US studies and reviews/meta-analyses (Haber et al., 2016; Leonard et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2021; Ravenscroft et al., 2017). Preparation for transition took many forms and a lack of evidence-based programming and curricula meeting the needs of youth with various interests and skills negatively affected the possibility of mainstream employment and community living. These outcomes were also negatively impacted when transition programmes focused on preparing people for sheltered workshops or low-paying jobs in food and hospitality sectors (Snell-Rood et al., 2020). Conversely, post-school success and mainstream employment were facilitated by: vocational education; quality transition services focused on mainstream employment; work experience in mainstream workplaces; and programmes with close links to a successful disability employment service (Bigby & De Losa, 2021; Haber et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2021; Xu & Stancliffe, 2019).

Mentoring, peer assistance and video modelling were useful strategies for promoting transition skills (Rowe et al., 2021) and successful involvement in post-secondary education (Collet-Klingenberg & Kolb, 2011). Opportunities for student advocacy and supportive professionals also promoted post-school success and informed choice

(Mazzotti et al., 2021; Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). Promoting student self-determination through self-directed Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) has been shown to improve self-determination and knowledge of transition students (Seong et al., 2015).

Poor coordination and collaboration were barriers to: mainstream employment and community living in the United States (Snell-Rood et al., 2020); informed-choice making of young people in the United Kingdom (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014); and living and participating in the community as an active citizen in the EU (Šiška et al., 2017). In the CR, involvement of a social worker in the school transition process was important for a positive experience (Foltánová, 2012).

Nature of available jobs and recruitment processes

Australian research identified three barriers to mainstream employment for people with IDD (Moore et al., 2018; Xu & Stancliffe, 2019): limited availability of suitable jobs in mainstream employment; centralised recruitment processes of many companies offering suitable jobs (e.g., retail companies); and the focus on productivity/efficiency, making it difficult for people with IDD to develop their employment skills on the job. The changing US labour market and increasingly technological nature of jobs, plus the small number of the youth with IDD graduating from post-secondary education programmes, add to the challenges of obtaining employment (Sundar et al., 2018; Wehman et al., 2018). For the CR and for EU, data on employment are available for people with disabilities in general. It is not disaggregated by disability categories, which makes it difficult to monitor progress to be able to evaluate the efficacy of policy and programmes targeted at persons with IDD in particular. In the United Kingdom, one survey that controlled for type of disability found that workers with 'a learning difficulty, psychological or emotional condition' were most likely to experience unfair treatment at work (Coleman et al., 2014; p. 40).

Expectations and attitudes

In the CR and United Kingdom, low expectations and disabling practices of professionals were barriers to successful partnerships between students, parents and mainstream schools, and to youth with IDD experiencing real choice and control (Buchner et al., 2015; Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). US investigations indicate that the feeling of success by youth with IDD in post-secondary life is

linked to parent and professional expectations and support (Doren et al., 2012; Harwick et al., 2017; Hoffman & Kirby, 2022).

Additional US research indicates that the relationship between attitudes and expectations is complex. Parents expect paid, competitive employment, but also value qualitative aspects of the workplace (e.g., goodness-of-fit, opportunities for social interaction) over common employment outcome metrics (e.g., pay and hours). They also express concerns about their child's future employment success and their ability to achieve what they desire (Blustein et al., 2016). Chen et al. (2019) found that parents' hopes were impacted by fears, uncertainty, realistic expectations and perceived lack of support. Other US research (Holwerda et al., 2015) found educators' expectations are more closely linked to post-school employment and post-secondary education than those of parents, and that the expectations of youth with IDD are often higher than their parents' (Kelley & Prohn, 2019).

Parental and teacher expectations are also linked to preparations for post-school life. Parent expectations for financial independence were associated with discussions with youth with IDD about employment and careers (Holmes et al., 2018). Test et al. (2009) and Doren et al. (2012) found that parental expectations influence employment options, experiences, and outcomes for youth with IDD. Other US research indicates that while important, attitudes and expectations are not as closely linked to post-school outcomes, as adaptive behaviour competencies (Dell'Armo & Tassé, 2019).

Available options, information, resources and expertise

Lack of available options after school, especially for inclusive employment, was a barrier to transition to adult roles and post-school activities in all of four countries (Leonard et al., 2016; Sundar et al., 2018; Wehman et al., 2018). Limited resources and expertise during transition manifested as: (a) lack of human resources in CR schools, with those available doing administrative tasks rather than working directly with students (Foltánová, 2012); (b) lack of US teaching and support staff with the right preparation, knowledge or skills to support people with IDD in transition (Wong, 2016), (c) lack of familiarity by parents with transition-related resources available in their communities (Schutz et al., 2022), and (d) lack of competitive integrated employment opportunities and supports (Wehman et al., 2018).

While the United States is a champion of inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) for people with IDD,

low retention and completion rates of youth with IDD in post-secondary education have been attributed to inadequate system preparedness regarding disability awareness, poor fit of advisors and quality of support services (Harwick et al., 2017; Hoffman & Kirby, 2022). Wehman et al. (2018) noted that changes in thinking about whether post-secondary education is appropriate for youth with IDD require that these students and families have the information and experiences needed to evaluate its appropriateness and desirability and the funding to do so.

Lack of affordable and accessible transportation and limited options for youth to live away from their parents (Collet-Klingenberg & Kolb, 2011; Noel et al., 2017) are also barriers to employment, independent living, and post-secondary education in the United States. In Australia, lack of training in independent public transportation skills was a barrier to employment (Brotherton & Tuckerman, 2022; Xu & Stancliffe, 2019). Limited awareness of resources by parents, difficulty accessing resources (e.g., long waiting lists for services) and service mismatches (Hoffman & Kirby, 2022) also contribute to the challenges in achieving positive transition outcomes.

Other US employment barriers are policy related. The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programme is linked to low employment rates, especially for low-skill and low paying jobs (Burkhauser & Daly, 2011; Sundar et al., 2018). Participation in SSDI or the Social Security Income (SSI) programmes may be a disincentive to pursue employment due to reductions in or loss of benefits, including healthcare (Houtenville & Brucker, 2013; Sundar et al., 2018).

Characteristics of young people

US research has focused on characteristics that facilitate or impede successful transition outcomes. Students' skill and autonomy development, including independent living, social, self-determination, self-advocacy, decision-making skills and psychological empowerment predict successful transition and post-school success (Kerr et al., 2020; Mazzotti et al., 2021; Rowe et al., 2021). Failure to self-identify and request supports to prepare for college and employment, and poorly developed social, coping and self-care skills are linked to poor outcomes in post-secondary education and work (Lipscomb et al., 2017). Poor coping and self-regulation skills impact transition to independent and community living (Hoffman & Kirby, 2022). Families reported that the limited cognitive or social skills and personal responsibility made it hard to plan and identify post-school options

resulting in families being more reliant on professionals, which itself was a barrier (Biswas et al., 2016).

Involvement and strength of families and whether they are equipped to support transition

Families' role and whether they have the resources/support needed to participate and where necessary lead the transition process was important across all four countries. Parental involvement in transition and positive expectations for their son/daughter was key in post-school success, including post-secondary education, employment, living in the community and transition to adult life (Hoffman & Kirby, 2022; Kerr et al., 2020; Mazzotti et al., 2021; Rossetti et al., 2016).

Families of youth with higher support needs often relied on professional services to facilitate their family member's development but available support was a lacking (Biswas et al., 2016). For the United Kingdom, the 18-year-old cut off for many services was reported by families to create a culture of exclusion with differences in the viewpoints of parents and professionals associated with conflict and unsatisfactory experiences.

Research shows better transition outcomes when families have the ability/resources to compensate for lack of support and low expectations at school. When families received more information about financial assistance, the school transition programme, and building informal community-based supports, they participated more and had a good experience of transition planning in Australia (Leonard et al., 2016). Post-secondary education outcomes were better when families advocated for the young adult during transition and while in college (Hoffman & Kirby, 2022).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper reports on research on transition of young people with IDD from school to adulthood in four countries. Differences in terminology, policy, and the availability of literature in each country make cross-country comparisons challenging, so we focused on what we could learn across these countries regarding transition policies, practices and outcomes.

Transition definitions included the 'triad' of employment, further education, and independent/community living. This was partly due to most research coming from the United States, where these three components are the primary focus of policy and funding. However, some policy and research identified a broader conceptualisation. The official US definition of transition includes adult

services and community participation. In the United Kingdom, relationships, decision-making, and health were also key aspects, and in CR, active citizenship was important. Australia does not currently have a legislative definition of transition.

There may be advantages to taking a broader view of transition grounded in the developmental literature. Scales et al. (2016) identified eight core dimensions of successful youth development. These dimensions include social, psychological, behavioural, educational, occupational, health, ethical and civic. However, these authors also point out, whatever dimensions of developmental success are used, they may not be valid for all individuals, especially those who experience various forms of diversity. Similarly, Beadle-Brown et al. (2023) argue that the Quality-of-Life Framework may be useful for exploring transition success. The Framework they proposed is based on the eight Quality-of-Life domains originally put forward by Schalock and Verdugo (2002). It aims to give services a clear vision of what they should be working towards helping people achieve, at the same time as ensuring they focus on each person in a person-centred way and understand the factors that influence Quality-of-Life.

There was little research that focused on approaches to transition support and its effectiveness either in the short-term or on a longitudinal basis—the limited findings tended to vary in terms of the nature of the transition approaches, the definitions of transition success (outcomes), and the methodology used.

Little research focused on young people's transition experiences, with mostly a negative picture marked by the lack of involvement, stress and low expectations (of teachers, professionals and sometimes parents). Unquestioned acceptance of these low expectations led to funnelling students into segregated, adult disability-service programmes. These traditional pathways often result in segregation and dependence, spuriously 'justifying' the low expectations that initially shaped the pathway. One important facilitator of successful transition is therefore setting high expectations and provision of high-quality supports (Brotherton & Tuckerman, 2022), to motivate youth (and those around them) to see challenging goals as achievable.

Other facilitators of successful transition, irrespective of the outcome examined, included: the involvement, strength and resources of families; skills of young people themselves; availability of a variety of options post-school; accessible information, and expertise in the workforce; and a collaborative transition process from as early as possible, with the young person involved as an active participant throughout. Specific to employment, having work experience focused on integrated employment was

key. A limited range of job possibilities and lack of accommodation and time for development once employed often meant people with IDD failed to get or keep employment.

Transition barriers and facilitators to successful adulthood were similar to research findings on other life transitions (e.g., primary to secondary school). Ravenscroft et al. (2017) explored successful transition within schools in eight European countries and found four core factors: ‘a child inclusive ethos’, ‘child autonomy and involvement’, ‘parental involvement’, and ‘transition planning and coordination’. There may be common elements of good transition support that could be applied to any transition.

We found a lack of available transition support options and that information about availability was not always accessible to young people and families. The importance of *mainstream* work placements could extend to other areas—community participation, leisure, living arrangements, etc. Meaningful involvement in decisions about their own future, requires experience of the options available.

In conclusion, this review identified gaps in the research evidence. Firstly, there is inadequate collection and use of data (whether official statistics or research data) to drive policy and determine effectiveness.

- *Summative longitudinal data* following youth post-transition over 5–10 years with a focus on employment, independent living, active citizenship, and post-secondary education.
- *Formative data*. Psychometrically sound *progress monitoring systems* for understanding students' growth *while they are still participating in transition programming* do not currently exist. Schools typically use are simple checklists with unknown validity that vary between schools. Consequently, when some youth fail to acquire needed competencies we do not understand this until **after** they leave the programme.

Secondly, there are limited evidence-based models or frameworks for successful transition. In many countries' frameworks do not exist or are inadequately conceptualised. In the United States, there are many models but only one that has adequate effectiveness data.

Thirdly, there is a gap concerning post-secondary education. Most future employment will require more than a high school education. Little is known of the involvement and outcomes of young adults with disabilities in Career & Technical Education (CTE) programmes or other vocational training. Current CTE programmes are not equipped to support students with IDD and other disabilities, and there is little understanding of how to effectively support these trainees.

Finally, there was little transition research that included the voices of young people with IDD. US transition research tends to be quantitative, providing limited opportunity for student voices. One isolated study (Ankeny & Lehmann, 2010) examined self-determination of students with disabilities through their own experiences in a secondary transition programme on a community college campus. Most Australian studies are based on parent and professional reports, with just one example of student voice being captured (Bigby & De Losa, 2021). UK transition studies representing student voice are also sparse (Pearson et al., 2021; Small et al., 2013). A few Czech studies on varied topics capture the student voice, including Šiška et al. (2017) and Buchner et al. (2015).

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. Because we aimed at mapping transition practices, research and policy across four countries, the scope of the literature we were able to cover was limited compared to conducting a more involved scoping or systematic review. Similarly, we were able to highlight certain practices, policies and research or lack there off, however, could not provide a complete picture of transition in each of the four countries. Because transition is defined differently in the countries covered and not all countries include transition as part of education or other legislation, we had to conceptualise transition in broad terms for this review. In addition, given that there are differences between the number of publications on transition between the countries with the United States having the most, some of the sections contain more detailed information based on the US context, compared to for example the Czech Republic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

More research is needed to identify the impact of transition programmes on a broader range of outcomes, capturing the experiences of young people themselves and identifying factors that determine successful outcomes. As highlighted by studies such as Xu and Stancliffe (2019), and Brotherton and Tuckerman (2022), there are clear implications for future research and practice. For example, in order to identify facilitators of successful transition it would be helpful to study the practices of highly successful programmes. Secondly, funders should actively monitor programme outcomes and require modification to, or closure of, programmes with repeated poor performance. Finally, people with IDD and their families deserve access to clear service outcome data to inform

their choice of programme. Improving the evidence-base and practice related to transition for young people with IDD would have significant impact on their quality of life and that of their families.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

All authors declare no conflicts of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors confirm that all the research meets ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

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