

The Power Of Collaboration:

Promoting High-Quality Transition Planning Through Effective Partnerships

Lizzie Juaniza-Saso, Extension Associate

Jessica Elliott, Extension Associate, Project Director

Kimberly J. Osmani, Senior Extension Associate, Program Director

Yang-Tan Institute on Disability and Employment, Cornell University's ILR School



ILR School

**K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan
Institute on Employment and Disability**

About the Institute

The Yang-Tan Institute works to advance the inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities in the workplace and community. Our research, training, and technical support expands knowledge about disability inclusion, leading to positive change.

Copyright © Cornell University. All rights reserved.



Cornell University overlooking Cayuga Lake in the fall, from the air.

Yang-Tan Institute's Mission

We are working toward a world where people with disabilities are fully included in the workplace and community by advancing knowledge, policies, and practices that enhance equal opportunities for all people with disabilities.



What Is Transition Planning?

- Transition planning is an ongoing process that is student-centered, culturally responsive, and a collaborative effort to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school.
- Transition planning includes the following student-focused questions:

Where are you now?

Where do you want to go?

How do you get there?

My First Jobs (1 of 2)

1. On your sheet of paper, number it from 1-10 (or more as you go).
2. Write down in order every paid job you have held (on and off the books).
3. Write down how old you were with your very first job.



My First Jobs (2 of 2)

**Jot down ages of
16 and 18 next to
the jobs (or
younger).**

**How/why did you
get your first job?**

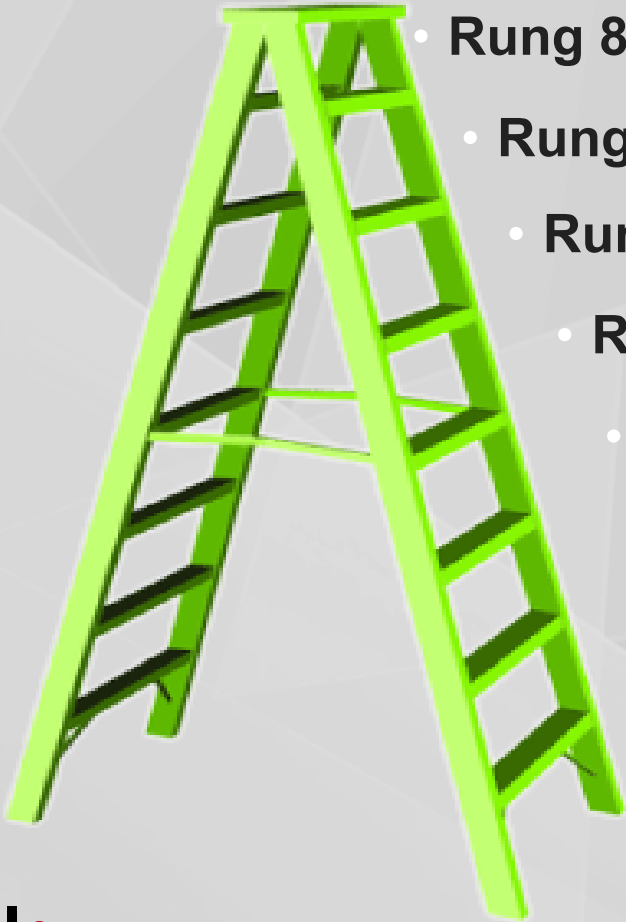
**What/who
influenced some of
the changes in
jobs?**

**Are you where you
thought you would
be at age 16? 18?
After college?**

Words Related to Collaboration



Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



- **Rung 8:** Young people and adults share decision-making
- **Rung 7:** Young people lead and initiate action
- **Rung 6:** Participation is adult-initiated with shared decisions with young people
- **Rung 5:** Young people are consulted and informed
- **Rung 4:** Young people are assigned and informed
- **Rung 3:** Young people are tokenized*
- **Rung 2:** Young people are decoration*
- **Rung 1:** Young people are manipulated*

**Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation.*

Youth-Adult Rubric

Dimension 1: Authentic Decision Making

Youth are involved in meaningful decision making.

Dimension 2: Natural Mentors

Adults intentionally support relationships with youth.

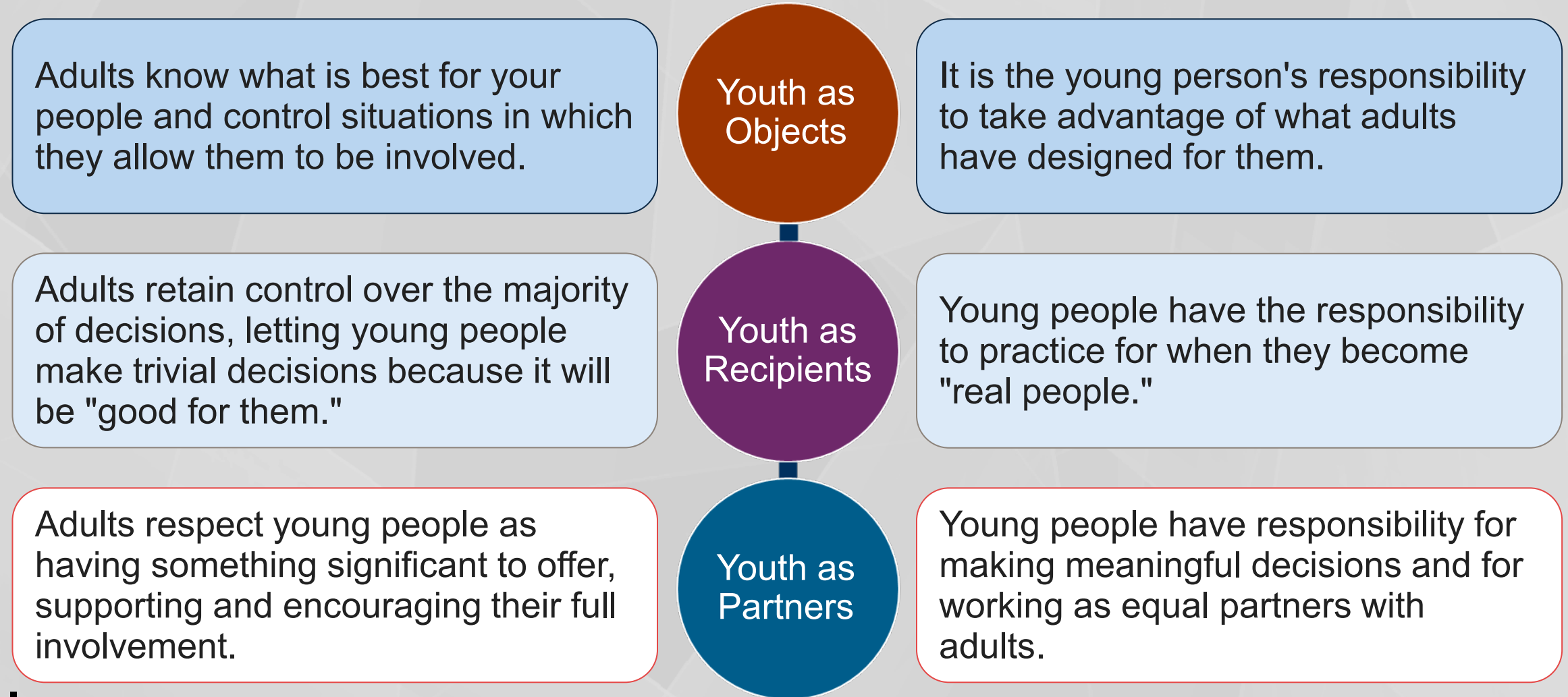
Dimension 3: Reciprocity

Youth and adults work together as partners.

Dimension 4: Community Connectedness

Youth are engaged in communities.

Spectrum of Adult Attitudes



Transition Planning Is A Collaborative Partnership

- As students with disabilities transition to adult life, collaboration among students, families, educators, and community agencies is crucial. This collaboration allows for the provision of necessary supports and services to facilitate a successful transition from school to work.
- Providers and families have the best knowledge of the student's:
 - current levels of abilities;
 - strengths and needs;
 - supports and accommodations that work; and
 - next steps.



Federal Requirements

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Schools are mandated to invite agencies who are providing or paying for transition services to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting.

Rehabilitation Act—Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies must allocate 15% of their federal funding toward paying for or providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

WIOA Title I Youth Program

States must allocate a minimum of 75% of the Youth funds on out-of-school youth and no less than 20% must be used for paid and unpaid work experiences.

Service Coordination and Transition

Interagency collaboration can be vital because some transition age students are involved in multiple systems.

- Coordination of services and supports can require increased information sharing, cross agency referrals, and more.
- For instance, students might simultaneously be involved in one or more systems such as: education, VR, social security, juvenile justice, foster care, developmental disability, or mental health.

Networking Activity

Indicate the region in
which you do most of
your work.



Systems Collaboration Study

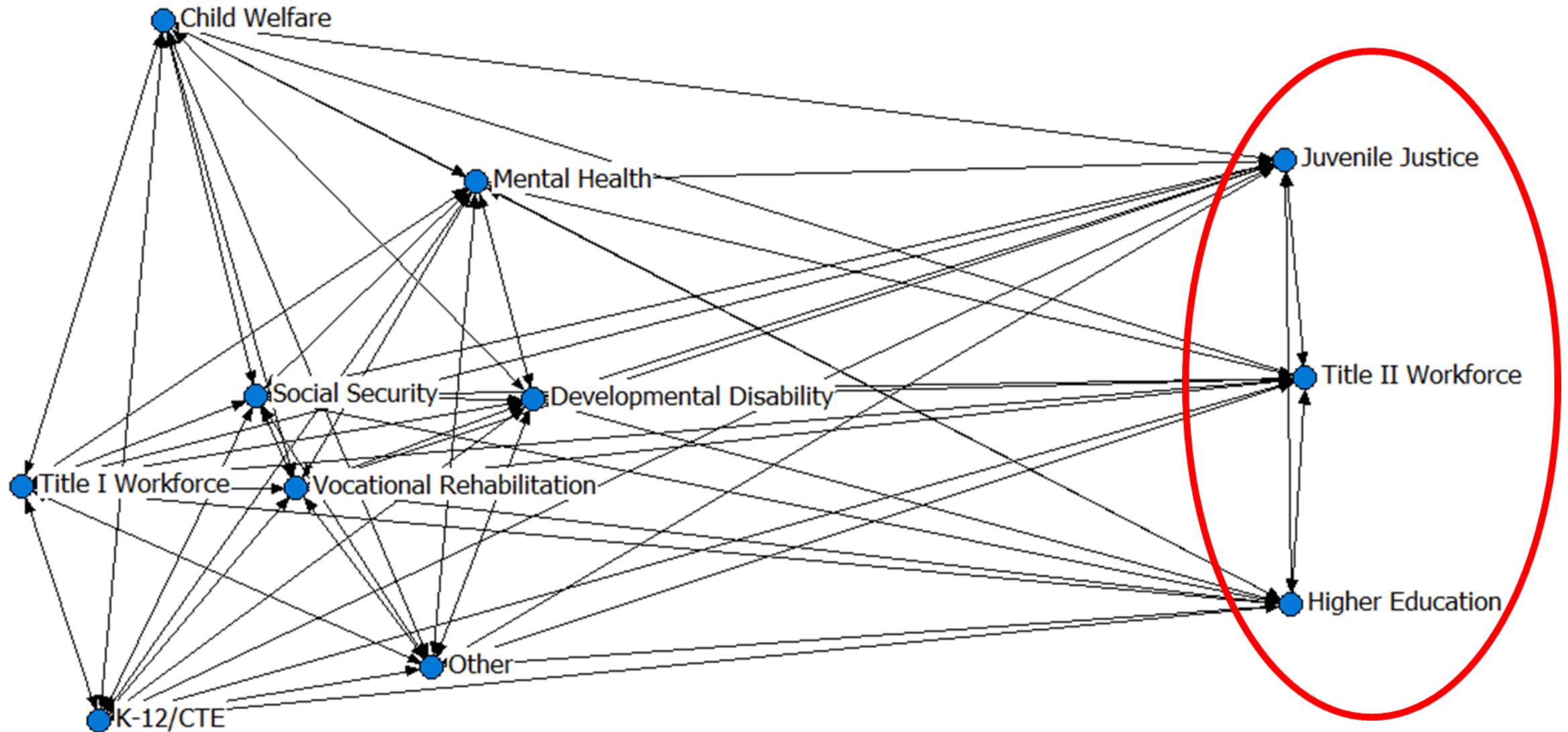
The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth (CAPE-Youth)

Research Question: What are existing levels of collaboration among agencies serving transitioning youth and young adults with disabilities (Y&YAD)? What common features are present in states showing strong collaborations?

Phase 1: Surveyed supervisors and “frontline” service providers across key agencies in all 50 states and compared with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)-911 data

Phase 2: Conducted focus group interviews with a subset of professionals in 10 states (1 state per federal region)

Identifying Gaps in Collaboration



Poll- Collaboration

Select the agencies/partners in which you have high levels of collaboration (e.g., coordinated services, braided funding, data sharing, cross referrals).



Creating a Network of Supports

The IRIS Center (2016)



Establishing Interagency Collaboration (1 of 2)

Stage	Definition	Example
Networking	<p>The transition coordinator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finds and develops contacts with agency personnel.• Shares information with students and families about what an agency does.• Shares general information with agency personnel about students' needs.	<p>A transition coordinator shares information about local VR services with a student and their family.</p>
Coordination	<p>The transition coordinator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assists the student and family access necessary community resources.• Is actively involved in arranging appointments and ensuring that the student receives the intended services.	<p>After meeting with a student and their family, the transition coordinator arranges a meeting with the school's VR representative to discuss the student's future goals towards employment.</p>

Establishing Interagency Collaboration (2 of 2)

Stage	Definition	Example
Cooperation	<p>The school and agency personnel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interact on a regular basis, even though this might be short-term.• Share information and expertise.• Establish and define their roles, schedule meetings, and identify and work toward shared goals.	<p>The transition coordinator works with the VR representative for the school to share the workload related to students preparing for their post-school goals. The transition coordinator helps the students work on their transition portfolios while the VR representative conducts the pre-vocational assessments and interest inventories with students.</p>
Collaboration	<p>Teams composed of school personnel and representatives from community agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop new programs to improve outcomes for students with disabilities• Identify needs in their community and create solutions to meet these needs.	<p>The school and VR develop a program that allows shared funding for transition services. As a result, several VR personnel are housed locally in the high schools to provide direct transition services.</p>

Guidelines for Practice— Improving Collaboration

Clarify	Establish	Provide	Engage	Overcome
Clarify roles and responsibilities—define the roles.	Establish regular meetings to improve coordination and accountability.	Provide training as needed.	Engage students and families—encourage active involvement.	Overcome logistical barriers—establish normed systems for scheduling and follow-up.

Facilitating Collaborative Conversations

- Identify a primary contact person both at the school and at appropriate agencies.
- Connect with students and families to discuss services other agencies may provide, and gather documentation for the referral process.
- Develop a plan with the student and school for coordinating appropriate services.
- Coordinate activities with the others as needed.
 - This could include informational sessions for families, students, and educators, determining a process for referrals, and identifying a schedule and space for meetings and activities.

Deepening Collaborative Engagement

- Connect with a local partners to dive further into services offered, and discuss specific students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP), assessments, accommodations, etc.
- Invite or ask to be invited (either virtually or in-person) to the CSE meeting.
 - If you can't attend, offer ways you can share important updates (e.g., referral/application information, documentation of student progress, feedback from a job coach).
- Ensure shared information is incorporated into the IEP so everyone is on the same page.
 - Include content in the Present Levels of Performance and the Coordinated Set of Transition Activities.
- Provide opportunities for continuous two-way communication outside of the CSE meeting.

What's working?

- What strategies or techniques do you currently use or have used in the past to effectively engage with partners?
- What has helped you sustain and model positive collaborative relationships?



Resources

- [A National Study on State-Level Interagency Collaboration](#)
- [CAPE-Youth](#)
- [National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative \(NTACT: C\) Interagency Agreement Toolkit](#)
- [NTACT: C Interagency Collaboration Training Module](#)
- [NTACT: C Interagency Collaboration Resources and State Examples](#)
- [Utah State Systemic Improvement Plan to Streamline Service Coordination](#)

References

Illinois Center for Transition and Work. n.d. Communicating Interagency Relationships and Collaborative Linkages for Exceptional Students (CIRCLES). Retrieved from [https://ictw.illinois.edu/resources/research-briefs/pathways/communicating-interagency-relationships-and-collaborative-linkages-for-exceptional-students-\(circles\)](https://ictw.illinois.edu/resources/research-briefs/pathways/communicating-interagency-relationships-and-collaborative-linkages-for-exceptional-students-(circles))

The IRIS Center. (2016). Secondary transition: Interagency collaboration. Retrieved from <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tran-ic/>

Activity: Ask it Basket

When I think about promoting high-quality transition planning through collaboration with agencies and community partners, one question or concern I have is...



Thank You!

Lizzie Juaniza-Saso, ej252@cornell.edu

Jessica Elliott, je349@cornell.edu

Kimberly J. Osmani, kosmani@cornell.edu



ILR School

**K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan
Institute on Employment and Disability**