

# Disability Inclusion, Intersectionality, and Knowledge Translation

KTDRR's 2024 Virtual KT Conference  
October 15, 16, and 18

Center on  
**KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION FOR  
DISABILITY & REHABILITATION RESEARCH**



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# Exposing Invisible Walls

*Understanding Transition for Students with  
Disabilities and Undocumented Immigration Status*

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# **Exposing Invisible Walls:**

*Understanding Transition for Students with Disabilities  
and Undocumented Immigration Status*

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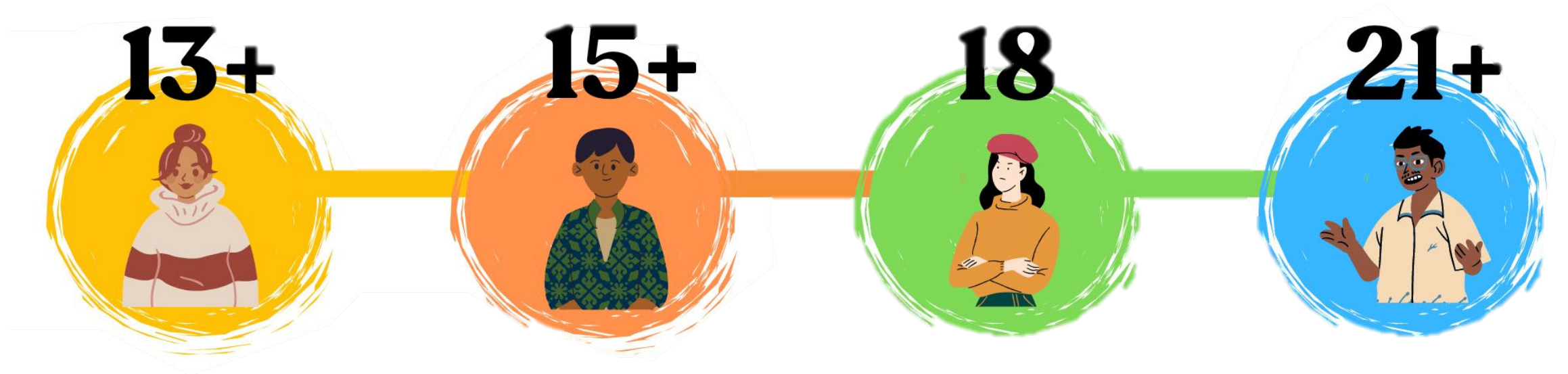
## About Us

Our Boggs Center, cross-team project is exploring the intersection of disability and immigration status. Please reach out and become part of a community that seeks to better understand the unique challenges inherent in transition to adulthood and employment for those who are undocumented and have disabilities.



## Secondary Transition is a Critical Period

Law, research, and practice suggest this is a critical period that requires targeted and specific support to lead to successful outcomes in adulthood.



## Secondary Transition Services

The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** guarantees a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** to prepare for adult life.

**Transition services** are a results-oriented process to facilitate the movement from school to post-school activities.

- Further education (*postsecondary, vocational, continuing and adult education*)
- Integrated employment (*including supported employment*)
- Independent living and community participation
- Adult services



## Secondary Transition Services

In practice, **secondary transition services** often do not account for the adult lives of undocumented students with disabilities.

Educators providing transition services often:

- Default to Euro-American cultural beliefs (Individualism, Capitalism)
- Presume students will have the ability to access “eligibility-based adult services”
- Presume families have equal capital for participation
- Default to resources and connections convenient to the school versus those that are used by or useful to students/families





# What does it mean to be Undocumented?

- All immigrants who reside in the United States without legal status
- Other terms used are aliens, unauthorized and illegal\* immigrants

**Entered  
without  
presenting at a  
port**

**Entered with  
Legal Status  
but Overstayed  
Visa**

**Deferred  
Action for  
Childhood  
arrivals (DACA)**

**Currently in  
process of  
legalizing  
documentation  
status**

## How many people are Undocumented?

- Roughly 10.5 million people (3% of the US population)

## How many people with disabilities are undocumented?

- It is unclear for many reasons (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982).

## The Undocumented Experience

- Fear is Endemic
- Liminality Translates to Reality
- Parental Sacrificios is Capital
- Acompañamiento is Mentorship

Aguilar, C. (2019). "Undocumented Critical Theory." *Cultural Studies <-> Critical Methodologies*, 19(3): 152–160.

## Undocumented X Disabled

- Fear X Othering
- Liminality X Complex Systems
- In/Visibility
- Acompañamiento X Care Communities

Padía, L. B., & Traxler, R. E. (2021). *Traerás tus Documentos (you will bring your documents): navigating the intersections of disability and citizenship status in special education. Race, Ethnicity and Education, 24(5), 687–702.*

## Challenges at the Intersection

- Systemic barriers:
  - Deportation and family separation
  - Health and economic insecurity and inaccessibility
  - Limited navigational capital
  - Uncoordinated services and supports
  - Heightened anti-immigrant sentiment
- Observed consequences:
  - Under-reported needs, decreased enrollment



## Our Legal/Ethical Obligations

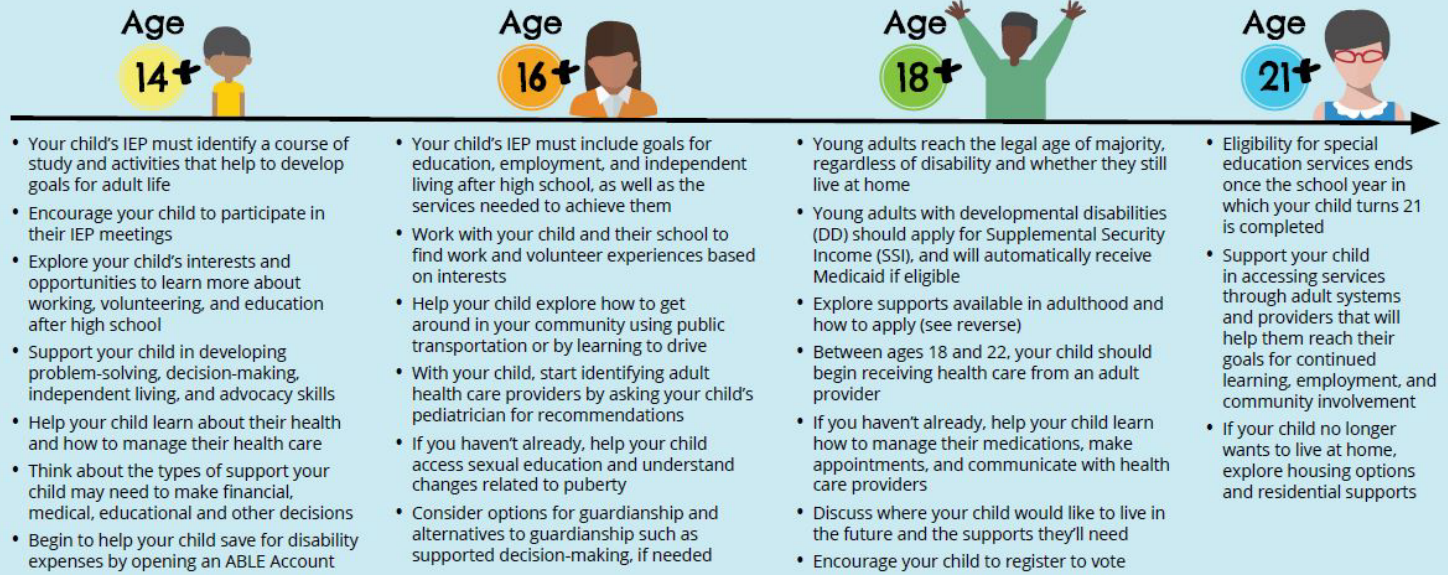
- IDEA (2004)
  - Legally bound to provide ALL students [FAPE]
  - Quality, relevant transition supports
- Competitive Integrated Employment (Employment First)
  - Cannot support “under-the-table” work
  - Can support Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) into employment
  - Can support obtaining (ITIN), connecting services/groups for Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)/employment



# Handout: BC Transition to Adulthood Timeline

## Transition to Adulthood for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Timeline for Parents

**Transitions** occur in many areas of life as adolescents become young adults. These transitions might include movement from school to work or postsecondary education, the shift from pediatric to adult health care, and leaving the family home. For students with disabilities, preparation for transition should begin by age 14 and focus on academic instruction, community experiences, employment, daily living skills, and exploration of supports needed for success in adult life. This timeline identifies considerations in planning for transition by age, from 14 to the end of your child's educational entitlement at 21.



**National Transition Resources**

**Transition Planning**

- Charting the Life Course: <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>
- National Parent Center on Transition & Employment: <https://www.pacer.org/transition/>

**Employment**

- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE): <https://apse.org/>

**Financial Savings**

- ABLE National Resource Center: <http://ablenrc.org>

**Health**

- Got Transition: <https://www.gottransition.org/>

**Post-secondary Education**

- Think College: <https://www.thinkcollege.net/>

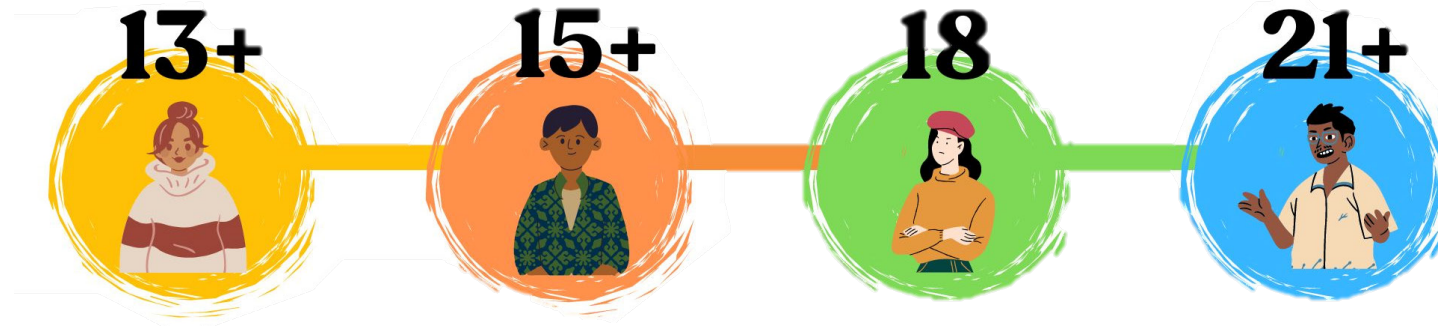
**Supported Decision Making**

- National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making: <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>





# Transition to Adult



## Transition to Adulthood for Young, **Undocumented** Adults with Disabilities

## GAPS & ISSUES

Unlikely to receive information regarding changing migratory status through school channels

Unlikely to receive transition supports linked to their authentic communities

A Social Security Number is needed to access VR services

Medicaid is needed to access DD services. New [LPR] have a 5-year delay to access Medicaid

Families may have concerns taking part in the bureaucratic IEP process

Potential concerns around bringing in “more people” into transition planning

Coming of majority brings opportunities around migratory status unknown to schools/families

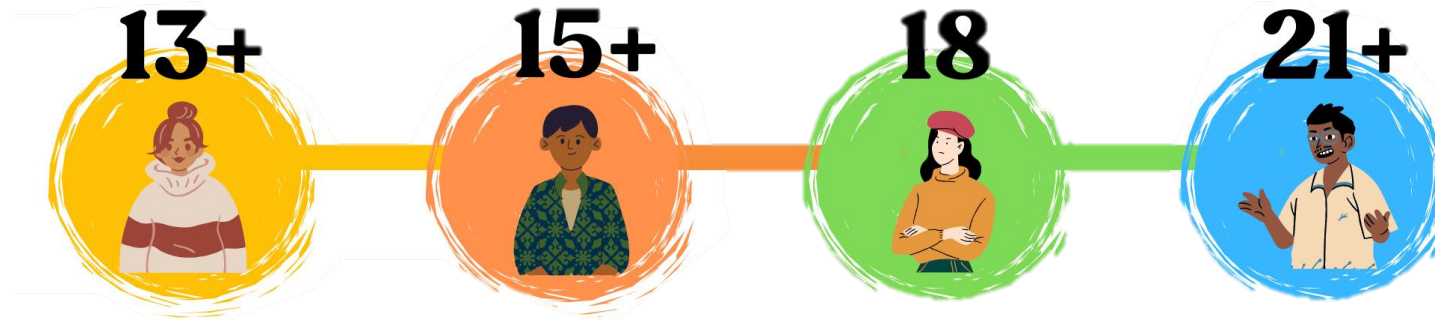
Those seeking to go to college may have challenges obtaining loans

Healthcare, Legal, Financial and Post-Secondary Connections Needed!





# Transition to Adult (continued)



## Transition to Adulthood for Young, **Undocumented** Adults with Disabilities

Resources can be shared with families for obtaining Legal Permanent Resident (LPR)

Individuals can be eligible for Medicaid 5 years after obtaining LPR. It is important to start early (lengthy process)

A student’s migratory status can be considered when coordinating services and supports (DACA, etc.)

Legal resources are useful for students and their families at this stage

## WHAT WE CAN DO

School-based services may begin phasing out. Familiarize students and families with traditional support services as well as connections to community resources for immigrant families.

Options exist for undocumented individuals to receive work authorization cards. Legal consult recommended.

NJ Comprehensive Access State—provides in-state tuition & financial aid.

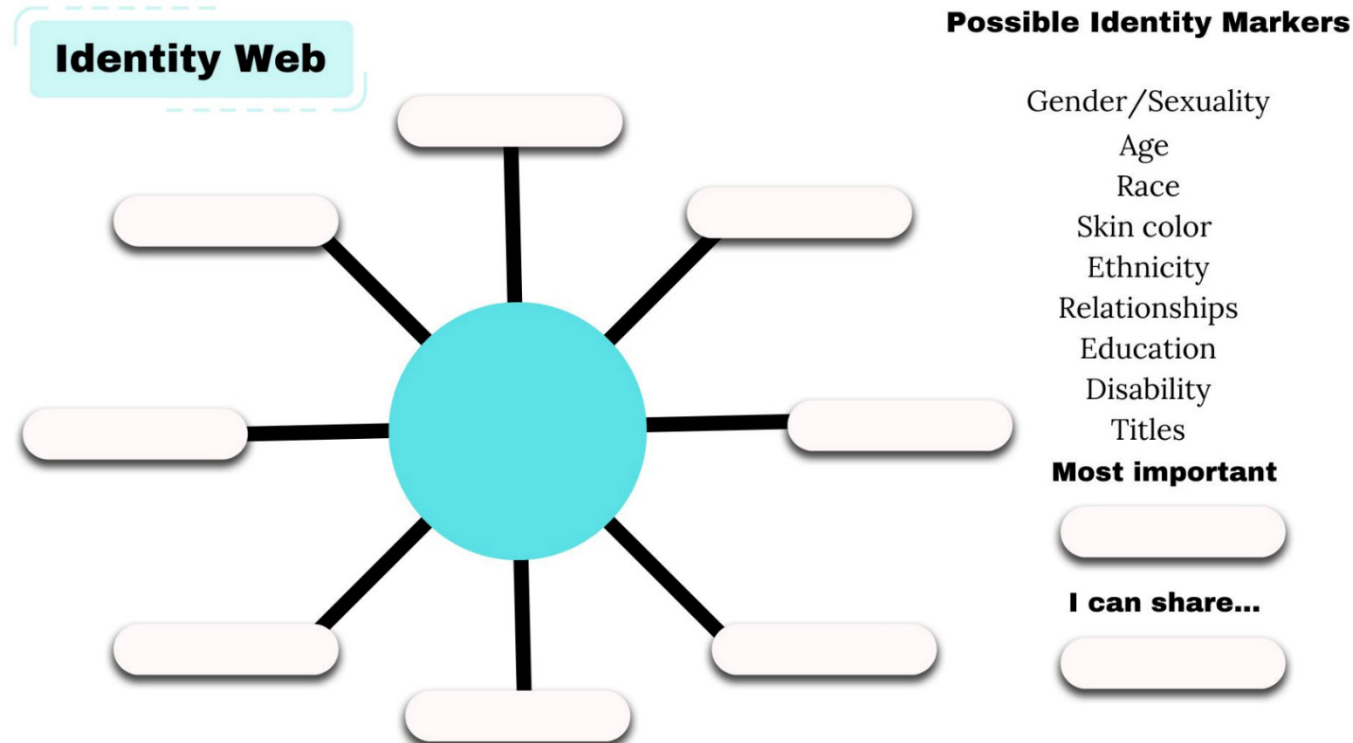
Culturally Responsive Practices: Build Trust with Families  
Access Rich Communities: Language and Information Considerations





# Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive practices bridge the educational gap by valuing and using individuals' cultures, languages, and experiences in their classrooms and communities.



## Build Trust and Respect with Families

- Invite interpreters and cultural liaisons to join teams
- Demonstrate commitment to shared decision-making and advocacy that empowers families
- Be reliable and dependable
- Respectful, nonjudgmental, and nondiscriminatory behavior & communication



# Identify, Access, and Use Formal and Informal Resources and Supports

- Conduct Community Resource & Asset Mapping
- Provide meaningful community-based instruction opportunities in students' communities
- Facilitate connections between immigrant-serving community organizations and families

## Community Mapping

This activity will help you and your allies understand your life right now and what you want for the future. Explore your community to learn more about the place you live. Make a list of places in your community that match your interests and vision for your future.

Here are a few questions to get you started:

Where could you get a gym membership?

Where is the closest emergency room/urgent care center for medical emergencies?

Where would you go for food shopping?

Where is your bank?

A form for community mapping. It features a red location pin icon at the top left. Below it are ten horizontal input bars, each preceded by a yellow circular marker. The first bar is partially filled with a grey bar, while the others are empty.



## Language & Information Considerations

Considering that schools and formal support services can be considered an “extension” of policing/ surveillance:

- Documentation
- Registration
- Language accessibility
- Student/Family Rights
- More?





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# Pre-Employment Transition Services

All students with disabilities, **regardless of immigration status**, are eligible to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) as needed.

NJ DVRS referral forms for students are currently being updated to remove the Social Security question.

The new forms are now **available** on the NJDOL Pre-ETS website.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
**Pre-ETS Student Referral**  
Pre-Employment Transition Services

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referral taken by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\* = required field

Last Name\* \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name\* \_\_\_\_\_  
Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Honoric (i.e., Jr., Sr., II, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred Pronoun \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Date\* \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender\*  Male  Female  
 Do not wish to self-identify

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_

Your race/ethnicity (Check all that apply)  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian  
 Black or African American  
 Hispanic or Latino  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 White  
 Do not wish to self-identify

Language(s)\* (Check all that apply)  
 English  Spanish  Vietnamese  
 American Sign Language  Braille  
 Large Print English  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Need interpreter?  Yes  No

Preferred communication format\*  
 Phone  Email  Mail  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate communication format\*  
 Phone  Email  Mail  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_



## What More Can We Do

- Review forms and omit any requests for information for immigration status, parental birthplace, or [SSN]
- Develop procedures for immigration requests from law enforcement/ICE and communicate these to families and to teachers
- Identify local policies that protect transition programs as sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants



## Your Call to Action

- Ensure that staff are trained on immigrants' legal rights
- Invite lawyers and advocates to provide free or low-cost legal services to assist families with navigating immigration law
- Offer English classes and interpreter services to families
- Hire multi-lingual and multi-cultural staff





**Q&A**

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