



Systematic Review: Forms of Family Involvement in Post School Transition Program Planning for Students with Disabilities

Muhammad Bakhtiar Safari

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*corresponding author email: muhammadbakhtiar.2022@student.uny.ac.id

Article history:

Received : Dec, 15 2024

Revised : Mar, 14 2025

Accepted : Jun, 17 2025

Abstract: This study explores the role of family involvement in the planning and implementation of post-school transition programs for students with disabilities through a systematic literature review (SLR) using a qualitative approach. Data were obtained from three databases: ScienceDirect, Scopus, and ERIC Journal. The results of the study show that family involvement focuses on decision-making, emotional support, and collaboration with education professionals. Active parental involvement in decision-making has been shown to improve students' readiness for further education or the workforce. Emotional support in the form of motivation, stress management, positive communication, and a stable home environment helps students navigate the transition period with confidence. Communication barriers between families and professionals remain a major challenge that can hinder optimal involvement. This study also highlights the often overlooked role of siblings in the transition process. The article recommends communication training for parents and professionals and the use of digital platforms to facilitate information sharing.

Keywords: *family involvement, transition programs, students with disabilities.*

I. Introduction

Students with disabilities face many problems and challenges in the educational process. In addition to academic, behavioral, and social challenges, there are also problems in undergoing the transition process during the educational process. This is due to biological changes in addition to cultural and educational evolution, which make children with disabilities feel difficulty in undergoing the school transition period (Aldosiry et al., 2021). Furthermore, the difficulties faced by students with disabilities during the transition period are exacerbated by low levels of participation, knowledge, and understanding among families particularly parents regarding transition services for children with disabilities (Dinati, 2019).

Transition services are a series of coordinated activities specifically designed for students with disabilities to help them achieve their post-school educational goals (Hagiwara et al., 2019). Transition services have a very broad and diverse scope, but this article focuses on post-school transition services. The importance of post-school transition for students with disabilities as an effort to help students with disabilities develop life skills to achieve independence (Hagiwara et al., 2019); enhancing participation in the workforce (Francis et al., 2018); reducing social disparities (Shogren et al., 2020); and improving the psychological well-being of individuals with disabilities (Zeedyk & McVilly, 2021).

A report by the International Labor Organization (ILO) shows that the global employment rate for people with disabilities is still low compared to that of people without disabilities, at 36% (ILO, 2020). In Indonesia, according to the 2022 report by the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), the employment rate for people with disabilities of working age remains at 26%, meaning that out of 100 people with disabilities, only around 26 have employment (Central Statistics Agency, 2022). One of the main causes of the low labor force participation of people with disabilities is the lack of structured post-school transition programs focused on developing work skills tailored to individual needs (Martika & Prakoso, 2022).

Post-school transition services for students with disabilities should ideally be conducted collaboratively, involving multiple parties including classroom teachers, psychologists, families, communities, students, and other stakeholders involved in the educational process, while continuing to prioritize individual needs and taking into account the preferences, strengths, and interests of the child (Education Law Center, 2022).

A strong collaborative partnership between schools, families, and the community is crucial in promoting successful outcomes for students with disabilities and is a key feature of the framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating transition services (Talapatra et al., 2019). The benefits of collaborative partnerships in planning transition programs for students with disabilities are significant, including assisting in the provision of trainers, providing support in the form of facilities and infrastructure, assisting in funding, and building mutual agreements to support students during the transition period (Francis et al., 2019).

The importance of family involvement in transition program planning as an effort to reduce service gaps and errors, reduce service duplication, reduce conflicts, and reduce service costs (Collier et al., 2015). Additionally, involving families in transition program planning for students with disabilities is an effort to obtain information about students' initial abilities, assist in planning educational services, facilitate collaboration between schools and the community, and help children find job opportunities or determine further education after graduation (Unggul, 2020). Thus, students with disabilities whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to be employed after completing high school (Lindstrom & Beno, 2020).

In implementing family involvement in transition program planning for students with disabilities, several obstacles are often encountered, such as a lack of information on transition program planning, communication errors, language and cultural differences, parental disappointment and lack of confidence, and a lack of professionalism on the part of the school (Francis et al., 2018; Hirano et al., 2018). Additionally, there are specific challenges from the school side, such as a lack of inter-institutional collaboration and the absence of a handbook for planning and implementing transition programs (Martika & Prakosha, 2022).

Given the importance of family involvement in planning post-school transition programs for students with disabilities in helping and facilitating the transition process for people with disabilities, a systematic review is needed to describe the forms of family involvement in planning post-school transition programs for students with disabilities. Thus, the research question is: "What are the forms of family involvement in planning post-school transition programs for students with disabilities?"

II. Method

The method used in writing this article is a systematic literature review (SLR) with a qualitative approach. This study aims to provide an overview of the forms of family involvement in planning post-school transition programs for students with disabilities. The main data source in this study is secondary data obtained through credible journal databases, namely Scenedirect, Scopus, and Eric Journal. Article searches were conducted in the journal databases using the search keywords "family OR parents involvement AND transition planning AND student AND disabilities," resulting in 4,952 articles.

The screening and exclusion process was carried out based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the first stage, screening based on inclusion criteria for publications from the last ten years (2014–2023) resulted in 2,617 articles from a total of 4,952 articles. The next stage filtered the article types, leaving only 1,216 research articles from the 2,617 articles screened in the previous stage. The selection continued based on language, resulting in 728 English-language articles from the 1,216 articles that passed the article type selection. Then, the article type screening resulted in 235 open access articles from the 728 articles that had been selected.

The next process involved reading the titles and abstracts of the articles, resulting in 23 articles from the 235 articles that aligned with the research theme. The final screening was conducted by reading the full text of the 23 articles to ensure overall suitability. The final results showed that there were 9 articles that met the criteria and were relevant to the research focus. These nine articles were then designated as secondary data obtained from three credible journal databases after undergoing a gradual selection process in accordance with the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The results of the screening and selection of articles are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Screening Results and Article Selection

No	Article Title	Author	Year of Publication	Citations
1.	Transition strategies and recommendations: perspectives of parents of young adults with disabilities	Grace L. Francis, Ashley Stride, dan Sascha Reed	2018	Francis, Stride, et al., 2018
2.	Toward Authentic IEPs and Transition Plans: Student, Parent, and Teacher Perspectives	Wendy Cavendish, Ph.D dan David Connor, Ed.D	2018	Cavendish & Connor, 2018
3.	Sibling Roles in Family–School Partnerships for Students With Disabilities During Transition Planning	Mayumi Hagiwara, MS , Susan B. Palmer, Ph.D, Christine L. Hancock, MA, dan Karrie A. Shogren, Ph.D	2019	Hagiwara et al., 2019
4.	Improving Family-School Collaboration in Transition Services for Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Framework for School Psychologists	Devadrita Talapatra, Gloria E. Miller dan Ruth Schumacher-Martinez	2019	Talapatra et al., 2019
5.	Validating a model of motivational factors influencing involvement for parents of transitional-age youth with disabilities	Kara A. Hirano, Ph.D1, Lina Shanley, Ph.D, S. Andrew Garbacz, Ph.D, Dawn A. Rowe, Ph.D, Lauren Lindstrom, Ph.D, and Leslie D. Leve, Ph.D	2018	Hirano, et al., 2018
6.	Barriers and Supports to Parent Involvement and Collaboration During Transition to Adulthood	Grace L. Francis, Ph.D, April Register, Ph.D, and Alexandra S. Reed, MA.	2019	Francis et al., 2019
7.	Effect of Parent Involvement and Parent Expectations on Postsecondary Outcomes for Individuals Who Are d/Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Stephanie W. Cawthon, Carrie Lou Garberoglio, Jacqueline M. Caemmerer, Mark Bond & Erica Wendel	2015	Cawthon et al., 2015
8.	Involvement in Transition Planning Meetings Among High School Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders	Megan M. Griffin, Ph.D, Julie Lounds Taylor, Ph.D, Richard C. Urbano, Ph.D, dan Robert M. Hodapp, Ph.D	2014	Griffin et al., 2014
9.	A Conceptual Model for Parent Involvement in Secondary Special Education	Kara A. Hirano, Med, dan Dawn A. Rowe, Ph.D	2016	Hirano et al., 2016

III. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis, several forms of family involvement in planning post-school transition programs for students with disabilities were found. The researcher summarized the forms of family involvement in planning post-school transition programs for students with disabilities in the following table 2.

Table 2. Forms of Family Involvement in Post-School Transition Planning

No	Family Involvement	Description of Findings	Source
1.	Involvement in decision making	Families are actively involved in decision-making regarding their children's educational and career goals, including plans for further education or employment after school.	Cavendish & Connor (2018); Francis et al. (2018)
2.	Emotional and social support	Parents provide significant emotional support that helps children cope with anxiety and stress related to post-school transitions.	Hagiwara et al. (2019); Francis et al. (2018)
3.	Collaboration with professional education	Families work together with teachers, psychologists, and other professionals in planning and implementing transition services, ensuring that the individual needs of students are met appropriately.	Talapatra et al. (2019); Cawthon et al. (2015)
4.	Provision of resources and practical support	Families help provide information about further education or employment opportunities and offer practical support during the transition. Additionally, siblings can serve as an important source of social support, helping children with disabilities navigate the transition to the workforce or further education.	Francis et al. (2018); Griffin et al. (2014); Hagiwara et al. (2019); Hirano & Rowe (2016)

A. Family Involvement in Decision Making

Family involvement in decision-making for students with special disabilities plays a significant role in determining the success of post-school transition programs. This involvement encompasses not only decisions regarding further education but also employment opportunities and life skills development. Parents actively participating in decision-making processes help schools identify the individual strengths and weaknesses of each student, thereby supporting the achievement of appropriate transition goals (Cavendish & Connor, 2018).

Findings by Lindstrom and Benz (2002) demonstrate a strong association between parental participation in transition planning and positive long-term outcomes in both education and employment settings. Communication barriers remain one of the primary challenges that inhibit effective collaboration between families and schools. Kaufman & Rabinowitz (2020) observed that limited communication skills on both sides frequently result in misunderstandings, disrupting optimal planning efforts. Improved communication training for parents and educational professionals is therefore essential to create a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process.

The presence of active family involvement not only enhances the quality of transition planning but also strengthens parents' sense of ownership regarding their children's future. Shogren et al. (2020) highlighted that family-centered approaches improve parents' understanding of the transition process, equipping them to provide more effective support to their children. Increased family engagement ensures that transition plans are more personalized, culturally responsive, and aligned with the unique aspirations of both students and their families.

B. Family Involvement in Providing Emotional and Social Support

Emotional support provided by families has been proven to be a highly influential factor in helping students with disabilities navigate the psychological and social challenges that arise during the transition to post-school life. Research by Hagiwara et al. (2019) and Francis et al. (2018) shows that emotional support from families can reduce the anxiety often experienced by students with disabilities. Zeedyk & McVilly (2021) found that family involvement in providing social and emotional support is closely linked to increased readiness among students to enter further education or the workforce.

This suggests that family support not only provides comfort but also facilitates better social adaptation in facing major life changes. Providing emotional support is not always easy, especially for families who may lack information or understanding about the specific needs of their children. Prevedini et al. (2020) suggest that educating parents about the psychological challenges faced by students with disabilities can enhance their ability to provide more effective support. Therefore, it is important to provide training programs for parents that can improve their understanding of how to support their children emotionally during the transition period.

Cultural background also plays an important role in how families provide emotional support. Muller et al. (2020) show that families with different cultural backgrounds may have different approaches to providing emotional support, which can influence how they support their children during transitions. Cultural sensitivity is important to ensure that the support provided is relevant and effective in line with the family's background.

C. Family Involvement in Collaboration with Educational Professionals

Close collaboration between families and educational professionals is crucial in planning and implementing post-school transitions for students with disabilities. Talapatra et al.'s research. (2019) and Cawthon et al. (2015) indicate that successful transitions depend heavily on cooperation between schools, families and various related professionals. Through this collaboration, every aspect of a student's needs, whether academic, social, or emotional, can be thoroughly covered in the transition plan. Morningstar & Clark (2021) emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration involving teachers, psychologists, career counselors, and parents to produce transition programs that are comprehensive and suit individual student needs.

This Equal involvement between families and professionals is key to effective collaboration. Lindstrom et al. (2002) found that families often felt marginalized in the transition planning process, inhibiting their active participation. Forming a coordinated transition team involving all relevant parties is one solution. Communication and cooperation between parties can be strengthened through this team, resulting in more holistic and sustainable planning..

The use of digital technology, such as online communication platforms, is also recommended to maintain connectivity and facilitate the exchange of information related to the transition. Hernandez & Santiago (2020) suggest digital technology as an effective solution to overcome distance and time barriers in communication between schools and families

D. Family Involvement in Providing Resources and Practical Support

Family involvement in providing practical resources, such as information about further education or employment opportunities, plays a crucial role in helping students with disabilities prepare for life after school. Francis et al. (2018) and Griffin et al. (2014) emphasize that families with access to relevant information, including scholarships or job training opportunities, can offer significant advantages for their children in planning post-school transitions. Shogren et al. (2021) suggest that access to information is one of the key factors influencing the success of post-school transitions, as well-informed students have more options to consider when making career plans.

Technological advancements also play a major role in expanding access to information. Gruebner (2022) recommend utilizing digital platforms that provide resources related to educational and employment opportunities to support families in offering practical assistance to their children. As online resources continue to grow, it is essential for schools and educational institutions to facilitate family access to this information.

Despite the availability of opportunities beyond school, many students with disabilities remain unaware of these options. Schools are therefore encouraged to adopt a more proactive role in collaborating with local communities to provide relevant resources for students and their families. Organizing career seminars or job fairs for students and families is one effective strategy to ensure they gain access to these valuable opportunities.

IV. Conclusion and Suggestion

The findings of this literature review indicate that family involvement in post-school transition planning for students with disabilities plays a crucial role in enhancing their readiness, improving transition outcomes, and strengthening collaboration between schools, families, and the broader community. Forms of family involvement include providing emotional support, participating in decision-making, and collaborating with educational professionals. Effective partnerships have been shown to produce more comprehensive transition plans with a positive impact on the future lives of students with disabilities. Additionally, the inclusion of siblings often overlooked in transition processes is also considered valuable in providing meaningful support throughout the post-school transition.

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations are proposed for schools. First, communication training programs for parents should be developed to increase their confidence and competence in participating actively in transition-related discussions. These programs may consist of face-to-face workshops or online sessions focused on effective communication strategies, awareness of students' rights, and techniques for managing differing perspectives. Second, schools are advised to establish coordinated transition teams comprising parents, students, teachers, counselors, and other professionals to collaboratively design and regularly monitor individualized transition plans. Furthermore, leveraging digital platforms such as career information applications, educational portals, and disability services websites is recommended to provide families with timely and accessible information regarding post-school opportunities. These efforts are expected to support the creation of more inclusive, adaptive, and well-structured transition processes.

References

- Aldosiry, N., Alharbi, A. A., & Alrusaiyes, R. (2021). Practices To Prepare Students With Disabilities for the Transition to New Educational Settings. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 120, 105657. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105657>
- Badan Pusat Statistik. (2022). Potret Penyandang Disabilitas di Indonesia: Hasil Long Form Sensus Penduduk 2020. Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.go.id/publication/2024/12/20/43880dc0f8be5ab92199f8b9/potret-penyandang-disabilitas-di-indonesia-hasil-long-form-sp2020.html>
- Cavendish, W., & Connor, D. (2018). Toward Authentic IEPs and Transition Plans: Student, Parent, and Teacher Perspectives. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 41(1), 32–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948716684680>
- Cawthon, S. W., Garberoglio, C. L., Caemmerer, J. M., Bond, M., & Wendel, E. (2015). Effect of Parent Involvement and Parent Expectations on Postsecondary Outcomes for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. *Exceptionality*, 23(2), 73–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09362835.2013.865537>
- Collier, M., Keefe, E. B., & Hirrel, L. A. (2015). Preparing Special Education Teachers to Collaborate With Families. *School Community Journal*, 25.
- Dinati, K. N. (2019). Program Transisi bagi Siswa Tunadaksa Usia Dini di SLB Negeri 1 Bantul. *Jurnal Widia Ortodidaktika*, 8(8), 818–822.
- Education Law Center. (2022). Transition Planning Under IDEA for Students with Disabilities a Guide for Advocates.

- Francis, G. L., Gross, J. M. S., Magiera, L., Schmalzried, J., Monroe-Gulick, A., & Reed, S. (2018). Supporting Students with Disabilities, Families, and Professionals to Collaborate During the Transition to Adulthood. *In International Review of Research in Developmental Disabilities* (Vol. 54, pp. 71–104). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.irrdd.2018.07.004>
- Francis, G. L., Regeater, A., & Reed, A. S. (2019). Barriers and Supports to Parent Involvement and Collaboration During Transition to Adulthood. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 42(4), 235–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143418813912>
- Francis, G. L., Stride, A., & Reed, S. (2018). Transition Strategies and Recommendations: Perspectives of Parents of Young Adults with Disabilities. *British Journal of Special Education*, 45(3), 277–301. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12232>
- Griffin, M. M., Taylor, J. L., Urbano, R. C., & Hodapp, R. M. (2014). Involvement in Transition Planning Meetings among High School Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *The Journal of Special Education*, 47(4), 256–264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466913475668>
- Gruebner, O., van Haasteren, A., Hug, A., Elayan, S., Sykora, M., Albanese, E., ... & von Rhein, M. (2022). Digital Platform Uses for Help and Support Seeking of Parents with Children Affected by Disabilities: Scoping Review. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 24(12), e37972.
- Hagiwara, M., Palmer, S. B., Hancock, C. L., & Shogren, K. A. (2019). Sibling Roles in Family–School Partnerships for Students with Disabilities During Transition Planning. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 42(3), 194–200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143418792045>
- Hirano, K. A., & Rowe, D. A. (2016). A Conceptual Model for Parent Involvement in Secondary Special Education. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 27(1), 43–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207315583901>
- Hirano, K. A., Rowe, D., Lindstrom, L., & Chan, P. (2018). Systemic Barriers to Family Involvement in Transition Planning for Youth with Disabilities: A Qualitative Metasynthesis. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(11), 3440–3456. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1189-y>
- Hirano, K. A., Shanley, L., Garbacz, S. A., Rowe, D. A., Lindstrom, L., & Leve, L. D. (2018). Validating a Model of Motivational Factors Influencing Involvement for Parents of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, 39(1), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932517715913>
- International Labour Organization. (2020). Disability Inclusive Employment Policies and Practices in the Private Sector. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org>
- Lindstrom, L. E., & Beno, C. (2020). Promoting Successful Transitions for Students with Disabilities. Policy Analysis for California Education.
- Lindstrom, L. E., & Benz, M. R. (2002). Phases of Career Development: Case Studies of Young Women with Learning Disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 69(1), 67-83.
- Martika, T., & Prakosha, D. (2022). Kesiapan Sekolah Luar Biasa dalam Memfasilitasi Post-School Transition bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus. *Journal of Special Education*, 5(2), 67–71. <https://doi.org/10.31537/speed.v5i2.638>
- Prevedini, A., Hirvikoski, T., Holmberg Bergman, T., Berg, B., Miselli, G., Pergolizzi, F., & Moderato, P. (2020). ACT-Based Interventions for Reducing Psychological Distress in Parents and Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Recommendations for Higher Education Programs. *European Journal of Behavior Analysis*, 21(1), 133-157.
- Shogren, K. A., & Hagiwara, M. (2020). Enhancing Transition Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: The Role of Family Involvement. *Exceptional Children*, 86(3), 321-336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402920939146>

- Shogren, K. A., Gross, J. M. S., & Reed, S. (2021). Family Involvement in Transition Planning and Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 44(2), 83–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143419884452>
- Talapatra, D., Miller, G. E., & Schumacher-Martinez, R. (2019). Improving Family-School Collaboration in Transition Services for Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Framework for School Psychologists. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 29(3), 314–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2018.1495083>
- Zeedyk, S. M., & McVilly, K. R. (2021). The Importance of Family Involvement in the Transition to Adulthood for Youth with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 34(3), 678–691. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12814>.