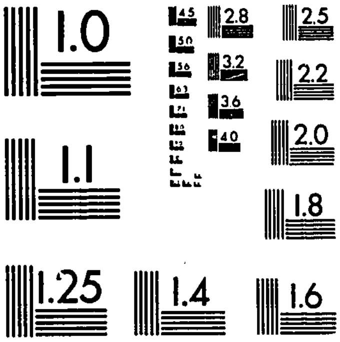

1.0
4.5
5.0
5.6
6.3
7.1
2.8
3.2
3.6
4.0
2.5
2.2
2.0
1.1
1.8
1.25
1.4
1.6

ED 240 381 CE 038 343

AUTHOR	McDonnell, John J.; And Others
TITLE	Issues in the Transition from School to Adult Services: A Survey of Parents of Secondary Students with Severe Handicaps. Specialized Training Program. Model School and Community Services for People with Severe Handicaps.
INSTITUTION	Oregon Univ., Eugene. Center on Human Development.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	[83]
CONTRACT	300-81-2608
NOTE	35p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Programs; Ancillary School Services; *Community Services; Education Work Relationship; Job Placement; *Needs Assessment; Parent Attitudes; *Residential Programs; Secondary Education; Secondary School Students; *Severe Disabilities; Special Education; Vocational Education; *Vocational Rehabilitation; Vocational Training Centers

ABSTRACT

Parental projections of service needs and their ranking of features they perceived as important in vocational and residential programs for their handicapped son/daughter were assessed through a written questionnaire. A total of 163 questionnaires were completed and returned by parents of high school students with moderate and severe handicaps. The questionnaire consisted of nine items that asked parents to provide demographic information, to rank features of vocational and day services most likely to influence selection of a program, to rank features of residential services most likely to influence program selection, and to rank generic adult service programs their children would need immediately upon graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation. Parents overwhelmingly ranked vocational/day programs as the top priority for their children upon graduation and for the next 10 years. Long-term structured employment models providing a wide range of work opportunities and contact with nonhandicapped peers were the preferred alternative. Residential programs were more important five to ten years after graduation. Case management services were seen as important at two points in a student's transition from school to adult services: prior to graduation and as parents grow older and less able to act as their children's overseer. Data also verified the inadequacy of information for parents about adult services. (YLB)

SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM

Model School and Community Services for People with Severe Handicaps

Issues in the Transition From School to Adult Services: A Survey of Parents of Secondary Students With Severe Handicaps

John J. McDonnell, Barbara Wilcox,
Shawn M. Boles, and G. Thomas Bellamy
University of Oregon

Center on Human Development
University of Oregon,
Eugene 97403

Issues in the transition from school to adult services: A survey of parents of secondary students with severe handicaps[1]

John J. McDonnell, Barbara Wilcox, Shawn M. Boles
and G. Thomas Bellamy
University of Oregon

For all adolescents, transition is a time when the security of school is exchanged for more complex opportunities, risks, and services; when family roles and relationships are adjusted to acknowledge the graduate's increased autonomy; and when the clear focus on learning as a personal and program objective is normally replaced by adult-oriented objectives of independent performance, productivity, and community participation. It is also during this period that most individuals' work histories are established, careers launched, and residences selected. The transition from school is a difficult time for most individuals because of abrupt service changes and complex choices with lifelong significance.

Not surprisingly, transition is even more difficult for students with severe handicaps. In addition to the stresses experienced by their more able peers, severely handicapped individuals and their families face special difficulties at graduation (Suezle & Keenan, 1981). It is not at all unusual for severely handicapped individuals to graduate, not to appropriate and needed services, but rather to waiting lists for those services. This can result in disruption of family schedules and the isolation of the graduate from community opportunities. At the same time,

---

[1] This research was supported in part by Contract #300-81-2608 from Special Education Programs, U. S. Department of Education, to the University of Oregon.

parents must come to terms with shifts in outcomes they expect from services. As students leave the public school system, the expectation that skill acquisition is the primary outcome of services must be replaced with the expectation of maintaining competent performance in the least restrictive programs available within their community. This realignment of outcomes forces parents at graduation to decide what constitutes a desirable adult lifestyle for their son or daughter, and then to help structure those services and supports that will secure this lifestyle (Bellamy, Wilcox, McDonnell, & Sowers, 1982).

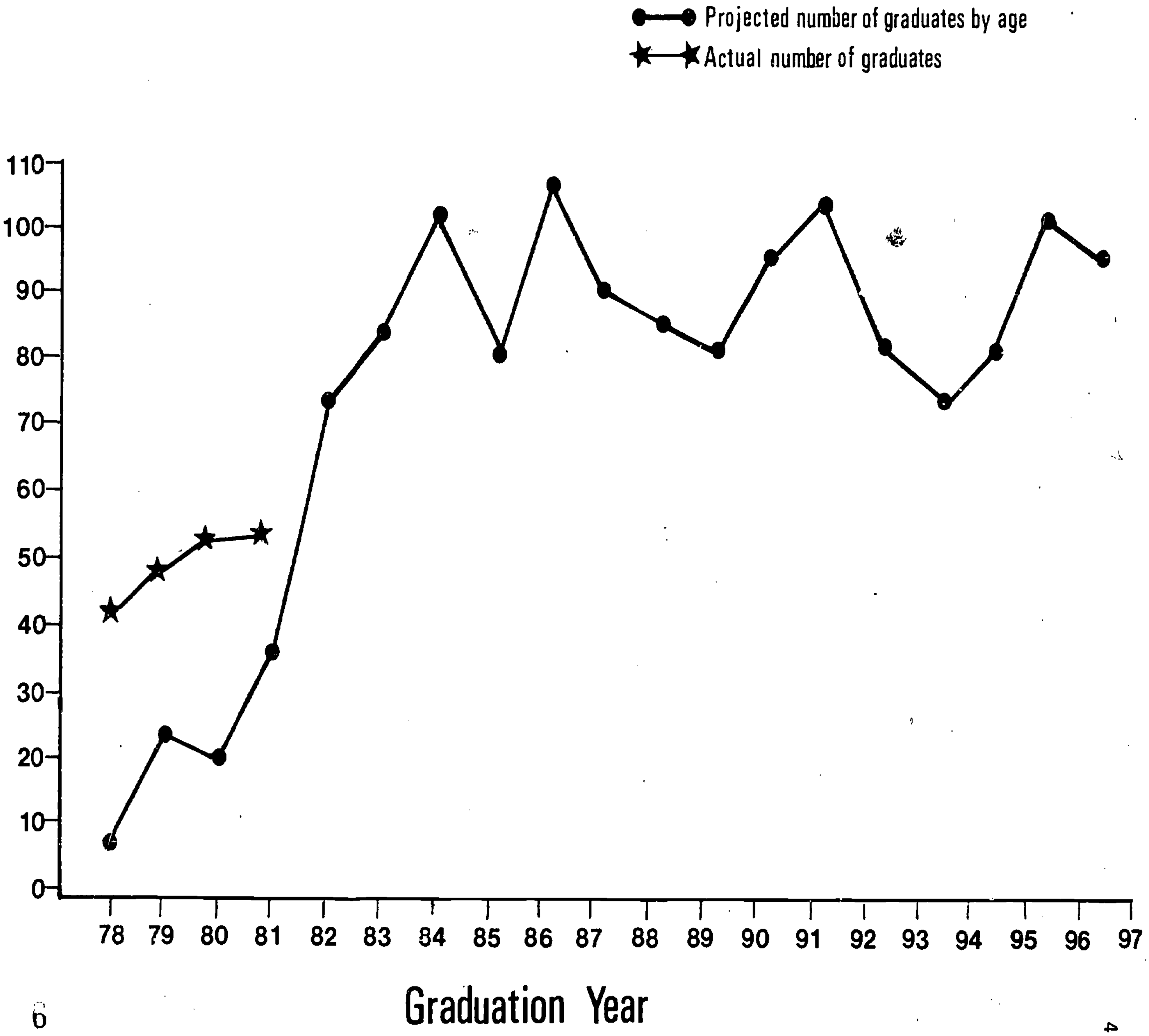
Transition is easily conceptualized as a bridge. Like a bridge, transition is only as strong as the foundation on either side (the quality of school preparation on one side and the quality of adult service opportunities on the other) and the construction of the span itself (the planning process). If any of these components is inadequate, the chance of student success in the community is greatly reduced. For example, a handicapped student might have had an excellent high school program and had several successful work experiences on integrated job sites in the community. However, if the only vocational opportunities available after leaving school are in segregated non-work "day programs," then the gains of schooling are effectively lost. On the other hand, there may be an excellent array of work training/placement options or residential alternatives for handicapped adults, but if high schools focused only on developmental or academic "readiness" on artificial classroom activities, then handicapped students will be poorly prepared to take advantage of those options. To finish the analogy, if both school preparation and post-school service options are strong and progressive but no attempt is made to assist par[illegible] the transition planning process, then services may be interrupted, [illegible]opriate, or incomplete.

Facilitating the transition from school to adult life will likely require changes in each element of the bridge: the content and structure of high school preparation, the scope and timing of the individual planning progress, and the array of post-school services. Ignoring for a moment both the school and the planning components, one sees two major problems in post school services: the quantity of services available and the quality of those services vis-a-vis the needs of the handicapped school leaver. Each of these problems is briefly discussed below.

Quantity of post-school services. Nationwide, the first generation of severely handicapped students to grow up in the public schools is now nearing graduation. In effect, their "right to education" has delayed their entry into the community service system for several years as they lived with their families and attended public schools. As these individuals begin to leave school, a dramatic increase in the need for community services can be expected (Wilcox & McDonnell, 1983). Data from Oregon illustrates this need (see Figure 1). Five years ago, throughout the state fewer than 15 severely handicapped students reached the mandatory school-leaving age; this year, over 100 will turn 22 and move from school to adult services. These school graduates will not have programs available but will simply join over 200 other developmentally disabled individuals on wait lists for vocational and residential programs.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Figure 1


Projected number of graduates by age
Actual number of graduates
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
Graduation Year

This quantity-of-service crisis is due to a lack of planning and funding for the development of community-based services to accommodate the needs of severely handicapped students graduating from Oregon schools. No new funds have been allocated for community services since 1979, despite increases in the number of "graduates." Since Oregon began public school services for severely handicapped students slightly before most states, it is likely that Oregon data foreshadow similar increases in school graduates in other states. Unfortunately, this increased demand is occurring exactly at a time when community services are experiencing dramatic fiscal cutbacks and when there is competition for community resources from deinstitutionalization.

Quality of post-school service options. Parents of severely handicapped children face not only the problem of service fragmentation and possible waiting lists, but also the fact that available programs may not meet the needs of their child. The 21-year-old severely handicapped student today is more skilled and competent than his or her counterpart of ten years ago who did not enjoy the benefits of a free appropriate public education. Unfortunately, community services have not kept pace with education in the development and dissemination of innovative program approaches.

The crisis that follows graduation is well illustrated in the available data on access to and results of services for severely handicapped adults. In an important follow-up study of school leavers before P.L. 94-142 changed the composition of special education programs, Stanfield (1976) found that 40% of graduates were receiving no vocational services, and that 94% of these graduates continued to live at home with their parents. The results of Stanfield's study were so startling that he concluded: "...graduation marked the beginning of a life of relative isolation from peers and segregation from the community" (p. 551). This hardly seems a fitting outcome to our nation's investment in public education for all. Other follow-up studies of special education graduates support Stanfield's (1976) findings (Delph & Lorenz, 1953; Saenger, 1972; Tisdel, 1958; Blessing & Samelian, 1972). It is even more discouraging to realize that all these studies were conducted prior to the enactment of P.L. 94-142 and, consequently, were reporting data on mildly handicapped students. The situation facing parents today was paraphrased by one mother at the National Parent Conference for Children Requiring Extensive Special Education Programming, who described her own fear that a relatively good special education program was soon to be followed by "long, lonely years at home."

A recent follow-up of all moderately and severely handicapped graduates of Oregon public school programs from 1976 to 1981 reported results similar to Stanfield (Brodsky, 1983). Twenty-three percent of the graduates who required some vocational program at graduation were still waiting for such services up to five years later. Similarly, 65% of those graduates who required residential services at graduation still had not entered an appropriate service program. Brodsky also reported that 80% of all graduates were earning less than $500 annually (less than $42/mo), thus seriously affecting the quality of life they experienced after high school. Over 60% of the parents indicated that they would like to see their child move into a less restrictive vocational and residential program within two years.

These rather dismal findings are underscored by national studies of adult services for individuals with moderate, severe, profound retardation or multiple handicaps (e.g., see Bellamy, Rhodes, Bourbeau, & Mank, 1982). When they are able to gain access to community services, these individuals are served in entry level programs where preparation for more advanced programs is the stated goal. Progress to these higher level programs is usually a prerequisite to gaining opportunities for work and community integration. Such progress, however, occurs at tortoise-like pace: for most of their adult lives, severely handicapped graduates can look forward only to infantalizing "readiness" activities, rather than work, wages, and community participation.

Opportunity for service planning. From the perspective of adult service programs there is a very real crises facing severely handicapped school leavers. Such a stress on the service system is often followed by rapid service expansion, with that expansion, in turn, presenting an opportunity for service reform. Program expansion typically presents a choice: fund more programs like those currently available or expand services by increasing the range of service alternatives.

The present transition crisis presents a complex set of issues to those responsible for service planning. They need to know not only how many students will graduate but what sort of post-school services might be most appropriate. At present, however, there is no common mechanism to project the needs of school leavers. Parents are in a unique position to provide planners with such information. There are several reasons that they are especially qualified for that role. First of all, parents represent a unique source of information about their handicapped son or daughter. They have been the constant participant in the IEP process while teachers, school representatives, or physicians have changed over the years. Families are in the best position to know the social support networks that will be available to a handicapped child over time. In effect, parents have a perspective on life planning that is not matched by episodic professional contact.

A second reason to utilize parents in transition planning is that parent involvement can be an important political force both to secure resources for post-school services and to influence the nature of those services. Parents have played increasingly active roles in planning school services as a function of PL 94-142. their role in influencing adult services is potentially even more direct. Most post-school programs are administered by nonprofit corporation, so consequently parents can actually initiate new nonprofit organizations to offer new programs or serve on boards of directors. In light of the fact that parents have the power to influence services it seems quite reasonable to solicit their input in projecting service needs.

A final reason for parent participation in planning is that parents are indirectly consumers of transition services. It is parents and family members who experience the painful results when transition efforts are unsuccessful. They must deal with discouragement when services are inappropriate, and with disruption of home life when services are unavailable. Parents have a perspective on life planning that is difficult to match with episodic professional contact. Parents are in the best position to know the social support networks that will be available to assist a given individual over time.

While parents are not the only source of planning information they are a source that should not be ignored. The present study is an initial attempt to project the post-school needs of severely handicapped high school students by asking their parents/guardians both to anticipate the generic services their sons/daughters would need and to identify the features of adult service programs that they desire for their children. The resulting information has implications for both high school and adult service programs.

Method

Parent projections of service needs and their ranking of features they perceived as important in vocational and residential programs for their handicapped son/daughter were assessed through a written questionnaire. This section describes (a) the general organization of the questionnaire, (b) the development of questionnaire content, (c) the survey respondents, and (d) administration procedures.

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of nine items that asked parents to provide basic demographic information; rank in order of importance those features of vocational and day services most likely to influence their selection of a program; rank in order of importance those features of residential services most likely to influence their selection of a program; and rank in order of importance generic adult service programs that their child would need immediately upon graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation.[2] Each of these items is described below.

Demographic information. In order to determine factors which might influence patterns of parent response, values for several demographic variables were gathered. These included: 1) the age of the responding parent and their spouse, 2) family income level, 3) the number of children

---

[2] Copies of the survey are available from John McDonnell, Specialized Training program, 135 Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403.

in the family (including the handicapped child), 4) parents' information about the the adult service programs available in their community and theprocedures to obtain those services, and 5) the source of parent information about adult services options.

Features of vocational/day services. Parents were asked to rank nine features of vocational or day programs in order of importance. These features are defined below.

1. Wages: The amount of money that their child could potentially earn in the program.
2. Work hours: The actual number of hours their child could spend at the vocational or day settings each day.
3. Type of work: The particular type of job or task the handicapped individual would do in the vocational or day program.
4. Contact with non-handicapped peers: The number of opportunities the son/daughter would have each day to work, eat, or take breaks with non-handicapped peers in the vocational or day program.
5. Amount of non-paid work: The potential amount of work that the son/daughter could do in the vocational or day program for which they would not receive wages. Non-paid work was defined as simulated, non-contract, or volunteer work.
6. Amount of job training: The potential amount of time each week that the son/daughter would receive training on different or more difficult jobs.
7. Access to community sites: The potential number of opportunities that the student would have each week to go to

restaurants, cafes, snack bars, or grocery stores during lunches and breaks at the vocational or day program.

8. Security: The length of time the individual would be guaranteed a placement in the vocational or day program.
9. Level of on-site supervision: The amount of time the student would receive direct supervision rather than working independently.

Parents were presented the nine features and their definitions and asked to rank the importance of each feature in the selection of a potential vocational or day placement for their own son or daughter. For example, if a parent valued job training as the most critical feature in selecting an option for their child, they would rank it "1." If wages were next most important in their selection of a vocational or day placement, they would assign a rank of "2." Parents ranked all nine features.

Features of residential services. Parents were asked to rank the importance of ten features in selecting a residential option for their child. These features were:

1. Amount of privacy: The provision of private space for sleeping, bathroom facilities, and personal belongings within the residence.
2. Cost: The monthly amount of money required to provide food, room, training, and other related services.
3. Amount of training: The amount of training time the student could receive each week on personal management and leisure-recreation activities.

4. In-house leisure activities: The number and nature of leisure activities opportunities to which the son/daughter would have access in the residence.
5. Community leisure activities: The number and type of community based leisure activities made available to the residents.
6. Autonomy and independence: The freedom that the individual would have to schedule and complete his or her own daily activities.
7. On-site supervision: The amount of time that the son/daughter would be directly supervised within the residence.
8. Contact with non-handicapped peers: The number of potential opportunities each week to meet, socialize, and interact with non-handicapped peers.
9. Family contact: The number of opportunities that family members would have to visit the residence.
10. Proximity to family home: The actual distance of the residence from the family home.

Parents were asked to consider the relative importance of each of these features in their own selection of residential programs for their child and to rank the features in order of importance from 1 to 10.

Projected service needs. Parents were asked to consider the particular needs of their child and rank in order of importance seven generic adult service programs. In order to determine whether parents perceived certain services more critical as their child got older, they were asked to project the importance of these services to their child immediately upon graduation from high school, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation. The seven generic service programs were:

a) income support (i.e. SSI, SSDI), b) vocational or day placement, c) residential placement, d) medical insurance (i.e. Medicaid), e) organized leisure activities, f) advocacy/guardianship, and g) case management (i.e. coordination of services by a service agency).

Development of Questionnaire Content

The features of vocational/day and residential services included in questionnaire items were generated from a logical analysis of the characteristics which would most likely effect any handicapped individual's productivity, independence, and integration in those settings. In order to validate this assumption, the features and their definitions were reviewed by five professionals with substantial experience with school and adult service programs for the severely handicapped. Their comments and suggestions were integrated into the final version of the questionnaire.

Respondents

The target group for the questionnaire were parents of students enrolled in public high school programs for trainable mentally retarded students throughout Oregon. Students are eligible for these programs if their IQ is less than 55 and they demonstrate severe deficits in adaptive behavior. This classification is heterogeneous and includes those students who might also be classified as moderately, severely or profoundly retarded; multiply handicapped, or autistic. In Oregon, 84% of the severely handicapped students are served in self-contained classrooms on regular public school campuses. Parents of the small number of severely handicapped students enrolled segregated school programs were not included in the survey.

Administration of Questionnaire

Questionnaires were distributed to parents by their child's classroom teacher. This method of distribution was selected both to reduce distribution costs and because a complete lists of parent names and addresses was not readily available.

Questionnaires were distributed through 65 high school classrooms in the state of Oregon. The sample included all classrooms identified in the Oregon Mental Health Division's Programs for Mental Retardation and Other Developmental Disabilities directory of classrooms for the 1981-82 school year. A total of 625 questionnaires were distributed.

Each classroom teacher was sent a packet of materials which included a letter of introduction addressed to the teacher and 5 to 12 parent questionnaire packets. The number of questionnaires distributed was based on the MR/DD program's classification of the classroom as either a rural model (serving up to 5 severely handicapped students) or standard TMR program (serving up to 12 students). The maximum number of questionnaires was sent to each classroom since exact student enrollment data were unavailable. The introductory letter to the teacher described the purpose of the survey and requested their assistance in sending one questionnaire packet home with each student in their class.

The questionnaire packet sent to the parent consisted of a) an introductory letter describing the purpose of the survey, b) one questionnaire, and c) a stamped envelope addressed to the principle investigator.

Three calendar weeks after the survey packets were distributed, a second packet containing follow-up materials was sent to classroom teachers. The packet contained an introductory letter requesting that the teachers distribute a reminder to parents to complete and return the questionnaire.

Results

A total of 625 questionnaires were distributed to parents of high school students with moderate and severe handicaps. Forty questionnaires were returned either because class loads had been reduced or because classes had been eliminated or combined. Of the remaining 580 questionnaires, 163 were completed and returned by parents. This number represents a 28% return of questionnaires mailed directly to teachers. It was not possible to obtain an actual respondent return rate given the method of survey distribution. However, this figure undoubtedly represents a conservative estimate of the return rate. The number of questionnaires distributed was based on the maximum permissible number of students per class.

Summary of Demographic Information

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the demographic variables included in the questionnaire. The mean age of parents responding to the questionnaire was 46.3 years (range = 15 to 71 years; the 15 year old parent was identified as a step-parent of the handicapped student). The median age of parents responding to the questionnaire was 44.5 years and the mode was 45 years. The mean number of children in responding families was 3.67 with a range of 1-17 children. The mode and median number of children in these families was 3.0 and 3.1 respectively. Finally, the income levels of families varied widely with 31% of the parents reporting an annual family income over $20,000. Nine percent of the parents who responded to the survey elected not to report income level.

Only 65% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they had received information about available adult service programs or the procedures required to access those programs. Thirty five percent of the parents reported receiving no information regarding adult service programs.

Of the parents who had received information about adult services, 30% reported that the classroom teacher was the source of that information. Other information sources included the Association for Retarded Citizens (25%), the LEA special education supervisor (23%), county mental health case managers (14%), and other parents (12%). Since parents were asked to indicate all sources of information about adult service programs, the total exceeds 100%.

Perceived Importance of Generic Adult Services

Table 1 presents the relative, mean, and median parent ranking of the perceived importance of generic adult service programs for their child immediately upon graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation.

A close examination of the data reveals several interesting trends. First, it is clear that parents perceive vocational/day services as the most important program need both at graduation and during ensuing years. Income support programs (i.e . SSI and SSDI) and residential programs were ranked second and third immediately upon graduation from high school. The relative rank of income and residential programs changes at five years after graduation. At ten years after graduation parents perceived vocational services as the most important, followed closely by residential and income support programs. This shift suggests that many parents anticipate that their handicapped child will live at home immediately after graduation and will not require a residential program until approximately five years after graduation.

Insert Table 1 about here

Variables Influencing Parent Choice of Vocational/Day Programs

The relative, mean, and median rankings of vocational/day service features parents would use in selecting vocational/day program for their child are presented in Table 2. Parents indicated that a vocational/day program was the most essential service for their child after graduation, and identified the amount of vocational training available and the security of the placement as the principle criteria they would use to select a program for their son or daughter.

The type of work the child would do and the number of hours spent in the program would also appear to strongly influence parent preference for a vocational/day program. Interestingly, contact with non-handicapped peers was ranked as important as on-site supervision. Wages, presumably a major variable in discriminating the quality of vocational/day programs, was not ranked highly by parents. However, performance of non-paid or simulated work was ranked last indicating that parents may expect wages for their child but would not necessarily use it as a major factor in selecting a vocational/day program.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 1

The Perceived Importance of Adult Services Upon Graduation, Five Years After Graduation, and Ten Years After Graduation

Upon Graduation			Five Years After Graduation				Ten Years After Graduation			
ean ank	Median Rank	Service	Relative Rank	Mean Rank	Median Rank	Service	Relative Rank	Mean Rank	Median Rank	Service
.9	1.0	Work or day placement	1	2.2	2.0	Work or day placement	1	2.5	2.0	Work or day placement
.3	3.0	Income support (SSI)	2	3.1	2.0	Residential placement	2	2.7	2.0	Residential placement
.7	3.0	Residential placement	3	3.2	3.0	Income Support	3	3.0	3.0	Income support
.9	4.0	Medical insurance	4	3.9	4.0	Medical insurance	4	5.1	4.0	Case management
.1	4.0	Organized community leisure activities	5	4.4	4.0	Organized community leisure acitivites	5	5.1	5.0	Organized commu leisure activit
.7	5.0	Case management	6	4.9	5.0	Case management	6	5.1	5.0	Advocacy
.3	6.0	Advocacy	7	5.2	6.0	Advocacy	7	5.4	6.0	Medical

Table 2
Parents Ranking of Vocational or Day Placement Characteristics

Relative Rank	Mean Rank	Median Rank	Characteristics	Definition of Characteristics
1	3.3	3.0	Amount of job training	The amount of time students recei training on different jobs.
2	3.4	3.0	Security	The length of time the student wi have access to the vocational or day placement.
3	3.6	4.0	Type of work	The type of job or activity the student does at the vocational or day placement.
4.	4.8	4.0	Work hours	The amount of time spent in the program each day.
5	5.1	5.0	Contact with non-handicapped peers	The number of opportunities to work, eat, or take breaks with non-handicapped people.
6	5.2	5.0	Level of on site supervision	The amount of time the student directly supervised rather than working independently.
7	5.8	6.0	Wages	The amount of money the student earns each week.
8	6.2	7.0	Access to community sites	The number of opportunities the student has to go to restaurants, cafes, or stores during lunches and breaks.
9	7.6	8.0	Amount of non-paid work	The amount of non-contract or volunteer work the student does for which they do not receive wages.

Variables Influencing Parent Choice of Residential Programs

Table 3 presents relative mean, and median ranks of features parents would use in selecting a residential program for their handicapped child. Residential placements become increasingly important to parents as their children grow older. The amount of training the student receives to increase competence in personal management and leisure skills was identified as the most influential feature in selecting a residential program.

Amount of privacy and personal space were also ranked as important considerations in selecting a residential placement for their child, as were on-site supervision and family contact. The remaining features (in-house leisure, cost, autonomy and independence, proximity to family home, and access to community leisure activities) were of less and relatively equal importance to parents. It is interesting to note that features which many professionals would consider critical outcomes of residential services for moderately and severely handicapped individuals (autonomy and independence, community leisure activities, and contact with non-handicapped peers) are not rated as highly as those features which describe the ongoing service structure of the residential placement.

Insert Table 3 about here

Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Parent Rankings

Spearman rank order correlations were computed to determine the degree of association between parent demographic variables and their rankings. A total of 120 correlations were run, with 17 being significant at $p \leq .05$. Each of the 17 significant correlations are briefly discussed below.

Table 3

Parents Ranking of Residential Placement Characteristics

Relative Rank	Mean Rank	Median Rank	Characteristics	Definition of Characteristics
1	3.6	3.0	Amount of training	The amount of time the student receives training in personal management and leisure skills
2	4.6	4.0	Amount of privacy	The extent to which the placement provides privacy and personal space in sleeping and bathroom arrangements
3	4.9	5.0	On-site supervision	The amount of time the student is directly supervised in the residential placement
4	5.1	5.0	Family contact	The number of opportunities for family visits
5	5.6	6.0	In-house leisure activities	The number and type of leisure opportunities the student has access to in the residence
6	5.6	6.0	Cost	The amount per month the student spends for food, room, training, and other related services
7	5.9	6.0	Autonomy and independence	The amount of freedom the student has to schedule their own daily activities
8	6.0	6.0	Proximity to family home	The distance of the residential placement from the family home
9	6.0	6.0	Community leisure activities	The number and type of leisure opportunities the student has access to outside the residence
10	6.1	7.0	Contact with nonhandicapped peers	The number of opportunities The student has each week to meet, socialize, and interact with nonhandicapped peers

Table 3

Parents Ranking of Residential Placement Characteristics

Relative Rank	Mean Rank	Median Rank	Characteristics	Definition of Characteristics
1	3.6	3.0	Amount of training	The amount of time the student receives training in personal management and leisure skills
2	4.6	4.0	Amount of privacy	The extent to which the placement provides privacy and personal space in sleeping and bathroom arrangements
3	4.9	5.0	On-site supervision	The amount of time the student is directly supervised in the residential placement
4	5.1	5.0	Family contact	The number of opportunities for family visits
5	5.6	6.0	In-house leisure activities	The number and type of leisure opportunities the student has access to in the residence
6	5.6	6.0	Cost	The amount per month the student spends for food, room, training, and other related services
7	5.9	6.0	Autonomy and independence	The amount of freedom the student has to schedule their own daily activities
8	6.0	6.0	Proximity to family home	The distance of the residential placement from the family home
9	6.0	6.0	Community leisure activities	The number and type of leisure opportunities the student has access to outside the residence
10	6.1	7.0	Contact with nonhandicapped peers	The number of opportunities The student has each week to meet, socialize, and interact with nonhandicapped peers

1. Parent Age and Importance of Generic Adult Services. Parent age was associated with the mean rankings of several service programs immediate upon the students graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation.

Parent age was negatively associated with case management services at graduation (r=-.22), five years after graduation (r=-.24), and ten years after graduation (r=-.25). These correlations suggest that older parents are less interested in case management than are younger parents. One possible explanation is that older parents perhaps feel less "system dependent" than younger parents preferring to manage their child's post-school service network without assistance from other agencies. This may be related to the relative stability of older parents in their communities, jobs, or retirement. At ten years after graduation, parent age was positively correlated with stated need for income support programs (r=.21). In other words as parents' age increased interest in income support for their child also increased. Logically, parents assume that they will be less able to help their child financially as they approach retirement age.

2. Parent Age and Characteristics of Vocational/Day Placement. Parent age positively correlated with contact with non-handicapped peers (r=.22). Interestingly, older parents valued contact with non-handicapped peers in their child's vocational/day placement more than did younger parents.

3. Family Size and Importance of Generic Adult Services. The number of children in the family was associated with several aspects of parent rankings of adult service needs. The number of children in the family was positively correlated with parent rankings of case management

service immediately after graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation, with correlations of .26, .22, and .16 respectively. As the number of children in the family increases, parent interest in case management services also increases. Parents apparently perceive themselves as less able to handle the case management of an adult handicapped child when there is a larger number of children in the family. Another interesting association between family size and parent rankings of adult service programs occurs at ten years after graduation. The number of children in the family was negatively correlated with parent ranking of the importance of residential placement for their handicapped child (r=-.19). As the number of children in the family increased parents interest in a residential program decreased. One might infer that parents are looking towards the siblings of the handicapped child as potential caretakers.

4. Family Size and Characteristics of Vocational/Day Services. The number of children in the family appeared to influence the ranking of at least one characteristic of vocational/day services. The number of children in the family was negatively correlated with access to community resources from the vocational/day placement (r=-.19). This suggests that as the number of children in the family increases, the importance of this feature in selecting a vocational/day program for their handicapped child decreases. This trend may be related to parents perceived ability to support their handicapped child's access to these resources.

5. Family Income and Importance of Generic Adult Services. The income level of the family influenced parent ranking of adult service needs for their child at graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation. Family income was negatively correlated with ranking of

medical programs at graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation with correlations of -.24, -.24, and -.20 respectively. In other words, as family income increased interest in federally funded medical programs went down. Presumably high income families felt that they could underwrite their child's medical needs, making these programs less important priorities than other service programs. Family income level was also positively correlated with interest in case management services at graduation, five years after graduation, and ten years after graduation (r=.20, r=.18, r=.26). As family income level increased, parent interest in case management also increased. This relationship can be explained if it is assumed that high income levels are, in many cases, a function of double career families. Parents in these situations might feel that they would require assistance from MR/DD case managers to adequately coordinate their child's service network.

6. Family Income and Characteristics of Vocational/Day Placements. Family income was negatively associated with the reported importance of wages available in a vocational/day placement, (r=-.24). As family income increased, parent interest in wages as a factor in selecting a vocational/day program decreased. It is logical to conclude that families with higher income levels would be less concerned with the amount of money their handicapped child earned.

Discussion

One of the most significant results of this survey was the parent projections of need for generic adult service programs. Parents in the sample overwhelmingly ranked vocational/day programs as the top priority for their child upon graduation and for the next 10 years. When paired with parents' ranking of critical features used to select vocational/day programs, this provides valuable information on the type of vocational services future consumers will require. Long-term structured employment models which provide a wide range of work opportunities and contact with non-handicapped peers would appear to be the preferred alternative of parents who responded to this survey. These results tend to confirm the proposals made by professionals who are currently developing and evaluating employment models for the severely handicapped (Bellamy, Horner, Sheehan, & Boles, 1981; Wehman, 1981; Rhodes, 1981; Sowers, Thompson, & Connis, 1979; Whitehead, 1979; Greenleigh, 1975).

Interestingly, residential programs were less important to parents immediately after graduation than they were five to ten years after graduation. This would suggest that many parents have similar expectations of their severely handicapped son or daughter as for non-handicapped high school graduates. It is quite normal for non-handicapped young adults to continue to live at home for several years until they have finished college, established a career or begun a family. Parents seem to have the same expectation that a severely handicapped child will remain home a similar period after "graduating" from school. That parents anticipate maintaining a handicapped child in the residence for a time should prompt both adult and school service providers to identify strategies that would support parents while their child continues to live at home. These strategies could take the form of service programs which assisted parents to increase the independence of their handicapped child within the family home and immediate neighborhood, provided respite, or periodic in home supports. The stated preference for vocational over residential programs also suggests that transition planning should first focus on developing those activities which will support student performance in vocational settings. As adult services are expanded to accommodate the larger number of school leavers, these data would suggest that expansion occur first in vocational programs.

It would appear from the group of parents surveyed that case management services are important at two points in a student's transition from school to adult services. First, there is a need prior to graduation for information about adult service programs in order to effectively plan for a student's post-school service network. Parents perceive an increasing need for case management services as they grow older and become less able or less willing to act as the principle overseer of their child's post-school services.

The present data also served to verify the inadequacy of current transition planning for severely handicapped high school students. A significant number of parents (35%) had not received <u>any</u> information about adult service programs in their local community, and there was no consistent source of information for those parents who had received information about adult services. Without information on these programs, parents are handicapped in several ways. First they will be less able to plan educational programs which will improve their child's current and future quality of life. Second in the absence of comprehensive information about current adult service programs, parents will be unable to advocate successfully for needed changes in adult services (Bellamy et al. 1982).

Not only do parents need information about what adult service programs are available, they need criteria against which to evaluate these programs. Parents clearly emphasized "training" as a critical feature in selecting both day and residential programs, rather than such features such as contact with non-handicapped peers, access to community resources, or wages. It would appear that parents continue to operate under the assumption that more training per se leads to better outcomes for their child. Bellamy et al. (1982) have pointed out that the promise of training in vocational service does not necessarily result in either increased access to less restrictive service environments or to improved vocational outcomes for clients. Rather, success in post-school work and residential environments is a function of opportunities available in the community. The capabilities of a student are irrelevant if no jobs or residential options exist. Parents assumption that more training is necessarily better may be a function of the fact that the source of information about adult service programs came most often from school personnel, and in the schools, training per se is valued rather than the achievement of significant outcomes such as wages or other work benefits.

Summary

Today the first generations of severely handicapped students who grew up in the public schools rather than in private or institutional programs are graduating . If the benefits of this schooling are to be realized fully, it is important that there be an efficient transition from school to the most appropriate post-school work and residential options. In order to overcome existing service problems (wait lists and restrictive program options), it is important that states carefully plan for severely handicapped school leavers. One important data source for such are the parents or surrogates of handicapped high school students. At the same time, if parents are to plan and advocate appropriate services, they themselves need information on the operation and the consumer benefits of in various service alternatives. Data from the present survey underscore parents' need for information related to the transition process, and illustrate that data from parents may provide important information about the types of services needed for school leavers, when services graduates will need when service need will likely be greatest, and the qualities most valued in those service programs.

References

Bellamy, G. T., Horner, R. H., Sheehan, M. R., & Boles, S. M. (1981). Structured employment and workshop reform: Equal rights for severely handicapped individuals. In J. Lapadakis, J. Ansley and J. Lowitt (Eds.), *Work, services and change. Proceedings from the National Institute of Rehabilitation Facilities*, Menomonie, WI: University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Bellamy, G. T. Rhodes, L. E., Bourbeau, P. E., & Mank, D. M. (1982). *Mental retardation services in sheltered workshops and day activity programs: Consumer outcomes and policy alternatives*. Paper presented at the *National Working Conference on Vocational Services* and Employment Opportunities, sponsored by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation, The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, and the Association for Retarded Citizens, Madison, Wisconsin, March.

Bellamy, G. T., & Wilcox, B. (1980). Secondary education for severely handicapped students. Guidelines for quality services. In B. Wilcox and A. Thompson (Eds.), *Critical issues in the education of autistic children and youth*. Washington, D. C.: Office of Special Education.

Bellamy, G. T., Wilcox, B., McDonnell, J. J., & Sowers, J. (1982). Improving vocational services for severely handicapped individuals. In *Proceedings* of the National Parent Conference on education of children requiring extensive special education. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Education.

Blessing, K., & Samelien, J. K. (1982). *An eleven year follow-up of adult former students of Wisconsin's public school classes for the trainable mentally retarded*. Unpublished manuscript.

Brodsky, M. (1983). *Post high school experiences of graduates with severe handicaps*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Delph, H. AQ., & Lorenz, M. (1953). Follow-up of 84 public school special class pupils with I.Q.'s below 50. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, *58*, 175-183.

Greenleigh Associates, Inc. (1975). *The role of the sheltered workshop in the rehabilitation of the severely handicapped*. Report to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Rehabilitation Services Administration, New York.

Kiernan, W. (1979). Habilitation: A dynamic system. In T. Bellamy, G. O'Connor, and O. Karan (Eds.), *Vocational rehabilitation of severely handicapped persons*. Baltimore: University Park Press.

McInerney, M., & Karan, O. (1981). Federal legislation and the integration of special education and vocational rehabilitation. *Mental Retardation*, *19*, 21-23.

National Governors Association. (1980). Employment and training of handicapped youth. Washington, D. C.: Author (draft).

Rhodes, L. E. (1981). Industry based structured employment: An option for severely handicapped people. Unpublished manuscript, University of Oregon.

Saenger, G. The adjustment of severely retarded adults in the community: A review of research on predictive assessment of the adult retarded social and vocational adjustment. (1972). New York: Teacher's College Press.

Sowers, J., Thompson, L., & Connis, R. (1979). The food service vocational training program. In T. Bellamy, G. O'Connor and O. Karan (Eds.), Vocational rehabilitation of severely handicapped persons: Contemporary service strategies. Baltimore: University Park Press.

Stanfield, J. S. (1976). Graduation: What happens to the retarded child when he grows up? In R. N. Anderson and J. G. Greer (Eds.), Educating the severely and profoundly retarded. Baltimore: University Park Press.

Suelzle, M., & Keenan, V. Changes in family support networks over the life cycle of mentally retarded persons. (1971). American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 86(3), 267-276.

Tisdall, W. A follow-up of trainable mentally handicapped children in Illinois. (1960). American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 65, 11-16.

Wilcox, B., & Bellamy, T. Design of high school programs for severely handicapped students. (1982). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Wilcox, B., & McDonnell, J. Transition of severely handicapped students from school to adult services. (1983, March)). Proposal submitted to Special Education Programs, U. S. Department of Education.