CEC's DCDT FAST FACTS: Vocational Education
Prepared by the DCDT Publications Committee

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center has identified evidence-based predictors of post-school success for students with disabilities based on a systematic correlational literature review (Test et al., 2009). Findings indicated that students who:

- passed more than half or all courses in 8 curriculum areas (remedial academics, traditional content classes, personal finance, community access, behaving responsibly, goal-setting or problem solving, specialized vocational education, regular vocational education) were more likely to be engaged in post-school education (Halpern et al., 1995),
- had vocational education credits in high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and post-school education than students who did not engage in vocational education (Harvey, 2002),
- participated in vocational education increased the likelihood of full-time employment more than two times (Baer et al., 2003), and
- received technology training were more than twice as likely to be employed than those who did not receive technology training (Leonard et al., 1999).

Yet, CEC reported only about 40% of students with disabilities have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) goal on postsecondary vocational training ("Study Synthesis Shows," 2007).

Vocational education, commonly known as career and technical education (CTE), is available in almost all high schools. Vocational education is coursework involving vocational curricula (e.g., drafting, welding, brick masonry) that incorporates community-based, in-school, and on the job training. Today, with national and state school reform efforts focused on academic achievement and with the fastest growing occupations now requiring some postsecondary education, career/technical educators are seeking effective ways to contribute to these goals.

Application to Teachers
- Familiarize yourself with CTE resources available. For example, use assessments CTE teachers have already administered to plan for transition for students with disabilities. CTE teachers often administer preference inventories for students that are useful for transition planning and transition services.
- Collaborate with CTE teachers and coordinators to understand training opportunities available to students.
- Work with guidance counselors to ensure students are enrolled in appropriate courses.
- Familiarize yourself with the **States' Career Clusters Initiative** established by the National Career Technical Education Foundation to identify Career Clusters as a tool to provide technical skills needed across 16 career clusters. These clusters include key knowledge and skills statements representing content students need to know and be able to do to be a successful employee in specific career areas. For more information see: www.careerclusters.org

Application to Administrators
- Find out what is available in your state and local area to help your CTE programs. The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE) is part of Office of Vocational and Adult Education's (OVAE) strategy to assist states and local education agencies in identifying and implementing effective career and technical education programs. For more information see: www.nccte.org

Application to Families
- Look for choices in career technical education and vocational education available in your district and talk to your child's IEP team to discuss how those classes could assist your child in working towards postsecondary goals. You can look into CTE and vocational education classes by contacting your child's teacher, by visiting with a guidance counselor, or by asking for a copy of the course catalog.

Where to go for Additional Information

Websites

Association for Career Technical Education (2010). *CTE initiatives*. Retrieved from
http://www.acteonline.org

Association for Career Technical Education (2010). *What is Career Ready?* Retrieved from
http://www.acteonline.org

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (2009). *Predictor of Post-School Success*. Retrieved from http://www.nsttac.org/ebp/PredictorResources.aspx

States' Career Cluster Initiative (2002). *Career clusters*. Retrieved from
http://www.careerclusters.org

United States Department of Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991). *What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000*. Retrieved from http://www.academicinnovations.com/report.html

Books, Newsletters, and Research Articles

Baer, R. M., Flexer, R. W., Beck S., Amstutz, N., Hoffman, L., Brothers, J., et al. (2003). A collaborative followup study on transition service utilization and post-school outcomes. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *26*, 7-25.

Kochar-Bryant, C. A., & Bassett, D. S. (2002). *Aligning transition and standards-based education: Issues and strategies.* Arlington,VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Halpern, A.S., Yovanoff, P., Doren, B. & Benz, M.R. (1995) Predicting participation in postsecondary education for school leavers with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 62,* 151-164.

Harvey, M. W. (2002). Comparison and postsecondary transitional outcomes between students with and without disabilities by secondary vocational education participation: Findings from the National Education Longitudinal Study. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *25*, 99-122.

Leonard, R., D'Allura, T., & Horowitz, A. (1999). Factors associated with employment among persons who have a vision impairment: A follow-up of vocational placement referrals. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 12,* 33-43.

Study Synthesis shows gains and problem areas for students with disabilities. (2007). *CEC Today*. Retrieved from http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CEC_Today1&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=6735

Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L. J., & Kohler, P. H. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *32*, 160-181. Doi: 10.1177/0885728809346960

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