

Outcomes of Approved Special Education Programs in the Private Sector

Outcomes for Students from the Class of 2000: Year 3 Follow-Up

Report Number 4, Part B NAPSEC Outcomes Project

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Year 3 Follow-Up: Class of 2000

The Programs and the Alumni

Seventy-three schools operating 95 programs in 14 states from 7 federal educational regions participated in the study. The regions represented were Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Appalachia, Southeast, North Central, Southwest, and Mid-Continent. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participating schools by state and federal region. Twenty-nine percent of the 95 participating programs were categorized as Pervasive Developmental Disorders, 20% as Medical Disorders, 36% as Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, and 15% as Learning Disorders programs.

Table 1

Class of 2000 Study Participating NAPSEC Schools by Federal Educational Region

n=73		
<u>Region/Participating State</u>	#	%
<u>Northeast:</u>		
Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island	11	15.0
<u>Mid-Atlantic:</u>		
Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	48	65.8
<u>Appalachia:</u>		
Tennessee, Virginia	8	10.9
<u>Southeast:</u>		
Mississippi	1	1.4
<u>North Central:</u>		
Illinois, Minnesota	3	4.1
<u>Southwest:</u>		
Texas	1	1.4
<u>Mid-Continent:</u>		
Kansas	1	1.4
Total	73	100.0

In 2001, one year after graduating, aging out, or receiving a certificate of completion, 551 alumni were available for this study, 96% of the original cohort of 573. In 2002, two years after graduating, aging out, or receiving a certificate of completion, 509 alumni were interviewed, 89% of the original 573. For the present contact in 2003, three years after graduating, aging out, or receiving a certificate of completion, 451 alumni were contacted, 78% of the original cohort. Table 2 shows the prior educational programs and demographic information for the alumni contacted in 2003, three years after leaving school.

Table 2

**Prior Educational Programs and Demographic Information
of Alumni from Class of 2000 (n=573)**

<u>Program Classification</u>	Year 4 Follow-Up (2004)	
	#	%
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	113	19.7
Medical Disorders	66	11.5
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	277	48.4
Learning Disorders	117	20.4
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
White	390	68.1
Black	129	22.5
Hispanic	40	7.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	1.7
Other	2	.3
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	381	66.5
Female	192	33.5
<u>Postschool Status By Contact</u>		
Available	451	78.7
Not Available	122	21.3

Method

Each participant was asked to contact every student who graduated from, received a certificate of completion from, or aged-out of one of their school's programs in June, 2000. The alumni were contacted by phone and every effort was made to interview the alumni as well as the parent, guardian, or another

relative. Each respondent was asked whether the alumni were engaged in Mainstream Activity (attending 4-Year or 2-Year College, Trade/Technical School; participating in Competitive Employment or the Military); Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (enrolled in a Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program or Supported or Sheltered Employment); Community-Based Program Activity (participating in an Adult Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Program); “Other” Activity (e.g., involved as a homemaker, volunteer or admitted to a hospital, correctional or drug rehabilitation facility); or was without any Postschool Education/Training, Employment, or appropriate Adult Program. They were also asked about the alumni’s living arrangements (independent; semi-independent; with parent, guardian or other relative; in a skill development or foster home; in a group home; in a residential treatment facility; in another facility, such as a development center, psychiatric hospital, correctional facility). These responses were then recorded and analyzed.

Results for Class of 2000, Year 3

When entry into Mainstream Activity, 4-Year/2-Year College or Trade/Technical School (17%), or involvement in Competitive Employment or the Military (34%), was examined, 51% of the alumni were found to be engaged in such activities. See Table 3.

Table 3

**NAPSEC Alumni Postschool Activity of
Class of 2000: Year 3**

n=451

Postschool Setting	Pervasive Developmental n=99		Medical n=58		ED/BD Programs n=195		Learning n=99		Total n=451	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	1	1.0	3	5.2	23	11.8	13	13.1	40	8.9
Two Year College	2	2.0	3	5.2	23	11.8	3	3.1	31	6.9
Trade/Technical School	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	2.0	1	1.0	5	1.1
Competitive Employment	8	8.0	5	8.6	86	44.1	42	42.4	141	31.3
Military	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	4.6	2	2.0	11	2.4
Mainstream Activity^a	11	11.0	11	19.0	145	74.3	61	61.6	228	50.6
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program	1	1.0	1	1.7	7	3.6	3	3.1	12	2.6
Supported Employment	36	36.4	8	13.9	5	.26	9	9.0	58	12.9
Sheltered Employment	16	16.2	2	3.4	3	1.5	11	11.1	32	7.1
Vocational Rehabilitation Activity^b	53	53.6	11	19.0	15	7.7	23	23.2	102	22.6
Adult Partial Care	3	3.0	0	0.0	5	2.6	3	3.1	11	2.4
Nonvocational Day Program	17	17.2	21	36.2	2	1.0	5	5.0	45	10.0
Community-Based Program Activity^c	20	20.2	21	36.2	7	3.6	8	8.1	56	12.4
Other	9	9.1	10	17.2	9	4.6	1	1.0	29	6.4
No Education/Training, Job or Program	6	6.1	5	8.6	19	9.8	6	6.1	36	8.0
Total	99	100.0	58	100.0	195	100.0	99	100.0	451	100.0

^a Mainstream Activity – 4-Yr./2-Yr. College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military

^b Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program, Supported or Sheltered Employment

^c Community-Based Program Activity – Adult Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Program

In addition, more than 22% were enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity and another 12% were participating in Community-Based Program Activity. While 8% were not engaged in postschool education/training, employment, or an appropriate adult program, another 6% were engaged in “Other” Activity, such as volunteering, entering a nursing home, hospital, drug rehabilitation, or correctional facility.

When the postschool activities of alumni who attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were examined, overall 74% were found to be engaged in Mainstream Activity. Moreover, 49% of alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were found to be involved in competitive employment, including the military. This compares favorably to the 47% employment rate achieved by alumni with behavioral problems from special education programs within the public schools who have been out of school from 3-5 years, persons with presumably less severe problems than those who had been enrolled in approved private special education (D’Amico & Blackorby, 1992). See Table 4 for this comparison.

Table 4

**Competitive Employment: Regular Education Students vs.
Public School Special Education Students with Behavioral Disorders vs.
NAPSEC Special Education Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders**

Out of School for 3-5 Years	Competitive Employment %
Alumni from Regular Education Programs	69 (D'Amico & Blackorby, 1992)
Alumni with Behavioral Disorders from Public School Special Education	47 (D'Amico & Blackorby, 1992)
Alumni with Behavioral Disorders from NAPSEC Programs	49

Living Arrangements

When the living arrangements were examined for alumni from all NAPSEC program categories, about 58% were found to be living in the community with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Moreover, 24% of the alumni from NAPSEC programs, persons with severe disabilities, were living independently, a rate that is lower than the 37% independent living rate reported for special education students from public schools who have been out of school for 3-5 years (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). See Table 5.

Table 5

**Independent Living: Regular Education Alumni vs.
Special Education Alumni from Public Schools vs.
NAPSEC Alumni**

Out of School for 2 Years	%
Alumni in Regular Education Programs	60 (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996)
Alumni from Public School Special Education	37 (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996)
Alumni from NAPSEC Programs	24

3-Year Comparison of Class of 2000 Outcomes

Table 6 compares the postschool activities of the NAPSEC alumni for the 2001, 2002, and 2003 follow-up studies.

Table 6

NAPSEC Class of 2000: 3-Year Comparison

	Mainstream		Vocational Rehabilitation		Community-Based Program	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
2001 Follow-Up n=551	296	54	132	24	61	11
2002 Follow-Up n=509	292	57	111	22	56	11
2003 Follow-Up n=451	228	51	102	23	56	12

The rate for Mainstream Activity has decreased from 57% to 51%. The rate for Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (23%) and Community-Based Program Activity (12%) have remained relatively stable from year to year.

Table 7

**NAPSEC Class of 2000
Mainstream Activity Comparison:
2001-2003**

	2001 (n=551)		2002 (n=509)		2003 (n=451)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	52	9.4	49	9.6	40	8.9
Two Year College	78	14.2	50	9.8	31	6.9
Trade/Technical School	30	5.4	18	3.5	5	1.1
Competitive Employment	123	22.3	158	31.0	141	31.3
Military	13	2.4	17	3.3	11	2.4
Total	296	53.7	292	57.2	228	50.6

When Mainstream Activity is examined in Table 7, it is interesting to observe that three years after finishing a NAPSEC program, the gains in competitive employment which were observed in 2002 (31%) have been maintained in 2003 (31.3%).

Table 8

**NAPSEC Class of 2000
Vocational Rehabilitation Activity Comparison:
2001-2003**

	2001 (n=551)		2002 (n=509)		2003 (n=451)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Voc Rehab Training Program	32	5.8	14	2.7	12	2.6
Supported Employment	65	11.8	55	10.8	58	12.9
Sheltered Employment	35	6.3	42	8.3	32	7.1
Total	132	23.9	111	21.8	102	22.6

As Table 8 shows, the rate of involvement in Supported Employment has increased slightly from 2002 (10.8%) to 2003 (12.9%). Involvement in Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program (from 2.7% to 2.6%) as well as Sheltered Employment (from 8.3% to 7.1%) have decreased slightly from 2002 until 2003.

Finally, as Table 9 indicates, the rate of Community-Based Program Activity has increased from 2002 to 2003 (from 11% to 12.4%).

Table 9

**NAPSEC Class of 2000
Community-Based Program Activity Comparison:
2001-2003**

	2001 (n=551)		2002 (n=509)		2003 (n=451)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Adult Partial Care Program	14	2.5	9	1.8	11	2.4
Nonvocational Day Program	47	8.6	47	9.2	45	10.0
Total	61	11.1	56	11.0	56	12.4

Conclusions for Alumni: Class of 2000 at 4-Year Follow-up

Three years after leaving a NAPSEC program, the alumni from the Class of 2000 appear to be productive. On the whole, 86% of the alumni were found to be actively involved in prosocial roles. When examined by program focus, 85% of the alumni from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 74% of the alumni from Medical Disorders programs, 86% of the alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, and 93% of the alumni from Learning Disorders programs were engaged in either Mainstream, Vocational Rehabilitation, or Community-Based Program Activity.

The rate of entry into competitive employment for alumni with behavioral problems from the Class of 2000 has grown from 37% (2001) to 49% (2002) and remained at 49% (2003). Not only is it noteworthy that this high risk group has found this stability, but the 49% rate closely follows the 47% employment rate for presumably less severely disabled special education students with behavioral problems out of public school programs for 3-5 years (D'Amico & Blackorby, 1992). In fact, more than 74% of the alumni from the Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs are involved in Mainstream Activity. The rate of independent living for these alumni from all program categories has increased 15% (2001) to 25% (2002) to 24% (2003), a rate which is lower than the 37% rate reported for the presumably less disabled special education students from public schools out of school for a comparable time period (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

Discussion for Class of 2000 Alumni Study

The goal of the year 3 follow-up study of the Class of 2000 is to learn the degree to which, over time, productive postschool activities are maintained. Three years later, 51% of these alumni report involvement in the mainstream, 23% in vocational rehabilitation, and more than 12% in appropriate community programs.

Moreover, three years later, the high-risk group of alumni who previously attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs reported a rate of 26% for participation in postschool education or training and a rate of 49% for involvement in competitive employment (including military service). This rate of employment compares favorably with the 47% rate reported for alumni with

behavioral difficulties from public school special education programs out of school 3 to 5 years (See Table 4, page 9). Most important, these findings also indicate that, overall, alumni from all categories who were engaged in competitive employment have made gains since 2001 when the rate was 25%. Furthermore, the alumni have maintained their employment status at about the same rate from 2002 (31.0%) to 2003 (31.3%). That gains in employment are made over time are consistent with the findings of the National Longitudinal Transition Study (SRI International, 1993).

Three years after leaving a NAPSEC program, nearly 86% of the alumni of the Class of 2000 continue to function as productive members of society. Continued longitudinal studies are needed to learn the degree to which, over time, these young adults are able to achieve and maintain this positive entry into the world of adulthood. Of equal importance, future research should identify the factors that help and hinder persons with disabilities from maintaining and achieving these productive roles.

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