

# Transitioning to adulthood case study



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD

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### Abstract

We have been asked to assess Tracey's ability to effectively transition and accomplish her dreams. The process will require collaboration from not only the behavior analysis but other administrators and para professionals such as her special education teacher, parents and other service providers. In order to ensure that Tracey is able to make a successful transition to adulthood we will be creating a program that will help to create balance, structure and routine, we also hope to foster improvement to her significantly below average performance in reading and social skills.

We hypothesize that with our assessment will enable Tracey to identify areas that needs improvement to change her behavior for a more independent living by decreasing the number of impulsive behavior, we also hope to work with her special education teachers to see her reading improve one to two grade levels.

We will also help Tracey and her parents understand why portions of her dreams after transition may not be attainable at this time, we will however, identify other possibilities that will utilize Tracey's skills and make her as productive and self-sufficient as possible, in order to experience and enjoy the quality of life she dreams about.

## TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD

Twenty-one year old Tracey who has Autism Spectrum Disorder dreams of one day attending college, after college she hopes to follow in her father's footsteps and work in an office as her father. Tracey needs routine and predictability to transition through her daily routines, if there is not predictability and routine she displays difficulty functioning. She presently reads at the level of a second grader. She also needs to be reminded to change and choose appropriate clothing on a regular basis. Aside from this Tracey is capable of completing daily living skills relatively independently as well as follow direction paired with pictures which help to simplify complicated tasks. Tracey has a very friendly personality, but tends to be impulsive at times, she is known to grab or push her peers. She hopes to be able to share an apartment with a friend when she graduates.

We all know that there are challenges to transitioning in life, for persons with disability it requires more assistance to make this process effective and practical.

A successful transition for Tracey will require a coordination of education, employment, independent living, vocational assessment and her daily living responsibilities. The task of assisting Tracey transition to adulthood with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can be mysterious and challenging.

Reviewing IDEA's definition for Autism Spectrum Disorder we see that Tracey exhibits "developmental disability which affects her nonverbal communication and social interaction skills resulting in a deficiency in her educational performance, she also requires repetitive activities to function." (Heward, 2013, p. 237)

Based on this definition we can utilize the Post-Secondary goals transition guide to create a strategy to help Tracey transition by identifying her strengths, preferences and career possibilities, as well as her social adaptability.

Identified area to be supported for effective transitioning for Tracey our 21 years-old with Autism Spectrum Disorder are, Tracey would like to attend college and share an apartment with a friend after her transition period. We also need to address her impulsive behavior of grabbing and pushing.

Education/Training: Tracey will need to participate in continued specialized academic training to improve her intellectual disabilities, as well as participate in any school work training program to make her employable. We suggest direct extended academic training to improve her reading and other academic skill, as well as job skills training in an office where she can learn filing or other functions like that of a mailroom clerk 4 to 5 times a week. We also support a “ semester-long course that helps person’s with disability learn critical social skills for survival and success” (Wenzel and Rowley (2010) (Heward, 2013, p. 544)

Employment: Because Tracey can only perform task that are paired with pictures to help her complete task, we suggest individualized employment or customized employment with the use of the behavior chain technique to train her to do specific sequence of conditioned responses through task analysis and instruction-based support. This will help her to have a clear and visual idea of the task she needs to perform. Individualized employment is a good option because it involves “ intensive job site training with one on one

instructions, it is based on the unique needs and contributions that Tracey possess, it also allows for her to have monitored performance and is community based”. (Heward, 2013, p. 538)

Independent Living: Tracey’s impulsive grabbing and pushing of peers and her inability to self-perform normal hygienic activities such as appropriate clothing and changing, makes it a sensitive decision when choosing her future living arrangements. It is recommended that she participates in the living arrangement at a co-residence apartment ( *if friend does not have a disability* ) which is shared by an individual with disabilities and a roommate without disabilities, this gives her an opportunity to meet her goal of sharing with her friend when she graduates, yet still having the required assistance she will need to function socially.

If Tracey’s friend does have a disability we would also recommend the group home living arrangement, because it helps to “ prepare individuals with disabilities for a more independent living situation”, (Heward, 2013, p. 545)

Concerns that may arise within the community as to Tracey’s capability for adjusting and functioning effectively into the transition period of adulthood with Autism Spectrum disorder would be her safety and ability to conduct herself as a single young female.

Behavior Assessment and Intervention Plan for Tracey’s impulsive grabbing (roughly seize or snatch an individual bodily limbs) and pushing (use of force in a quick succession to move one from one point to another).

Our goal as ABA's is to use observational learning along with a token board system to help Tracey learn new responses such as using speech and appropriate social skills to communicate with her peers instead of resorting to grabbing or pushing. We hope to reinforce these new responses by model the appropriate behavior such as teaching the Tracey to attend, imitate, and identify negative and positive responses along with their consequences. We hope to use a technique called theraplay to demonstrate the acceptable behavior responses. "(Theraplay is a form of therapy that uses elements of play therapy to assist one in forming better social relationships with others)" (Simeone-Russell, 2011)

Example: We would explain to Tracey that pushing her peer is not acceptable, we would demonstrate that the appropriate response is to " say excuse or use another path to get by". Tracey will also need to update her chart regarding each acceptable and unacceptable behavior using self-evaluation and monitoring. Her chart is evaluated at the end of each day, both by her teacher and her parents. Three or more pushing incidents a day are reinforced by Tracey receiving a sticker with a pushing illustration. Two or less reported incidents results in her receiving a gold sticker with the appropriate illustration to be placed on her chart. At the end of each week if she has positively reinforced the acceptable behavior she will be able to trade in her stickers for a preferred treat otherwise negative behavior earns her further instructions and demonstration regarding the appropriate response.

Tracey's weekly chart will be collected and the data will be graphed on a bi-weekly and monthly scale and used to determine the effectiveness of the

intervention plan, a decrease of the negative behavior and an increase in the positive reinforced behavior will determine the success of the intervention.

Parental support in the form of emotional and practical help with reading and instructional activities and enforcing the expected behavioral responses are ways in which Tracey's parents can assist her to transition into adulthood, allowing her to learn from her failures and responding with correction and encouragement will help to develop the appropriate self-determination and characteristics required to succeed. Her parents can also help by assigning her chores in order to help her demonstrate independence.

Her special education teachers and service providers can help to develop her strengths through specific teaching techniques geared for her disabilities and implementing them in her curriculum, teaching her new routines that may arise after she transitions. Use of self-monitoring techniques will also assist Tracey in meeting her personal goals, these adjustments will in turn allow Tracey to securely explore the world and develop into who she dreams of becoming.

Our successful intervention plan will be depended on the inclusion of all required personnel participation, on identifying Tracey's strengths and weakness, helping her to develop as an individual with proper guidance and resources that will be beneficial to retained resilience as she transitions into adulthood with her disability. Based on the assessment and Tracey abilities most of her present goal will not be attainable unless intensive intervention strategies are put in place. We expect improvement in behavior and academic ability to improve by at least one grade level. Quality of life is the

new norm for persons with disability transitioning into adulthood, if their needs and training are addressed responsibly the process can be accomplished to enable mobility, safety, and security for the individuals. The greatest threat to a person with disability finding successful independence is lack of training, support and governance.

## References

Heward, W. L. (2013). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education (10th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Simeone-Russell, R. (2011, October). A practical approach to implementing theraplay for children with autism spectrum disorder. *International Journal Of Play Therapy*, 20(4). *International Journal Of Play Therapy* , pp. 224-235.