



Realizing Employment First for Youth



Kesha's Path to Community Employment

Case Study of Student Identified with an
Intellectual Disability (Cognitive Disability)

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Kesha is a student served through an IEP in her local school district. The Evaluation Team Report (ETR) indicates that Kesha's educational identification is a student with a cognitive disability (intellectual disability).

Brief History

Kesha was served through an IEP since preschool. She also was connected to the County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CBDD) prior to age 2 and received Early Intervention services through the CBDD. She attended the integrated preschool in her local school district where she continued to attend school until graduation. Throughout her educational career, Kesha required IEP services and supports. She accepted the assistance of others to navigate the school, make decisions, and prepare for class or other activities. Kesha's social circle and social activities have always been an important part of her life.

Early Discussions

During the early middle school years, Kesha indicated a strong desire for community employment. In fact, Kesha and her family had discussions as early as elementary school that focused on 'working' as part of her future adult life. However, even as she entered high school she was still having difficulty narrowing her interests to begin a specific career plan.

In School Support

When Kesha attended the integrated preschool in her local school district, she received related services of speech, occupational and physical therapy through the program. In the elementary years she continued to be served through an IEP and received academic support, related services and assistance with organizational and social skills. This same type of assistance continued through middle and high school but expanded beyond the academic subjects to vocational skills and activities. As Kesha moved into high school the related services were primarily consultative in nature and focused on her adult goals and the skills and needed supports of adult life.

In middle school she began her transition planning with a multi-agency team. At this time, the team found she was receiving a great deal of assistance from both teachers and paraprofessionals to complete her academic assignments and prevocational tasks. This included support in organizing materials and facilitating social engagement with peers. She was able to care for all her personal needs during the school day.

The following information reviews the multi-agency information gathered to inform transition assessment and to develop the postsecondary goals. Highlights of the services and supports that were identified as necessary through multi-agency planning are also reviewed in the information on the following pages.

Family Engagement

It is important to recognize that a general family outreach procedure is not sufficient to meet many of the individual family needs. Throughout Kesha's journey, team members' efforts focused on engaging Kesha's family in meaningful future planning using a variety of strategies and resources. This included offering ongoing and timely information while assisting the family to understand and connect to resources. The team was also sensitive to the family's priorities and goals and used these to help guide the planning. Through the years the family's needs changed, requiring the school and agencies continuing efforts and strategies to evolve as well.

The following information reviews the multi-agency information gathered to inform transition assessment and to develop the postsecondary goals. Highlights of the services and supports that were identified as necessary through multi-agency planning are also reviewed in the information on the following pages.

Transition Assessment:

Information was collected by a multi-agency team using the following tools and methods:

Transition Assessment Tools and Processes Included:

- Student interest inventories using easy read materials, pictures and videos
- Student interview, multiple opportunities, shortened sessions.
- Job Shadows in employment environments identified from interest inventories
- Review of previous years records to identify strengths, effective supports and areas of need. Community based work assessment
- Observations in multiple environments – school, home, community – for skills such as: Independent living skills, social competencies, level of independence, problem solving, communication.
- Interview with parents/family members and teachers from previous years
- Review of information from Individual Service Plan through County Board of DD to inform Preferences, Interests, Needs, Skills/Strengths (PINS)

Preferences/ Interests

- Spending time with friends and family playing games, going to the mall and doing crafts
- Shopping for clothes, looking at clothes, fashion, watching TV shows about fashion
- Would rather work with others than alone.
- Enjoys meeting new people
- Prefers individual instruction in new tasks or to learn new skills
- Interested in pet animals, such as cats, small dogs and birds
- Enjoys the creativity of fixing hair and makeup (with her mom and sister)
- Emerging interest in cooking - especially baking

Skills/Strengths

- Is able to articulate what she prefers and does not prefer to teachers and sometimes parents
- Can follow a visual schedule to complete routine tasks of independent living
- Motivated to learn when instruction and experiences are designed for her learning style
- Able to use calculator for basic math
- Learning to follow basic recipes (using picture supports) to bake cookies and other desserts.
- Understands information best using easy read materials & picture symbols.
- Hygiene and appearance are excellent
- Independent with personal care needs in school and home
- Social skills are a strength. Most confident with adults.

Needs/Challenges

- Vocational tasks attempted at school require ongoing adult prompting and extended time to complete correctly
- Academic subjects present a challenge. Keshia requires specially-designed instruction and modification of all content areas
- Problem solving new situations is stressful. Lacks confidence in new situations.
- Becomes anxious/stressed when trying new tasks. Concerned with making a mistake. Looks for assistance before trying.
- Requires assistance to remember and use safety measures in the kitchen (at home)
- Difficulty narrowing her interests to begin a specific career plan
- Requires extended time and support to transfer or apply skills and knowledge to new situations

Post-Secondary (Adult Life) Goals: Ongoing Transition Assessment and resulting information assisted to develop and confirm the following Post-Secondary Goals

Postsecondary Goals	Supporting Transition Assessment Data Below are examples of Transition Assessment data that support the identified goals
<p>Education Goal Kesha’s Early or Initial PS Education Goal</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school, Kesha will participate in instruction for vocational skills development necessary to be successful in community integrated employment opportunities aligned with her skills and strengths</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational tasks attempted at school • require ongoing adult prompting and extended time to complete correctly • Requires extended time and support to transfer or apply skills and knowledge to new situations • Prefers individual instruction in new tasks or to learn new skills
<p>Refined Education Goal</p> <p>As the team and Kesha gained more information and insight, the PS Education goal was refined as she moved through high school</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school, Kesha will participate in on-the-job training to learn the specific vocational skills necessary for employment in a local clothing retailer</i></p>	
<p>Community Employment Goal Kesha’s Early or Initial PS Employment Goal</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school Kesha will be successfully employed in community integrated employment in the clothing retail industry.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys meeting new people • Shopping for clothes, looking at clothes, fashion, watching TV shows about fashion • Would rather work with others than alone. • Able to comprehend functional information using easy read materials and picture symbols. • Requires extended time and support to transfer or apply skills and knowledge to new situations • Hygiene and appearance is excellent • Independent with personal needs
<p>Refined Community Employment Goal</p> <p>As the team and Kesha gained more information and insight, the PS Employment goal was refined as she moved through high school</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school Kesha will be successfully employed part-time in community integrated employment in a local clothing retail store with natural and environmental supports.</i></p>	

Review the Activities, Services, and Supports Included in Kesha’s Journey to Community Employment

	Early Years (Up to 10 years)	Early Middle School Years (11-12 years)	Late Middle School Years (12-14 years)	Early High School Years (14-16 years)	Late High School Years (16+ years)	After Graduation
Department of Developmental Disabilities - County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CBDD)	<p>CBDD received referral for EI services and found eligible for services at age 18 months.</p> <p>Service and Support Administrator (SSA) from CBDD attends and participates in yearly IEP meeting</p>	<p>SSA attends initial multi-agency transition planning meeting (age 13)</p> <p>CBDD ‘transition series’ (For students and families. Information about issues for parents on relevant Post School issues and planning as well as experiences and information for students on planning for adult life.)</p>	<p>SSA attends yearly multi-agency planning (MAP) meetings for ongoing transition planning</p>	<p>Redetermination of eligibility (age 16).</p>	<p>Discussion of the use of technology for ongoing support on the job following graduation</p> <p>Connected Kesha to transportation options that would allow her to explore additional employment opportunities.</p> <p>SSA and School Team reviewed the Disability Benefits 101 website (https://oh.db101.org) with Kesha’s family with a focus on the information related to income and potential impact on benefits in order to assure benefits could be maintained even when employed.</p>	<p>Extended supports following OOD services with access to waiver services as needed to maintain community employment including: in-person job coaching and technology support</p> <p>Employment Navigator continues to collaborate with Kesha and team</p>
			<p>Requested for HCB Waiver for future employment supports. Placed on waiting list for HCB waiver services.</p>	<p>Included CBDD Employment Navigator/SSA in MAP meetings for ongoing transition planning</p>		

	Early Years (Up to 10 years)	Early Middle School Years (11-12 years)	Late Middle School Years (12-14 years)	Early High School Years (14-16 years)	Late High School Years (16+ years)	After Graduation
Education Local Education Agency (School)	<p>Began preschool services at age three through local school district and participated in an integrated preschool program with typical peers, taught by special educators and early childhood instructors. Also received related services of speech, occupational and physical therapy through the programs.</p> <p>As she moved through the elementary school years, she continued to be served through an IEP and received academic support, related services and assistance with organizational and social skills.</p>	<p>Specially designed instruction and simulated practice for safety in environments of adult daily living</p> <p>Specially designed instruction, modifications and/or adaptations for all academic subjects. IS responsible while Paraprofessionals and General education teacher assist to implement and support.</p>	<p>Specially designed Instruction in self-determination with a focus on decision-making, problem-solving and risk-taking</p> <p>Specialized instruction in use of Smartphone apps for visual supports to prompt through steps of tasks (instead of paraprofessional)</p> <p>Job Shadows in selected local businesses focused on areas of interest including retail clothing, cosmetics and cosmetology, retailer of cook-wear and small appliances</p> <p>Formal referral to OOD (following career goal development and initial career development services from school transition coordinator and Intervention Specialist)</p>	<p>Using video modeling and simulation, Kesha continued to build skills in decision-making, problem-solving and risk-taking</p> <p>Vocational instruction of job tasks in the retail store (folding clothing for display, organizing clothing by size and style for display, etc.) using chaining, prompting with gradual fading of verbal and gestures. Visual schedules provided as ongoing support when needed</p> <p>Instruction in OMJ website tools and how to build resume with specially designed instruction / support from Intervention Specialist and Transition Coordinator</p>	<p>Specialized Instruction in use of Facetime App for virtual coaching</p> <p>Self-monitoring strategies used in community settings to improve decision-making, problem-solving and risk-taking</p> <p>The school team participated in discussions about benefits with the County Board of DD SSA and family using the DB 101 website as a tool for discussion and future resource.</p>	<p>Education services through the LEA end at graduation</p>

	Early Years (Up to 10 years)	Early Middle School Years (11-12 years)	Late Middle School Years (12-14 years)	Early High School Years (14-16 years)	Late High School Years (16+ years)	After Graduation
Vocational Rehabilitation Agency - Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)	No Service. Vocational Rehabilitation Services begin at age 14	With parent consent, OOD Counselor (OTSP) attends IEP meeting to explain OOD services to family. Prior to a formal referral to OOD, Kesha participated in with a small group in a Pre-ETS service of Job Exploration counseling to assist her in developing a career goal.	In the months between 9th and 10th grades, Kesha participated in Summer Youth Career Exploration in the areas of retail clothing/ accessories and pet stores.	In the months between 10th and 11th grades, Kesha participated in Summer Youth Work Experience in the area of retail clothing	In the months between 11th and 12th grades, Kesha participated in Summer Job development	After graduation, OOD can support Kesha should her disability present a barrier to obtaining or maintaining her employment. Services such as Vocational counseling and training; Job search and job placement assistance
Ohio Job and Family Services Workforce Development OhioMeansJobs	No Services Requested	No Services Requested	With specialized instruction/ support from Intervention Specialist and Transition Coordinator, used OhioMeansJobs.com website to create and use OMJ backpack. Used Career Cluster Inventory to better target and narrow career interests and identify PINS. Viewed videos of careers and career environments, including retail.	Use the School Center in the online training center in OhioMeansJobs. com to assist with classroom subjects	Posted resume, searched and applied for jobs, and practiced interviews with the assistance of teacher, paraprofessionals and family members.	Kesha can continue to use her OMJ Backpack and submit applications when seeking employment following graduation. She also attended a few job fairs.
Mental Health and Addiction Services	No referral or service was found to be needed					

Read About Kesha's Journey to Community Employment

Kesha's preparation for employment began even before she formally entered the transition years. The following information discusses Kesha's Path to Community Employment through her education years and is intended to narrate the previous graphic.

Kesha was referred to Help Me Grow/**Early Intervention (EI)** services at 18 months of age when an observant pediatrician became concerned with delays in her developmental milestones.

- The EI Specialist from her local County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CBDD) worked with the family to increase opportunities and interventions that would enrich language, motor and social development.
- The EI Specialist also connected Kesha to her local school district preschool program and assisted in the transition into preschool services at age 3.

In Kesha's **preschool years**, supports and services generated primarily from the local school district. These included:

- Preschool services at age three through local school district in an integrated preschool program with typical peers. This was taught by special educators and early childhood instructors working together to support and teach all the children in the program.
- Related services of speech (ST), occupational (OT) and physical therapy (PT) through the preschool program. ST services were primarily offered in individualized sessions while the OT and PT services were small group and consultative in nature.
- While the CBDD was not involved with direct service, Kesha's Service and Support Administrator (SSA) attended and participated in yearly IEP meetings. She also spoke regularly with the family for updates on Kesha's progress and potential needs.

In Kesha's **elementary school years**, supports and services generated primarily from the local school district. These included:

- Services through an IEP that included academic support, related services and assistance with organizational and social skills
- Related services of speech and occupational therapies that supported her academic and social development
- Support and instruction in the general and special education environments from general education teacher, intervention specialists and paraprofessionals.

As Kesha moved through the **Middle School years**, services and activities related to adult life preparation included:

- A multi-agency planning (MAP) meeting was held when Kesha was age 13. The meeting was attended by Kesha, her parents, school staff, CBDD SSA and OOD counselor. These MAP transition meetings were held each year until Kesha graduated.
- A 'Transition Series' for parents and youth offered through the local CBDD. The series offered information for parents on relevant Post School issues and planning and also provided experiences and information for students on planning for adult life. Kesha and her parents decided to attend. Although Kesha was only 12 years of age at the time, she and her parents both found it to be helpful and gave them a jump on transition planning.
- Review of OOD services at the initial MAP meeting by the OOD OTSP (Ohio Transition Support Partnership) Counselor. Parent consent was obtained for the counselor attendance prior to the meeting.
- Specially designed instruction by the Intervention Specialist and simulated practice for safety in environments of adult daily living
- Specially designed instruction, modifications and/or adaptations for all academic subjects. Intervention Specialist responsible while Paraprofessionals and General Education teacher assist to implement and support.

In the **later years of Middle School**, as Kesha neared (and passed) her 14th birthday, the focus on prevocational services in Middle School became more intense with increasing participation from other agencies.

- Specially designed Instruction in self-determination with a focus on decision-making, problem-solving and risk-taking
- Specialized instruction in use of Smartphone apps for visual supports to prompt through steps of tasks (instead of paraprofessional prompting)
- With specialized instruction/support from Intervention Specialist and Transition Coordinator, used OhioMeansJobs.com website to create and use OMJ backpack. Used Career Cluster Inventory to better target and narrow career interests and identify PINS. Viewed videos of careers and career environments, including retail.
- Job Shadows arranged by the Intervention Specialist in selected local businesses focused on areas of interest including retail clothing, cosmetics and cosmetology, retailer of cook-wear and small appliances. These activities were services offered through the IEP.
- Prior to a formal referral to OOD, Kesha participated with a small group in a Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) of Job Exploration counseling to assist her in developing a career goal.
- Formal referral to OOD (following career goal development and initial career development services from school transition coordinator and Intervention Specialist)
- Requested HCB Waiver for future employment supports. Placed on waiting list for HCB waiver services.

With her postsecondary community employment goal in place, transition services became more intense and focused in the High School years. Kesha's school team continued to work with Kesha and her family and agency partners to provide the services, experiences and planning necessary for her to successfully transition to employment following high school. Services and activities in the **early High School years** included:

- Inviting the CBDD Employment Navigator to participate in the yearly MAP meetings to assist in ongoing transition planning. The Employment Navigator remained involved with Kesha following graduation to assist in her Path to Employment.
- Vocational instruction of job tasks in the retail store (folding clothing for display, organizing clothing by size and style for display, etc.) using chaining, prompting with gradual fading of verbal and gestural prompts. Visual schedules provided as ongoing support when needed. This is an IEP transition service and implemented by the Intervention Specialist and paraprofessional (or school job coaches).
- Using video modeling and simulation, Kesha continued to build skills in decision-making, problem-solving and risk-taking. This is an IEP transition service and implemented by the Intervention Specialist.
- Instruction in OMJ website tools and how to build resume with specially designed instruction / support from Intervention Specialist and Transition Coordinator
- Use of the OMJ School Center in the online training center in OhioMeansJobs.com to assist with classroom subjects
- Redetermination of eligibility for CBDD services (age 16)
- OOD Summer Youth Career Exploration (between 10th and 11th grades) to learn more about the career areas of retail clothing/ accessories and pet stores.

As Kesha continued into the **later High School** years and prepared for graduation, her MAP team continued to meet and her transition services became even more targeted to life following high school. Activities and services included:

- CBDD facilitating a discussion of the use of technology as ongoing support on the job following graduation. This could be a future HCB Waiver service for Kesha.
- SSA and School Team reviewed the Disability Benefits 101 website (<https://oh.db101.org>) with Kesha's family with a focus on the information related to income and potential impact on benefits in order to assure benefits could be maintained even when employed. The db101 website facilitated discussion and became a resource for the future.
- CBDD also connected Kesha to transportation options that would allow her to explore additional employment opportunities in the community
- Specialized Instruction in use of Facetime App for virtual coaching in preparation for possible use of technology for on-the-job support following high school. Discussions at MAP meetings surfaced the advantages of using technology. Besides giving Kesha more independence, availability of in-person job coaching services may be limited. Preparing for that possibility is wise transition planning.
- Self-monitoring strategies used in community settings to improve decision-making, problem-solving and risk-taking were provided by the Intervention Specialist. This is part of the ongoing and scaffolded instruction that was planned beginning in Middle School.
- OOD Summer Youth Work Experience in the months between 11th and 12th grades in the area of retail clothing. Retail clothing was selected as the focus area after previous experiences found Kesha's interest and skill to be stronger in this type of work than other potential options that were explored in the earlier years.
- Using OMJ.com to complete and post her resume, search and apply for jobs, and practice interviews. Kesha required the assistance of teacher, paraprofessionals or family members to access and complete many of the functions of the website, however her navigation skill of the website continued to improve.

Following graduation, Kesha continued to use or stay connected with several agencies. This included:

- CBDD services for ongoing adult life support and access to her community. Kesha's skills and independence increased greatly as she neared graduation. Her MAP Transition team assisted her to plan and target the services and supports to prepare for transition to adult life. However, as an adult she may need assistance transitioning to her new job, refining her employment skills, improving her daily living skills and accessing the community. HCB Waiver services can assist in all these areas. This would include access to in-person job coaching and technology support for virtual coaching.
- Collaboration with the Employment Navigator/SSA through the CBDD to assure she is accessing all available supports across agencies.
- OOD. After graduation, OOD can also offer support to Kesha to obtain or maintain her employment. Coordinating the services between OOD and CBDD will be important and could be a focus of the initial post-school MAP meeting.
- ODJFS. Kesha can continue to use her OMJ Backpack and submit applications through OhioMeansJobs.com when seeking employment following graduation.