



CSESA

The Center on Secondary Education for
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

A High School Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

David Test, Erik Carter, & Kate Szidon

Paper presented at the annual conference of the Division on Career
Development and Transition, November 14, 2013, Williamsburg, VA.

About CSESA

- Research & Development Center
- Funded by the Department of Education (IES)
- Purpose: To develop and study a comprehensive high school program for students on the autism spectrum

CSESA Sites



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY



UNC
FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

UC DAVIS
MIND INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS
AT AUSTIN



The Goal of CSESA

To improve post-secondary outcomes
for students by using high quality
professional development and
evidence-based interventions to
support practitioners, families, and
students

Why is CSESA important?

...nearly 80% still live at home, almost half have no jobs or postsecondary training, 40% never have contact with friends, 17% never feel hopeful about the future, 21% never engage in outside activities, and many experience a decrease in insurance coverage and therapy services.
– Paul Shattuck

[After high school] they are completely without any supports at that point, and from then on their world seems to get smaller and smaller the child is almost always at home.”
-Teacher

Individuals with ASD have poorer outcomes compared to individuals with other disabilities – even the individuals with ASD graduating from the general curriculum with a diploma.

I can tell you that if I had had a plan like this in place...my life would be very different. I would not have wasted 10 years of my life doing jobs that I was frankly unsuited for and did not fit in.
-Adult with ASD

It's hard to get that consistency, making sure everybody's following. That's a lot of people to get on the same page. Everybody's willing to try stuff, but we're not all using the same language, and that's confusing for somebody to work with that many people.
-Administrator

Students with ASD

- High School
 - Difficulty navigating a complex environment
 - Frequent transitions between classes and teachers
 - Nuanced social situations
- Post High School
 - Poor post-secondary outcomes overall

“Our kids are alone. They made it through high school somehow – poorly or well. But they are all alone. They don’t go to dances, they don’t go bowling, and it is not because they do not want to.”

-Parent from CSESA focus group

CSESA Content

CSESA Foundations

- Purpose: professional development for school staff who are serving students with ASD
- Format: Assessment, training, and coaching

Independence & Behavior (PRISM)

- Purpose: to promote responsibility, independence, and self-management for students with ASD
- Format: Process for identifying and addressing key goals in existing instruction

Social Competence and Peer Connections (PASC)

- Purpose: to improve social competence skills and increase social opportunities for students with ASD
- Format: Combination of peer-mediated interventions and direct instruction

CSESA Content (contin.)

Academics: Literacy (Alternate Achievement and CSR)

- Purpose: to teach students to comprehend passages of connected text (AAL), used to support learning of content (CSR)
- Format: use of systematic instruction to teach question answering and related comprehension skills (AAL), use of evidence-based approach with cooperative learning component (CSR)

Transition and Families

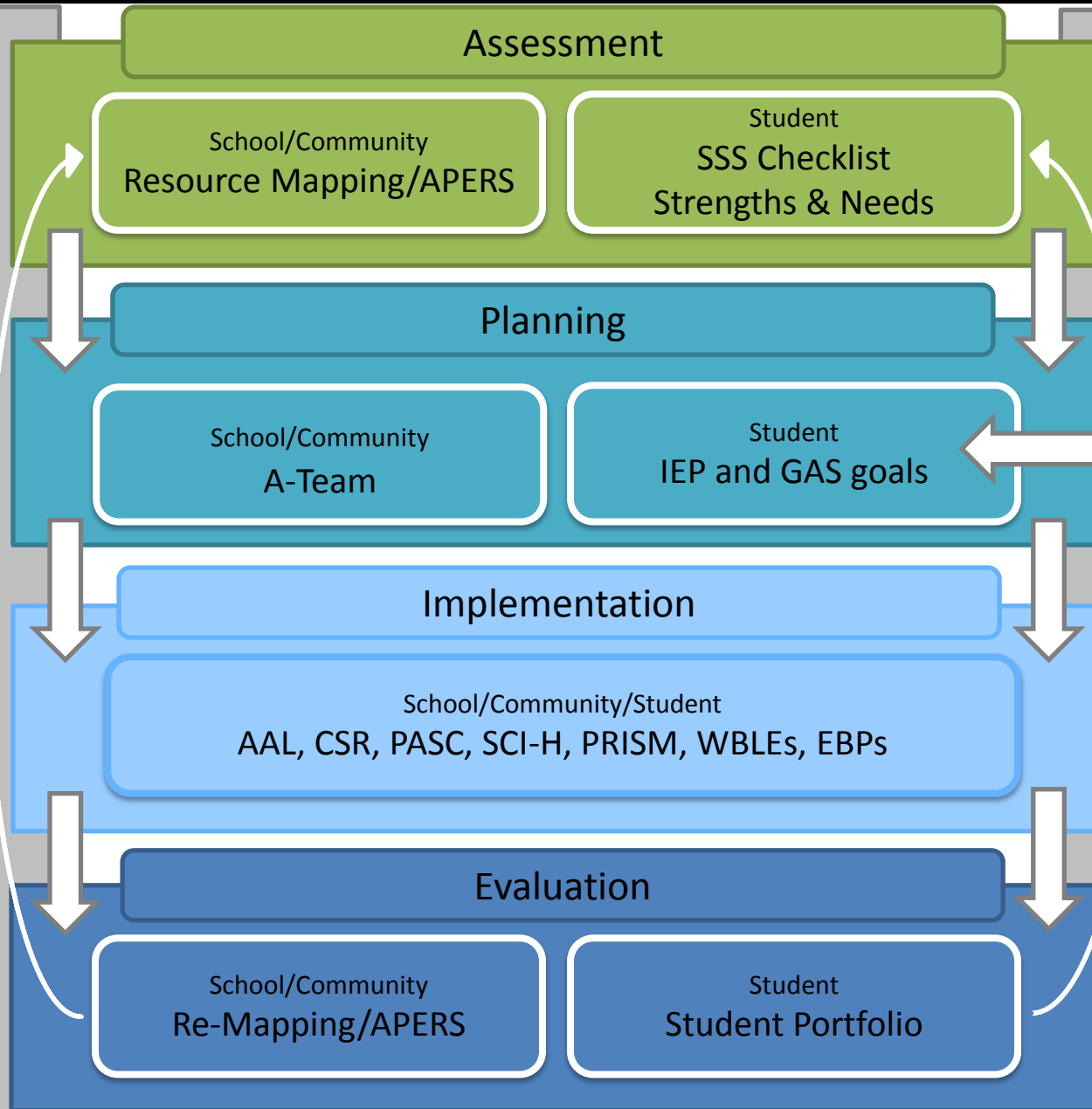
- Purpose: to improve transition planning process and family knowledge of transition process
- Format: explicit instruction, community based instruction, coaching, and family training groups

CSESA Model Framework

Professional Development

School/Community

Online Course, Initial Training, Transition Training, and Ongoing Coaching

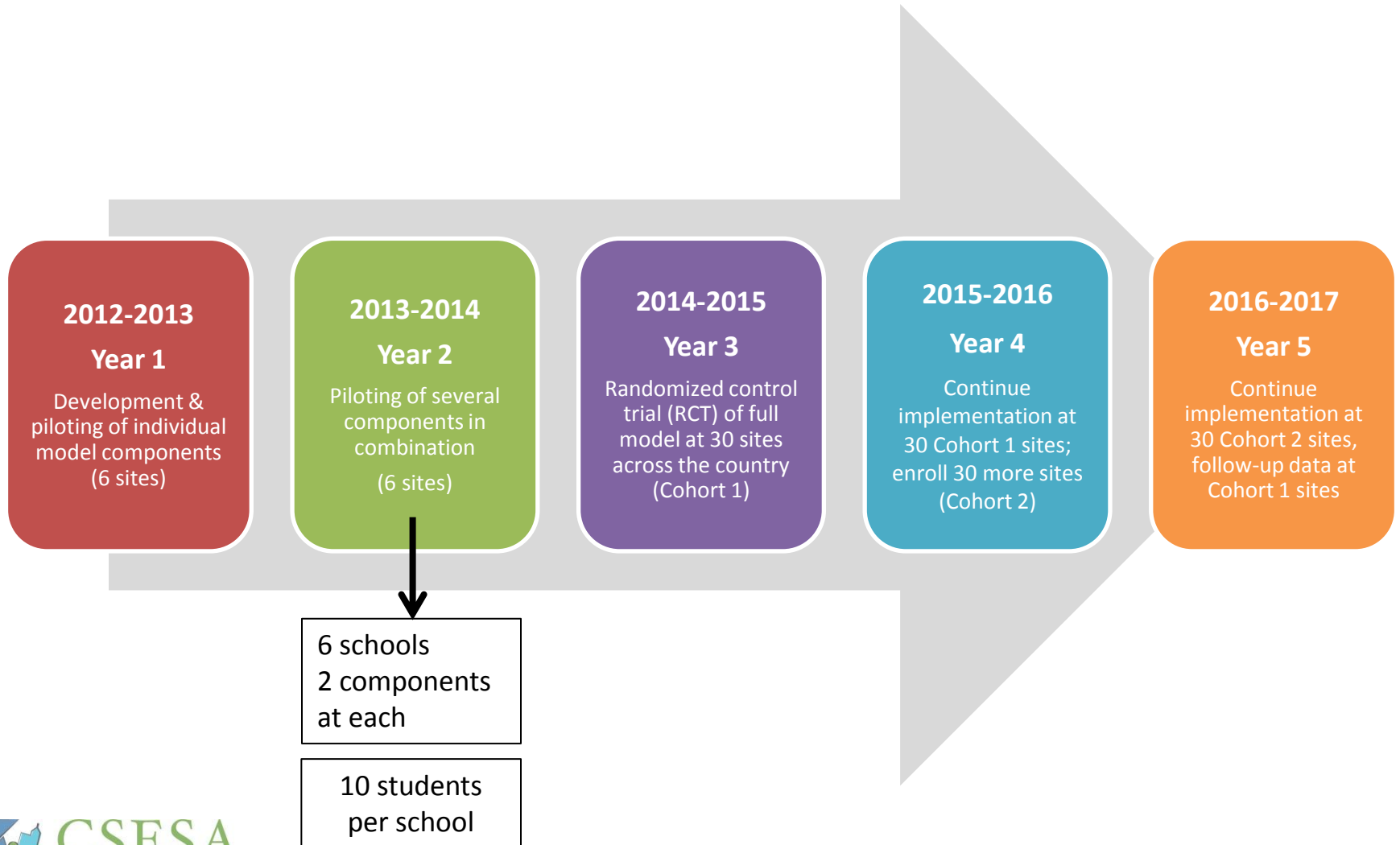


Student
IEP Involvement

Family
Transitioning
Together

Equipping & Empowering

The Big Picture



Year 1: CSESA Study

- Focus Groups
 - With school personnel, community stakeholders, youth and young adults with ASD, and family members
 - Revised and refined components from feedback
- Pilot Studies
 - Each site tried at least one component in a high school
 - Collected data from school staff, families, and students
 - Further revised and refined components

Year 2: CSESA Study

- At each site:
 - One high school
 - 7-10 students with ASD
 - CSESA Foundations + 2 components
- At UNC Charlotte site
 - CSESA Foundations
 - Academic
 - Transition & Families
- At Vanderbilt site
 - CSESA Foundations
 - Academic
 - Transition & Families



CSESA Foundations



The CSESA Curriculum: Peer and Social Competence Component

Exploring the promise and possibilities
of peer-mediated interventions for
adolescents with ASD

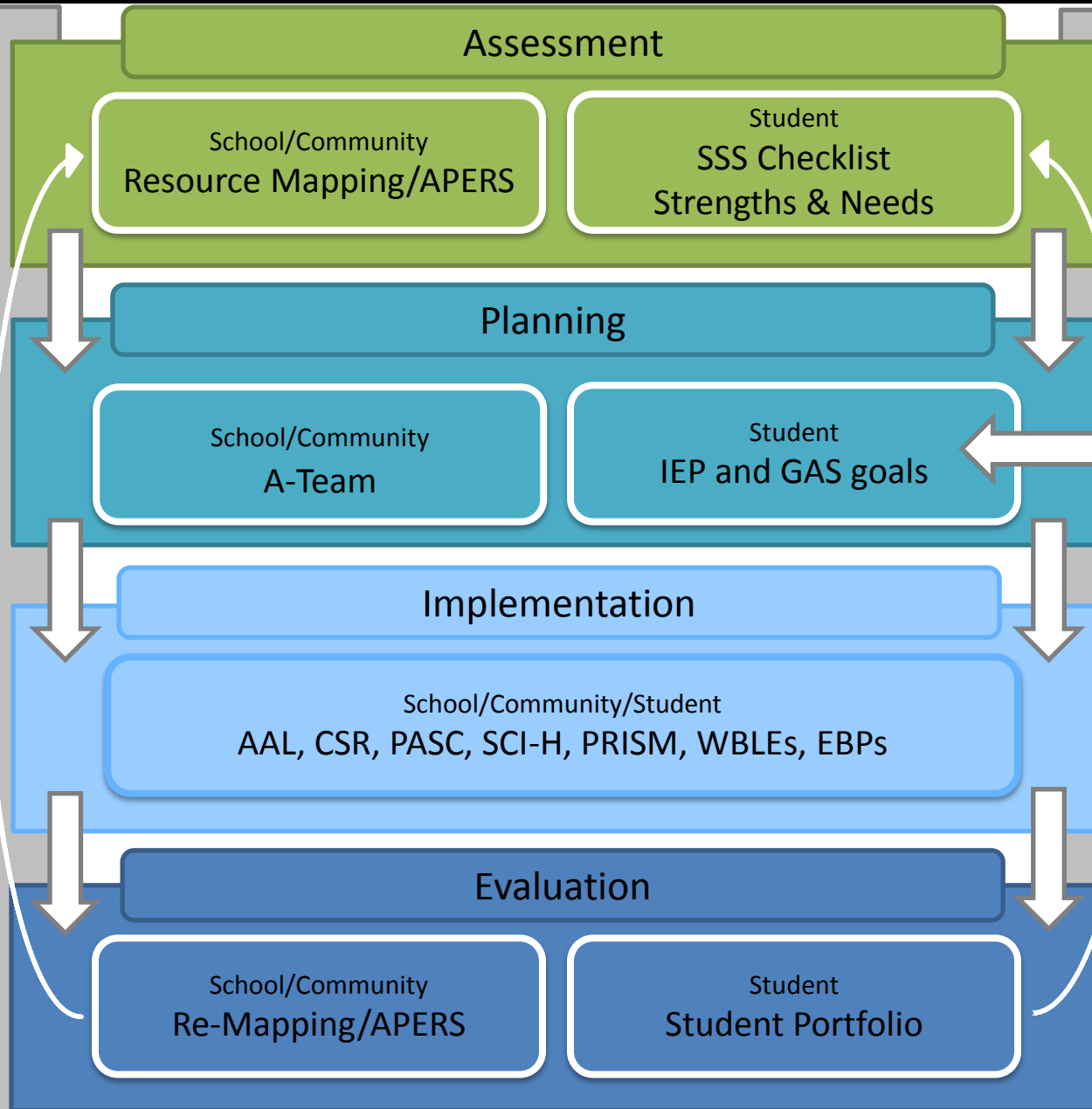
Social

CSESA Model Framework

Professional Development

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Online Course, Initial Training, Transition Training, and Ongoing Coaching



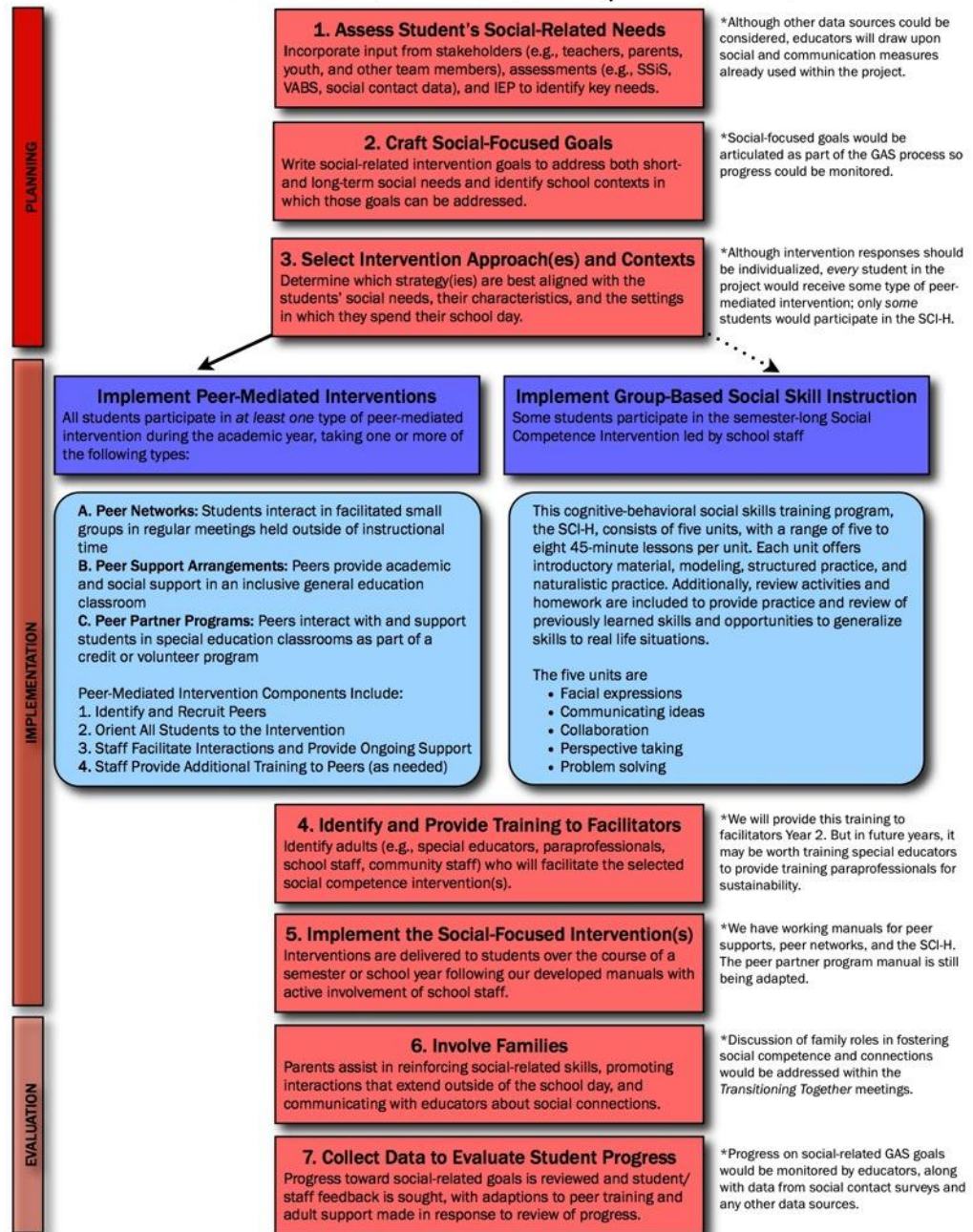
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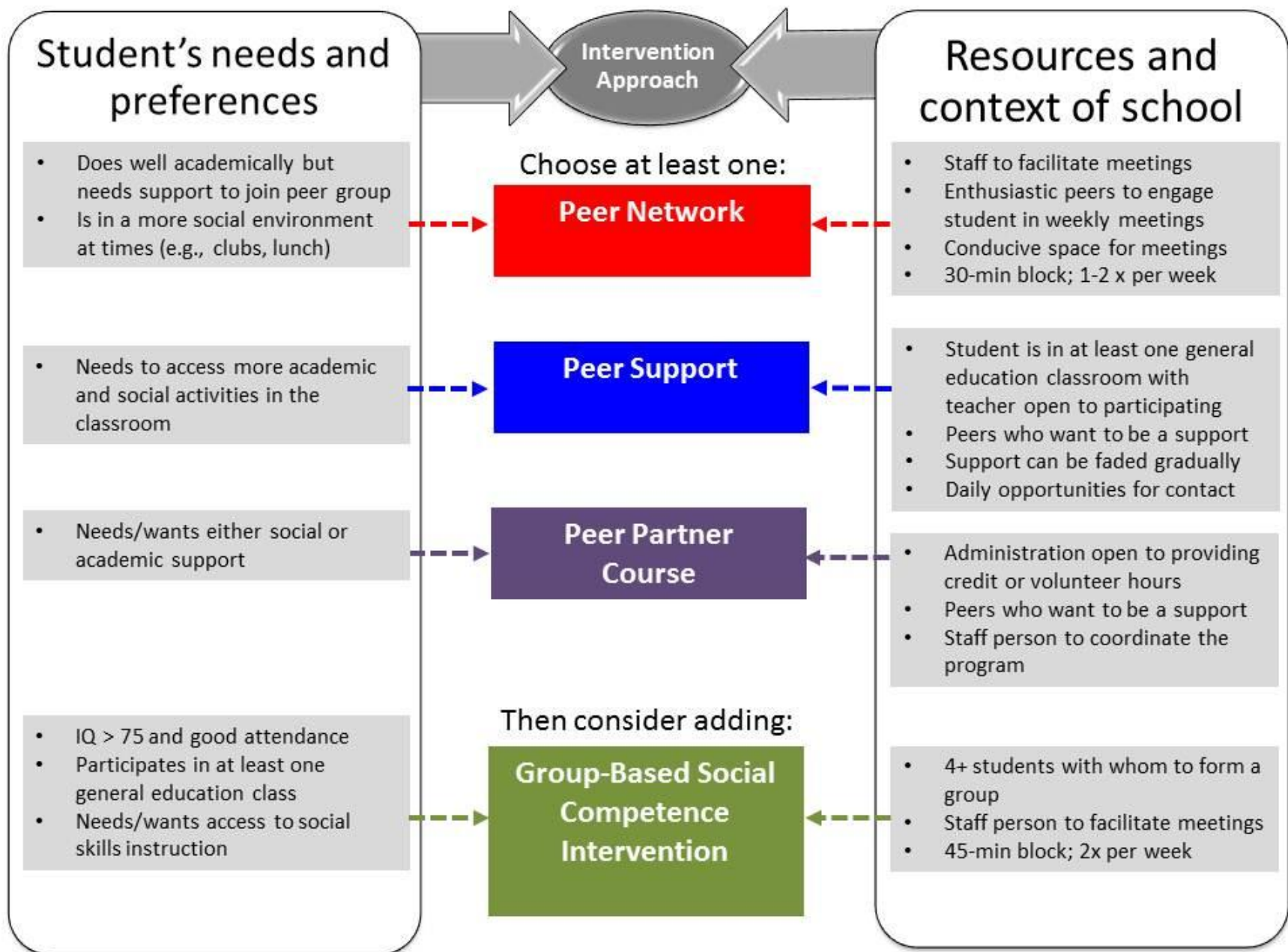
CSESA Peer and Social Component (PASC)

Peer and Social Component (PASC)



PASC Intervention Process

1. Assess student's social-related needs
2. Craft social-focused goals
3. Select intervention approach(es) and contexts
4. Identify and provide training to facilitators
5. Implement the social-focused intervention
6. Involve families
7. Collect data to evaluate student progress



Other Factors to Consider	Peer Network	Peer Support	Peer Partner	SCI-H
A group of peers are able to meet regularly and offer support	X		X	
An educator can meet weekly and arrange activities in advance	X			
General education classroom placement with a 1:1 paraprofessional		X		
Dedicated space is available for group meetings	X			X
An adult staff member who can meet regularly and deliver curriculum				X

* School resources must align with intervention requirements

	GOAL 1: Initiate conversations with peers	GOAL 2: Work collaboratively with classmates	GOAL 3: Develop relationship with peers
Advisory			
Math 1		Peer support	
Keyboarding			
Break			
History			Peer support
Science	Peer support		
Lunch	Peer network		Peer network
Life skills class			Peer partner

* Chosen intervention must align with relevant social goals

Peer Network Interventions

- A social group of students established around a student with ASD that:
 - Meets weekly around conversation and shared activities
 - Interacts outside of the meeting
 - Helps the student become more involved in school life
 - Receives regular guidance from an adult facilitator

Peer Network Strategies to Foster Social Connections Among Adolescents With and Without Severe Disabilities

Erik W. Carter, Jennifer Asmus, Colleen K. Moss, Molly Cooney, Katie Weir, Lori Vincent, Tiffany Born, Julia M. Hochman, Kristen Bottema-Beutel, and Ethan Fesperman



TEACHING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 51-59, Copyright 2013 CEC


Peer Networks: Overview

1. Identify and invite network partners
2. Hold a training meeting for partners (student with ASD may or may not participate)
3. Hold an orientation meeting with student and partners
4. Facilitate regular social network meetings
5. Provide feedback and support
6. Fade direct support




Potential Benefits of Peer Networks


- Students with ASD who are supported by peers have been found to:
 - Interact regularly with more peers
 - Enjoy more sustained interactions with peers
 - Participate in more school activities
- Peers providing support to classmates with ASD have reported:



I loved being part of this and being able to learn a little more about Jack.



I've been able to communicate better with the kids but also with other people.



My eyes are more open to my partner's needs.

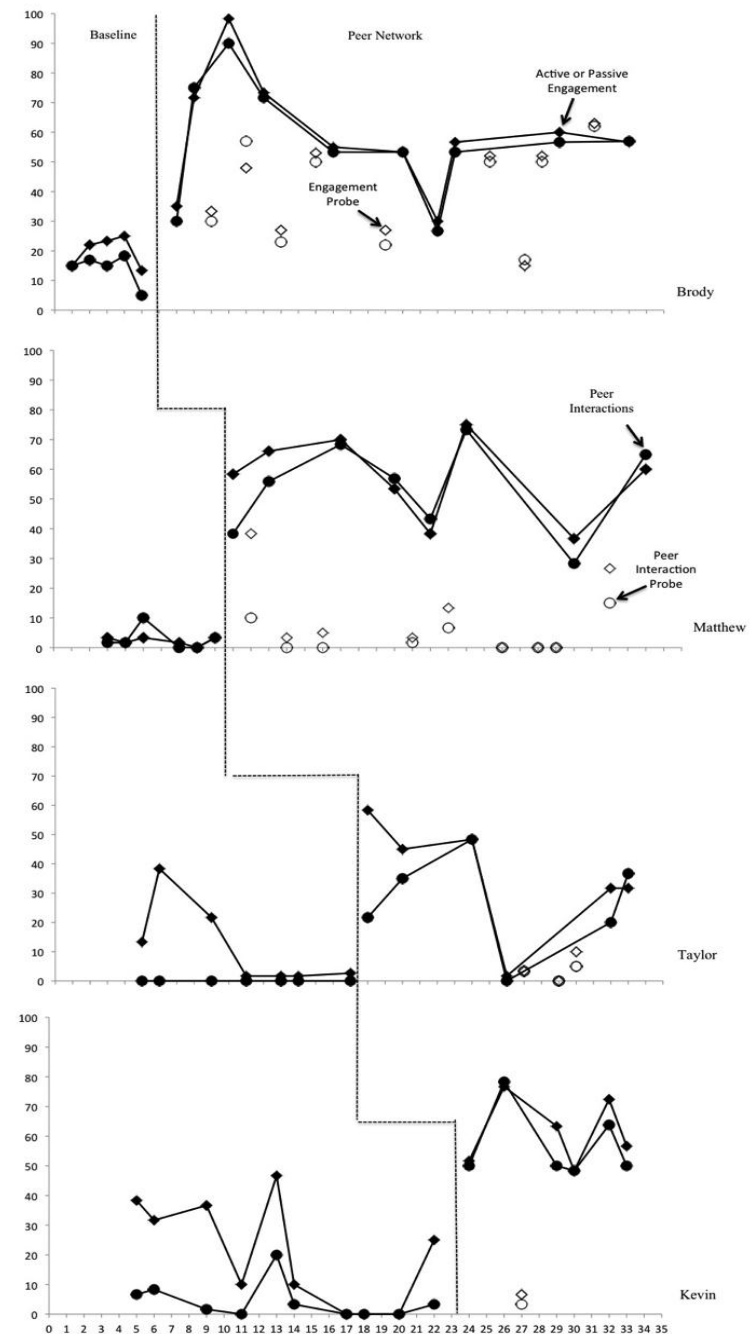
Early Findings from Two Pilot Studies

- Six high school boys with ASD (ages 14-18)
- 15 peer partners (without disabilities)
- 5 network facilitators (special educators, paraprofessionals)
- Three high schools (urban, high-poverty)
- Network Context: Cafeteria or Advisory Period

Measures & Design

- Observational Measures
 - Peer interactions (i.e., partners, others, students with disabilities)
 - Social engagement (i.e., active, passive, unengaged)
 - Social-related goals (individualized)
 - Peer and adult proximity
- Experimental Designs
 - Multiple baseline across participants
 - MBL/Withdrawal (ABAB, ABA)

In the Cafeteria



In the Classroom (Advisory)

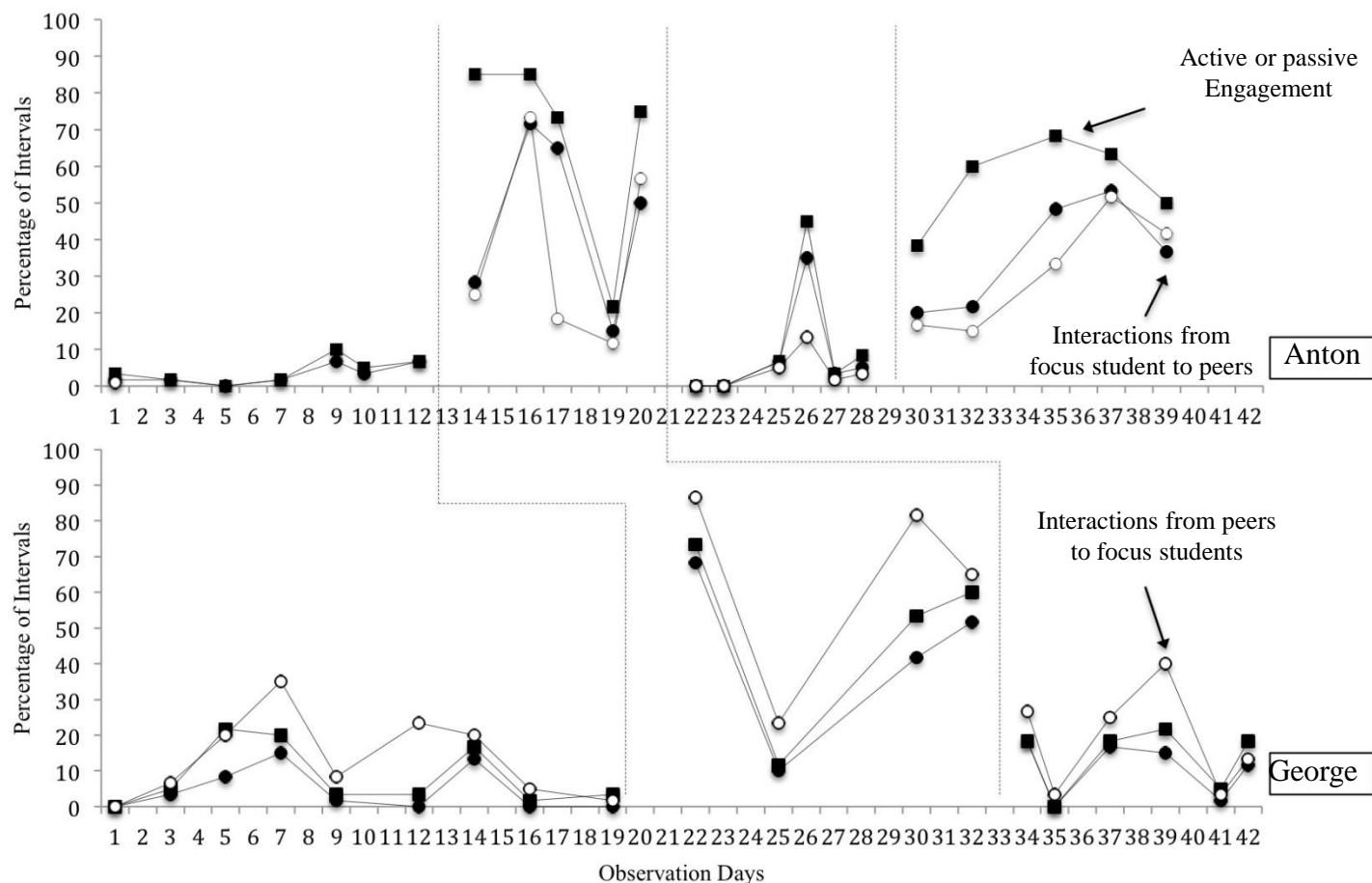


Figure 1. *Percentage of intervals in which focus students were actively or passively engaged (closed squares), the focus student interacted socially with peers (closed circles), and a peer interacted socially with the focus student (open circles).*

Focus Groups and Interviews



- Nine focus groups (61 stakeholders)
 - Three with educators and administrators
 - Four with parents of children with ASD
 - Two with community representatives and providers
- Individual interviews (28 youth and young adults with ASD)
- Research Questions
 - How do key stakeholders understand the concept of "social competence and social connections" and its importance within the high school curriculum?
 - What factors might impact the development of social competence and connections for high school students with ASD?
 - ***How should school services and supports be optimally designed to promote social competence in effective and socially valid ways?***
 - How should such interventions be addressed alongside other transition priorities within a comprehensive intervention approach?

Stakeholder Recommended Strategies for Promoting Social Skills and Connections

1. Begin intervention and awareness efforts as early as possible to ensure positive outcomes
2. Ensure strong support exists among school leaders and promote schoolwide commitment
3. Make sure intervention and/or programming efforts have the buy-in of *all* stakeholders
4. Reflect on the school's capacity and ensure interventions are sustainable and feasible
5. Actively promote awareness and positive views about disability (and ASD specifically) widely
6. Involve families in meaningful ways responsive to the strengths and needs of each family
7. Identify each student's social-related needs, strengths, and goals using meaningful assessment procedures
8. Consider how issues of privacy and disability disclosure will be addressed
9. Decide with a planning team how the intervention will be implemented and by whom
10. Decide on avenues for recruiting peers and qualities they should possess
11. Orient peers to their roles and responsibilities within any intervention efforts
12. Consider the contexts for interventions and how opportunities for interaction will be designed
13. Make sure students with ASD receive effective instruction to build social competence
14. Consider generalization at the beginning of and throughout intervention efforts



The CSESA Curriculum: Transition & Families Component

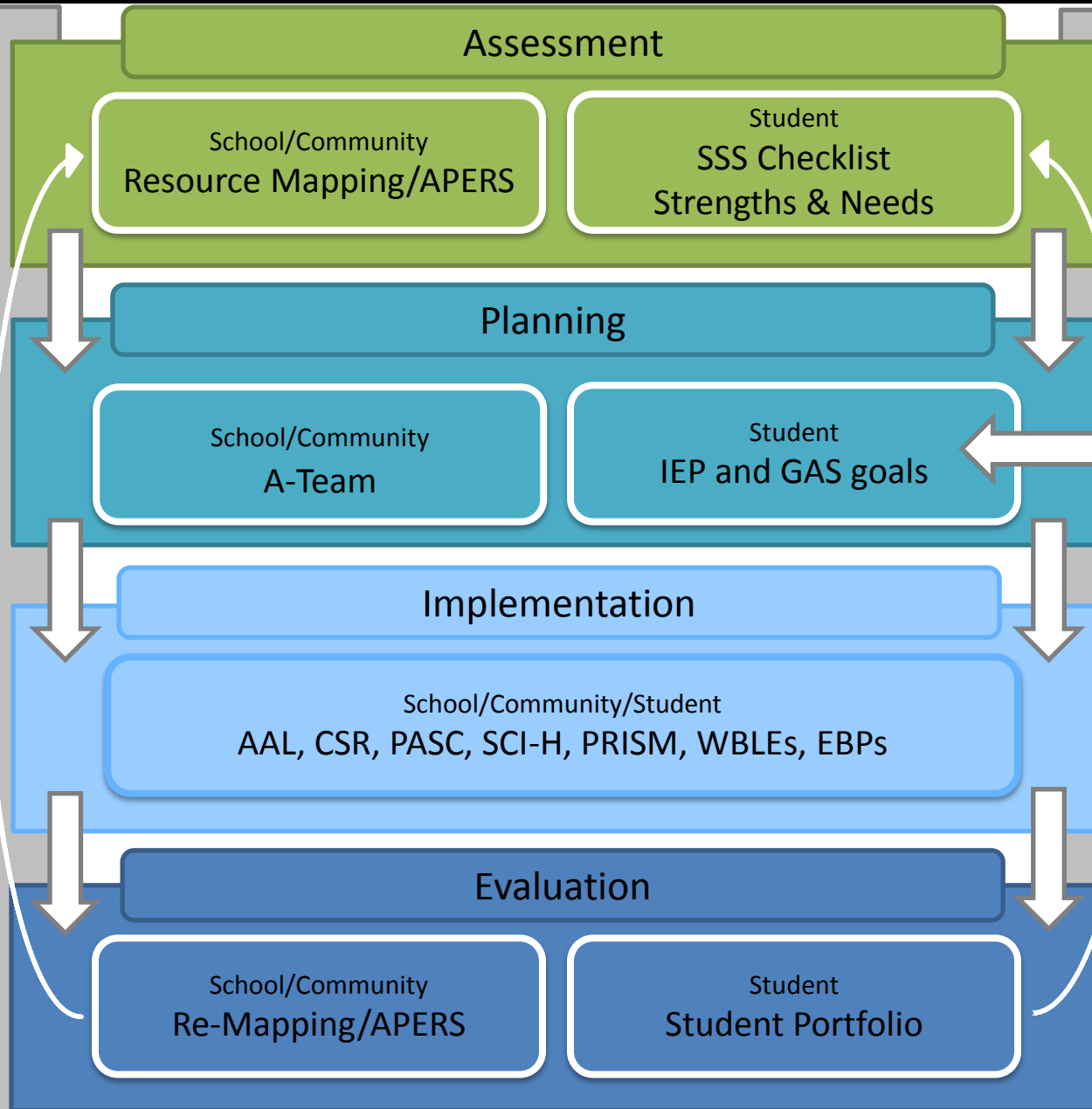
**Transition
& Families**

CSESA Model Framework

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Student
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Family
Transitioning
Together

Equipping & Empowering

Transition & Families

- Transitioning Together (family component)
- Transition Process
 - School and Community Resource Mapping
 - Transition Planning Process
 - Student Involvement in the IEP
 - Work Based Learning Experiences in preparation for postsecondary goals (college, careers, independent living)



Family Support- Transitioning Together

Program Goals

- Provide education and support for parents
- Emphasize positivity and problem solving
- Share relevant resources and referrals based on results of school and community mapping

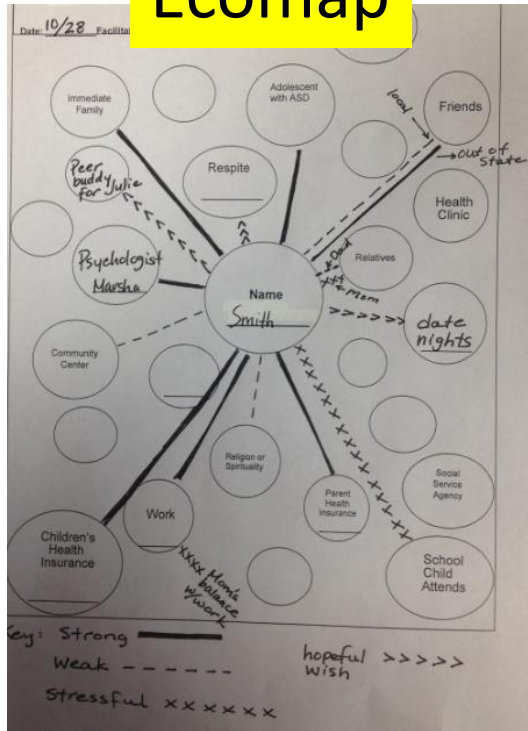


Family Support- Transitioning Together Program Components

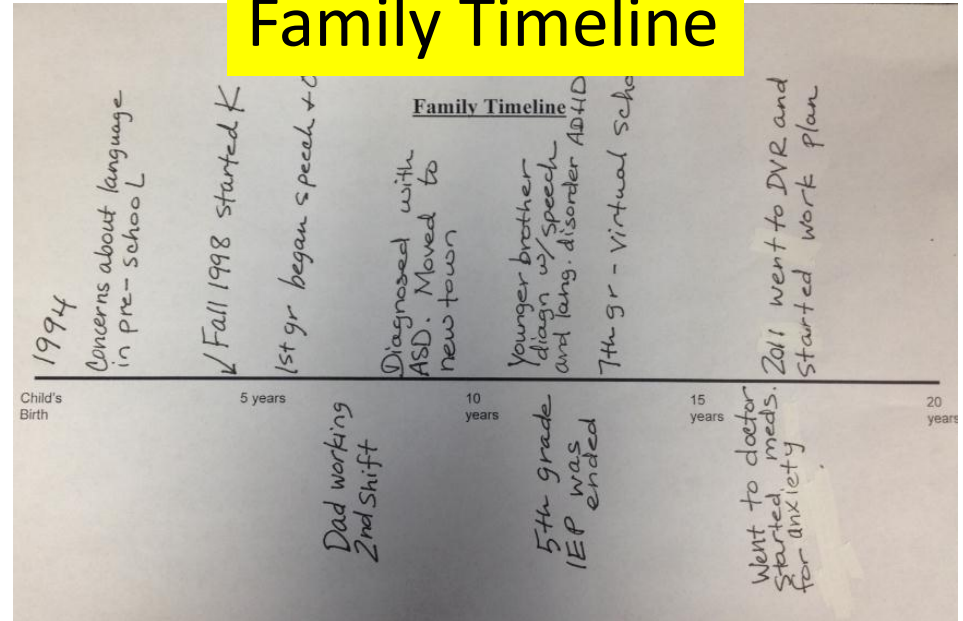
- 2 individual family “joining sessions”
- 8 multi-family weekly group sessions
- 8 sessions for teens

Joining Session

Ecomap



Family Timeline



Family Goals might be:

- Finding respite opportunities so mom and dad can go on dates.
- A peer buddy for their daughter to have social opportunities.



The problem solving process

STEP 1: DEFINE PROBLEM

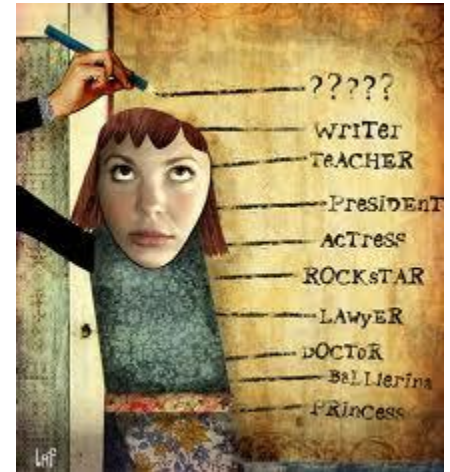
STEP 2: LIST ALL POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

STEP 3: DISCUSS ADVANTAGES AND
DISADVANTAGES

STEP 4: CHOOSE THE BEST SOLUTION

Transitioning Together Topics

- Autism in adulthood
- Transition planning
- Family Topics
- Problem-solving
- Risks to adult independence
- Community involvement
- Legal issues
- Risks to parental health and well-being





Early Findings

Positives

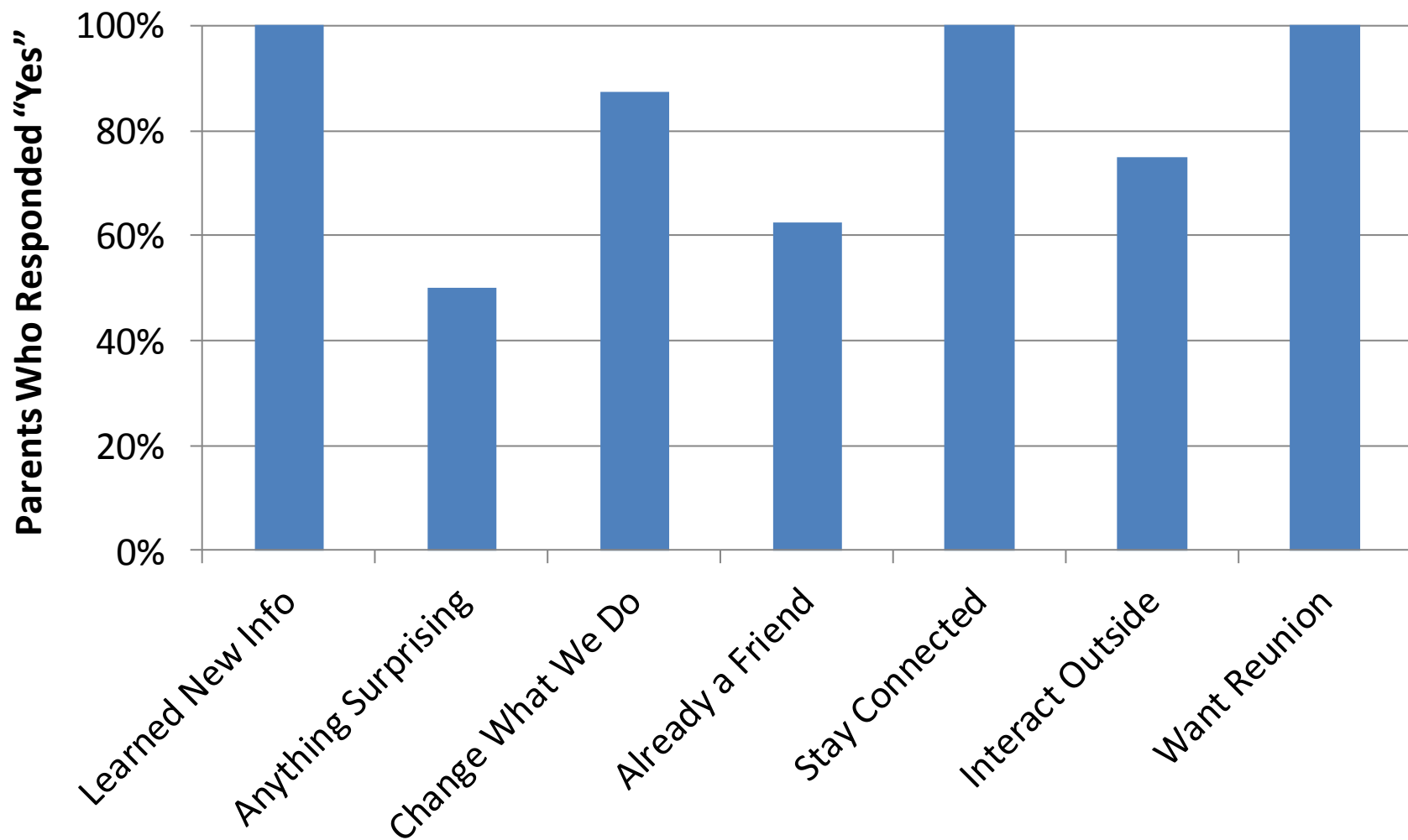
- Parents, teachers, and teens reported satisfaction with the program and were highly engaged

Information for CSESA

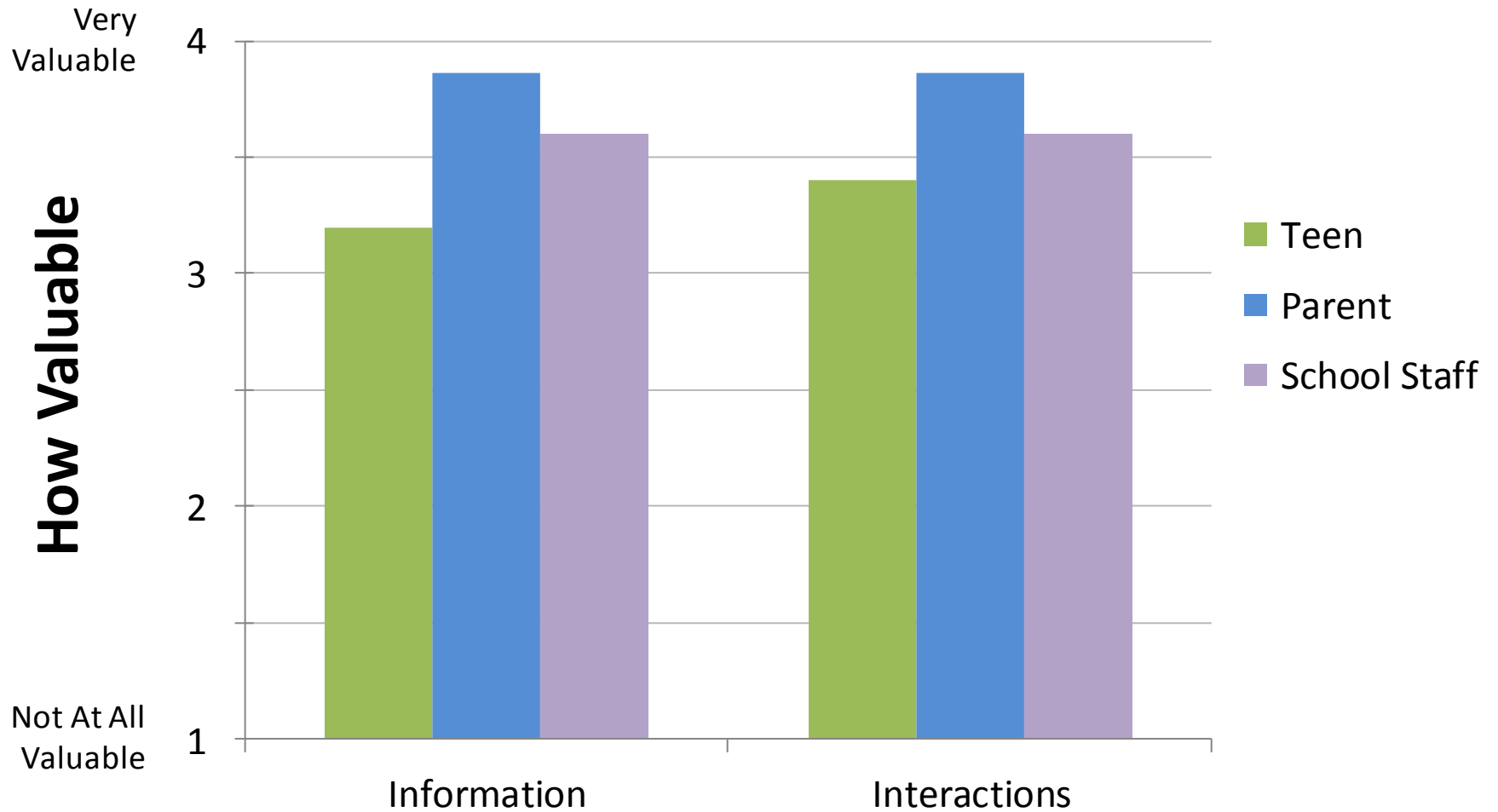
- Having a very heterogeneous group of families resulted in less discussion of autism-specific concerns



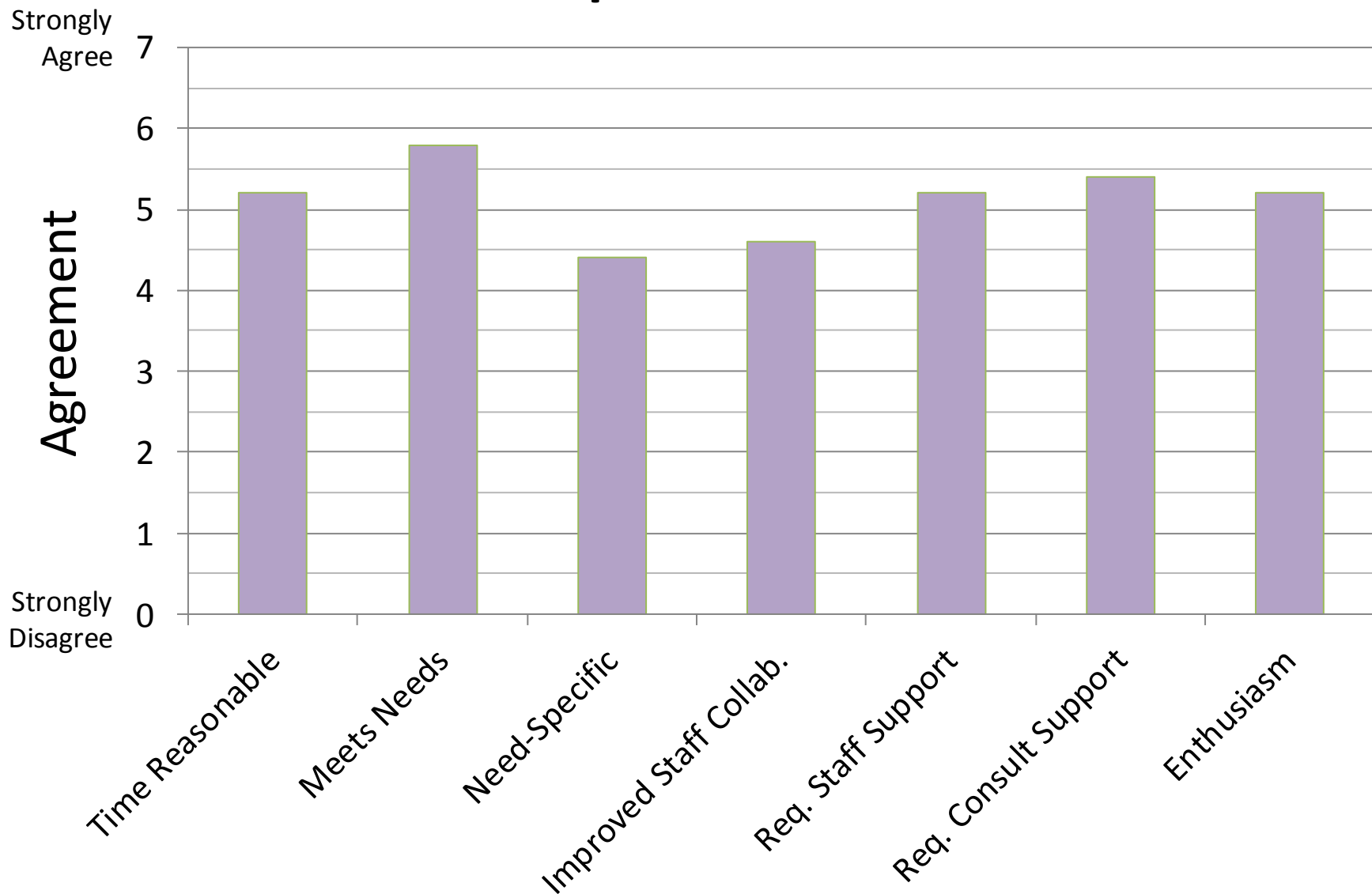
Parent Exit Interview

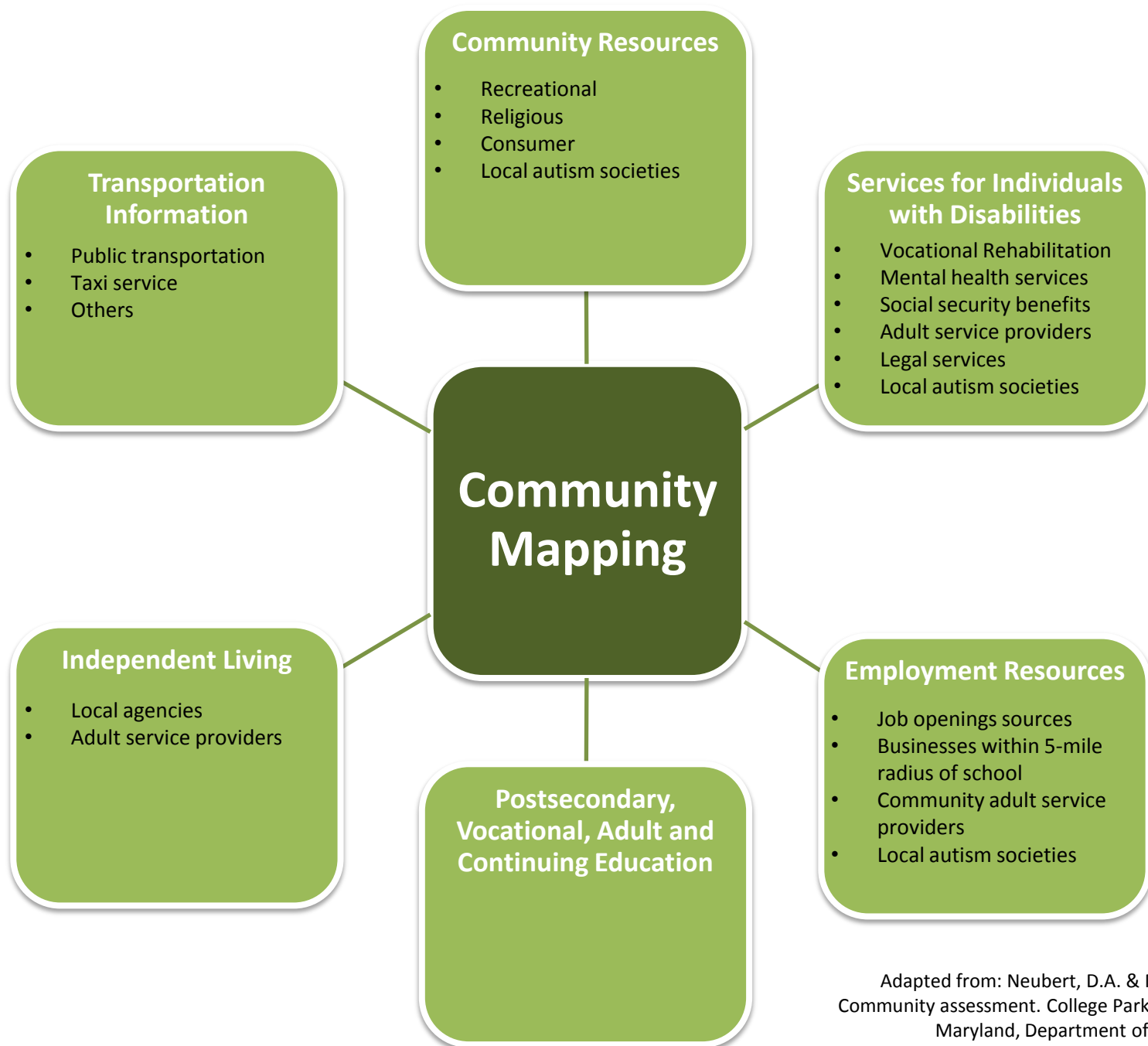


Program Evaluation Questions



School Staff Implementation Reflection





Adapted from: Neubert, D.A. & Moon, M.S. (2006).
Community assessment. College Park, MD: University of
Maryland, Department of Special Education.
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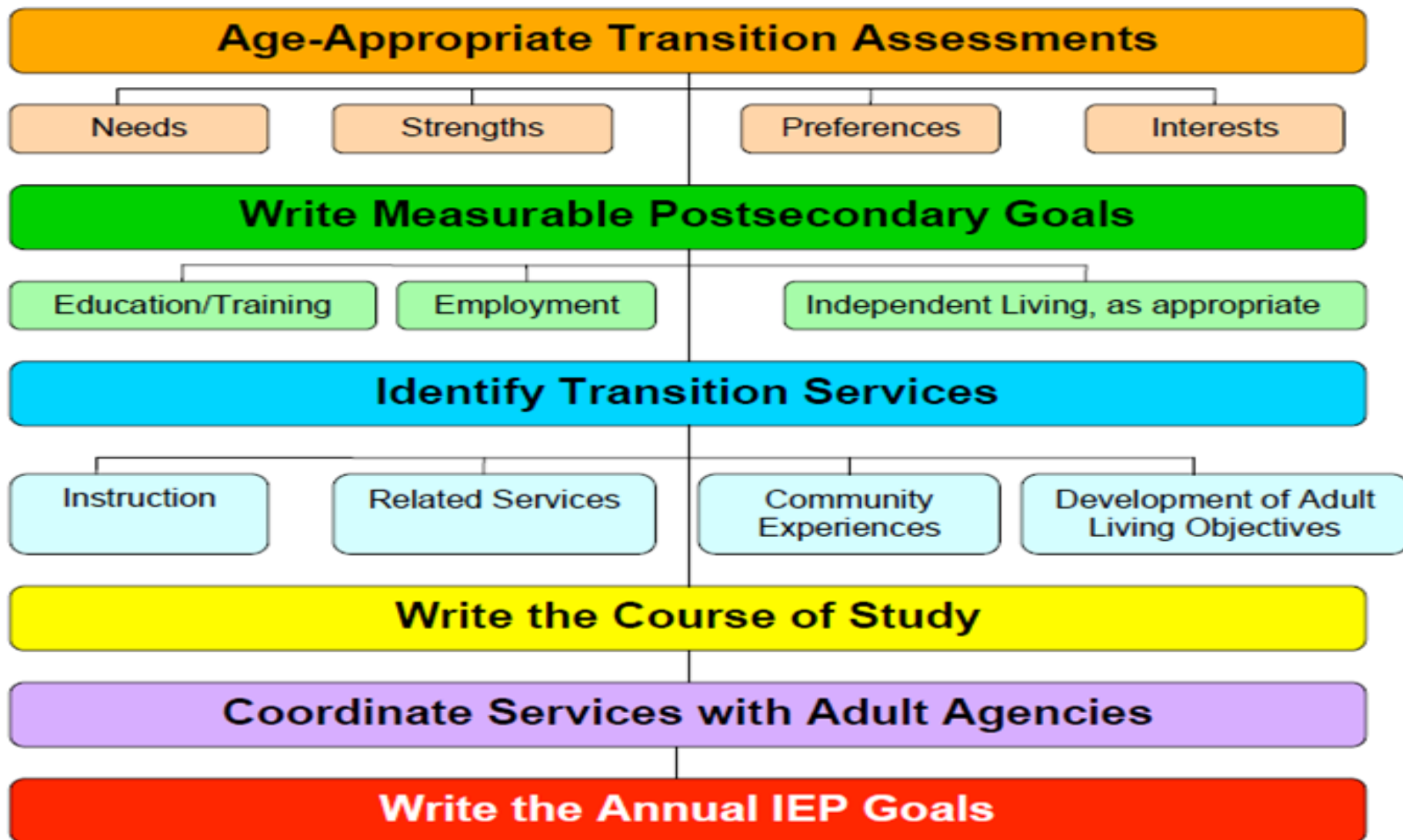
Transition Planning

- Conducting transition assessment to
 - ☐ Develop postsecondary goals
 - ☐ Identify transition services
 - ☐ Identify appropriate course of study
 - ☐ Identify annual goal instruction
 - ☐ Identify agencies to engage in planning
- Planning/ writing IEPs that meet I-13 (legal) requirements

Indicator 13

- Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes *appropriate measurable postsecondary goals* that are *annually updated* and based upon an *age appropriate transition assessment*, *transition services*, including *courses of study*, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and *annual IEP goals* related to the student's transition services needs.
- There also must be *evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting* where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, *a representative of any participating agency was invited* to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

TRANSITION SERVICES FLOW CHART



Indicator 13 Quality Rubric

- 0 - 3 point rating for each item
- Adapted from Rhode Island's quality I-13 review rubric

Student Involvement in the IEP

- Choice of 3 evidence-based curricula to teach
- Engages student in identifying strengths, needs, and goals
- Teaches about IEP process
- Prepares student to participate in the meeting at various levels



Student Directed Meeting Resources

- *Self Directed IEP*
- *Self-Advocacy Strategy*
- *Whose Future is it Anyway?*



Work Based Learning Experiences

Career Exploration	"Career Exploration involves visits by youth to workplaces to learn about jobs and the skills required to perform them. Visits and meetings with employers and people in identified occupations outside of the workplace are also types of career exploration activities from which youth can learn about jobs and careers." (Luecking, 2009, p.13)
Job Shadowing	"Job Shadowing is extended time, often a full workday or several workdays, spent by a youth in a workplace accompanying an employee in the performance of his or her daily duties." (Luecking, 2009, pg.13)
Job Sampling/Work Sampling	"Work Sampling is work by a youth that does not materially benefit the employer but allows the youth to spend meaningful time in a work environment to learn aspects of potential job task and "soft skills" required in the workplace." (Luecking, 2009,p. 13)
Service Learning	"Service Learning is hands-on volunteer service to the community that integrates with course objectives. It is a structured process that provides time for reflection on the service experience and demonstration of the skills and knowledge required." (Luecking, 2009, p. 13)
Internships	"Internships are formal agreements whereby a youth is assigned specific tasks in a workplace over a predetermined period of time. Internships may be paid or unpaid, depending on the nature of the agreement with the company and the nature of the tasks." (Luecking, 2009, p.13)
Apprenticeships	"Apprenticeships are formal, sanctioned work experiences of extended duration in which an apprentice learns specific occupational skills related to a standardized trade, such as carpentry, plumbing, or drafting. Many apprenticeships also include paid work components." (Luecking, 2009, p.13)
Paid Employment	"Paid Employment may include existing standard jobs in a company or customized work assignments that are negotiated with an employer, but these jobs always feature a wage paid directly to the youth. Such work may be scheduled during or after the school day. It may be integral to a course of study or simply a separate adjunctive experience." (Luecking, 2009,p.13)
Mentoring	"Mentoring is a person who through support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example helps another person, usually a young person, to reach his or her work and life goals. Mentoring relationships provide valuable support to young people, especially those with disabilities, by offering not only academic and career guidance, but also effective role models for leadership, interpersonal and problem-solving skills."(Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2012)

Sample Work Sampling Activities

Career Ready	
Student Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotation through various community workstations • Sampling various job tasks • Career Assessments • Unpaid Workplace Experience
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for Employment in Kalamazoo County, Michigan provides Work Sampling experiences in real workplaces. For more information see: http://kresa.org/efe
College Ready	
Student Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review an introductory, general syllabus from a college/ university level course. Choose one sample paper or project from the course. Map out a method of you completing one of the assignments. Create a time that includes all the steps you would take in order to make sure you completed the assignment.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/rickard/101Syll.html is a link to Professor John Rickard's English 101: Introduction to Fiction syllabus. Many of the fictional samples are synchronous to canonized texts found in most English 101 courses. • http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/stdnt-disabilities-accom-hndbk07-08.pdf provides you with the guidance that the University of Virginia disseminates to their Faculty and Staff to help with accommodations for students with disabilities

Contact CSESA

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subscribe-csesa@listserv.unc.edu](http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/subscribe-csesa@listserv.unc.edu)

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