

# Life After High School: The Experiences of Young Adults with ASD

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# Learning Objective

- Participants will be able to **identify trends in postsecondary education and employment activities** for a sample of diverse young adults with ASD

# Beginning with Acknowledgements and Thank You's

- CSESA

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Autistic youth and their families and the school staff members who have participated in our studies.

# About CSESA: The Intervention Study (2014-2017)

- 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
- Intervention study
  - 2 years in each school
  - Randomly assigned to CSESA or services-as-usual
- About the sample
  - 60 high schools in 3 states (NC, WI, CA)
  - 547 students with ASD
  - 539 school staff



# About CSESA: The Follow Up Study 2018-2021

- Funded by the Department of Education (IES)
- Purpose: To determine the longer-term outcomes for high school students with autism who participated in the CSESA study
- Follow-Up Study
  - Data collection at 1 timepoint several years post-study participation
  - Data gathered from caregivers, young adults, & teachers if relevant
  - **Interview** and online assessments

Data presented today will not compare across groups and **will focus only on the caregiver interview & questionnaires**

Data collected before & after March 2020 are included

Data analysis are ongoing.

# Sample Information N=212 (41% of original sample consented YES\*)

\* N=31 (6%) of sample selected NO for further participation

Age	Gender	Ethnicity/Race	Cognitive	Adaptive
~Mean age of 20 (range =18-24)	Gender: 84% Male, 15% Female, ~1% Non-Binary	Hispanic/Latino: 16% Non Hispanic/Latino: 84%  70% White, 12% African American, 7% Multi/Biracial, 4% Asian, 10% Other	Mean Leiter Score of 87.5  (range = 30- 139)  **assessed by CSESA Research Team	Mean Vineland Score of 75.8  (range = 20- 128)  **assessed by teacher  <b>Diploma type:</b> 63% standard, 37% modified

# Important Note

Income	N %
<\$20K	N=10 %=6.1
\$20-39K	N=13 %=7.9
\$40-59K	N=26 %=15.8
\$60-79K	N=26 %=15.8
\$80-99K	N=21 %=12.7
>\$99K	N=69 %=41.8

# Measures

## Parent/Caregiver Interview & Survey:

- Developed by CSESA team
- 17 question structured interview, conducted in-person, by phone, or via Zoom by CSESA researchers
- Gathered qualitative information pertaining to adult domains (postsecondary education, employment, daily living, adult services, social/community activities)
- Used to score Vocational index

## Parent/Caregiver Online Survey:

- Developed by CSESA team
- 21 item questionnaire examining adult domain areas (postsecondary education, employment, daily living, adult services, social/community activities)

11. Can you tell me about the type of activities your son/daughter currently performs or performed at the day program/sheltered workshop? \*important for Voc. Index

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12. How does/did the program fit with [NAME]'s interests or strengths?

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13. How satisfied are you with the program?

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14. Is [NAME] self-employed?  
 NO  
 YES

**Ask Q. 15 if self-employed**

15. Can you describe the type of work your son/daughter does?

TOP 4

## Parent/Caregiver Check-In

Thank you for allowing your son/daughter to participate in the CSESA project. We will use this questionnaire to learn more about what happens as students leave high school. Most of the questions will ask about the time since your son/daughter exited their high school or transition program.

**NOTE:** As part of this study, we are working with young adults across the whole autism spectrum, so some of these questions may be more or less relevant to your son/daughter and family. Please answer each question even if it is less relevant for your family.

### General Information

1) Describe your son's/daughter's **current** living situation. *Choose one answer.*

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Living in the family home
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Living in another home (e.g., extended family, foster home, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Living independently (no paid staff) by <u>him/herself</u> in apartment, dorm, house, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Living independently (no paid staff) with <u>others</u> in apartment, dorm, house, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Living in a partially supported/semi-independent setting outside the home
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Living in a fully supported/group home setting outside the home with fewer than 8 residents
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Living in a fully supported/residential placement (e.g., psychiatric facility, long-term care facility) outside the home with 8 residents or more
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Other <b>Specify:</b> _____

2) Please check what best describes your current situation regarding guardianship/conservatorship of your son/daughter. *Choose one answer.*

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Full guardianship/conservatorship
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Limited guardianship/conservatorship
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Power of attorney



# Employment Trends

The background features a dark blue gradient on the left side, transitioning into a series of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of blue (light blue, medium blue, and dark blue) on the right side. The shapes are angular and layered, creating a modern, abstract design.

## Developing a Vocational Index for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Julie Lounds Taylor<sup>✉</sup> and Marsha Mailick Seltzer

### Vocational index, from most to least independent

	Score	Category
Most independent	9	Employment in the community <i>without</i> supports greater than 10 h a week
	9	Postsecondary, <i>degree-seeking</i> educational program greater than 10 h a week
	8	Postsecondary, <i>degree-seeking</i> educational program or employment in the community <i>without</i> supports—total activities 10 h a week or less
	7	Employed in the community <i>with</i> supports greater than 10 h a week. No time spent in sheltered settings.
	6	Employed in the community <i>with</i> supports (no time spent in sheltered settings)—total activities 10 h a week or less
	5	Sheltered vocational setting and supported community employment—total activities greater than 10 h a week
	4	Sheltered vocational setting and volunteering in the community—total activities greater than 10 h a week
	4	Sheltered vocational setting (workshop or day activity center) with no community employment/volunteering—greater than 10 h a week.
	3	Sheltered vocational setting—total activities 10 h a week or less
Least independent	2	Volunteering with no other activities or postsecondary <i>non-degree seeking</i> education with no other activities
	1	No vocational/educational activities

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Mean = 7  
SD = 2.6  
Range = 1-9



- Employed is ever employed (not just current)
- Respondents could choose as many categories as were applicable in their employment history

WORK SETTINGS	N=118
Any work setting	Employed: n=92
Paid work setting	Employed: n=76
Community work setting	Employed: n=89
Internship/ apprenticeship	Employed: n=11 Mn hrs/wk: 18.7 Mn # of mo: 4.0
Volunteering	Employed: n=45 Mn hrs/wk: 3.9 Mn # of mo: 15.5
Adult day program/day rehab	Employed: n=10 Mn hrs/wk: 20.2 Mn # of mo: 12.2
Contract/Sheltered workshop	Employed: n=6 Mn hrs/wk: 14.7 Mn # of mo: 14.0
Work for pay with support	Employed: n=38 Mn hrs/wk: 15.7 Mn # of mo: 11.5
Work for pay independently	Employed: n=50 Mn hrs/wk: 20.3 Mn # of mo: 11.6
Self-owned business/ micro-enterprise	Employed: n=7 Mn hrs/wk: 1.8 Mn # of mo: 25.5
Military service	Employed: n=0



Talking about job at NC Conservation Core\* “He feels a lot of pride in what he’s done.” “He says, ‘I like knowing my work will last generations, and that people will come to these parks and enjoy it.’ And he gets a lot of pride out of that, which is wonderful.” -Parent



# Postsecondary Education Trends

The background features a dark blue gradient on the left side, transitioning into a series of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of blue (light blue, medium blue, and dark blue) on the right side. The shapes are angular and layered, creating a modern, abstract design.

- Includes any postsecondary education (not just current)
- Respondents could choose as many categories as were applicable in their postsecondary education history

## EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

N=118

Technical/vocational/  
trade school

Enrolled: n=19  
Mn hrs/wk: 18.2 (14.2)  
Mn # of mo: 7.1 (5.8)

2-year community  
college

Enrolled: n=36  
Mn hrs/wk: 10.4 (5.5)  
Mn # of mo: 14.2 (8.7)

4-year  
college/university

Enrolled: n=15  
Mn hrs/wk: 14.3 (3.1)  
Mn # of mo: 19.5 (12.6)

Post-secondary  
education program for  
YA w disabilities

Enrolled: n=15  
Mn hrs/wk: 11.8(8.7)  
Mn # of mo: 12.9 (11.8)

Online classes

Enrolled: n=19  
Mn hrs/wk: 5.9 (5.1)  
Mn # of mo: 7.2 (6.0)

# Facilitators to Postsecondary Employment & Education

- **Job Support**
  - “He had supports initially...from the vocational rehab folks.” -Parent
- **Accommodations on campus**
  - “I feel lucky that this schooling in college is very open. The teacher, the instructors their have probably the highest level of understanding of kids on the spectrum. And you know their very patient and they work hard with him, but he still requires additional support. He’s succeeding because of that support.” –Parent
- **Stepwise progression**
  - “He’s in a college transfer program, so he’s working towards an associate’s degree with the goal of transferring to a four-year school.” -Parent
- **Family Support**
  - \*Talking about schoolwork\* “You know someone has to kind of be on top of him and doing stuff.” –Parent
- **Social Support**
  - He’s an “A” student and does really really well in his classes and he’s completely independent in doing his homework, but he still needs support for navigating the social situation for communicating.” -Parent

# Barriers to Postsecondary Employment & Education

- **Limited supports available**
  - He's an "A" student and does really really well in his classes and he's completely independent in doing his homework, but he still needs support for navigating the social situation for communicating." -Parent
- **Feeling Socially Isolated**
  - ""{Just it's} hard for him to make friends and then actually get together with friends." –Parent
  - "Just how he communicates. He still is focused on his interest, so he has a hard time relating to what other people may be interested in hearing." -Parent
- **Supports Needed for Adaptive/Independent Living Skills**
  - \*Talking about cooking\* "He just needs assistance, and he needs it to be more of something simplistic that is a no oven and no stovetop type of mixing together type thing." -Parent
- **Driving**
  - "He can not pass the driver's test"- Parent





# Next Steps

- Just the beginning in understanding the experiences of our sample
  - Rich detail of their post-secondary lives
  - Growth on standardized measures examined
  - Role of high school programming

# Resources



- The CSESA website (link via QR Code) has dozens of free resources available for researchers, practitioners, and families!

