

Supporting Youth in the Transition to Adulthood

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3 Passage to Adulthood

By Frank F. Furstenberg, Ph.D.

Today, young people are transitioning to adulthood later in life than they were in the 1960s and 70s. Why has this change occurred and what does it mean for young adults, their families, and the larger society? This article discusses the transition to adulthood from a historical perspective. It then explores the challenges of this later transition for vulnerable youth and discusses a few of the many policy changes which can support them.



8 The Benefits and Risks of Adolescent Employment

By Jeylan T. Mortimer, Ph.D.

Much controversy surrounds the consequences of adolescent paid work and whether it is good or bad for youth. This article summarizes findings from the Youth Development Study, which shows that the effects of teen employment on the successful transition to adulthood depend on its patterning through the years of high school and its quality. The article concludes with a discussion of what parents, counselors, and others can do to help youth make sound employment-related decisions to assure effective career exploration and a successful school-to-work transition.



12 Adolescents with Disabilities Transitioning to Adulthood: Implications for a Diverse and Multicultural Population

By Audrey A. Trainor, Ph.D.

Adolescents with disabilities face unique challenges to postsecondary education, employment, and other aspects of achieving adult success. Despite the advancement of special education postsecondary transition theory and practice, some groups of youth, particularly those who have been historically marginalized, continue to fare worse than their dominant-group peers. This article considers the state of transition education and planning for youth with disabilities, paying particular attention to majority/minority issues and trends.



17 Supporting Homeless Youth During the Transition to Adulthood: Housing-Based Independent Living Programs

By Amy Dworsky, Ph.D.

While many young people depend on parental financial and emotional support well past the age of 18, those who are homeless must make the transition to adulthood without it. This article discusses the needs of homeless youth as they transition to adulthood. It then describes three housing-based independent living programs designed to address these needs; concluding with a discussion about why the needs of so many homeless youth are still not being addressed.

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From the Editor's PC

Dear Colleagues,

In the fairly recent past, young men and women transitioned into adulthood rather quickly, with most completing school, leaving home, and entering full-time employment, marriage, and parenthood by age 25 or so. Today, only a minority of young adults complete these transitions by age 30. What does this longer transition period mean for youth and their families, especially those that may already be struggling?

We begin this issue with a historical perspective on youth transitioning to adulthood provided by Frank Furstenberg. In this article, Dr. Furstenberg takes a special look at the challenges this longer transition period poses for vulnerable youth and their families.

For many people, an important measure of attaining adulthood is financially supporting your family. Most youth begin the foray into the world of work during their high school years. Working during high school is a way to achieve independence, learn interpersonal skills, and develop a good work ethic. However, it also has the potential to distract youth from their school work, and keep them from participating in important extracurricular activities. Our second article, by Jeylan Mortimer, discusses the effects of teen employment on the successful transition to adulthood.

For some youth, the transition to adulthood can be especially challenging. Understanding these challenges can help those of us who work with youth better assist them in the transition. This issue concludes with two articles focusing on the needs of vulnerable youth. The first, by Audrey Trainor, examines the needs of youth with disabilities, especially those from historically marginalized groups. The second, by Amy Dworsky, looks at the needs of homeless youth who are making the transition to adulthood without parental support.

We hope that this issue of *The Prevention Researcher* will help provide an understanding of the transition to adulthood for today's youth. By understanding this process, we can better prepare and support youth in making a successful transition.

All the best,

Steven Ungerleider, Ph.D.
Editor/Psychologist

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The Prevention Researcher (ISSN 1086-4385) is a quarterly journal with the mission of connecting service professionals to the latest research. Established in 1994, each single-theme issue of *The Prevention Researcher* focuses on promoting successful adolescent development. *The Prevention Researcher* is indexed in CINAHL, PsycEXTRA, and Education Index.

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