Summary of the Issue:

Thus far, concerns for post-secondary supports for students with disabilities have primarily focused on those students who met institutional criteria for admission, but because of their disabilities, required supports and services to enhance the likelihood of their success in post-secondary programs.

Little attention has yet been paid to opportunities for those students with significant developmental disabilities, including cognitive disabilities, to participate in post-secondary educational programs or to programs to encourage them to become life-long learners. These students would not meet the usual admission criteria to matriculate in vocational or community college programs.

When their eligibility under IDEA ends at the age of 21, many of students lack continuing opportunities for inclusion with the age-peers in living, learning, and social activities. Self-determination at the age of 21 provides few choices when post-secondary educational opportunities are closed to them and job opportunities are limited.
Study Questions/Method:

A search of the literature has been conducted to address the following questions:

♦ What are elements of promising post-secondary program models and practices for students with developmental (including cognitive) disabilities?
♦ What are the current program models in place and what are the characteristics of the institutions with inclusive post-secondary programs for students with developmental disabilities?
♦ What are the characteristics of the students who have matriculated in programs?
♦ What kinds of course work has been available for students?
♦ What are the measures of "effectiveness" to be applied to measuring student outcomes?
♦ Does the inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in post-secondary programs enhance the likelihood of their subsequent employment?
♦ What policies and recommendations are appropriate to further expand opportunities for the inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in post-secondary educational programs?

Findings:

A search of the literature has revealed a paucity of information on the subject. Further searching, synthesis, and analysis of the findings are underway.

Implications by Audience:

**Disabled Young Adults:** Young adults with developmental disabilities are acutely aware of the limited opportunities that exist for post-secondary inclusion. They are seeking opportunities for learning and social activities with their peers.

**Parents:** Parents of young adults with developmental disabilities are keenly interested in developing options for their sons and daughters. Parents are frustrated with the current lack of post-secondary opportunities in education, social activities, and vocational placements.

**Secondary Institutions.** Secondary institutions need to be aware of postsecondary education as an option for students with cognitive disabilities and plan for the inclusion for students in both age appropriate and post high school classes.

**Post-Secondary Institutions.** The findings of this study will be important to post-secondary education institutions to enable them to better serve their community and to avoid potential litigation because of excluding young adults who may qualify for admission to their programs.
Policy-Makers. Policy-makers and legislators need to be educated about the needs and the possibilities of individuals with developmental disabilities. They need to know what is working and how successful models can be replicated at a local and national level.

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