



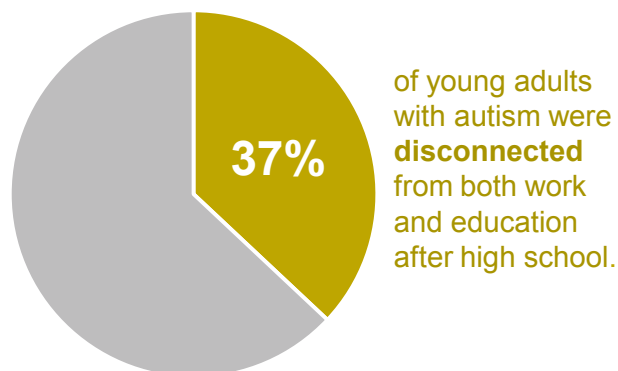
Key Findings from the National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood

This fact sheet summarizes key findings from the National Autism Indicators Report which can be found here: drex.lu/autismindicators. The Autism Indicators report tracks statistics about issues facing individuals on the autism spectrum. These statistics set the stage to discover whether quality of life for those with autism and their families is improving over time.

The Life Course Outcomes Research Program is building a base of knowledge about the things other than clinical interventions that promote positive outcomes for people on the autism spectrum and their families and communities.



The purpose of transition planning is to connect students to work, continued education, or other outcomes.



Outcomes and Disconnection for Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum

How we live, work and play are all connected. Where we live and our ability to navigate within our communities affects where we work. Workplaces provide opportunities for social connections which affect our mental well-being and generate more opportunities for community involvement. The sum total of the parts of our lives contributes to our quality of life. This is true for everyone – not just people with disabilities.

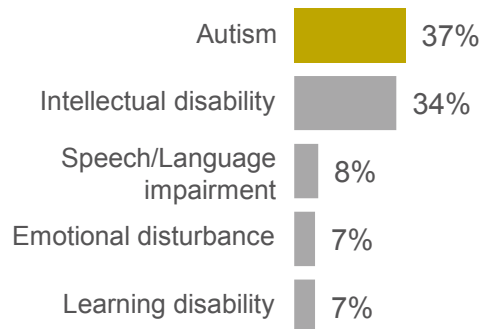
It is a great concern when youth leave high school and don't have access to opportunities that will help them live as independently as possible. Missing the connections after high school to jobs, continued education, and opportunities for independence makes it difficult for youth to begin establishing a quality adult life.

As you will see in this report, too often these outcomes are never realized. We used data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) collected in 2009 when young adults were 21 to 25 years old.

More disconnection for those with autism

Far more young adults on the autism spectrum were disconnected from both work and education during their early 20s compared to their peers with other types of disabilities. While over one-third of those on the autism spectrum experienced disconnection, very few with learning disability, emotional disturbance, or speech-language impairment were disconnected in comparison.

More young adults with autism were disconnected from both work and education than their peers with other disabilities.



Percent never worked or went to school

Source: National Longitudinal Transition Study-2

Autistic young adults reported a wide range of outlooks.

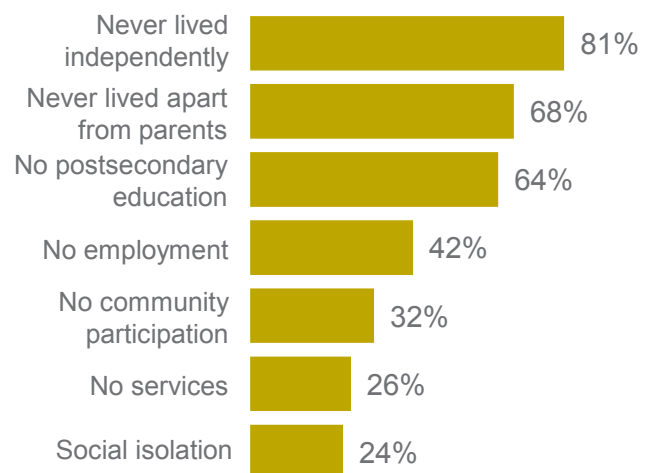
A subgroup of autistic young adults who were capable of participating in the NLTS2 responded to a variety of self-belief statements regarding to how they felt about themselves and their lives. Nearly 60% indicated in the past week they felt enjoyment of life, and about half felt hopeful about the future. At the same time, 60% indicated they felt depressed, and a little less than half identified with feeling lonely (48%) and disliked by others (45%).

Over 66% of young adults on the autism spectrum did not transition into employment or education in the first two years after leaving high school.

Unintended outcomes - the flip side of the story

When we track outcomes, we often think in terms of what people achieved. We can also think about outcomes in the reverse. Examining unintended outcomes – what people did not achieve – can provide clues about priorities for program and policy development and targets for innovative transition planning.

Which outcomes were difficult for young adults with autism to achieve between high school and their early 20s?



Percent experienced during their early 20s

Source: National Longitudinal Transition Study-2

Disconnection Factors

We explored factors that may be related to disconnection:

Household Income

Nearly 65% of young adults from lower income households (<\$25K) were disconnected compared to 20% of those from the highest income households (>\$25K).

Race and Ethnicity

Fewer white young adults (29%) with autism were ever disconnected during their early 20s compared to black (56%) and Hispanic young adults (60%).

Conversation Ability

Nearly 75% of those who were not able to converse at all were disconnected, compared to 7% of those with the highest level of conversational skills.

Disconnect after HS

66% of those with autism had higher rates of disconnection following high school than those with intellectual disability (46%).

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