

A New Perspective on Transition: A Photovoice Project

Project Overview

Project PEACE is an initiative to create a community-based transition plan that serves to improve transition opportunities and employment outcomes for youth with IDD. As a part of this project, we needed to hear from youth directly about their transition experiences and we chose to use photovoice to allow youth to share their stories.

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice is a research method in which stakeholders collect data by taking pictures and describing the meaning behind them. In this project, we asked youth to take photos that helped tell the story of their transition and employment. With photovoice, participants learn self-advocacy and communication skills through photography and storytelling training.

Our Process

1. We worked with community partners to recruit transition-age youth
2. Recruited participants and their parents met to discuss the project and if interested, youth could register to participate.
3. We designed 5 photovoice sessions: 3 sessions were spent training youth on photography, storytelling, and self-advocacy skills, 2 sessions were dedicated to youth discussing their photos.
4. Next, we will refine each session based on feedback from youth and implement photovoice in a classroom setting.

Who participated?

To recruit participants, we partnered with the Center for Independent Living in Richmond, VA. 5 youth ages 14 to 22 participated in our first cohort of virtual photovoice (3 females, 2 males; 4 identified as Black, 1 identified as Hispanic/Latina). Each participant's experiences varied widely in terms of transition and employment, with some being currently employed, and others just now exploring their career goals.

What Did Youth Share?

Discussion 1: What are your employment goals?

The first prompt youth were given was to take photos that helped share the story of their employment goals. Here are some themes we found:

- Self-advocacy: each participant could identify their own strengths related to their goals.
- Self-exploration: for some youth, it seemed like this was their first experience thinking about their employment goals, so photovoice served as an opportunity for reflection and goal-setting.



"I feel so comfortable and safe. That's how I feel when I work there, you know, and,uh, my boss has been telling me lots of good tips about taking care of kids."

Discussion 2: What are your barriers to employment?

Our second discussion prompt asked youth to discuss employment barriers they have faced. Here are some themes from this discussion:

- Community-focused: The barriers that youth mentioned were not only specific to them, but also to our community, such as lack of transportation and lack of work-based learning opportunities.
- Planning: this discussion served as a way for youth to consider their goals and barriers to effectively plan for employment attainment.



"This mountain is like a barrier. It's the hardest job to do."
"So those are your barriers to employment, your math and your communication skills."

Learn more about Project PEACE on our [website!](#)

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