Transition to adulthood for individuals with autism spectrum disorder: current issues and future perspectives

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**Abstract:** Rising autism prevalence rates have lent urgency to efforts to improve outcomes for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Stakeholders have focused, in particular, on the transition to adulthood that can occur over a range of ages, typically between 18 and 22 years, and often corresponding to when the youth finishes secondary school. This represents a particularly vulnerable time, as the entitlements of the children’s service system end and young adults with ASD and their families encounter fragmented and underfunded systems of care. Research across multiple domains – education, vocational training and employment, social support and community involvement, housing and healthcare – reveals poor outcomes for this population during the transition to adulthood, suggesting that the current models of school-based transition planning are not meeting the needs of youth with ASD. This article highlights findings from some of this literature, examines financial aspects of the transition process, and offers our perspectives on current practices and recommendations for future study. An organized program of research coupled with aggressive policy and service system changes are needed to achieve more favorable transition outcomes for the ASD population.