

NLTS2 Data Brief

A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 • January 2002, Vol. 1, Issue 1



National Center on Secondary
Education and Transition
Creating Opportunities for Youth With
Disabilities to Achieve Successful Futures



NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL
TRANSITION STUDY 2

Introducing the NLTS2

The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) is part of a valuable portfolio of congressionally mandated studies sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education. NLTS2 will provide a rich description of the characteristics, experiences, and achievements of youth with disabilities who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and will identify factors that contribute to positive outcomes for youth.

NLTS2 involves a nationally representative sample of almost 12,000 students who were 13 to 16 years old and received special education in December 2000. The study, being conducted by SRI International, will follow them until 2010 in an effort to understand their educational, vocational, social, and personal experiences as they transition from adolescence to early adulthood. SRI International is a large, not-for-profit research institute located in Menlo Park, CA, and has conducted a variety of research in education and human services for over 50 years. NLTS2 focuses on factors such as high school coursework and placement, academic performance, extracurricular activities, postsecondary education and training, adult services, employment, independent living, and community participation. NLTS2 will be of great value to the U.S. Congress; federal, state, and local education agencies; parents and youth; educators; researchers; and advocacy groups as they shape policy and practice for young people with disabilities over the next decade and more.

Sharing the “Wealth”

Over its 10-year life, NLTS2 will be a “gold mine” of information about the characteristics, experiences, and achievements of youth with disabilities as they transition from secondary school to early adulthood. In sharing this wealth, NLTS2 will —

- Report information as soon as findings can be made available. Reports will be released every year, beginning in 2002.
- Provide information in reasonable-size packages targeted to key issues.
- Tailor products to the information and access needs of important audiences and communicate through organizations that serve them.
- Make information available in a variety of formats (e.g., reports, topical information sheets, issue papers) on the World Wide Web at www.nlts2.org.

studies, self-concept, self-determination skills, and an interview about their views of school will be conducted by a trained professional. These in-person assessments will take about an hour and will be given only once for each student, in the spring of either 2002 or 2004, when he or she is between 16 and 18 years old. The assessment will be done at school or at home at a time that is convenient for the student and family. If the form or content of this assessment is not appropriate for a student, accommodations will be made, or an alternate assessment will be given.

Transcripts

High school transcripts will be collected to describe the courses students take and how they perform in school. Transcripts will be collected in 2002 and 2004 for all students who are still in school and again for each student in the year he or she leaves school, so that a complete record of high school courses and performance is available. If a student's special education program is not recorded on a transcript, an alternative form for describing the content of instruction will be used.

The Sample

The NLTS2 sample is designed so that information from the study will represent youth with disabilities nationally as a group, youth in each of the 12 federal special education disability categories, and youth in each of the five single-year age groups in the study.

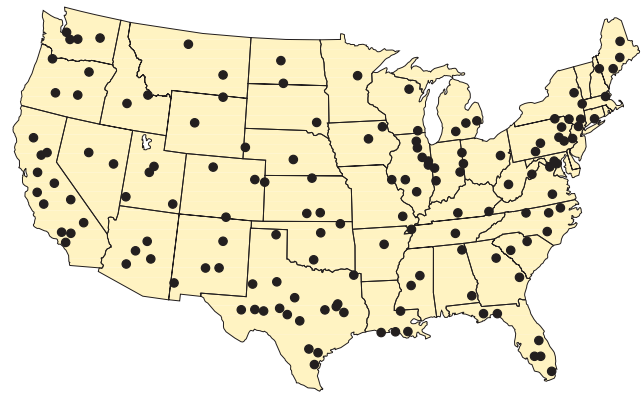
Almost 12,000 students, representing all special education disability categories, were selected from more than 500 school districts and state-supported special schools throughout the United States.

The sample was selected in two stages. First, school districts were chosen, representing all geographic regions and variation in district enrollment and wealth. State-supported special schools for the deaf and blind were also invited to participate. In all, 476 school districts and 38 special schools were willing to take part.

In the second stage, students who were 13 to 16 years old, in at least 7th grade, and receiving special education as of Dec. 1, 2000, were selected from rosters of all students receiving special

education services in participating districts and schools. Students were selected randomly from each disability category so that approximately 1,000 students are in the sample in most categories (fewer are in the low-incidence categories of traumatic brain injury and deaf/blindness). Taking attrition over time into account, this number of students will ensure that an adequate number of youth will remain for analyses in the later years of the study.

The sample will be statistically weighted to represent the relative sizes of the disability categories nationally.



Location of NLTS2 Students

Current Activities

The first wave of NLTS2 parent/guardian interviews began in May 2001, and extended into the fall. A mail survey of parents who were not reached by telephone were carried out through the end of the year. The perspectives of approximately 9,350 parents or guardians are expected to be represented in this first wave. The participation of parents and guardians is essential to the success of NLTS2. The information they provide about youth, households, and their own experiences of interacting with schools is critical to understanding how families and schools help youth transition to adulthood. NLTS2 values and appreciates the interest and support of all parents/guardians.

Upcoming Activities

NLTS2 expects to accomplish much during the 2001-2002 school year. Local professionals will be recruited to conduct direct assessments of students in spring 2002. School survey questionnaires and transcript requests will also arrive at schools in the early spring.

Looking Ahead

The years of transition to adulthood are a very exciting time for youth, their families, and those who serve them. Through quarterly topical updates, published in collaboration with NCSET, NLTS2 will keep parents, youth, educators, policy-makers, and researchers informed of study activities and findings. NLTS2 has tremendous potential for making a difference in the lives of youth with disabilities in transition; with your support and help, it will. Communicating with key audiences is of utmost importance to NLTS2. Your comments and suggestions are invited.

NLTS2 Welcomes Feedback!

Contact us —

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The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) is located at the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota (<http://ici.umn.edu/ncset>).

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