

Disability-related supports needed for Postsecondary Education: Young Adults With Disabilities – Executive Summary

From *Inclusive Postsecondary Education and Decent Work:
Effective Links for Young Adults with Disabilities*

Executive Summary on This Theme

Young adults with disabilities have a range of disability specific needs that must be addressed for ongoing attendance and success at college/CEGEP/trade school and university. Young adults with cognitive (learning and developmental/intellectual) disabilities and those whose disabilities are of severe and very severe complexity are in substantially greater need than others of *all* the supports explored in this study.

Young adults with vision and hearing disabilities also face substantially higher-than-typical levels of need for several supports, as do BIPOC young adults with disabilities. The supports that are substantially more widely needed by these individuals are accessible building features, suitable materials for learning, and human support. The human supports will vary according to disability-related need such as for a sign language interpreter, a tutor, a personal attendant, etc.

Young adults in low-income households and those whose disabilities are of moderate complexity are substantially more likely than others to need accessible curriculum and procedures and accessible technologies.

These findings are drawn from research Eviance recently completed in collaboration with its partners at Toronto Metropolitan University, OCADU, St. Francis Xavier University, and ARCH Disability Law Centre.

Recommendations

An aim of the project is to identify and encourage more policies and practices that increase the likelihood that young adults with disabilities will obtain both good-quality postsecondary education (PSE) *and* employment consistent with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) definition of "decent work" (ILO, 2012).

Consistent with those aims, colleges, CEGEPS, trade and technical schools, and universities should be making available the supports that young adults with disabilities need to learn and graduate. Young adults with disabilities of mild complexity, who have relatively low needs for support, should not be made into a major focus of attention here. Instead, the focus should be on addressing the markedly high needs for various supports experienced by young adults with cognitive (learning and developmental/ intellectual) disabilities and those with disabilities of severe and very severe complexity.

Young adults with vision and hearing disabilities and BIPOC young adults with disabilities are also considerably more likely than many others to need accessible building features, learning materials, and human support in PSE. Postsecondary schools aiming to support the attendance and graduation of these individuals should ensure that their support requirements are addressed. Concerning human

support, the postsecondary institution's role may at times involve providing services on campus (e.g., sign language interpreters, tutors) and at other times facilitating the involvement of the student's own support person (e.g., attendant).

Postsecondary schools should also ensure that curricula and procedures are flexible and that accessible learning technologies are available. This will help support young adults in low-income households and those with disabilities of moderate complexity in attending and graduating. Especially for students living on low incomes, difficulties obtaining disability-related supports are in many cases due to the unaffordability of the supports (Morris, Fawcett, Brisebois, & Hughes (2018).

Attention to the needs of BIPOC young adults with disabilities, those with seeing and hearing disabilities, those in low-income households, and those with disabilities of moderate complexity will be important steps towards closing gaps in support for PSE experienced by young adults with cognitive and more complex forms of disability. Student surveys, focus groups, and other measures to gauge the adequacy of the supports available to diverse students are important steps postsecondary schools can take towards identifying specific gaps in support that should be closed.

See the full report for specific directions for policy and practice: *Inclusive postsecondary education and decent work: Effective links for young adults with disabilities*. The full report is available on the Toolkit page of the present website.

References

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- Morris, S. P., Fawcett, G., Brisebois, L., & Hughes, J. (2018). *A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017*. Ottawa: Minister of Industry for Statistics Canada.



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