



Butler Technology and Career Development Schools

Transition to Work Program

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Background

Project LIFE™ is a transition-to-adulthood program developed by Butler Technology and Career Development Schools (Butler Tech) serving communities in Southwest Ohio. Realizing the need for better programming to assist students with disabilities in reaching their post-school goals for integrated community employment and increased adult independence, Butler Tech began a journey to find the best. Butler Tech chose to implement the nationally renowned Project SEARCH® program in 2006. After successful implementation of their first Project SEARCH program, it became apparent that students with more significant developmental disabilities were in need of more time to learn and practice skills needed for greater overall independence. The expectations for these students needed to be raised. Butler Tech's answer to this challenge was the development of a program that would provide the foundational skills needed for success in Project SEARCH while increasing overall daily living and employability skills.

The first Butler Tech Project LIFE™ program was created in 2007. It has since developed into a comprehensive, multi-year transition program in which students can develop, practice and strengthen skills that are high predictors of increased adult independence and successful integrated community employment. The primary goal of Butler Tech students participating in Project LIFE is that they complete their transitional programming by applying for and participating in Project SEARCH on or before their final year of school eligibility. Butler Tech's three Project SEARCH programs are continually recognized at the Project SEARCH International Conference level for their high employment outcomes. We believe this is due in large part to Project LIFE's contribution to the continuum.

Project LIFE Today

Project LIFE offers a targeted course of study in combination with experiential life skills education and authentic community-based work training experiences.

Today, Project LIFE is a nationally replicated program which, in conjunction with Project SEARCH, offers a multi-year transition program continuum. Utilizing research based best-practices, this combination of programming gives students a smooth and seamless transition to adulthood with a focus on competitive, employment outcomes.

Transition Program Continuum

Recognizing the need for multiple and leveled transition programs, Butler Tech currently houses three Project LIFE programs in conjunction with three Project SEARCH® programs. Butler Tech provides transition programming for up to 100 area students annually, the combined programs give students with diverse learning challenges the opportunity to learn and grow based upon their individual needs. A dedicated team of program stakeholders, including special education instructors, administrators, parents and community rehabilitation partners review the program applications and interview the students in order to determine which of these programs will best meet the students' learning and transition to employment needs.



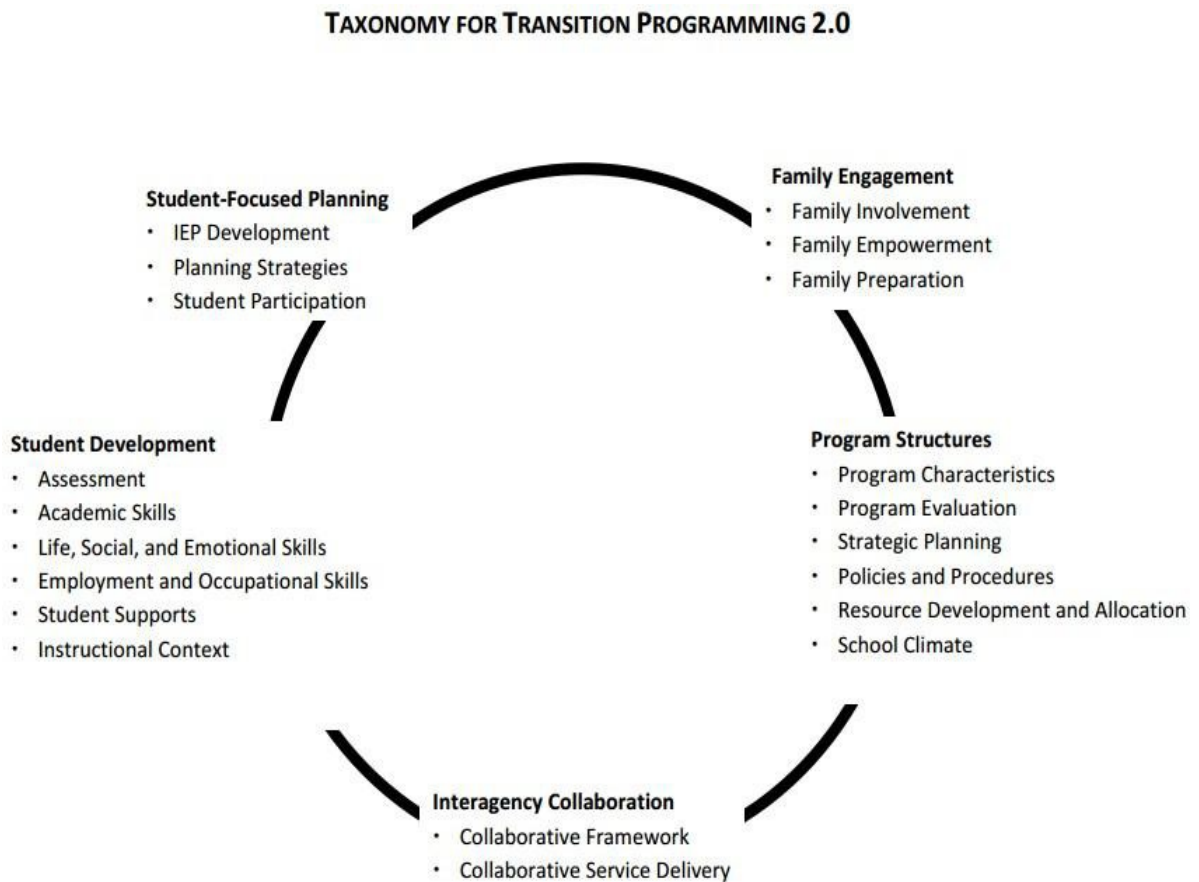
Project LIFE 101 is focused on building the *foundational skills* that students will need for future success in Project SEARCH followed by employment and a more independent adulthood. The program consists of a combination of 50 percent classroom instruction/daily living skills and 50 percent entry-level job training experiences in three different community businesses per year. The classroom instruction portion of the program *introduces* skills in team building, workplace safety, social skills/communication, personal financial literacy, technology, preparing for employment, maintaining employment and independent living skills.

Project LIFE 201 is focused on the *further development of skills* that students will need for success in Project SEARCH followed by employment and increased independence in adulthood. This program consists of a combination of 25 percent classroom instruction/daily living skills and 75 percent entry-level job training experiences in three different community businesses per year. The classroom instruction portion of the program *strengthens* skills in team building, workplace safety, social skills/communication, personal financial literacy, technology, preparing for employment, maintaining employment and independent living skills.

Project SEARCH® is focused on the goal of skill *refinement* in the areas of team building, workplace safety, technology, maintaining employment, self-advocacy, financial literacy, health and wellness, and preparing for employment. Program participants (interns) attend the program for a full school year in the host business/hospital. The host business provides access to an on-site training room that can accommodate up to 12 interns. The classroom instruction occurs approximately 1 hour per day and is based on the Project Search employment skills curriculum. www.projectsearch.us

Transition Compliance and Best Practices

Since its inception in 2007, Butler Tech's Project LIFE program has continued to evolve and expand into a research-based best practice transition program model that meets and exceeds the transition service requirements listed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Utilizing the *"Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0"*, Project LIFE fidelity components ensure an effective model for the planning, implementing and evaluation of transition focused education for students with disabilities.



Kohler, P. D., Gothberg, J. E., Fowler, C., and Coyle, J. (2016). Taxonomy for transition programming 2.0: A model for planning, organizing, and evaluating transition education, services, and programs. Western Michigan University. Available at www.transitionta.org

Course of Study Development

In 2007, Butler Tech transition program instructors and curriculum specialists assisted the Project SEARCH personnel in the development of the Project SEARCH national curriculum. Butler Tech continues to collaborate with Project SEARCH administrators to strengthen our mission of providing an innovative continuum of transition programming that meets the transition-to-employment needs of individuals with disabilities, their families and the greater community.

Outcome data supports that participation in Project SEARCH provides students with skills leading to high employment outcomes. The Project LIFE course of study was developed to provide students with the prerequisite skills needed to be successful in Project SEARCH. Taking the time to build a strong foundation focused on employment and independent living skills is Project LIFE's primary focus. The additional time allows students the opportunity to learn and practice adult living and employability skills focused on their specific needs. This also gives families time and assistance to better navigate the changes that will occur as their teen or young adult child transitions from school-based to adult service supports. In some cases, Project LIFE has also provided students who do not have access to Project SEARCH programming with an alternative pathway to meet their post-school goals.

Course of Study Components

Butler Tech curriculum specialists, intervention specialists, job training coordinators and administrators developed a written course of study that focuses instruction on established standards, essential skills, and transition to employment/adulthood. The Project LIFE course of study directs teachers to the knowledge and skills that increase the likelihood for all students to receive consistent and appropriate transition focused instruction. Access to the course of study is offered via a curriculum management platform that provides an easy to use interactive, on-line community network for program instructors and registered program personnel. This format allows peer-to-peer sharing and input on an ongoing basis that will further strengthen the program.

The course of study identifies the knowledge and skills for each lesson by breaking the standards into units, benchmarks, and learning targets. Targeted "essential skill" assessments are provided for program instructors to measure and evaluate each student's individual progress while also providing data to inform instructional decisions.

The Project LIFE course of study provides two levels that can be used to meet the specific learning needs of students as they move through the continuum of programming available. Where a continuum of programming does not exist, the leveling can be used to provide the instructor with the capability for guided differentiation within the classroom. Each level, 101 and 201 include the following eight *units (standards)*; however, benchmarks and learning targets differ between the two levels to provide a more tiered approach to instruction.

1. Team Building
2. Workplace Safety
3. Social Skills/Communication
4. Personal Financial Literacy
5. Technology
6. Preparing for Employment
7. Maintaining Employment
8. Independent Living Skills

Skill Assessments

Currently, the Project LIFE course of study *essential skill learning targets* are accompanied by more than 120 instructor-designed, skill-based assessments with accompanying materials. This comprehensive material is utilized to determine student baseline scores and assist in targeting individual and group instructional needs. They can also be used as Age Appropriate Transition Assessments to inform IEP goal development and pinpoint needed transition services and activities.

Example of Project LIFE 101 Assessment for Essential Skill Learning Target 2.1.3





Unit #:	2	Unit Name:	Workplace Safety
Benchmark #:	2.1	Benchmark Description:	The student will acquire knowledge and skills related to safety in the workplace.
Benchmark Skill #:	2.1.3	Skill Description:	Select solutions related to unsafe work practices and attitudes.
Location:	Classroom		
Type of Assessment:	Worksheet		
Materials for Assessment:	2.1.3 Worksheet		
Assessment Procedure:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be given the 2.1.3 Workplace Safety Worksheet Assessment. 2. Students will have the directions and scenarios or picture descriptions read aloud to them. 3. Students will verbally provide ways to solve the unsafe workplace practices or attitudes. 4. The instructor will use the assessment rubric below to determine student success. 		

2.1.3 Workplace Safety Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Look at the following pictures. They are showing unsafe work practices. Write down or explain a solution to the problem.

Problem	Solution
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk away and do nothing. 2. Clean up the spill. 3. Find a supervisor and tell them about the spill.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run out of the house. 2. Do not put potholder on a burner. 3. Just don't cook.

Student Performance Reports

In order to provide a streamlined progress monitoring system, Project LIFE instructors will have access to the course of study **Student Performance Report** that can be utilized quickly and easily to provide real time data collection for tracking and reporting student progress. Color coding provides the opportunity for both levels of assessments to be utilized and shared within one combined report. The student performance report is structured to share data based on three different reporting periods during the school year.

Example of the Excel formatted Student Performance Report




Student Performance Report

Name:	Student #01	Pre- assessment	Mid-Year Assessment	Post- Assessment
Unit 1	Team Building			
1.1	The student will acquire skills necessary to function within a team			
1.1.1	L101: Engage in communication with team members about an activity L201: Demonstrate the ability to communicate personal needs, wants, and questions within a team			
1.1.2	L201: Identify and practice effective interpersonal skills with co-workers, managers, and customers			
1.1.3	L101: Identify the steps necessary to complete a task within a team L201: Identify the steps necessary to complete a task within a team			
1.1.4	L101: Complete assigned tasks according to team-established procedures within specific timelines L201: Complete assigned tasks according to team-established procedures within specific timelines			
Unit 2	Workplace Safety			
2.1	The student will acquire knowledge and skills related to safety in the workplace			
2.1.1	L101: Identify safe working practices related to the workplace			
2.1.2	L201: Demonstrate knowledge of occupational safety in the workplace			

Weekly Job Report

Project LIFE is designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore and gain skills in three different community based work environments per year. Utilizing input from community employers, employment specialists, and staying current with trends for entry level employment needs, Project LIFE personnel have developed a comprehensive employment skills rubric and performance report. This document is designed to provide a weekly score related to the development of soft skills and job performance on work tasks performed by the student while under the supervision of a skills trainer.

The rubric was developed based on input received from employers related to their actual standards for employee expectations. It provides the student and their team with real time data regarding progress in the job training setting. This information provides specific information to the transition team relative to student growth and performance trends. This report also enhances transition team planning leading to better employment outcomes.

Project LIFE Weekly Job Report							
		Documentation		Weekly Score:		Previous Week	Current Week #:
		<p>Although we are using a written task list, Suzy was unable to locate needed materials on 3 out of 5 days this week. She greeted staff warmly each day and asked 1 question to site staff when job coach was assisting another intern.</p>		Employment Categories Weekly Score		1	2
Soft Skills	Attendance/Punctuality			8	10		
	Attitude / Effort / Behavior			6	5		
	Appearance/Hygiene/Uniform			7	7		
	Accepting Constructive Feedback			2	3		
	Self-Advocacy / Ask for Assistance			4	5		
Job Performance	Social Communication / Interaction			4	6		
		4	4.8				
		4	4.8				
Scoring Rubric				4	4.8		
10	Employee Standard			4	4.8		
9	Acceptable Performance			4	4.8		
8	Support for Pace			47	55.2		
Employment Related IEP Goals							
7	Support for Quality	Goal 1:					Weekly Rating
6	Support for Completion	In a job site setting, Suzy will ask for assistance with 2 or fewer verbal prompts in 2 out of 3 observations.					5
5	Support for Completion and Quality	Goal 2:					Weekly Rating
4	Minimal Support to Initiate	In an employment setting, Suzy will move from task to task independently in 2 out of 3 observations.					5
3	Support to Initiate						
2	Incomplete / Needs Training						
1	Incomplete / Effort						
0	Refusal						
Job Performance							
Tasks	Wipe Tables	Chairs Up	Vacuumed	Chairs Down	Clean door	Another Task	Average score
Job Performance Score	3	5	8	5	3		4.8
Job Performance Notes	Needed several verbal prompts to begin task. Unable to locate needed supplies.	Missed several chairs. Required assistance to lift.	Great quality but a very slow pace, vacuumed over same spot several times.	Missed several chairs, required assistance to lift.	Needed verbal prompts to initiate task.		



www.butlertech.org/ProjectLIFereplication

www.facebook.com/ProjectSearchProjectLifeButlerTech/

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Core Model Fidelity Components

1. Project LIFE will result in the following student outcomes:

- Successful participation in Project SEARCH®. (www.projectsearch.us)
- Increase in overall employability skills.
- Connections to vocational rehabilitation services and other community rehab agencies.
- A future of integrated, competitive employment in their community.

2. Project LIFE programs utilize the five transition quality indicators outlined in the "Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0".

(Kohler, 1996; Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016)

- **Student Focused Planning:** Project LIFE is student focused and students are an integral and active member of their individualized transition planning process.
- **Student Development:** Project LIFE is a combination of instruction focused on life skills, employment skills, vocational curricula, assessments, structured work experiences and individualized support services.
- **Interagency Collaboration:** Project LIFE incorporates a collaborative service delivery utilizing a framework that includes school personnel, students, parents, service providers and community businesses.
- **Family Involvement:** Project LIFE actively supports and encourages open and ongoing communication with family members to include input, feedback, and providing access to family training opportunities.
- **Program Structure:** Project LIFE is outcome based and flexible to meet student's individual needs related to their transition to integrated employment opportunities and overall increased independence for adult living.

3. Project LIFE students will meet the following eligibility criteria.

- Majority of students are at least 16 years old **OR** meet labor law requirements for assigned work based learning environments.
- Students have documented disability that warrants their need for participation in Project LIFE.
- There is family support and evidence of a strong desire by student to increase overall independence and acquire competitive work skills leading to future integrated employment in their community.
- Majority of students display characteristics needed for current and future eligibility in local and state agencies That provide supports to individuals with disabilities.

4. Project LIFE programs can be differentiated and utilize a combination of authentic, experiential learning opportunities in and out of the school setting.

- Project LIFE can be differentiated based on needs of students:
 - Level 101
 - ✓ At least 2 hours daily participation in classroom or life skill lab component
 - ✓ At least 2 hours daily participation in community based employment skills training
 - Level 201
 - ✓ At least 1.5 hours daily participation in classroom or life skill lab component
 - ✓ At least 3 hours daily participation in community based employment skills training
- Project LIFE includes opportunities for instruction on individualized goals.
- Project LIFE provides the opportunity for students to explore and gain transferable employability skills in three different authentic work based learning environments per year.
- Project LIFE provides the opportunity for students to gain and practice independent living skills in a variety of authentic learning environments.

5. Project LIFE provides two levels of an 8 Unit Course of Study focused on the transition to Employment and independent living skill sets. Course of Study Assessments for each essential learning target provide baseline data and the ability to track student progress.

- Course of Study Standards
 1. Team Building
 2. Workplace Safety
 3. Social Skills and Communication
 4. Personal Financial Literacy
 5. Technology
 6. Preparing for Employment
 7. Maintaining Employment
 8. Independent Living Skills
- Course of Study includes two levels of skill assessments for each unit that can be utilized to gather and report baseline data, mid and end of year progress.
- Course of Study provides guidance for “**essential skill**” development based on differentiated - levels of learning needs and is directly correlated to the Project SEARCH curriculum.
- Course of study components, materials and accompanying resources are available via an interactive, on-line curriculum network (Project LIFE Portal).

6. Project LIFE staffing includes a qualified instructor and consistent skill trainers across all learning environments.

- The Project LIFE instructor, skill trainers and key stakeholders from partner organizations have received orientation and training from Butler Tech/Project LIFE personnel.
- Dedicated and consistent staffing is available in classroom, life skill lab, and community based learning environments.
- The instructor is a full time, licensed special education teacher who acts as teacher and Project LIFE program coordinator. Duties may include: marketing, student recruitment, development of work based learning opportunities, supporting and assessing all aspects of student development, course of study planning and delivery, single point of contact for Project LIFE stakeholders, etc.
 - ❖ *Whenever possible, it is recommended that the instructor have at least 5 years of special education teaching experience with transition age students and additional licensing/certification in the provision of transition to adulthood services.*
- The “skill trainers” serve a dual role by supporting students in all learning environments, thus providing continuity and the opportunity for the application, reinforcement and generalization of learned skills across settings.
- Ratio of skill trainers to students is no more than 1:5.

7. Project LIFE personnel recognize that collaboration is critical to meet the unique needs of the students, families and program by utilizing the following program expectations.




















- A steering committee will be composed of members from education, department of vocational rehabilitation, local and state organizations supporting persons with DD, Project SEARCH staff, students, family members and community business partners.
- The steering committee will meet regularly (as determined during program implementation) to support Project LIFE needs and monitor progress.
- Recruitment of local businesses to provide a variety of authentic on-the-job training and other employment related experiences will occur.
- Referrals to VR, DD and other rehab agencies are implemented and agency representatives are included in meetings and communications.
- Regular communications with family members is provided and their participation in a minimum of 2 Employment Planning (progress) Meetings and at least one Individual Education Program review is encouraged.
- Communication is maintained with personnel/teachers who are sending students in order to assist them in preparing students for successful participation in Project LIFE.

8. All Project LIFE program locations will have a licensing agreement signed with Butler Tech.

- All licensing fees have been paid to Butler Technology and Career Development Schools for access to materials and resources needed to implement and sustain Project LIFE. An annual licensing renewal fee will be paid starting in the second year of Project LIFE operation and every year thereafter.
- Assigned staff will enter Project LIFE data at designated time of year to include information related to:
 - Number of students beginning Project LIFE
 - Number of students completing Project LIFE
 - Disability identification of student participants
 - Number of students eligible for local/state service agencies
 - Description of community based work experiences
 - Number of students meeting intended Project LIFE outcomes
 - If outcomes are not met, the reason why
 - Other non-identifiable data as requested

Materials and Resources Provided with Replication License

(This list will continue to develop and be updated annually for license holders)

-  Face to face training by qualified Project LIFE personnel
-  Ongoing consultative support via phone/video conferencing, emails
-  Project LIFE Instructor Guidance Manual
-  Access to on-line interactive course of study management platform
-  8 Unit Course of Study (2 levels – 101 and 201)
-  Essential Skills Course of Study Assessments
-  Course of Study Performance Report templates
-  Sample lesson plans, newsletters, marketing documents, etc.
-  Information for free and for-purchase supplementary teaching materials
-  Information and materials to support student behaviors
-  Information and materials to promote community based work training
-  Sample program handbooks and program fliers
-  Program applications and selection process examples
-  Instructions, samples and templates for conducting student led meetings
-  Guidance for writing transition focused IEP's
-  Program orientation and open house resources and ideas
-  Sample materials and support for program marketing and sustainability
-  Information regarding program needs and startup costs
-  Ongoing data collection system for tracking student outcomes

Are you ready to implement Project LIFE™ to help your students with developmental disabilities successfully transition to Project SEARCH®, employment and independence?

For more information, please contact:

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Partnering for Successful Outcomes!