

Student and Family Participation in Transition Planning: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2012)

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Introduction

Active student and parent participation in the transition planning process have long been recognized as important components in a successful transition to adulthood. Federal legislation requires that transition services be included in individual educational program (IEP) discussions for students aged 16 and older. Legislation further requires that both students and their parents are invited to the IEP meetings where transition will be discussed. The extent to which students and their parents actively participate in these discussions is unclear.

Research Questions

- 1) Who are the students represented in the NLTS-2012 dataset by select demographics and age groupings?
- 2) To what extent do students and parents participate in IEP and transition planning meetings in relation to specific age groupings?
- 3) What roles do students play in their transition planning meetings by specific age groupings?
- 4) Are there variations in student participation in developing a transition plan by disability category across time?
- 5) Are there variations in student participation in IEP/transition planning meetings by disability category?

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Method

The NLTS 2012 dataset represents a stratified random sample of students in the United States. A total of 12,988 parent surveys and 11,128 youth surveys were collected from students with and without disabilities and their families between February 2012 and August 2013. Data from both the youth and parent surveys were used in this analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to address research questions 1-4. A Chi-square test was also conducted to compare NLTS2 (collected a decade ago) to NLTS 2012 data to examine changes over time. To address research question 5, four logistic regression analyses were performed using SAS 9.4 PROC SURVEYFREQ and PROC SURVEYLOGISTIC procedures.

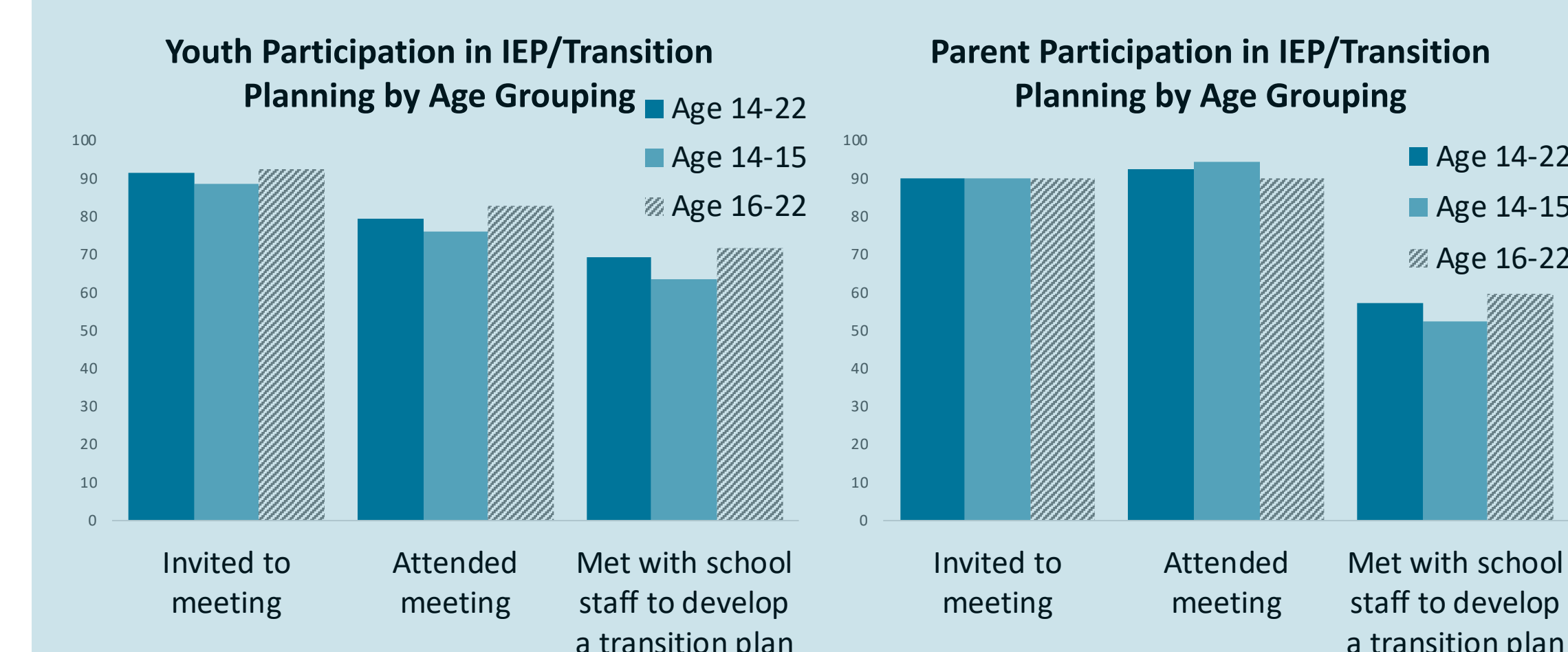
Results

RQ1: Who are the youth represented in the NLTS-2012 dataset?

	Age 14-22	Age 14-15	Age 16-22
Disability Category			
Autism	6.5	5.8	7.1
Deaf-blindness	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emotional disturbance	9.6	9.3	9.8
Hearing impairment	1.3	1.3	1.3
Intellectual disability	11.3	8.2	14.6
Multiple disabilities	3.1	2.3	3.9
Orthopedic impairment	1.0	0.9	1.2
Other health impairment	15.0	16.5	13.4
Specific learning disability	46.7	49.7	43.4
Speech or language impairment	2.3	2.7	2.0
Traumatic brain injury	0.7	0.6	0.7
Visual impairment	0.5	0.4	0.5
IEP but unspecified disability	2.1	2.2	2.0
Gender			
Male	67.3	68.1	66.5
Female	32.7	31.9	33.5
Race			
Non-Black	67.3	66.9	67.7
Any Black	22.5	22.7	22.4
Multi / Other	2.6	2.3	2.9
Hispanic	7.6	8.1	7.1
Free/Reduced Lunch			
No	42.6	39.8	45.6
Free	40.2	42.5	37.6
Reduced	5.8	5.8	5.8
Free or reduced	11.5	11.9	11.0
Parents' Highest Education level			
Graduate degree	9.3	9.2	9.4
4-year college degree	18.0	17.3	18.8
2-year college degree	13.8	14.2	13.5
Technical or trade school degree	6.1	6.7	5.4
High school diploma or GED	38.4	37.5	39.4
Less than high school	14.4	15.1	13.6
English Language Learner			
No	91.9	90.8	93.0
Yes	8.1	9.2	7.0

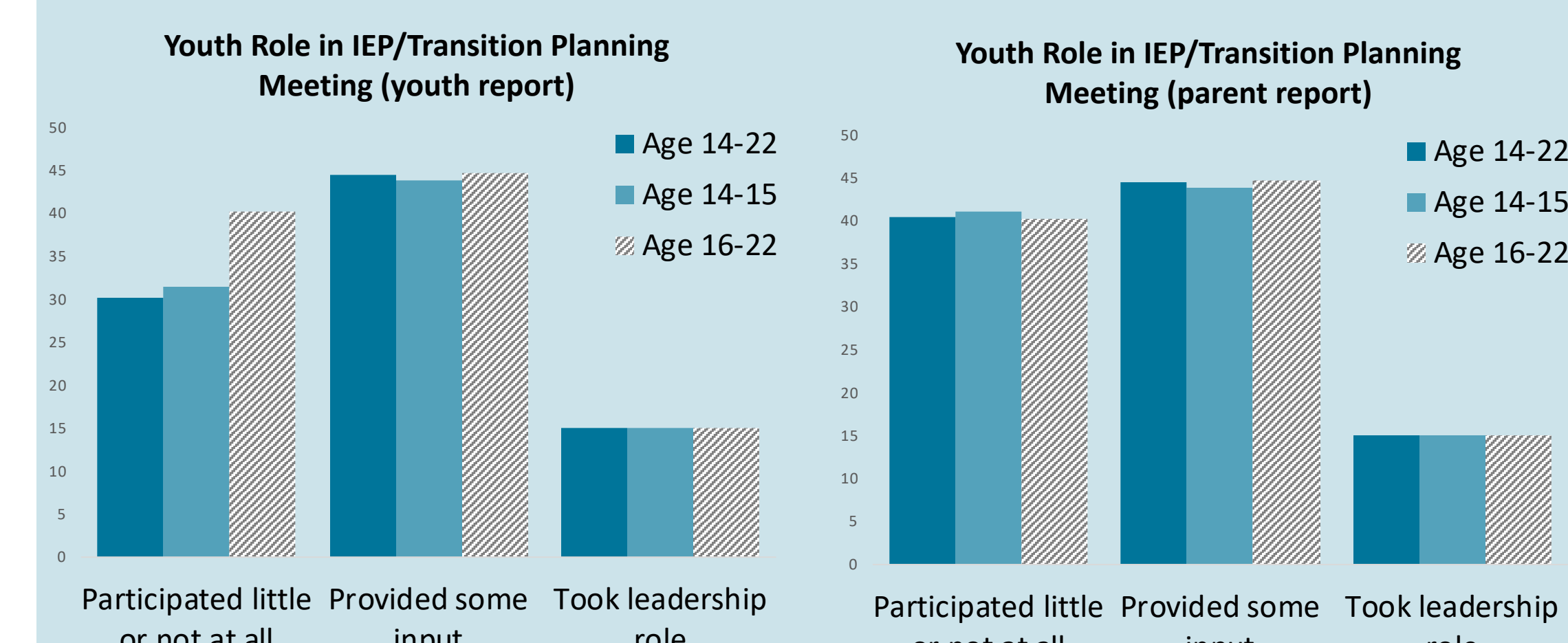
Selected demographic characteristics of the survey sample.

RQ2: To what extent do students and parents participate in IEP and transition planning meetings?



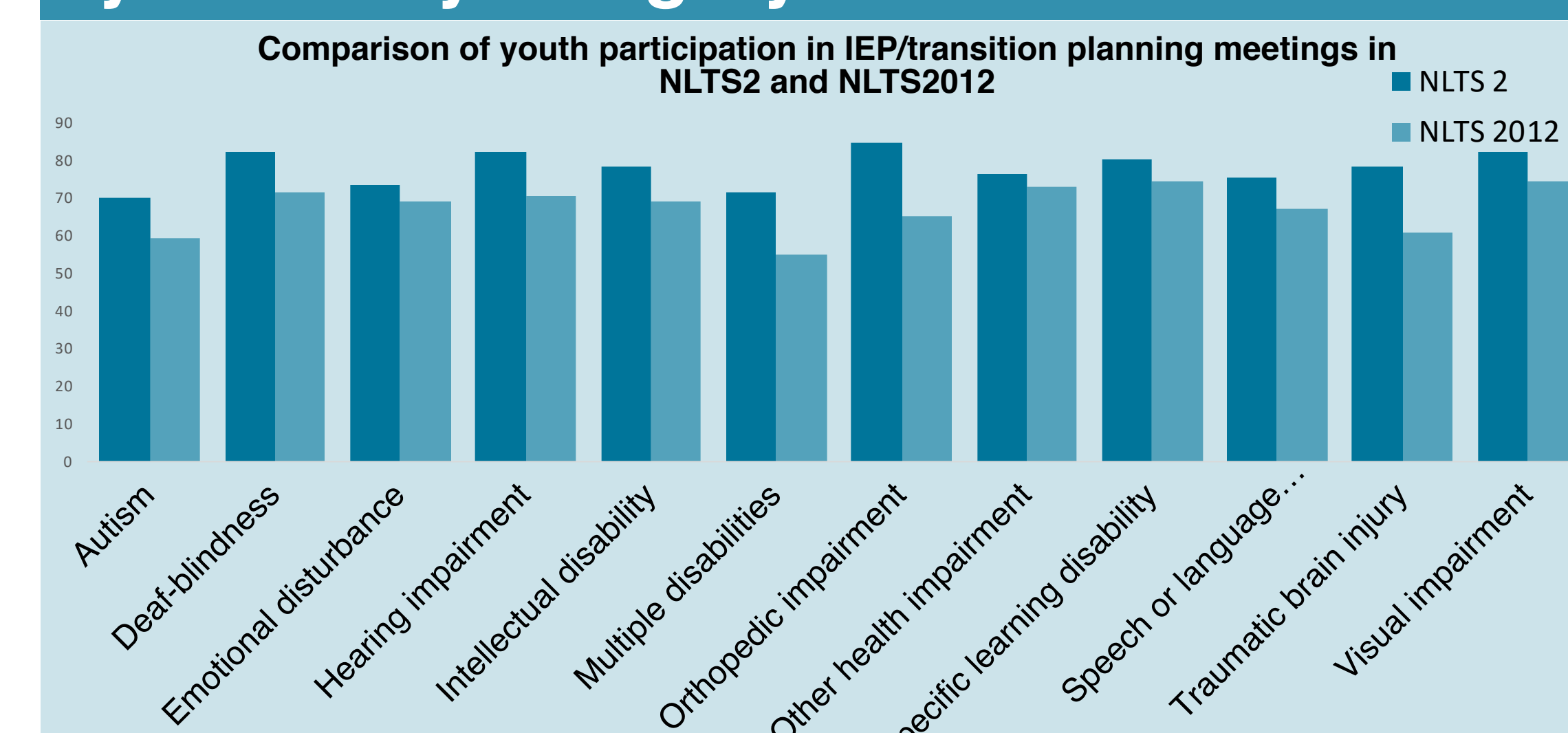
The majority of students across all three age groupings reported having attended an IEP meeting in the last two years. However, significantly fewer students reported having met with school staff to develop a transition plan. A large majority of parents also reported having attended an IEP meeting in the last two years, while significantly fewer parents reported having met with school staff to develop a transition plan.

RQ3: What roles do students play in their transition planning meetings?



Parents reported that less than 10% of the youth played a primary role in coming up with goals during their IEP/transition planning meetings.

RQ4: Are there variations in student participation in developing a transition plan by disability category across time?



There has been a significant decline in the percent of parents reporting that their child met with school staff to develop a transition plan across all disability categories since the 2001–2003 school year.

RQ5: Are there variations in student participation in IEP/transition planning meetings by disability category?

Selected Logistic Regression Results for Parents/Youth Meeting with Teachers and Youth's Role by Disability Category

Disability Category	Parents met with teacher to set goals (OR)	Youth met with teachers to set goals (OR)	Parent perception of youth's role (OR)	Youth perception of their role (OR)
Autism	1.27	0.58*	0.42***	0.61*
Intellectual disability	1.24	0.80	0.56**	0.96
Multiple disabilities	1.15	0.45**	0.29***	0.72
Orthopedic impairment	.71	0.48*	0.84	1.16

Youth with autism ($p < .05$), multiple disabilities ($p < .01$) and youth with orthopedic impairment ($p < .05$) are less likely to provide input during IEP/transition meetings according to parent responses to the NLTS 2012 survey.

Findings

- A majority of youth reported being invited to and attending IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Of the student who attended IEP/transition meetings, approximately 70% reported that they had provided some input or took a leadership role.
- Approximately 30% of youth report that they had not met with school staff to set goals related to their transition plans.
- A majority of parents reported being invited to and attending IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Compared with students with specific learning disabilities, students with autism (ASD), multiple disabilities, intellectual disability and orthopedic impairment are less likely to meet with school staff to set transition goals and provide meaningful input during meetings.
- There has been an overall decline in student participation in the development of transition plans over the past decade. This decline is visible across all 12 disability categories.