

6. CHANGES IN THE ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, AND PREPARATION FOR WORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

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The preceding two chapters have described changes between 1987 and 2003 in the postsecondary education and employment experiences of youth with disabilities in their first 2 years out of high school. Each of those activities can be a central focus for youth who participate in them. For some youth, however, participating in work or schooling after high school is not an either-or choice; they combine the multiple demands of employment and postsecondary education, while still others may choose another path to productive engagement in their community, such as participation in a job training program that is unaffiliated with a college or university. These realities argue for taking a more comprehensive look at the ways in which youth with disabilities can be involved in moving toward financial independence.

At the time of NLTS, looking beyond paid employment in considering postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities was not common. For example, Halpern (1990) found that of 27 follow-up or follow-along studies of youth with disabilities, 25 dealt with some aspect of employment, whereas 16 considered residential arrangements and 10 addressed issues of postsecondary education. In an effort to broaden the view of positive pathways to early adulthood, NLTS analysts developed a concept of engagement that incorporated both employment and postsecondary education, as well as job training and volunteer activities (Jay, 1991). In that spirit, this chapter addresses changes from NLTS to NLTS2¹ in the extent to which youth with disabilities had been engaged in any of three modes of participation in their communities since high school: paid employment, education (enrollment in a GED or other high school degree completion program; a 2- or 4-year college; or a vocational, business, or technical school), and job training other than programs associated with a college.² Changes in the way or ways in which youth were engaged also are presented.

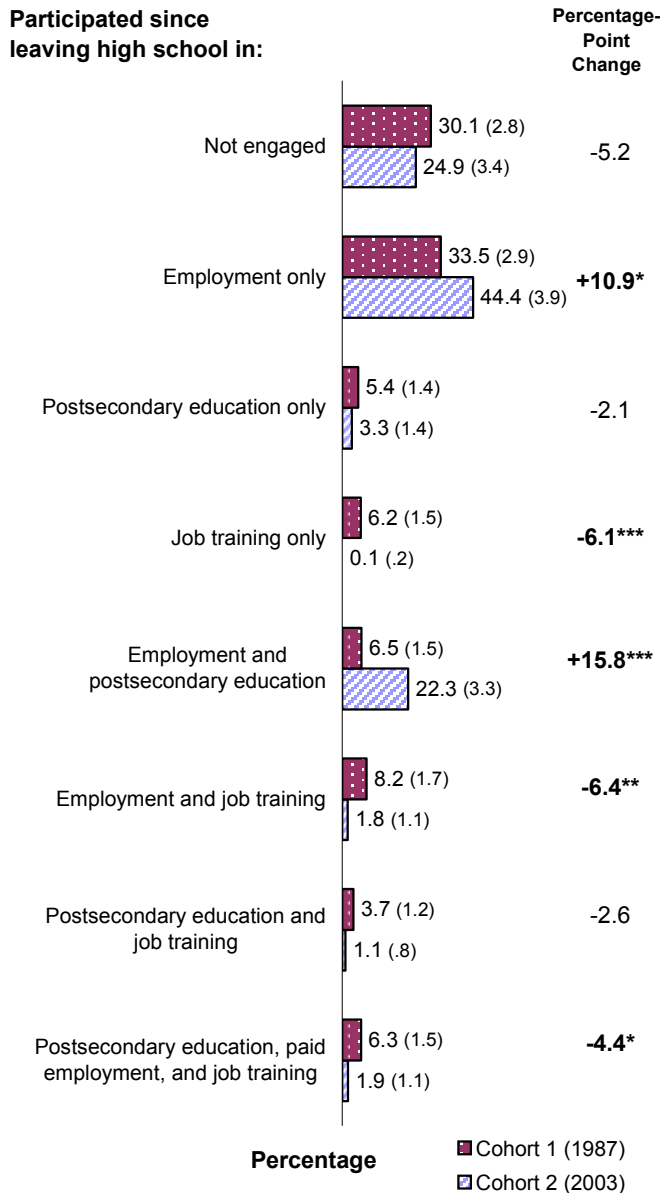
Rates and Modes of Engagement in the Community

The large majority of youth with disabilities had engaged in school, work, or preparation for work in their early years after high school (Exhibit 6-1). Three-fourths of cohort 2 youth had worked, gone to school, or been in job training, not a significant increase from the 70% of cohort 1 youth who had been involved in one or more of those activities. However, despite there being little change in the overall rate of engagement, the specific modes of engagement of youth with disabilities at the two points in time changed. Most apparent is the 16-percentage-point increase in the proportion of youth who had both worked and gone to school since leaving high school. Whereas only 6% of youth had been involved in both activities in cohort 1, 22% of cohort 2 youth had engaged in both work and school ($p < .001$). A sizable increase also was apparent in youth focusing on employment alone; an 11-percentage-point increase brought to 44% the proportion of youth with disabilities for whom paid employment had been their sole

¹ Youth for whom data are available for 1987 and 2003 are referred to as cohort 1 and cohort 2, respectively. For both groups of youth, 20% were 15 through 17 years old, 31% were 18, and 50% were 19.

² Note that the definition of engagement presented in this chapter does not include volunteer work, as had been the case in NLTS.

**Exhibit 6-1
ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR
PREPARATION FOR WORK BY
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES**



Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistical significance: *p<.01; **p<.05; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

mode of engagement since leaving high school. These increases were accompanied by decreases in the proportion of youth involved in job training alone (6 percentage points, p<.001) or in combination with employment (6 percentage points, p<.01) or with both employment and postsecondary education (4 percentage points, p<.05). No change was evident in postsecondary education alone; 5% had been thus engaged in cohort 1, compared with 3% in cohort 2. Similarly, the rate of participation in the combination of postsecondary education and job training did not change; 4% and 1% of youth in the cohorts 1 and 2 did so, respectively.

Differential Changes Related to Disability Category

The stability over time in the overall rate at which youth with disabilities had engaged in school, work, or preparation for work since high school is apparent across disability categories (Exhibit 6-2). Although some double-digit changes occurred in the overall measure of engagement, they were mixed in direction, and none attained statistical significance. However, the result of the changes was to narrow the range in the rates of engagement across disability categories from a 54-percentage-point spread in cohort 1 to 37 percentage points in cohort 2. The narrowing came almost entirely from an increase in the lowest score, not a decrease in the highest score. Specifically, the top scores in the two cohorts were quite similar; 80% of

cohort 1 youth with hearing impairments and 83% of cohort 2 youth with learning disabilities had engaged in school, work, or preparation for work since high school. In contrast, the bottom score in cohort 1 was 26% for those with multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness but was 46% in cohort 2 for youth with mental retardation. In that shift, several disability categories markedly changed their place in the overall distribution across categories. For example, youth with

Exhibit 6-2
CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR PREPARATION FOR WORK OF
OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH, BY DISABILITY CATEGORY

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impairment	Mental Retar- dation	Emo- tional Distur- bance	Hearing Impair- ment	Visual Impair- ment	Ortho- pedic Impair- ment	Other Health Impair- ment	Multiple Disabilities/ Deaf- Blindness
Since high school, percentage engaged in:									
Postsecondary education, paid employment, or job training									
Cohort 1 (1987)	75.3 (4.1)	73.5 (6.2)	55.5 (5.8)	67.7 (4.9)	80.5 (4.6)	65.0 (7.7)	56.2 (9.3)	69.2 (8.3)	26.1 (14.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	82.6 (4.3)	70.1 (9.9)	45.8 (8.0)	69.2 (5.2)	65.2 (8.1)	73.9 (8.6)	56.4 (7.9)	55.7 (12.9)	58.6 (13.3)
Percentage-point change	+7.3	-3.4	-9.7	+1.5	-15.3	+8.9	+2	-13.5	+32.5
Postsecondary education only									
Cohort 1 (1987)	5.9 (2.2)	4.7 (3.0)	4.4 (2.4)	4.0 (2.1)	5.1 (2.5)	15.1 (5.8)	6.2 (4.5)	9.0 (5.2)	7.3 (8.3)
Cohort 2 (2003)	3.0 (1.9)	.9 (2.1)	2.6 (2.5)	2.9 (1.9)	3.2 (3.0)	10.1 (5.9)	12.3 (5.3)	4.6 (5.5)	19.3 (10.7)
Percentage-point change	-2.9	-3.8	-1.8	-1.1	-1.9	-5.0	6.1	-4.4	12.0
Paid employment only									
Cohort 1 (1987)	37.4 (4.6)	27.8 (6.3)	25.5 (5.1)	34.8 (5.0)	21.2 (4.7)	11.9 (5.2)	16.6 (7.0)	16.0 (6.6)	9.3 (9.3)
Cohort 2 (2003)	50.0 (5.7)	28.2 (9.8)	25.1 (6.9)	46.6 (5.6)	20.0 (6.8)	10.2 (5.9)	22.2 (6.7)	25.3 (11.3)	29.2 (12.3)
Percentage-point change	+12.6	+4	-.4	+11.8	-1.2	-1.7	+5.6	+9.3	+19.9
Job training only									
Cohort 1 (1987)	5.7 (2.2)	6.1 (3.4)	6.9 (3.0)	6.4 (2.6)	14.7 (4.1)	4.5 (3.3)	14.9 (6.7)	3.4 (3.3)	5.1 (7.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.0	.0	.6 (1.2)	.3 (.6)	.0	.0	.0	.5 (1.8)	.0
Percentage-point change	-5.7*	-6.1	-6.3	-6.1*	-14.7***	-4.5	-14.9*	-2.9	-5.1
Postsecondary education and paid employment									
Cohort 1 (1987)	6.3 (2.3)	17.1 (5.3)	3.0 (2.0)	7.7 (2.8)	14.2 (4.0)	8.8 (4.6)	3.3 (3.3)	23.1 (7.6)	.0
Cohort 2 (2003)	25.4 (5.0)	36.9 (10.5)	5.7 (3.7)	16.0 (4.1)	34.8 (8.1)	35.9 (9.4)	19.2 (6.3)	20.5 (10.5)	7.1 (7.0)
Percentage-point change	+19.1***	+19.8	+2.7	+8.3	+20.6*	+27.1**	+15.9*	-2.6	+7.1
Postsecondary education and job training									
Cohort 1 (1987)	3.2 (1.7)	3.4 (2.6)	4.4 (2.4)	4.3 (2.1)	6.8 (2.9)	9.5 (4.7)	5.0 (4.1)	5.1 (4.0)	.0
Cohort 2 (2003)	1.1 (1.2)	.0	2.5 (2.5)	1.1 (1.2)	.0	2.1 (2.8)	.0	.0	1.5 (3.3)
Percentage-point change	-2.1	-3.4	-1.9	-3.2	-6.8*	-7.4	-5.0	-5.1	1.5

Exhibit 6-2
CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR PREPARATION FOR WORK OF
OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH, BY DISABILITY CATEGORY (CONCLUDED)

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impairment	Mental Retardation	Emotional Disturbance	Hearing Impairment	Visual Impairment	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Multiple Disabilities/ Deaf-Blindness
Paid employment and job training									
Cohort 1 (1987)	8.8	10.2	7.8	6.5	8.4	12.4	2.0	12.5	2.9
	(2.7)	(4.3)	(3.1)	(2.6)	(3.2)	(5.3)	(2.6)	(6.0)	(5.4)
Cohort 2 (2003)	1.0	3.0	9.3	1.5	.9	.4	.0	2.5	.4
	(1.1)	(3.7)	(4.6)	(1.4)	(1.6)	(1.2)		(4.1)	(1.7)
Percentage-point change	-7.8**	-7.2	1.5	-5.0	-7.5*	-12.0*	-2.0	-10.0	-2.5
Postsecondary education, paid employment, and job training									
Cohort 1 (1987)	8.0	4.2	3.5	3.9	9.9	2.8	8.3	.0	1.6
	(2.6)	(2.8)	(2.1)	(2.0)	(3.4)	(2.7)	(5.2)		(4.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	2.2	1.1	.0	.8	6.3	15.2	2.7	2.3	1.2
	(1.7)	(2.3)		(1.0)	(4.1)	(7.0)	(2.6)	(3.9)	(3.0)
Percentage-point change	-5.8	-3.1	-3.5	-3.1	-3.6	+12.4	-5.6	+2.3	-.4

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness had by far the lowest rate of engagement in cohort 1 (significantly lower than those for six other categories) but were above three categories in cohort 2, as youth with mental retardation took the bottom position. Youth with hearing impairments had the highest rate of engagement in cohort 1 but were surpassed by four other categories in cohort 2 (p<.05 compared with youth with learning disabilities).

Neither the proportion of youth with disabilities who had been engaged solely in postsecondary education or solely in employment changed markedly over time for any disability category, nor did the rate at which youth were engaged in those two activities together in combination with job training. In fact, not only did the rate of postsecondary education enrollment as a sole engagement activity not change, there were no significant differences in the 11-percentage-point spread across categories in that measure in cohort 1. That range increased to 18 percentage points in cohort 2, with only youth with speech or orthopedic impairments differing significantly from each other (1% vs. 19%, p<.05). Similarly, there were no meaningful differences across categories in cohort 1 in youth participating in the combination of school, work, and job training; only youth with visual impairments and those with mental retardation differed in cohort 2 (15% vs. 0%, p<.05). Greater differences were apparent regarding employment as a sole engagement activity. Youth with visual impairments had the lowest rates of this activity in both cohorts (12% and 10%), and youth with learning disabilities had the highest (37% and 50%), with the difference between them increasing from 28 percentage points (p<.001) to 40 percentage points over time (p<.001).

Although the rates of postsecondary education and paid employment as sole modes of engagement did not change over time, there was a significant increase in the likelihood of youth engaging in the combination of those activities among youth in four categories: learning

Exhibit 6-3
CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR
PREPARATION FOR WORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH
WITH DISABILITIES, BY SCHOOL-EXIT STATUS

	Completers	Dropouts
Since high school, percentage engaged in:		
Postsecondary education, paid employment or job training		
Cohort 1 (1987)	77.3 (3.4)	63.5 (4.7)
Cohort 2 (2003)	78.8 (4.0)	69.3 (6.6)
Percentage-point change	+1.5	+5.8
Employment only		
Cohort 1 (1987)	34.4 (3.9)	34.7 (4.7)
Cohort 2 (2003)	40.2 (4.7)	56.4 (7.1)
Percentage-point change	+5.8	+21.7*
Job training only		
Cohort 1 (1987)	8.3 (2.2)	3.6 (1.8)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.1 (.3)	.2 (.6)
Percentage-point change	-8.2***	-3.4
Postsecondary education and paid employment		
Cohort 1 (1987)	6.6 (2.0)	7.0 (2.5)
Cohort 2 (2003)	29.0 (4.4)	7.4 (3.7)
Percentage-point change	+22.4***	+4
Paid employment and job training		
Cohort 1 (1987)	11.7 (2.6)	5.0 (2.1)
Cohort 2 (2003)	2.2 (1.4)	1.2 (1.5)
Percentage-point change	-9.5**	-3.8
Postsecondary education, paid employment, and job training		
Cohort 1 (1987)	8.7 (2.3)	4.1 (1.9)
Cohort 2 (2003)	1.8 (1.3)	2.3 (2.1)
Percentage-point change	-6.9*	-1.8

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Note: The categories of postsecondary education only and postsecondary education combined with job training are omitted from the exhibit because there were no significant changes over time or differences between categories.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels:
 *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

disabilities and hearing, visual, and orthopedic impairments. Significant increases ranged from 16 to 27 percentage points (p<.05 to p<.001). In contrast, rates of job training as a sole mode of engagement and combined with employment and with postsecondary education declined significantly for some categories. Youth with hearing impairments had decreases in all three of these measures, ranging from 7 percentage points for job training combined with postsecondary education to 15 percentage points for job training alone. A more limited change with regard to job training is evident for youth with emotional disturbances, for whom only job training alone declined (6 percentage points, p<.05).

Differential Changes Related to School-Exit Status

Neither youth with disabilities who completed high school nor those who left without finishing experienced significant changes over time in their overall measure of participation in school, work, or preparation for work (Exhibit 6-3). Nonetheless, the significant difference between the two groups in their rates of engagement that was apparent in cohort 1 (77% vs. 64% for completers and dropouts, respectively; p<.05), was eliminated by cohort 2 (79% vs. 69%, not a significant difference). In addition, there were neither significant changes

in youth pursuing postsecondary education only or in combination with job training nor significant differences between completers and dropouts in those modes of engagement in either cohort.

However, changes were apparent in the rates at which youth with disabilities pursued other modes of engagement, although those changes occurred differentially for those who completed high school and those who did not. For example, the increase in youth who were working as their sole mode of engagement that was observed for youth with disabilities as a whole occurred largely among high school dropouts (22 percentage points, $p < .05$). In contrast, an increase of similar size in youth combining working and going to school occurred only among high school completers ($p < .001$). This increase created a significantly higher rate of these joint activities among cohort 2 completers than among dropouts (29% vs. 7%, $p < .001$), a difference not observed in cohort 1. High school completers also were the only group to experience declines in the proportion who were engaged only in job training or in job training combined with paid employment or with both employment and postsecondary education (decreases of 7 to 10 percentage points, $p < .05$ to $p < .001$).

Differential Changes Related to Demographic Characteristics

Age. The overall rate of engagement in school, work, or preparation for work did not change significantly for any age group of youth with disabilities (Exhibit 6-4). This stability maintained the relative advantage 19-year-olds had in overall engagement. They were significantly more likely to be engaged in cohort 1 than either of the younger age groups (79% vs. 57% and 64% of 15- through 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds, respectively, $p < .05$ for both comparisons) and were more likely than the youngest age group to be engaged in cohort 2 (82% vs. 55%, $p < .05$).

No change in any mode of engagement was apparent among the youngest age group, whereas 18- and 19-year-old youth with disabilities shared some changes and experienced others differently. For example, both groups showed increases in engagement in the combination of paid work and postsecondary education since leaving high school. However, the increase was more than twice as large for 19-year-olds (23 percentage points, $p < .001$) than 18-year-olds (11 percentage points, $p < .05$), giving them a significantly higher rate of this form of engagement in cohort 2 than the youngest age group (31% vs. 8%, $p < .01$). Both 18- and 19-year-olds experienced similar-size decreases in the likelihood of participating in job training as their sole mode of engagement (5 and 7 percentage points, respectively, $p < .05$ and $p < .01$). However, only 18-year-olds experienced a large increase in being engaged in paid work alone (23 percentage points, $p < .01$) and a significant decrease in the combination of all three modes of engagement (7 percentage points, $p < .05$). Nineteen-year-olds had the only significant decrease in the pursuit of paid employment combined with job training (9 percentage points, $p < .01$).

**Exhibit 6-4
CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR
PREPARATION FOR WORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH
WITH DISABILITIES, BY AGE**

	15 through 17	18	19
Since high school, percentage engaged in:			
Postsecondary education, paid employment or job training			
Cohort 1 (1987)	57.2 (8.1)	63.6 (5.0)	78.6 (3.5)
Cohort 2 (2003)	54.6 (10.1)	75.8 (5.1)	82.1 (4.5)
Percentage-point change	-2.6	+12.2	+3.5
Employment only			
Cohort 1 (1987)	27.3 (7.3)	28.3 (4.7)	39.0 (4.1)
Cohort 2 (2003)	41.9 (10.0)	51.3 (5.9)	41.2 (5.8)
Percentage-point change	+14.6	+23.0**	+2.2
Job training only			
Cohort 1 (1987)	5.6 (3.8)	5.3 (2.3)	7.0 (2.2)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.1 (.6)	.0	.2 (.5)
Percentage-point change	-5.5	-5.3*	-6.8**
Postsecondary education and paid employment			
Cohort 1 (1987)	4.0 (3.2)	6.1 (2.5)	7.7 (2.3)
Cohort 2 (2003)	8.1 (5.5)	17.0 (4.5)	30.7 (5.4)
Percentage-point change	+4.1	+10.9*	+23.0***
Paid employment and job training			
Cohort 1 (1987)	4.4 (3.4)	7.7 (2.8)	10.0 (2.5)
Cohort 2 (2003)	1.1 (2.1)	3.0 (2.0)	1.4 (1.4)
Percentage-point change	-3.3	-4.7	-8.6**
Postsecondary education, paid employment, and job training			
Cohort 1 (1987)	3.5 (3.0)	8.8 (2.9)	5.8 (2.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.0	2.1 (1.7)	2.4 (1.8)
Percentage-point change	-3.5	-6.7*	-3.4

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Note: The categories of postsecondary education only and postsecondary education combined with job training are omitted from the exhibit because there were no significant changes over time or differences between age groups.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Gender. Although the rate of overall engagement in school, work, or preparation for work did not increase significantly for either gender (Exhibit 6-5), the changes over time did eliminate the sizable advantage cohort 1 boys had had over their female peers (76% vs. 57%, p<.01). Cohort 1 boys also had an advantage over girls in the likelihood of employment being their sole mode of engagement (38% vs. 23%, p<.05). However, a 16-percentage-point increase among girls with disabilities resulted in their cohort 2 rates of engaging in employment only being quite similar (47% and 40%). There also was parity in their pursuit of the combination of paid employment and postsecondary education; boys' and girls' increases in this form of engagement (15 and 17 percentage points, p<.001 and p<.05) and their rates of engagement in these combined activities in the two cohorts were similar (8% and 4% in cohort 1, 23% and 22% in cohort 2). There also were changes among both genders in the pursuit of job training alone, although the decrease was more than twice as large for girls as boys (10 and 4 percentage points, respectively, p<.05 for both changes). Only boys experienced a decline in the likelihood of being engaged in job training in combination with employment or with both employment and postsecondary education (8 and 7 percentage points, p<.01 and p<.05).

**Exhibit 6-5
CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR
PREPARATION FOR WORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, BY GENDER**

	Boys	Girls
Since high school, percentage engaged in:		
Postsecondary education, paid employment, or job training		
Cohort 1 (1987)	75.6 (3.2)	57.1 (5.5)
Cohort 2 (2003)	76.5 (4.1)	72.3 (6.0)
Percentage-point change	+.9	+15.2
Paid employment only		
Cohort 1 (1987)	38.1 (3.6)	23.2 (4.7)
Cohort 2 (2003)	47.0 (4.9)	39.6 (6.6)
Percentage-point change	+8.9	+16.4*
Job training only		
Cohort 1 (1987)	4.4 (1.5)	10.4 (3.4)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.1 (.3)	.1 (.4)
Percentage-point change	-4.3*	-10.3*
Postsecondary education and paid employment		
Cohort 1 (1987)	7.5 (1.9)	4.3 (2.3)
Cohort 2 (2003)	22.8 (4.1)	21.5 (5.5)
Percentage-point change	+15.3***	+17.2*
Paid employment and job training		
Cohort 1 (1987)	9.7 (2.2)	4.9 (2.4)
Cohort 2 (2003)	2.0 (1.4)	1.6 (1.7)
Percentage-point change	-7.7**	-3.3
Postsecondary education, employment, and job training		
Cohort 1 (1987)	7.7 (2.0)	3.2 (2.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	1.1 (1.0)	3.4 (2.4)
Percentage-point change	-6.6*	+.2

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Note: The categories of postsecondary education only and postsecondary education combined with job training are omitted from the exhibit because there were no significant changes over time or differences between genders.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Household income. As with other demographic characteristics, the overall measure of engagement did not change over time for any income group (Exhibit 6-6). This stability retained the significant advantage of youth in the highest income group relative to those in the lowest that existed in both cohort 1 (80% vs. 59%, p<.01) and cohort 2 (88% vs. 65%, p<.01). However, the significant difference between the middle and lowest income groups that was apparent in cohort 1 (80% vs. 59%, p<.05) no longer existed in cohort 2 (71% vs. 65%). There were no notable changes in paid employment or postsecondary education as sole modes of engagement or in the combination of postsecondary education and job training, nor were there significant differences across income groups in the rates of these forms of engagement.

However, changes were noted in all other modes of engagement. The highest income group experienced the most widespread changes, with three of five modes of engagement changing significantly for that group, including job training as a sole activity and in combination with paid employment (decreases of 7 and 12 percentage points, p<.01 and p<.001, respectively) and the combination of paid employment and postsecondary education (a 24-percentage-point increase, p<.001). The lowest income group also experienced a 7-percentage-point decline in the rate of participation in job training only (p<.05), and the middle income group had an 8-percentage-point decline in youth participating in the combination of paid employment, postsecondary education, and job training (p<.05).

Exhibit 6-6
CHANGES IN ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL, WORK, OR PREPARATION FOR WORK OF
OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND RACE/ETHNICITY

	Income			Race/Ethnicity		
	Lowest	Middle	Highest	White	African-American	Hispanic
Since high school, percentage engaged in:						
Postsecondary education, paid employment, or job training						
Cohort 1 (1987)	58.7 (6.1)	79.7 (4.9)	79.9 (4.1)	74.3 (3.3)	62.5 (6.2)	63.4 (12.6)
Cohort 2 (2003)	64.9 (6.6)	70.7 (7.1)	87.6 (4.8)	78.9 (4.0)	69.3 (7.6)	66.7 (11.1)
Percentage-point change	+6.2	-9.0	+7.7	+4.6	+6.8	+3.3
Job training only						
Cohort 1 (1987)	7.6 (3.3)	3.7 (2.3)	7.2 (2.6)	5.8 (1.7)	8.8 (3.6)	.8 (2.3)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.3 (.8)	.0	.1 (.5)	.1 (.3)	.1 (.5)	.4 (1.5)
Percentage-point change	-7.3*	-3.7	-7.1**	-5.7***	-8.7*	-4
Employment and postsecondary education						
Cohort 1 (1987)	6.3 (3.0)	5.8 (2.9)	8.1 (2.8)	5.7 (1.7)	5.0 (2.8)	19.0 (10.2)
Cohort 2 (2003)	11.2 (4.4)	12.9 (5.2)	32.6 (6.8)	26.1 (4.3)	17.6 (6.3)	13.8 (8.1)
Percentage-point change	+4.9	+7.1	+24.5***	+20.4***	+12.6	-5.2
Employment and job training						
Cohort 1 (1987)	4.9 (2.7)	9.4 (3.6)	13.0 (3.4)	11.0 (2.3)	3.7 (2.4)	.1 (.8)
Cohort 2 (2003)	2.8 (2.3)	1.1 (1.6)	.6 (1.1)	1.2 (1.1)	4.4 (3.4)	1.4 (2.8)
Percentage-point change	-2.1	-8.3	-12.4***	-9.8***	+0.7	+1.3
Postsecondary education, employment, and job training						
Cohort 1 (1987)	1.2 (1.3)	9.4 (3.6)	8.6 (2.8)	7.8 (2.0)	2.7 (2.1)	8.1 (7.1)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.7 (1.2)	.9 (1.5)	2.7 (2.4)	1.6 (1.2)	3.3 (2.9)	1.2 (2.6)
Percentage-point change	-5	-8.5*	-5.9	-6.2**	+6	-6.9

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Note: The categories of employment only, postsecondary education only, and postsecondary education combined with job training are omitted from the exhibit because there were no significant changes over time or differences between groups.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Race/ethnicity. The lack of change in the overall rate of engagement in the community resulted in no differences between racial/ethnic groups in that measure in either cohort. Of the modes of engagement for which significant change occurred, white youth with disabilities experienced those changes most broadly. They were the only group with a significant increase in youth pursuing both paid employment and postsecondary education (20 percentage points, p<.001), with corresponding reductions in pursuit of job training alone and in combination with

employment and with employment and postsecondary education (6 and 10 percentage points, $p < .01$ and $p < .001$). African-American youth also witnessed a reduction in job training participation as the sole mode of engagement (9 percentage points, $p < .05$). Hispanic youth had no significant changes in their modes of engagement.

Summary

This effort to examine postschool outcomes in a more comprehensive way than is possible by focusing on postsecondary education or employment alone demonstrates that in their early post-high-school years, the majority of youth with disabilities in both 1987 and 2003 (70% and 75%, respectively) had engaged in these activities or in a job training program, alone or in combination. Although this rate of engagement in school, work, or preparation for work did not increase markedly over time, the ways in which youth were involved in their communities did change. The marked increase in postsecondary education that was depicted in Chapter 4 accounts for the largest increase in any mode of engagement. Interestingly, that increase in postsecondary education occurred almost entirely in combination with employment; the rate at which youth with disabilities had engaged in both postsecondary education and paid employment since high school almost quadrupled, to 22% in cohort 2, largely among high school completers. There was no accompanying increase in youth with disabilities pursuing postsecondary education alone. However, an increase in youth pursuing employment alone was apparent, largely among high school dropouts. These increases were accompanied by declines in engagement in job training programs as a sole activity or in combination with postsecondary education or with paid employment.

Modes of engagement changed significantly only for youth with learning disabilities; emotional disturbances; or hearing, visual, or orthopedic impairments, with youth with hearing impairments experiencing the most widespread changes. In contrast, no changes were evident for youth with speech or other health impairments, mental retardation, or multiple disabilities/deaf-blindness; youth in the latter two categories were among the least likely to be engaged in school, work, or preparation for work in both cohorts 1 and 2.

Regarding demographic differences in modes of engagement, significant changes were more common among older youth, those in the highest income group, and white youth with disabilities. No changes in rates or modes of engagement were apparent for the youngest group of out-of-school youth with disabilities or Hispanic youth. Several changes in modes of engagement occurred similarly for boys and girls with disabilities, although girls were the only group to experience a significant increase in employment as a sole mode of engagement. Changes among girls also eliminated the cohort 1 gap between genders in their rates of overall engagement; their rates were quite similar in cohort 2.