



Poster Presentation

## 4 to 24: Development of a Transition Resource App for Parents

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### Presenter Information

Karla Antonelli is a research scientist with the NRTC on Blindness & Low Vision at Mississippi State University. Her current research includes the development of a transition information resource in a mobile application, for use by families of children and youth with hearing and vision impairment and additional disabilities. She and the development team have collaborated with teachers, service providers, and parents on information and resources for the application which will be beneficial to youth including those with CHARGE syndrome. Her experience in the blindness field began as a student employee at the NRTC in 2014, while completing her degree in Cognitive Science at MSU. Her doctoral work included emphasis in research methodology, statistics, visual cognition, and computer usability design and testing. Her project work at the NRTC has also included studies on transition, mentoring for college students, customized transportation, and measuring implicit bias regarding the work competence of people with blindness or low vision.

Anne Steverson is a research associate at the National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision (NRTC) at Mississippi State University. Ms. Steverson earned a Master of Science in Counselor Education emphasis in Student Affairs from Mississippi State University in 2013.

### Presentation Abstract

For families of children with dual sensory impairment in addition to other disabilities, information and resources about fostering communication and building independence into adulthood can be a lifeline. To help fill this need, a new app is being created for parents to help families build these skills over time, including a focus on supporting opportunities for employment.

Transition is often thought of as focused in the teenage years, but building a successful adulthood starts early. Fostering communication, self-determination, and independence are important in the very early years, and the earlier these skills receive attention, the more benefit a child or youth could receive later in life. To support this focus, and to bring information and resources to families in a format that is easy to use, a new app is being created for parents of children and youth who have both hearing and vision impairment along with other disabilities. The app will focus on providing information, links to resources, and descriptions of activities parents can do with their children to support building independence over time.

The app is an information resource in an easy, interactive format for parents on the go. It is not a curriculum, nor a replacement for rehabilitation or education services. Instead, its purpose is to educate parents about activities, programs, and services that will help their children reach their highest potential, up to and including independent living and employment. This poster will provide an overview of the app and what it will provide for families.

Description of poster “4to24: Development of an App to Help Families and Youth Focus on Employment,” by the National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision, funded by NIDILRR grant #90RT5040.

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4to24 is a new app created to help youth who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind focus on steps to prepare for employment by providing families with practical information, resources, and activities.

The poster depicts a winding road beginning from a background of a small sapling, and a signpost reading “Age 4.” Along the road on each side are signposts from the beginning to end, which read the following:

- Start early to lay the foundation for success. Build concepts through real-life experiences.
- Learn about careers! Practice communication skills while asking people about their jobs.
- Practice writing skills! Write a letter to a family member or start a journal.
- Stay up-to-date on technology! Ask peers and mentors what they use. Check out consumer group meetings and assistive technology conferences.
- Visit a college campus and explore housing and transportation options.
- Dress for success for that job interview. Here are some tips!
- Choose where to live. Explore community supports! Check out social activities!

On the road are depicted the outline of a tortoise and a hare, with a thought cloud reading “Move at your own pace!”

The road leads to the base of a large, healthy tree. At the top of the tree is a bluebird with a thought cloud reading “Interactive design brings tips right to you!” At the end of the road is another signpost pointing ahead, reading “Age 24.”

The app includes information and activities for a range of activity and ability levels.

For more information about the app for families, contact Karla Antonelli at [kantonelli@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:kantonelli@colled.msstate.edu).

To sign up for updates and opportunities to become an app tester, register at <https://www.research.net/r/MSUAppRegistry>

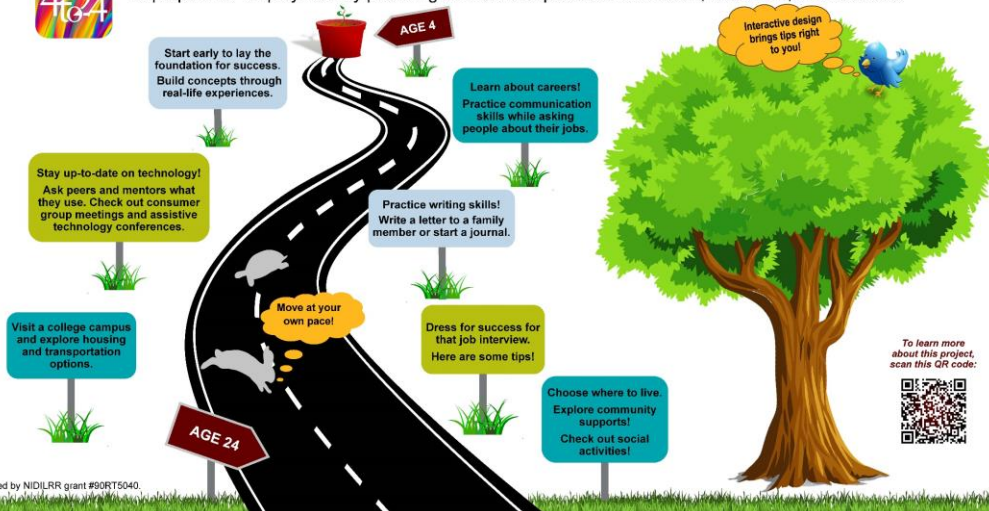


## 4to24: Development of an App to Help Families and Youth Focus on Employment

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