

# Perceptions and Expectations of Youth With Disabilities. A Special Topic Report on Findings From the National Longitudinal Study-2 (NLTS2)

## Chapter 6 - Youth's Expectations for the Future

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At 15 to 19 years old, NLTS2 youth are on the threshold of adulthood. As they look toward their future adult roles, what are their academic, occupational, and independence expectations? Multiple factors have been found to be associated with aspirations and expectations, including individual abilities and social context (Hudley et al. 2003; Sirin et al. 2004). For example, teachers' supportive behaviors—emotional warmth and academic validation—have been found to be related to students' educational aspirations (Yun and Kurlaender 2004), and occupational aspirations have been found to be more closely associated with youth's perceived efficacy than with their actual academic achievement (Bandura et al. 2001).

Youth's future aspirations are positively related both to their high school outcomes and their adult achievements (Nurmi 1991; Wyman et al. 1993). Having more positive expectations for the future is associated with being academically successful and engaged in high school (Hudley et al. 2002; Murdock, Anderman, and Hodge 2000). Higher expectations of academic and career success is related to higher high school completion rates (Franse and Siegel 1987), thereby avoiding the negative impact on employment and postsecondary education attainment associated with dropping out (Wagner et al. 2005). In addition, higher educational aspirations are associated with higher postsecondary school attendance rates (Durham, Danner, and Seyfrit 1999).

NLTS2 asked youth with disabilities to envision their futures

and articulate their expectations for the period following high school. This chapter presents findings regarding expectations related to educational and independence achievements for youth with disabilities as a whole and for those who differ in their primary disability category.<sup>1</sup> No differences in expectations between youth with different demographic characteristics reach the  $p < .01$  level of statistical significance; thus, they are not reported here.

### Educational Attainment Expectations

Youth with disabilities were asked how likely they thought it was that they would reach several education milestones, using a 4-point scale: "definitely will" (4 points), "probably will," "probably won't" or "definitely won't" (1 point; figure 19). Almost 85 percent expect they "definitely will"<sup>2</sup> graduate from high school with a regular diploma; an additional 12 percent think they "probably will" do so. Fewer than 1 in 20 youth (4 percent) do not expect to graduate from high school with a regular diploma.

Youth with disabilities report being less confident that they will attend postsecondary school. One-half (52 percent) say they expect they "definitely will" continue on to postsecondary school, and approximately one-third (34 percent) expect they "probably will." However, more than 1 in 10 (14 percent) consider postsecondary education unlikely.

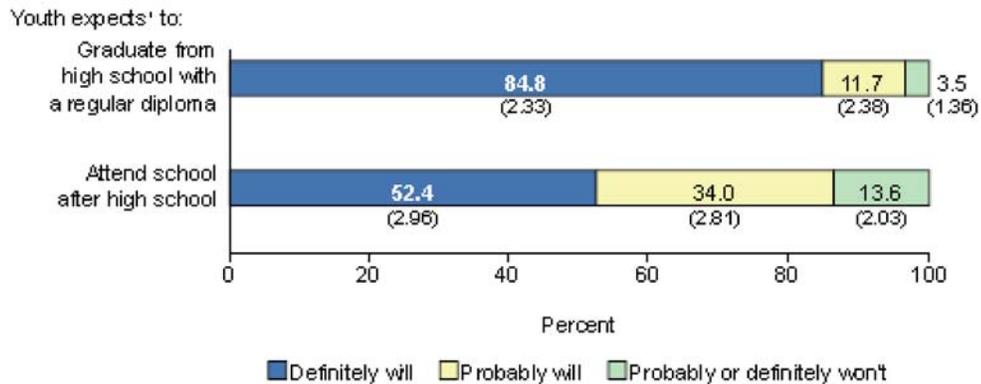
Youth with disabilities also were questioned about whether they expected to complete three types of postsecondary pro-

grams: vocational, technical, or trade school; 2-year college; and 4-year college. Approximately one-quarter expect they "definitely will" complete a vocational, technical, or trade school program (26 percent) or 4-year college (25 percent), and about one-third (34 percent) say they "definitely will" graduate from a 2-year college (figure 20). An additional 34 percent to 39 percent report they "probably will" complete each of the three types of postsecondary education.

Expectations related to high school graduation are comparable for youth with disabilities and their peers in the general population. Most youth in both groups (97 percent of youth with disabilities and 99 percent of those in the general population)<sup>3</sup> say they expect to finish high school with a regular diploma. Youth with disabilities are less positive than their general population peers about postsecondary education attendance or completion.<sup>4</sup> Eighty-six percent of youth with disabilities expect they "definitely" or "probably" will continue their education after high school, compared with 95 percent of those in the general population who expect to go on to postsecondary school ( $p < .001$ ). The gap in expectations is wider related to postsecondary school completion. Almost four of five youth in the general population report expecting they will graduate from a 4-year college (79 percent), compared with approximately three of five youth with disabilities who "definitely" or "probably" expect to complete this type of education (61 percent,  $p < .001$ ).

Figure 19

Youth With Disabilities' Reported Expectations for Their Future Educational Attainment



<sup>1</sup>Youth who have attained the outcome are included as "definitely will."

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

Independence Expectations

In addition to their expectations regarding educational attainment, youth with disabilities were asked how likely they think it is that they will achieve sev-

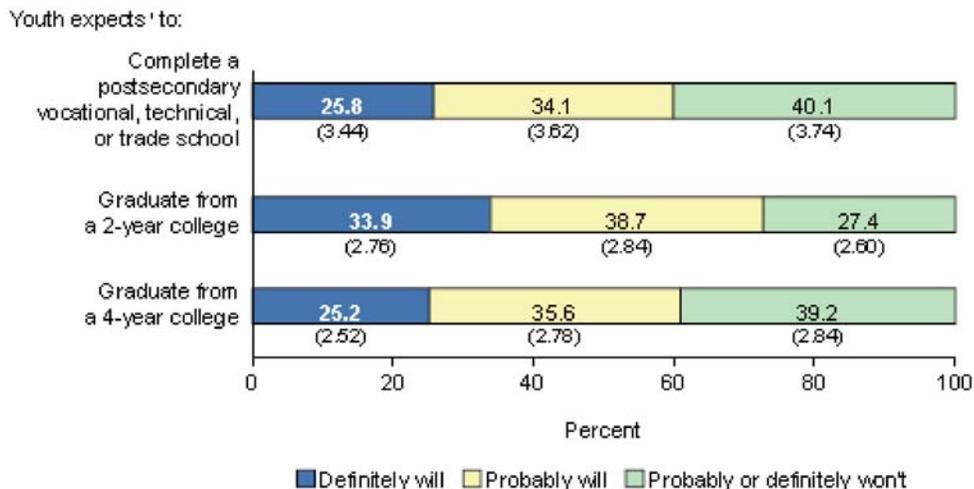
eral milestones of independence: getting a driver's license, finding paid employment, being financially self-sufficient, and living independently.

More than four of five youth with disabilities (81 percent) "definitely" expect to get a

driver's license (figure 21). Another 14 percent think they "probably" will be able to earn driving privileges. The large majority of youth with disabilities (95 percent) expect they "definitely" will get a paid job. However, youth are less certain that

Figure 20

Youth With Disabilities' Reported Expectations for Their Future Postsecondary School Completion



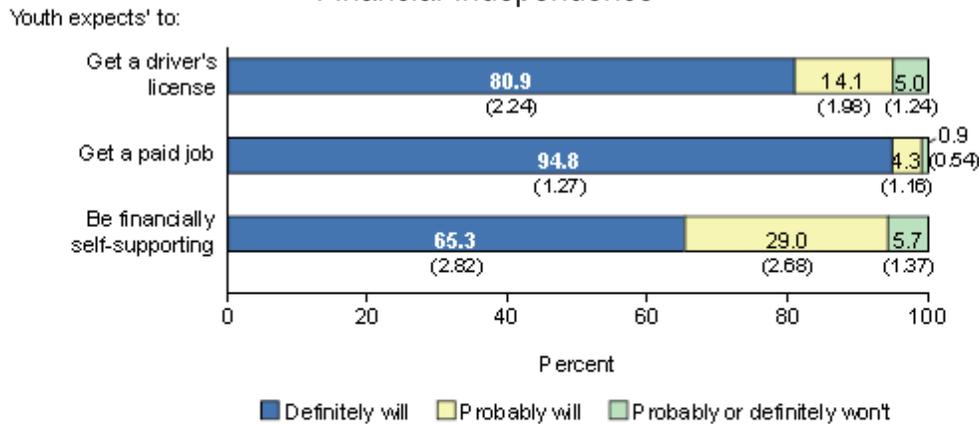
<sup>1</sup>Youth who have attained the outcome are included as "definitely will."

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

Figure 21

Youth With Disabilities' Reported Expectations for Their Future Driving, Employment, and Financial Independence



<sup>1</sup>Youth who have attained the outcome are included as "definitely will."

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

these jobs will pay enough for them to be financially self-sufficient; about two-thirds (65 percent) expect they "definitely will" be able to support themselves financially, without family or government support ( $p < .001$  for comparison with definitely expect to get a paid job). Approxi-

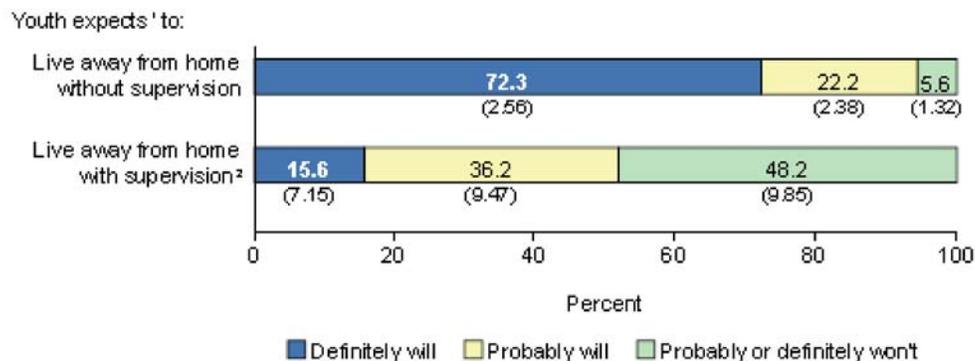
mately 3 of 10 (29 percent) report they "probably will" be able to be financially self-sufficient.

Expectations for residential independence do not differ significantly from expectations related to financial independence (figure 22). Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of youth with

disabilities think they "definitely" will be living independently in the future. An additional 22 percent say they "probably" will be living independently, while 6 percent report they "probably" or "definitely" will not. Among youth who think they will not be able to live in-

Figure 22

Youth With Disabilities' Reported Expectations for Their Future Residential Independence



<sup>1</sup>Youth who have attained the outcome are included as "definitely will."

<sup>2</sup>Asked only of youth who do not think they will live away from home without supervision.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

dependently without supervision, even having supervision is not expected to result in independence for many; nearly half (48 percent) do not expect to live away from home with supervision, while 16 percent of those youth expect they “definitely” will be able to live away from home with supervision.

### Relationships Among Expectations

Expectations are related in that youth who hold higher expectations in one domain tend to hold higher expectations in other domains, when values on the response scales for each expectation were correlated (table 17).<sup>5</sup> For example, those who expect to be able to support themselves

financially also tend to expect to live on their own in the future ( $r = .49, p < .001$ ). Correlations are significant for all education- and independence-related outcomes. Correlation coefficients range from  $r = .06 (p < .01)$  for the relationship between expecting to get a driver’s license and to graduate from high school with a regular diploma, to  $r = .59 (p < .001)$  for the relationship between expecting to attend a postsecondary school and to graduate from a 4-year college, as well as between expecting to complete a postsecondary vocational or technical program and to complete a 2-year college.

### Comparison With Parent Expectations

Two years before youth with disabilities were asked about their expectations, their parents were asked to report on the perceived likelihood that their adolescent children with disabilities would reach these education and independence milestones. A comparison of parents’<sup>6</sup> and youth’s expectations on the same set of expectations using the same 4-point scale indicates that, overall, parents tend to hold lower expectations for their adolescent children’s future achievements than youth hold for themselves (figure 23). Across the various milestones, youth are 7 to 26 percentage points more likely

Table 17  
Correlations Among Youth With Disabilities’ Reported Expectations for Their Future Educational and Independence Attainment

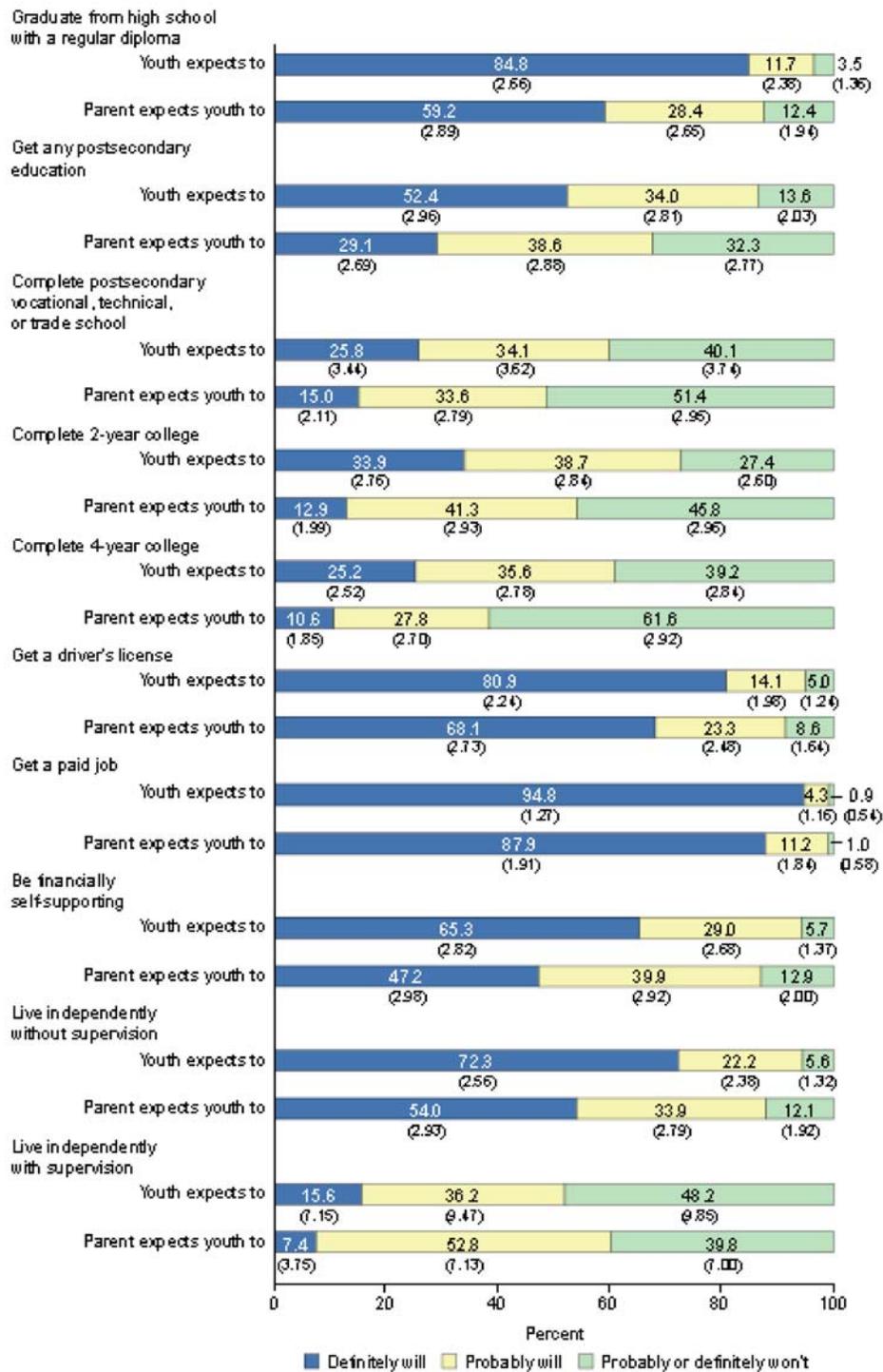
Expectation	Graduate from high school	Go to postsecondary school	Complete voc tech school	Complete 2-year college	Complete 4-year college	Get a driver’s license	Get a paid job	Be financially self-supporting	Live independently without supervision
Graduate from high school with a regular diploma	1.00	.31***	.10***	.14***	.23***	.06***	.13***	.19***	.19***
Attend school after high school		1.00	.56***	.48***	.59***	.08***	.10***	.21***	.20***
Complete a postsecondary vocational, technical, or trade school			1.00	.59***	.36***	.11***	.06***	.16***	.14***
Graduate from a 2-year college				1.00	.41***	.13***	.09***	.17***	.16***
Graduate from a 4-year college					1.00	.10***	.13***	.27***	.23***
Get a driver’s license						1.00	.18***	.26***	.32***
Get a paid job							1.00	.33***	.25***
Be financially self-supporting								1.00	.49***
Live independently without supervision									1.00

\*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

Figure 23

Expectations for Youth's Future Educational and Independence Attainment Reported by Youth With Disabilities and Their Parents



NOTE: Youth who have attained the outcome are included as "definitely will." Standard errors are in parentheses.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 1 parent telephone interview/mail survey, 2001, restricted to responses for the subset of youth included in this report; Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

than parents to expect they “definitely” will attain education and independence outcomes. Differences between parents’ and youth’s expectations “definitely” to attain these milestones are statistically significant for all education and independence outcomes,<sup>7</sup> with the exception of expectations related to living independently without supervision. For example, more than half of youth with disabilities expect they “definitely” will continue their education after high school, whereas fewer than one-third of their parents expect them to do so (52 percent vs. 29 percent;  $p < .001$ ), and approximately two-thirds (65 percent) “definitely” expect to be financially self-supporting, compared with fewer than half (47 percent) of their parents predicting their children will achieve financial self-sufficiency ( $p < .001$ ).

Despite these differences, parents’ and youth’s expectations are related to each other in that youth who hold higher expectations tend to have parents who hold higher expectations for them. Correlations between youth’s and parents’ expectations are significant for all education and independence-related outcomes,<sup>8</sup> with correlation coefficients ranging from  $r = .21$  ( $p < .001$ ) for expectations related to completing a postsecondary vocational or technical program to  $r = .74$  ( $p < .001$ ) for expectations related to getting a driver’s license.

### Disability Category Differences in Expectations

There are differences in youth’s expectations regarding future educational attainment and independence apparent for youth in different disability categories.

#### Educational Attainment

Youth do not differ significantly by disability category in their expectations to graduate from

high school. Expectations “definitely” to graduate from high school range from 70 percent for youth with multiple disabilities to 93 percent for those with traumatic brain injuries (table 18). In contrast, disability category differences are apparent for expectations related to postsecondary school. Expectations to “definitely” attend postsecondary school range from 8 in 10 of those with hearing impairments to fewer than 4 in 10 of those with mental retardation. Youth with hearing impairments are more likely to expect they “definitely will” attend postsecondary school (80 percent) than are those with multiple disabilities (47 percent,  $p < .01$ ), autism (47 percent,  $p < .01$ ), or mental retardation (38 percent,  $p < .001$ ). Youth with mental retardation also are less likely to expect to “definitely” continue their education after high school than are youth with visual impairments (70 percent,  $p < .001$ ), traumatic brain injuries (67 percent,  $p < .01$ ), orthopedic impairments (62 percent,  $p < .01$ ), speech impairments (59 percent,  $p < .01$ ), or emotional disturbances (56 percent,  $p < .01$ ).

Expectations for completing postsecondary vocational, technical, or trade school programs do not differ significantly by disability category. Youth in most disability categories do not differ significantly in their expectations related to graduating from a 2-year college; the one exception is that those with mental retardation are less likely to expect they “definitely will” graduate from a 2-year college (23 percent) than are those with traumatic brain injuries (53 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Expectations for “definitely” graduating from a 4-year institution vary more widely across disability categories. Youth with hearing impairments are more likely to expect to “definitely” complete a 4-year college

program (47 percent) than are those with mental retardation (16 percent,  $p < .001$ ), autism (21 percent,  $p < .01$ ), other health impairments (23 percent,  $p < .001$ ), learning disabilities (25 percent,  $p < .01$ ), or emotional disturbances (27 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Youth with mental retardation also are less likely to expect to graduate from a 4-year university than are those with traumatic brain injuries (43 percent,  $p < .01$ ), visual impairments (39 percent,  $p < .01$ ), orthopedic impairments (39 percent,  $p < .01$ ), or speech or language impairments (35 percent,  $p < .01$ ).

#### Independence

Future independence expectations also differ across disability categories. Expectations for “definitely” earning a driver’s license range from 12 percent to 92 percent (table 19). Few youth with visual impairment (12 percent) or deaf-blindness (25 percent) expect they “definitely” will get a driver’s license. Youth in both disability categories are less likely to expect they “definitely” will have a driver’s license than are those in all other categories (other than multiple disabilities for comparison with expectations of youth with deaf-blindness).<sup>9</sup> Approximately half of those in four categories—youth with mental retardation (58 percent), orthopedic impairments (57 percent), autism (54 percent), and multiple disabilities (53 percent)—expect to “definitely” get a driver’s license. Youth in these four disability categories are significantly less likely to expect to drive than are those in six of the other disability categories who have expectations ranging from 81 percent to 92 percent—youth with learning disabilities (86 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons), speech impairments (87 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons), emotional disturbances (82 percent;  $p < .001$  for com-

**Table 18**  
**Youth With Disabilities' Reported Expectations for Their Future Educational Attainment, by Disability Category**

Expectations <sup>1</sup>	LD <sup>2</sup>	SLI	MR	ED	HI	VI	OI	OHI	AU	TBI	MD	DB
	Percent/standard error											
Percentage expected to:												
Graduate from high school with a regular diploma												
Definitely will	87.9 (3.50)	77.0 (4.92)	73.7 (7.10)	83.7 (4.47)	85.9 (7.69)	90.9 (4.67)	81.5 (5.75)	79.9 (4.78)	77.0 (8.32)	93.1 (5.84)	70.4 (9.64)	‡
Probably will	9.0 (3.07)	21.1 (4.77)	22.5 (6.73)	10.3 (3.68)	10.7 (6.83)	8.0 (4.41)	17.1 (5.58)	15.1 (4.27)	21.4 (8.02)	6.8 (5.80)	24.1 (9.03)	‡
Definitely or probably won't	3.0 (1.83)	2.0 (1.64)	3.7 (3.04)	6.0 (2.87)	3.4 (4.00)	1.1 (1.69)	1.4 (1.74)	5.1 (2.62)	1.6 (2.45)	0.1 (0.73)	5.5 (4.82)	‡
Get any postsecondary education												
Definitely will	53.3 (4.34)	58.8 (4.60)	37.7 (6.25)	56.2 (4.71)	79.9 (6.36)	69.9 (5.86)	62.2 (5.86)	49.6 (4.87)	47.2 (8.44)	66.9 (9.06)	47.1 (8.42)	55.4 (11.17)
Probably will	34.0 (4.30)	30.6 (6.35)	41.6 (4.35)	30.1 (5.72)	15.4 (5.46)	24.1 (5.16)	24.0 (4.67)	35.8 (8.17)	37.2 (8.26)	24.3 (8.18)	37.8 (4.30)	‡
Definitely or probably won't	12.7 (2.90)	10.6 (2.88)	20.7 (5.22)	13.7 (3.26)	4.7 (3.36)	6.0 (3.03)	13.7 (4.15)	14.6 (3.44)	15.6 (6.13)	8.8 (5.45)	15.1 (6.04)	19.1 (8.83)
Complete postsecondary vocational, technical, or trade school												
Definitely will	26.9 (4.97)	22.4 (5.03)	22.1 (6.68)	29.3 (5.65)	22.5 (9.27)	17.4 (6.71)	20.2 (6.32)	20.0 (5.01)	13.3 (6.88)	35.0 (11.43)	17.8 (8.06)	‡
Probably will	34.5 (5.33)	42.1 (5.96)	24.6 (6.93)	35.5 (5.94)	40.4 (10.90)	45.3 (8.81)	34.5 (7.49)	33.2 (5.89)	40.2 (9.93)	31.0 (11.08)	40.5 (10.35)	‡
Definitely or probably won't	38.6 (5.46)	35.5 (5.77)	53.3 (8.03)	35.2 (5.93)	37.1 (10.73)	37.3 (8.56)	45.3 (7.84)	46.8 (6.25)	46.5 (10.11)	34.0 (11.35)	41.7 (10.39)	‡
Complete 2-year college												
Definitely will	36.6 (4.16)	31.9 (4.18)	22.5 (5.18)	32.3 (4.42)	42.4 (6.31)	34.6 (6.05)	32.5 (5.56)	29.9 (4.38)	24.5 (6.69)	52.6 (9.55)	25.5 (6.69)	34.1 (8.94)
Probably will	39.0 (4.21)	37.0 (4.33)	39.0 (6.06)	39.7 (4.62)	28.0 (5.73)	34.3 (6.04)	39.0 (5.79)	37.5 (4.63)	37.2 (7.52)	31.0 (8.85)	35.2 (7.33)	‡
Definitely or probably won't	24.4 (3.71)	31.1 (4.15)	38.5 (6.04)	28.0 (4.24)	29.6 (5.83)	31.1 (5.89)	28.5 (5.35)	32.6 (4.48)	38.3 (7.56)	16.4 (7.08)	39.4 (7.50)	34.0 (8.93)
Complete 4-year college												
Definitely will	25.2 (3.75)	35.2 (4.30)	16.1 (4.53)	26.8 (4.18)	47.2 (6.33)	39.0 (6.23)	38.7 (5.60)	22.6 (3.98)	20.6 (6.16)	42.9 (9.36)	24.8 (6.67)	41.8 (9.41)
Probably will	38.0 (4.19)	34.7 (4.29)	35.9 (5.91)	28.0 (4.24)	32.3 (5.93)	42.2 (6.31)	27.8 (5.15)	30.3 (4.37)	33.6 (7.19)	31.9 (8.82)	21.1 (6.30)	‡
Definitely or probably won't	36.8 (4.16)	30.1 (4.13)	48.0 (6.16)	45.3 (4.70)	20.5 (5.12)	18.8 (4.99)	33.6 (5.43)	47.1 (4.75)	45.8 (7.59)	25.2 (8.21)	54.1 (7.70)	30.1 (8.75)

‡ Responses for items with fewer than 30 respondents are not reported.

<sup>1</sup> Youth who have attained the outcome are included as "definitely will."

<sup>2</sup> LD=learning disability; SLI=speech/language impairment; MR=mental retardation; ED=emotional disturbance; HI=hearing impairment; VI=visual impairment; OI=orthopedic impairment; OHI=other health impairment; AU=autism; TBI=traumatic brain injury; MD=multiple disabilities; DB=deaf-blindness

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

parison with mental retardation, autism, and multiple disabilities;  $p < .01$  for comparison with orthopedic impairments), hearing impairments (92 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons), other health impairments (81 percent;  $p < .01$  for all comparisons other than for comparison with autism, which is not a significant difference), or traumatic

brain injuries (87 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons).

More than 80 percent of those in all disability categories other than autism expect “definitely” to have paid employment. Responses range from 78 percent of those with autism to 97 percent of youth with learning disabilities. Youth with autism are less likely to expect “defi-

nately” to be employed than are those with learning disabilities or speech, hearing, or orthopedic impairments ( $p < .01$  for all comparisons).

Approximately two-thirds (61 percent to 71 percent) of youth in 6 of the 12 disability categories expect to be financially self-supporting, including those with learning disabilities;

Table 19  
Youth With Disabilities’ Reported Expectations for Their Future Independence, by Disability Category

Expectations <sup>1</sup>	Percent/standard error											
	LD <sup>2</sup>	SLI	MR	ED	HI	VI	OI	OHI	AU	TBI	MD	DB
Percentage expected to:												
Get a driver’s license												
Definitely will	86.3 (2.93)	87.2 (2.98)	57.9 (5.89)	81.8 (3.59)	91.5 (3.44)	12.4 (4.15)	57.0 (5.75)	80.7 (3.70)	54.0 (7.44)	86.6 (6.19)	53.1 (7.64)	25.2 (7.84)
Probably will	11.7 (2.74)	11.6 (2.86)	28.2 (5.37)	14.2 (3.25)	7.3 (3.21)	#	24.2 (4.97)	12.7 (3.12)	24.5 (6.42)	8.2 (4.98)	19.4 (6.05)	6.3 (4.39)
Definitely or probably won’t	2.0 (1.19)	1.2 (0.97)	13.9 (4.13)	4.0 (1.82)	1.2 (1.34)	87.6 (4.15)	18.8 (4.54)	6.6 (2.33)	21.5 (6.13)	5.2 (4.03)	27.4 (6.83)	68.6 (8.38)
Get a paid job												
Definitely will	97.1 (1.43)	95.7 (1.82)	86.3 (4.14)	92.9 (2.39)	96.1 (2.38)	92.6 (3.35)	83.8 (4.31)	95.8 (1.90)	77.7 (6.25)	92.5 (4.78)	86.1 (5.23)	82.2 (7.13)
Probably will	2.6 (1.36)	4.3 (1.82)	9.7 (3.56)	5.8 (2.18)	3.1 (2.13)	7.2 (3.31)	11.3 (3.70)	4.2 (1.90)	9.8 (5.98)	6.7 (4.53)	11.2 (4.76)	17.8 (7.13)
Definitely or probably won’t	0.2 (0.38)	#	4.0 (2.36)	1.3 (1.06)	0.8 (1.09)	0.2 (0.57)	4.9 (2.52)	#	2.6 (2.39)	0.8 (1.62)	2.7 (2.45)	#
Be financially self-supporting												
Definitely will	71.3 (3.93)	60.6 (4.48)	37.1 (6.21)	66.2 (4.47)	57.8 (6.46)	68.6 (6.09)	46.8 (6.00)	67.4 (4.59)	34.3 (7.64)	62.2 (9.12)	29.2 (7.61)	40.4 (9.47)
Probably will	25.0 (3.77)	35.8 (4.39)	48.1 (6.42)	28.3 (4.26)	35.5 (6.26)	28.7 (5.93)	36.2 (5.77)	26.9 (4.35)	43.1 (7.97)	35.9 (9.03)	46.0 (8.34)	45.4 (9.61)
Definitely or probably won’t	3.7 (1.64)	3.6 (1.71)	14.8 (4.57)	5.5 (2.16)	6.8 (3.29)	2.7 (2.13)	16.9 (4.50)	5.7 (2.27)	22.5 (6.72)	1.9 (2.57)	24.8 (7.23)	14.1 (6.72)
Live independently without supervision												
Definitely will	76.7 (3.61)	69.2 (4.14)	48.8 (5.91)	78.0 (3.89)	66.9 (5.99)	68.7 (5.91)	57.4 (5.78)	76.0 (4.04)	45.8 (7.57)	75.8 (7.93)	40.8 (7.63)	57.8 (9.21)
Probably will	20.1 (3.43)	24.9 (3.88)	36.7 (5.70)	17.2 (3.55)	22.6 (5.32)	26.9 (5.65)	23.1 (4.93)	18.7 (3.69)	31.9 (7.08)	21.6 (7.62)	35.3 (7.41)	26.8 (8.26)
Definitely or probably won’t	3.2 (1.50)	5.9 (2.11)	14.5 (4.16)	4.7 (1.99)	10.6 (3.92)	4.4 (2.61)	19.5 (4.63)	5.4 (2.14)	22.3 (6.33)	2.6 (2.94)	23.9 (6.62)	15.4 (6.73)

<sup>1</sup> Youth who have attained the outcome are included as “definitely will.”

<sup>2</sup> LD=learning disability; SLI=speech/language impairment; MR=mental retardation; ED=emotional disturbance; HI=hearing impairment; VI=visual impairment; OI=orthopedic impairment; OHI=other health impairment; AU=autism; TBI=traumatic brain injury; MD=multiple disabilities;DB=deaf-blindness

# Rounds to zero.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 2 youth telephone interview/mail survey, 2003.

emotional disturbances; speech/language, visual, or other health impairments; or traumatic brain injuries. Youth in all of these disability categories are significantly more likely to expect to support themselves than are those with mental retardation (37 percent), autism (34 percent), or multiple disabilities (29 percent).<sup>10</sup> Youth in these six disability categories also are more likely to expect to live independently in the future (69 percent to 77 percent expect to do so) than are those with mental retardation (49 percent), autism (46 percent), or multiple disabilities (41 percent).<sup>11</sup> Youth with orthopedic impairments are less likely “definitely” to expect to support themselves (47 percent) or to live independently (57 percent) than are those with learning disabilities ( $p < .001$  for self-supporting comparison,  $p < .01$  for living independently comparison), emotional disturbances ( $p < .01$  for both comparisons), or other health impairments ( $p < .01$  for both comparisons). Youth with deaf-blindness are less likely than those with learning disabilities to expect to be financially self-supporting ( $p < .01$ ).

## Summary

This chapter describes youth’s expectations for attaining certain educational and independence outcomes. Most youth expect they will graduate from high school, with a regular diploma. Approximately half expect they will attend school after high school and one-quarter to one-third expect they will graduate from one of three types of postsecondary schools. Youth with disabilities are less positive than their peers in the general population about postsecondary education attendance and completion.

The majority of youth with disabilities expect they will get a paid job, but they are less certain that these jobs will pay enough for them to be financially

self-sufficient. Most youth think they “definitely” or “probably” will live independently in the future. Among youth who think they will not be able to live independently without supervision, half do not expect to live away from home with supervision.

Expectations are related in that youth who hold higher expectations in one domain tend to hold higher expectations in other domains. Further, youth tend to hold higher expectations for themselves than their parents held for them 2 years earlier. Despite these differences, parents’ and youth’s expectations are related to each other in that youth who hold higher expectations tend to have parents who hold higher expectations for them.

There are differences in expectations regarding the future educational attainment and independence of youth in different disability categories. Youth with hearing or visual impairments or traumatic brain injuries tend to hold higher expectations related to postsecondary education than do those with mental retardation or multiple disabilities. Youth with learning disabilities; emotional disturbances; speech/language, visual, or other health impairments; or traumatic brain injuries are more likely to expect to be financially self-supporting and to live independently without supervision than are those with mental retardation, autism, or multiple disabilities. No differences in expectations are significantly related to gender, age, household income, and race/ethnicity.

The longitudinal design of NLTS2 permits the monitoring of progress of youth with disabilities in their future pursuits, as well as an assessment of the extent to which the expectations examined here are realized in the years following high school.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Readers are reminded that findings are national estimates for a subsample of youth with disabilities who could report their own perceptions and expectations, not a sample of all youth with disabilities in the NLTS2 age range. See chapter 1 for further details on the group that is the focus of this report.
- 2 When youth were interviewed, those who already had achieved an outcome were not asked the expectation item related to that outcome. For example, those who already completed secondary school were not asked whether they expected to graduate from high school. Throughout this chapter, youth who already have

attained an outcome are included as “definitely will” attain that outcome. If those who had attained an outcome were excluded from the analyses, findings would not be representative of the range of youth included in the NLTS2 report sample.

- 3 General education statistics related to graduation from high school are from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES) 1993 youth survey, responses for youth ages 15 through 19. The NHES item somewhat differs from the NLTS2 item. The NHES item asks youth, “Do you think you will graduate from high school?” with “yes/no” responses. The NLTS2 item asks, “How likely do you think it is that you will graduate from high school and get a regular high school diploma?” with response categories of “definitely will,” “probably will,” “probably won’t,” or “definitely won’t.” For comparison with general population, NLTS2 responses of “definitely will” and “probably will” are combined for comparison with NHES “yes” responses.
- 4 General education statistics related to postsecondary education are from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES) 1999 youth survey, responses for youth ages 15 through 19. NHES and NLTS2 postsecondary education expectations items have similar wordings, but the response categories differ. NHES items have “yes/no” response categories, and NLTS2 items have response categories of “definitely will,” “probably will,” “probably won’t,” and “definitely won’t.” For comparison with general population, NLTS2 responses of “definitely will” and “probably will” are combined for comparison with NHES “yes” responses.
- 5 Expectations related to the likelihood that youth will live away from home with supervision are not included in these analyses because only a subset of respondents were asked this item.
- 6 NLTS2 Wave 1 2002 parent ex-

pectations reported in this chapter include only parent responses for the subset of youth with disabilities included in this report. Note that the 2-year difference between recording parents’ and youth’s expectations may result in differences in expectations, apart from the differences between parents and youth themselves.

- 7 All relationships are significant at the  $p < .01$  or  $p < .001$  level.
- 8 Expectations related to the likelihood that youth will live away from home with supervision are not included in these analyses because only a subset of respondents were asked this item.
- 9 Comparisons of youth with visual impairments’ expectations to “definitely” get a driver’s license with those of youth with learning disabilities (86 percent,  $p < .001$ ), speech/language impairments (87 percent,  $p < .001$ ), mental retardation (58 percent,  $p < .001$ ), emotional disturbances (82 percent,  $p < .001$ ), hearing impairments (92 percent,  $p < .001$ ), orthopedic impairments (57 percent,  $p < .001$ ), other health impairments (81 percent,  $p < .001$ ), autism (54 percent,  $p < .001$ ), traumatic brain injuries (87 percent,  $p < .001$ ), multiple disabilities (53 percent,  $p < .001$ ). Comparisons of expectations to “definitely” get a driver’s license of youth with deaf-blindness with those of youth with learning disabilities ( $p < .001$ ), speech/language impairments ( $p < .001$ ), mental retardation ( $p < .001$ ), emotional disturbances ( $p < .001$ ), hearing impairments ( $p < .001$ ), orthopedic impairments ( $p < .01$ ), other health impairments ( $p < .001$ ), autism ( $p < .01$ ), traumatic brain injuries ( $p < .001$ ).