Jenny is 5 years old and lives with her parents and older brother. Her parents noticed that her verbal skills were not progressing as a preschooler and that she did not play with other children, so they took her to see a developmental pediatrician. A diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was made, and her parents found a preschool program that provided extra supports for children with autism. They have decided to enroll her in kindergarten in the public education system this coming fall, as they have heard there is an autism team within the school system.

How can we as occupational therapists use and build upon the current evidence about the transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities in the next 15 years so Jenny will be able to achieve her desired outcomes as a young adult? What needs to happen within systems and services between now and then to meet Jenny’s needs for a smooth, successful transition to adult life? The evidence presented in this book provides a starting point to identify what is already known (and can be built upon) and what is not known. This information should give occupational therapists and other professionals working with children and youth with disabilities some directions for the future.

What Do We Know?

Every transition journey is unique and clinicians, therefore, need to address each person’s journey in an individualized and client-centered manner. Although each individual is unique, evidence indicates that many of the issues and challenges facing youth with any type of disability are similar. For example, all youth with disabilities have poorer adult outcomes than those without disabilities in the domains of employment, post-secondary education, living arrangements, and...