

FAST TRACK

FAST TRACK is a set of activities designed for youth with special needs. The purpose is to provide youth some basic information and strategies in the areas critical to making the transition to adulthood. The goal is to help youth have a satisfying journey on the highway of life. To make the trip successful requires youth to:

1. Get Ready for the Journey—Make a Systematic Plan

- Learn how to use PAR—Participatory Action Research
- Set destination goals—Vocation Planning
- Develop a plan for reaching destination
- Follow your map—Monitor progress toward reaching destination
 - Role Play—Job interview
 - Select PAR Goal

2. Manage the Destination

- Money Management
- Living Arrangements/Housing
- Transportation
 - Role Play—Applying for housing with credit check
 - Select PAR Goal

3. Keep the “Machine” in Good Working Order

- What you need to know about your body and how to keep it healthy
- Medical check-ups
- Emergency plan
- Insurance information
 - Role Play—Doctor appointment and visit
 - Select PAR Goal

4. Get Along with People You Bump into on the Road

- Positive Moods Have Positive Effects
- Optimists Live Longer and Better Lives
- Read People’s “Road Signs”—Nonverbal behavior
- Be a Good Communicator
- Everybody Enjoys Humor
 - Role Play—Different affects/emotions
 - Select PAR Goal

5. Write Resumes, Practice Job Interviews, and Research Job Accommodations



GETTING ON THE *FAST TRACK*

POP QUIZ

Every person gets **ONE**.^{*} One what ...?

Life is...?

- ◆ A Highway
- ◆ A Bowl of Cherries
- ◆ Wonderful
- ◆ ???

At what age do children take control of their lives? ^{**}

- ◆ 2 years
- ◆ 12 years
- ◆ 18 years
- ◆ 25 years
- ◆ ???

What does it mean to be an “adult”?

^{*}One life

^{**} Children slowly acquire the skills they will need to be independent and take care of themselves. The opportunity to practice these skills may be affected by a physical, health, or cognitive condition.

Get Ready for the Journey—Make a Systematic Plan

In *FAST TRACK* we use the *scientific process* on every step of our journey—to make decisions, to develop a road map, to understand the people we meet along the way, to monitor health, to make housing arrangements, and to budget money. Using the scientific process helps to keep us on track and avoid wrong turns and detours. Let's get this show on the road!

POP QUIZ

WHO IS A SCIENTIST?

- ◆ Leonardo da Vinci
- ◆ You
- ◆ Albert Einstein
- ◆ All of the Above
- ◆ None of the Above

POP QUIZ ANSWER

All of the Above



Get Ready for the Journey—Make a Systematic Plan

As you begin your adult life journey, you need to plan what you want to do in the future. What do you want to be when you get older? What do you have to do to get there? Of course, many people change their minds about what they want to do several times throughout their lives. But you have to start somewhere, and the sooner the better.

In this unit, you will set vocational goals, figure out the adaptations you might need to achieve your goals, and learn to use the scientific method to monitor your progress in meeting your goals.

In this unit you will use the scientific process to:

1. Learn how to set goals and monitor progress.
2. Evaluate the results of the Vocational Interest Survey.
3. Examine the Transition Youth Interest Survey.

Group Rules- What Participants Need to Know!

1. Be open to new backgrounds, ideas, races and religions.
2. Don't be afraid to express yourself.
3. Take time to get to know people; this will make it easier to talk about personal issues.
4. Be willing to try new things; volunteer to go places.
5. Don't be argumentative; share your views and accept other views or keep quiet.
6. Don't sign up unless you're willing to participate.
7. Be ready and willing to keep track of data.
8. Be ready to work.
9. Give everyone a chance to talk.
10. Set a rule on how long a person can talk.
11. Don't come in angry; leave your problems at the door, unless you think the group can help you.
12. Be willing to exchange e-mails.
13. Get to know others; take advantage of opportunity to make new friends.
14. HAVE FUN!

Confidentiality and Legal Protections

You should feel confident in knowing that any information, topics, discussions within the group stay within the group. As a participant you should feel comfortable in discussing any topic. As scientists we must protect the identity and rights of anyone who participates in our studies. It is the law.



The Scientific Method in Every Day Lives

In important ways, everyone is a scientist, including you. What does this mean? Suppose you need some extra cash to pay for something you really want. What do you do? Here is how you might use the scientific process.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- How do I get the money I need to buy a car?

2. WHAT IS KNOWN AND NOT KNOWN ABOUT THE PROBLEM

Known

- A used car will cost less than a new car.
- A new car is generally safer.
- I have \$1,000 saved for a down payment.
- I can get financing through the credit union, but I need to show my income.

Not Known

- How much will insurance cost?
- How much will gas and maintenance cost?
- Will my parents co-sign on a loan?

3. HYPOTHESIS

- *If* I can manage my money wisely to afford the costs of financing a car, insurance, and maintenance; *then* I can buy a car.

4. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Strategy: Determine the total costs so that I can prepare a budget for all costs associated with purchasing and maintaining a car.

- Estimate new/used car costs by looking in newspaper and/or on the web. Yes No
 - Call insurance companies. Yes No
 - Check gas costs and estimate miles to be driven. Yes No
 - Estimate maintenance costs. Yes No
 - Chart income. Yes No
- TOTAL Yes No

5. MEASURES

- Put all the numbers together in a chart to weigh income versus expenses.

6. INTERPRETATION

- I can get a used car.
- I need to find a car costing between \$3,000—\$4,000.
- I will need to have my mom or dad co-sign at the bank.
- Maybe I need to save my money for awhile.

FAST TRACK PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

In *FAST TRACK* we use the scientific process to solve everyday problems and issues that you may confront as you make important decisions about your life journey.

What we do is called **PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)**. In PAR the consumers of research are involved in every step of the scientific process. This includes selecting the problem or issue, finding out what is known and not known, developing a strategy for addressing the problem, collecting the data, and evaluating the results.

In the following sessions, you will select destinations (goals) in health care, education and/or jobs, social life, and living arrangements.

PAR STEPS WITH EXAMPLES

1. SELECT A DESTINATION/GOAL.

- Vocation
 - Figure out if I have the skills to do what I love to do.
- Health
 - Lose Weight.
- Social
 - Make Friends.
- Living
 - Manage my own money.

2. FIND OUT WHAT IS KNOWN AND NOT KNOWN ABOUT THIS DESTINATION/GOAL.

- Share experiences with others and identify sources of information.
 - Interview/volunteer to work with people who have that job.
- Check these sources.
 - Check web sites for good diets.
 - Join local organizations.
 - Learn about on-line banking.

3. STATE GOAL IN A TESTABLE FORMAT –STATE THE HYPOTHESIS.

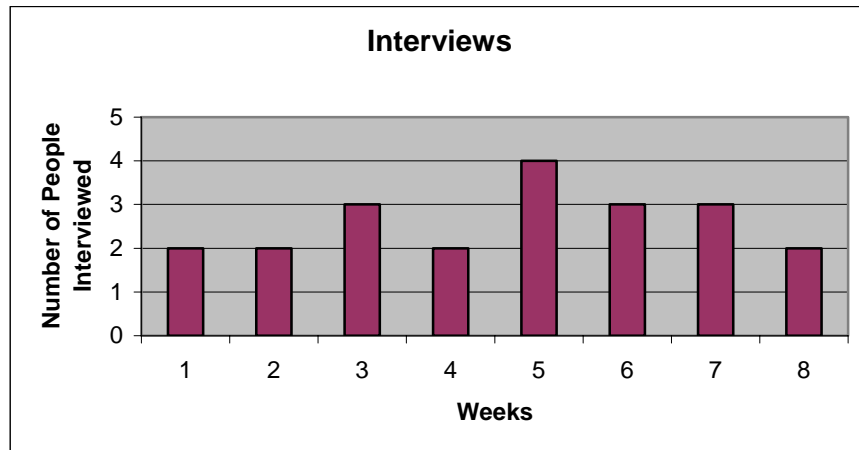
- Take the information you have gathered and state your goal in a testable format.
- “If I do Then will happen”
 - If I interview people then...
 - If I count calories then...
 - If I join the YMCA then...
 - If I do on-line banking then...

4. DEVELOP A TRAVEL PLAN.

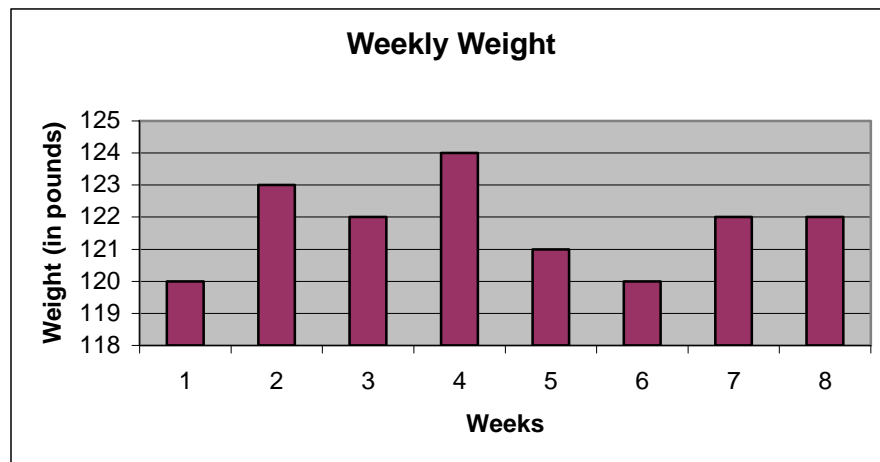
- Select a strategy that will help you test your hypothesis and reach your goal.
- Devise a method for charting your progress in reaching your goal.
 - I will interview 5 people about ...
 - I will plan a menu for the week that...
 - I will attend XX activities at the YMCA and
 - I will reconcile my bank account every....

5. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS TOWARD YOUR DESTINATION.

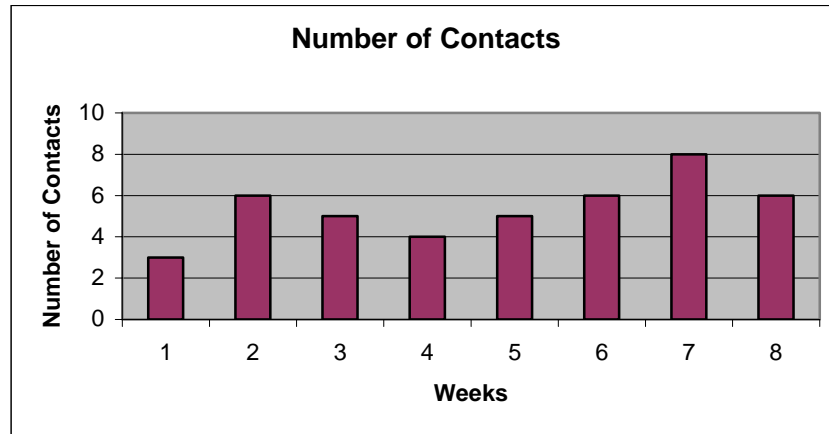
- Use a check list, or record time or amount, and graph as you go.
- MEASURE! MEASURE! MEASURE!
- Measure your progress so you will know if you are on track.
 - Analyze responses to interview.



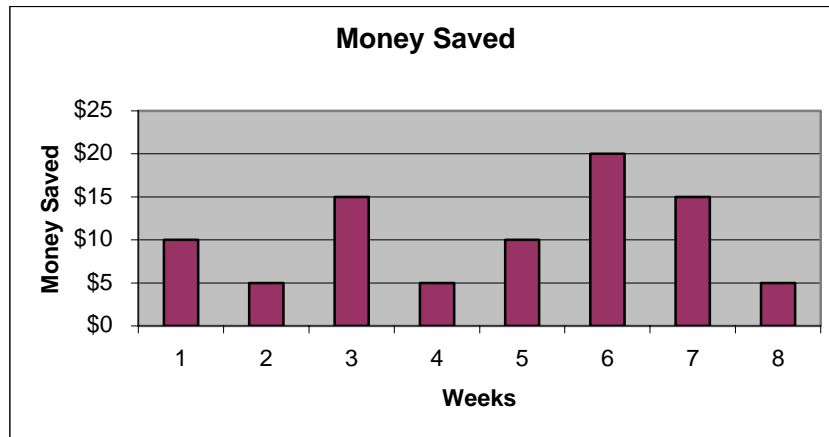
- Measure weight daily/weekly.



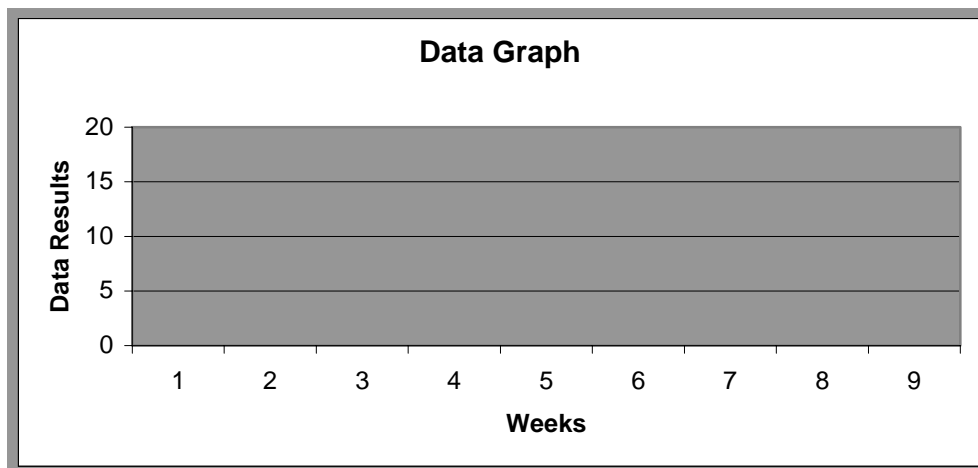
- Count the number of people I talk to, make dates with, or telephone.



- Keep track of money saved.



6. HIT THE ROAD—AND RECORD THE DATA.





7. ANALYZE YOUR DATA—DID YOU REACH YOUR DESTINATION?

- If your data show you are not making progress, change your strategy and start again.
- If your data show you have reached your destination, move on to another goal!

8. SHARE THE FINDINGS SO OTHERS CAN USE YOUR MAP.

- There are many ways you can let others know “what works.”
- Volunteer to work with other youth.
- Make presentations at local and state agencies who are responsible for people with special needs.

Practice Examples

- **Education/Vocation**

Mary wants to attend college, but she doesn't know anything about how much it costs or how she could get money to pay for school. What does she need to do? How could she use PAR to achieve her goal?

- **Health**

Jack has to take many medications to control his epilepsy. He believes he is old enough to manage his medications rather than his parents. He wants to take control of this part of his life. What should he do? How can he use PAR to help achieve his goal?

Joyce has a physical disability. It is important that she exercise regularly, but she avoids getting started. What do you suggest she do? How can she use PAR to achieve her goal?

- **Social**

Bill wants to make more friends. He recently enrolled in a community college. What should he do? How can he use PAR to achieve his goal?

Jim is a young man who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. He is a good student who attends community college, but he is having problems at home. His parents are afraid to let him do the things he wants to do with his life. The family has arguments all the time and he gets pretty discouraged. What should he do? How can he use PAR to help him solve his problem?

- **Living**

Perry is a young man with spina bifida. He believes he is ready to move into his own apartment. What does he need to do? How can he use PAR to help achieve his goal?

Jane is a young woman with cerebral palsy. She wants to take a vacation but is concerned about accessibility. How can she use PAR to help her achieve her goal?