



Lionsgate Academy

Post-School Study

Introduction

Lionsgate Academy is a *transition-focused*, personalized learning program. Because we are transition-focused, we promote life-long learning, finding satisfying careers, and living as independently as possible. In the spring of 2020, we reached out to alumni and asked them questions about post-secondary schooling, vocational activities, and their living situations. This report provides details about a survey completed by former students (or family members); it is the beginning of many activities designed to stay in closer touch with our graduates and to include them more in activities on our campuses.

When seeking a comparison group, we used data from the National Longitudinal Transition Studies-2 (NLTS2). The NLTS2 began as the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and has been funded by the US Department of Education for over 35 years. The NLTS surveyed or interviewed thousands of students, their families, and their teachers to see how high school prepared them for young adulthood. Participants had IEPs while in school and represented the 13 categories of disabilities used to determine eligibility for special education services. The questions asked by researchers addressed topics that included, among others:

- Access to Services
- Community and Social Participation
- Education
- Employment
- Health and Mental Health
- Living Arrangements
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Safety and Risk

In seeking a comparison group, Lionsgate selected one of 5 studies published by the Drexel (University) Autism Institute that used data about students with ASD from the NLTS2 (and other sources). The five comprehensive documents that make up the *National Autism Indicators Reports* are:

1. Transition Into Young Adulthood
2. High School Students on the Autism Spectrum
3. Developmental Disability Services and Outcomes in Adulthood
4. Vocational Rehabilitation
5. Children on the Autism Spectrum and Family Financial Hardship

Lionsgate drew data from the first report, Transition into Young Adulthood (2015) to compare outcomes on three measures:

- Employment
- Post-Secondary Education
- Living Arrangements

This report compares our findings from the Lionsgate Academy Post-School Survey with the data and research questions from the Drexel *Transition into Young Adulthood* report.

Note: There are a number of limitations to our study. The first is that the data from the 2015 Transition study are 10 years old. We would hope that over the past 10 years that outcomes for young adults with autism would improve. Since its founding, Lionsgate has relied on a state-mandated lottery system to admit new students. The large proportion of white students is much greater than the national study. Although the demographics of the state of MN are closer to those at Lionsgate, the influence of race on the outcomes reported is not measured and is a limitation to the report. Lionsgate is taking active steps to broaden its accessibility and increase the diversity of the student body.

Overview

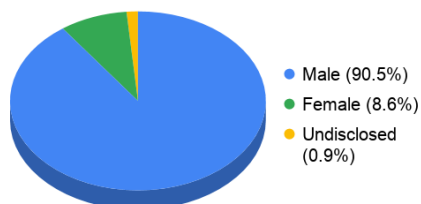
of Lionsgate Academy Post-School Survey

Demographics

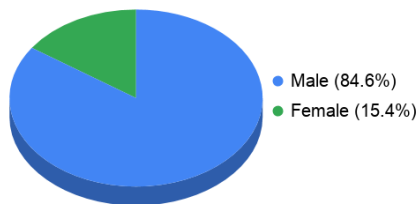
Lionsgate Academy Graduates vs. NLTS2 Participants

Gender

GENDER (Lionsgate Academy)

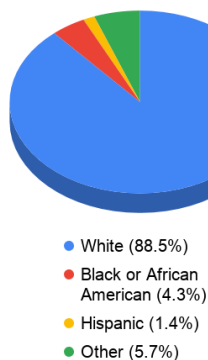


GENDER (NLTS2 Participants)

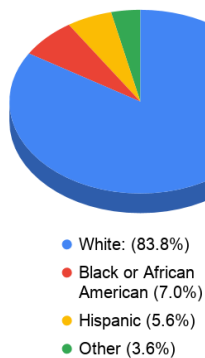


Race/Ethnicity

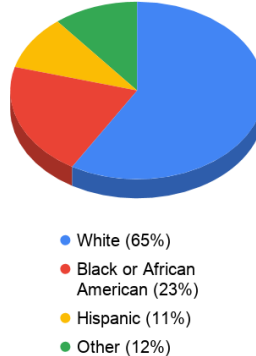
RACE/ETHNICITY
(Lionsgate Academy)



RACE/ETHNICITY
(State of Minnesota Total Population)



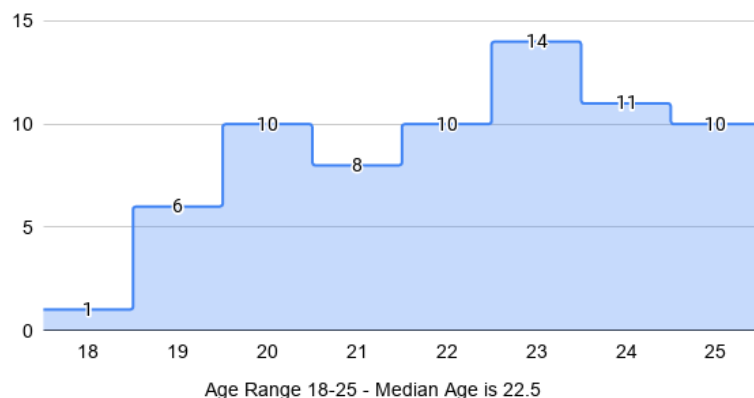
RACE/ETHNICITY
(NLTS2 Participants)



Age

Ages of Lionsgate Academy Graduates*

*graduates who responded to the survey



Did you know?

Lionsgate Academy is a public charter school founded in 2008 by parents of secondary students on the autism spectrum. Since its initial enrollment of 61 students, Lionsgate has grown to 3 school locations in the Twin Cities area with 3 types of programming and as of the fall of 2020 has 340 students in grades 7 through 12 (which includes a transition program for students between the ages of 18 to 21 and a high needs program).

As a public charter school, Lionsgate is open to all students with or without disability. However, with a mission to serve students on the autism spectrum, the percentage of students receiving special education services has consistently remained above 90%, often hovering at or about 95%.

After the initial start of the school, Lionsgate's popularity among families as a charter school of choice was evidenced by a history of waiting lists of over 200 families. The current students hail from 11 counties and 48 independent school districts.

The first graduating class from Lionsgate Academy was in 2011 with 11 students graduating. Now, 10 years later, the class of 2021 will have 38 graduating students.

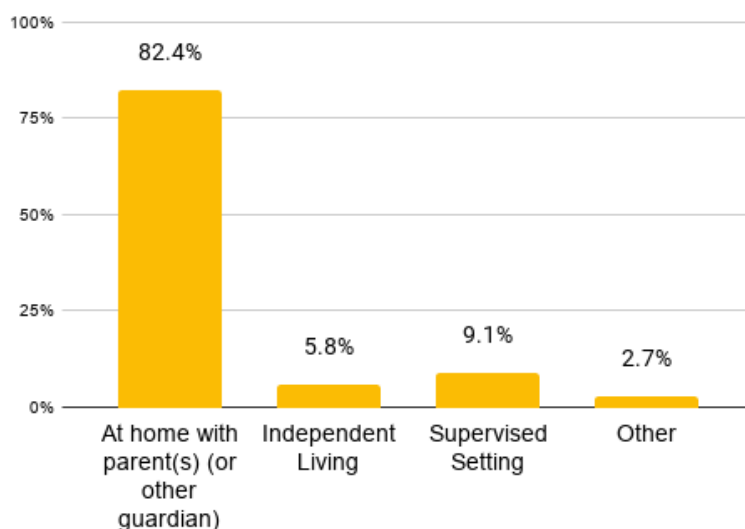
Since 2011, 138 students have received a diploma from Lionsgate Academy. Of that number, 103 attended at least one year of Lionsgate's transition program: Achieving Independence and Maturity (AIM).

Living Arrangements of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum

After leaving high school, some young adults will first experience independent living. Some will move away from their parent's home and into a college dorm with a roommate or on their own. Data from the NLTS2 indicates that the majority of young adults on the autism spectrum, however, continue to live with a parent or guardian in the first years after high school.

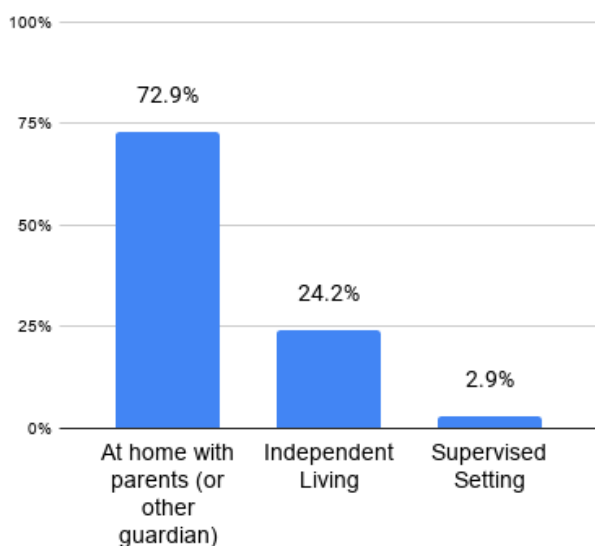
National data shows that 21% of all young adults lived at home with a parent during their early 20's, 82% of young adults on the autism spectrum lived with a parent at some time since leaving high school. Few lived in supervised settings (group homes, correctional facilities, medical facilities and others) or independently (on their own, with a spouse or roommate or college housing).

Living Arrangements of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum (National)



Lionsgate Academy graduates live independently more than the national average of young adults on the autism spectrum.

Living Arrangements of Lionsgate Academy Graduates



The Lionsgate Academy Post-School Survey shows that currently, 72.9% of Lionsgate alumni live at home with a parent or guardian. 24.2% live independently; on their own, with a roommate or in a college dorm. 2.9% reside in a supervised setting.

Autism does not end when children reach adulthood. Most will continue to need some type of services or supports. When special education services end, many do not qualify for adult services. Families often refer to this as "falling off a cliff" — referring to the dramatic decline in access to services during the transition to adulthood.

[New graduates] are past some of the bumps of adolescence but are not yet mature adults. Some call this emerging adulthood — a period filled with changes and increased demands for youth to function on their own and advocate for their own needs.

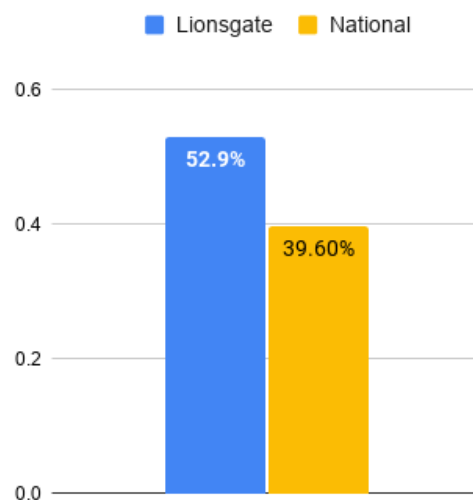
Post-secondary Education of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum

People in the U.S. who continue their education beyond high school generally can expect to earn more, be healthier and live longer lives. According to data gathered by the A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, 75% of youth in the general population attend some type of post-secondary education in the first years after high school and about 65% of high school graduates enroll in college.

Yet, approximately one-third of young adults on the autism spectrum went on to attend any kind of post-secondary education during their early 20's. Post-secondary education is referring to any vocational/technical school, 2-year or community college, or a 4-year college or university.

According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2, 39.6% of young adults with autism ever attended any type of post-secondary education. Of those, the majority attended 2-year colleges. For some, the 2-year college was used as a stepping stone to a 4-year college. For others, it was their sole college experience.

Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum that ever attended Post-Secondary Education

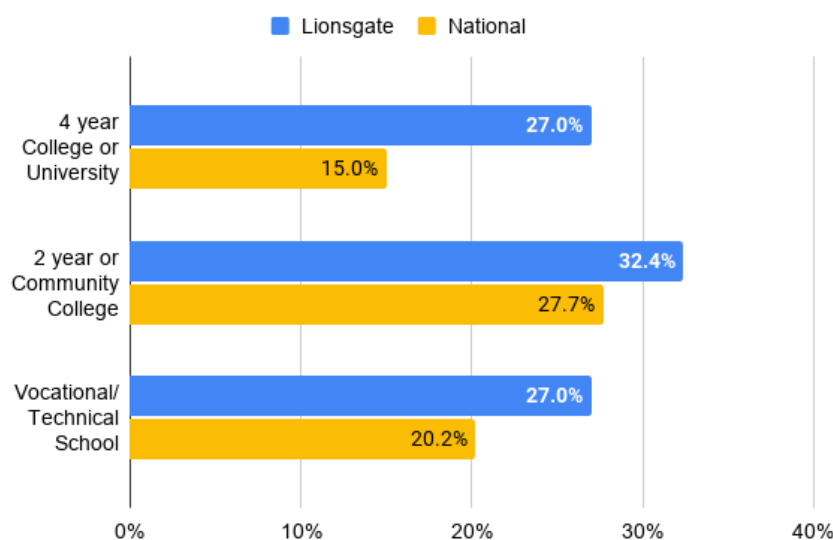


13.3% more Lionsgate Academy alumni ever attended post-secondary education than the national average of young adults on the autism spectrum.

Lionsgate Academy alumni place higher than the national average with having 52.9% to ever attend post-secondary education. Of those that attended post-secondary education, 27% attended a 4-year college or university and 59.4% attended a 2-year community college or a vocational/technical school.

Post-secondary education is a critical pathway to employment, and some with autism do go on to attend college or vocational/technical schools. Yet, compared to high school, there is a much smaller range of supports and services available to adults with autism in post-secondary school settings. Eligibility for many services requires students to formally document their status as having a disability.

Post-Secondary Education Ever Attended by Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum*



*Comparison includes ONLY 4-year, 2-year, and Vocational Schools Attended

Employment Outcomes

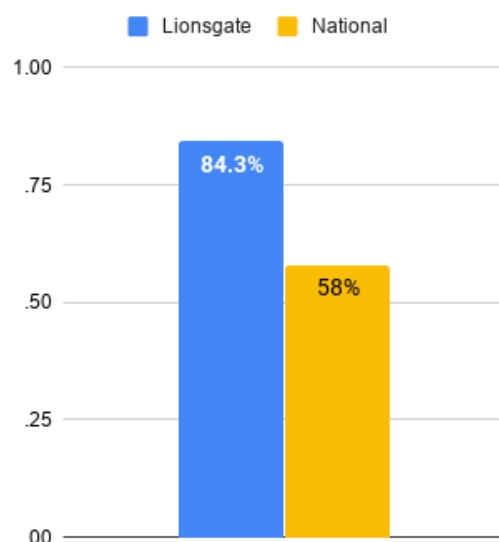
of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum

Employment provides a key link between financial independence, health insurance, benefits and social relationships. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that nearly 99% of young adults in the U.S. will work at some point in their early 20s.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) (2009) data shows that employment is the primary transition goal of students with disabilities as they prepare to exit high school. There are 50,000 students on the autism spectrum that leave high school every year and they are hoping to find jobs.

The National data shows that 58% of young adults on the autism spectrum ever worked between high school and their early 20s. Of those who worked, the average number of jobs was 3. Nearly 80% worked part-time and earned an average of \$9.11 per hour. Full-time workers earned an average of \$8.08 per hour (this wage has been adjusted for inflation on the graph below).

Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum that Ever Worked for Pay

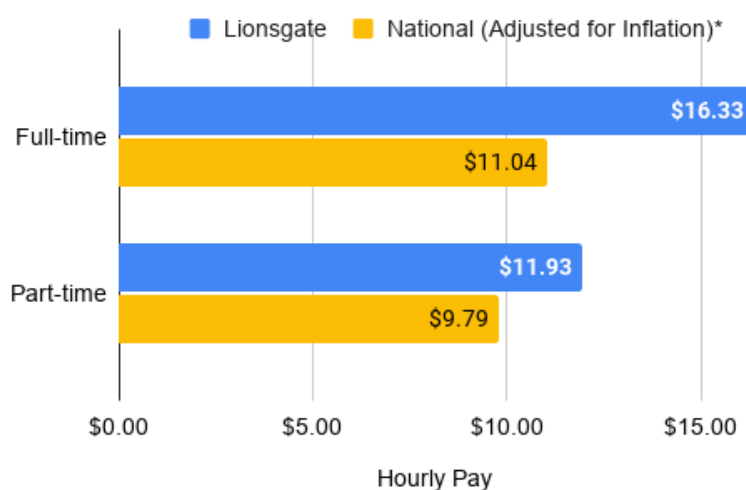


84.3% of Lionsgate Academy alumni, compared to 58% nationally of young adults on the autism spectrum, ever worked for pay.

The Lionsgate Academy Post-School Survey shows that 84.3% of Lionsgate graduates have worked for pay post school. Of those, the average number of jobs is 2.3 and 47.5% were full-time. Full-time workers earned an average of \$16.33 per hour. Part-time workers earned an average of \$11.93 per hour.

Employment is often the primary transition goal of students with disabilities as they prepare to exit high school. Getting a job is about much more than earning a paycheck. It's a rite of passage. It's about assuming an adult role in society, gaining self-confidence, establishing independence and taking those first steps toward pursuing a career.

Average Hourly Wages for Full and Part-time Employment of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum



*<https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation>

Additional Information

Methodology and Sources

Methodology

The purpose of our study is to determine how Lionsgate students are faring in regard to their living situation, their employment status and their post-secondary education when compared to the indicators reported in the National Autism Indicators Report. Beginning in the spring of 2020, Lionsgate developed a series of questions to elicit responses that could be directly compared to the study. Students were organized by graduating class and the most recent parent contact information was used to reach out to families. Where possible, contact information directly from the students was gathered.

Since 2011, 185 students have been through 12th grade at Lionsgate Academy. These students or their parents were contacted to complete a survey (either online or by phone). The survey posed many different questions including: age, gender, race/ethnicity, post-school programming, and employment. There were 127 responses to the survey. Of those, 28 attended a different transition program, three had unenrolled from Lionsgate before receiving a diploma, and 15 were still in the AIM program at the time of the survey. For this study, we decided to use Lionsgate alumni who graduated after 12th grade or after completing the AIM program and were between the ages of 18 and 25 (similar to the NLTS2). That criteria eliminated another 11 responses from the data set. This left us with 70 responses--what we believe is an accurate representation of our alumni.

As noted above, there are no recent studies that provide up-to-date information regarding how students on the autism spectrum fare after high school and using data as old as NLTS2 is problematic. That being said, we expect to uncover other data that will help support our current students to make their transitions be even more successful.

Sources

CPI Inflation Calculator (2020, September 11). <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation>

National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (2009). *NLTS2 data tables*. Available at: <http://www.nlts2.org>

Roux, Anne M., Shattuck, Paul T., Rast, Jessica E., Rava, Julianna A., and Anderson, Kristy, A. (2015) *National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood*. Philadelphia, PA: Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University. <https://rb.gy/1srbs0>

U.S. Census Bureau. *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for Minnesota data table: 2019*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-detail.html>