



DEVELOPING THE TRANSITION PLAN

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- ✓ Transition Meeting
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Now let's look at developing the transition plan as part of a student's IEP. We'll look at when a transition timeline should be developed, who is to be involved in planning, what the purposes of the meeting are, seven "steps" to help us through the transition process, and the key requirements for the transition IEP.

PURPOSE OF THE TRANSITION IEP PLANNING MEETING

The purposes of the meeting should be to:

- determine the needs of the student,
- target the services available to meet identified needs,
- develop a formal transition plan,
- monitor the progress of the student, and
- provide information and training for parents about the transition process.

PREPARING FOR TRANSITION PLANNING

It is unlikely that anyone is more concerned about your daughter's future than you are. As you learn about her disability and become better aware of the impact it would have on her life and yours, you may have avoided thinking about her adult years. Transition planning will help you, may even force you, to think about the future and the inevitable changes that lay ahead.

The law defines several of the key phrases found in transition planning. "Transition services" is defined as a coordinated set of activities for a student that is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities." It also says that "the coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests and shall include instruction, community experiences, employment development, related services, and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. Post-school activities include: post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing adult education, adult services, and independent living.

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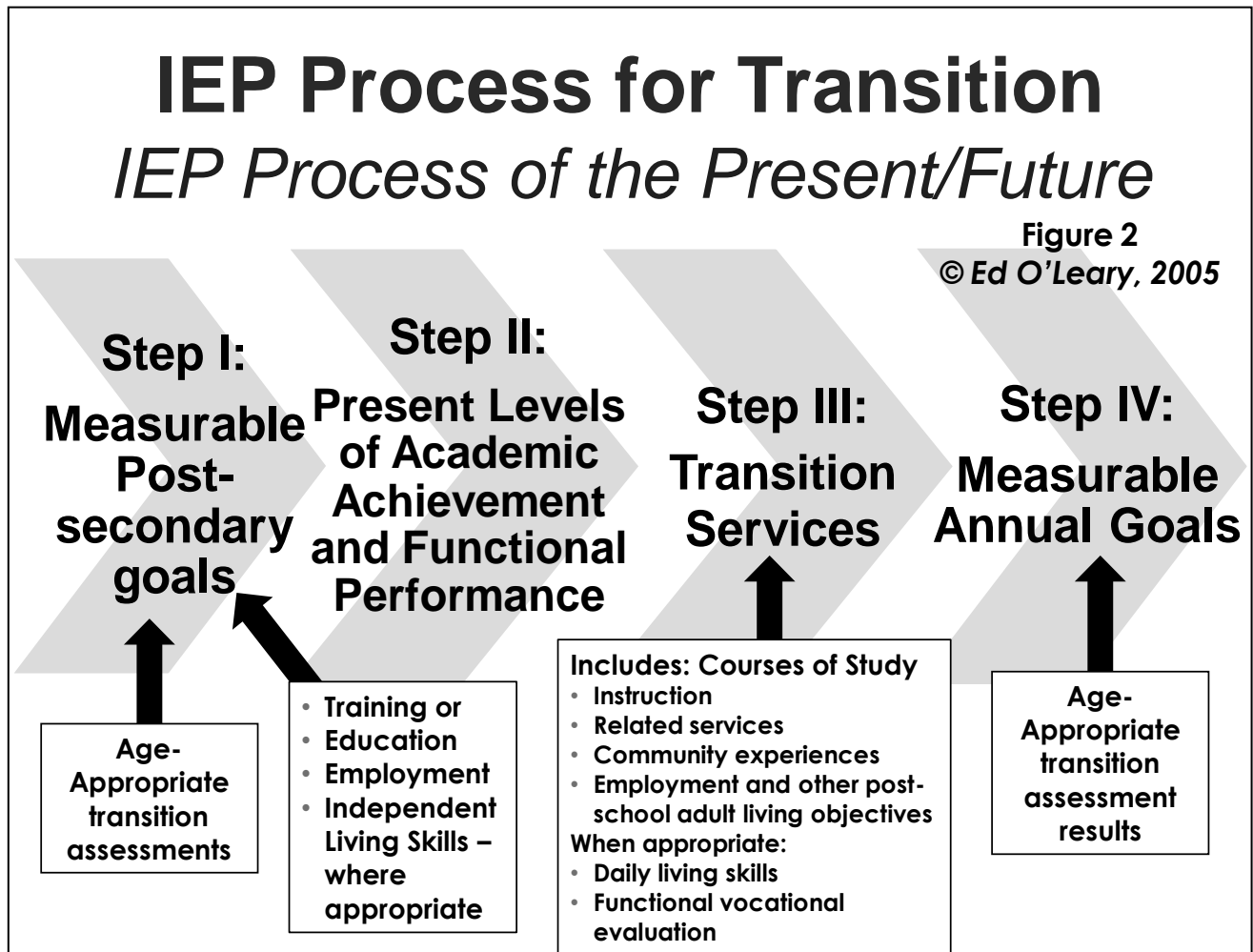
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SEVEN STEPS TO TRANSITION

The better prepared you and your son or daughter are before the IEP meeting, the more efficient and effective the process will be. Steps 1-7 below will prepare you for a successful IEP meeting and for successful transition outcomes. Have in mind a long-range vision for the student.

“The IEP team needs to take a longitudinal view of where the student would like to end up, and then build an IEP that will help them get there. This process, perspective, and futures planning will make the IEP a more useful, meaningful, and dynamic tool to help insure the student’s post-school success and transition into the adult world.” - Ed O’Leary



Begin with the End in Mind!!!

Having a long-range vision for what the outcomes should be can help us to do better planning. If we're not sure what the vision is, the following steps can help!

1. Identify the environments and planning areas important to the young adult from this list: education/training, community involvement, health, life skills, social: relationships/friends, living arrangements, self-determination, recreation/leisure, employment – including “soft skills”, communication, and other.
2. Identify the skills needed for your son or daughter to succeed in each targeted planning area. Identify the student's current skills for each area. Compare the current skills with the skill demands of each area.
3. Prioritize needs, interests, and preferences to be considered in the IEP. Have the student list his or her preferences, interests, and needs. Have the parent/family list priorities based on family values, plans, concerns, and student needs. Teachers and other professionals should also list priorities based on school requirements, assessments, observations, and experiences with the student. Identify potential resources, programs, services, and support options. Consider sharing the lists with other team members prior to the meeting.
4. Prepare for the IEP meeting. You will need to identify any team meeting participants you would like to invite. They should then be invited. Parents must be invited to the IEP transition meeting at a mutually agreeable time and place. Parents and students must be informed of the purpose, time, and location of the meeting and be told who will attend. If the student does not attend the meeting, steps must be taken to consider the student's preferences and interests. If the student is going to conduct the IEP meeting, the student should prepare the agenda and practice. If parents do not attend the meeting, steps must be taken to ensure participation. Parents can help their students prepare to actively participate in meetings. (Refer to page 24 on team members. Also see page 28 for more information on helping students participate.)
5. Develop the transition plan during the IEP meeting. You will need to: keep the long-range vision of the student's life clearly in front; select priority outcomes; write a list of needed transition services; write a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals; write short-term objectives to measure progress toward the goals for students who take alternate assessments, identify supports (who will help with what); identify linkages (how different agencies need to work together to provide “seamless service”); write down the date by which each objective needs to be completed (timeline) and by whom (responsibilities); and confirm with team members that they understand their responsibilities.
6. Implement (start working on) and monitor the IEP. You will need to: provide the services and implement the program; collect information on the student's progress toward measurable annual goals and short-term objectives; communicate with all IEP team members; identify other strategies for meeting annual goals (and short-term objectives) or modify them if they are not being met; and meet again as an IEP team if services are not being provided.
7. Watch and record outcomes. You and the transition team should continually watch and record outcomes. Did the student make progress? Reach his goal? The team should: review the IEP at least once per year and revise the plan if necessary. Remember to celebrate successes!

Throughout this entire process, remember that when you have concerns about services or placements being offered or provided to your son or daughter, it is best to express those concerns in terms of the young adult's needs and work together with the team to negotiate the best way to meet those needs. Always seek to resolve concerns at the lowest level possible. If negotiation breaks down, you have a right to several remedies including mediation or a due process hearing. For more information on remedies, please see the handbook “Parents as Partners in the IEP Process” or contact the Utah Parent Center.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN TRANSITION PLANNING? KEY PLAYERS...

You may be asking yourself: “Who is involved in transition planning?” Transition plans are most effective when they are developed by team members who are working together. IDEA requires that the following people be part of the IEP development:



- the student,
- parents – and if desired, the family,
- special education teacher (at least one),
- regular education teacher (at least one) who has knowledge of the student,
- related service providers (if appropriate, speech or occupational therapists, etc.),
- Local Education Agency (LEA) representative, and
- other adult service providers, such as:
 - Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, and
 - Support Coordinator (case managers for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities – DSPD)

As quoted in Utah’s Special Education Rules: “For an IEP team meeting that includes as a purpose of the development of a transition plan:

- The LEA must invite the student with a disability to attend the student’s IEP meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the post-secondary goals for the student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.
- If the student does not attend the IEP meeting, the LEA must take other steps to ensure that the student’s preferences and interests are considered.
- To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a student who is age 18 or older, the LEA must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.”

The following information was also taken from the Utah Special Education Rules: “Beginning not later than one year before the student reaches the age of majority (age 18), the IEP must include a statement that the student and the student’s parents have been informed of the student’s rights under Part B of the IDEA that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority (except for a student with a disability who has been determined incompetent by a court). These rights include:

- An adult student has the right to approve his or her own educational placement and Individualized Education Program (IEP) without help from parents, family, or special advocates.
- An adult student has the right to allow parents, family, or special advocates to help if he/she desires.

“The LEA must provide any notice required by Part B of the IDEA and Utah’s Special Education rules to both the student and the parents. All rights accorded to parents under Part B of the IDEA transfer to the student. These rights will also transfer to students who are incarcerated in an adult or juvenile, State or local correctional institution.”

The student is an important team member whose input is essential in developing an effective transition plan. Your son's preferences, goals, and aspirations are the driving force of the plan. When he has a say in planning his future, he is more likely to be committed to making the plan work. If he is following his dreams, he will be motivated from within to see them become reality.

Because the school is expected to initiate her preparation for transition to work and adult life, the guidance and support of school personnel is essential. It is also necessary to identify who else will participate in the IEP meeting along with them, your daughter, and you. They may include regular education teachers, guidance counselors, vocational educators, social workers, psychologists, etc. If she is capable, your daughter should extend the invitations to participants, in cooperation with school personnel. As a courtesy, additional participants should be announced to all parties prior to the meeting.

Keep in mind how important it is to have a team whose primary desire is to equip your student for a future that is meaningful, satisfying, and as independent as possible. This task requires all members of the team to participate honestly and with total commitment to a positive outcome; there is no room for private agendas or negative feelings.

PEOPLE TO INVITE TO THE TRANSITION IEP MEETING

Fill in the blanks with the names of the appropriate individuals.

Family Members:

Teachers:

Other School Personnel:

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:

Community Agency Representatives (DSPD, Mental Health, Independent Living):

Current or Prospective Employer:

It may also be appropriate to have a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attend. The services provided by Utah's Division of Rehabilitation Services exist to assist eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment. Among their services are: assessment, career guidance, counseling and placement, acquisition of assistive technology and medical or other services if necessary, interpreter and reader services, occupational licenses, tools, etc., and, a variety of training programs. More information about Vocational Rehabilitation services can be obtained from the Utah Parent Center.

When appropriate, representatives of community programs like residential specialists, mental health workers, and support coordinators with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities are included. Any adult agency which has services that link school experiences with realistic employment and independent living opportunities should be encouraged to send a representative. Prospective or current employers may be invited as well.

When you have prioritized her needs from your perspective and invited those who need to attend the IEP meeting to address them, you are ready to map the course for her to move from the school system to adulthood.

HELPING STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE IEP PROCESS

Students who have not participated in their IEP meetings often view the IEP process with fear or mistrust. They may perceive goals as being arbitrarily imposed. Students who participate in the IEP process are more committed to working on the IEP goals.

Steps in preparing a student to participate appropriately in the IEP process:

1. Explain what the process is and obtain a commitment from the student to participate.
2. Describe an IEP meeting and demonstrate how to participate by role playing with the student.
3. Help the student to do a self inventory. Teach the student to plan for the conference just like you do. The student could fill out a simple form that includes important information.

As part of the inventory, have the student list:

- Learning strengths – list as many as possible.
- Learning weaknesses, if there are a lot, help him prioritize and list the most important ones.
- Goals and interests
 - School
 - Non-school
 - Long range (after graduation)
- Learning instructional preferences
 - How do I learn best? (e.g. listening, reading, doing)
 - What kind of group is best for me? (e.g. large, small)
 - What kinds of tests are best for me? (e.g. written, untimed)
 - What kinds of study materials are best for me? (e.g. written, taped)
 - What kinds of aids help me? (e.g. tape recorder, computer, calculator, friend taking notes for me, buddy)
- For a secondary student, as a part of the inventory, you could use a chart (see following example) listing goals she is willing to work on in each class or deficit area.

Class Area	Skills Needed for this Class	Skills I Need to Improve
English	Writing Sentences	Using commas correctly
	Being prepared	Being prepared
Study Skills	Skimming	Outlining
Social Skills	Accepting criticism appropriately	Accepting criticism appropriately

4. Teach the student how to share information from the inventory appropriately. Teaching the SHARE process is one method of helping students who need this skill.

The SHARE Process

- S = Sit up straight
- H = Have a positive attitude
- A = Active listening
- R = Relax
- E = Eye contact

5. Have the student *practice* sharing the material. (If this is done in a classroom situation, the students could do this as a group first and give each other feedback.)
6. Obtain a commitment from the teacher and others attending the IEP to help the student participate actively. Some suggestions for encouraging student participation are:
 - Establish the purpose and goals of the meeting
 - Ask the student relevant questions, such as asking them to talk about:
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Skills he wants to improve
 - Goals for school
 - Career or vocational interests
 - Ways he learns best
 - Types of tests that are best
 - Etc...
 - Listen and attentively take notes.
 - Give the student plenty of time to think and respond. This is crucial.
 - Use the information she provides.
 - Encourage questions and discussion.
 - Summarize the student's goals and plans.
 - Keep eye contact with the student. (Teachers usually tend to look at and talk to the parent, which is discouraging to the student.)
7. Follow up after the IEP. Help the student evaluate his participation.
 - List at least three things he did right.
 - List one or two areas for improvement.

These techniques can be used either in a classroom situation or with an individual student. Research shows that when a student participates in her IEP, she likes it and feels important. The student will bring up most of the real concerns and you can add the rest. The student is usually quite accurate. In addition, the teacher obtains insight into what the student thinks about her studies.

An added benefit of a student participating in the IEP is the building of self-esteem and commitment because the student feels like a partner in the process.

The "Helping Students Participate in the IEP Process" portion is based on notes from a lecture by Candace S. Bos and is used with her permission. For more complete information on this topic, refer to "The Education Planning Strategy" by Anthony K. Van Reusen, Candace S. Bos, Jean B. Schumaker, and Donald D. Deshler.

WHAT MUST BE ON A TRANSITION IEP?

In addition to the contents that are required for all IEPs, IDEA requires additional content for a transition IEP, including:

- Appropriate measurable post-secondary goals, including academic and functional goals, based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training or education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills;
- The transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the student in reaching the student's post-secondary goals.
- The transition services, including courses of study, need to assist the student in reaching their post-secondary goals; and
- All of the other items that are required for an IEP (as outlined in the Utah Special Education Rules).

Transition services and planning began as one of many ideas for increasing the quality of life for young adults with disabilities. Today, transition from school to adult life is more than a nice idea; it is a requirement of the law. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that transition services be included in every student's transition-age IEP.

Transition, as outlined in the IDEA, requires a shift in thinking and planning from an 'expert-based' model to a model with the individual with a disability at its center. The foundation of the plan needs to be a coordinated effort among the student, parents, schools, and adult service providers to achieve a desirable future for the individual. The focus should always be the young adult's vision of the future.

The law defines several of the key phrases: "Transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that is designed to be within an outcome-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests; and shall include:

- Instruction;
- Related services;
- Community experiences;
- The development of employment and other post-secondary adult living objectives; and
- If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

Transition services are designed to be a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including:

- post-secondary education,
- vocational education,
- integrated employment (including supported employment),
- continuing and adult education,
- adult services,
- independent living, or
- community participation.

For all students, when writing the IEP before the student turns 16 (or younger, when appropriate), the IEP team must:

- Actively involve the student in his or her IEP development.
- Base the IEP on the student's needs, preferences, and interests.
- Refine the student's desired post-secondary goals.
- Review the student's transition services such as the courses of study or multi-year description of coursework, adjusting them as needed to achieve the student's desired post-secondary goals.

To facilitate the development of the statement of the interagency responsibilities, "the public agency shall also invite a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If an agency invited to send a representative to a meeting does not do so, the public agency shall take other steps to obtain participation of the other agency in the planning of any transition services".

WRITING MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOALS

Measurable postsecondary goals are outcomes that occur after the person has left high school. They tell what a student WILL do (be enrolled in, attending, working at, etc.).

Some tips for writing measurable postsecondary goals:

- Use results-oriented terms such as “enrolled in”, “work”, “live independently”
- Use measurable descriptions such as “full time” and “part time”
- Begin the goal with “After high school . . .”
- Goals can be broader to begin with and then refined and updated with each annual IEP as the student progresses.
- Sometimes goals in education and employment can be combined.
- Sometimes several goals are needed in one area.

Measurable postsecondary goals are required in three areas:

- Training or education—specific vocational or career field, independent living skills training, vocational training program, apprenticeship, on the job training, Job Corps, four year college or university, technical college, two year college, shorter vocational or technical program, etc.
- Employment—paid (competitive, supported, sheltered); unpaid (volunteer, in a training capacity); military, etc.
- Independent Living, where appropriate—adult living, daily living, independent living, financial, transportation, etc.

SAMPLE MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOALS

14 year old student with a mild disability

- Training/Education—After high school, Eric will get on the job training in an area related to dirt bike racing.
- Employment—After high school, Eric will work full time with dirt bikes.
- Independent Living—After high school, Eric will live in an apartment with friends.
- Combined Training/Education and Employment—After high school, Eric will get on the job training whole working full time in an area related to dirt bike racing.

17 year old student with a mild disability

- Training/Education—After high school, Sherry will enroll full time at Weber State University in the nursing program.
- Employment—After high school, Sherry will work full time as a nurse.

20 year old student with a significant disability

- Independent Living—After completion of school, I/ Lance will live with my mother and continue to take part in community activities like bowling, going to church and visiting friends and family.
- Training/Education—After completion of school, I/Lance will attend the XYZ Center and receive training on work behaviors and skills.
- Employment—After completion of school, I/Lance will be employed in a sheltered environment at the XYZ Center

18 year old student with a moderate or significant disability

- Independent Living—After completion of school, I/William will live with my brother and take part in community social and recreational activities.
- Training/Education—After completion of school, I /William will attend ADAPT and receive vocational skills training.
- Employment—After completion of school, I /William will work at ADAPT in the supported employment program.

18 year old student with a mild or moderate disability

- Training/Education—After high school, I/David will get on-the-job training to become a farmer.
- Employment—After high school, I/David will work full time as a farmer.

20 year old student with a moderate disability

- Independent Living—I/Courtney will live in a group home with other friends or roommates. I will need assistance with buying food, caring for myself, and doing work around the house.
- Education/Training—I will receive on-the-job training at Pick N Save.
- Employment—I will work part time in a grocery store like Pick N Save.
- Community Participation (not required)—I will be involved in my church and spend time with other people in Brookfield. I will go shopping in different stores. I like working outside by raking leaves and picking up sticks.
- Recreation and Leisure (not required)—I will join Special Olympics, go to baseball, football, and basketball games. I will play soccer, basketball, football, and baseball/softball with my friends. I like to watch movies and read store ads.

This information on writing measurable post-secondary goals is used with permission from Ed O'Leary. Summarized from information given at the Utah Transition Conference, April 3, 2008. © Utah Parent Center

MEETING TO DEVELOP THE TRANSITION PLAN

The best way to start the meeting is with introductions. It would be fitting for your son to make the introductions or ask the individuals to introduce themselves. When it is your turn, it would be helpful to remind everyone how important it is to succeed in developing a long-range plan so your son will have a meaningful life after leaving school.

The first step in developing a plan is to select and agree on priority outcomes. This will lead to a statement of long-range goals for at least the next three to five years. In the case of students at risk of dropping out of school, it may be beneficial to develop a transition plan before age 14, when warranted. Realistic goals will be selected after reviewing the present level of educational performance along with your son's strengths and interests.

Based on the desired outcomes, the team can identify any barriers that exist and select strategies to overcome them. This is also the time to identify opportunities available for him. Written annual goals will specify ways to overcome the barriers and maximize his use of existing opportunities. Needed services and available resources, along with specific activities and experiences to help him reach the goals will be noted.

In addition to long-range goals and annual goals, the written transition IEP will include short-term objectives for those students who will be participating in alternate assessments.

While preparing to leave the meeting, express anticipation of successful outcomes and appreciation to all the participants. They will be valuable allies in the weeks, months, and years ahead. By developing good working relationships with team members, your student's plan has a higher likelihood of succeeding.

His written plan must also specify how different agencies will work together to provide needed services. The final step is confirming with team members to assure that they understand their responsibilities and agree to them. The "Transition Timeline", found on page 35 can help you keep track of what is needed to smooth the transition process.

WHEN SHOULD A TRANSITION TIMELINE BE DEVELOPED?

A transition timeline for your student should be set up beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is 16 (such as a meeting conducted when the student is 15 years old), or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, and should be updated annually. Notice of the transition IEP meeting must:

- Indicate that a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the post-secondary goals and transition services for the student; and
- Indicate that the LEA will invite the student; and
- Identify any other agency that will be invited, with the consent of the parents or student age 18 or older, to send a representative.

TRANSITION PLANNING TIMELINE

Student Age	Action Needed*	By Whom	By When
10 – 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include social skills, communication, functional math and reading, self-help, and self-advocacy skills on IEPs. • Develop and use a plan to increase independence at home. • Participate in U-PASS assessment. 		
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate transition planning as part of the IEP process by age 15 (last IEP before age 16). • Identify vocational interests and abilities. • Include activities such as: career exploration, job sampling, and an introduction to vocational training. • Begin to identify community services that provide job training placements. • Prepare a job placement file with references and a description of acquired skills. • Initiate application to adult service agencies with lengthy waiting lists (e.g. DSPD). • Participate in U-PASS assessment. 		
16 – 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact appropriate adult service programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Postsecondary education/training – Social Security Administration – Residential or independent living services – Vocational Rehabilitation – Recreation/leisure • Participate in UBSCCT assessment.** 		
17 – 18+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to consider and research guardianship. • Take ACT or SAT tests and complete college applications for postsecondary training. • Participate in UBSCCT assessment.** 		
18+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue annual review and update of transitional IEP. • Establish needed health benefits. • Develop long-term financial support plan (e.g. SSI) 		

*IEP Transition Plan is to be reviewed and updated at least annually.

**Beginning sophomore year.

+Depending on the existing disability, some students will have until at least their 22nd birthday to accomplish their transition goals. (Ask your school district transition specialist for more information about Utah's state requirements.)

AFTER THE MEETING

As soon as a plan has been prepared, it is time to implement it. Part of working the plan is collecting information on the progress being made. It is important to communicate with all IEP team members as you monitor your daughter's progress. Keep a written log of telephone calls and face-to-face conversations which include the date, the name of the program, and the person contacted as well as a summary of the discussion. Also keep copies of letters, notes, progress reports, homework assignments, IEPs, work performance reviews, and any other relevant records (e.g. testing results, medical reports, etc.).

It is very important to keep good records because it is impossible for you or any of the professionals working with your child to remember everything. There are so many details involved with planning your child's future that it is important to keep the information that you are collecting organized and easily accessible. There are many reasons you as a parent should keep track of important information about your child. Some professionals may know part of what is going on with your child, but you are the only one that knows everything! When you have a good record keeping system, all of the information is easily accessible and together. It is very helpful to have a system in place that includes information pertaining to your child's school services up to the current date.

**NOTE: You may want to make duplicate files –
one for you and for the student.**

To help you remember the numerous details important for your student, refer to the timelines. It identifies things which need to be done and when to do them. It is meant to supplement the IEP and assure that progress is being made.

Keep in mind the IEP must be reviewed at least annually. If no review meeting is held, do not hesitate to contact the school. Cooperate with them in scheduling a meeting of the team as soon as possible to review your daughter's transition plan and IEP. You may always request to reconvene as needed.

If goals or objectives are not being met, determine whether or not modifications are needed. Request another meeting of the team if agreed upon services are not being provided or if strategies are not working. Any concerns about services or placements must be expressed in terms of your daughter's needs. In the case of disagreement, it is best to negotiate with the team. If negotiations break down, you have a right to mediation and a due process hearing.

FAILURE TO MEET TRANSITION GOALS

If a participating agency, other than the LEA, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP, the LEA must reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition goals for the student set out in the IEP.

Nothing relieves any participating agency, including a State vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that LEA.

If any public agency other than an educational agency is otherwise obligated or assigned responsibility to provide or pay for any services that are also considered special education or related services, the public agency must fulfill that obligation or responsibility, either directly or through contract or other arrangement or as provided in an interagency agreement. Such services could include but are not limited to:

- services relating to assistive technology devices,
- assistive technology services,
- related services, supplementary aids and services, and
- transition services that are necessary for ensuring a FAPE to students with disabilities within the State.

If a public agency other than an educational agency fails to provide or pay for the special education and related services, the LEA must provide or pay for these services to the student in a timely manner. The LEA is authorized to claim reimbursement for the services from the non-educational public agency that failed to provide or pay for these services and that agency must reimburse the LEA in accordance with the terms of the interagency agreement.

*This content is taken from the Utah Parent Center handbook:
From NO Where to KNOW Where: A Parent Handbook for the Transition to Adult Life.*