



# TRANSITION PLANNING

## TRANSITION

### What Are Transition Services?

Transition services refers to a coordinated set of activities for a student designed to be within 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. Post school activities might include post-secondary education (including vocational education), integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

The coordinated set of activities is based upon the individual student's needs. The student's strengths, preferences and interests should be taken into account. The activities should include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.

For a student who will turn 16 before the next IEP meeting, age-appropriate transition assessments must be conducted. These assessments may relate to the postsecondary goals of the student in the areas of training or education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills.

### Why Is It Important For The Student To Be Involved?

Having the student involved in developing the transition plan improves the likelihood that the goals will be achieved.

The LEA must invite the student with a disability to attend his or her IEP meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary 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.

It is important for students to learn self-advocacy skills. Older students are often able to prepare for and may conduct their own IEP meetings.

### Who Else Is Required To Participate In The Transition IEP?

All of the members that are required for any IEP team must participate. In addition, representatives from other agencies can be very helpful.

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. This includes Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Independent Living (IL), the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) and/or other agencies or programs. For a student who is post-high school, a regular educator required as an IEP team member may be a person knowledgeable about the expectations in the setting in which the student is or may be receiving transition services as described in the IEP.

One way for parents to help facilitate and encourage the attendance of agency representatives at the IEP meeting is for the student or the parent to give the invitation. This may reduce the 'red tape' the school faces in getting consent and may also persuade the representative that he or she is needed and welcome at the meeting.



***If your child has special needs, so do you! We can help!***

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### When Is Transition Planning Required On The IEP?

IDEA 2004 requires that transition planning be included on each student's IEP beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16 (the IEP conducted when the student is 15 years old) or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team and updated each year. The purpose of the transition requirement is to focus attention on how the student's educational program can be planned to help the student prepare for life after high school.

#### The IEP must include:

- All of the regular IEP contents listed earlier in this book and in addition:
- A PLAAFP statement describing how the student's disability affects access to and progress in post-secondary activities.
- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals, including academic and functional goals, based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training or education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills
- For students with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives, and
- The transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the student in reaching the student's postsecondary goals. Transition services may be provided as special education or as related services or both.

Transition goals may be included at an earlier age. This may be particularly important for students who are at risk for dropping out of school or for those individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Early transition planning is encouraged because:

- Transition from special education can be complicated.
- Planning courses of study before ninth grade when credit toward graduation is earned can result in a much smoother process.
- It may take longer than two years to put support services in place.
- Adult services are not mandated to be available for all and may have eligibility requirements.
- Some agencies may have long waiting lists.
- Some students may need the services of several agencies. It requires time to determine which agency will do what and who will pay for services.
- Some plans may have to be altered several times to meet the needs of the student.

### Important Points to Remember In Transition Planning

Parents should consider the following in transition planning:

- Begin with the end in mind. Writing the required measurable postsecondary goals will help the team to envision the desired outcome for the student. When a vision for the future is firmly in mind, it is easier to write meaningful goals and to use the student's remaining time in school wisely.
- Transition goals must remain flexible and reflect the development and educational needs of the student at different grade levels and times.
- An important question for parents to ask themselves about every IEP goal, especially in the secondary school years is:  
**"If my son or daughter never learns to do this, will someone else have to do it for him or her?"**  
Asking this question can help parents and other IEP team members focus their efforts on goals to develop functional skills that will promote as much independence as possible.

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- Decide on the graduation requirements expected for the student and make sure these requirements are recorded on the IEP. This will prevent any misunderstanding when it gets closer to graduation time and will also help to determine what transition goals should be on the IEP.
- When the student reaches the “age of majority” which is 18 years old in Utah, the right to make educational decisions transfers to the student (except for a student who has been determined to be incompetent by a court). The IEP must include a statement that the student and parents have been informed of the rights at least one year before the student reaches the “age of majority.”

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.

### 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.

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- 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.

*Information on "Writing Measurable Post-Secondary Goals" is used by permission from Ed O'Leary. Summarized from information given at the keynote presentation of the Utah Transition Conference, April 3, 2008.  
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*This content is taken from the Utah Parent Center handbook: Parents as Partners in the IEP Process Parent Handbook*

The Utah Parent Center also offers a workshop and companion parent handbook called *From 'NO' Where to 'KNOW' Where – Transition to Adult Services A Parent Handbook*. The presentation and handbook provide detailed information on many topics related to transition planning. Please **CLICK HERE** to view those materials.