

WHAT PARENTS AND YOUTH SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TRANSITION

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Good afternoon, and welcome to this. I'm glad that we have Parent Center staff here because it's a little challenging to be presenting to a computer screen. It's kind of nice to be able to get the feedback; Roz is helping to lighten things up, as usual, when we have Roz in the group. We are going to be talking about transition today – post-secondary transition – and basically what I've done is kind of gone through and said, 'what are some expectations that we all have about getting ready for these kids to leave school?'

So, looking at the second slide, first of all, I've given you my contact information. If you have some questions that you really don't want the group to hear – if there some things that are maybe a little personal, or you'd like to be identifying specific school districts or specific teachers, then please feel free to call me or e-mail me, and I will get back to you as soon as possible. I also have given you the URL, the address for our website. That is the section where I keep posting transition information, and hopefully we have it updated. So, there's some information that you might be able to find on that. Is there anything specifically that you would like me to touch on today? Just in case I haven't included it in my presentation, I just want to make sure that I address all of your concerns. So, is there anything that you would like me to address? Just type it in, and I'll make sure that we cover it.

Okay, moving on....first of all, I think that when we get to transition points, we need to understand that the change is coming, and everybody gets pretty emotional at this time. As parents, we start worrying about what's going to happen when

school's out: What are they going to be doing? Where are they going to live? Who's going to take care of our kids? Students start talking about how great it's going to be that they're not going to have to go to school. And they don't particularly care about what's going to be happening three days after school is out. And then that leads us to be worrying even more about the fact that the kids aren't really concerned about what's going to be happening with life. It's sort of like when our kids start getting driver's licenses. And, as parents, we're knowing that that's a change that has to happen. Kids, if they're eligible, they need to be getting their licenses. Kids are all excited about where they're going to be driving, what they're going to be doing, and then we start worrying about what they're going to be doing when they're driving. Well, it's the same thing with post-secondary transition. We just don't know what's going to be happening and we start stressing about that, which sometimes makes some of these changes even more upsetting than they would have been normally.

Okay, so today what I'd like to talk about are basically three ideas. Thinking about the change ahead: What can you and your student expect the school team to be doing during this time? What can you and the school team expect your student to be doing? And, what can you and your student expect you to do? I'm approaching it from three ways because I think generally when we start talking about transition services, we have the expectation that this is a school activity, and the school will be doing whatever. In reality, it's a team. And the team includes you and it includes your student.

So, going to the next slide. What can you expect your school's IEP team to do? First of all, you can expect the school team is going to help your student decide what their post-secondary goals are. And we're required to look at post-secondary goals in education or training, employment, and possibly independent living as appropriate – but definitely for education and training and employment. And we can expect

the school team to provide opportunities for your student to set new goals as their interests or skills change. We know that, for the student in 10th grade, it could be that they want to work in the computer field designing computer games, because they happen to really like computer games. As they start learning about what's involved in terms of post-secondary education, what the work requirements are, they might change their mind and decide that that's not going to be fun, and now we're going to go into being a chef. So, anticipate that the school will help the student make those changes as appropriate.

You can also anticipate that the school will help the student decide who may be providing those services when they leave school. Is it going to be Vocational Rehabilitation, is it going to be the Disability Resource Center at college? Who is going to help your student reach those post-secondary goals or provide services to reach those goals after they leave school? And, they're going to help your student make those connections with agencies, either by inviting the agency representative to the IEP meeting or by providing you and the student with the information that they need to help them contact that agency. You'll notice that both of these bullets are IDEA requirements. So, when I say that you can expect your school team to do these things, my expectation is that they will do it because those are some of the requirements by law.

You can also expect your school team to provide information to you and your student about graduation requirements and about how your student is progressing towards meeting those requirements. Like I said, I've been working in this area since 2001, and since then I think we've had about 5 different sets of graduation requirements. So it's a challenge to figure out exactly what the requirements are at any given moment. And the requirements that are in place when your student starts in 8th or 9th grade may have been modified a little bit as your student approaches their senior

year, or the time they're exiting the school system. I think it's very important for the team, including you and the student, to start talking about graduation requirements – in 9th grade at the latest. I think that they should start talking about these things in 8th grade, because 9th grade is when the course requirements start....when the students start accumulating credit towards graduation – and accumulates those credits by participating in specific classes. It's also time to decide exactly what is the exit document going to be. Is it going to be a certificate of completion; is it going to be a diploma; where exactly is this student heading in terms of the documentation at the end of school?

You can also expect your school team to provide the supports and services necessary for your student to learn the skills that will help them achieve their post-secondary goals. These usually come in the form of annual IEP goals. So, for example, if a student is going to be going to college, what are the supports and skills they need in order to be successful at college? They're probably going to need to improve reading skills; math skills; self-advocacy skills are very important in terms of being able to self-disclose a disability. Those are all the things that are going to show up in the IEP goals.

You can expect your school team to be a resource for community agencies and services. They also might help you locate that information in the community or in the Internet. It's very difficult for any one person to know everything; but between what parents know, what different members of the school team know – then I think it's reasonable to think that you can come away with which agencies and services are going to be available locally to help your student achieve their post-secondary goals.

Another IDEA requirement is that you and the student both are invited to the IEP team meeting. And, when the student turns 18, of course, then the student has reached the

age of majority, and the student becomes the key player at the IEP team meeting. But, prior to that, if transition services are going to be discussed, then your student will be invited to the meeting. Your school team will also be providing your student with a Summary of Performance, including recommendations to help him or her achieve the post-secondary goals, when they either graduate....exit the school system by graduating with a high school diploma, or reach maximum age. This information is provided to the student when they leave at those times.

Okay, those are just some general team expectations, and I have a few questions here from some of the staff here which might prompt you to ask some additional questions. If you do have questions, please type them in and we'll address them. First of all, does every school district have a post-high school program? And that varies...the way it looks varies across school districts. Public schools are required to provide a free appropriate public education to eligible students until they either graduate with a regular high school diploma, or reach maximum age, which in Utah is age 22. So, yes, the school will have some kind of a post-high school program for students until age 22. In some cases, it's in the high school facility itself. In some cases, it's on the high school campus, but in a different building. And in some places, it's community-based on a college campus or on a community college location, someplace off the high school campus. But, every school district is required to provide services to students until they're 22. In the rural areas it's more than likely going to be located in the high school building. Some students maybe are participating in high school classes; some may be participating in community activities – and again, that's based on the student's need, and it's discussed at the IEP meetings.

What happens if our student has been attending a charter school? And you all know that charter schools are public schools, and therefore they're required to follow the

same....meet the same requirements as any other traditional public school district. So, there is going to be a transition plan, students are going to attend meetings, agency needs are discussed. If the student is going to be staying in school and not actually leaving with same age peers with a high school diploma, then the charter school is responsible for providing those post-high services, just like any other public school. So, we have some nods here that apparently that was the answer that was expected.

Now, the question from Wendy. Wendy says, "I work for an independent living center and I work with students in transition. My question is...I just became acquainted with a young man, he is 20, higher functioning autism. He came to Utah from Oregon where he dropped out of school. He did have an IEP in Oregon, can he be picked back up as a student in Utah until he is 22?" Good question, yeah, this is an interesting one. The federal requirements requiring provision of a FAPE until the student reaches maximum age – because it is federal it applies across the country. So, this student, because he has not....this young man rather, because he has not received a high school diploma from anywhere is still eligible for special education services in his district of residence. So, depending on where he lives, I would recommend that , Wendy, if you are working with him as a mentor that you contact the special education director in your school district, wherever you're located, and taking this young man with you, of course, because it's up to him, he is an adult and can make this decision; and that you talk about what are the options available in that particular school district: what would the recommendations be; how can you access all of his records from Oregon (or at least his IEP and his eligibility determination). The special education director will help you decide what kind of information is needed and then talk about how he would fit into the post-high program in that particular LEA, and how that post-high program can be made to fit him – it goes both directions. It may be his choice that he does not want to go

back to whatever the public K-12 program is, in which case, I think it would be very appropriate to talk about what's available through adult education – working towards an adult high school diploma, and receiving the special education supports through adult ed. And again, Wendy if you have any specific questions or want to go over that again, please feel free to contact me either by phone or by cell phone.

Okay, another question: Can the school psychologist provide a DSM-IV diagnosis before a student leaves high school? Just kind of a review – many of the post-high programs....and I'm meaning post-high after the student exits the school system. For example, colleges require a DSM-IV diagnosis. My recommendation with that would be to work with the Disability Resource Center at that particular college and find out if they do accept diagnosis from a psychologist. Some programs accept the review of the file by the school psychologist, and the school psychologist saying, 'yes, the student does meet the eligibility requirements and does have a diagnosis of a specific learning disability in the area of...according to DSM-IV.' Some colleges accept that; some colleges want a whole new diagnostic evaluation, and that's really based on whatever their procedures are. So, I think the first thing to do would be to contact that college and see if they accept that DSM-IV from the school psychologist, then work with the school team and make sure that the school psychologist is willing to, and will write that letter by the deadline, and include all of the information that the college needs.

Another one: Is there a counselor or a transition specialist at every school site that can get information about post-secondary resources and services in the community? There is someone at the school site; that varies – it can be the team leader, the case manager in the high school, it can be a transition specialist in the high school, it can be a transition specialist at the district level; so the first person to talk with to

find out who knows about this information would be discussing it with the young person's case manager – the person who really leads the IEP meetings. Okay? And, they would be able to connect you with the appropriate person in the school district who would have that information.

“Who is in charge of inviting outside agencies to come to transition meetings?” Whoa, okay. It's the special ed answer: it depends. I think it's very appropriate if your family and your young person are already involved with an agency such as DSPD, Mental Health, Voc Rehab; I think it's very appropriate for you to invite the agency representative to the IEP meeting. If this is a first-time involvement, meaning that this is the first time that your young person is going to be meeting the Voc Rehab counselor, and this is the introduction to Voc Rehab services, I think it's very appropriate for the school team, with your consent, or the consent of the adult student, to invite the representative. When the agency connection is brand new, I think it's probably easier for the school team to invite the agency representative, because hopefully they've already established a linkage, they've established some communication with that person, and they have some kind of relationship. So, it's just a little easier for them to do that. Again, if a school district person...if the IEP team school person is going to be inviting the agency representative, they do need to have your consent or the consent of the adult student, a student who is 18 or older, to invite that representative to the IEP meeting. Are there any other questions from the online audience? We'll wait just a second here. Feel free to add questions at any time, and I'll just address them as they come up or at the end of each section.

Okay, let's go on to student expectations. What exactly can we expect from the student or the young person? This is something...a section that sometimes is a little painful for parents – sometimes it's painful for educators. I think sometimes we err on the side of not really having – I'm not even going to

say high enough expectations – sometimes we have limited expectations about the student's responsibility in this whole transition process. Students play a very large role. This, when we're talking about transition, we're talking about the student's life and the students need to be involved in this discussion, they need to be active participants.

So, first of all, when we're talking about transition planning, the first thing we can expect is that our student is going to be going to school daily, unless illness or disability issues prevent regular attendance. Having had a couple of students who have gone through the high school experience, I know that it's very easy for students to just be kind of like, 'well, I'm too tired to go today.' If the parents who are working... and our students are leaving after we go to work, it's not unusual to come home and find out that our students have not been in school all day long and we have not known about that. So, I think it's very important to impress upon students that going to school is a family requirement. Okay, now with my kids I used to say, "You're either bleeding or throwing up or you've died. Those are reasons not to go to school." Now, I know those are a little extreme, but that hopefully was sending the message that, you know, I'm pretty serious about you getting to school. The other piece of it is, if students don't go to school, that really limits their chance to earn the credits they need to receive a high school diploma. And we know from research, that students without a high school diploma...I'm looking around, I know we talked about this at the conference we went to recently; but it seems to me that it was like 50% higher unemployment rates. I mean, huge unemployment rates just for not having that diploma. Kids who don't go to school end up not earning a diploma, so I think we need to stress that.

I think we need to expect our students to participate in challenging classes and activities; and this could be a stretch for us as parents also, because we might think that, 'Oh, you know, algebra is way too hard, so let's talk about resource

math, or let's talk about functional math." And I think we need to think about the long-term consequences of students not having that background. We know that even though the classes are challenging, that a lot of our students rise to those challenges; that they really work; and they really can meet our expectations. As we keep boosting those expectations, we can turn out adults that really are very, very capable adults.

We can expect our students to make decisions – with and without our input. When I was working in transition programs in the schools, my first discussion about transition outcomes was always with the student: What do you want to do when you leave school? What are your goals and what are your dreams – not what are your mom's dreams for you, but what do you want to do if you had your way and you could do anything you wanted, be anything you wanted, what would that be? And I think that sometimes we forget about that.

Again with the next one – identifying post-secondary goals with which you don't agree, and certainly aren't what you would choose for your student. I know that my kids set post-secondary goals, and they were not goals that I necessarily agreed with. They were not the pictures that I had for my students when they...as soon as they were born, you know the pictures we all have for our kids. But these are the kids' goals; these are our young people's goals. And we need to expect them to set goals and work towards those goals. And we sometimes need to modify what we're thinking in our pictures of the students to meet the goals that they have chosen. Pretty painful for us as parents, I'll tell you, it's a real challenge.

We can also expect our students to participate in transition planning by attending the IEP meetings. I've talked with parents who say that they would rather not have their students attend the meetings because they really don't want their students to know about disabilities, about their specific

disability. And I really think that if we are going to have our students achieve their potential, they need to know what their skills are, and they need to know what their challenges are. I think probably the best place to discuss that with the least amount of emotion, is at IEP meetings. And so I encourage students to attend and I encourage students to also participate in meetings, not just sit there and say, 'yeah, uh-huh, okay, whatever.' But to actually say, 'this is what I want to do, this is what I need to learn, this is what I'm good at.'

We need to expect students to practice their self-advocacy skills at IEP meetings and in other social situations. This means being assertive and not aggressive – real fine line sometimes for students. Students need to be able to say, 'this is what I want to do.' and say it assertively and say, 'I don't care what you think about it, I'm going to do this' which becomes a little more aggressive. We need to make sure that students communicate effectively: they're making eye contact, we can expect them to make eye contact; we can expect them to use appropriate language. If they're becoming inappropriate, we can expect, either as parents or school teams, to be able to intervene and make the corrections so that they are continuing to communicate effectively. We need to expect that they're going to listen effectively, and sometimes we have to model appropriate listening in order for students to be listening. Listening effectively means that they're kind of sitting up; they're not playing with their...they're not texting someone during the IEP meeting; or they're not playing with whatever the latest iteration of Gameboy is; but they're actually paying attention to what's going on in the meeting. And, we can expect them to be able to negotiate when appropriate. When we, as the parents or school team say, 'No, you WILL take geometry', and they're saying, 'Over my dead body, I'm not going to take geometry', then where can the student counter with, 'I'd like to take this instead.' So, we can expect them to come up with the suggestions that are a part of negotiating.

We can also expect students to be asking questions about IEP or schoolwork, including questions such as, 'Why do I have to take geometry?' In answer to that, generally the answer that we hear is, 'Because I told you to' or 'Because the school says you have to.' However, I think that we can broaden that, and answer that with, 'You're interested in going into working in architecture. Geometry will give you a beginning background in 3-dimensional objects and will give you some of the skills you need to become an architect, so this is why you need to be able to take whatever.' Questions like, 'Why do I have to do homework?' 'Well, you know, practice is a skill that you're learning in class, that's why you have to do homework.'

We have a question here: "What happens after a student is 18 and they no longer want IEP or transition services?" When students turn 18, they become their own adults, and we all know from all of our students, and probably from us with some of our experiences that we get to make our own decisions, and sometimes our decisions are not what would be considered to be the best. Which is a long way around getting to, okay, what happens when the student is 18? I'm trying to...where do we start here? Utah's Compulsory Education Law require students to attend school until they're 18; there's some other ways to get out of it, but basically compulsory ed ends when a student is 18. So, students may legally decide at 18 that they are not going to go to school, they're not going to go to special ed, they're not going to whatever...okay, at 18? Hopefully, the school will have had discussions prior to this. For example, prior to age 17 when they start talking about age of majority, and start talking about 'what does this mean to become an adult, and what are the consequences of making decisions?' But, the student can still decide 'I'm not coming back here', okay? The school district's responsibility, as I said earlier, is still to provide a FAPE. Some of the things that we recommend that schools do is to notify the student annually that they're still eligible for special education services; if you are interested in coming back to

school, these are some of the services we would provide; we would recommend these goals in your IEP, and we would provide these services – if you're interested, please contact (and then the name of a contact person at the school. If a student shows up after 2 or 3 years, the first thing would probably need to be considered is whether the student continues to be eligible for special education services, so they would still need to go through the eligibility procedures.

Another option for a student who is 18 – thinking about the program in the school, sometimes when students are 18 or 19 or 20, and their post-secondary program is still in the high school building, they don't want to come to school with 15 and 16-year old kids. So, where else can those special education services be provided? It could be that an ATC (an Area Technology College) would be appropriate to learn specific skills. It could be that a community college setting would be appropriate, again to go into some of those pre-college activities. It could be that there's going to be an IEP that's focused on community goals, such as employment, and that the school team is still implementing the IEP in terms of monitoring the student – maybe meeting with the student offsite for an hour a day to get started – but the education really is taking place in the community. So, when the question is 'What happens after the student is 18?', it's like, well, it depends. What does the student want? What is the student willing to do – again it goes back to negotiating. Are they willing to show up someplace which maybe is not their traditional building? But, the bottom line is, the student is still eligible for a FAPE and the school and the LEA is still required to provide a FAPE until the student reaches 22 or earns a regular high school diploma. The question is: "They're still required to offer, does the student have to access?" No. Any questions about student's roles or what happens with students, or what we can expect of students? No, okay, let's go on to parent expectations.

What may be expected of parents? And I modified this a little bit because some of these things, some of the expectations, things that I think could be expectations, would depend on the severity of the young person's disability. And there might be additional expectations based on your school district, your charter school, your IEP team. First of all, as a parent...you may be expected to...you will be expected to attend and participate in IEP meetings. I think that's the critical piece for parent involvement. It's not just saying, 'okay, this is what the team is going to....this is what they're going to be working on in school next year,' but it's also talking about, 'how can I help as a parent?' 'How can I help in the school setting?' 'How can I help my young person achieve the post-secondary goals?' 'Is my young person going to be graduating or exiting with a diploma?' 'Where do I find out about financial aid if my young person is going to be going on to college?' There's more than just setting goals for the IEP.

You may be expected to attend and participate in other parent meetings, as appropriate for your student. It might be appropriate for you to be attending parent conferences meeting with regular education teachers, or participating in the school community council; if you feel that there's some things that need to be done differently in your school, the school community council is the way to go – or the PTA, whatever parent organization is appropriate...is available at your school. We have a tendency I think as parents and as educators to think in silos. Sometimes I'm guilty of thinking in the transition silo and I never go beyond that. As parents, because we stress the IEP so much, sometimes I think the expectation is that parents will only participate in the IEP and no other part of school life. And I'd like to encourage parents to participate in the whole fabric of school activities: extracurricular activities, volunteering as chaperones when appropriate, etc; because your young person is a part of the whole school community, not just part of the special education department.

As a parent, you may be expected to provide opportunities for your student to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as community or church activities. You may be asked to make sure that your student attends football games in the school with a peer tutor, for example. Or you may be asked to help your student participate in some service learning projects, which would include some community activities. By helping your student or your young person learn about what's available in the community, you're helping set a model for things that they can be doing in the community as adults, when you no longer will be there, or will be willing or able to kind of shepherd them around the community to be involved in activities. There's some activities that students can participate in as volunteers, even if they're not participating in the actual activity. For example, a lot of communities have runs, or marathons, or those kinds of things that are pretty volunteer labor-intensive. Students who aren't able to participate in the run or are not interested in participating, or are not able to participate in record-keeping can certainly participate by helping to hand out water at the rest stops; they can be runners between...a different version of runners between locations, they can send/take messages from station to station. So, there's a lot of things that they can do. When they're participating in those activities as a student...as someone still in school and they get into the habit of doing that, that becomes an activity that they can participate as independent...in which they can participate as independent adults with other independent adults, and it's no longer a young person/parent activity. So, it's important to think about what's available in the community and how students can participate.

You also might be expected to help your student explore possible post-secondary options for work, education, or training in independent living. And having conversations with the student about sort of the "What do you want to be when you grow up" activity. Talking about what adults in your family do

for a living; what types of education or training they had in order to achieve that work goal. You'll also be expected to have high expectations for your student's academic performance and social behavior: Expecting that homework will be completed and in on time; that a "D" is not good enough kind of thing. A "C" is an average grade and is your family...your young person, is that okay with them or would you be more comfortable with a "B"? I shy away from saying, 'You have to have straight 'A's. I think a straight 'A' means that you are an exceptional student and a 'C' is an average student. And so there's nothing shameful about a 'C', and if you feel that your student's work rates a 'C', then that's what they should be earning. If you feel that they're capable of more than 'C' work, then kind of up the ante on that. In terms of having high expectations for your student's social behavior, I think that that includes independence; appropriate social behavior in public, including greeting other adults and greeting other students appropriately; and basically anticipating that a student who is 18 or 19 or 20 is going to be considered by others in the social arena as an adult. They're going to look like an adult, and they're going to be expected to act the way an adult would act. And so, I think it's very reasonable to expect, as a family, that you would start expecting those same behaviors from your young person.

It's important to consider the possible consequences of a variety of activities that happen as we approach transition age. What happens if graduation substitutions are made – if, for example, classes are substituted for science requirements as part of the diploma requirements? What are the long-term consequences of that if the student is going to be going on to college? What could happen when they get there? What are the possible consequences of exiting school with same age peers or staying in school until the student turns 22? What are the pros and cons of each one of those? And then, what are the pros and cons of exiting the school with a diploma or a certificate of completion? I think that school teams will expect

parents to participate in those discussions and really be open to conversations about “What if?” What if they get a diploma, what if they don’t get a diploma...that kind of thing.

Schools and your student...they anticipate that you will be facilitating the connection with adult agencies. The school team is responsible for providing that initial information, and might expect you to help follow-up by helping your young person keep appointments, follow through with any applications – most of the applications require a pretty extensive amount of background information, including family financial information, that would be your responsibility for providing. The expectation is that the student, the young adult, will be giving the information to the agency, however you might be expected to help that young person collect that information and put it in usable format – have it in a way that the student can actually give it to the agency.

You and your young person will be expected to understand and accept what the age of majority really means – that your student becomes an adult at age 18 (unless you or someone else has been awarded guardianship through the courts). The school team will be talking to your student then, if no one else has guardianship and the student...the 18 year old student is the adult, then the decision-making in education circles falls to the student. And the school team will expect that you will understand that you will no longer be asked to consent for an evaluation, for example – and that a lot of the communication will be through the student and not through you, which sometimes becomes a challenge, because none of us thinks that our 18 year olds are ready to make decisions about anything. And it’s a big switch.

We have a question here: “What do you say to parents who are convinced that their child has significant disabilities and that the parent doesn’t feel that they can do anything; for instance, a child who attended Jordan Valley School where

most of the students have pretty significant disabilities.” I think it goes back to having expectations and recognizing what the student is able to do. When I go through...when I went through IEPs and reviewed IEPs, I always talked first about the present level of performance; what is the student doing right now; what are they able to do? That’s, I think, is the big discussion. In talking about that, I know in special education, in order to be eligible you have to be able to not do...But, I never worked with a student who did not have skills. I think the important thing to talk about is the skills they have and then to talk about how their skills relate to what they want to do for post-secondary activities. I’ve talked with parents who say, ‘Well, we’re not going to worry about them going on for education or training, we’re not going to worry about them having a job because they just can’t do that, there’s nothing they can do.’ And I always countered with, ‘I understand if the student...if the young person is going to be living at home with you, then what are some things that we can do to help make life easier for you at home? They’re job now is going to be “working” at home, so what are some things that we can work on in school to make life easier? How can we help students participate, for example, in meal preparation by helping you work with the student to hook up a switch to a toaster or to a blender? Or, how can we help the student become more independent at home by hooking the switch up to the TV or the DVD player so that they can turn it on and off at will, and they’re not...you’re not required to come and do that all the time – so that the student is able to achieve some independence at home.’ I understand that there are times when students are not able to work...young adults are not able to be in the community because of health issues. Children with chronic health issues generally need to be pretty protected – so I think we need to understand that one. I also think that we need to look at, even if the student is not going to be working in the community, how can we facilitate the student’s involvement in the community, either as a volunteer in a day program doing something; because, let’s face it: We as adults, as our young adults get

older, we as parents get older. And it becomes more and more difficult for us to be able to provide the total care of our young adults with disabilities. I think part of transition planning as the whole team, including the parents and the school team, is looking at long-range. What about when this young adult who is 19 is now 30? What do we see as the involvement...community involvement for this 30 year old adult? Who is going to be providing the care for this 30 year old adult with significant disabilities, and how can we start fostering the (the fire engine is just going by, in case you're wondering what's going on. It's not this building)...

I think our responsibility as schools is to help parents understand that there might come a time in their lives that they need support in helping care for this young adult with significant disabilities. How can we start making those connections? How can we start putting things in place while the young person is still in school to make that transition smoother 10 years down the road?

Transition doesn't...transition is an activity that's required under IDEA starting when the student is 15...it's in the first IEP to be held starting when the student is turning 16. And we have a tendency to think that transition planning ends as soon as the student leaves the school system. I think that the formal requirements for transition planning under IDEA end when the student's leaving the school system. But we need to remember that there are transitions all the way through life. And the reason for making those transitions really moves from...the burden starts falling on the student, the young adult, and the parents without the support of the school system. I think this time, the end of the school system involvement, is the time for the team to work together to start giving the young person skills, helping the parents recognize the community supports, so that when transitions happen when the young person is leaving college, for example – huge transition point – that the young person has the skills to say, 'what comes next?', has the

knowledge about agencies that are available in the community to say, 'okay, I'm out of college with my degree – who's there to help me with the accommodations I need on the job site?' And to help the parent who has reached the point of saying, 'I'm 65, I have a 30 year old young adult living at home – who's going to help me now? Where do I go to get the support I need?' So, as I said, it's something that we need to be talking about as the student is through the school system; and understanding that what we're going to be providing are, if this...then this is a possible activity; not, this is the definite plan about what is going to be in place when my young adult reaches 30.

Do you have any questions, or comments, or some concerns about things that maybe I didn't address about transition planning? Because, you know, in an hour, it's a little hard to hit everything. So, do you have any other questions about graduation requirements, about services at the college, or post-secondary higher education level, anything about employment? (Yes, we do have the fire trucks going back and forth here.) If not, then thank you very much. Again, the second slide contains my contact information if you do think of something or have questions after the next IEP meeting or have concerns about agency involvement, graduation requirements, etc.; please feel free to contact me and I will do my best to provide the information that you need. Thanks very much.