

Life After High School - Ready or Not

LIVING



LEARNING



WORKING



IDEA '04 and Transition



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires transition planning for all students who have IEPs. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to prepare students for the transition from school to adult life so that skills, services and supports are in place at the time of graduation. For some students on IEPs, this is an easier process than

for others. It is important that parents ask for the transition support they and their son or daughter may need.

Transition planning gives parents, educators, and students a road map by which young people with disabilities can:

- prepare for the responsibilities of adulthood
- learn the skills necessary during high school to live and work independently in the community.

It is never too early to start transition planning. Best practice suggests beginning the transition process as your child moves from middle to high school.

Iowa's Department of Education has indicated that it will continue to begin transition planning with students on IEPs during the year the child turns 14. Parents are encouraged to:

- advocate for transition planning to occur the year your child turns 14 years of age
- share parent and student questions and concerns through discussions
- ensure that the appropriate assessments are completed in all areas related to transition: learning, working and living
- determine that specific goals are in place by the time your student is 14 years old to make sure the transition process is off to a good start.

The IEP team will be instrumental in planning for the next four years your child spends in high school.



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For more information, please contact FEP at 319-399-6700 or 800-332-8488.

Transition Planning Checklist

✓	Activity	Age/Eligibility	Suggested Timeframe
	Preparation for the IEP should include specific ideas for living, learning and working after high school	All students on an IEP	Beginning when student turns 14 years old annual IEP meeting and each year after
	Meet with your guidance counselor and review your credits	All students who want to graduate with a regular high school diploma (vs. an IEP diploma)	Spring of each year of high school
	Discussions about one's disability and how it will impact one's adult life	All students with special needs	Beginning at 8 th grade IEP and each year after
	Promoting Self-Advocacy skills as part of the IEP	All students with special needs who need self-advocacy skills	7 th , 8 th , 9 th , 10 th , 11 th and 12 th grade
	Assess student interests, strengths and preferences with post high school goals in mind	All students on an IEP	Beginning when student turns 14 years old annual IEP meeting and each year after
	Assess student needs in the areas of functional life skills to help plan course of studies for high school	All students needing vocational and residential supports	8 th grade IEP meeting (earlier if necessary)
	Incorporate community mobility in IEP goals	Students who will rely on public transportation	Begin at any age
	IEP to include work experiences in the community if appropriate	Students who will need vocational supports	Fall of 11 th grade (earlier if necessary)
	Meet with high school counselor and teacher to plan course of studies needed to attend college	Students wanting to go on to community or 4 year college	8 th and 9 th grade
	Visit community programs and job sites	All students	At least by spring of 11 th grade
	Invite Vocational Rehabilitation Services to attend IEP meeting	Students who will need vocational supports	During 10 th grade in school
	Explore Workforce Development program	All students who are interested	10 th and 11 th grade
	Visit vocational (work) providers Visit sheltered worksites	All students who will need vocational supports	10 th and 11 th grade
	Apply to agencies for adult residential and vocational services	All students needing vocational and residential supports	Depending on waiting lists, at least two years before services are needed
	Contact the local Central Point of Coordination Representative of your county for funding	All students who will need vocational and/or residential supports	At least by 11 th grade
	Visit potential residential (living) sites	All students who will need residential supports and determined eligible	11 th grade
	Visit colleges and learn about Disability Services offered and requirements	Students wanting to go on to community or four year college	11 th and 12 th grade
	Consider guardianship and conservatorship/durable power of attorney	Parents of children needing help with decision making	Age 17, apply 6 months before age 18
	Identify transportation needed to meet vocational needs	All students	During 12 th grade
	Apply for Supplemental Security Income – SSI	Limited financial resources (at age 18, individual becomes family of one)	Apply at any age; apply or reapply at age 18
	Have documentation of your disability	Any student who will need vocational and/or residential support or go on to college	Within 3 years of graduation
	Assess assistive technology needs for living, learning and working	All students	7 th , 8 th , 9 th , 10 th , 11 th and 12 th grade
	Check if your district has a transition program for eligible students, ages 18-21	Students who have yet to meet some of their IEP goals	10 th , 11 th and 12 th grade

A Useful Tool in...

Child Study Team (CST) Meetings, Individual Education Program (IEP) Meetings, or Parent-Teacher Conferences

Exchange of information is essential in understanding and making decisions about children and how they learn best. For sure, listing a child's strengths and needs for all team members to see and keep fresh in mind is one effective way to help the team make good decisions. Having parents list options which they would like to see in place to help their child be successful in school can serve as a springboard for discussion and a point from which to negotiate. Also helpful is having the parent(s) list questions, fears and concerns about their child and/or situations the child may be in. Once people state or hear these issues, they can better understand all perspectives and take them into account when planning for the child.

STRENGTHS	NEEDS	OPTIONS	QUESTIONS, FEARS AND CONCERNS

Does Your Child Have Good Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination Skills?

Choice making, problem solving and goal setting are all a part of being a strong self-advocate. Helping children become self-determining adults begins when they are very young and is certainly a critical part of transition planning. [Do your child's transition goals address self-advocacy and self-determination?](#)

Becoming a confident person willing to speak up for one's self, express needs and seek assistance begins with an understanding of one's disability. Yet so often we avoid that topic with our youth with disabilities, not wanting to point out differences, offend or make them feel badly. We will talk with

them about what they can and can't do yet we don't discuss what's behind some of what they can't do. If our children with disabilities are going to feel good about themselves, they must first feel okay about being a person with a disability. So, parents:

- Don't talk around the disability. Naming or describing the disability can demystify and disarm the power that makes some afraid and anxious about it.
- Let's raise our children with disabilities to be knowledgeable, comfortable, accepting of themselves, articulate and assertive.

- Equip them to speak frankly about their strengths, needs, wants, and feelings.
- Give them tools (information and skills) they will need to gain and keep as much control over their lives as possible.
- Consider them a part of the planning team for their IEPs and teach them to collaborate with those providing care/ services.
- Give them gifts we want all children to receive – courage, self-determination, knowledge of themselves, self-acceptance and self-sufficiency.

Reminder Question: How do we as parents, teachers and community service providers empower students to make choices, solve problems and set goals?



Ten Areas of Transition Need

When planning for a student's transition from high school to the adult world of work or further education, think of these 10 categories of life skills and how IEP teams can include them in the student's high school program.

LIFE SKILL	EXAMPLES
1 SELF DETERMINATION/ DISABILITY MANAGEMENT	Explaining your needs and strengths in the workplace or school. Requesting needed accommodations. Getting advocacy or legal support when needed. Learning about Assistive Technology (AT), Personal Assistance Services (PAS), disability pride.
2 ACADEMIC/LIFE LONG LEARNING	Taking classes at a university or community college. Going to community workshops such as gardening, parenting classes, home repair. Using community resources such as the library. Planning a 4-year degree from a college.
3 DAILY LIVING	Cooking meals, using home or commercial washers/dryers or home cleaning equipment, painting walls.
4 HEALTH/PHYSICAL CARE	Personal cleanliness such as bathing, washing hair, using deodorant. Dental care, making doctor appointments, learning CPR. Sex education. Mental health screenings.
5 LEISURE ACTIVITIES	Joining a bowling league, pursuing a hobby, making dates for movies with friends, going out to eat, biking, and attending community events.
6 MOBILITY	Getting a driver's license. Learning how to ride the city bus/para transit system. Using city maps. Calling a cab. Sharing the cost in a car pool.
7 MONEY MANAGEMENT	How to open and manage a checking account. What credit cards mean. How to get a bank loan. How to budget.
8 SOCIAL SKILLS	Speaking and greeting others, appropriate behavior at work/school/friends. Good manners in restaurants, going out on a date, relationships with the opposite sex.
9 WORKPLACE READINESS	Managing workplace stresses, dealing with authority, going to a job interview, time management.
10 OCCUPATIONAL SPECIFIC SKILLS	Learning the functions of the tools needed for the job, finding a mentor, practice job skills after work such as computer skills, cooking skills.

Transition Checklist



The following is a checklist of transition activities that you and your son or daughter may wish to consider when preparing transition plans with the IEP team. Your student's skills and interests will determine which items on the checklist are relevant. Use this checklist to ask yourself whether or not these transition issues should be addressed at IEP transition meetings. The checklist can also help identify who should be part of the IEP transition team. Responsibility for carrying out the specific transition activities should be determined at the IEP transition meeting.

7th-8th Grade (Four to Five Years Before Leaving the School District)	9th-10th Grade (Two to Three Years Before Leaving the School District)	11th-12th Grade (One Year Before Leaving the School District)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify personal learning styles and the necessary accommodations to be a successful learner and worker. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify career interests and skills, complete interest and career inventories, and identify additional education or training requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> Explore options for post-secondary education and admission criteria. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify interests and options for future living arrangements, including supports. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn to effectively communicate your interests, preferences, and needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Be able to explain your disability and the accommodations you need. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn and practice informed decision making skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate assistive technology tools that can increase community involvement and employment opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Broaden your experiences with community activities and expand your friendships. <input type="checkbox"/> Pursue and use local transportation options <i>outside of family</i>. <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate money management and identify necessary skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Acquire identification card and the ability to communicate personal information. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and begin learning skills necessary for independent living. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn and practice personal health care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify community support services and programs (Vocational Rehabilitation, County Services, Centers for Independent Living, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Invite adult service providers, peers, and others to the IEP transition meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Match career interests and skills with vocational course work and community work experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Gather more information on post-secondary programs and the support services offered, and make arrangements for accommodations to take college entrance exams. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify health care providers and become informed about sexuality and family planning issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the need for financial support (Supplemental Security Income, state financial supplemental programs, Medicare). <input type="checkbox"/> Learn and practice appropriate interpersonal, communication, and social skills for different settings (employment, school, recreation, with peers, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Explore legal status with regards to decision making prior to age of majority. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin a resume and update it as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice independent living skills, e.g., budgeting, shopping, cooking, and housekeeping. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify needed personal assistant services, and if appropriate, learn to direct and manage these services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for financial support programs (Supplemental Security Income, Independent Living Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Personal Assistant Services). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the post-secondary school you plan to attend and arrange for accommodations. <input type="checkbox"/> Practice effective communication by developing interview skills, asking for help, and identifying necessary accommodations at post-secondary and work environments. <input type="checkbox"/> Specify desired job and obtain paid employment with supports as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Take responsibility for arriving on time to work, appointments, and social activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Assume responsibility for health care needs (making appointments, filling and taking prescriptions, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Register to vote and for selective service (if a male). <input type="checkbox"/> Match career interests and skills with vocational course work and community work experiences.

