

# Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

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# Applicable Laws

## High School

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act

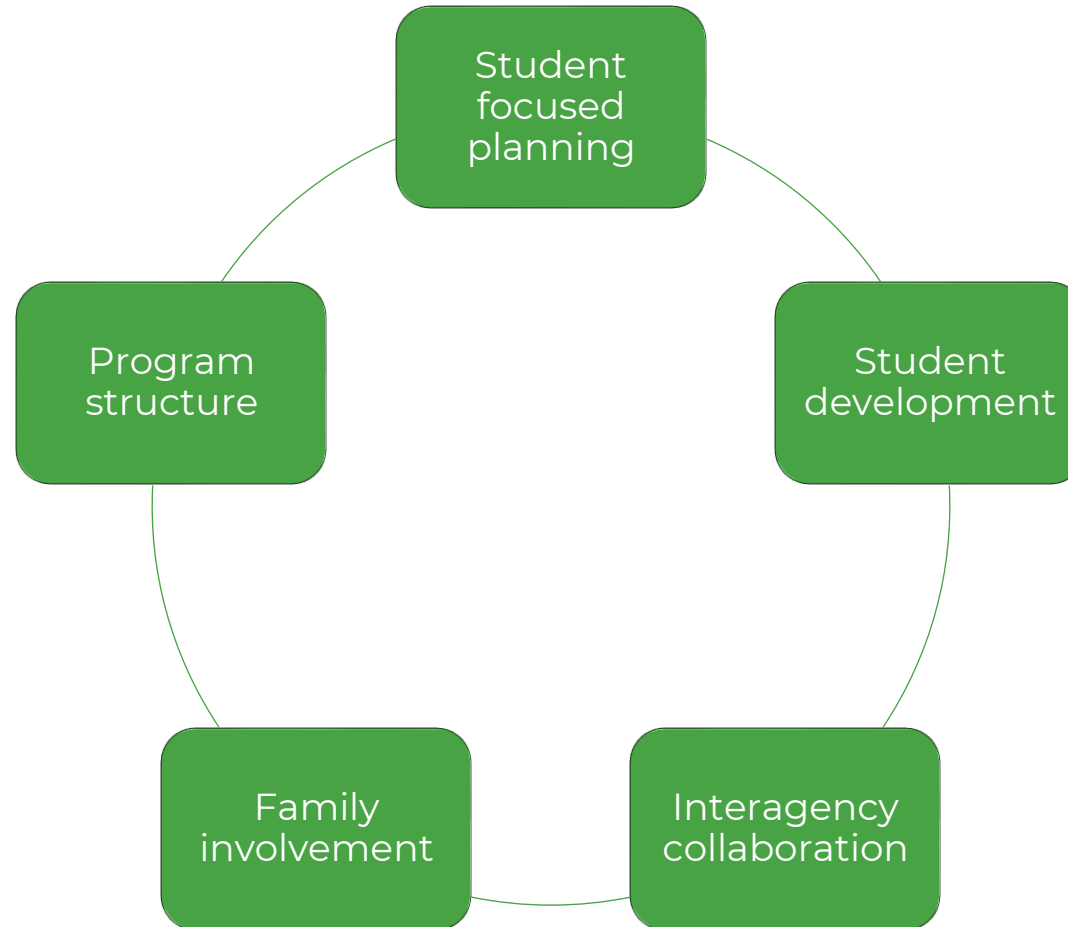
## College/University

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act

# Transition Planning

- The IDEA emphasizes that all children with disabilities are entitled to “transition services,” also known as transition planning.
- Under federal law, these must be provided by age 16.
- Despite federal and state mandated transition services, post-school outcomes are poor for children with disabilities.

# Transition Planning



# Transition and the Law

- IDEA defines “transition services” as a coordinate set of activities for a child with a disability that are:
  - Designed within a results-oriented process;
  - Focused on improving the **academic** and **functional** achievement of the child;
  - Facilitate movement from school to post-school activities;
  - Based on the child’s individual needs, taking their strengths into account; and
  - Includes instruction, community experiences, development of employment and post-school living objectives, and acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

# Transition Planning in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)



# What is Transition Planning?

- A process that brings students and their families together with educators and other adult service providers to help plan and prepare students to exit school and enter a post-secondary school environment, such as adult day programs, employment, vocational school, and college.
- A truly successful transition process is the result of comprehensive team planning that is driven by the dreams, desires, and abilities of youth.

# What is Transition Planning?

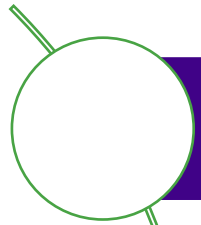
- A transition plan provides the basic structure for preparing an individual to live, work, and play in the community, as fully and independently as possible.
- Developing and executing a meaningful transition plan is required to ensure that students with IEPs are prepared for the post-high school challenges they will encounter.



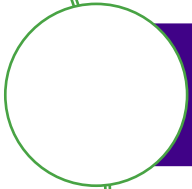
# Transition Plan

- Must address:
  - Instruction,
  - Related services,
  - Community experiences,
  - Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and
  - Acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation, when appropriate.

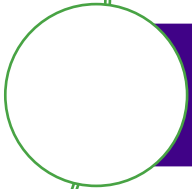
# Transition Plans Must Be...



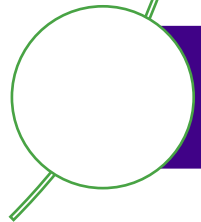
Results oriented



Based on the individual



Improve academic and functional skills



Help transition out of high school

# Transition Plan

## Elements of Quality Transition Planning

### Transition assessment

- Academics
- Vocational skills
- Interests/aptitude
- Self-determination
- Independent living

### Post-secondary goals

- Training/education
- Employment
- Independent living

### Instruction and services

- Identify transition services
- Identify IEP goals
- Involve agencies that assist with transitioning

# IEP Meeting Participants (1 of 2)

- If a purpose of the IEP meeting is the consideration of postsecondary goals and transition services needed to assist the student in reaching these goals, in addition to the local school system personnel and the parents, the school must invite:
  - **The student**
    - If the student does not attend, the school must take other steps to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered.

# IEP Meeting Participants (2 of 2)

- **Participating agency**

- Any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.
- Must obtain parent consent to invite agency representatives before each IEP meeting.
- Different agency representatives may be required depending on the discussion at each IEP meeting.

# IEPs (1 of 2)

- **Must include documentation of:**
  - Evidence of age-appropriate **transition assessment**
  - Appropriate measurable **post-secondary goals** in employment, education/training, and independent living, if appropriate
  - **Annual IEP goal(s)** related to the student's transition services needs
  - Transition **services**
  - Courses of study that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals



# IEPs (2 of 2)

- Must include documentation of:
  - Evidence that:
    - The student was invited to the IEP meeting,
    - The parent, or student if they have reached the age of majority, provided consent to invite agency representatives if it is appropriate for representatives to be invited, and
    - The agency representative was invited to the meeting.

# Goals (1 of 2)

- A measurable postsecondary goal is an outcome that occurs after the student has left high school.
  - The student will...
  - NOT the student hopes to, plans to, or will investigate...
- The path toward achieving the goal occurs **before** the student leaves high school.

# Goals (2 of 2)

- Local education agencies (LEAs) are **not liable** if a student does not meet their postsecondary goals.
  - There is a statutory obligation to provide transition services to assist a student in attempting to reach their measurable postsecondary goals.



# Goals for a Transition Plan

## Academic Skills

- Reading
- Written language
- Mathematics
- Problem solving
- Comprehension
- Art or music
- Foreign language

## Communication Skills

- Requesting
- Following/giving directions
- Communicating information
- Understanding information

## Social Skills

- Answering a phone and making calls
- Displaying appropriate workplace behavior
- Learning how to protect themselves from victimization

## Occupational & Vocational Skills

- Using a timecard
- Arriving to work on time
- Accepting instruction and corrections
- Using appropriate voice tone and volume

# Measurable Post Secondary Goal Hypothetical

Max, is a 14-year-old with autism, intellectual disability, and limited communication skills. He is on the certificate track. His post secondary goal reads, “Max will help people after graduation.” The IEP does not indicate that Max was present at the IEP meeting. Max’s parents say he enjoys helping to take care of animals at a local shelter and helping with tasks in his dad’s shop.

Is “Max will help people after graduation” an appropriate, measurable post secondary goal?

What concerns do you see in this hypothetical?

How can this post secondary goal be improved?

# Goals for Transition Hypothetical

Sue, is a 16-year-old with downs syndrome. She is on the diploma track. Her post secondary goal reads, “Sue will attend a four-year college.” Sue requires adult support for some of her executive function skills and extra time to complete assignments. Her transition goals are:

1. Sue will research three four-year colleges
2. Sue will determine what classes she needs to take for college
3. Sue will check in with the counselor to discuss college admission

Is “Sue will attend a four-year college” an appropriate, measurable post secondary goal?

Do the goals for transition address academic skills, communication skills, social skills, and/or occupational and vocational skills?

What are some better goals for transition?

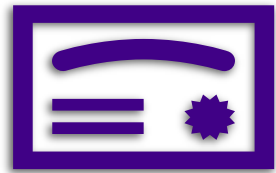
# Poor Transition Planning

- More likely to drop out of school
- Less likely to attend postsecondary education
- Less likely to be employed 3-5 years after high school
- Achieve lower levels of independent living
- Experience more social isolation as adults

# Summary of Performance

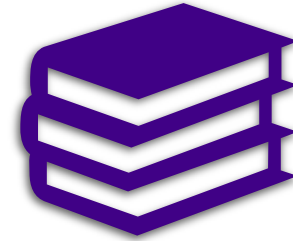
- Required by the IDEA when a child with an IEP receives a diploma or ages out.
- LEA provides the child with a summary of their academic achievement and functional performance.
  - Includes recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals.
  - IDEA does not specifically list what the SOP must contain.
    - Varies by state.

# Transition Planning



## Diploma options

High School Diploma  
Certificates of Completion  
General Education Diploma



## Post-secondary options

Adult day program  
Employment  
Vocational program  
College

# Post Secondary: Students Rights and Responsibilities (1 of 2)

- Section 504 and Title II of the ADA require that postsecondary educational institutions provide students with disabilities with accommodations, including appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services, that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school's program.
- Postsecondary educational institutions are **not required to make adjustments or provide aids or services that would result in a fundamental alteration** of their academic program or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the postsecondary institution's programs.

# Post Secondary: Students Rights and Responsibilities (2 of 2)

- To receive these supports, a **student with a disability must inform the college** that he or she has a disability and needs one or more accommodations. The college is not required to identify the student as having a disability or assess the student's needs prior to receiving a request for an accommodation. Colleges may set reasonable requirements for documentation that students must provide.

# Things to Remember

High School	College/University
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Entitlement</li><li>▪ Mandatory, free</li><li>▪ Identifies students</li><li>▪ Special programs</li><li>▪ Modified course</li><li>▪ Offers support</li><li>▪ Applies accommodations</li><li>▪ Monitors progress</li><li>▪ May have small classes</li><li>▪ Schedule is arranged</li><li>▪ Tests &amp; quizzes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Eligibility</li><li>▪ Voluntary, expensive</li><li>▪ Must self-identify</li><li>▪ Academic standards</li><li>▪ Academic standards</li><li>▪ Seek support</li><li>▪ Request accommodations</li><li>▪ Monitor own progress</li><li>▪ May have large classes</li><li>▪ Arrange own schedule</li><li>▪ Lengthy exams</li></ul>

# Transition Planning Timelines



# Transition Planning for Students Exiting at 21 and Eligible for State Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Agency Services: Age 14-15

## Schools

- Identify career interests and goals
- Participate in IEP meetings
- Develop initial transition plan

## Government Programs

- Apply to the I/DD agency – eligibility
- Provide written consent for school to share information with I/DD agency and/or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency

## Self-Advocacy

- Learn about disability
- Consider life after school
- Attend community transition fairs and workshops

# Transition Planning for Students Exiting at 21 and Eligible for I/DD Agency Services: Age 16-17

## Schools

- Participate in employment training
- Consider travel training

## Government Programs

- Submit a Mobility application form
- Consider obtaining an ID or driver's license

## Self-Advocacy

- Create social networks
- Investigate recreation activities for after high school

# Transition Planning for Students Exiting at 21 and Eligible for I/DD Agency Services: Age 18

## Schools

- Explore supported employment and work-based learning opportunities

## Government Programs

- Apply for Medical Assistance
- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

## Self-Advocacy

- Begin financial and future planning
- Register to vote
- Explore living arrangement options

# Transition Planning for Students Exiting at 21 and Eligible for I/DD Agency Services: Age 19-20

## Schools

- Explore postsecondary education and training options

## Government Programs

- Apply to VR agency the fall prior to exit year

## Self-Advocacy

- Begin visiting community adult service providers
- Explore adult mental health care, if needed

# Transition Planning for Students Exiting at 21: Fall of the Final Year

## Schools

- Invite adult provider to IEP exit IEP meeting

## Government Programs

- Develop contingency plan if funding from IDD agency is not immediately available
- Apply to and select service providers

## Self-Advocacy

- Explore transportation options
- Work with entire team to create seamless transition to adult service delivery system

# Transition Planning for Students Graduating at 18: Age 13/14 (last year of middle school)

## Schools

- Identify career interests and goals
- Participate in IEP meetings
- Develop initial transition plan

## Government Programs

- Apply to the I/DD agency, if appropriate—eligibility
- Give permission for school to share information with I/DD agency and/or VR agency

## Self-Advocacy

- Learn about disability
- Create a transition planning home file

# Transition Planning for Students Graduating at 18: Grade 9

## Schools

- Meet with guidance counselor to select high school course of study
- Review graduation requirements with guidance counselor

## Self-Advocacy

- Become familiar with needed classroom accommodations
- Create social support and networks

# Transition Planning for Students Graduating at 18: Grade 10

## Schools

- Apply for College Board accommodations
- Take PSAT

## Government Programs

- Submit Mobility application
- Consider obtaining a driver's license

## Self-Advocacy

- Learn about community travel, explore transportation options
- Utilize public transportation to travel in community

# Transition Planning for Students Graduating at 18: Grade 11

## Schools

- Discuss potential post-secondary options with school transition personnel
- Review graduation requirements with guidance counselor

## Government Programs

- Apply to VR agency in the fall
- Consider career assessment through VR agency
- Research federal financial aid options

## Self-Advocacy

- Consider part-time/summer employment
- Research college, trade school, military, and employment options
- Visit colleges and trade schools

# Transition Planning for Students Graduating at 18: Grade 12

## Schools

- Take ACT/SAT

## Government Programs

- Apply for financial aid between January 1 and March 1
- Apply for SSI at 18, if eligible
- Register to vote at 18

## Self-Advocacy

- Apply to colleges, employers, or enlist in military
- Contact Disability Support Services if applying to college

# MD Achieving a Better Life Experience Program (ABLE)

- During the 2024 Maryland legislative session, HB 336/SB 592 passed both chambers.
- The legislation requires IEP, individualized family service plan (IFSP), and Section 504 teams to provide parents written information materials regarding the MD ABLE program.
  - At least once per year
  - In the parent's native language
  - Parents may request written informational at any subsequent meeting
  - Materials may be distributed electronically or by hand

# Resources



# Resources

- [National Technical Assistance Center on Transition \(NTACT\)](#)
- [National Youth Transitions Center](#)
- [Wrightslaw](#)
- [National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services](#)
- [Rehabilitation Services Administration](#)
- [MSDE Secondary Transition Planning Guide for Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- [Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates](#)

# Project HEAL Brochures

- Estate Planning for Parents of Individuals with Disabilities in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Life After High School: Making the Transition to Postsecondary Opportunities in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#)
- [Social Security Disability Benefits: What You Need to Know](#)

# Contact Information

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# Questions?



To learn more, get involved, and stay  
connected, visit  
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We were all born with great potential.  
Shouldn't we all have the chance to achieve it?

