

GUIDE TO TRANSITION PLANNING

WAYNE COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY



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INTRODUCTION TO TRANSITION PLANNING

Transition planning is a process used to assist a student with a disability in moving from the school into adult life. It is a cooperative effort between the school, the student, the family, and community agencies. Transition planning increases the likelihood of success in adult life.

This can be a very exciting time, but also a period of uncertainty for both the family and the student. The family and the student will face many questions and decisions regarding housing, future employment and/or education, the community, transportation, finances, and recreation and leisure. They will deal with new agencies, new professionals, and a great deal of new information.

As the most important member of the planning team, the student needs to guide the process as much as possible. Everything revolves around the student and his/her preferences and interests. A transition assessment will help determine those preferences and interests as well as interviewing the student.

The law requires transition planning for all students with a disability, beginning at the age of 16, or earlier, if appropriate. Since the transition process often requires future use of community resources and agencies, it is important that they be included early in the transition planning.

According to IDEA 2004:

(b) Transition services. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include—

(1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and

(2) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.

(c) Transfer of rights at age of majority. Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State law, the IEP must include a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under Part B of the Act, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under §300.520.

The school has an obligation to provide assistance to the student and family during this time of transition. This is done through the development of a transition plan and is an important part of the student's annual Individualized Education Program.

This guide is designed to provide information about transition services and to assist in making the process a smooth and successful one. The following components will support district staff, parents, students and community agencies to identify key elements that impact successful transition.

Transition activities should be designed to help the student select and plan for basic and realistic life outcomes. These goals are different for every person and are very much a personal choice. However, all people should have the opportunity to:

- Have a home.
- Have a healthy lifestyle.
- Have financial security.
- Have a job.
- Have friends.
- Be a consumer.
- Be an active citizen.
- Have recreation and leisure activities.

TRANSITION PLANNING:

Transition planning is the process of preparing a student for the completion of his/her school program and moving into adult life.

- Begins at age 16, or younger if appropriate.

- Considers the student's needs, strengths, preferences and interests as determined by age appropriate transition assessments.
- Focus on life after school.
- Is a required part of the Individualized Education Program.
- Aligns with the Educational Development Plan (EDP).
- Includes the student and family members as part of the planning process.
- Includes the involvement of a variety of school staff.
- Includes non-school agencies, services and community resources, when determined appropriate.
- Ensures that the student receives instruction and social skills development, career options, post-secondary education, community living and community resources.
- Is coordinated by the school.
- Is addressed every year.
- Recommends family support systems.
- Is a cooperative effort between the school, student, family, employers and community agencies.

WHAT ARE TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS?

Transition Assessment:

- Is a continuous process of obtaining, organizing, and using information to assist individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families in making all critical transitions in students' lives both successful and satisfying. – Clark 1998
- Is a process that is measurable, demonstrates improvement and leads towards the student's desired post-secondary goals
- Evolves over time, is ongoing, and is not a one time or annual event

- Requires student engagement
- Involves more than one person
- Involves more than one tool
- Reveals what skills the student possesses and what skills the student must acquire
- Can be formal, informal, or both
- Needs to be completed for all students with an IEP.
- The initial assessment may indicate area(s) in need of a more in-depth assessment, IEP goals, transition services and/or transition activities

Transition Assessments Should Answer the Following Questions:

- a) What are the desired post-secondary goal/s?
- b) What are the student's needs, strengths, preferences and interests?
- c) What skills does the student possess to help achieve his/her goals?
- d) What skills and knowledge must the student acquire to achieve his/her post-secondary goals?
- e) What IEP planning issues need to be addressed? For example, instructional settings, goals and objectives, courses of study, accommodations, supports, modifications, assistive technology, etc.

1) Transition Assessment Information Is Used for the Following:

- a) Developing measurable postsecondary goals.

These goals describe what the student would like to achieve after exiting school. These goals are measurable, meaning that have an outcome that will occur after the student has exited all school programming. These goals include the following areas:

- i. Training/Instruction – What additional training will you need? (Vocational program, job training, certification, apprenticeship, etc.)
- ii. Education – After school completion, what additional education will you need? (Continuing adult education, college, certification programs, etc.)
- iii. Employment – After school completion, what will be your job?
- iv. Independent Living (when appropriate) – After school completion, how will you participate in your community? (Living, activities, social, recreation, etc.)

b. Developing measurable IEP annual goals

An annual goal or goals included in the IEP that will help the student make progress towards the stated postsecondary goals. The IEP Annual Goals must identify a learning gain that is reasonable for the student to achieve in one year, given the instruction and services he/she will receive.

c. Identifying appropriate transition services

- i. Transition services are identified in the IEP and will help the student meet his/her postsecondary goals.
- ii. Transition Service Areas
 - Instruction-Teaching specific skills in both formal and informal education settings in the community.

- Community Experience-Opportunities provided to learn skills and experience events outside the school and the school classroom in the community. This includes job shadowing, tours of the postsecondary educational facilities, community work experiences, recreational experiences, volunteer work and using community resources.
- Development of Employment and other Post-School Adult-Living Objectives
Activities/strategies listed in this area focus on development of work-related behaviors, job seeking and job retention skills, career exploration, skill training, apprenticeship training and actual employment.
- Acquisition of Daily Living Skills (when appropriate)
Creating opportunities in both school and the community to learn skills to live independently or with support. These skills include housekeeping, medication self-management, transportation and mobility, self-advocacy and self-awareness and others associated with being an active community member.
- Functional Vocational Evaluation-
Includes situational assessments at actual jobsites and/or use of checklists and other tools that assess student interests and skill across a variety of job sites.

Transition Planning- Student Perspective

WHAT ARE MY NEEDS AND WHO CAN HELP ME?

- While in school, what do I need to learn and do to reach my dreams?

- What courses of study do I need? Classes? Experiences? Activities?
- How can the school help me?
- Who else can help me? Agencies? Community?
- What do I want to do when I become an adult?

WHAT DO I WANT TO DO FOR A CAREER?

- What do I want to be doing in 5 years? In 10 years? In 15 years?
- Is there something I can do in school, at home, or through an experience that will help me with my goals?
- What are my interests?
- What do I do well?
- With what do I need help?
- Where do I want to work? In the city? In the country? On a ship? In an office? Outside?
- Do I want to work with others or work by myself?
- Do I need special training for my career choice?
- Do I want to go to college, trade school or other training? How will I pay for my education?
- How can I find out more about the career(s) I am interested in?

- What do I need to be successful in my chosen career(s)?

WHAT DO I WANT TO DO WITH MY LIFE?

- What are my dreams?
- What do I like to do? Hobbies? Activities? Sports?
- Do I want to get married? Be a parent?
- Where do I want to live? In the country? In the city? On the coast? In the desert?
- What do I need to do to live independently?
- How will I get around? (Drive, bus, other)

LIVING ON MY OWN

Living on your own can be an exciting idea, but are you ready for the responsibilities and do you have sufficient funds to live an independent life?

- How much money will I need to live on?
- How much money do I need to support a family?
- Do I know how much it costs to rent a place to live?
- What about the cost of food? Utilities? Transportation? Insurance? Recreation?
- How will I get to work or school? Bus? Car? Friend?
- Do I know my social security number?
- Do I have a driver's license or a state identification card?

- If I get a car, how much will it cost and can I afford to make monthly car payments? What about the cost of gas? Maintenance? Insurance?
- Do I need to learn how to take the bus or other public transportation?
- Do I know my medical history and how to make an appointment with my doctor? How will my medical expenses be paid? Do I have medical insurance?
- Am I registered to vote? (If male, am I registered for the draft)?
- Are there agencies that can help provide support me such as MRS, social security or other adult services? Do I know how to meet with them to see if I am eligible?
- Do I know how to speak up for myself and make good choices?
- How much will it cost to go to college or a training program?

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families can help prepare their young adults with disabilities by giving them a growing number of opportunities to make their own decisions.

Families can provide their teenager with opportunities to explore employment, housing options, and community recreation programs in their community by utilizing their own network of relatives and friends as well as formal service systems.

Most importantly, families can prepare themselves to accept their child in his or her new adult role and allow their adult children to take an active role in the

decisions that will determine their future-even if it means allowing them to make mistakes.

Since self-determination skills are most effectively learned and developed by practicing them, students with disabilities should be given many opportunities in their home life and in school to use their self-advocacy, decision-making and socialization skills well before they leave high school to prepare themselves for working and living in their community.

FAMILY CHECKLIST

- Help your son/daughter learn about and understand his/her disability and abilities.
- Support your son/daughter in developing their postsecondary vision.
- Advocate for the curriculum that will prepare your son/daughter for their post-secondary goals.
- Provide opportunities for your son/daughter to explore post-school options (e.g. Employment, career centers, community colleges, state colleges, universities, living arrangements, recreation and leisure, transportation and community services).
- Gain knowledge or resources and agencies that may support your son/daughter's transition goals and activities.
- Keep records of the transition-related services and activities that occur.
- Discuss and develop strategies for transportation if son/daughter will be dependent on others to get to work, social activities and other life events.

- Encourage your son/daughter to be as independent as possible at home and in the community.

TRANSITION TOPICS TO CONSIDER

SELF DETERMINATION

- The development of self-determination skills is a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout one's life.
- Self-determination is important for all people, but it is especially important, and often more difficult to learn, for young people with disabilities.
- Self-determination is a combination of attitudes and abilities that leads people to set goals for themselves and to take the initiative to reach these goals. It is about being in charge, but it is not necessarily the same thing as self-sufficiency or independence. It means making your own choices, learning to effectively solve problems, and taking control and responsibility for one's life. Practicing self-determination also means one experiences the consequences of making choices.

AGE OF MAJORITY (TURNING 18)

Turning 18, or reaching the "age of majority" in Michigan, is when a young person is considered an adult and granted legal autonomy. These rights will be the responsibility of the student upon reaching the age of majority unless the family has completed the legal process for power of attorney or guardianship.

One year before turning 18, a student must be informed during the IEP of his or her rights under IDEA and will be given information entitled *Procedural Safeguards Notice* to help the student understand his/her rights.

GUARDIANSHIP OR POWER OF ATTORNEY?

GUARDIANSHIP is a legally recognized relationship between a competent adult (the guardian) and a student with a disability. The guardian is given the duty and

right to act on behalf of the student in making certain decisions affecting the life of the student.

POWER OF ATTORNEY gives legal authority to a person to make decisions on behalf of another person

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION

Even though IDEA laws do not require transition to be in place until the year the student turns 16, it is important to start thinking about transition during middle school in order to better prepare for high school and beyond. For students with a disability it is time to start thinking about goals for the future in the areas of education, employment and adult living, in order to have the right plans in place leading to their postsecondary goals. One of the first steps in middle school transition is career exploration and the development of the Educational Development Plan, which is required to be completed by the end of the eighth grade.

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN (EDP)

An EDP documents the ongoing process in which a learner identifies both career goals and a plan of action to achieve them. The purpose of the EDP is to provide every student with an ongoing record of career planning that will help guide them in selecting careers that align with their aptitude, interests, and strengths. The EDP outlines the course of study and course sequence where specific content will be learned while the IEP speaks specifically to the programs, accommodations, modifications, and services that are necessary to support the student's success. Together these two documents complement each other in supporting the student toward the EDP goals.

COURSES OF STUDY

The courses of study are the classes needed (required and elective) to achieve a diploma.

There are many paths to a diploma/completion:

- Traditional High School
- Personal Curriculum
- Career and Technical Education
- Online and virtual learning

- Early College programs
- Some type of certificate
- A combination of options

Determining which path is the right path for the student is a student, family and school decision. To learn about the diploma and graduation requirements for your high school, contact your school district.

PERSONAL CURRICULUM

The personal curriculum (PC) is an option any student or family can explore as a way to modify certain graduation requirements and earn a diploma. This must be offered. The purpose of secondary education is to prepare students for life after high school. Any modification in a student's graduation requirements needs to be consistent with this purpose. Local school districts have the ability to develop PC policies. The PC may be requested by the parent, legal guardian, emancipated student, or school personnel. Students who are not pursuing a diploma or students who are unable to meet modified Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements do not need a Personal Curriculum.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

Career and Technical Education are high school instructional programs that teach students skills in a specific career cluster. For example: agriculture, construction, communications business, finance, etc. The mission is to prepare students so they have the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills to enter, compete and advance in education and their careers.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

While there are many paths a student with or without an IEP may travel to obtain a diploma, there is only one diploma in Michigan. For students with an IEP whose disability impacts their ability to meet the requirements for a diploma, they may receive from their school district what is often called a certificate of completion. The certificate of completion is not referenced in special education rules or laws. The requirements for and the awarding of any type of certificate is a local school district decision. The certificate of completion may also be known as a local certificate, certificate of attendance, certificate of participation, or a transition certificate.

THE SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE (SOP)

The Summary of Performance (SOP) will be completed prior to your graduation or when you are leaving school. It will summarize your academic achievements and functional performance, employment status, post-secondary plans. It will list any agencies you may be connected with prior to leaving school. The SOP will include your progress toward goals and will list your accommodations from your most recent IEP and will include recommendations for meeting your post-secondary goals. You and/or your guardian must sign the SOP.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Some individuals with disabilities may be eligible for services from Community Agencies to assist them in their post-school life. Some of the agencies are Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Detroit Wayne County Mental Health Authority (DWCMHA), Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP).

THE COMMUNITY AGENCIES MAY ASSIST INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES BY:

- Providing information on services available through their agency.
- Participating in the Transition IEP meeting as available, assisting in developing the transition plan.
- Assuming responsibility, when, appropriate, for some of the transition activities as the student leaves school.

SOME INFORMATION AND HELPFUL HINTS

- There may be a detailed application process to access supports and services from adult service providers. Eligibility criteria for Adult Service Agencies may vary among certifications.
- Documentation of the individual's disability will be required to determine eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid, Community Mental Health services, and employment services from Michigan Rehabilitation. It is extremely important to keep good records.

- Ideally, the transition from school to agency services is seamless, however, services may not be provided immediately. There may be a waiting period.
- Get started before the end of public education (graduation or aging out of eligibility) to minimize gaps in supports and services.
- Keep good records noting each conversation that occurs. Note the time, date, person contacted and information obtained, and keep a copy of the letters you write or receive from an agency.
- Keep records on employment, letters of recommendation, and a current resume on file.
- Keep medical records and other treatment documentation related to the individual's disability and needs.

SOME WEBSITES FOR TRANSITION INFORMATION:

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_38924---,00.html
Michigan Department of Education High School

www.michigantsa.com – Michigan Transition Services Association

www.ncset.org – National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

www.cec.sped.org – Council for Exceptional Children

<http://community.cec.sped.org/dcdt/home> - CEC - Division of Career Development and Transition

www.cenmi.org – Center for Educational Networking

www.seriweb.com - Special Education Resources on the Internet

www.transitionta.org/ - National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

<https://heath.gwu.edu/> - HEATH Resource Center, the national clearinghouse on post-secondary education of individuals with disabilities

www.ssa.gov/ - Social Security Administration

www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org – Michigan Alliance for Families

www.pacer.org – PACER Center – Assistance for Children with Disabilities

www.ngsd.org – National Gateway to Self-Determination

<http://www.resa.net/specialeducation/transitionplanning/>- Wayne RESA
Secondary Transition Planning Resources

<https://oakland.k12.mi.us/instructional/technical-assistance/special-ed-compliance/iep-development/Pages/Secondary-Transition.aspx> Oakland
Schools