

Transition Planning Requirements of IDEA 2004

What is transition planning?

Transition planning is a process mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) for all students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in K-12 education. The purpose is to facilitate the student's move from school to post-school activities.

The transition planning must:

- start before the student turns 16;
- be individualized;
- be based on the student's strengths, preferences, and interests; and
- include opportunities to develop functional skills for work and community life.

Who develops the transition plan?

- The IEP team
- The student
- Parents
- Optional: employers, college representatives, student advocates



What is the transition team's job?

- Identify the student's vision for his/her life beyond high school;
- Discuss what the student is currently capable of doing in both academic and functional areas;
- Identify age-appropriate, measurable goals;
- Establish services designed to build on strengths and identify needed accommodations;
- Define each transition activity on the IEP regarding who is responsible for the activity and when each activity will begin and end.

How can students best prepare for transition planning?

The school should teach the student:

- The purpose and benefits of an IEP;
- The procedures of an IEP meeting, including who is there and why;
- The purpose of the transition planning part of the IEP meeting;
- The importance of the student's input;
- How to describe their own strengths and challenges (academic and non-academic);
- How to put their vision for their own future into words;
- How to participate in setting their own goals; and
- How to self-advocate for the kinds of supports they will need to meet their goals.

What is “Transfer of Rights”?

IDEA 2004 requires that at least one year before the student reaches the “age of majority” and legally becomes an adult, the school must (1) alert the student of their new, upcoming responsibilities, and (2) provide notices of upcoming meetings to the student as well as the parents, while all other notices will go only to the student.

States determine what the “age of majority” is, so it can vary from state to state. But when the student reaches that age, he or she will assume legal control over educational placement, educational records, eligibility, evaluations and programming, and any mediation or due process needed to resolve disputes.

What is a “Summary of Performance (SOP)”?

A summary of performance is a document the school must provide before the student graduates from high school or turns 22 years old. It summarizes academic and functional performance levels and transition needs at the time the student completes school. It must be specific, meaningful, and written so the student can understand it. It must make recommendations about how to help the student meet his or her postsecondary goals. The SOP should be reviewed at the student’s final transition planning meeting.

Additional Resources for Transition Planning

- **National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities,** www.heath.gwu.edu, provides information about educational support services, procedures and opportunities at a variety of postsecondary entities.
- **National Center for Learning Disabilities,** www.ncld.org/adults-learning-disabilities, provides information about transition, including checklists for various ages.
- **Postsecondary Innovative Transition Technology (POST-ITT),** www.postitt.org/about.shtml, provides a technology-based tool to help with transition planning.
- **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET),** www.ncset.org, focuses on secondary education and transition.
- **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY),** <http://nichcy.org/schoolage/transitions/adult/students>, includes information about the basics of student involvement, person-centered planning, and materials for students.

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