

# Building the TRANSITION PLAN

The entire purpose of the IEP process is to prepare your child for life after high school.

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**T**he law requires that transition is addressed in the individual education plan by specifying the activities and supports the student needs to build the skills, experiences, and connections in order to achieve their life goals.

"Although IEP documentation feels and looks linear, the planning progression should be dynamic with IEP teams approaching the transition process holistically rather than in a fragmented manner... Nothing has been finalized until all areas have been considered."<sup>44</sup>

Under the IDEA, the first IEP after a student is 16 must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are based on age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. The IEP now includes the transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the child in reaching these goals.<sup>45</sup>

The transition plan should be reflected in the student's IEP. Some states may have separate documents or forms to help streamline transition planning (such as an Individualized Transition Plan or a Transition Planning Form), but all agreements (including goals, objectives, accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids, special education, and related services, community experiences, etc.) must be documented in the student's IEP.

Regardless of what it's called, transition planning is a legally mandated part of the IEP and should not be treated as a separate process. All the rules, definitions, and safeguards of the IEP remain – the IEP must continue to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE) during transition years with the added obligation of assessing and addressing long-term, post-school outcomes.

Transition planning is a complex process. It requires time, collaboration, and open minds. The team should remain focused on the student's best possible outcomes. Transition planning should not be an afterthought or an add-on. The IEPs developed during the transition years are the most important as they have the greatest impact on your child's future life options.

Transition planning is not just about what the student can do right now, but what they could do with appropriate instruction, training, support, and experiences. The student may change direction (many times!) during the course of high school – that's okay. This process is about determining a student's potential and possibilities for their future life and making a plan for how to get there.

These are the main parts of a transition plan outlined in the IDEA.<sup>46</sup> Each year, make sure all parts have been completed.



# TRANSITION CHECKLIST



## ASSESSMENTS

Age-appropriate assessment related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills assessments (including community access and recreation and leisure skills) based on the individual needs of the student to be used to determine appropriate measurable postsecondary goals. This includes functional vocational evaluation if appropriate.



## MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOALS

These are goals for life *after* high school. There must be one goal in each of the following areas: training/education, employment, and if appropriate, independent living skills. Evidence that the measurable postsecondary goals have been updated annually based on age-appropriate transition assessment and data collection must be provided each year.



## ANNUAL IEP GOALS

Annual IEP goals must support measurable post-secondary goals to outline the steps that the student needs to take while still in high school to achieve their postsecondary goals.



## PROGRESS MONITORING

Progress monitoring including benchmarks to keep track of how the student is progressing towards their goals and accessing other transition services. If the child is not making progress, reconvene the team and discuss changes to the child's instructional program.



## SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

The transition plan must list the supports and services needed to help the student achieve their postsecondary goals through a coordinated set of activities, including: specially designed instruction; courses of study; related services; community experiences; employment and other adult living objectives; daily living skills; and activities for exploration and skill development.



## STUDENT INVITATION

Evidence that the school invited the child to attend the meeting must be provided.



## OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Involvement of outside agencies that may provide adult services, as well as evidence that a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP meeting with the prior consent parent or student who has received the age of majority.



## AGREEMENT

Agreement of who will provide and/or pay for the activities outlined in the statement of transition services, stating who is responsible for each aspect of the process (including referral to outside agencies, work experience, on-the-job training, and follow-up).

## EXAMPLES OF HOW TO COMBINE TRANSITION AND IEP REQUIREMENTS

IEP COMPONENT:	FROM A TRANSITION PERSPECTIVE, INCLUDE:
Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vision statement of the student's hopes and dreams for the future.</li> <li>• Parent and student identification of strengths, needs, interests, and preferences, including career goals.</li> <li>• A description of student's current skills and experiences, including transition-related assessment results where appropriate, in the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Academics, including performance on state and district requirements linked to graduation outcomes.</li> <li>» Effectiveness of the previous use of accommodations, modifications, and supports in achieving or progressing toward prior IEP goals.</li> <li>» Social/emotional/behavioral skills, especially as these relate to job seeking, job keeping, and socialization.</li> <li>» Communication, including any special supports the student will need to work and live independently.</li> <li>» Health/medical, including any condition that will necessitate medical management skills for the student.</li> <li>» Independent living, including community integration and participation.</li> <li>» Community experiences (vocational and independent living), including the nature and type of experiences the student has had.</li> <li>» Cognitive and learning skills, including strengths that will assist in identifying bypass strategies to compensate for disability challenges.</li> <li>» Self-determination skills, including self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-management, and self-motivation.</li> <li>» Current participation within the general curriculum and with other youths, with and without disabilities, including extracurricular participation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current postsecondary education, employment, and independent living goals.</li> <li>• Diploma status and plans; participation in state/district assessments.</li> <li>• Anticipated course of study for secondary school.</li> <li>• Instruction, community experiences, related services, independent living skills instruction, and functional vocational evaluation; cross-reference to the appropriate IEP components.</li> <li>• Linkages; cross-reference to the appropriate IEP components.</li> </ul>
Annual goals, objectives, and benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable annual goals that enable the student to make progress toward his or her long term post-school transition goals for employment, postsecondary education, and independent living.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Intermediate objectives or benchmarks with clear evaluation criteria and timelines that will document progress toward the annual transition goals.</li> <li>» Responsible person(s) for providing instructional activity or monitoring progress toward each goal and how progress will be evaluated.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Accommodations, modifications, and supplementary aids and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job accommodations or modifications that may be needed for the student to be successful.</li> <li>• Job coach or assistant, if needed.</li> <li>• Supports ranging from intermittent to pervasive, depending on need.</li> <li>• Assistive technology that may enable the student to live or work more independently.</li> <li>• Extended school year or day, if needed to meet the student's transition goals or objectives or to access specialized services.</li> </ul>

## EXAMPLES OF HOW TO COMBINE TRANSITION AND IEP REQUIREMENTS (cont.)

IEP COMPONENT:	FROM A TRANSITION PERSPECTIVE, INCLUDE:
Special education and related services , including the frequency, location, duration, and provider of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialized training for staff who will provide transition services or supports, if needed.</li> <li>• Vocational evaluation, if needed.</li> <li>• Therapy/counseling services, if needed.</li> <li>• School health services, if needed.</li> <li>• Assistive technology evaluation, if needed.</li> <li>• Orientation and mobility services, if needed.</li> <li>• Community-based instruction or work experience.</li> <li>• Specialized instruction to meet transition goals and objectives, including occupationally specific programs.</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>
Least restrictive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive services provided within the community or workplace.</li> <li>• Participation with youth and young adults with and without disabilities.</li> </ul>
Periodic reporting of progress toward annual goals/ objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans for monitoring and reporting to families the progress toward annual goals (including transition-related goals).</li> <li>• Plans for reconvening IEP team if not progressing, or if services have not been provided as agreed upon.</li> </ul>

*From IEP Transition Planning – From Compliance to Quality.*<sup>47</sup>

## KEY Points



Transition services are an added component of the IEP at transition age.



The transition IEP has many parts that you must know.



The most important IEPs of your child's life are during the transition years.