

Southgate Community Schools
Special Education Department

Parent Transition
Information Handbook



Transition Information Handbook

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

At the end of high school students are faced with many choices and challenges. We wonder, are they ready to leave home? Where will they live? Will they go to college? Will they get a job? Could they survive without mom and dad telling them what to do? Are they really prepared to be productive adults? Who, where, what and how do they get help when they need it?

To better prepare our children for the future we must help them develop a plan. We simply cannot wait until they leave high school for action steps to begin. We must start long before that to ensure that our children will develop the skills, attitudes and problem solving abilities to function in a rapidly changing world.

That's exactly what transition planning is all about: helping each student take small steps to reach his or her desired life goals. The student's desires, interests and preferences should guide the type of educational programming he or she receives. Together, parents and educators should be working together to help forge the plan and the action steps necessary to achieve realistic outcomes. We are very proud to present this booklist to assist parents and guardians in their quest to support their child on the road to adulthood.

The booklet is designed to provide you with easy-to-understand information about the transition process. It will:

- Help you understand the roles of the student, the parent and the teacher.
- Provide you with suggestions and ideas about how to help your child identify and state what he or she wants to do.
- Identify and explain what you should expect at the transition-planning meeting/IEP.
- Explain how transition goals should be incorporated into your child's total educational program.
- Help you understand the community service agencies that may be available to assist students.

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What is the Concept of Transition?

Transition is a simple concept that has three major parts:

1. To assist every student and his or her family to think about goals for life after high school and develop a long range plan for reaching those goals.
2. Make sure the high school experience ensures that the student gains the skills needed to achieve his or her goals for the future.
3. Identify and link students and families to support services and programs before the student leaves the school system.

Transition includes:

- Focusing on the individual
- Providing an educational foundation that focuses on student results
- Communication
- Helping students and families
- Collaboration
- Operating in an atmosphere that is non-threatening and fosters communication and planning
- People working together and sharing information, ideas and resources
- The opportunity to change, grow, build, and challenge
- A way of thinking. Remember to think outside of the box ☺

Life Outcomes:

Transition planning should help the student plan, make meaningful choices and have realistic outcomes. To the fullest extent possible 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 Timeline

Like all people, persons with disabilities go through many transitions in their lives. Transition planning is focused on the transition from school to adulthood. However, it is important to view transition in the context of the student's total learning experience, since transition planning at the secondary level must build on the developmental experiences of the student up to that time. Annual transition assessment is an integral part of this process. The following table shows how transition choices should be developed and formed beginning at the preschool level. Ultimately, this type of long range thinking and planning should result in an IEP that is results-oriented and a plan that will prepare students for post school adult life.

Career Awareness & Exploration of Adult Life Roles	Career Exploration and Defining Adult Roles	Career Preparation & Adult Roles/Responsibilities
Primary Level Grades 1-5 Ages 5-11	Middle School Grades 6-8 Ages 11-14	High School Grades 9-12 Ages 14-Graduation

Areas of Intelligence

Parents and guardians need to understand their child's strengths and weaknesses. Do you know how smart your child is?

The 8 different ways that people are intelligent include:

1. Music Smart – musical, rhythm sense
2. Body Smart – sports, athletic
3. People Smart – good skills in dealing with others
4. Self Smart – understand self well
5. Picture Smart – artistic, values visual aspects
6. Word Smart – good vocabulary, communication skills
7. Logic Smart – good math skills, systematic thinker
8. Nature Smart – experience in the natural world

Which smart area is a strength for your child?
Which smart area causes your child difficulty?

As the person who will guide your child in setting reachable goals, it is helpful to know the smart areas for the child. The smart areas that are not as well developed should also be considered as we help your child transition toward adulthood.

We need to help your child set goals. Goals are the things your child will want to accomplish because they have meaning. They should be realistic enough for your child to believe they are possible, yet not compromise one's dreams.

Transition Areas

Adult Living: Activities/strategies in this area emphasize activities/strategies that focus on adult living skills. These are generally those activities that are done occasionally such as registering to vote, filing taxes, obtaining a driver's license, renting or buying a home, accessing medical services, obtaining and filing for insurance, accessing social security.

Community Experiences: The emphasis in this area is on activities/strategies that are generally provided outside the school building and that prepare the student for participation in community life. These activities should encourage the student to participate in the community, including government, social, recreational, leisure, shopping, banking, transportation, and other opportunities.

Daily Living Skills: Those activities that adults do most every day. These can include such things as preparing meals, budgeting, maintaining a residence, paying bills, raising a family, caring for clothing, and/or personal grooming.

Employment: Activities/strategies listed in this area focus on development of work-related behaviors, job seeking and keeping skills, career exploration, skill training, apprenticeship training and actual employment.

Functional Performance: is not defined in IDEA 2004, but IEP teams can consider the **nonacademic** needs of the student that might include:

- Self-Determination Skills
- Problem Solving Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Career/Vocational Skills
- Motor Skills
- Social Skills
- Behavioral Skills
- Communication Skills
- Technology Skills

The functional performance information can come from a variety of sources such as: the parent(s), general and special education teachers, the student, various assessments (Standardized, informal), etc.

Functional Vocational Evaluation: The assessment process that provides information about job or career interests, aptitudes and skills. Information is gathered through situational assessments in the setting where the job is performed. This can include observations, formal and informal measures, and should be practical. Information is gathered through a functional vocational assessment can be used to refine educational experiences, course of study, and employment activities/strategies in the statement of transition services.

Instruction: Activities/strategies listed in this area have to do with instruction, whether that is formal or informal imparting of knowledge or skills. The activities can include, but are not limited to such things as broad curricular areas of needed coursework, educational experiences, skill training, etc. or activities/strategies that are necessary to prepare for and take part in college, continuing education, further skill training, adult living, etc.

Related Services: Activities/strategies in this area should consider the current and projected related service needs of the student. This area is not for specifying the needed related services for the next school year. Related services for the school year should be addressed in another appropriate section of the IEP. The context of related services here has to do with determining if the related services will continue beyond school, helping to identify who or what agency might provide these services, helping to identify how the student and parent can access these services and then connecting the student and parent to whomever will provide those services before the student leaves the school system. This type of planning, discussion and identifying of activities/strategies should make the move from the school to a related service provider, or adult agency, as seamless as possible for the student and parent.

Transition Assessment: A planned on-going process of obtaining information to address the comprehensive transition needs of students in areas such as: employment, further education and training, daily living, leisure, community participation, health, self determination, communication, or interpersonal relationships. The assessments can be formal and/or informal.

Effective Transition Planning

- Transition planning efforts should start early.
- Planning must be comprehensive.
- Annual Transition Assessment (formal or informal).
- Planning process should be realistic.
- Student participation is essential.
- Family involvement is crucial.

The transition process should be coordinated by the school. It should involve the linkage of community agencies, school, the student and his or her family, according to their needs.

- Every community should have supports and services available that will help the person with a disability.
- Timing is crucial if certain linkages are to be made and a seamless transition to life after high school is to be achieved.
- Transition planning must be reviewed every year.
- Transition plans must center on student interests and preferences.
- Transition should drive the IEP.

Transition Participants and Their Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Students

- Have required documents (Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, State I.D., Insurance Cards, Immunization Record, Proof of Guardianship, etc.) and know where they are kept.
- Attend the Individual Education Planning Team meetings.
- Actively participate in all discussions and decisions.
- Communicate post school preference and interests.
- Communicate his or her strengths as well as areas where help is needed.
- Self-advocate.
- Become knowledgeable of community supports.

Responsibilities of Parents

- Have required documents (Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, State I.D., Insurance Cards, Immunization Record, Proof of Guardianship, etc.) and know where they are kept.
- Support the student.
- Provide information concerning the strengths and areas of concern for the student.
- Help focus on goals that will influence the student's life after completion of school.
- Be knowledgeable of community/family supports.
- Before the IEP/Transition Meeting, make a list of everything you want to discuss.
- Design activities at home to help your son or daughter practice skills that will help with the transition into adulthood.
- Encourage the student to be as independent as possible both at home and in the community.
- Complete the responsibilities assigned to you on the Transition Plan.
- Join advocacy groups, share experiences, ask for help if needed and offer help to other parents.

Responsibilities of the School

- Help plan and coordinate activities to help the student move through the school system and into adult life.
- Coordinate the development and annual review of the IEP along with the transition plan, goals and objectives.
- Provide transition assessments.
- Provide student support to ensure the plan is implemented at school.
- Provide information about community service agencies.
- Invite key participants to the IEP meeting.
- Provide agencies with referral information. Remember, some application waiting periods may be lengthy.
- Inform the student/parent that parental rights will transfer to him/her at the age of 18.

Responsibilities of Community Agencies

- Participate in the transition plan while the student is in school.
- Provide information as to eligibility requirements and services provided by the agency.
- Assume responsibility for transition activities when the student leaves the school.
- Make referrals as needed.
- Complete all plans prior to graduation.

Questions and Tips for Parents

Questions to Consider

The first step in a good transition plan is to ask the student what they want to do after completing their secondary program.

- Do they have required documents and know where they are?
- Do they want to work? Where?
- Do they want to live alone? Get married? Raise a family?
- Do they know how to get around the community? Bus routes?
- Do they know the duties of a citizen? Voting? Obeying laws?

Once we know what the student wants to do, the transition team can begin to see what areas the student needs to work on during each school year. Transition assessment results must be considered.

1. Does the transition plan follow the strengths and preferences of the student?
2. How do these activities assist the student to become more independent in the areas of employment, daily living, and community?
3. Do the IEP goals relate to and support the transition plan? For example, let's say that your son or daughter wants to be a carpenter. Do the IEP goals for math reflect the need to strengthen mathematical measurement skills?

Tips for Parents

- Talk to your child.
- Keep in touch with teachers regarding the progress of your child.
- Go to the IEP meeting prepared and with a positive attitude.

- If you do not understand something, ask for clarification.
- Keep records and information.
- Check to see if the transition plan is working.
- Monitor your child's transition plan.
- Learn to distinguish between things you can change and things you cannot change.
- During the year be sure to follow through on what you said you would do.
- Think positively.
- Be realistic and don't expect perfection from yourself and others.
- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible.
- Build on your child's strengths.

Guardianship

In Michigan, a child becomes an adult at the age of 18 (the age of majority). At this age your son or daughter will assume all responsibility for his or her own life decisions. State law mandates that at the age of 17, the student must be advised of age of majority changes at the IEP meeting. This means that you will no longer be the guardian for your child.

Parents sometimes need to make difficult decisions concerning their child. Guardianship is a very serious decision. Guardianship is a legally authorized commitment between a capable adult and a person with a disability. Until your child turns 18 years old, the parents are considered the legal guardians. If you feel it will be necessary to remain legal guardians of your child with a disability, it is best to start planning when the child turns 17. Guardianship can be viewed as a protective measure when decisions must be made regarding medical, legal and financial matters.

It is important to first seek qualified, experienced counsel in the specific area of guardianship:

Types of Guardianship

- **Partial Guardianship:** Reserves the right for adults to make some decisions.
- **Plenary or Full Guardianship:** Makes all major decisions for adults.
- **Standby/Substitute:** Replaces plenary guardian when necessary.
- **Co-Guardianship:** In cases where two persons share guardianship.

To Apply for Guardianship, contact Wayne County Probate Court at (313) 224-5706. The process takes 3 to 8 months.

Conclusion

As the primary caregiver of a precious child, we each have our own individual parenting styles and our own individual ways of seeing our world. However, we all have in common the dream that our child will enjoy a life that is as enriched and fulfilling as possible. We also have in common the true desire to do all that we can to help our child reach full potential. Transition is a cooperative effort between the student, family, school and community agency. Our mission is to support you as you guide your child in the setting of worthy goals and in the transition process that will make those goals a reality. In Southgate, the first transition plan must be done during the school year that a child turns 16. This plan becomes a map that guides your child from school to the adult world. If we pay attention to the map, opportunities for your child's success will become much more likely. Transition works best when the student, parents, family, school and agencies all work together.

(734)946-3500

Technical Schools

William D. Ford Career-Technical Center

Wayne-Westland

(734)419-2100

Programs:

- Auto Body Repair
- Business/Computer Technology
- Computer Aided Design/
- Drafting (CADD)
- Construction Technology
- Culinary Arts
- Digital Media
- Electronics/Robotics
- Graphic/Printing Communications Technology
- Heating/Air Conditioning/ Refrigeration
- Web Design: Integrated

Website: <http://wwcsd.net/fctc>

- Automotive Technology
- Child Day Care
- Computer Aided Mfg. Machining
- Computer Science: Database
- Cosmetology
- Desktop Publishing
- Hospitality
- Graphic Design
- Health Occupations
- Media Production
- Welding Technology

Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI)

11611 West Pine Lake Road, Plainwell, MI 49080

1-877-901-7360

The Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) is a specialized vocational training and rehabilitation center for Michigan citizens with disabilities. Students live in on-campus dormitories and supported by a 24-hour staff. MCTI offers a wide range of support services, including academic, rehabilitation, and substance-abuse counseling, on-site recreational programs, and a staff of nurses and social workers. MCTI has flexible enrollment and offers financial aid to eligible students.

Programs:

- Automotive Technology
- Certified Nurse Assistant
- Custodial
- Electronics
- Grounds Maintenance/Landscaping
- Office Automation
- Cabinetmaking/Millwork
- Culinary Arts
- Customer Service
- Graphic Communications
- Machine Technology
- Retail Marketing

Community Mental Health Services

Access Center (800)-241-4949 Please call to find out if you are eligible.

Providers: go online to choose a provider and then call the provider number below

Developmental Disabled (Cognitively Impaired, Autism Spectrum Disorder):

- Synergy Partners (866)724-7544 www.synergypartnersllc.com/home.html
- Community Living Services (734)467-7600 www.comlivserv.com/services.htm
- Consumer Link (888)711-5465 www.bhpi.org

Mentally Ill (Emotional Impairment):

- Care Link (888)-711-5465
- Gateway (800)973-4283

The Guidance Center, for Developmental Disabilities or Community Mental Health Services

Southgate, MI 734-785-7700

www.guidance-center.org/contact-us

