

Secondary Transition: What Educators Need to Know

The transition service requirements of IDEA 2004 recognize that education can improve the post-school outcomes of students with disabilities by doing a better job of preparing students and their families for the complexities of the adult world.

Start at the beginning . . .

When planning for a student's transition to life after high school, educators should begin the journey on a solid foundation. This is best accomplished by making sure that the transition planning team knows the interests, aptitudes, and abilities of the student in the early years of high school. Transition assessment, whether formal or informal, is the beginning of an appropriate transition plan.

This information should be included in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance section of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

For whom is transition planning required?

Transition planning is required for all students with disabilities, at the time the student turns 14 (or sooner if appropriate), who qualify for special education services.

Invite the right people . . .

Each transition planning team is made up of individuals who will assist the student in achieving their post-high school goals. These may include, but are not limited to:

- The student
- Family members
- Special education teacher
- General education teacher(s)
- Career/tech center personnel
- Transition coordinator
- Guidance counselor
- Agency/community representatives

Reminder: When inviting outside agencies, please provide as much advanced notice as possible.

Identify the outcomes . . .

The transition team plans for post-school outcomes. Here are some examples:

Postsecondary Education and Training

- None – student expresses no interest
- Student is undecided

- Two- or four-year college/university
- Technical/trade school
- Military training
- Adult education classes
- Other

Employment

- Competitive employment without support
- Competitive employment with support
- Employment training program
- Employment in a specific career cluster such as: carpentry, retail sales, or the food industry

Independent Living

- Access community resources and programs without support
- Access community resources and programs with family supports
- Access community resources and programs with agency supports

Independent living outcomes include recreation/leisure and residential options, as well as community participation issues such as transportation.

Develop the plan . . .

The IEP document contains a grid in which educators place information regarding the transition services and activities being implemented during this IEP. An abbreviated list of examples of activities/services could include:

Postsecondary Education and Training

- Scheduling SAT accommodations
- Attending college fairs
- Practicing self-disclosure
- Touring program campus
- Training in note-taking strategies
- Contacting campus Offices of Students with Disabilities
- Developing organizational skills

Employment

- Participating in:
 - in-school work experiences
 - community service projects
 - job shadowing visits
 - work experiences
 - interest inventories
 - mentoring experiences
 - volunteer work

Independent Living

- Training in:
 - pedestrian safety
 - public transportation
 - shopping/money skills
 - apartment living
 - recreation and leisure activities
 - accessing community medical services
 - healthy lifestyles
- Registering to vote

Reminder: Include the courses of study and other educational experiences in which the student will be engaged.

See the big picture . . .

The grid covers the period of time the IEP is in effect. However, IEP teams must also document a multi-year planning process. This step-by-step, year-to-year plan leading students from high school to their post-school outcomes is called the coordinated set of activities. One way to document the coordinated set of activities might be to keep the grids from year to year. Upon graduation, the IEP team would then have a coordinated set of activities in the student's file. Another way might be to add to the grid each year so that the record of the coordinated set of activities is

documented yearly – resulting in the final IEP containing all activities completed during the student's school career.

Reminder: Transition plans should be tailor-made for each student.

Resources

Brinckerhoff, L. C., McGuire, J. M., Shaw, S. F. (2002). *Post-secondary Education and Transition for Students with Disabilities*. 2nd Ed. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Sands, Deanna J. (1999). *Best Practices: A Study to Understand and Support Student Participation in Transition Planning*. Denver, CO: University of Colorado at Denver. (dsands@ceocudenver.edu)

Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., Garza, N., and Levine, P. (2005). *After High School: A First Look at the Postschool Experiences of Youth with Disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. [Online]. Available: www.nlts2.org/pdfs/afterhighschool_report.pdf.

For additional information, visit PaTTAN online at www.pattan.net or contact a secondary transition consultant at:

PaTTAN – Pittsburgh Office
412-826-2336 or 800-446-5607

PaTTAN – Harrisburg Office
717-541-4960 or 800-360-7282

PaTTAN – King of Prussia Office
610-265-7321 or 800-441-3215

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