

TRANSITION TIPS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS WITH IEPs

The Postsecondary Transition Planning Process

Your child's postsecondary transition plan is the detailed plan that identifies your child's goals for life after high school. The plan must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills. Since you reside in Ohio, your child's plan must be in place not later than the first IEP that is in effect when your child is 14 years of age. This means that the school district should begin the planning process in middle school when your child is 13 years of age or younger.

What you need to know...

TIP 1: Make sure you start planning early

- Transition planning and services begin at age 14
- The student is invited to be a part of the IEP team at age 14
- The student needs to understand their role in developing their vision
- Planning a student's future should be based on what they need, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do
- Both formal and informal assessments can help the IEP team know what transition services should be provided. They also give feedback on how well a student is doing.

TIP 2: Transition starts with a student's vision

- Vision = Postsecondary Goals
- Postsecondary Goals are what a student wants to do after they leave high school
- Postsecondary Goals describe what a student's future activities might be after high school, such as if they want to participate in higher education, what type of job they are interested in, and what they hope their life will look like
- Postsecondary Goals will likely change year to year as a student has different experiences and gains new skills

TIP 3: Transition assessments are needed for planning

- Transition planning can help students learn what they are good at and like to do. Transition Assessments can answer questions about who the student is, where they want to go, and what support they need.
- Both formal and informal assessments can help the IEP Team know what transition services should be provided. They also give feedback on how well a student is progressing.
- The school district will conduct age-appropriate transition assessments related to employment. If your child's school district is not conducting postsecondary age-appropriate assessments, you may request that they do so. These assessments will identify your child's preferences and interests for what they would like to do in life after high school, as well as identify their needs and strengths. Since it is common for students to change their plans for the future while in high school, age-appropriate assessments are repeated periodically.

TIP 4: Transition planning is a process

- Transition should be discussed at every IEP Team meeting beginning when a student turns 14
- Your child's postsecondary transition plan must be updated at least annually. Postsecondary transition planning will be discussed as a part of your child's IEP review. However, it is not uncommon for additional planning meetings to take place without the full IEP team.
- Team members should talk about what a student is interested in doing after high school and what supports they will need to get there
- After a discussion about Postsecondary Goals, the IEP Team should take this discussion to develop Annual IEP Goals and Transition Services/Activities
- Annual IEP Goals should relate to what skills a student needs to work on this year to achieve their Postsecondary Goals
- The student's Postsecondary Goals should be recorded as the future planning statement on the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Every year, Annual IEP Goals and Transition Services/Activities will change and the IEP Team will continue to help the student work toward their Postsecondary Goals. As your child gets older, expect the plan to become more detailed and specific.
- Your child's postsecondary plans should drive your child's Annual IEP Goals so that they will be prepared to do whatever they would like to do after graduation from high school. Your child's IEP goals should be written to help your child meet their postsecondary transition goals.

The more engaged students are in planning their futures, the more promising those futures are likely to be

The school district is required to invite your child to the IEP meeting when postsecondary transition planning will be discussed. At your discretion, your child may or may not attend all or part of the IEP meeting. Representatives from outside agencies that can support your child after high school may also be invited to attend your child's IEP meeting when postsecondary transition planning takes place. The outside agencies may be invited by you, or with your permission, by the school district.

The Transition Process is a unique process and individualized for your child's needs and abilities

It is important to remember that the ultimate goal of your child's IEP is to prepare your child for life. As a parent, you can be instrumental in assuring that the school district provides the detailed planning that is needed for your child to be prepared to meet their postsecondary IEP transition goals and to be prepared for life after high school.

Since your child has a disability and is on an IEP, it may take your child longer to acquire the skills needed for postsecondary life. For this reason, IDEA 2004, the Federal Law governing special education, permits your child to remain in school until his/her 22nd birthday.

If your child has not acquired the skills identified in his/her postsecondary transition plan or needs more time to fulfill other academic and/or IEP goals, consideration may be given to deferring graduation beyond when he/she would typically graduate. If the IEP team (including the parents and student) makes the decision to defer graduation, your child will not receive their diploma at that time. However, your child can go through a "social graduation" where they walk the stage with their peer classmates. The actual diploma will later be awarded when exiting school services. Please note that once the school district awards a diploma to your child, the school district has no further obligation to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE) or IEP services to your child.

IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A formal agreement about the services a school will provide for the student's special education needs.

Annual IEP Goals

Goals that the IEP Team sets to describe which skills the student will gain by the end of one year, so that the student moves one year closer toward achieving their postsecondary goals.

IEP Team

During the transition years, a group of people discuss the transition planning and write the IEP together. The student, parents, special education and regular education teachers, a district representative, and any other individuals who have evaluated or provided services to the student, all work together to help a student achieve their postsecondary goals.

If appropriate, employers, other agencies such as those agencies serving adults with disabilities, and others with knowledge or expertise about the student, should be included in your child's IEP team.

Postsecondary Transition

For students with IEPs, the time between ages 14 and 22 when they work with their IEP team to create and carry out a plan that will help them learn the skills they need to achieve their vision for adult life.

Postsecondary Goals

The student's vision for adult life or life after high school is in the areas of education, training, employment, and independent living. These goals will appear in Section 5 of the IEP when a child turns 14 years old.

Transition Assessment

The ongoing process of collecting data on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do related to work, education, living, and participation in the community.

Transition Services and Activities

A coordinated set of services and activities based on what a student's needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do. These items are designed to help them achieve their vision for adult life.

For questions and further assistance, please contact:

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