

# **SPECIAL EDUCATION - TRANSITION 101 A GUIDE FOR PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**



***\*EMPOWERING YOUR CHILD FOR SUCCESS IN SECONDARY TRANSITION\****

***2025 – 2026***

# SPECIAL EDUCATION - TRANSITION 101

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Dear Parents,

Navigating the transition from school to adulthood can be daunting, especially for students with special needs. As your child approaches secondary transition, it's crucial to equip yourself with the knowledge and resources to support them effectively. Here's your essential guide to understanding and preparing for this journey:

**What is Secondary Transition?** Secondary transition refers to the process of preparing students with disabilities for life after high school, including further education, employment, and independent living. It aims to facilitate a smooth shift from school to adult life, ensuring students are equipped with the skills and support they need to achieve their goals.

### Key Components of Transition Planning:

1. **Assessment and Goal Setting:** Identify your child's strengths, interests, and preferences to develop meaningful transition goals aligned with their aspirations.
2. **Transition Services:** Access specialized services and supports, such as vocational training, job placement assistance, and independent living skills training, tailored to your child's needs.
3. **Collaboration:** Foster partnerships between schools, families, and community agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to transition planning and implementation.
4. **Self-Advocacy:** Empower your child to advocate for their needs, preferences, and rights as they transition to adulthood.
5. **Postsecondary Education:** Explore options for further education, including colleges, vocational schools, and adult education programs, that offer inclusive environments and support services for students with disabilities.
6. **Employment Opportunities:** Investigate vocational training programs, internships, job shadowing opportunities, and supported employment services to help your child gain valuable work experience and secure meaningful employment.
7. **Independent Living Skills:** Foster independence by teaching essential life skills, such as budgeting, household management, transportation, and self-care, to promote autonomy and self-sufficiency.

### Your Role as a Parent:

- \* Be an active participant in the transition planning process, advocating for your child's needs and preferences.
- \* Encourage your child to explore their interests, strengths, and career aspirations, and provide guidance and support as they develop their postsecondary goals.
- \* Foster self-determination and self-advocacy skills by encouraging your child to take ownership of their transition journey and make informed decisions about their future.
- \* Stay informed about available resources, services, and supports to help your child achieve their transition goals.

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### Transition Services:

Transition services are a set of coordinated activities designed to help students with disabilities move from the world of school to the world of adulthood. These services are tailored to each student's individual needs, strengths, and preferences.

**\*\*Importance of Transition Planning:** Begin transition planning as early as possible, ideally by age 14. This ensures there's enough time to identify goals, explore post-school options, and develop necessary skills.

**\*\*Student Involvement:** Encourage your child to actively participate in the transition planning process. Their input is crucial in identifying their strengths, preferences, and goals for the future.

**\*\*Age-Appropriate Goals:** For a student aged 14 to 22, transition goals could include developing independent living skills (such as cooking, managing finances, and using public transportation), exploring vocational interests through job shadowing or internships, and identifying post-secondary education or training options.

**\*\*Community Resources:** Research and connect with community resources that offer support and services for individuals with disabilities. These could include vocational rehabilitation agencies, independent living centers, and job training programs.

**\*\*Collaboration with School Team:** Work closely with your child's school team, including teachers, counselors, and special education coordinators, to develop and implement the transition plan. Regular communication ensures that everyone is aligned and working towards the same goals.

**\*\*Review and Revise:** Regularly review and revise the transition plan as needed. As your child grows and their interests and abilities evolve, their goals may change as well. Flexibility and adaptability are key.

### Transition Assessment:

Transition assessment is an ongoing process of gathering information about a student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs related to their transition from school to post-school activities such as further education, employment, and independent living.

Parents play a crucial role in the transition assessment process as they have valuable insights into their child's abilities, preferences, and goals. Their input helps ensure that the transition plan reflects the student's unique needs and aspirations.

How Transition Assessments Inform the IEP:

**\*\*Identifying Goals:** Transition assessments provide valuable information that helps the IEP team identify appropriate goals and objectives for the student's transition plan. This could include academic, vocational, independent living, and social-emotional goals.

**\*\*Determining Services and Supports:** By understanding the student's strengths and areas for growth, transition assessments assist the IEP team in determining the necessary services, accommodations, and supports to help the student achieve their post-school goals.

Parent input can be gathered through various means, including surveys, interviews, and questionnaires.

Parents can:

- list their child's strengths, interests, and hobbies, along with any activities or subjects they particularly enjoy or excel in.
- share their child's aspirations for the future, including career interests, desired living arrangements, and educational goals.
- identify any areas where their child may require additional support or accommodations, such as academic assistance, social skills development, or vocational training.
- provide information about community resources and services that may benefit their child's transition, such as vocational rehabilitation agencies, job training programs, or support groups.

### Being Prepared for the IEP Team

Remember, the ultimate goal of transition services is to empower students with disabilities to achieve their full potential and successfully navigate the challenges of adulthood. By working together with your child and their support network, you can help pave the way for a bright and fulfilling future.

By completing a transition assessment and sharing their insights with the IEP team, parents can ensure that their child's transition plan is comprehensive, personalized, and aligned with their aspirations and needs. Open communication and collaboration between parents and the IEP team are essential for developing a successful transition plan that sets the stage for a bright future.

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### Remember, You're Not Alone!

Transition planning can feel overwhelming, but remember that you're not alone on this journey. By working collaboratively with your child, educators, and community partners, you can help pave the way for a successful transition to adulthood.

#### Resources and Support:

- \* Connect with your child's school to access transition planning services, including Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and transition assessments.
- \* Explore community organizations, disability advocacy groups, and online resources that offer information, support, and guidance on secondary transition for students with disabilities.
- \* Seek guidance from vocational rehabilitation agencies, disability service providers, and postsecondary institutions to explore postsecondary education and employment options for your child.

*\*\*\*For additional support and guidance, don't hesitate to reach out to your child's school or local special education resources. Together, we can empower every student to achieve their dreams and thrive in the transition to adulthood. \*\*\**



#### North Providence Special Education Local Advisory Committee

**Please Join Us!** Each NPSELAC meeting will include a speaker and/or presentation on a topic related to special education. We are always striving to meet the needs of parents, students, and faculty so please feel free to contact us with any concerns or suggestions.

#### Parent Support

The more informed you are as a parent, the better you can protect the rights of your child. Parental involvement in a child's education is the key to his success. With your support, your child can experience academic excellence to the best of his or her ability.

[npselac@npsd.k12.ri.us](mailto:npselac@npsd.k12.ri.us)

#### Transition Contacts:

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Office of Rehabilitation Services

<https://ors.ri.gov/fact-sheetsbrochures>

40 Fountain Street

Providence, RI 02903

[401.421.7005](tel:401.421.7005) (V)

[711](tel:711) (RI Relay)

[401.462.7791](tel:401.462.7791) (Espanol)

Division of Developmental Disabilities

BHDDH

<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/transitioning-adult-services>

14 Harrington Rd.

Cranston, RI 02920

Rhode Island Regional Transition Centers

<https://risecondarytransition.org/about/>

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities

<https://sherlockcenter.riic.edu/>