



IEP Tip Sheet

Transition Services

This tip sheet introduces and briefly defines transition services. To learn more, review the additional resources and check with state law for supplemental requirements.

What Does IDEA Say?

According to [IDEA Sec. 300.320](#), each child's individualized education program (IEP) must contain . . .

“(b) Transition services. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include—

- (1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and
- (2) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.”

What Are the Essential Elements of Transition Plan?



Age-Appropriate Transitions Assessments

Age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills.



Postsecondary Goals

Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments.



Transition Services

The transition services (including courses of study or the series of classes assigned to assist the student with reaching their postsecondary goals) should include the areas of

- instruction,
- related services,
- community experiences, and
- the development of employment and daily living skills.

The transition plan is added to the IEP to explicitly focus on postsecondary outcomes. It does not replace the other components of a student's IEP!





What are examples of post-school activities that transition services might address? Examples include

- postsecondary education,
- vocational education,
- integrated employment (including supported employment),
- continuing and adult education,
- adult services,
- independent living, or
- community participation [300.43(a)(1)].

How do teams design transition services? Teams must use “a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities.” [300.43(a)(1)]

What is the relationship between the IEP and transition services? "Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education." [300.43(b)]

When should transition planning begin? Although IDEA requires transition services to be in effect when the child turns 16, some states require transition planning to start at a younger age. Be sure to review state guidance to determine when to initiate transition services. In addition, it is never too early to

- start conversations about the student and family’s goals and dreams for the future,
- provide opportunities for exploration of different post-school opportunities, and
- focus on improving academic and functional achievement and self-advocacy skills to help students work toward their post-school goals.

Tips for Success

- ✓ Start with the end in mind by clearly defining what the student and parents want for the future.
- ✓ Ensure transition planning is an ongoing process, not something that occurs only during the annual IEP meeting.
- ✓ Review and update the age-appropriate transition assessment yearly to identify needs.
- ✓ When developing the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statement and measurable annual goals, focus on both academic and functional skills necessary for employability.
- ✓ Collaborate with community-based and transition services to develop a coordinated transition plan that allows the student to build skills and explore post-school opportunities within and outside school.
- ✓ Invite partners to join the IEP team (at the discretion of the parent and the public agency) to help inform the IEP and transition plan development.





Where Can You Learn More?



A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth With Disabilities (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services):

This guide provides information for educators and parents to help develop a transition plan for students with disabilities and describes opportunities for post-secondary life.



Transition Planning (National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative): This webpage offers a collection of transition planning resources, including a checklist for compliance with Indicator 13, IEP case study examples, and toolkits to support schools as they develop programs and services for students with disabilities.



Transition Coalition Online Modules: The Transition Coalition offers online professional development opportunities, tools, and resources to enhance educators' skills in developing a transition plan.



Secondary Transition: Helping Students with Disabilities Plan for Post-High School Settings (IRIS Center): This module focuses on the transition process from high school to postsecondary settings. Among other topics, it discusses IEP planning, engaging students in the process to become better advocates for their own needs, and the importance of outside agencies such as vocational rehabilitation



Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Website: This site includes information about RSA—programs, news, policy and guidance, and fiscal and performance information—to assist state and other agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation and other services to individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence, and integration into the community and the competitive labor market.



PROGRESS Center Website: The PROGRESS Center website includes additional information about developing high-quality IEPs and additional tip sheets in this series.