

Secondary Transition

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why is it important to do secondary transition planning?

Transition planning is required by federal law (IDEA 2004) and Pennsylvania regulations (Chapter 14). Research shows that a large number of students receiving special education services do not pursue education or training beyond high school and, when compared to the general population, are not as successful as adults in the work place and in living independently in the community. Effective transition planning and programming helps to close these gaps.

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.

When does secondary transition planning start?

Transition planning and services are required by Pennsylvania regulations (Chapter 14) to be addressed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of the student in the year in which the student turns 14 years of age. Transition planning may begin at an earlier age if the IEP team decides that early planning is appropriate. These planned services should support the student's post-school goals for education and training, employment, and independent living.

Who is involved in the transition planning process?

Transition planning involves the student, the family, all relevant educational staff (including a representative from Career and Technical Education if the student is planning to attend or is involved in a career and technical education program), personnel from outside agencies, and other applicable community members who engage as a team in developing a purposeful transition plan.

How do we determine what a student needs for effective transition programming?

Transition planning begins with good assessment. This assessment should be completed before developing the IEP. Assessment data serves as the common thread in the transition process and forms the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the IEP. Transition assessments can be formal or informal. Formal assessments typically involve using a standardized procedure for administering, scoring, and interpreting an assessment. For example: adaptive behavior/daily living skills assessments; general and specific aptitude tests; interest inventories; intelligence tests; achievement tests; employability tests; and self-determination assessments. Informal assessments could be interviews and questionnaires, direct observations, curriculum-based assessments, or environmental analyses. Transition related assessment and student progress information should be described in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance (PLAAFP) section of the student's IEP.

How is a transition plan written?

Once all of the assessment information about the transition needs of the student is completed, including academic and functional strengths and needs, along with information from the student, the student's family, relevant education personnel, agency staff and applicable community members, an IEP team meeting is held. At this meeting, the IEP team discusses the student's postsecondary goals for education, employment and independent living. Based on the student's postsecondary goals, the IEP team reviews the student's present educational levels, develops the transition services and activities section (the transition grid), writes measurable annual IEP goals that address the identified needs, and completes the remaining sections of the IEP based on the student's postsecondary goals.

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