

Understanding the Transition IEP Process

Once your child is 16 years old, a transition IEP must be held by the IEP team to discuss future services.

The IEP must include a statement about the child's future needs along with any services that will help your child develop the skills necessary to meet these goals.

The plan should also list any non-educational agencies that might provide your child with additional support. The IEP team should consider what strategies would assist your child in taking steps toward vocational, employment, independent and post high school educational plans.

The Individual Transition Plan helps create goals for your child's future. The **transition IEP assessment** is the ongoing process of collecting data that reflects your child's **needs, preferences and interests** as they move towards adulthood. Age appropriate assessments are mandated by **IDEA** and should now include the areas of education, employment, and independent living.

Parents and students are encouraged to research potential adult services providers, vocational, college and university programs that offer programs aligned with the child's future goals.

- **AGE of MAJORITY STATEMENT:** This is to be signed no later than **1 year before the student reaches 18**. The statement declares that **your child has been informed of his/her rights and is aware that these rights transfer to them at the age of 18**. At age 18, the student has the right to approve the development and implementation of the IEP and they will sign it themselves.
- **TRANSITION IEP GOALS** should focus on training and/or education and should include vocational education and adult education programs. Other goals include employment either regular or supported and independent living skills. Goals vary depending on the needs of the child. The transition IEP must list what services are needed to assist your child in reaching their post-secondary goals.
- A **SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE (SOP)** is also required by **special education law**. When a student exits the school system, either by obtaining a diploma or aging

out, schools must provide them with a SOP to assist in the process from school to post school activities.

Contents of the SOP include a summary of your child's academic achievements and functional performance, recommendations on how to assist your child in meeting post-secondary goals and list the accommodations and modifications that have been utilized in high school. This information is intended to help establish a student's eligibility and need for accommodations in postsecondary settings.

TRANSITION PLANNING PROGRAMS:

School districts and county offices offer specific programs that students can participate in once they turn 16. Check with your local school district or county Department of Education to see what types of programs are available.

Families play an important role in the quality of life and adjustment of students with disabilities as they leave high school. It is critical to learn strategies needed to assist your child during the transformation to adulthood.

These include:

- Modeling self-advocacy
- Teaching decision-making skills
- Allowing your child to safely take risks and try new things
- Helping your child feel good about what they can do
- Helping your child understand their disability and challenges
- Realizing that self-determination takes a lot of practice.