

# Chapter 8:

## Secondary Transition

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In this chapter you will:

- learn what is included in a transition plan
- get information about questions to ask the student to help in planning for his/her future
- find out about the transfer of rights at age 18
- learn about the Delegation of Rights form and where to complete it
- find out what happens if the student receives a regular diploma
- learn about student participation in a graduation ceremony while maintaining the right to continue special education services
- get informed on student participation in the home-based support services program authorized by the Developmental Disability and Mental Disability Services Act

Leaving high school is the beginning of adult life for all students. For students with disabilities, choices and decisions about the future may be more complex and may require a great deal of planning. State regulations require transition planning and the implementation of a transition plan to start by the time a student reaches 14½ years of age, or younger, if appropriate. This transition plan becomes an official part of the student's Individualized Education Program ("IEP").

The student and his or her family are expected to take an active role in preparing the student to take responsibility for his or her own life once school is finished. It is critical that families and their students understand that a student's entrance into adulthood and exit from high school means that the right or entitlement to special education services and a free and appropriate public education ends. Where once school provided a centralized source of education, guidance, transportation, and even recreation, after students leave school, they will need to organize their own lives and needs and navigate among an array of adult service providers and federal, state, and local programs. This can be a scary task and the student and his/her family need to be prepared. Families provide a critical support system for their children especially during the transition to adulthood. Active participation and partnership with the IEP Team can assist families in bridging the gap between school and adult service systems and pave the way to a successful transition to adulthood for their student.

### **What is Transition and what does it do for students with disabilities?**

Transition planning is a great opportunity for families/guardians and students to take a leadership role in setting goals and directions for the future. Transition planning:

- begins at age 14½ in Illinois and continues until the student graduates or reaches age 22;
- prepares students for life after high school;

- helps students plan for and choose high school courses;
- helps students decide what skills they need to develop to live and work in their community after high school;
- gives students the opportunity to explore work and career options while still in high school;
- helps students and families make connections with education and training programs, colleges, agencies and support services for after high school to continue working toward goals; and,
- helps students and the entire IEP team learn about student interests, what works and doesn't work in their lifestyle, their skills and talents, and who can help in achieving specific student goals.

### **What are transition services?**

Transition services are a coordinated set or group of activities for a student that fits together like a puzzle. The full picture of the puzzle is the student's life after high school. The transition plan should be designed to help each student access a variety of transition services, activities, and supports that will help them move from school to adult life activities including post-secondary education, vocational training, employment, adult education, adult services, and independent living.

Transition services are intended to prepare students to move from the world of school to the world of adulthood. In planning what types of transition services and activities a student needs, the IEP Team considers areas such as postsecondary education or training, employment, and adult living. The transition services themselves are a set of activities that are based on the student's strengths, preferences, interests and needs.

The pieces of the transition services puzzle may include, depending on the child's needs:

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### **Instruction**

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Instructional support the student might need in specific areas to complete courses for graduation, succeed in the general curriculum (e.g., tutoring), placement in advanced classes, gain the skills he or she needs (e.g., social skills training, preparation for college entrance exams, self-determination skill training, etc.), and could also include teacher developed accommodations, curriculum adaptations, peer tutoring or adult basic education.

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### **Community experiences**

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These are provided in community settings by schools or other agencies including (but not limited to) job site training, job shadowing, work experiences, banking, shopping, transportation, counseling, and recreation.

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### **Related services**

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The student may need to benefit from special education or to enter the adult world (e.g., transportation, social services, medical services, rehabilitation technology) and /or linkages to related services he/she might need after high school.

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### **Development of employment and other post- school adult living objectives**

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These include services that lead to a job or career (e.g., career planning, guidance counseling, person-centered planning, job placement, job try-outs) and activities like registering to vote, filing taxes, renting a place to live, accessing medical services, and accessing adult services such as Social Security Income (SSI).

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### **Daily living skills**

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Skills adults need as a foundation for everyday life including self-care, independent living, money management,

maintaining a home, health care, etc. – if appropriate.

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### **Functional vocational evaluation**

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Used to find out what kinds of talent, aptitudes and job skills a student has (e.g., situational work assessment, work samples, work adjustment programs, aptitude tests, series of job try-outs—if appropriate).

#### **How can families, parents and guardians help begin planning for the future?**

Parents, families and guardians can assist the transition planning team by helping to find answers to the follow questions:

What are the student's...

- » Long-range employment and life goals?
- » Interests and talents?
- » Learning styles?
- » Positive personality traits?
- » Achievements?
- » Social skills?
- » Work experiences (paid, volunteer, at home, at school, in the community) and where might he/she like to work?
- » Specific challenges and strategies for dealing with them?
- » Needs for accommodations and support?
- » Options after high school (college, trade school, military, employment, living arrangements, healthcare, recreation, etc.)?

#### **Why is it important for students to participate in their IEP planning and meeting?**

Participating in planning for life after high school builds

### Tips for Parents

Families should take time to discuss these agencies and find out who they are and why their participation in the IEP meeting could be critically important to the student's future success.

student confidence and responsibility and helps parents transition to new roles as guides and mentors for their student as they step back and let their student take on a more active, decision-making role.

### **Must the school district have parent consent to invite post-school service agencies to the IEP meeting?**

IDEA 2004 requires the school district to invite a representative of any agency outside of the school district that might be an important support or linkage for the student to be successful in his/her post-school goals. However, before inviting any agency representative, the school district must obtain the consent of the parent or the student if he/she has reached the age of majority (18) to extend the invitation.

## What are the basic components of the transition plan?

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### Age-appropriate transition assessment

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The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children defines transition assessment as the "...ongoing process of collecting data on the individual's needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. *Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)*" [Sitlington, Neubert, and Leconte. (1997) in *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 20, 69-79].

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) has prepared some guidance under the direction of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). In regard to the selection of assessment tools they recommend that district staff:

- become familiar with the different types of transition

assessments and their characteristics

- select methods that assist students by helping them answer the following questions:
  - » Who am I?
  - » What do I want in life, now and in the future?
  - » What are some of life's demands that I can meet now?
  - » What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community?
  - » What are my options in the school and community for preparing me for what I want, now and in the future?
- select approaches that are appropriate for students in terms of cognitive, cultural sensitivity, and language comfort (including parent and student interviews/questionnaires)
- always interpret and explain assessment results in formats that students and families can understand easily

### **Must a district obtain parental consent in order to complete a transition assessment?**

Parent consent is not required for age-appropriate transition assessments. 34 CFR §300.302 states that “screening for instructional purposes is not an evaluation....screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies...shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility...”

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### **Measurable post-school goals**

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These are the result of high school – what the student will achieve after leaving high school. Post-school goals are:

- based on student strengths, preferences and interests
- shaped, refined and updated by the use of age-appropriate transition assessments



- written using results-oriented terms such as “enrolled in”, “will work”, “will attend”, “will live”, and descriptors such as “full-time” or “part-time”

Measurable post-school goals are written for the following areas:

- Education and/or training
  - » Education – community college, university, technical/trade/vocational school
  - » Training – vocational or career field training, independent living skill training, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, job corp., etc.
- Employment
  - » Paid employment (competitive, supported, sheltered)
  - » Non-paid employment (volunteer, in a training capacity)
  - » military
- Adult Living (if needed)
  - » independent living skills, health/safety, financial/income, transportation/mobility, social relationships, recreation/leisure, self-advocacy/future planning

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### Specific Transition Services

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**Course of Study** is list of courses or instructional program of study for the student. The course of study should be in the IEP and should align with the student’s post-school goals. There are two important questions to consider for course of study:

- Does a post-secondary goal require a certain minimum requirement of courses, e.g., college bound, trade school bound, district graduation requirements, etc.?
- Does a post-secondary goal require or benefit from the successful completion of specific high school classes, e.g., a future chef planning to take and completing all



cooking related classes, a future child-care provider planning to take and completing relevant classes in Family and Consumer Science, etc.

**Transition Services** are the coordinated set of activities that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate movement from school to post-school. The components of the coordinate set of activities include instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment and post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

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### **What is the Summary of Performance (SOP) and when do you get one?**

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When a student's eligibility for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) ends either because the student is graduating with a regular diploma or reaching the maximum age of eligibility (22), the school district must provide the student with a summary of his/her academic achievement (e.g., academic successes, etc.) and functional performance (e.g., works skills, accommodations, social skills, self-determination skills, etc.) and include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her post-secondary goals.

- The SOP is prepared and provided to the student during the final year of high school.
- The SOP can also include input from the student and/or family expressing their point of view about successes and support needs related to post-school goals.

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### **Whose responsibility is it to give the SOP to outside agencies, such as employers?**

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The SOP is for the student and/or family's use. Similar in use to a resume, the SOP is a portable, user-friendly document that provides a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, as well as recommendations regarding accommodations, services, link-

ages and/or activities that will help the student successfully transition or move into their post-school goals. Therefore, the school district would keep a copy but has no responsibility to share this document with outside agencies.

### What is the transfer of parental rights all about?

When a young adult reaches the age of 18 in Illinois, they have truly become an adult in the eyes of the law and have the right to make their own decisions. According to IDEA 2004, at least one year before a student reaches the age of 18, the school district must inform the parent(s) and student of the rights under the federal and state regulations that will transfer from the parent to the student upon turning 18. This means that unless other arrangements have been made by the family, e.g., guardianship – the student has the right to make the final decisions about his/her education.

#### Delegation of rights – another option

During the 2007 legislative session, Illinois added language to the school code (23 IAC 14-6.10) that allows a student to retain independent legal status while delegating his/her right to make educational decisions. According to the added requirement, a student who has reached the age of 18 can choose to sign a Delegation of Rights to choose their parent or other adult to represent them and assist in making decisions about his/her education. This delegation applies only to educational decisions and can be ended by the student at any time. The school district must provide a copy of the Delegation of Rights to the parent and student during the IEP meeting in the year that the student turns 17.

#### Worth a Look

The School Code provision that discusses delegation of rights is Section 14-6.10, found at 105 ILCS 5/14-6.10. You can also find a sample delegation of rights form on the ISBE website at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/nc\\_deleg\\_34-57k.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/nc_deleg_34-57k.pdf).

### Resources

<http://www.dd.illinois.gov/LocalAgency.cfm>

Home-Based Support Services Program – Follow this link to find your local Developmental Disability Local Coordination Agency or call 1-888-DD-PLANS or 1-866-376-8446

(TTY).

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/total.htm>

The Illinois State Board of Education, Special Education Services secondary transition webpage provides access to a great variety of resources, tools and information related to secondary including the Transition Outreach Training for Adult Living (TOTAL) modules.

[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/iicc/pdf/arc\\_family\\_manual.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/iicc/pdf/arc_family_manual.pdf)

The ARC of Illinois Family Manual for Transition to Work and Adult Services.

[http://www.illinoisworknet.com/vos\\_portal/residents/en/Jobs/Prepare/Skills/](http://www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/residents/en/Jobs/Prepare/Skills/)

Illinois WorkNet provides access to a wealth of resources and information about working in Illinois.

[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/iicc/pdf/transition\\_resources.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/iicc/pdf/transition_resources.pdf)

This link will take you to a list of selected web addresses for transition-related information and resources.

[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/ta\\_projects.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/ta_projects.htm)

Illinois State Board of Education Technical Assistance Projects.

### **The Big Picture: Transition Planning**

Effective transition planning is the result of teamwork over the course of the student's time in the education system. Don't wait until graduation or age 22 to think about what your student wants to do. DO provide support and mentoring to assist your student to make a plan for him or her self. DO ask your family, friends, neighbors, school teachers and counselors to help you along the way. Do use networking as a way to find out what options might be available for life after high school and how to access them.

