Preparing for Life After High School

Transition Planning 101

By the time your child turns 16, his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) is focused on transition services. Transition planning, however, can and should begin as early as age 14.

The transition plan charts a course for graduation and life after high school, with measurable goals related to post-secondary education, employment, independent living, housing, and community participation.

The transition plan is created by the IEP team (with your son/daughter’s participation). It identifies the skills, services and supports necessary to reach the student’s goals.

It’s a lot to consider, but you are not alone. Organizations such as PAVE (wapave.org) and Parent to Parent (arwca.org/getsupport) can help guide your way.

For a list of other high school transition resources and publications, visit: informingfamilies.org.

Transition Goals (at a Glance)

The transition plan drives your son/daughter’s IEP and successful transition to life as an adult. Ask yourself what instruction, support and services are needed to achieve goals related to:

- Employment and/or Post Secondary Education
- Independent Living Skills (e.g., money management, decision-making, shopping, cooking, using the bus)
- Housing/In-Home Support
- Social/Recreational
- Financial/Legal
- Health & Safety

Any Age: Apply for services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).

A Partnership for Better Communication
On Developmental Disability Issues in Washington State
Transition Planning Checklist

Consider the following checklist of skills, activities, and services when creating your child’s high school transition plan for his/her IEP. For more information on transition planning, visit www.informingfamilies.org.

**Independent Living**
Identify skills and abilities that will help your son or daughter be as independent as possible, such as:
- Money Management and Budgeting
- Decision-Making
- Self-Advocacy
- Registering to Vote
- Communication
- Transportation Training
- Shopping
- Cooking
- Housekeeping

**Social/Recreational**
- Build friendships outside the family.
- Create a circle of support (family, friends, neighbors).
- Identify and connect with groups that share similar interests:
  - Athletic
  - Faith-Based
  - Creative Arts
  - Humanitarian
  - Civic
  - Cultural

**Employment/Post-Secondary Education**
- Identify interests, strengths and needs, and list the types of jobs that would be a good fit.
- Identify personal contacts useful in finding jobs.
- Research college courses and programs (integrated and/or specialized).
- Learn and practice job skills.
- Apply for employment services from DVR and DDA.
- Obtain Assistive Technology and Training.

**Financial and Legal**
- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Arrange for a Representative Payee for SSI (benefits if money management is a concern)
- Benefits Planning (including Social Security Work Incentives, such as PASS and IRWE)
- Establish a Special Needs Trust
- Seek guardianship (if less restrictive alternatives are not appropriate)

**Health & Safety**
Identify needed skills and/or resources to be healthy and safe:
- Emergency Recognition and Response
- Personal Care/Hygiene
- Counseling
- Physical/Occupational Therapy
- Adult Medical Care Provider

**Housing and In-Home Supports**
- Apply for DDA services/supports (e.g., Medicaid Personal Care, Supported Living, Companion Home, Adult Family Home)
- Apply for HUD federal housing assistance. (Contact your local Housing Authority to find out how long the waiting list is.)
- Research home ownership programs for adults with DD: washingtonaccessfund.org/resources/homeownership.php

What kinds of supports and instruction are needed to reach these goals??