



Secondary Transition: Considerations for the Transition Process

1. Transition efforts need to be started early.

Be proactive rather than reactive. Provide information to families well before the student enters grade 9 so they are aware of the process and can be considering ideas and options.

2. Student focused thinking is essential.

During the student's high school years, the IEP must be focused on providing the students with the skills, knowledge, and other agency connections that will allow them to be independent and successful citizens. It is essential that the student voices her/his *measurable post-secondary goals* and that instruction relate to these goals.

3. Planning should be comprehensive.

Annually, consider and discuss how the disability impacts each transition area. Be careful not to dismiss an area because of the students' abilities. For example: A high functioning student with a learning disability May still have needs in areas of daily living or recreation and leisure.

4. Student participation is crucial.

An IEP is a student's personal education plan. A transition IEP is an educational plan that prepares the student for life after high school. The mere physical presence of the student at the IEP meeting is no longer adequate. To as great a degree as possible, students need to be actively directing the transition planning process with increasing responsibilities at IEP meetings. The transition services are based upon their future goals, their preferences, and their interests. Their active participation is critical.

5. Family involvement is critical.

Since parents most frequently become their child's sole "transitional expert" as soon as the student graduates, it is important that they become informed, knowledgeable and active. It is also important that the family's requests, opinions and values are considered in transition planning.

6. Community-based activities are important.

Meaningful learning will most likely take place if it occurs in "real world" settings. If functional, successful involvement in the community is the goal of transition, then early, realistic emersion in that world will provide the student with essential learning experiences. Activities can be the responsibility of any team member: school, parents, student or other agency and can be assigned and documented in the Transition Services section of the IEP.

7. Involvement of public or private service agencies.

The IEP ends with graduation. If ongoing support is needed, coordinating services with the adult agencies that provide the appropriate services needs to begin prior to graduation. Collaboration in planning will lead to greater success and a smoother transition.

8. Balance what is ideal with what is possible.

It is important to prioritize a student's transitional needs. You cannot be all things to all people, but you can help to provide students with the essential skills that allow them the best opportunity to be successful. Much of what you work on should be driven by the student's measurable post-secondary goal statements.

9. Transition planning would be beneficial for all students.

The fact is that despite a quality education and nurturing parents, many students leave high school unprepared for the demands of everyday life. Though formal transitional planning is required only for students with special needs, it would undoubtedly benefit all students. The goal of secondary special education should be to provide students with disabilities with the skills, knowledge and connections they require to best achieve their future goals.

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