

# TEACHER'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING --- (AND WRITING) --- IEP TRANSITION PLANS

The legal-ish stuff & useful information you need  
to develop a **meaningful** IEP transition plan for your students!

*Disclaimer: I am not a lawyer, therefore this guide is not legal advice, and all educators should consult their school supervisors and legal counsel for specific directives. This guide is my interpretation of the IDEA transition services law as it relates to developing an IEP transition plan. I'm sharing my own experience interpreting, writing, and implementing IEP transition plans. Since each state has their own IEP transition plan format and language, some terms and information may or may not be applicable for the state which you reside or support students in.*



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Learning

# Let's get to it!

## IDEA SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW

- Section §300.43 details Transition Services
  - [CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE LAW](#)
    - Give it a read, it's not boring and it's pretty to-the-point

## TRANSITION PLANNING VS SERVICES VS PROGRAMMING

- Transition planning begins when the student is 14 year old
  - PLANNING INCLUDES HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE STUDENT'S FUTURE
- Transition services begin when the student is 16 years old (or younger, depending on your state)
  - SERVICES ARE ACTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO HELP THE STUDENT ACHIEVE THEIR POST-SCHOOL DESIRES
  - SERVICES NEED TO BE UPDATED ANNUALLY
- Transition programming is available to students who have achieved their graduation credit requirements
  - THIS ISN'T AN OFFICIAL 'TERM' IN THE LAW, BUT IS A HELPFUL WAY TO DISTINGUISH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED AT THE HIGH SCHOOL AND 18-21 YEAR OLD LEVEL

# Making sense of the law

## TRANSITION PLAN PURPOSE

- Per the law, you must take into consideration the student's needs, as well as their interests, preferences, and strengths

Transition Plan  
Parent/Guardian & Family Feedback

Transition Plan: Parent Assessment- Life Skills

Independent Living

Where do you see your student living in young adulthood?

Home with family

Community based housing

Independently in the community

Independent program

Other

### HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

- Gather information via transition assessments that are distributed to school staff, the family, and, of course, the student. Assessments must be appropriate and given yearly.
- Per the law, services include 'instruction, related services, and community experiences'
  - HOW DO YOU DO THAT?
    - The law mentions 'coordinated activities' that are 'results-orientated' that address 'academic and functional achievements,' therefore this could include (but is not limited to) enrolling the student in courses related to their area of interest, holding lessons in a resource class specific to independent living skills, or visiting the community to apply and strengthen vocational skills
  - Per the law, services also include the 'development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.'
    - HOW DO YOU DO THAT?
      - Use feedback from the transition assessments to develop an outcome for what the student will achieve after they graduate/exit from special education services.
      - This outcome drives the development of goals to help the student achieve their vision
      - For students with needs in daily living and vocational skills, those should be articulated as well
  - The transition plan document is fluid and will change and update as the student grows, matures, develops skills, and refines their dreams for post-school life

# Give it to me straight

## IEP TRANSITION PLAN MEETING

- **Who to invite**
  - THE STUDENT, PARENT\*, AN OUTSIDE AGENCY, AND SCHOOL STAFF WHO ARE PART OF THE IEP TEAM
- **What transition goals to include**
  - TRANSITION SERVICES MAY BE MET THROUGH GOALS THAT ARE ADDRESSING THEIR CURRENT AREAS OF NEED OR THEY MAY BE SEPARATE AND SPECIFIC TO HELPING THEM ACHIEVE THEIR TRANSITION PLAN OUTCOMES
    - You may need to identify or 'link' goals back to employment, education, training, or independent living skill areas
    - Create a free account through the [National Technical Assistance Center on Transition](#) and view case study examples for guidance.
      - *Example - Upon graduation from high school, Seria will live at home with family while continuing to be responsible for keeping her room clean and assisting with cooking family meals.*
- **What to include in the 'course of study'**
  - FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL, INCLUDE THE CLASSES THEY NEED TO GRADUATE. THIS SERVES AS A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT THE COURSES NEED TO ACHIEVE A DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE ARE TAKEN BEFORE GRADUATION
    - For students who express a desire to attend college or pursue a career path that requires a bachelors degree or higher, the IEP team should discuss the appropriate classes to prepare them for the academic rigor of college

# Give it to me straight

## IEP TRANSITION PLAN MEETING

- **What to include in the home-based services section**
  - FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR HOME-BASED SERVICES AND INFORMATION RE: ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESSING THOSE SERVICES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE PLAN SO FAMILIES ARE AWARE OF HOW THEY CAN ACCESS THOSE SUPPORTS
- **Will the student earn a diploma or certificate?**
  - CONSULT WITH YOUR DIRECT SUPERVISOR AS EACH STATE AND SCHOOL HANDLES DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES DIFFERENTLY
- **What happens when the student turns 18 years old?**
  - 1 YEAR BEFORE THE STUDENT TURNS 18, THEY NEED TO BE INFORMED THAT THEIR RIGHTS WILL AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFER TO THEM WHEN THEY TURN 18 YEARS OLD
  - WHEN THEY TURN 18 YEARS OLD (AKA- THE AGE OF MAJORITY), THE STUDENT IS NOW THEIR EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS HOLDER, UNLESS THEY CHOOSE TO DELEGATE THEIR RIGHTS BACK TO SOMEONE
    - The educational rights and delegation of rights conversation should be explicitly had with the student
    - If a student wants to delegate their educational rights back to someone, like a family member or parent, the student and that person need to complete a form
      - See your direct supervisor for your state's form
    - If the student maintains (or keeps) their educational rights, then the student would need to invite their parent to the IEP meeting as their guest
      - Families do NOT need to seek guardianship/conservatorship solely for the purpose of being invited to the IEP meeting.

# Give it to me straight

## IEP TRANSITION PLAN MEETING

- **What is an Outside Agency?**
  - AN OUTSIDE AGENCY IS A REPRESENTATIVE FROM A LOCAL OR STATE ORGANIZATION WHO WOULD SUPPORT THE STUDENT AFTER GRADUATION OR EXIT FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS AS AN ADULT
    - For example- community college representative, vocational rehabilitation representative, adult day program representative, etc
- **Do I need to send anything home before the IEP meeting?**
  - YES, YOU SHOULD SEND A DRAFT OF THE TRANSITION PLAN HOME FOR THE STUDENT AND FAMILY TO REVIEW PRIOR TO THE MEETING WHERE THE TRANSITION PLAN WILL BE DISCUSSED.

# Give it to me straight

## IEP TRANSITION PLAN MEETING

- **What kinds of activities or lessons should I do to help students work toward their transition plan goals?**
  - HAVE LESSONS ON SKILLS THAT ARE NEEDED TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY (COOKING, CLEANING, LAUNDRY, PERSONAL HYGIENE, MONEY MANAGEMENT, SHOPPING, BUYING A CAR, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, ETC)
  - SHOW LIVING OPTIONS (PICTURES OR IN-PERSON TOURS) IN YOUR AREA AND THE COST ASSOCIATED WITH EACH (APARTMENT, HOUSE, RENTAL, BUYING, ETC)
  - COMPARE WORKING PART OR FULL-TIME HOURLY WAGE JOB TO THE COST OF LIVING INDEPENDENTLY IN YOUR AREA (AVERAGE COST OF RENT, BILLS, ETC)
  - VISIT THE WEBSITE OR TOUR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND TRADE SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA
  - COMPARE COST OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO TRADE SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY
  - COMPLETE APPLICATION TO POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL, REGISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES
  - RESEARCH ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS WITH THE STUDENT AND HAVE THEM COMPARE WITH THEIR CURRENT COURSEWORK/GRADES/STANDARDIZED SCORES
  - USE AN INTEREST INVENTORY TO NARROW DOWN WHAT TYPE OF JOBS THE STUDENT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN
  - RESEARCH LEVEL OF EDUCATION, SKILLS NEEDED, EXPECTED INCOME, AND VIRTUAL SHADOW VIDEOS FOR DIFFERENT JOBS ([HELPFUL WEBSITE](#))
  - RESEARCH LOCAL VOLUNTEER AND PAID OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THEIR AREA OF INTEREST
  - APPLY FOR DEPT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (MAY BE CALLED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES IN YOUR STATE)
  - COMPLETE JOB TOURS AT LOCAL BUSINESSES FOR ENTRY LEVEL POSITIONS, RESEARCH INFORMATION ABOUT EXPERIENCE-BASED CAMPS AND INTERNSHIPS FOR CERTIFICATE/DEGREE POSITIONS, OR SET-UP AN INTERVIEW WITH SOMEONE IN THAT FIELD ABOUT THEIR JOB
  - TOUR LOCAL ADULT DAY REHAB OR RECREATION-BASED PROGRAMS WITH STUDENTS AND/OR FAMILIES, SET UP TRIAL DAYS FOR THOSE NEARING GRADUATION/EXIT
  - SET UP A FIELD TRIP/OUTING TO TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
  - APPLY FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OR OBTAIN TRANSPORTATION CARD

# Let me think this through

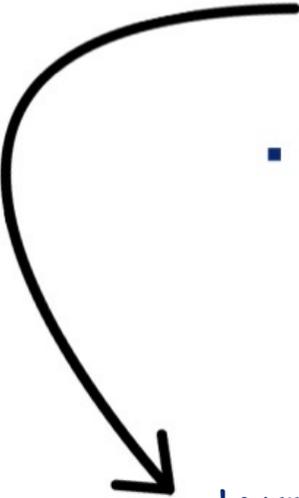
## ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

- **A student is in core (English, math, science, history) courses with modified curriculum, but plans to pursue a college degree**
  - ADDRESS AT THE IEP MEETING HOW THERE IS MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE STUDENT'S GOALS AND CURRENT ACADEMIC COURSE OF STUDY. BEING OPEN AND HONEST ABOUT THIS DIFFERENCE IN CURRENT PLANNING AND FUTURE GOALS WILL BEST SUPPORT THE STUDENT LONG TERM.
- **A student receives 1:1 assistance and modifications in core courses and plans to pursue college.**
  - ADDRESS AT THE IEP MEETING HOW COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES DOES NOT PROVIDE MODIFIED CURRICULUM AND MAY NOT ALLOW AN AIDE TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT IN LEARNING DURING CLASSES. THE TEAM SHOULD CONSIDER A FADE OF SUPPORT PLAN AS THE STUDENT NEARS GRADUATION OR EXIT.
- **I received the transition assessments back, what should I do with them?**
  - CONSIDER DRAFTING A SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS AND ADDING THE NOTES TO THE IEP OR SCAN AND UPLOAD THE ASSESSMENTS AS PART OF THE IEP
- **The feedback from the student transition assessment differs from the staff and parent/family feedback.**
  - STUDENT VOICE IS MOST IMPORTANT AND THE DIFFERENCE IN LONG TERM DESIRES SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE TEAM AT THE IEP MEETING SO EVERYONE CAN GET ON THE SAME PAGE. A STUDENT'S INTERNAL MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE A DREAM WILL LIKELY RESULT IN A HAPPIER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL ADULT THAN EXTERNAL PUSHES TO FOLLOW A DIFFERENT PATH.

# Let me think this through

## ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

- What is Indicator 13?
  - A CHECKLIST TO COMPLETE TO ENSURE THAT ALL PARTS OF THE IEP TRANSITION PLAN HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED.
- What do I list in the 'linkages/agency' section?
  - LIST LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION THAT THE STUDENT MAY ACCESS AFTER GRADUATION/EXIT TO HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR POST-SCHOOL DESIRES
    - This might include community college disability service office information, local social security administration office to apply for SSI, public transportation information, state's website to apply for Medicaid and other benefits, department of rehabilitation services vocational rehab agency, employment support services, independent living advocacy agencies, appropriate adult day program and special recreation associations, among others.
    - Many families aren't aware this information may be listed for them in the transition plan, so if it is, point it out to them at the IEP meeting



Learn all about benefits and how to support your students and families in understanding and applying for funding and services that are right for them through this professional development!

Confused  
to  
Connected



*Professional Development*

# Transition Plan Checklist

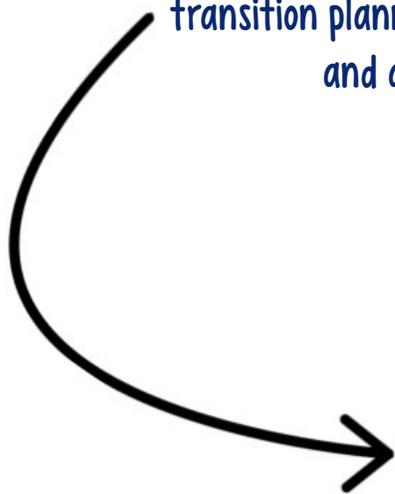
- Start planning at 14 years old
- Implement transition services at 16 years old
- Distribute age-appropriate transition assessments to student, family, and school staff (new assessments distributed yearly)
- Collect and review transition assessments from student, family, and school staff
- Develop measurable transition outcomes or goals for education, training, employment, and independent living
- Confirm transition outcomes or goals reflect the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs
- Identify appropriate courses according to their transition outcomes or goals
- Identify opportunities for vocational development, as appropriate
- Identify opportunities for independent living skill development, as appropriate
- List home-based services agency contact information for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities
- List linkage or contact information to agencies the student can access as an adult to help them achieve their post-school desires
- Identify if a diploma or certificate will be earned, based on course plan
- For students turning 17 years old, notify them of their upcoming 'age of majority' and how educational rights will transfer
- For students turning 18 years old, notify them they are their educational rights holder and explain the opportunity to delegate those rights to someone else
- Invite the student, parent (as appropriate), outside agency, and IEP team staff to IEP meeting where the transition plan will be reviewed, discussed, and finalized; send home a draft of the transition plan prior to IEP meeting for review
- Complete Indicator 13 paperwork

# If you want even more support...

- Additional reading from the US Department of Education, specific to transition- [A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities \(August 2020\)](#)
- Check out this [informal conversation](#) guide for how to have meaningful, open, and honest conversations with families about what they see for their student's post-school life
- Check out these blog posts about how to...
  - [Increase parent engagement in transition planning](#)
  - [A family's journey through transition planning](#)
  - [How to explain SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, and more to a family](#)
  - [Professional developments for transition teachers](#)

## IF THIS GUIDE WAS HELPFUL...

Keep learning about transition, transition services, transition planning, and transition programming from ME and a whole community of educators!



**SPED**  
TRANSITION  
TEACHER  
COMMUNITY

# ABOUT ME



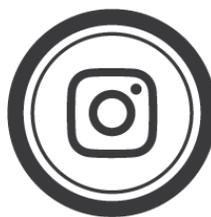
I've been teaching for over 10 years and continue to find joy in working with students with disabilities!

I currently teach transition age young adults (18-22 years old) with moderate to severe disabilities. Community experiences, life skills, consumer math, and vocational skills are the focus and I love that each day is different and new.

My educational background includes- Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Special Education, Master's Degree in Advanced Special Education, and 30+ Graduate Hours in Assistive Technology.

-Heather

## CONNECT WITH ME HERE!



## GRAPHICS & FONT CREDIT



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