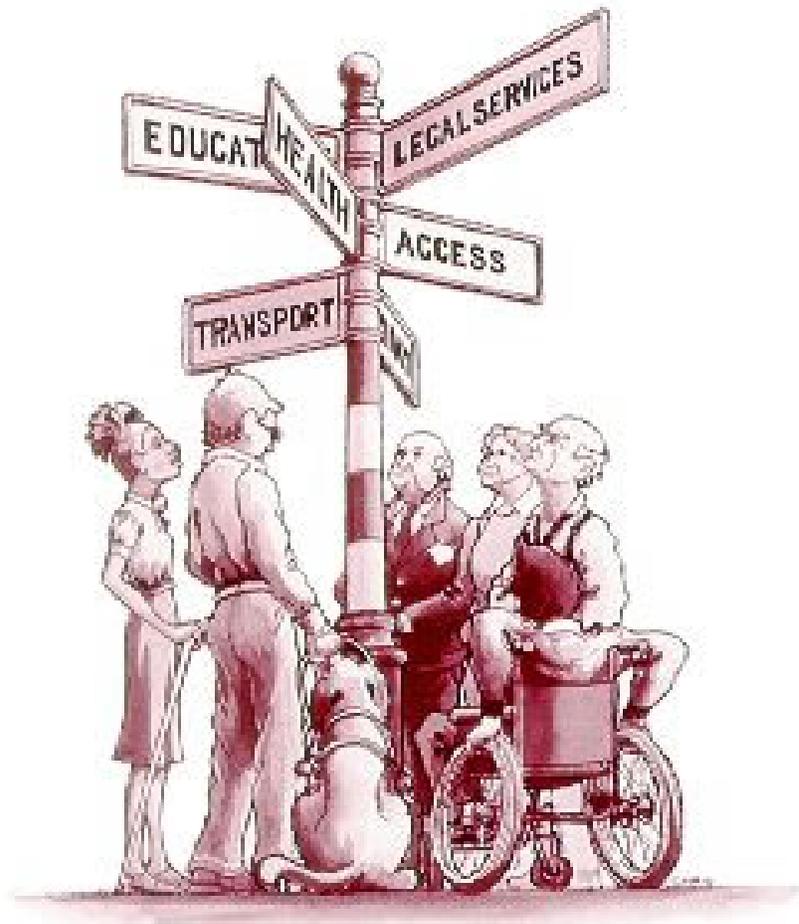


# Operating the Transition Process: A Guide for Students and Families



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## Operating the Transition Process:

### A Guide for Students and Families

#### Purpose:

- ◆ To improve transition services and outcomes for middle and high school students with disabilities while they are still in school.
- ◆ To increase the knowledge and understanding of the transition process of each member of the transition team.
- ◆ To maximize the contributions of family members and other natural supports in attaining high levels of independence and productivity sought in the transition process.

## The Student and Family Guide

What is transition?

What does the law really say?

Why do we need to have a transition process?

Who should be involved in the process?

When should the process begin?

What should be discussed?

How does transition planning occur?

## The Personal Connection.....

**Think back to your senior year. What were your plans/dreams in the following areas?**

1. Live
2. Work
3. School
4. Social
5. Income

**Now think back again. What were your parent's (family's) goals/plans for you?**

1. Live
2. Work
3. School
4. Social
5. Income

**Finally, what really happened?**

1. Live
2. Work
3. School
4. Social
5. Income

**How did it work out?**

**Why didn't it work out?**

**Why do we need to address transition services?**

**IT'S THE LAW!!!**

**ALL people desire the same basic life outcomes:**

- ◆ **Having a job**
- ◆ **Having friendships**
- ◆ **Being a consumer**
- ◆ **Being an active citizen**
- ◆ **Having a home**
- ◆ **Having financial security**
- ◆ **Enjoying leisure activities**
- ◆ **Having a healthy life style**

# What is Transition??

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 redefines transition services:

## Subpart A - General

### §300.42 Transition services.

(a) Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

- (1) Is designed to be within a *results-oriented process*, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability *to facilitate the child's movement from school to post school activities*,
- (2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the *child's strengths, preferences and interests*;

and includes—

- (i) Instruction;
- (ii) Related services;
- (iii) Community experiences;
- (iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
- (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

# What does this regulation really say??

**When preparing students for life after public education you have to focus on three areas:**

## ◆ **Post-secondary education**

Education options include:

- Community colleges
- Four-year colleges and universities
- On-the-job training
- Apprenticeships
- Military service
- Adult Education
- Technical Schools
- Independent Living Training

## ◆ **Employment**

Employment Options include:

- Full/part-time jobs
- Supported employment
- Sheltered employment
- Volunteer jobs
- Apprenticeships
- Employment training
- Military service
- Job Sharing

## ◆ **Independent and community living**

Adult life options include:

- Friends and family
- Relaxation and fun
- Homes of your own
- Work or volunteering
- Lifelong learning

# **The Transition Concept**

**The concept of transition is simple and generally has three major components:**

- 1. Coach every student, along with his or her family, to think about goals for life after high school and to develop a long-range plan to get there.**
- 2. Design the high school experience to ensure that the student gains the skills and competencies needed to achieve his or her desired post-school goals.**
- 3. Identify and link students and families to any needed post-school services, supports or programs before the student exits the school system.**

**Everyone experiences transitions – some people are just able to deal with the transitions better than others!**

**Preparation of students to enter the “real world” is crucial!**

Research conducted by the Office of Special Education Programs, United States Department of Education has raised concern for the lifestyles of student's with disabilities (SRA International, 1993). The study found that:

- ◆ Students with disabilities were more likely than students enrolled in general education to be impoverished
- ◆ A disproportionate number of students with disabilities dropped out of school
- ◆ Fewer youths with disabilities took advantage of post-secondary education
- ◆ Unemployment rates for youth with disabilities were higher than their non-disabled counterparts.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study in 2005 reported that:

- ◆ 19% of all students with disabilities dropped out
- ◆ 44% of youth with disabilities out of school 3-5 years were not employed
- ◆ After being out of school 3-5 years students with disabilities were twice as likely as their non-disabled peers to be living at home.
- ◆ Within 3-5 years after being out of school, 38% of all males with disabilities had been arrested.

**The transition process should enable students to leave school with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful to live life as independently as possible.**

## **Guiding Principles Essential to the Transition Process**

- 1. Transition planning efforts should start early.**
- 2. Planning must be comprehensive.**
- 3. Planning process must be balanced with what is ideal with what is possible.**
- 4. Student participation is essential.**
- 5. Family involvement is crucial.**
- 6. Transition planning process must be sensitive to diversity.**
- 7. Everyone uses supports and services.**
- 8. Community-based activities are important.**
- 9. Interagency commitment, cooperation, and coordination must be improved.**
- 10. Timing is crucial if certain linkages are to be made and a seamless transition to life after high school is to be achieved.**
- 11. The transition planning process should be considered a capacity-building activity.**
- 12. Ranking of transition needs must occur.**
- 13. Transition planning is beneficial to all students.**

## **Why Do Families Need to Think About Transition**

**and**

## **What Questions Do They Need to Consider**

- ◆ **When will your son/daughter be ready to leave “the nest”?**
- ◆ **How will your son/daughter support him/herself?**
- ◆ **When the family is longer able, who will be there for support?**

## **IDEA 2004 and Disability Policy**

*Congress finds that:*

**Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:**

- **Live independently**
- **Enjoy self-determination**
- **Make choices**
- **Contribute to society**
- **Pursue meaningful careers**
- **Enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and economic mainstream of American society.**

## **When should the process begin?**

- **... not later than the first IEP**
- **to be in effect when the child is 16,**
- **or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team**
- **and updated annually thereafter –**

**IDEA '04 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)**

## **Student's Rights**

**Beginning at least one year before reaching the age of majority (age 18 in Delaware), the student's IEP must include a statement that he/she has been informed of his/her rights that will transfer to him/her on reaching the age of majority.**

## What is the difference between **ENTITLEMENT** and **ELIGIBILITY** Systems?

**Transition is the process of moving from ENTITLEMENT services to ELIGIBILITY services. The difference between the *entitlements* of public education and the *eligibility* criteria of adult services can be confusing. Generally, students with disabilities who are receiving special education services are *entitled* to educational services until the student has reached age 21 or met the requirements for a high school diploma or high school certificate. Once the students exit the school system, they must meet *eligibility criteria* and funding availability to receive services from adult service agencies. Each agency will have distinct *eligibility criteria*. Families who begin transition planning early will have more time to create opportunities for their young adults to achieve their goals.**

# **When should the transition process really begin and how does it occur?**

**Transitions happen across the life span...**

## **In Elementary School**

- ◆ **Focus should be placed on teaching self-care/independent living skills:**
  - **Communication**
  - **Eating**
  - **Toileting**
  - **Mobility**
  - **Grooming**
  - **Time/money management**
  - **Following a schedule**
  
- ◆ **Talk about the world of work**
- ◆ **Establish work routines**

## **In Middle School:**

- ◆ **Continue to work on self-care skills**
- ◆ **Continue to work on general work habits**
- ◆ **Become involved in career exploration activities**
- ◆ **Participate in vocational assessment activities**
- ◆ **Use information about interests and capabilities to make preliminary decisions about possible careers: academic vs. vocational or a combination**
- ◆ **Contact local service providers**

## **In High School:**

- ◆ **Develop a formal transition plan**
- ◆ **Re-assess interests and capabilities**
- ◆ **Participate in ongoing vocational assessment and address gaps**
- ◆ **Take courses that are required for entry into college, trade schools, or careers of interest**
- ◆ **Participate in regular training in community sites (employment and otherwise)**
- ◆ **Focus on improving work quality and production**
- ◆ **Identify necessary accommodations for work or further education**

# **Who** needs to be involved in the transition process?

**Student**

**Parent or Guardian**

**Special Education Teacher**

**Regular Education Teacher**

**Career and Technical Education Teacher**

**Guidance Counselor**

**Administrators/Designee**

**Agency Representatives**

**Could include:**

- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
- **Division of Developmental Disability Services**
- **Social Security Administration**
- **Centers for Independent Living**

**Any others you can think of...**