

Transition Services for Students Ages 16-21

Each school district and staff person can devise their own methods of implementing transitional programs and vocational assessments. When a student qualifies for special education and, he/she reaches the age of 16, a transitional Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is developed. Students have the right to an education and continued transition services until he/she turns 21 years of age. The IEP would include transition services based on an evaluation of student needs and his or her readiness. The Transition plan includes programs and services that will assist the student in progressing towards independence after they leave school.

Understanding the Process for Implementing Transition:

Transition services are a partnership involving the student with a disability, his/her family, school personnel, members of the local community, adult service representatives, employers, and interested others. In the school setting, transition services should be an integral component of the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP), focusing both on present and future needs.

When should a Transition IEP be developed?

No later than the IEP that is in effect when the student turns 16, or as early as age 14 if appropriate for the student.

What is required in a Transitional IEP?

- A statement of your student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
- A description of how the school district will measure your student's progress towards meeting her/his annual goals, including when and how often the school district will provide periodic reports on the progress of your student.
- A statement of the special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services to be provided to or on behalf of your student.
- A statement of the program modifications or supports to be provided to school personnel related to your student's needs.
- An explanation as to the extent to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the general education classroom and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities.
- A statement about any approved individual accommodations your student needs to measure her/his academic achievement and functional performance on state and district assessments.

Accessing Transition Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide the parents/guardians of a student who is eligible for or referred for special education with a notice containing a full explanation of the rights available to them.

Schools are required to provide transition services to students who are eligible for special education. Students have the right to an education and continued transition services until she/he turns 21 years of age.

If the student is determined ineligible for services, a written request for a due process hearing is made by a parent or district relating to issues about the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or provision of Free Appropriate Public Education to a student. Requests must be made within—and allege violations that occurred not more than—two years before the date you knew or should have known about the allegation. Only an administrative law judge may allow an exception to the two-year timeframe through a Due Process Hearing.

Citizen complaint:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/DisputeResolution/CitizenComplaint.aspx>

Due process with the school:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/DisputeResolution/DueProcess.aspx>

Helpful Transition Information & Resources:

<http://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/transition-services/>

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/programreview/Monitoring/SecondaryTransition.aspx>

- If the IEP team determines your student must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular general state or district-wide assessment of student achievement, a statement explaining why your student cannot participate in the general assessment and the particular alternate assessment that has been selected is necessary for your student.
- Extended school year (ESY) services for the student, if the student shows regression or loss of information learned.
- The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described within the IEP, as well as the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications.
- Measurable annual goals.

Measurable Postsecondary Goals:

The measurable postsecondary goals should be based on transition assessments in the areas of needs, strengths, preferences and interests. The assessments can be both formal and informal and then collected by the IEP team and updated annually.

The planning in Transition:

Planning for the future should help the IEP team design functional instructional programs that reflect the student's interests and needs for life. This type of planning in the secondary levels will help with transitions throughout his/her life in the areas of employment, community living, post-secondary education, and the development of friendships. Effective transition services should enable the student to manage his/her future.

Components of a transition plan within an IEP include:

Transition Services

Transition services includes an evaluation of student needs and are based on his or her readiness and a determination of programs and services that will assist the student in progressing towards independence. Services are not to be decided based on availability, but on the student's needs. Transition services are a set of coordinated activities designed to be a results-oriented process that facilitates the successful movement from school to postsecondary living.

Course of Study

A course of study is a current description of coursework and/or activities to achieve the student's desired post-secondary goals, from the student's current IEP through their anticipated exit year.

Agency Collaboration

Transition Services are designed to be a results-oriented process that facilitates the movement from school to postsecondary living activities. Some services may be provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and/or other agencies in your community. (To be determined by the agency and its qualifying criteria)

Annual IEP Goals

Annual goals are statements that describe what a student with a disability can reasonably be expected to accomplish within a 12-month period of the student's program, and, should include timeframe, conditions, behavior, and criterion.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has developed a guide for families: Special Education in Washington State. You can find links to these guides and much more information at OSPI's page on Special Education Services: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/default.aspx>