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TRANSITION PLANNING

New Directors' Institute
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Transition Planning in the IEP

IDEA 2004 - §300.320(b)

(b) *Transition services.* Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include—

(1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and

(2) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.

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IDEA 2004 - §300.43

(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**, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

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(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 provision of a functional vocational evaluation

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Quick Summary of Transition

- Transition services are intended to prepare students to move from the world of school to the world of adulthood.
- Transition planning begins during high school at the latest.
- IDEA requires that transition planning start by the time the student reaches age 16.
- Transition planning may start earlier (when the student is younger than 16) if the IEP team decides it would be appropriate to do so.
- Transition planning takes place as part of developing the student's IEP.
- The IEP team (which includes the student and the parents) develops the transition plan and reviews and updates it annually.

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- The student must be invited to any IEP meeting where postsecondary goals and transition services needed to reach those goals will be considered.
- In transition planning, the develops goals for postsecondary education or training, employment, and as needed, independent living;
- Transition services must be a coordinated set of activities oriented toward producing results.
- Transition services are based on the student's needs and must take into account his or her preferences and interests.

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What does this mean for schools?

- Formal transition plans must be included in the student's IEP when the student has turned 15.
- The IEP team may determine that transition planning should begin earlier.
  - May begin earlier for a student who, because of the nature and severity of the disability, may need more supports after completing school
  - May begin earlier for a students who is at risk for not completing school
- Caution: transition planning does not start in a "grade", e.g. "We do transition planning in 10th grade" or "We don't do transition planning because we only go to 9th grade in our school".
- Transition planning is required for all students of transition age with IEPs, even those who "seem" to have their lives planned.

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What does transition planning look like?

- Transition planning is a process, not an activity at the IEP team meeting.
- Transition planning is an on-going discussion.
- While the process is the same, how the process is implemented may look different for different students.
- Teachers, students, and parents may need to be encouraged to look beyond the traditional calendar-year IEP when helping the student plan for life after high school.

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What do schools (and IEP teams) need to do?

- Administer age-appropriate transition assessments
  - Formal or informal
  - Assessments are appropriate for the student
    - Nature of student's disability
    - Post-school ambitions
    - Community opportunities
- Help the student develop measurable post-secondary goals
  - Employment, required
  - Education, required
  - Independent Living, where appropriate
- Determine needed transition services
  - What services does the student need to facilitate movement toward his/her post-secondary goals?
  - Might any agency be providing or paying for any services?
    - If yes, invite agency representative, with consent of parent or adult student, to the IEP meeting.

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- Develop and provide instruction to meet annual IEP goals
  - Write annual IEP goals to address skills student will need to achieve the post-secondary goals.
- Develop courses of study
  - What education classes or experiences does the student need to learn the skills identified in IEP goals?
- Invite the student to any IEP meeting where transition services will be discussed.
- Review and update the transition plan annually as part of the annual IEP review.

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Additional Information to Discuss

- Address school completion on an annual basis
  - What does "graduation" mean for this student? Diploma? Staying in school until age 22?
  - If the student will be earning a diploma, is the student on track to graduate?
- Give notice of the Transfer of Rights at Age of Majority
  - At least one year before the student's 18th birthday, the student and parents must be informed of any rights under IDEA that transfer to the student.
  - Students have the right to involve others in transition planning or to refuse to have others involved.
  - Students aged 18 are their "own parents" unless someone has court-ordered guardianship.

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Points to Remember

"If you take a moment and think about what's listed in this definition of transition services, you'll see that it includes the domains of independent and adult living. The community… employment… adult services… daily living skills… vocational…postsecondary education. This definition clearly acknowledges that adulthood involves a wide range of skills areas and activities, and that preparing a child with a disability to perform functionally across this spectrum of areas and activities may involve considerable planning, attention, and focused, coordinated services.

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"Note that word—*coordinated*. The services are to be planned as a group and are intended to drive toward a result—they should not be haphazard or scattershot activities, but coordinated with each other to achieve that outcome or result.

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What result might that be? From a federal perspective, the result being sought can be found in the very first finding of Congress in IDEA, which refers to "our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities." [20 U.S.C. 1400(c)(1)] Preparing children with disabilities to "lead productive and independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible" is one of IDEA's stated objectives. [20 U.S.C. 1400(c)(5)(A)(ii)]"

NICHCY. Retrieved 4/9/12 from National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities: http://nichcy.org/schoolage/iep/iepcontents/transition

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