



Statewide Parent
Advocacy Network

Empowering families,
professionals, and others
interested in the well-being
and education of children
and youth

In this fact sheet:

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{and more}

SPAN

35 Halsey St., 4th floor
Newark, NJ 07102
VOICE: (973) 642-8100
FAX: (973) 642-8080
TOLL-FREE: (800) 654-7726

One of the major purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to ensure that all students with disabilities are prepared for further education, employment, and independent living.

TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE

TRANSITION is the formal process of long-range cooperative planning that will assist students with disabilities to successfully move from school into the adult world.

What are Transition Services?

“Transition services” are a coordinated set of activities 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 post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

Services must be based on the child’s need, taking into account his/her strengths, preferences and interest.

Transition services include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.

Where are transition services provided?

Transition services must be provided in the “least restrictive environment” (LRE). LRE is likely to be the “real world” – the community in which the student will live and work after high school graduation. A student’s transition goals may include learning to ride a bus, learning to shop for groceries, learning to access community-based recreational activities and learning how to apply for a job.

The IEP team must consider and provide any supplementary aids and services needed to allow the student to participate in services and programs with those who do not have disabilities.

When does transition planning begin?

In New Jersey, transition planning begins in the school year in which a student will be 14. At that time, the IEP must include a statement of the graduation requirements that the student is expected to meet. In addition, it must include a statement of the students’ strengths, interests and preferences, along with a course of study and related strategies and activities designed to help students develop or attain post-secondary goals.

How does transition affect the IEP?

An IEP meeting in which transition is discussed should begin with the student’s vision for his/her future and include considerations such as where he/she wants to live; what kind of work he/she wants to do; and whether he/she plans to go to college. *(continued on page 2)*



The IEP for the school year in which the student turns 16 must include measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments; and appropriate transition services. Postsecondary goals need to be measurable, and include education after high school, employment, community participation, and independent living.

What is the role of outside agencies in the transition planning process?

The IEP team must consider the need for consultation from other agencies such as the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

What are the graduation requirements for a student with disabilities?

Graduation requirements are determined individually. The IEP must include a statement of the State and local graduation requirements that the student is expected to meet. If the student is exempted from these, or if there is a modification to the requirements, the IEP must include a rationale for the exemption or modification, as well as a description of the alternate proficiencies to be achieved in order to qualify for a diploma. Graduation with a state endorsed diploma requires prior written notice. When a student graduates or ages out of school, the student must be provided with a written Summary of Performance. It is important to be aware that the graduation is the only change in placement that does not require evaluation. In addition to earning required credits, the student must also meet transition-related IEP goals and objectives before earning a diploma.

What should be considered before accepting a diploma?

All students with disabilities are eligible for special education services through the end of the school year in which they turn 21. The decision about when to accept a diploma is based on the IEP and should not be taken lightly: once a student accepts a diploma, the right to special education and related services ends.

For students likely to need day services or job supports from the Division of Developmental Disabilities, it is important to know that services will not be initiated until the individual is 21.

What are the rules regarding diplomas and participation in graduation ceremonies?

A student with a disability can participate in senior prom, senior class trips and graduation ceremonies with peers, **without** accepting a diploma. The student can receive a diploma after satisfying the goals, objectives and graduation requirements outlined in the IEP, or by June 30th in the school year in which he or she turns 21, whichever comes first.

The Role of the Student

Regardless of the student's disability, he/she must be invited to any meeting in which transition will be discussed. Although the student may choose not to attend, he/she should be encouraged and supported to actively develop self-advocacy skills. Creating opportunities for choices and preferences at an early age encourages decision-making skills. Early participation in the IEP process prepares students for their expected participation at age 18 when they will be making their own IEP decisions.

Adult rights transfer to students at age 18, so students become the decision makers, regardless of ability. Parents who believe their child will need assistance should consider supported decision making & alternatives to guardianship before the student turns 18.

Learn more:

Federal regulations governing Transition can be found at 34 CFR 300.34.

New Jersey State regulations governing Transition can be found at NJAC 6A:14-3.7.

Go online for answers to these questions:

What are some transition considerations for students going to college?

What is the role of DDD and DVRS?

What is Supported Decision-Making?

What is the role of SSI?

What is the role of DCF? DMS?

What is Alicia's Law?

What is in the Written Summary of Performance?

What does it mean that New Jersey is an "Employment First" state?



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