




Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund



Navigating the Special Education Transition Maze

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ZOOM TIPS

- **Questions?** Type your questions by using the **CHAT** feature at the bottom of your screen. Please remember that privacy is important--no personal or identifying information about student!
- **Evaluations!** During the presentation there will be poll questions--they won't take much time to complete. These questions help us improve our trainings and fulfill requirements set by the U.S. Dept. of Education.

We very much appreciate your feedback!

**For individual questions please contact us at 510-644-2555 x 5227 or
IEPhelp@dredf.org**



Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

- Unique alliance of people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities
- National law and policy center dedicated to protecting and advancing disability civil and human rights
- Disability rights are civil rights
- **VISION:** a just world where all people live full and independent lives free of discrimination
- Educate legislators and policy makers on issues (such as IDEA, ADA) affecting rights of people with disabilities

***DREDF is working hard to protect and support the civil rights of people with disabilities during this pandemic--visit our website for more information.**

Parent Training and Information Centers

- PTI are places where families can get help to understand their child with a disability education rights and learn to use them effectively
- PTIs offer **free** trainings for parents of children with disabilities, youth and community members
- There is a PTI in every state and territory in the United States
- To find a PTI near you, visit the:
 - [Center for Parent Information Resources](#).
- The PTI at DREDF now serves the North Coast Region!

To Contact us:

- 800-348-4232 (toll free)
- 510-644-2555 x 5227 (voice)
- iephelp@dredf.org (Email)



PURPOSE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CONNECTS DIRECTLY WITH TRANSITION PLANNING

Purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is “to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services **designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living**” (300.1)

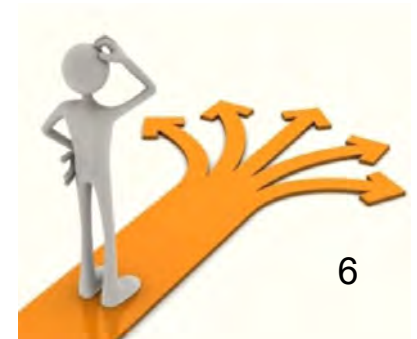


TAKING THE LONG VIEW: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

How do we provide school based transition support--including during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- What are our Priorities as Parents, Youth and Advocates for Youth?
 - Person Centered Planning
 - Quality of Life
 - Community engagement
 - Culturally appropriate support
 - Youth led, Youth directed to greatest possible extent

“Nothing About Us Without US!”



SOME KEY LIFE SKILLS

- Knowing **WHO** can help and how to **REACH** them
- Knowing how to **ASK** for help
- Handling disappointment/ Skills for Coping/Recovering
- Flexibility—When the Plan doesn't go as planned!
- Self Advocacy/Knowing RIGHTS
- Disability Awareness and Pride
- Self Care/Independent Living (as appropriate)... build these into everything we teach!



IEP: ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE



I → is for **INDIVIDUALIZED** — NOT COOKIE CUTTER

E → is for **EDUCATION** — More than just “**Academics**”

P → is for **PLAN** — A (flexible) guide to the future (not just “winging it” or getting student through one year)

Tip: No need to choose between diploma track and functional life skills — some need both!

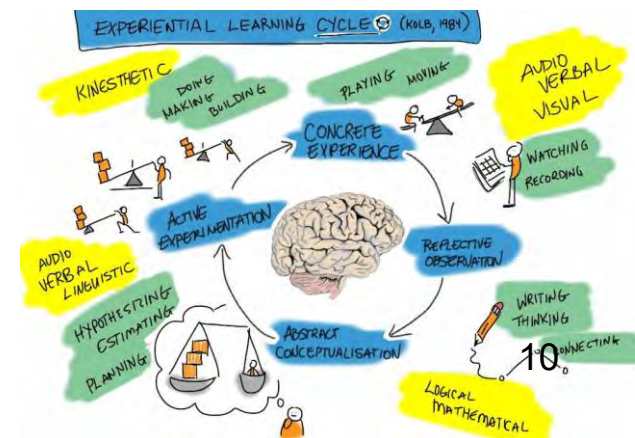
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What do we mean by “independence”, “community” and “inclusion”?
- How do we measure quality of life? Success?
- How many of us are doing what we thought we’d do when WE were 18-22?
- When ARE “typical” young people truly independent?
- What skills/experiences did WE need to be successful?
- Youth with disabilities are **YOUTH** first



WHAT IS NEEDED?

- Learning doesn't end with special education. All students with disabilities should be encouraged to seek out and access adult learning opportunities while in school
- Education and Training after high school can change not only employment outcomes, but self image and social connections
- Lifelong learning requires two things:
 - **The expectation that it should happen**
 - **The instruction needed to access it**
- That's where YOUR advocacy comes in!



IDEA REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTH

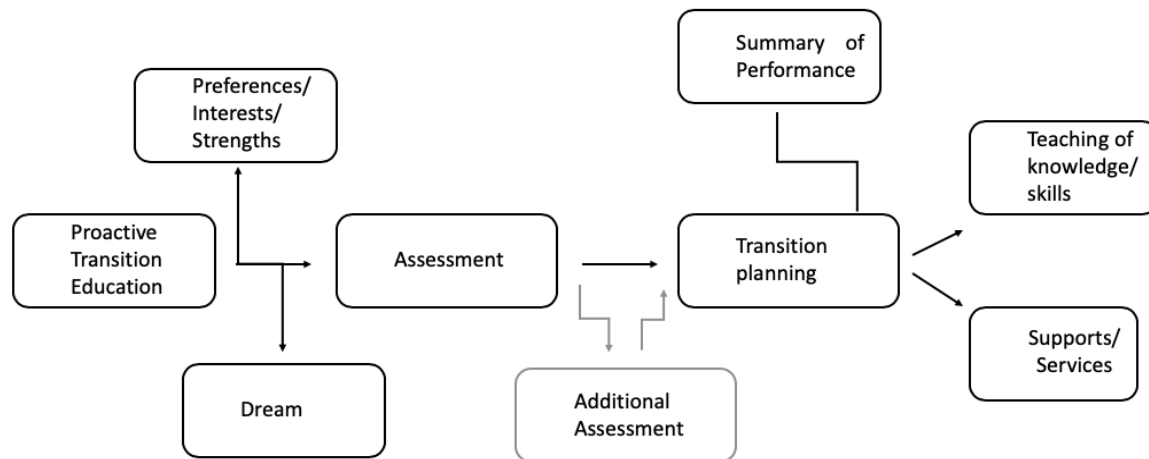
- Diploma or certificate of completion track (what age do they exit? With diploma or at 22?) Don't assume diploma is impossible! [Difference Between a High School Diploma and High School Certificate](#)
- Transition plan in IEP no later than 16th birthday [Transition Planning | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)
- Age of Majority (Notice one year prior in writing)--students hold own rights at 18 unless conserved. [Age of Majority | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)



SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

School must provide a Summary of Performance upon school exit: [Transition: Summary of Performance \(SOP\)](#)

Provides the student/family with a document that will help establish eligibility for reasonable accommodations and supports in post-school settings. Also useful for the Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Assessment process and Disabled Student Programs (DSP) at colleges



WHAT IS A TRANSITION PLAN?

Requirements

- In place no later than 16 (CA)
- Individualized to student's specific strengths, needs and wishes
- Based on data, evaluation, information about student and family priorities, values, goals
- Tied to goals, services, supports that help it become achievable (What does student need to learn, practice to get there?)
- Not just a checklist--meaningful!



IS AN INDIVIDUALIZED TRANSITION PLAN DIFFERENT THAN AN IEP?

- NO. It is a required PART of the IEP at 16 (or sooner) in CA
- Does team have info it needs to develop the plan?
- It is often helpful to dedicate an IEP meeting to focus on transition planning. [Transition Assessment Request Sample Letter](#)
- Plan, Adapt and modify as student grows, develops, changes

NOTE: All legal requirements apply during distance learning, including TRANSITION requirements!



WHERE DO WE START?

Where is Student NOW and where do they want to GO?

- Present levels and student/family vision are the starting line that helps team create long term, measurable postsecondary goals (MPSG's) in 3 KEY areas:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Independent Living

No matter the challenges, being part of a community and having quality of life are priorities!



START WITH: PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

- Where we are starting from guides where we can go and how we get there
- We start by understanding (with input from YOUTH and all team members and others involved with youth) the **STRENGTHS** and **CHALLENGES** a student starts with in order to create a reasonable, appropriate plan
- **REMEMBER: Assessment and Evaluation:** More than just a career survey OR Interest Inventory. Team needs DATA

USE STARTING POINT TO DEVELOP MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOALS

- Training/Employment → a program leading to high school completion or certificate like adult education or a short-term training program like a vocational program
- Education → community or technical colleges (generally two-year programs) or college or university (generally four-year programs)
- Independent Living → skill set needed to make your life work—budget, shop, nutrition, organizing, handling conflict, dealing with frustration, vote, file tax returns, interact with law enforcement



MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOALS MPSG's

The IDEA requires:

Appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals (MPSG) based on age-appropriate **assessments** related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills

So—what IS a **MPSG**?

Answer: what the student plans to do upon school exit

Specific: You could check

Reasonable: Not an impossible dream. Achievable

[Secondary Transition Planning: The Basics](#)

MPSG EXAMPLES

- **Education/Employment/Independent Living**
 - Joey will attend a two year program at Chabot Community College and get certified as a smog technician and work in the auto repair industry
 - DeAndre will attend a UC, and enroll in pre-med classes, with a long term goal of becoming a doctor
 - Namita will work in supported employment learning to care for animals
 - Lupita will live independently in the community with in home support services to meet her medical needs

Tip: Could you go CHECK to see if student did it?

CONNECT ANNUAL IEP GOALS WITH MPSG'S

Questions to consider:

- Does the student know what her post-school goals are for education or training? If no, create goals around that!
- Can the student explain his disability and support/ accommodation needs?
- Does student know what medication she takes, and know when and how to schedule medical/dental appointments independently?
- Does the student know that college is option? [Inclusive Postsecondary Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

why?
how? who?
WHEN?
Where?

WITHOUT GOALS, TRANSITION PLAN BECOMES A TRANSITION TO NOWHERE

- ITP inadequate where not based on transition evaluation, contains inadequate transition services, lacks goals that are meaningful, appropriate and measurable
- Beware the “career exploration” inventories. Can help, but NOT an assessment!
- ITP is a FLEXIBLE roadmap to a destination that matters!



CONNECT THE DOTS: WHAT GOALS FOR IEP ARE NEEDED?

- Complete UC a-g requirements and prepare for SAT/ACT to be eligible for a UC
- Learn self care skills to prepare for job training program (grooming, laundry, time management, navigating environment)
- Create a PORTFOLIO containing a resume, an introduction to an employer or teacher, letters of recommendation, sample work products
- Increase self regulation skills by learning to accept positive criticism without meltdown
- Know how to shop, budget, prepare a meal



KEY INDEPENDENT LIVING GOALS OFTEN LEFT OUT!

- Registering to vote and learning how to fill out ballot
- Securing an ID card or Driver's License, Passport
- Completing a job application
- Sexual Health and Responsibility
- Interacting with Law Enforcement/knowing legal rights
- Budgeting
 - Using a calendaring system
- Using Assistive Technology/equipment independently
- Knowing how to hire assistants to help with care/equipment
- Creating a "rental resume" to apply for housing
- Creating a letter of introduction for instructors, employers
- Connecting with Others/avoiding isolation

EXAMPLES: INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Many higher functioning students get this left OUT of their ITP. It's critical!
- **Example: Independent Living Postsecondary Goal:** Results of the Casey-Ansell Life skills assessment documents that Gavin need to learn how to manage money, budget, and hire a personal assistant so he can live independently
- **MPSG:** With the help of a Personal Assistant, Gavin will live independently in a dormitory setting at college
- **IEP goals:**
 - Gavin will create a monthly budget that is realistic based on his SSI estimate
 - Gavin will conduct mock interviews with prospective attendants using a checklist developed with his special ed teacher based on what kind of helper works best for him

Transition Activities/Services (including activities that link the student to adult services)	Responsible Individual/ Describe Responsibilities	Date to be Completed
Instruction	PARENTS, SPED Teacher, Workability Staff Gavin will increase his use of assistive technologies (voice to text, calendaring with reminders, skype) and practice independent living skills (e.g., doing laundry, meal preparation, budgeting, using assistive technologies for movement).	05/2016
Related Services	With the help of his parents and Special Education teacher, Gavin will research Personal Assistants available in the area of his chosen postsecondary school, and begin to interview potential personal assistants.	06/2016
Community Experiences	Gavin will tour his chosen dormitory, and (with the help of his orientation and mobility teacher and parents) map out accessible routes through campus (e.g., from the dorm to class buildings).	05/2016
Employment	Considered, but not appropriate at this time	
Daily Living Skills	With the help of the Special Educator, Gavin will create a list of ways his disability impacts his daily living, and practice/develop strategies to help him overcome each impact.	05/2016
Adult Living	Gavin will participate in one to two community events in the area in which his postsecondary school is located prior to the start of college.	09/2016
OTHER	Gavin will contact his doctor to get a referral to a therapist in the area of his postsecondary school.	05/2016 ₂₅



Q&A

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- Just because it's HARD does not mean we GIVE UP
- Goal must always be to increase participation FROM a present level TO a higher level!
 - Students who can't explain why they have an IEP need to learn this (**GOAL**)
 - Students who resist help need to learn how to accept it (**GOAL**)
 - Can't run their own IEP meeting? (**GOAL**)



OVERCOMING BARRIERS - Continued

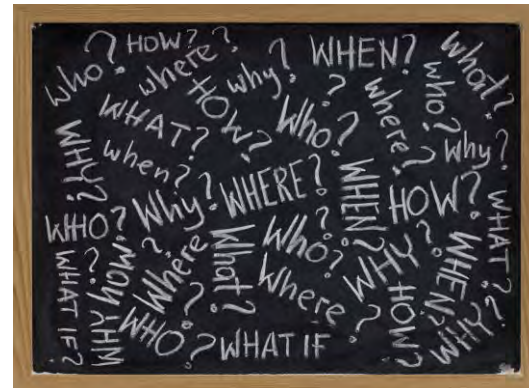
- Dealing with Student Resistance--Ideas to Consider:
 - Case Manager: Pre- IEP interview (ex. YouTube video). Extra credit opportunity
 - Skype them in for 10 minutes this year, 30 next year, in person by 18...
 - Written statement to team-what's working. What isn't
 - Video/picture of student doing what she loves
 - Student work products (art, report, recent success)

Ask: Can student explain disability? It's impact on them? What accommodations/supports work for them?

SELF ADVOCACY IS KEY

Explore opportunities to Increase Self Advocacy:

- [Connecting, Organizing, Educating Youth with Disabilities – YO! Disabled & Proud](#)
- Disability Pride, History, Awareness
- [Autistic Self Advocacy Network | Nothing About Us Without Us](#), NAMI, other Support and Advocacy Groups
- Movies, books, articles on successful adults with disabilities. [Crip Camp](#)



CONNECTIONS/INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION MATTERS!

- Once a student receives a regular diploma or turns age 22 (or ends that school year), the school district has no responsibility. Don't let this turn into a "cliff" student (and family) falls off. Build bridges
- Critical to coordinate interagency services as early as possible
- Look to Regional Center, Independent Living Centers, County Foster Care/AB 12, Department of Rehabilitation, and College Disabled Students Programs for services and supports. Invite agencies to transition IEP meetings (Call a meeting to focus ONLY on transition)



INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

- Consider steps for applying and determining eligibility
- Assistance with securing enrollment
- Plan for effective use
- Examples: Center for Independent Living, Department of Rehabilitation, Center for Assistive Technology, County Mental Health, Social Security Admin, Adult Assisted Living Program...
- The school district is charged with making linkages to other agencies when needed
- Explore Department of Rehab programs for Youth:
[CA Department of Rehabilitation: Employment, Independence & Equality](#)

DOCUMENTING DISABILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION

- In testing (SAT, ACT, AP exams) education, student must request and document need for accommodation—most schools assist but ASK no later than end of sophomore year
- Same in employment context, but applicant must balance risks of disclosure in employment context with benefits. Great Goal Area!

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

NOTE: Triannuals in high school really matter for this reason.

Records review is easier, but may not be adequate as we need DATA and PRESENT LEVELS to PLAN and SUPPORT!



DON'T RULE OUT COLLEGE: MANY NEW OPTIONS!

- Consider value of experience - what does it feel like to learn with other adults outside of high school?
- To follow a routine independently?
- To participate in community and be independent “with training wheels”?
- [Think College | Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog](#)
- Adult Connections—Relationships, social engagement, access to typical peers, and other SWD's working on similar goals
- Open the door for later down the road—Developmental DELAYS mean late bloomers



CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR COLLEGE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Usually require up-to-date evaluation (generally not more than 3 years old—senior year is ideal)
- IEP or 504 plan may be insufficient—need ASSESSMENTS and/or Medical/Psychiatric REPORTS
- Special education/Section 504 eligibility helps – not legally essential, but in practice, often critical!
- Evaluation must be **by** qualified professional
- Must show impairment in comparison to average population
- Must link need for accommodation to impairment
- Has Student been USING accommodations?
- Suggestion: Request any and all records by April of Senior/final year of public school

FOR STUDENTS WITH COGNITIVE OR FUNCTIONAL DISABILITIES

- Don't rule out college or training — emphasize PREPARATION and SUPPORT
- If Student will need adult support/assistance long term, plan should STILL be to increase connectedness, community participation, independent decision making, quality of life
- Ask: What MATTERS to this student? What experiences, subjects, activities light them up?
- Plan: If parent/aide not in the picture, HOW will we make sure caregivers/support staff in new settings understand what pleasure, distress, pain, sadness look like, and what training is needed to ensure this?

FOR STUDENTS WITH HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

- Transitioning to new doctors, therapists, psychiatrists, is difficult. Begin planning at least six months in advance
- Goal possible around how to know if therapist is good fit for them
- Knowing what medications, side effects, refill requirements are is critical goal
- Self Regulation — knowing when to drop classes, take breaks, read warning signs is key
- Teaching student to identify and access care is essential!

FAMILY/SCHOOL TEAM COLLABORATION

- Families provide critical relevant information!
- Participate in the process — listen, question, collaborate and challenge on high stakes issues
- Negotiate in good will — follow through on your end, ask what you can do to support teachers, staff
- Remind team of who this youth IS and what he CAN do. Strengths based!
- Share/What am I most worried about?
- Is there something I can recommend?
- If your child cannot participate in meeting, speak to their dreams and interests —bring them in in any way possible
- Bring in concrete examples of strengths and challenges to help team understand
- Know when to step back!

WHAT CAN ADULTS DO TO HELP?

- ❑ Help youth make doctor appointments, learn to calendar
- ❑ Provide incremental independence opportunities
- ❑ Ensure youth understands his/her disability, and can explain it to others
- ❑ Make sure student understands **LEGAL rights** and **responsibilities**
- ❑ Encourage youth to USE accommodations
- ❑ Create Portfolio—letter of intro, list of accommodations that work, a list of skills, strengths, interests, letters of recommendation, resume
- ❑ Practice! Visit DSP offices with student but let them lead. Colleges want direct contact with students, and will not share information without student permission (and prefer NOT to in most cases)
- ❑ Audit a college lecture, and prep student for expectations for behavior/engagement
- ❑ Consider when and whether to step in, and use person centered approaches to planning
- ❑ Avoid “rescue mode, use “coaching” model
- ❑ Create simulations of interviews, conflicts, etc.



THE PLAN IS FINALIZED - NEXT STEP

- **Monitor the plan** — is it working? Does it need changing? Are there implementation problems?
- **Gather data** — how can we know if plan is working without information?
- **Focus on self advocacy in all we do** — student led, student centered
- **Advocacy matters** — how WILL we teach student these skills? IEP goals?
- **Adjust** as student changes/grows



TAKEAWAY

- Transition Planning should start early
- Plan must be Person/Strength Centered, Culturally Appropriate
- Plan must link activities, classes and learning at school to postsecondary goals—education is more than a formal degree. It's a GATEWAY
- Parents are critical partners in the process
- Students should be increasingly in the driver's seat no later than 16
- Interagency collaboration is key AND HARD
- Plan for dreams but offer reality checks — we all learn to live within our own limits



TRANSITION PLAN COMPLIANCE

US Department of Education Checklist:

- % of youth with IEPs 16 and above with IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals, based upon transition assessment, transition services, that reasonably enable the student to meet postsecondary goals, and IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs.
- Evidence that the student and representatives of other agencies were invited to the IEP Transition Team meeting (with prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority (legal adulthood)).

[NSTTAC Indicator 13 Checklist Form A \(Meets Minimum SPP/APR Requirements\)](#)



Q&A - EVALUATIONS

Please take some time to fill out the poll while we answer your questions



RESOURCES

- **CA Department of Education Transition Resources:**
[Secondary Transition Planning - Special Education \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)
- **Age of Majority Info for Parents:** [Transfer of Parental Rights at Age of Majority | The Wrightslaw Way](#)
- **Indicator 13 Goals (compliance review tool):**
https://transitionta.org/sites/default/files/transitionplanning/NSTTAC_ChecklistFormA.pdf
- **Department of Rehabilitation Youth Programs:**
[CA Department of Rehabilitation](#)
- [**Resource Guide for Youth & Young Adults In Alameda County California Children's Services \(CCS\)**](#)

[Sample Transition Plans](#)

- [Exemplar IEP Transition Plans](#)
- Understood: [Download: Sample IEP Transition Plan and Goals](#)
- [Five Steps for Developing Effective Transition Plans for High School Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

RESOURCES

Transition Info for YOUTH:

- Youthhood.org

[The Youthhood - Where teens prepare for life after high school](#)

This is a very interactive site for youth to use to start thinking about what they want to do with the rest of their lives, designed to help youth plan for the future. (Psst! Good for adults, too.)

- <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/priority-selfadvocacy/#youth>
- [Resources for “Everything You've Wanted to Know about Sexuality Issues But Were Afraid to Ask”](#)
- [Self-Advocacy: Find the Captain in You!](#)
Video (10 minutes) | A funny and fun way to introduce self-advocacy to young people with disabilities.
Follow two hosts with dry humor on their morning news talk show



DREDF provides information and training to parents/guardians of school-age children with disabilities (up to age 26), and professionals who serve these students and their families.

To use our services contact us. If we don't serve your area we can refer you to the agency that does.

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