

Transition Planning

with Department of Rehabilitation, the Regional Center,
and the School District

Presentation by: Disability Rights California

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I. Introduction:

Transition services are activities and supports that help students with disabilities prepare for life after secondary school. Today, we will discuss services from three sources: the School District, the Regional Center, and the California Department of Rehabilitation. We will focus on transition services that help students with disabilities prepare for competitive, integrated employment.

What is Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)?

- Real jobs with real wages
- A job where a person makes minimum wage or more, works with people with and without disabilities, and has equal opportunities to advance (get promotions)

High Expectations NOT Low Expectations

People with disabilities (and their families) often face the problem of low expectations. Here are some examples of things people say when they have low expectations:

- You can't do that
- People who have autism can't work with others
- You need to be more realistic
- A day program is your only option
- You can't make minimum wage

In reality, people with disabilities can and do work in many different types of jobs. High expectations can help students to believe in themselves, and to work towards their goals. Here are some examples of things people say when they have high expectations:

- You can do it, with the right supports

- People with autism can be good at all kinds of jobs
- You can set goals, and achieve them
- You have many options
- I expect you to work hard
- I believe in you

A bad plan vs. a good plan:

When people talk about transition services, they often talk about transition planning. Whether you work with the Department of Rehabilitation, the Regional Center, the School District, or a combination of these agencies, you will probably have one or more transition plans. A transition plan is a written document that lists your goals, and the services you need to help you reach these goals.

Here are some characteristics of a bad plan:

- Generic transition words
- No goals, or unachievable goals
- No timelines, or unrealistic timelines
- Does not reflect choices
- Reflects low expectations
- Does not include supports
- Does not include a date to review

Here are some characteristics of a good plan:

- Specific to you
- Concrete goals, that are achievable
- Specific, realistic timelines
- Reflects your choices
- Reflects high expectations
- Includes supports
- Includes a date to review

II. Pre-Employment Transition Services:

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are a set of services that can help students with disabilities (under 22) to prepare for their careers. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, state vocational rehabilitation programs (like the California Department of Rehabilitation

“DOR”) are required to help make sure that Pre-Employment Transition Services are available to students with disabilities. You do not have to apply for DOR services to get Pre-ETS (but you will usually need to provide the DOR with some basic information). The DOR often works with school districts, and other agencies to provide Pre-ETS.

Here are examples of Pre-Employment Transition services:

Job Exploration Counseling:

- Talking about different options
- Career speakers
- Learning about the labor market (what careers hire a lot of people)
- Career assessments
- Mentors

Work-Based Learning Experiences:

- Job shadowing
- Volunteering
- Paid internships
- Summer jobs

Counseling on post-secondary education opportunities:

- Talking about schools, such as colleges, universities, and trade schools
- Taking college-level classes
- Summer programs
- Campus visits

Instruction on self-advocacy:

- Confidence
- Making choices
- Know your rights
- Community resources
- How to challenge a decision

III. Transition Services from the School District:

Your Individualized Transition Plan (ITP):

Your ITP is a written plan that you create with your school district to help you prepare for life after school. Here are some things to know about ITPs:

- It is part of your Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- You must have an ITP when you turn 16.
- An ITP must be based on your needs, preferences and interests and reflect the student's own goals.
- An ITP is based on assessment.
- If the school district's transition assessment is not appropriate, consider requesting an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE).
- The school district must provide you with appropriate transition services to implement your ITP and help you move from school to adult life. Transition services may include employment and academic training, strategic planning, interagency coordination and parent training.

Diploma vs. Certificate Track:

As you develop your ITP, you might talk to the school about whether your goal is to get a high school diploma or a certificate of completion. Here is some information to know about this topic:

- A regular high school diploma means that you have completed all of the local and state requirements for graduation. It also means that you are no longer eligible for special education and related services.
- Special education students who do not earn a regular high school diploma can earn a certificate of completion. A certificate of completion may be earned at any time from the end of your senior year until you exit special education at age 22. A certificate does not end your eligibility. A student who earns a certificate of completion can continue working toward a regular diploma.
- Your track (diploma vs. certificate of completion) is determined in the IEP process.

At age 18, you have the right to make your own decisions about your education and your IEP.

You can request advocacy assistance from regional center to help develop your ITP, obtain appropriate transition services and/or get on the track that is right for you.

IV. Transition and the Regional Center:

Your Individual Program Plan (IPP):

Your IPP is your plan with the Regional Center, and it lists your goals and the services and supports you need. Here are some things to know about IPPs and transition services:

- Your IPP lists your goals, and the services you need
- You can ask for an IPP meeting to add transition-related goals (like a goal to work in competitive integrated employment)
- There are some restrictions on services for transition-aged youth ages 18-22 (under WIC section 4648.55)
- Your service coordinator can help you advocate for services from the school and/or Department of Rehabilitation

Regional Center and Living Arrangements:

- Living arrangements for after you turn 18
 - There are many options for where to live, including: living with friends or family, living in your own home, Foster Family Agency (FHA), living in a group home with other people with developmental disabilities.
 - Other options to support you in living independently include: Independent Living Services (ILS), Supported Living Services (SLS) respite, Personal Care Attendants (PCA), and day programs.

Paid Internship Program:

Regional Centers across the state now have Paid Internship Programs.

Here are some things to know about this program:

- New Regional Center program (started in 2016)
- Ask your service coordinator to add a paid internship goal to your IPP
- Available to students too!
- Regional Center can pay up to \$10,400 per year, per person in wages
- You can get supports to find and keep your internship

V. California Department of Rehabilitation Services:

Beyond Pre-Employment Transition Services, the DOR can also provide a wide variety of services to help people with disabilities (of all ages) to reach an employment goal. These services depend on your specific goal and your needs. They can include training, assistive technology, job search services, job coaching, transportation, and more.

Applying for DOR Services:

If you would like DOR services (beyond Pre-Employment Transition Services), the first step is to apply. Here are some of the steps in the process:

- You can apply by: filing out their application form online (<http://www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/>), mailing in the application form, and/or calling your local DOR office (and setting up an intake).
- From the date you apply, the DOR has 60 days to decide if you are eligible (unless you agree to an extension).
- If you are found eligible, the DOR should work with you to create your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days (unless you agree to an extension)

Your Individualize Plan for Employment (IPE):

Your IPE is a written plan that you create with the Department of Rehabilitation. When you agree on the plan, you and your counselor sign the plan. It can be updated in the future. Your IPE should include:

- Your employment goal (your future job)
- Timelines (can be updated)
- Steps to reach your goal
- Services needed to reach goal
- Who will provide each service, when will they start
- Everything is based on your choices

VI. Advocacy: Tips, Strategies, and Examples

Getting bounced around:

Sometimes when you are working with multiple agencies, you get bounced back and forth between the agencies.

Here are some tips:

- Start by figuring out the services you need, then decide who will pay
- Ask them to talk to each other (with releases)
- Schedule a meeting where everyone is there
- Provide a denial to show that the other agency is not paying for what you need
- Contact Disability Rights California

Strategies for solving problems:

When you disagree with the School District, Regional Center, and/or Department of Rehabilitation, you have options. Here are some options you could try:

You might try less formal, less adversarial strategies.

Less formal:

- Talk to your counselor, or service coordinator
- Bring a friend or family member to a meeting
- Ask for an explanation in writing
- Ask for a note taker
- Contact a supervisor

Remember, as students with disabilities and parents of students with disabilities, you have formal, procedural safeguards as well.

More formal:

- Contact Disability Rights California and/or Office of Clients' Rights Advocates
- Find out about your appeal rights
- Appeal by the deadline
- Make a customer service complaint
- Attend public meetings and voice your concerns
- Contact your representatives

VII. Examples

So, how does this all work? Below, are three examples of how the School District, Regional Center, and Department of Rehabilitation can work together to help a student with a disability achieve their career goals.

Example One: Liza

Liza is a junior in high school. She has Cerebral Palsy, and uses a wheelchair. She loves books, and dislikes being bored.

- ITP (school): Liza updates her ITP to include job shadowing. She visits libraries, bookstores, and a publishing company. She decides she really enjoys the bookstore.
- IPP (Regional Center): Liza updates her IPP to include a paid internship at a bookstore. She works at Barnes and Nobles over the summer.
- IPE (DOR): Liza applies for DOR services, and she is found eligible. DOR pays for the assistive technology she needs to do her job at Barnes and Nobles. She wants to become a Librarian, which requires a Master's Degree. DOR helps her find a community college that meets her needs, and then she will transfer to a state university.

Example Two: Jose

Jose is 18 years old, and attends a transition program. He has autism. Jose loves routines, and learning how things work. He dislikes loud environments.

- ITP (School): Jose updates his Individualized Transition Plan to include goals related to writing, and building tools. He learns he enjoys writing, and working on a computer.
- IPE (DOR): Jose applies for DOR services, and he is found eligible. Jose decides that he would like to write technical manuals. With funding from the DOR, he attends a certificate program, and gets help to apply for a job
- IPP (Regional Center): Jose updates his IPP to reflect his goal of competitive integrated employment. The Regional Center will help him access these services from the School District and DOR.

Example Three: Brittany

Brittany is 14 years old. She is Deaf and has an intellectual disability. She loves soccer, and being around other people. She dislikes writing.

- ITP (School): As part of her ITP, Brittany gets extended services in the summer. She attends a summer sports and academic program for Deaf/HOH students for two years.
- IPP (Regional Center): When she is 17, Brittany asks to be referred to the Paid Internship Program. She works as a coach at the summer program she attended in the past.

- IPE (DOR): Brittany applies for DOR services, and is found eligible. She attends a program to become a referee, and the DOR pays for her tuition and an ASL interpreter.

VIII. How to Contact Us:

Disability Rights California (DRC):

Intake: 1-800-776-5746

TTY: 1-800-719-5798

DRC Website: <https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/>

Office of Clients' Rights Advocates (OCRA):

(Advocacy for people who get Regional Center services)

Arthur Lipscomb, CRA: (510) 267-1280

TTY: 1-877-669-6023

IX. Referrals and Resources

The California Department of Rehabilitation:

General website: <http://www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/>

Section of website on youth services:

<http://www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/Services-to-Youth/index.html>

Oakland branch phone #: (510) 622-2764 (Voice); (844) 729-2800 (TTY)

Fremont branch phone #: (510) 794-2458 (Voice); (844) 729-2800 (TTY)

Berkeley branch phone #: (510) 883-6000 (Voice); (844) 729-2800 (TTY)

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program (benefits counseling); at the Center for Independence:

Website: <http://www.cidsanmateo.org/work-incentive-planning-assistance.html>

Phone #: 650-645-1780

Job Accommodation Network (information about reasonable accommodations at work):

Website: <https://askjan.org/>

Phone #: 1-800-526-7234 (Voice); 1-877-781-9303 (TTY)