

## **Transition**

### **1. What happens when a student does not want to work, live independently, etc.?**

Even if a student has no desire to seek further education or training to become employed in the future, measurable post secondary goals need to be included in the IEP of a transition-aged student. Through transition assessments (obtaining parent input is usually beneficial in this type of situation), hopefully some interest in a career or a field will emerge, and can then be written into the IEP. For students struggling with identifying career and postsecondary goals, their transition services should emphasize activities or coursework to help them to develop measurable postsecondary goals in these areas. If a student doesn't require formal education or training to reach their desired career, it is still likely that they will receive some type of on-the-job training through the employer. If a student has no desire to live independently, but will continue to live with family, that is what should be stated in the measurable post secondary goal.

Examples -

Employment - I will be employed in a service, artistic, or socially-oriented job.

Education/Training - I will receive on-the-job training to be successfully employed.

Independent Living - After high school, I will continue to live with my parents.

### **2. Do transition services need to be documented for 1 year or for multiple years?**

IDEA 2004 Regulations require that transition services be documented for the current year. As a "best practice," transition services for multiple years may be documented in the IEP, but this is not required by IDEA 2004.

### **3. Do you need permission to invite outside agency representatives (the person asking the question is aware that it needs to be done for transition, but what about younger children?)**

IDEA 2004 does not address obtaining parental permission to invite outside agency representatives for purposes other than transition.

### **4. Can you state, "I will work in retail", rather than writing Wal-Mart, Alco, etc.?**

A specific business does not need to be mentioned. Using the words, "I will work in retail" is fine, but indicating whether the student will be a cashier, stocker, manager, etc. is even better. This would help the IEP team to target coursework, experiences, and other transition services to best prepare students for their chosen employment.

### **5. What do you do in regard to transition to other placements when parents of a student age 18 years old who has a significant cognitive disability assume all rights?**

When parents have obtained full guardianship of their child, transition will continue the same way. The student's preferences and interests should be taken into account, but the guardian would have the ultimate say. Connections with outside agencies and making applications should typically start well before the student reaches age 18.

## **6. What are the options for child with a significant cognitive disability?**

Early planning is critical for students who will require extensive postsecondary supports. A child with a significant cognitive disability may benefit from services through an adjustment training center (ATC) while still eligible for special education, and also as an adult. ATC's are located throughout the state, and they provide a wide variety of service including: case management, nursing, employment training, independent living training, and social/leisure activities. Also, the Division of Developmental Disabilities employs Resource Coordinators to assist individuals with development disabilities and their families in identifying options and accessing services. Another service option for young adults could be the PLANS Program, also funded through the Division of Developmental Disabilities

Examples of measurable post-secondary goals might be:

- \* Upon aging out of special education, John will participate in part-time volunteer vocational experiences, while attending the adult day services center.
- \* Upon completion of high school, John will enroll in an adult day services center and participate part-time in basic self-help skills training.
- \* After high school, John will live in an apartment with on-site supports.

## **7. How long is the signed parental consent to invite outside agencies to a meeting effective?**

It is recommended that the signed parental consent be valid for one year. This also applies to consents from students who have reached the age of majority. Please see page 59 of the IEP TA Guide for a sample form with the required contents.

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/specialed/IEP/IEPPProcessTAGuide8.22.07.pdf>

## **8. When a student receives a signed diploma, does it result in disqualifying the student for Social Security Income (SSI)?**

Receiving a signed diploma doesn't impact a student's eligibility for SSI. However, students with or without disabilities, who are receiving dependent Social Security retirement, survivor, or disability benefits (not SSI), based on a parent or guardian's circumstances, will lose those benefits upon graduation or attainment of age 19. (See the Social Security web site for details - <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10084.pdf>). Therefore, if receiving SSI prior to age 18, the student will need to re-apply for SSI benefits at this age.

## **9. How old must a child be to be eligible for SSI?**

A child can be eligible for SSI at any age. However, prior to the age of 18, the parents' income is taken into account. If the student seeks eligibility at the age of 18 (or after), he is considered a family of one and the parent's income has no bearing on eligibility, even if he continues to live in their home. If a student has been receiving SSI prior to the age of 18, they will need to re-apply at age 18 to determine continued eligibility as an adult. If a child had been determined not eligible prior to age 18 due to family income, there may be options to still make them eligible for SSI. Quite frequently, families will stop seeking eligibility when they find that their income is too high and they aren't aware of the other options available to them to make their child eligible for SSI. In this situation,

families should contact a benefits specialist in their region for benefits counseling. Benefit specialists are located throughout the state.

**10. Is there a list of service agencies available “by community”?**

There is not a specific community list of service agencies. The USD Center for Disabilities has a Resource Guide for People with Disabilities containing service descriptions and contact information for various disability-related agencies: <http://www.usd.edu/cd/publications/resourceguide.pdf> Another document, “Suggested Transition Activities - Adult Services/Resources”, can be found on pp. 21 & 22 in the QuickBook of Transition Assessments, published by Transition Services Liaison Project. This one page document lists the agencies available in South Dakota who may serve as potential adult service providers for students. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Transition Liaisons, Developmental Disability Resource Coordinators, and South Dakota Advocacy Services staff can also assist educators with helping to match students with potential service providers.

**11. Does benefit planning need to be included in the IEP?**

Many parents and teachers have limited knowledge of Social Security’s rules and regulations. If a student receives SSI, and is starting to seek employment, a possible transition service/activity may be for the student and family to meet with a benefits specialist to determine the impact of wages on the student’s SSI and other benefits. Social Security’s work incentives can help students and adults to earn wages, while keeping many or all of their benefits. The VR Counselor or Transition Liaison assigned to your school can help you to locate a benefits planner in your area.

**12. How close to age 16 should transition assessment be completed?**

IDEA 2004 requires measurable post-secondary goal statements, based on age-appropriate transition assessment, to be part of the IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16 years of age. Some districts choose to start transition assessment earlier, sometimes as part of the three-year reevaluation. Career Interest assessments help most middle school students to start thinking about the future. Students of transition age should be interviewed shortly before their annual IEP meeting to identify possible changes in their measurable postsecondary goals for employment, education/training, and where appropriate, independent living.

**13. If a student is signed up with Voc. Rehab., does one need to have permission to attend the student’s IEP meeting?**

If a student is already receiving services through Vocational Rehabilitation, permission is not required for the VR Counselor to attend the IEP.

Example: A student is turning 16 and wants to participate in Project Skills. The school district would obtain parental consent to invite VR to the IEP. VR attends the IEP meeting, student applies for VR eligibility, is determined eligible for VR services, and begins working through Project Skills. When VR attends the next year’s IEP, consent will not need to be obtained, because at this point, VR has obtained records & releases from the student & parents. VR is considered a member of the IEP team, since they are providing transition services to the student.