

The Ages of Transition!



All children with disabilities begin receiving transition services starting with the IEP in place when they turn age 16 (or earlier, if appropriate).

By age 16, every IEP should:

- ◆ Be future-directed
- ◆ Be goal-oriented
- ◆ Be based on student's preferences, interests and needs

One year before a student reaches the age of majority under state law (which is 18), the student's IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the student when turning 18.

- T**—Transfer of Rights: Students now perform all the functions their parents/guardians performed previously.
- R**—Responsibilities: Students are responsible for IEP decisions.
- A**—Advocacy: Students need to be able to speak on their own behalf and determine what they want in the future.
- N**—Notices: Students will now get notices for meetings, consents, IEP decisions, etc.
- S**—Supports: Students may need support at meetings and in making decisions, such as from parents. However, ultimate decisions belong to the students.
- F**—FERPA: Confidentiality and all other rights transfer to the students.
- E**—Evaluation: Decisions about evaluations belong to the students (requests, consent, IEEs, etc.).
- R**—Rights: Students have all the rights parents held prior to age 18. Students become the "parent" referenced in IDEA.



All children with disabilities legally become an "adult" at age 18 in South Dakota. Team should consider whether they feel the young adult can make sound decisions and manage key areas of life effectively. If not, options to consider may be supported decision making, power of attorney, representative payee, conservatorship or guardianship.

For more information, contact The Guardianship Program, www.sdguardians.com, 224-9647 or Disability Rights South Dakota, www.drds.org, 224-8294.

18-21 YEARS



At some point during this time frame, a student's public education comes to an end. Points to consider when thinking about graduation:

- ◆ It should be discussed with incoming freshman, and continue annually until date of graduation.
- ◆ Make sure all team members understand the implications of graduating with a signed diploma.
- ◆ Parents and students need to understand the school's policy on diplomas and student participation in the graduation ceremony well before the event!!

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PARENT BRIEF



TRANSITION PLANNING: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Completion of high school – the beginning of adult life – these are exciting times for you and your son or daughter! You have likely spent countless hours learning how the system works and ensuring your child receives the supports and services necessary to succeed in school. It's finally time to sit back and relax, right? Well...not exactly!

The choices for students with disabilities may require a great deal of planning and may be more complex than for the typical high school graduate. Transition planning is required by law to begin no later than 16 years of age. Therefore, the Individual Education Program (IEP) that is written while your child is 15 will have a total different look. This IEP will focus on your child's dreams/goals for the future. The Transition IEP should provide the student a seamless transition from high school to the adult world.

Transition planning includes identifying post-secondary goals in the areas of employment, education/training and independent living, taking into consideration the preferences and interests of your child. This planning process also includes developing transition services, activities and a course of study to assist him/her in reaching these goals. Adult service agencies are available to assist during the transition years and into adult life.

Starting with the IEP to be in place when the child turns age 16 (**or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team**) and continuing until the student is no longer eligible for special education services, the IEP Team must:

- ◆ actively involve the child in his or her IEP development;
- ◆ base the IEP on the child's strengths, preferences, and interests;
- ◆ determine the child's post-school goals;
- ◆ determine needed transition services; and
- ◆ ensure the transition services the student requires in order to meet the student's postsecondary goals are provided.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

-Eleanor Roosevelt



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Self-determination refers to both the right and the ability to direct your own life.

No matter what or how significant the disability may be, STUDENTS are the most important people in the transition process. They should be actively engaged in all aspects of the process. The IEP team must invite the student to attend any IEP meeting in which the team will be considering transition needs or services. The IEP transition long-range goals must be based on the student's preferences, interests, and strengths. If the student does not attend the meeting, the school must ensure that their preferences and interests are considered when developing the transition plan.

SELF-DETERMINED STUDENTS WILL:

- ◆ Know their strengths and weakness and understand their disability,
- ◆ Know what they want their future to look like and how to plan for it, and
- ◆ Know the supports needed to take control in their life.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME SELF-DETERMINED?

- ◆ Encourage your child to make choices and decisions about every-day activities.
- ◆ Help your child identify strengths and preferences.
- ◆ Help your child understand that choices have results and consequences.
- ◆ Talk to your child about the process of goal setting.
- ◆ Encourage disability awareness.
- ◆ Help your child understand accommodations and the role they play in his/her life.
- ◆ Talk to your child about his/her rights.
- ◆ Help your child become involved in his/her IEP.
- ◆ Model problem solving.



Self-determination allows people to make choices and decisions to improve their quality of life.

Community Services and Adult Agencies in South Dakota



Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has traditionally been a primary player in transition meetings. DRS provides individualized vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors can provide vocational counseling and guidance with career goals. Also, DRS can work with high school age students through a paid work experience program called Project Skills.



Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI). SBVI is a sister agency to DRS, and provides similar services, including Project Skills; however, SBVI works with individuals who are blind or have visual impairments. SBVI can provide guidance and counseling, funding for training, assistive technology services, and numerous other services that specialize in vision



Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). The mission of DDD is to support people with developmental disabilities and their families. The DDD is responsible for the oversight of the Community Support Providers. DDD also administers the Family Support 360 Program, and the Respite Care Program. Intervention and Support Specialists are available throughout the state to assist families with planning and accessing services.



Independent Living Centers are located throughout the state to help people with disabilities achieve and maintain self-sufficient lives within the community. Some services that are provided include community living services, advocacy, independent living skills, peer support, and more.



Dakota Link is the assistive technology (AT) program for South Dakota. Dakota Link can help schools and families locate, acquire and use the latest available assistive devices that best meet an individual's needs. Dakota Link has AT Specialists statewide who can meet with IEP teams or individuals.



Disability Rights SD is a non-profit legal services agency dedicated to protecting and advocating for rights and inclusion of South Dakotans with disabilities. DRSD's legal team works to protect the rights of the disability community. DRSD provides advice, information and referral regarding disability concerns, laws and rights, and legal representation.



Benefits Specialists assist people receiving supplemental security income (SSI) and social security disability insurance (SSDI) to understand how work will impact their benefits such as food stamps, housing, Medicaid, and others.

NOTE—Each of these agencies has their own definition of disability, as well as eligibility requirements and possible waiting lists. That is why it is so important for IEP teams to discuss the services and programs well in advance of the student's exit from school. Teams should invite representatives from the appropriate agencies to attend the IEP meeting to explain the services they have to offer. (Parents must give consent prior to the district inviting outside agencies.) The list above is not all-inclusive. For more info on other agencies, go to www.tsfp.org.