

The Ages of Transition:



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

By age 16, every IEP should be:

- ◆ Future-directed
- ◆ Goal-oriented
- ◆ Based on student's preferences, interests and needs

By the time a student turns 17 yr old, his or her IEP must include a statement that he or she has been informed of the rights that will transfer to the student when turning 18. Examples of rights that will transfer to the student at age 18 may include:

- T** - Transfer of Rights: Students now are responsible to 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 seek support from parents or others at meetings and in making decisions. However, the ultimate decision belongs to the student.
- F** - FERPA: Confidentiality and all other rights transfer to the student.
- E** - Evaluation: Decisions about evaluations (requests for evaluation, consent for evaluation, etc.) belong to the student.
- R** - Rights: Students have all the rights parents held prior to age 18. Students become the "parent" referenced in IDEA.



All students with disabilities legally become an "adult" at age 18 in South Dakota. The IEP 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, <https://dhs.sd.gov/guardianship/guardianshipandconservatorshipfaqs.aspx>, 605-224-9647 or Disability Rights South Dakota, www.drslaw.org, 604-224-8294.



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!!

PARENT BRIEF

Starting the Transition to Adulthood Planning Process



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

Developed by
Transition Services
Liaison Project,
a Black Hills Special
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program.



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www.tslp.org

Transition Planning for High School Students 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 totally 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, which includes linking the student to adult programs and services BEFORE they leave the high school setting.

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 a course of study, as well as transition services and activities to assist him/her in reaching these goals. IEP teams must consider inviting adult service agencies to the meeting (with prior written parent consent) who may provide services to the student during or after high school.

Starting with the IEP in place by the time the student 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 student in his or her IEP development;
- ◆ base the IEP on the student's strengths, preferences, and interests;
- ◆ determine the student'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.

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

Self-determination (SD) involves attitudes and abilities including self-awareness, assertiveness, decision-making, goal setting, problem solving and self-advocacy skills. Developing these skills is a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout life. SD skills are best learned through real-life experience, which involves taking risks, making mistakes, and reflecting on outcomes. *Learning these skills enables students to assume responsibility and control.* Students with disabilities should be given opportunities to learn and practice these skills BEFORE they leave high school to prepare them for working and living in the community.

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 to the best of their ability. 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. When students are unable to attend the meeting, the school must ensure that their preferences and interests are considered when developing the transition plan.

SELF-DETERMINED STUDENTS:

- ◆ Know their strengths, limitations and abilities and understand their disability,
- ◆ Know what they want their future to look like and how to plan for it,
- ◆ Know the supports needed to take control in their life,
- ◆ Actively participate in their transition IEP meeting.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME SELF-DETERMINED:

- ◆ Encourage your child to make *choices and decisions* about everyday activities
- ◆ Help your child identify his/her 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

DID YOU KNOW:

Research shows that students with disabilities who are self-determined are more likely to be employed and earn more per hour one year out of school than their peers who are not self-determined.

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

DREAM
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE

ACCEPT
who you
are, and
REVEL
in it."

Mitch Albom

Who Should Be Invited to a Transition IEP Meeting

IEP teams must consider inviting adult service agencies to the IEP team meeting who are likely to provide or pay for services the student would benefit from now or in the future. Parents must give written consent prior to the school inviting agencies to any meeting where transition is being discussed. Parents have the right to invite someone with knowledge or expertise regarding their child to the meeting as well. Though not required, it is considered a matter of courtesy or good teamwork for the parent to inform the school who you are inviting.

Listed below are agencies the IEP team may consider inviting to a transition IEP meeting. For more information on these or other agencies the IEP team might consider inviting, go to www.tslp.org. Note - Each of these agencies has their own definition of disability, as well as eligibility requirements and possible waiting lists. Thus, depending on what services are needed, teams should start planning early.



Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) DRS has traditionally been a primary player in transition meetings. DRS assists eligible individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. Services may include guidance & counseling, Pre-Employment Transition Services, training and more. DRS funds the Project Skills program, a paid work experience program for students age 16 or older who qualify.



Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Offers services to people who have blindness or a visual impairment. SBVI can provide guidance and counseling, adjustment to blindness training, assistive technology services, assistance in finding and keeping a job, and more. SBVI also participates in the Project Skills program for students age 16 or older who qualify.



Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) DDD programs support people to participate in the communities of their choice. Service options include Family Support 360, Strengthening Families, Respite Care, and CHOICES waiver programs.



Independent Living Centers (ILC) 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.



South Dakota Parent Connection (SDPC) connects families who have children with the full range of disabilities or health care needs to information, training, and resources. The Navigator Program provides individualized guidance to parents and school professionals at no cost.



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.



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.