



# Transition Newsletter

DEC  
2025



## RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT



Disability Rights SD has a website that can assist you with leading your IEP meeting. Just answer the questions and it will assist you with producing a “draft transition plan” that can be used to develop transition goals. This plan is your road map to transitioning into adult life after high school!  
[www.itransitionsd.org](http://www.itransitionsd.org)

Disability Rights SD also helps with advocating for rights and inclusion of South Dakotans with disabilities. Go to their website to learn more!  
[www.drdsdla.org](http://www.drdsdla.org)

*This is informational only. DHS is neither supporting nor endorsing this website. Please determine for yourself if you wish to use it and proceed accordingly.*

## You and Your IEP

An **IEP** (Individualized Education Program) is a plan made just for you to help you succeed in school. It includes the support, services, and teaching methods you need. The IEP is part of a law called **IDEA** (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), which makes sure students with disabilities get the help they need. Here’s how it works:

### Evaluation:

- You will have an evaluation to understand your strengths and challenges. This helps the school and your family create the best plan for you. The evaluation happens every three years to check if any changes are needed.

### The IEP Team:

- The IEP team includes your family, teachers, and other people who support you, like transition specialists. The most important person on the team is **YOU**. Your voice matters!

### Why You Should Attend Your IEP Meeting:

- Going to your IEP meeting is important because it gives you the chance to speak up about what helps you learn best.
- You can share your ideas about what supports you need, like extra time on tests or help with notes.
- Being part of the meeting helps you learn how to advocate for yourself and understand your strengths and challenges.
- It also helps you get ready for life after school by figuring out what works best for you now and in the future.

Your IEP is all about helping **YOU** succeed, so it's important to be part of the conversation. If you're not already involved, start now! Your voice matters in making decisions about **YOUR** future!

Here’s a video you can watch — [bit.ly/whatismyiep](https://bit.ly/whatismyiep)



## Be More Involved in Your IEP!

At your next IEP meeting, there are many ways you can take an active role because the IEP is all about YOU and YOUR goals!

Here are some things you can do to make your voice heard:

### Make the Introductions

- Take the lead at the start of the meeting by introducing your family members and explaining your relationship to them and to anyone else in the room that you know.
- Ask others to introduce themselves as well.
- Thank everyone for being there and for helping you with your education plan.

### Share Your Best Work

- Create a PowerPoint or portfolio of your best work from the past year, like assignments or projects you've completed.
- Share what you're most proud of and explain why you think you were successful in those areas.
- This is a great way to show the team how you've been doing and the progress you've made.

### Discuss Beneficial Accommodations and Supports

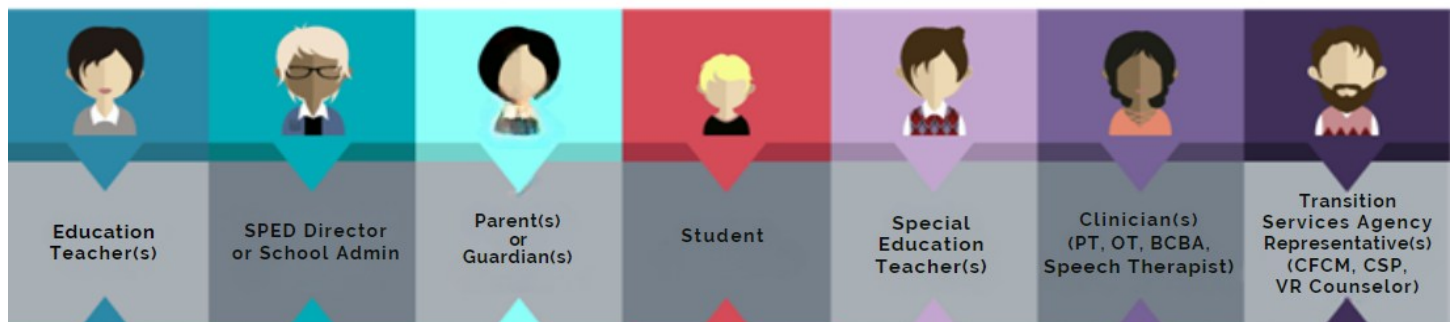
- Go over the list of accommodations and supports that were in your previous IEP. These could be things like extra time on tests, note-takers, or modified assignments.
- Talk about which supports worked well for you and which ones didn't. If something wasn't helpful, let the team know so they can suggest better supports that might work for you.
- Your input helps make sure you're getting the right help!

### Contribute to the Goals Discussions

- Goals are a big part of the IEP. They describe what you will work on during the next year, based on what you can do right now.
- Be sure to speak up about what you want to work on. This is your chance to tell the team what's important to you and what you want to improve or learn.
- Make sure everyone understands your priorities so your goals can match what you really need and want to achieve.

Taking an active role in your IEP meeting will help ensure that the plan created is truly tailored to your needs, goals, and successes. It also helps you practice important skills like **self-advocacy** and **leadership**—skills you can use throughout life! Always remember, the IEP meeting is about **YOU!** Be sure to listen, learn, and participate so **YOUR** voice is heard!

## Student's IEP Team



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Applications are due **December 19, 2025** — [tslp.org/events](https://tslp.org/events)

## What is YLF?

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a five-day leadership training and career awareness program for high school students with disabilities. It provides training in leadership, self-advocacy skills and career awareness. About 45 students throughout South Dakota are selected each year.

## How much does it cost?

Nothing! All costs, including transportation and food, are paid for through public funding and private donations.

## When and where is YLF?

June 7-11, 2026 at Northern State University in Aberdeen SD. Selected students will stay in the dorms at NSU with security and 24-hour nursing care available!

## What does a typical day look like?

Starts with breakfast at 8am in the college cafe. Large group presentations, hands-on activities, educational games, & small group activities fill the day. Every evening a special event is planned like a picnic, dance, park activity, etc.!

## Who can apply?

Any student with a disability wanting to learn from others about their own and others' disabilities, learn how to analyze your strengths and weaknesses, learn about different leadership styles and disability laws, how to influence others, and much more!



I never knew what the [disability] meant on my IEP, because of an activity at YLF, I understand more about my diagnosis and how it impacts me. I can now advocate more for myself to voice my needs moving forward!

Thank you for giving (my child) the opportunity to attend YLF... It was a really good experience for her to be surrounded by a positive group of her peers and to interact with all of you and feel supported and involved. What a wonderful program!

I'm so glad that I came because it gave me the opportunity to meet others in similar situations and I no longer feel alone and better understand what I need to do to be successful!



**APPLY TODAY AT: [TSLP.ORG/EVENTS](https://tslp.org/events)**