



NASET's Education Children with Severe Disabilities Series

Transition Services

Part I

The Introduction of Transition Services

In 1990, the laws governing the education of children with disabilities took a major step forward with the introduction of transition services. The rules and regulations for the IDEA released in 1990 define transition services as:

a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; include instruction, community experience, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional evaluation.

Simply put, transition is helping students and family think about their life after high school, identify long-range goals, designing the high school experience to ensure that students gain the skills and connections they need to achieve these goals, the provision of funds, and services to local school districts to assist in the transition process.

In May 1994, President Clinton signed the School to Work Opportunities Act. This act contains the blueprint to empower all individuals, including those with disabilities, to acquire the skills and experiences they need to compete. This landmark bill demonstrates that transition is clearly now a national priority, important to ensure our economic viability as well as to offer every young person a chance at a productive life.

Every state receives federal special education moneys through Part B of IDEA, and in turn, most of these funds flow through to local school districts and other state-supported programs providing special education services. As a requirement of receiving these funds, there are state education agencies that monitor the programs for which the funds are made available.

Types of Services Covered Under Transition Services

General overview of services and experiences a child may be entitled to have during this period of transition.

Brief Overview of Transition Services (Further series will elaborate on these topics)

Transition services are aimed at providing students and their families with the practical and experiential skills and knowledge that will assist in a successful transition to adult life. While transition services are provided in each of the following areas, it is important to understand that not every student with disabilities will need to receive all of these services. The available services included in the transition process are:

- instruction
- employment
- post school activities
- community experiences
- activities of daily living
- functional vocational evaluations

More specifically, the intent of transition services is to explore and plan a variety of areas that will allow the student with disabilities to construct a useful and practical bridge to the adult world. This planning is a process that usually begins by age 14 years of age the suggested areas to be considered when one begins transition planning include:

1) Transition Planning

This area of the site provides ideas and information on how students, families, school personnel, service providers, and others can work together to help students make a smooth transition. The completion of high school is the beginning of adult life. Entitlement to public education ends, and young people and their families are faced with many options and decisions about the future. The most common choices for the future are pursuing vocational training or further academic education, getting a job, and living independently.

2) Disability Population Receiving Transition Services

Transition services are provided for students with disabilities to help make the transition from the world of school to the world of adulthood. The population that is eligible under IDEA to receive such services includes students classified as disabled under 13 separate categories. This section will focus on those 13 categories and provide the reader with an overview of each specific disability.

3) Transition Services on the IEP

This section describes the core of transition planning what the law requires and how that plays out in the real world. With the newest amendments to the EHA -- now entitled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA (Public Law 105-17) -- a new component has been added to the IEP. Beginning no later than age 16, each student now must also have included in the IEP a statement of the transition services that he or she needs in order to prepare for such post-school outcomes as employment, postsecondary education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

4) Occupational/Vocational Education

Participation in occupational education programs can provide important experiences and specific vocational training. Specific areas include the following:

- Vocational assessment and training Academic skills Individualized curriculum to meet transition needs

5) Post Secondary/Continuing Education

Starting in junior high school, the student's IEP should include educational goals which prepare him/her for further education or vocational training. Specific areas include the following:

- Application assistance College fairs Financial aid Investigate PASS to save for post-secondary expenses Study skills Transportation Discussion of academic supports Assistance with contacting on-campus supports

6) Legal/Advocacy

Advocacy is speaking up for oneself and working with others to make systems work for the individual. People with disabilities have the right to an opportunity for working, living, and socializing in the community. Specific areas include the following:

- Learning to advocate for oneself Understanding accommodations Understanding one's rights Program accessibility Participation in team planning

7) Transportation/Travel Training

The ability to use transportation options is crucial for independence. Inability to use transportation, or the lack of accessible transportation can seriously limit social and work opportunities. Specific areas include the following:

- Mobility training Transportation to work/school Investigate PASS plan to save for transportation Use of public transportation Driver evaluation/training

8) Financial/Income

Planning in advance is the best way to avoid difficulty at a latter time. The school district may be able to provide information on how to get assistance pertaining to financial matters. Specific areas include the following

- Money management/budgeting Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) Work incentives Wills/Trusts/Estates

9) Personal Independence/Residential

Independence is about self-determination. An individual with disabilities can be independent while living with family or friends. He/she may even choose to live alone and have support staff to assist him/her. Specific areas include the following:

- Personal care Meal preparation Household chores Sexuality Identify living options Shopping Time management Banking skills Telephone skills Decision making skills

10) Medical/Health

Maintaining good health allows one to focus on life activities and goals that have been set have set. Specific areas include the following:

- Medication Ongoing medical care Fitness and nutrition Insurance Medicaid/Medicare Management of personal assistance

11) Employment

It is important for one to consider all the work experience options when selecting a career. Specific areas include the following:

- Competitive employment Enclave Job seeking skills Job coach Job related social skills Supported employment Sheltered work Employer support Volunteering

12) Recreation/Leisure

Everyone needs a break from work and school. Having fun is an important way to get mental and physical exercise. It is also a good way to meet people and to make new friends. Specific areas include the following:

- Community recreation activities Leisure time activities Special interest areas Explore hobbies

13) Assistive Technology

This section of Transition Services looks at the importance that assistive technology plays in the lives of individuals with disabilities and the thousands of available types of technology available.

14) Social and Sexual Issues

Here you will find expert advice on dealing with these two very sensitive issues. Today, because of the work of advocates and people with disabilities over the past half-century, American society is acknowledging that those with disabilities have the same rights as other citizens to contribute to and benefit from our society. This includes the right to education, employment, self-determination, and independence. We are also coming to recognize, albeit more slowly, that persons with disabilities have the right to experience and fulfill an important aspect of their individuality, namely, their social life and sexuality.

15) Self Determination

What it means and how to help your student develop self determination is the topic of this section. One of the most significant concepts to emerge in the last few decades is the awareness of the importance of self-determination in the life of an individual with a disability. For too long, professionals made decisions for people with disabilities with little input from the individual or parents. While these decisions were motivated by good intentions, they may have overlooked the desires, hopes, and aspirations that remained hidden within the person with disabilities. As our society has become more sensitive to the needs and rights of the disabled, we have moved to the concept of self-determination as a crucial element in the design of a life plan.

16) Record Keeping During the Transition Process

This section will guide you through the types of records and information you will need to gather. Be prepared as you can in this phase of your student's life and ensure the best possible transition and guarantee of services for the student and his/her parents.

17) Other Support Needs/Tables, Charts and Statistics

An individual with disabilities may need to develop a resource list of supports that will help him or her make the transition to the adult world. Specific areas include the following:

- Support groups Psychological services Social work services Respite Social peer groups Case management Assistive technology Speech and language pathology Audiology services Rehabilitation counseling Physical and occupational therapy Orientation and mobility services

Some students with severe disabilities will need more extensive intervention for transition to adult life. Students with less involved disabilities may require only limited services in only one or two of the above areas, with specific attention given to how the disability affects a particular aspect of transition.

Transition service regulations have to do with communication, collaboration, and coordination of plans, programs, services, supports, and resources. This communication, collaboration, and coordination must occur among students, families, schools, agencies, and communities.

Together, they make decisions as well as share responsibilities and resources. All this is based on what is needed by and in the best interest of each student.