



Guidance

Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

**Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education
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What is Transition Planning and why is it important?

Transition planning is a process, to assist students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), facilitate movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education and employment. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires transition planning begin no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team. A transition plan is based on a student's strengths, preferences, and interests, which may change from year to year, and identifies opportunities for the student to gain knowledge and skills needed for continuing education, work, and community participation, in preparation for adult life.

Who is involved in Transition Planning?

When the purpose of the IEP Team meeting is the consideration of postsecondary goals and development of a transition plan, which includes identification of the transition services needed for the student to reach those goals, 34 CFR § 300.321 of the IDEA requires the IEP Team to include:

- The student
- The parents of the student
- A regular education teacher of the student
- The special education provider
- A representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction, is knowledgeable of the general curriculum and has the authority to commit district resources

- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- Representative(s) of any participating agency likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, with consent of the parents or the student who has reached the age of majority

When the student does not attend the IEP Team meeting, the district must take other steps to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered.

Transition Assessments

The IDEA requires the IEP Team to conduct age-appropriate transition assessments as part of the transition planning process to assist the student in developing postsecondary goals. Transition assessment is defined as an on-going process of gathering data about a student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future work, education, living, personal, and social environments.

Assessment data serves as the common thread in the transition process and forms the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the IEP. (Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of The Council for Exceptional Children). Transition assessment is accomplished by using a variety of assessment instruments, transition tools, and other data sources including interest inventories, student surveys, skills assessments, aptitude assessments, observations, interviews, medical reports, etc. Transition assessments must be completed prior to the first IEP Team meeting where transition services will be discussed and must be updated annually. 34 CFR § 300.320(b)(1).

Educational Development Plan and Transition Plan

The Michigan Merit Curriculum legislation (PA 141 of 2007) established a requirement for schools to assist all students with the development of an Educational Development Plan (EDP) in grade 7 and subsequently to ensure each student reviews their EDP during grade 8 and revises it as appropriate before beginning high school. The EDP and the IEP are distinctly separate documents that share a common goal of improved postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities.

The data gathered from the transition assessments and the EDP are used to develop measurable postsecondary goals in the areas of education, training, employment, and, when appropriate, independent living skills.

The link between the EDP and the IEP may be more clearly understood by thinking about universal elements of quality planning:

- Identification of student preferences, interests, strengths, and needs.
- Development of postsecondary goals in education, training, employment, and, when appropriate, adult living.
- Review of academic performance, learning style, and effective support strategies, for students in grades K-8.
- Identification and coordination of course(s) and support.
- Review on an annual basis.

Postsecondary Goals

The transition plan must include measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment in the areas of education, training, employment, and independent living, where appropriate. Postsecondary goals identify the student's long-term goals beyond school. When the IEP Team is addressing secondary transition, the IEP must include at least one annual goal supporting the transition services identified in the plan. Annual goals must be measurable and are included in all IEPs, whether or not transition is being discussed.

Transition Services

Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability which are:

- Designed to be within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

- Based on the individual student’s needs, taking into account the strengths, preferences, and interests of the student; and includes:
 - **Instruction:** Teaching specific skills in both formal and informal educational settings and in the community.
 - **Related Services:** Supports needed for students to access more integrated work, education, and living environments. Related services, within the context of transition services, are to help the student and family determine if services are needed beyond high school, help identify who or what agency might provide those services, help identify how the student and family can access those services and make the connections to needed services prior to the student leaving school.
 - **Community Experience:** Includes participation in community work experiences, recreation/leisure activities, residential and community engagement activities, volunteering opportunities, training in accessing community settings, or joining a team/club/organization.
 - **Development of Employment:** Includes job-seeking skills, career exploration, skill training, and actual employment opportunities. Volunteer work also provides important skills and experiences that could lead to integrated employment.
 - **Other Post-School Adult-Living Objectives:** Includes those services and support activities, such as access to employment support agencies, establishing a bank account, registering to vote, filing taxes, renting a home, accessing medical services, filing for insurance, or accessing adult services, college information, or Social Security Income (SSI).
 - **Acquisition of Daily Living Skills (when appropriate):** Creating opportunities at school and in the community to learn skills to live independently or with support(s). These skills may include housekeeping, medication, self-management, transportation and mobility, self-advocacy and self-awareness, and others associated with being an active community member.
 - **Functional Vocational Evaluation:** An in-depth look at the career and vocational interests and skills of a student with disabilities within the

context of authentic work experiences. This includes situational assessments or community-based assessments in the setting where the actual skills and/or job are performed. The evaluation provides specific data regarding general work behaviors across a variety of job sites.

Collaboration with State and Community Agencies

Effective transition planning occurs when schools and community agencies work together to plan and coordinate the provision of transition services and supports.

Connecting students to appropriate community agencies before the student transitions from school to adult life is critical for improving student outcomes, achieving competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training (including credential attainment), and independent living.

Agencies

[Bureau of Services for Blind Persons \(BSBP\)](#): Like Michigan Rehabilitation Services, BSBP provides vocational services; however, BSBP works specifically with persons who are blind or visually impaired. In addition, BSBP provides training and other services to empower people to achieve their individual goals, including pre-employment transition services. Depending on the individual's needs and eligibility for specific services, BSBP may also provide some types of adaptive equipment, and computer software.

[Centers for Independent Living \(CIL\)](#): Consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living services. The goal of a CIL is to assure people with disabilities have the services and supports essential to make informed choices, to have personal control over their own lives, and to participate to the fullest extent possible in the everyday activities of work, home, family, and community.

[Community Mental Health Services \(CMH\)](#): Mental health services in Michigan are coordinated through local Community Mental Health Services Programs, which can sometimes go by names other than "Community Mental Health". CMHs might provide direct services, or contract with separate agencies to provide services. Contact your local CMH to get started.

[Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\)](#): Administers several programs which may be useful for adults with disabilities. These services include home help services, food assistance, health care coverage, supported employment, and state disability assistance.

[Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute-Wayne State University](#): The mission is to contribute to the development of inclusive communities and quality of life for people with disabilities and their families through a culturally sensitive, statewide program of training and education, community support and services, research, and sharing of information. The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute is one of 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) nationally.

[Michigan Rehabilitation Services \(MRS\)](#): Provides vocational services and training to assist young adults, and adults, with disabilities gain or retain employment. Available services include reasonable accommodation recommendations, employee counseling, job analyses, job coaching, skill analyses, pre-employment transition services.

Resources

[Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council](#): The Council's mission is to support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams and has an overarching principle that people with disabilities are supported across their lifespan to live self-determined and self-directed lives in a diverse and inclusive community.

[Measurable Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives](#): IEP goals and objectives must include certain compliance components to measure and report student progress.

[Measurable and Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives - Substantive Compliance](#): Information for determining substantive compliance for the purposes of providing an educational benefit.

[National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative \(NTACT:C\)](#): Provides information, tools, and supports to assist multiple stakeholders in delivering effective services and instruction for secondary students and out of school youth with disabilities. NTACT:C is a Technical Assistance Center co-funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

[State Performance Plan Indicator B13: Secondary Transition Data Collection Manual \(2024\)](#): B-13 is part the IDEA State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) and reports the percent of youth with an IEP, aged 16 and above, that contains coordinated, measurable, annual goals and transition services, including courses of study, to reasonably enable a student to meet their postsecondary goals. The intent of this document is to provide compliance information for use when completing the SPP Indicator B-13 checklist.

[A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities \(Aug. 2020\)](#): A guidance document developed by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.