



Transition Planning: Where to Begin? Overview

The goal of education is to prepare children and youth to become productive, happy and independent (sometimes with support) adults. Education programs strive to teach important concepts, skills and knowledge that will be useful as students move into the adult years. Making this transition successful requires planning beyond the completion of required coursework or even the transition plan on the IEP.

Parents and families should expect to participate in a process that allows for careful examination of the student's interests ("what I like to do") and aptitudes ("what I am good at doing"). The process should also include an examination of how these strengths can translate to adult employment, on-going education, leisure activities and living situations. This also means that it is important to have a realistic assessment of the student's current skills and knowledge in order to know where to focus instruction and skill development, particularly during the middle and high school years.

Overview of the Process

The transition process is more than the completion of a form on the IEP. A meaningful transition planning process provides specific and useful information to be used to complete the IEP transition plan documented on the IEP.

Steps of a transition planning process include:

1. **Identification of Future Plans and Post-Secondary Goals** of desired adult outcomes, especially in the areas of employment, education and independent living.
2. **Transition Assessments** that result in a comprehensive profile of the student's strength, interests, aptitudes, challenges, needs, supports, learning style, preferences, gifts and any other information that helps mold the goals and services of the transition plan.
3. **Courses of Study-** Transition assessments help identify where the student is currently in the process to achieve their future goals and what other skills/experiences/knowledge (i.e. course of study) needs to occur in order to achieve those goals. This may be academic in nature or could include social, vocational, and life skills development.
4. **Transition Services and IEP Goals.** Goals of the IEP should be linked to the ultimate postsecondary goals of the student. IEP goals should help the student achieve those desired outcomes. Transition services are activities, knowledge, referrals, or other experiences or instruction that lead directly to the desired adult outcomes.

Where to Begin?

Parents, Families and Students can begin the process of Transition Planning and the development of the transition plan on the IEP by focusing on the following three areas of the process.



1. **VISIONING and FUTURE PLANNING:** Students, Parents, Families should create a vision. A unique, person-centered, meaningful description of the adult life that the both the young adult (adolescent) and the family are working to achieve. This future vision is crafted and developed based on the student's strengths and interests and is uniquely designed to create an adult quality of life. Information from a variety of people and sources can assist the family and student to create a vision that is meaningful and realizable. The vision then becomes the guide... the pointer... for the entire IEP and educational program.
2. **GOAL SETTING:** The vision leads to the creation of Adult Goals in the areas of Education, Employment and Independent Living. Families should be an integral part of crafting these adult goals. These goals are stated in positive and measureable terms. The goals are intend to reflect what the young adult will do AFTER exiting high school.
3. **ASSESSMENT:** Age Appropriate Transition Assessment (AATA) is an ongoing process that will assist the student, parents and educational team to craft the goals and identify the necessary objectives to move closer to achieving the adult outcomes. AATA helps define the gap in student achievement or knowledge. That is ... AATA helps the team understand where the student is currently (in relation to those adult goals) and what needs to be accomplished, learned or achieved to reach adult goals. These necessary steps are included in the IEP and educational program.

REFERENCES

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Transition Coalition at the University of Kansas (2009). *It's more than just the law: People make it happen*. Retrieved June 27, 2011 from http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/tcfiles/files/docs/peopleMakeItHappen_8-20091250526573.pdf/peopleMakeItHappen_8-2009.pdf



Resources

OCALI Autism Transition to Adulthood Guidelines

<http://www.ocali.org>

OCALI Lending Library

<http://www.ocali.org>

Autism Society of Ohio

<http://www.autism-society.org>

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

<http://www.ocali.org>

Edresources Ohio: Transition Page

<http://www.edresourcesohio.org/transition/index.php>

OAR Life Journey Through Autism –Transition to Adulthood Guide

<http://researchautism.org/resources/reading/documents/TransitionGuide.pdf>

Improving Person Centered Thinking: Improving the Quality of Person Centered Planning

<http://rtc.umn.edu/docs/pcpmanual1.pdf>

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)

<http://www.nsttac.org/>

It's My Choice

http://www.mnddc.org/extra/publications/choice/Its_My_Choice.pdf