

16. TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN AGE 14 AND OLDER

Beginning at age 14, or younger if appropriate (the spring before the child enters high school), the IEP team must meet to address the child's transition into high school.



The IEP team works with the child to create a transition statement as part of the IEP. This statement should address the child's goals beyond graduation and show how planned studies and services will help the child attain these goals. The team should explore various academic and vocational programs available in school and around the community that can help the child. All necessary supports and services will then be written into the child's IEP. For example, a student planning to attend college after high school graduation may take college preparation classes starting their first year of high school. The IEP transition statement should reflect this goal and could include the provision of regular academic counseling and any other appropriate supports to address needs that arise during the academic school year.

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The advocate must ensure the child has the necessary skills, education and experience to successfully make the transition to adulthood.

It is important to set realistic and appropriate goals and objectives, considering the child's long-term best interest. Many children aging out of foster care are ill equipped to achieve and maintain successful, long-term employment.

Transition Services for children ages 16 Years and older

The IEP team must work with the child to ensure the child has necessary life skills and supports to become an independent and self-sufficient adult. Transition services include all instruction and services necessary to help the child reach these goals.

The IEP team should consider the child's long-term social, emotional, and economic health and well-being when addressing transition services in the IEP.

Starting at age 14 and updated annually, each student's IEP must include:

- **A statement of the transition service needs that focuses on the student's courses of study (such as participation in college preparatory classes or a vocational education program, or both)**
- **Benchmarks or short-term objectives and goals in the IEP that address student's needs, including instruction, educational experiences, support and related services that will assist the student to prepare for transition from secondary education to post-secondary life (high school graduation).**

THE LAW:

Beginning at age 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), each student's IEP must include a statement of needed transition services for the student. Services should be based on the individual student's needs, considering the student's preferences and interests. Services should be designed to promote movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education(college), vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The IEP plan should address related services; community integration; and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and vocational training.

The child's IEP should also include, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages. If other agencies could be responsible for providing or paying for transition services (such as the Department of Rehabilitation), a representative of that agency should attend the child's IEP meeting.

If an agreed-upon service by another agency is not provided, the child's school must implement alternative strategies to meet the student's needs. This requires that the public agency provide the services or convene an IEP meeting as soon as possible to establish alternative strategies to meet the transition services objectives and to revise the IEP.

Resources/options for older students:

Continuing Education is a high school diploma program designed to meet the needs of students 16 through 18 years of age who have not graduated from high school, are not exempt from compulsory school attendance (are legally required to attend school), and are considered at risk of dropping out of school entirely. Students enrolled in continuing education programs often lack the credits/hours for graduation. Other students need flexible school schedules because they are employed, need other services or have adjustment problems.

Other services within continuing education can include independent study, regional occupational programs, career counseling, job placement and apprenticeships.

Vocational training/education is designed to provide the student with the knowledge and experience to find and keep gainful employment. Vocational training is available through a number of community agencies including:

- High schools
- Regional centers (specifically for individuals with disabilities)
- Economic Development Centers
- Community colleges
- Regional occupational programs
- Adult education programs
- Private programs

- Department of Rehabilitation
- Others

An effective vocational program is directly related to the child's interest and long-term career goals.

Vocational training should emphasize:

- Skills training appropriate to the child's development and abilities
- Coping skills/stress management
- Functional academic skills: reading and writing, basic math
- Interpersonal relationships; ability to get along with co-workers/clients/customers
- Daily living skills: transportation to and from work; money management, self-care, etc.
- Integration with the nondisabled community
- Self-advocating: acquiring assertiveness training, etc. to self-advocate for needed services/equipment, etc.

Volunteering can also expose the student to new experiences, and the greater community, where they can gain valuable work experience, develop interpersonal skills, etc.

Life skills training can be provided by regional centers, high school home economics classes, etc. Parents/care providers can also provide many opportunities in the home for the child to practice such skills as cooking, money management, grocery shopping, general housekeeping, etc.

The IEP team should identify all necessary services and service providers in the IEP plan, and include the location, frequency and duration of needed services. The child's progress should be monitored and reported in the same manner as other goals and objectives outlined in the IEP.

For more information:

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707-445-6300