



Transition & Collaboration Fact Sheet

Overview

Transition is when a student moves from high school to adult life. For students with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act requires students with disabilities prepare for life after high school by developing and implementing a transition individualized education program (IEP).³ This is generally needed when a student turns 16, but many states require it when they turn 14. Preparing for life after high school starts with the transition IEP because the student states their goals. Students must include goals for getting a job, college or training, independent living, and participating in the community. These goals align with the student's transition assessments' outcomes, identifying the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and support needs. The student's learning experiences, related services (like therapy) and community experiences also align and help develop their college goals.

In addition to IDEA, the 34 CFR § 361.22 requires Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) work with the student's school to determine if students are eligible for VR services before high school graduation. This policy also requires VR provides information and assistance to the school regarding pre-employment transition services, transition services, and VR.²

Collaboration

Because all students with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education under IDEA, the public school system has been the single provider of education, job training, employment supports, therapies, and community-based instruction for students with disabilities. However, when a student graduates from high school, those services end. There is no single funding source or a single agency that will fund and provide the broad range of services offered by the school. To receive ongoing

*“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.”*

- Helen Keller

services, transition-age youth must be eligible for benefits. Each agency has an application and eligibility process. For many students and families, this is a confusing process that requires support, guidance, and interagency collaboration with the youth's case conference committee members and agency staff. Because the application and eligibility determination can take months, students need to apply before exiting school. The special education staff and agency staff may guide the application timeline.

Collaboration is individuals voluntarily working together toward a common goal. Collaboration allows youth, parents, educators, and adult agencies representatives to learn from each other and develop a unified plan for assisting the youth in a successful transition to adulthood. Interagency collaboration requires that each person know each agency's role and responsibilities.¹ In the following section, the roles and responsibilities for interagency collaboration are highlighted.

Roles and Responsibilities

Student

The student should always be included in meetings regarding their education, healthcare, and services. As part of the transition process, students should participate in the person-centered planning (PCP) process and community-based activities to identify their strengths, interests, preferences and needs. Completing transition assessments help students identify and refine their postsecondary goals for

employment, education/training, and independent living. In most states when a youth with a disability reaches 18, they become an emancipated adult and are legally responsible for making their own decisions. As a legal adult, the transition-age youth with a disability must agree if their parent/guardian may attend their meetings, case conferences, and agency appointments.

Parents/Guardians

A parent/guardian's role should be to advocate for a child's quality of life with a disability. They provide critical information regarding their child's strengths, interests, preferences, and support needs as part of person-centered planning and case conferences. When a child is a minor (<18 years old), parents/guardians will also be responsible for applying for resources in their child's name such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid Insurance, Medicaid Waivers, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Parents may also support their child by registering for advocacy training at a Center for Independent Living, purchasing a public transportation pass, and obtaining a state identification card.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC)

The VRC's role is to provide guidance, career counseling, and information regarding employment and the training and support required. The VRC may contribute to developing the postsecondary goal for getting a job in the transition IEP. Also, the VRC may have recommendations for transition services and activities for the student to complete during high school as they develop and acquire skills to obtain their career goals. A recommended

service is participating in Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). VR funds these services. Pre-ETS are offered to any student with a disability and help students in exploring and planning for successful future employment through targeted training in:

- Career exploration
- Work readiness
- Counseling on postsecondary education
- Self-advocacy
- Work-based learning

Prior to exiting high school, the transition-age youth should apply to VR. The VRC determines the eligibility for the VR services. The VRC and student will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which outlines employment steps.

Waiver Case Manager

If a student receives a Medicaid Waiver, they will choose a case manager. The case manager will develop a plan with the transition-age youth to access community-based services and have the supports they need to establish a meaningful quality of life. Based on the individual waiver budget, the services may include residential in-home supports, daily living skills instruction, long-term supported employment supports, volunteer employment, transportation and budgeting, among others. The waiver case manager may coordinate their plan with the transition IEP and the VRC's plan to provide consistency and align the Waiver's goals and services. By working together and sharing resources, the youth can have a valuable experience to give him skills to obtain his postsecondary goal.

Transition-Related Agencies

Resource	Purpose
<u>Center for Assistive Technology</u>	Each state has Center for Assistive Technology which offers information and technical services to help people with disabilities acquire and use assistive technology devices. To locate your state's Center for Assistive Technology, visit the Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training Center's Program Directory .
<u>Centers for Independent Living (CIL)</u>	Assist persons with disabilities achieve greater independence by providing services and activities which enhance independent living skills and community inclusion. Services focus on independent living skills, advocacy, peer counseling, information and referral and transition, transition assistance from nursing homes and other segregated environments

Resource	Purpose
	to community-based residences, and transition of youth from secondary education to postsecondary life. Find your state's CIL by using the Independent Living Research Utilization's Directory of CILs .
Centers for Parent Information & Resources	Work with families with children with disabilities from birth to 26 years old. They help parents participate effectively in their children's education and teach parents/guardians about the available resources. They provide accurate information, empathetic peer support, valuable training and effective advocacy based on the concept of parents helping parents. Find your state's parent center by visiting Parent Center Hub's online listing .
Division of Mental Health Services	Each state has a division of mental health which directly operate mental health care programs or fund and oversee other publicly or privately operated programs or hospitals. To locate your state's division of mental health services, visit the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors' Mental Health Glossary .
Medicaid Insurance	Medicaid is a state/federal program that pays for medical services for low-income pregnant women, children, individuals who are elderly or have a disability. To qualify, these individuals must meet income and other eligibility requirements. To apply for Medicaid in your state, you may begin the application process at Benefits.gov .
Medicaid Waivers	Provide home and community-based services to a limited, targeted group of individuals with intellectual disabilities/development disabilities who without waiver services would require nursing facility or an intermediate care facility level of care. To learn about the waivers available in your state visit MedicaidWaiver.org .
Social Security Administration	Provides financial support to qualifying children with disabilities. Two resources helpful to parents and transition-age youth are the Benefits for Children with Disabilities pdf and What You Need to Know about SSI When You Turn 18 pdf from the Social Security Administration.
Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR)	Supports eligible individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining competitive, integrated employment through vocational counseling and guidance, training, and technology. To find the VR website and information for your state, visit the Rehabilitation Services Administration's list of State VR Agencies .
Workforce Development Services	The Department of Workforce Development Services provides online assistance as well as local office to assist people find employment. Visit its website and/or find your local office at the CareerOneStop website .

Contributors

Faith Thomas, PhD
 Kristen Dahl, LPCC, CHES
 Patti Singleton, MS

References

1. Cooke, M. & Cooke, L. (2017). *Interactions: collaboration skills for school professionals* (8th edition). Pearson Publishing.
2. Education, 34 CFR § 361.22 (2020). <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/361.22>
3. Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).

Check us out on Social Media!

