



Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

2005

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WELCOME

The IEP can become a plan that will help your young person move from school to adult life...

This is a guide to planning for the successful transition of a student with disabilities from school to adult life. It was written for families of Florida's students with disabilities. However, other people involved in transition planning, such as students and teachers, will also find this guide helpful.

Transition planning focuses on plans and dreams you and your young person have for the future. The purpose of transition planning is to provide your young person with the services and supports he or she needs to make a successful move into adult life.

Transition planning usually begins at age 14. However, it may begin before age 14 for some students. For example, earlier transition planning may help stop a student from dropping out of school. Earlier transition planning may also be needed for a student with significant disabilities, because it may take more time to set up needed post-school services.

- Transition planning *should* take place for any student with disabilities who has an individual educational plan (IEP), beginning by the time the student turns 14.
- Transition planning *should* be part of the IEP process.
- Transition services *should* be part of the IEP, not a separate plan.
- Transition planning *should* involve the student, the family, school staff, agency staff, and others identified by the Transition IEP team.
- Transition planning *should not* be a one-time event.

The transition process continues until the student graduates from high school.

This guide will help you understand how the IEP can become a plan that will help your young person move from school to adult life. An IEP that helps a student get ready for transition is called a Transition IEP.

Note: For general information about the education of students with disabilities (ages 3 to 22), see *For Parents of Florida's Students with Disabilities: An Introduction to Exceptional Student Education* (available from the Clearinghouse Information Center at the address listed on the inside front cover of this book).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide provides you with information about transition planning, the Transition IEP, diploma options, and other topics. It also includes some special sections that will help you participate more fully in the transition process.

- The Parents' Dictionary that begins on page 33 explains the meaning of the underlined words in this guide.
- The Observation Guide on pages 47 and 48 will help you to think about your young person's current strengths and needs and plans for the future. You can record information and ideas right on the Observation Guide.
- On the Parents' Record of Transition Meeting (pages 49 and 50) you can record what happens before, during, and after a Transition IEP meeting. Feel free to make copies of this form or any other part of this guide for your use.
- The Directory that begins on page 41 lists state agencies and other organizations that may be able to help your family during the transition process.
- You can use the Transition Checklists that begin on page 53 to determine what should be happening for your son or daughter each year in preparing for the transition from school to adult life. A checklist is provided for each year from age 14 through age 18. Another checklist is provided for ages 19-21. Each checklist includes transition practices that are required by federal or state law. The back of each checklist includes practices that are not required but that are suggested because they contribute to successful transitions.

We hope this guide will help you to help your young person. The people at your young person's school or in your local school district office will be happy to work with you and to answer your questions.

STUDENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The success of transition planning depends on each member of the team...

The success of transition planning depends on each member of the team helping the student reach his or her dreams for the future. Parents are a very important part of this process. Your involvement determines how successful your young person's transition will be.

It is also important that your young person participate as much as possible in the transition planning process, especially in deciding what he or she would like to do after leaving school. The [*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)*](#) emphasizes the importance of involving students in meaningful ways in the Transition IEP process.

You and your young person know more than anyone else about

- your young person's goals for adult life
- strengths and resources of your family
- strengths and resources of your extended family and the community
- services your family needs
- services and service providers that have helped you in the past.

WHAT ARE TRANSITION SERVICES?

Transition services help a student move from school to post-school activities.

The purpose of transition planning is to provide your young person with the services and supports he or she needs to make a successful move into adult life. The Transition IEP team plans the services that will help your young person make this transition. The team includes you, your young person, and teachers. Once your young person reaches age 16, the team may also include representatives of agencies that are likely to provide or pay for services.

Transition services are a coordinated set of services that help students prepare for post-school activities such as

- college or university programs
- continuing and adult education
- vocational training
- employment
- adult services from various agencies
- independent living
- community participation.

The IDEA says the following about transition:

- Beginning when the student is 14 (or younger, if appropriate), the IEP must include a statement of the student's transition service needs. This statement should focus on the courses of study the student will follow to achieve his or her desired post-school outcomes.
- Beginning when the student is 16 (or younger, if appropriate), the IEP must include a statement of needed transition services for the student. This statement must include, if appropriate, any interagency responsibilities or linkages required.

“Transition service needs” and “transition services” are the terms used in IDEA. However, they sound so much alike that they can be confusing. In this guide, the term “courses of study” is used instead of “transition service needs” to make these ideas less confusing.

Transition services must

- be based on your young person’s individual needs
- take into account your young person’s likes and interests
- include needed activities in the areas of
 - instruction
 - *related services*
 - community experiences
 - employment
 - post-school adult living skills
 - *daily living skills*, if appropriate
 - *functional vocational evaluation*, if appropriate.
- involve agencies such as Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (which used to be called the Developmental Disabilities Program), Mental Health Program, and Division of Blind Services, if the agency is likely to provide or pay for services.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE TRANSITION IEP MEETING?

The process of developing a plan for a young person in need of transition services is a bit different...

You will be asked to help write a Transition IEP when your young person is 14 years old, and at least once every 12 months after that. You may be familiar with the process of developing a regular IEP. The process of developing a Transition IEP is a bit different. The contents of the Transition IEP are somewhat different too.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

The notice about the Transition IEP meeting is different than the notice you received about IEP meetings when your child was younger.

In addition to the information required for all IEP meeting notices, the written notice for a Transition IEP meeting must tell you

- that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss courses of study (transition services needs) or needed transition services
- that your young person has been invited
- which other agencies have been invited to the meeting (for students age 16 or older).

PARTICIPANTS

People who must be invited to the Transition IEP meeting are

- your young person
- you
- one or more of your young person's ESE teachers
- one or more of your young person's general education teachers, if your young person is or will be participating in the general education environment
- a representative of the school district
- a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services (if your young person is age 16 or older)
- any other person that you, the school, or an agency believes has knowledge of your young person or special equipment used by your young person.

Your young person must be invited to participate in Transition IEP meetings. If your young person is not able to attend the meeting, the Transition IEP team must take steps to make sure they consider your young person's needs, preferences, and interests.

If an agency invited to come to a Transition IEP meeting does not do so, the school district must take other steps, such as letters or phone calls, to try to have that agency participate. If an agency agrees to provide services but does not do so, the Transition IEP team will need to meet again to find other ways to meet your young person's transition needs.

PREPARATION FOR THE TRANSITION IEP MEETING

*Discuss goals for the future
with your son or daughter
before the meeting...*

It's a good idea to get ready for the Transition IEP meeting before you go. Discuss goals and desires for the future with your young person and his or her teachers before the meeting. With help from his or her teacher, your young person may already have collected some information to prepare for the meeting. Your young person may even be prepared to lead the Transition IEP meeting.

Your child's teacher may give you a pre-meeting form that will help you prepare. If not, you may use the [Observation Guide on pages 47 and 48](#). Also, organize your records to bring to the meeting. That way, any information you need will be at your fingertips.

Before the Transition IEP meeting, you may want to

- gather information about your young person's present and future situation, such as recent IEPs, [evaluations](#), and work history
- learn about the contents of the Transition IEP and what will happen during the Transition IEP meeting
- think about what services, including [assistive technology](#), your young person needs to reach his or her [desired post-school outcome](#)
- sign and return the exchange of information forms; this allows the school to share information on your young person with other agencies that may provide transition services
- become familiar with local services that may help your young person
- be sure you know which diploma option your young person is working toward and understand the education and employment outcomes associated with that option. (See page 23.)

Here are some ways that you and the teachers can help your young person prepare for the Transition IEP meeting:

- Give your young person information about the transition planning process.
- Ask your young person about his or her interests and abilities.
- Ask your young person about his or her goals for post-school adult life and help your young person to develop a desired post-school outcome statement that reflects the living arrangements, work, postsecondary education, and recreational and social activities he or she hopes to participate in.
- Help your young person review and update his or her transition portfolio (a collection of school records, job history, work samples, and career plan).
- Encourage/help your young person to fill out a pre-planning form for transition services. Review it with your young person.
- Help your young person understand the education and employment outcomes associated with the type of diploma he or she is working toward. (See page 23.)
- Teach your young person self-determination and self-advocacy skills. (See pages 28–30.)

CONTENTS OF THE TRANSITION IEP

The Transition IEP contains some special kinds of information...

The Transition IEP contains all the information that other IEPs do. The Transition IEP also contains some extra information, including

- a desired post-school outcome statement
- for students age 14 and older, a statement regarding courses of study (transition service needs)
- for students age 16 and older, a statement of needed transition services (If no services are needed, that must be stated in the Transition IEP. It is also recommended that the team include an explanation of how that decision was made.)
- a description of agency responsibilities and linkages, if appropriate (for students age 16 and older)
- an indication of whether the student is working toward a standard diploma or a special diploma (See page 23.)
- consideration of the provision of information about or instruction in self-determination, if appropriate for the student
- at least one year before the student reaches the age of 18, a statement that the student has been informed of the rights that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of 18.

The sections that follow describe some of the most important parts of a Transition IEP.

DESIRED POST-SCHOOL OUTCOME STATEMENT

The desired post-school outcome statement describes your young person's dreams for life after graduation. It is important because it gives the IEP team a vision to work toward. The rest of the Transition IEP is based on the student's desired post-school outcome.

The desired post-school outcome statement should focus on

- where your young person will live
- what kind of job he or she will have
- what kind of postsecondary education he or she will pursue
- what he or she will do for fun
- how he or she will participate in social activities
- how he or she will become part of the community.

This statement should be updated each year. An example of a desired post-school outcome statement is provided below.

John desires to obtain employment, but doesn't know what he wants to do. He would also like to participate in a men's softball league, get his driver's license, help his elderly neighbors, and eventually live on his own.

The workbook *Dare to Dream* is designed to help students develop desired post-school outcome statements. See page 39 for information on how to obtain a copy of *Dare to Dream* from the Clearinghouse Information Center.

PRESENT LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

In a Transition IEP, the present levels of educational performance statements should focus on areas that are related to the desired post-school outcome statement. All Transition IEP team members must have a clear picture of your young person's abilities and interests. This information may come from your young person's portfolio or file, as well as from your young person, your family, teachers, and agency staff. The information should include formal and/or informal assessment data. It should also identify your son or daughter's priority educational needs.

An example of a present level of performance statement focusing on employment is provided below.

Based on information from John, his parents, teachers, and informal classroom assessments, John has not yet participated in any school-related career exploration activities. As he lives in a rural area and his family has limited opportunities for transportation, he hasn't had much exposure to career opportunities in his home community or surrounding communities. John is able to perform simple functional tasks independently (e.g., bathing, dressing, eating). He is well liked by his friends, teachers, and community and exhibits good social skills. He is making adequate progress in his academic program working toward a special diploma. However, preliminary classroom assessments and informal interviews indicate that John is likely to need supports to identify his career interests, preferences, and abilities; obtain employment; and maintain employment. His cognitive disability limits his ability to complete multistep tasks in sequence for new tasks introduced without verbal or model prompts. Additionally, his disability impacts his ability to make decisions when given multiple options. John's priority educational need is to identify a preference for post-school employment that matches his interests and abilities.

MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS AND BENCHMARKS OR SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

Measurable annual goals are stepping stones from your young person's present levels of performance to the hopes for the future expressed in the desired post-school outcome statement.

The Transition IEP team may write benchmarks or short-term objectives. The team does *not* have to write both benchmarks *and* short-term objectives.

All Transition IEP team members should be involved in developing measurable annual goals and the benchmarks or short-term objectives that go with them. It is especially important that you and your young person be involved.

An example of a measurable annual goal with benchmarks is provided below.

Measurable Annual Goal

John will describe at least one career preference with an explanation of how the career or job matches his interests and abilities at his annual Transition IEP meeting.

Benchmarks

John will describe his own interests and abilities related to career preferences after completing a self-assessment with supports by October 15, 2005.

Given observations, interviews, and experiences in at least four different job descriptions/positions (up to five hours each position), John will express his preferences and concerns about each job within a week after each exploration activity.

Needs Addressed by Measurable Annual Goals

Transition IEP goals address needs in particular activity areas that relate directly to post-school life, such as community experiences and employment. Transition services activity areas that must be addressed are listed on page 9.

The Transition IEP team should write measurable annual goals in any of the activity areas in which your young person has needs. One measurable annual goal may address more than one activity area.

STATEMENT OF COURSES OF STUDY (TRANSITION SERVICE NEEDS)

Beginning when your young person is age 14, the Transition IEP will include a statement of transition service needs. Transition service needs focus on courses your young person will take in order to prepare for transition to post-school life. This statement must be updated each year.

Here are some examples of transition service needs focusing on courses of study:

- advanced placement courses to prepare for college
- career education courses to prepare for a career
- courses in daily living skills such as preparing meals, using public transportation, and managing money.

Here is an example for John, the student we have been following so far:

John will participate in exploratory career education and courses that provide community-based experiences to help him learn about career options and identify his preferences.

STATEMENT OF NEEDED TRANSITION SERVICES

When your young person is age 16 or older, the Transition IEP will include a statement of needed transition services in the following areas:

- **instruction**—formal instruction in school, home, or community, including community-based instruction, travel training, academic and career/technical education courses, self-determination and self-advocacy training, and extracurricular activities
- **related services**—transportation and developmental, corrective, and other support services that help the student benefit from instruction
- **community experiences**—participation in activities outside the school building, including community activities such as recreation, using public transportation, and shopping
- **employment**—activities that prepare a student for employment, such as career education, development of good work habits, technical skills training, guided practice in school and community work situations, career placement, supported competitive employment, on-the-job training
- **post-school adult living**—preparation for important adult activities that are done only occasionally, such as those necessary for living and participating in the community, including renting an apartment, paying bills, filing for insurance, voting, and getting along with others.

If appropriate for your young person, the Transition IEP team will also identify needed transition services in the following activity areas:

- **daily living skills**—activities that teach your young person to manage daily personal needs (preparing meals, grooming, budgeting, etc.) as independently as possible
- **functional vocational evaluation**—an evaluation that collects information on your young person’s career interests and aptitudes.

The statement of needed transition services for the areas identified as priority educational needs to meet your son or daughter’s desired post-school outcome statement is typically addressed through the development of measurable annual goals and benchmarks or short-term objectives. Related services, however, are typically addressed in the related services area designated for all IEPs, including Transition IEPs.

John required a statement of needed transition services in the area of employment. You may wish to look back to page 17 to see how employment was addressed through the development of a measurable annual goal and benchmarks for John. Other areas (e.g., post-school adult living) would be addressed similarly, based on the student's desired post-school outcome statement, present levels of performance, and priority educational needs.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND LINKAGES

The Transition IEP team must create connections, or linkages, with agencies that can provide services for your young person after he or she leaves school.

When your young person is age 16 or older, the Transition IEP must identify any community agencies that will provide services your young person needs to achieve his or her desired post-school outcome. It is important that these agencies participate in the transition process.

Depending on your young person's needs, key agencies may include

- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (part of the Florida Department of Education)
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (used to be called the Developmental Disabilities Program)
- Mental Health Program (part of the Florida Department of Children and Families)
- Division of Blind Services (part of the Florida Department of Education)
- community college
- career center
- leisure and recreation service providers
- ☐ medical, health, or mental health service providers
- ☐ other community-based organizations and providers of services to adults.

John's present level of performance statement for the area of employment indicated that he would likely need supports to obtain and maintain employment. Agencies might be likely to provide or pay for services and supports to assist John with obtaining and/or maintaining employment and should therefore be invited to attend his Transition IEP meeting.

TRANSITION TEAM WORK

All members of the team must do their part...

As you can see, for your young person to have a successful transition into adult life, all members of the Transition IEP team must do their part. Schools alone cannot get a young person ready for adulthood. The family, the community, service agencies, and the young person share this responsibility. When the Transition IEP team carries out the transition process well, your young person benefits.

SCHOOL DISTRICT/SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- The school district has the main responsibility to make sure that the measurable annual goals and the benchmarks or short-term objectives are met. If a service on the Transition IEP has not been provided, the school district must get the Transition IEP team back together to find another way of providing the service. The school district is responsible for helping students and agencies link up with one another.
- The school district is also responsible for helping the student learn self-determination skills so that the student can effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and self-advocate, if appropriate.
- The school district will also identify someone to follow-up with agencies and verify that services identified in the Transition IEP are provided.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Representatives from other agencies may be asked to attend Transition IEP meetings. Other agencies often have many responsibilities in the transition process.

Here are some reasons that agencies are invited to Transition IEP meetings.

- Your young person may need agency assistance during his or her final years of school.

- An agency may need to take responsibility for some of the measurable annual goals and benchmarks or short-term objectives.
- An agency may need to take responsibility for purchasing, maintaining, and training on assistive technology your young person's needs.
- Agency representatives may need to reassure you that the agency will provide supports and services once the young person has left school.
- Agencies may have been helpful to your young person in the past.

If an agency that was to provide a service does not do so, the Transition IEP team will meet again to work out another way to provide that service to the student.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

The family provides the most day-to-day support for their child from birth to adult life, so the family knows best which services their young person needs to make the transition from school to adult life. Here are some specific roles that families play in the transition process:

- Take an active role in the transition process. Ask questions. Make suggestions.
- Keep records of the transition-related services and activities that occur.
- Review your son or daughter's Transition IEP goals.
- Review graduation requirements and help make decisions about diploma options.
- Provide opportunities for your son or daughter to explore post-school options (e.g., employment, career centers, community colleges, universities, living arrangements, recreation and leisure, and community service).
- Support your son or daughter in developing his or her own desired post-school outcome statement.
- Support your son or daughter in writing personal letters of invitation for teachers and agency personnel to attend his or her Transition IEP meetings.
- Conduct mock Transition IEP meetings so your son or daughter can practice participating in the meeting.
- Help your son or daughter to develop a portfolio that includes an updated Transition IEP, copies of birth certificate, social security number, assessment scores, psychological testing, learning style, grade point average, class rank, honors or awards, work evaluations, work experiences, and other related information.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Your young person also has responsibilities in the transition planning process, such as

- taking an active role in developing the Transition IEP
- learning about the transition process
- thinking about what services would help him or her in daily adult life, so that the transition team may invite the appropriate agencies to the Transition IEP meeting
- thinking about what he or she wants to do—and where he or she wants to do it—in the years immediately after school
- meeting and working with career and guidance counselors to determine which courses and other school experiences are required for desired post-school activities
- learning more about his or her disability and how to get the services and supports he or she needs to achieve long-term goals
- developing and using self-determination and self-advocacy skills
- going to class
- completing homework assignments
- saving money for post-school activities
- learning how to use and maintain the assistive technology he or she needs
- accepting responsibility for chores at home.

DIPLOMA OPTIONS

The diploma decision will greatly affect your young person's future...

Successful transitions require lots of planning and decision-making. One of the most important decisions is the type of high school diploma that the student will work toward. The student and family make this diploma decision with the IEP team. The decision is based on the student's needs and desired post-school outcomes.

It is important that you be fully informed about diploma options, because a student's opportunities for employment, further education and training, and military service after graduation may depend on the type of diploma that the student earns. The diploma decision will greatly affect your young person's future.

The IEP team must make an initial diploma decision at the IEP meeting during your young person's eighth-grade year or during the school year of your young person's 14th birthday (whichever comes first). The diploma decision may be changed later through an IEP meeting, if necessary.

IEP teams should consider diploma options in the following order, according to the student's needs and abilities:

- □ **Standard Diploma**
- □ **Standard Diploma with FCAT waiver**
- □ **Special Diploma, Option 1**
- □ **Special Diploma, Option 2.**

Depending on the diploma option selected, some students may need to spend more than four years in high school. A student with a disability has the right to stay in school until age 22, or until the student earns a standard diploma (or GED diploma), whichever comes first. Students who do not meet requirements for a standard or special diploma may be awarded either a regular or a special certificate of completion, depending on their coursework.

STANDARD DIPLOMA

The standard high school diploma is the type of diploma earned by most students. The student studies the general curriculum (the regular Sunshine State Standards). The student may receive certain allowable accommodations to *how* the material is taught and how the student is tested, if needed. The student must meet all the following requirements:

- The student earns the required credits in high school.
- The student earns at least a 2.0 grade point average.
- The student passes both parts of the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

STANDARD DIPLOMA WITH FCAT WAIVER

If the IEP team determines that the FCAT cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, even if all allowable accommodations are used, the team may waive, or omit, the FCAT requirement for graduation. The student may then graduate with a standard diploma with FCAT waiver. To be considered for the waiver, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

- The student has taken the grade 10 FCAT with appropriate, allowable accommodations at least twice and has participated in the March administration of the FCAT during the senior year.
- The student has participated in intensive remediation in math and/or reading, if passing scores were not earned.
- The student is progressing toward meeting the minimum number of course credits prescribed by the state and district school board.
- The student has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the grade 10 Sunshine State Standards.
- The student has an overall grade point average of 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
- The IEP team has determined that the FCAT cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, even if all appropriate, allowable testing accommodations are used.

SPECIAL DIPLOMA

Special diplomas are appropriate *only* for students who cannot learn all the same things nondisabled students learn, even with accommodations. These students need modifications to the curriculum—changes in *what* they are expected to learn.

Students who are working toward a special diploma are often assessed using an alternate assessment instead of the FCAT.

There are two types of special diplomas: **Option 1** and **Option 2**.

Special Diploma, Option 1

The requirements for a special diploma under **Option 1** are as follows:

- The student must earn the minimum number of course credits determined by the local school board.
- The student must show mastery of the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma.

Note: Students who have been identified as visually impaired or speech impaired are not eligible for a special diploma unless they also have another identified disability.

Special Diploma, Option 2

The student fulfills an individually designed graduation training plan that includes employment and community living skills, meets related measurable annual goals and benchmarks or short-term objectives, and maintains employment for at least one semester.

The requirements for a special diploma under **Option 2** are as follows:

- The student must be successfully employed for at least one semester, at or above minimum wage.
- The student must achieve all annual goals and short-term objectives related to employment and community competencies in the graduation training plan.
- The student must show mastery of competencies in his or her employment and community competencies training plan.

EFFECTS OF THE DIPLOMA CHOICE

Employers, adult education programs, career centers, the military, colleges, and universities all accept a standard diploma. However, the military, colleges, and universities usually do not accept a special diploma. So a special diploma may limit your young person's options in post-school adult life.

For this reason, the standard diploma should be the starting point for IEP teams when making the diploma decision. When in doubt, IEP teams are encouraged to choose the standard diploma.

Here are some questions the IEP team should consider before making the diploma decision:

- Can your young person learn the skills required to meet the Sunshine State Standards?
- What accommodations for classroom work and tests does your young person need to meet the Sunshine State Standards?
- What modifications in course requirements does your young person need?
- Can your young person earn the credits and grade point average required to earn a standard diploma?
- Can your young person pass the FCAT?
- What are the district's requirements for the special diploma?
- If your young person cannot meet the requirements for a standard diploma, is he or she going to work toward special diploma option 1 or special diploma option 2?

As you can see, it is important to make the diploma decision carefully. However, the decision can be changed if it turns out to be wrong for your child. So, if it is not clear whether your young person will be able to meet the requirements for a standard diploma, the IEP team may decide to have your young person try and if he or she is not able to meet the requirements, to change to a special diploma later. If there is a chance that your young person will be able to earn a standard diploma, he or she should at least begin by working toward a standard diploma.

CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

With careful planning and monitoring of progress, most students with disabilities are able to earn either a standard diploma or a special diploma. However, some students complete the required courses but are not able to meet the other requirements for a standard diploma or a special diploma. These students may receive one of the following types of certificates, which are not high school diplomas:

- [certificate of completion-College Placement Test \(CPT\) Eligible](#)
- [certificate of completion](#)
- [special certificate of completion](#).

STATE OF FLORIDA DIPLOMA (GED DIPLOMA)

Students who are at least 18 years old and who have not earned a standard diploma may try to earn a [State of Florida high school diploma](#). To earn this diploma, the student must pass the Tests of General Educational Development (GED). The GED tests are written on a ninth-grade reading level.

Note: For more information, see “High School Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities: Getting the Right Fit,” which is available from the Clearinghouse Information Center.

GETTING A HEAD START ON TRANSITION

It is never too early to plan for transition to adult life...

Preparing your young person for transition to adult life is a gradual process. Even if your young person is not old enough to participate in job training or to develop independent living skills, there is a lot you can do now.

Here are some suggestions for you to consider as your child grows up.

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND EARLIER

- Encourage your child to strive for early independence.
- Involve your child in activities that foster self-respect, self-esteem, and self-determination.
- Take your child into the community. Point out community members and talk about what they do.
- Encourage your child to talk about what he or she might like to do as an adult.
- Show your child how much you enjoy your own work.
- Encourage your child to dress and groom appropriately and to take care of his or her own self-care or cleanliness needs.
- Assign your child specific duties around the house. Insist that your child do them thoroughly and on time.
- Give your child an allowance and let him or her spend some of the money and save some.
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities outside of school, such as sports, clubs, and music or art.
- Encourage your child to participate with you in community activities such as visiting elderly people, helping neighbors in need, attending social events, and shopping.

- Introduce your child to people who do various kinds of work. Include people with disabilities and people without disabilities. Discuss what the worker is doing and encourage your child to talk about what job he or she might like to do.
- Take your child to work with you on “Take Your Daughter (or Son) to Work Day.”
- Help prepare your child to participate in community programs by taking your child with you when taking part in community activities.
- Attend your child’s IEP meetings.
- Include goals related to social and community skills in the IEP.
- At IEP meetings, ask that your child participate in career awareness activities, including career assessment.
- Address career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation in the IEP.
- Monitor your child’s progress toward annual IEP goals by talking with team members and your child.
- Talk to other families who have gone through the transition process. Find out what has been helpful to them.
- Talk to the school staff about whether your child should work toward a standard diploma or a special diploma. Learn about the differences between a standard diploma and a special diploma.
- Explain the IEP process to your child.
- Help your child develop self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- Help your child begin and/or update a career plan and transition portfolio.
- Identify agencies that provide adult services, such as the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Visit work and independent living programs to identify what options will be available when your child leaves school.

HIGH SCHOOL

- Develop a plan to increase independence. Let your young person make decisions and take reasonable risks.
- Encourage your young person to become involved in community activities and increase his or her circle of friends.
- Encourage your young person to find paid employment in the community.
- Teach your young person to use public transportation independently.
- Introduce your young person to people with disabilities who are successfully employed.
- Help your young person continue to develop and use self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- Attend Transition IEP meetings with your young person.
- Help your young person learn to direct his or her own Transition IEP meeting.

- Help decide if your young person will work toward a standard diploma or a special diploma.
- Address employment training at actual work sites in the Transition IEP.
- Address career education opportunities at the high school or career center in the Transition IEP.
- Encourage your young person to update his or her career plan and transition portfolio.
- Help your young person monitor his or her progress toward annual Transition IEP goals and the desired post-school outcome.
- Teach your young person to be responsible for any special equipment he or she needs.
- Identify and apply for services provided by adult agencies.
- Investigate adult living options available in your community.
- Consult legal experts about financial planning, guardianship, and estate planning.
- Become aware of Social Security work incentives if your child receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). If your son or daughter has previously been turned down for SSI or SSDI based on income, reapply for benefits after his or her 18th birthday, when your income will no longer be considered for eligibility purposes.

WHEN YOUR YOUNG PERSON BECOMES AN ADULT

AGE OF MAJORITY

The age when a person becomes a legal adult is called the *age of majority*. The rights of the parents of a student with a disability transfer to the student when the student reaches the age of majority. In Florida, this is 18 years of age.

Young adults and their parents may have different ideas about the best steps to take to reach their goals. If you and your young person over age 18 disagree with each other on a course of action, the school district should help you to resolve this conflict. *Mediation* may be appropriate in such a situation.

Where there are concerns about the student's ability to participate in the process of educational decision-making, school district personnel should continue to work closely with the parents to ensure that appropriate decisions are made.

If the student has been determined incompetent by the court, then rights would not transfer to the student but would be retained by the individual appointed by the court as the student's guardian.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION, AGES 18-21

IDEA regulations specify that a *free appropriate public education (FAPE)* must be available to all students with disabilities who have not reached age 22 and who have not earned a standard diploma or its equivalent (e.g., GED). If a student graduates with a special diploma, a certificate of completion, or a special certificate of completion and has not reached age 22, the school district must make FAPE available to the student (at the student's option) until the student's 22nd birthday or until he or she earns a standard diploma.

School districts may elect to offer a variety of programming options for adult students. These options may be offered in a variety of settings, including a high school campus,

special center, adult education center, career center, community college, or community-based organization. Programming options may include

- coursework leading toward a standard diploma (including dual enrollment at community college or career center)
- coursework leading toward a special diploma, which may include *community-based instruction* and community-based employment training (including supported competitive employment)
- career/work force education programs (including dual enrollment at community college or career center)
- co-enrollment in adult general education to earn credits toward a standard diploma
- GED preparation courses (adult students, GED Exit Option Model students)
- specialized programs for adults with disabilities
- other programs developed by local school districts that enable a student to meet graduation requirements.

PARENTS' DICTIONARY

On the next several pages you will find definitions of words used by people who work with students with disabilities.

The definitions are simplified for use in this book. Different school districts may use these words in somewhat different ways. Always feel free to ask for definitions of words being used to describe your young person or your young person's education.

Academic—Having to do with subjects such as reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.

Accommodation—A different way of doing something that takes into account a person's disability. When a student with a visual impairment studies by listening to a recording of a textbook, the student is using an accommodation. Accommodations are changes in *how* a student is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change the requirements of a course or the standards the student must meet. Compare with "modification."

Age of Majority—The age when a person becomes a legal adult. The rights of the parent of a student with a disability transfer to the student when the student reaches the age of majority. In Florida, this is 18 years of age. See also "transfer of rights."

Alternate Assessment—An assessment that is used for a student with a disability when a standard state- or districtwide assessment is not appropriate for that student. See "assessment."

Annual Goal—See "measurable annual goal."

Assessment—A way of collecting information about what a student knows and can do and what a student still needs to learn. Assessment may include giving tests, observing the student, and looking at a student's portfolio or work samples.

Assistive Technology—Assistive technology devices and/or services. See below.

Assistive Technology Device—Equipment that is used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of children who have disabilities.

Assistive Technology Service—A service that directly helps a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This includes evaluating assistive technology needs; purchasing equipment; selecting, fitting, and repairing equipment; and training the child, family, teachers, employers, or others in the use of the equipment.

Benchmarks —Statements in the IEP that describe major milestones a student must reach in order to achieve one of his or her "measurable annual goals." An IEP must include either benchmarks or "short-term objectives."

Career Education—Instruction and experiences designed to make students aware of the broad range of available careers, teach them general job-preparatory skills, and offer them courses of study that allow them to develop skills needed for specific careers. May include career exploration courses, practical arts courses, diversified cooperative education, work experience, job entry program, and on-the-job training.

Certificate of Completion—This certificate is given to students who pass the required courses in high school but do not earn the required grade point average and do not pass the grade 10 FCAT and so are not eligible for a "standard diploma."

Certificate of Completion-College Placement (CPT) Test Eligible—This certificate is given to students who pass the required courses in high school and earn the required grade point average, but do not to pass the grade 10 FCAT and so are not eligible for a "standard diploma." Students who earn this certificate are allowed to take the College Placement Test and be admitted to remedial or credit courses at a Florida community college.

Community-Based Instruction (CBI)—Instruction that takes place in locations in the community and is designed to help students perform skills such as grocery shopping and using public transportation. CBI often includes training in the classroom followed by practice in community settings.

Courses of Study—The courses a student age 14 or older plans to take in order to reach his or her desired post-school outcome.

Daily Living Skills—Skills in taking care of one's own personal needs as independently as possible. Examples include dressing for work, renting an apartment, and buying a bus pass.

Desired Post-School Outcome Statement—A statement that describes where a student would like to be within one to five years of leaving school. It is a vision of what that student wishes to become.

Disability—A condition that makes it hard for a student to learn or do things in the same ways as most other students. A disability may be short-term or permanent.

Eligible—Refers to a student who meets the requirements for and is in need of ESE programs and services. The decision is based on State Board of Education rules.

ESE—See "exceptional student education."

ESE Administrator—The leader of a school district's ESE programs. This person works for the whole school district, not just one school.

Evaluation—A way of collecting information about a student's learning needs, strengths, and interests. It is used to help decide whether a student has a disability and is eligible for ESE programs and services. It may include giving individual tests, observing the child, looking at records, and talking with the student and parents.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)—The name given in Florida to educational programs and services for students with special learning needs (including those who have disabilities and those who are gifted). It is sometimes called “special education.”

FAPE—See “free appropriate public education.”

FCAT—See “Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.”

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)—A set of tests taken by Florida’s public school students in grades 3 through 10. To earn a standard diploma, students must pass both the reading and math parts of the grade 10 FCAT. Some students with disabilities may receive a waiver from the FCAT requirement for graduation.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)—The words used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe the right of a student with a disability to special services that will meet his or her individual learning needs, at no cost to his parents.

Functional Vocational Evaluation—An ongoing process that identifies a student’s career interests, work-related aptitudes and skills, and need for training.

GED Diploma—See “State of Florida high school diploma.”

General Curriculum—The things that most nondisabled students are studying. In Florida, the general curriculum is the Sunshine State Standards, which describe what students are expected to

know and be able to do at various points in their education.

General Education—The classes and activities most students (including nondisabled students) participate in. It includes academic and career education.

IDEA—See “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.”

IEP—See “individual educational plan.”

IEP Meeting—A meeting held at least every 12 months to write a student’s IEP. Changes in a student’s services or placement must be made at an IEP meeting.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP)—A written plan that describes the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the ESE services, supports, aids, and accommodations and modifications that will be provided to that student.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—The most important United States law regarding the education of students with disabilities.

Interagency Responsibilities—Services listed on a Transition IEP that agencies have agreed to provide or help the school district provide.

Linkages—Connections between students with disabilities and agencies that provide adult services.

Measurable Annual Goal—A statement in an IEP of what a student needs to learn and should be able to learn within one year.

Mediation—A process in which parents and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the help of a person who has been trained to resolve conflicts. It may also be used to help parents and adult students with disabilities to resolve disagreements about the student's education.

Modification—A change in the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet. A change in *what* the student is taught or tested on. The change is based on the student's needs because of his or her disability. Compare with "accommodation."

Notice—A note or letter to parents about an action the school plans to take that will affect their son or daughter's education, such as holding an IEP meeting or changing the student's services or placement.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)—Instruction that provides students with realistic work experiences in order to help them acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to hold a job.

Post-School Activities—Activities a student would like to pursue after finishing high school. Some post-school activities are postsecondary education, continuing and adult education, technical training, employment, adult services, independent living, recreation, and community participation.

Postsecondary Education—The next level of education after high school, such as college/university course work or technical training.

Present Levels of Educational Performance—Statements in an IEP that describe what a student can do or what he or she knows now.

Related Services—Special help given to a student with a disability in addition to classroom teaching. Related services help a student benefit from instruction. Examples of related services include transportation, career counseling, job coaching, and rehabilitation counseling.

Self-Advocacy—Speaking and acting on one's own behalf, such as in a Transition IEP meeting.

Self-Determination—Taking control and making decisions that affect one's own life. Self-determination skills help students with disabilities to make their own choices, set their own goals, and manage their own lives.

Short-Term Objectives—Statements in an IEP that describe small, measurable steps a student must learn or master before the student can reach one of his or her "measurable annual goals." An IEP must include either short-term objectives or "benchmarks."

Situational Vocational Assessment—A system of observation used to gather information about a student's work-related behavior in a controlled work environment.

Special Certificate of Completion—This certificate is given to students with disabilities who pass the required ESE courses in high school but fail to master the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma. See "certificate of completion," and "special diploma."

Special Diploma—The diploma given to students with disabilities who are not able to meet the regular Sunshine State Standards and receive a standard diploma. There are two types of special diploma: option 1 and option 2. To receive special diploma, option 1, the student must meet the Sunshine State Standards for Students with Disabilities. Criteria for special diploma, option 2, are based on the individual needs of the student.

Standard Diploma—Diploma granted to students who earn the specified number of credits and grade point average, meet the regular Sunshine State Standards, and pass the FCAT. This is the general education diploma.

Standard Diploma with FCAT Waiver—Diploma granted to students with disabilities who earn the specified number of credits and grade point average, meet the regular Sunshine State Standards, and meet any other school district graduation requirements, but have not passed the grade 10 FCAT and for whom the IEP team has decided that the FCAT is not an accurate measure of the student's achievement.

State of Florida High School Diploma—A diploma earned by a student who is at least 18 years old and who passes the Tests of General Educational Development (GED).

Sunshine State Standards—A set of objectives that describe what Florida's students are expected to know and be able to do at certain stages of their school career. Most students with disabilities are able to meet these standards if they have the right services and accommodations.

Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma—A set of objectives students with disabilities in Florida work on if they cannot meet the regular Sunshine State Standards.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)—Benefits paid to people with disabilities who have limited income. A child's eligibility is based on the income of his or her parents. Children who were not eligible because their parents' income was too high may become eligible once they reach age 18 and should reapply.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)—Benefits paid to people who are disabled and who have work credits or who were disabled before age 22 and have an eligible (disabled or diseased) parent.

Supported Employment—Competitive work at or above minimum wage that provides regular opportunities for interaction with nondisabled people. Supported employment gives people with disabilities help in getting and keeping a job.

Transition—For students with disabilities, the process of getting ready to move from school to adult life. The process occurs over a period of several years and involves planning, goal-setting, instruction, services, and activities designed to make that move successful.

Transition IEP—The IEP used for students age 14 and older. The transition IEP helps prepare students for life after school.

Transition IEP Meeting—An IEP meeting for a student age 14 or older. A major purpose of this meeting is to help plan a young person's move into adult life.

Transition Service Needs—See "courses of study."

Transition Services—A coordinated set of activities that helps a student move from school to post-school activities.

SUGGESTED READING MATERIALS

Below is a list of free reading materials for people involved in the Transition IEP process. To order these and other materials, contact the

Clearinghouse Information Center

Voice: 850-245-0477

Fax: 850-245-0987

Email: cicbiscs@fldoe.org

Website: www.myfloridaeducation.com/commhome

- *Dare to Dream*. This work book helps students develop their own desired post-school outcome statements. Available in English and Spanish. Request item #308942.
- *Dare to Dream for Adults*. This work book helps adults with disabilities identify their interests, accomplishments, and needs; set goals; and obtain the support they need to reach their goals. This is an ideal resource for secondary students who have previously used *Dare to Dream* and want to move to another level of transition planning. Request item #312421.
- *Diploma Decisions for Students with Disabilities—What Parents Need to Know*. This book describes the various diploma options for students with disabilities, important considerations related to each type of diploma, and information about how to select a diploma option. Available in English and Spanish. Request item #310521.
- “High School Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities: Getting the Right Fit.” This pamphlet provides an overview of the diploma and certificate of completion options for students with disabilities. Available in English and Spanish. Request item #312217.
- *SIMPLY Careers!* This guide describes a seven-step process that helps students achieve their Transition IEP goals through career assessment, exploration, experiences, support, and planning centered around four broad career focus areas. Request item #312087.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP (DIRECTORY)

Many organizations and agencies offer information and services to parents of children with disabilities. On the next pages you will find just a few of them. Any of the groups listed will be happy to answer questions or give you information.

LOCAL

Administrator, Exceptional Student Education (Contact local school board or district office for address and telephone number.)

(Name) _____
(Address) _____
(Telephone Number) _____

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) (Contact exceptional student education administrator for address and telephone number.)

(Name) _____
(Address) _____
(Telephone Number) _____

Florida Department of Children and Families (Check local telephone directory for address and telephone number.)

(Name) _____
(Address) _____
(Telephone Number) _____

**Program Chairperson, Special Education or Exceptional Student Education
Department at local college or university**

(Name) _____
(Address) _____
(Telephone Number) _____

STATE AGENCIES

**Florida Agency for Persons
with Disabilities**
(850) 488-4257
web: apd.myflorida.com

**Florida Agency for Health Care
Administration (AHCA)**
web: www.fdhc.state.fl.us

**Florida Alliance for Assistive Services
and Technology (FAAST)**
(850) 487-3278
e-mail: Faast@Faast.org
web: www.faast.org

Florida Department of Children and Families

Florida Department of Children and
Families
Adult Mental Health
web: [www.dcf.state.fl.us/mentalhealth/
amh.shtml](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/mentalhealth/amh.shtml)

Florida Department of Children and
Families
Children's Mental Health
web: [www.dcf.state.fl.us/mentalhealth/
cmh.shtml](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/mentalhealth/cmh.shtml)

Florida Department of Education

Bureau of Exceptional Education and
Student Services
(850) 245-0475
web: [www.myfloridaeducation.com/
commhome](http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/commhome)

Division of Blind Services
web: www.state.fl.us/dbs

Division of Community Colleges and
Workforce Education
web: www.fldoe.org/cc/

Division of Colleges and Universities
web: www.fldcu.org/

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
web: www.rehabworks.org/

Office of Workforce Education
web: www.firn.edu/doe/workforce

**Florida Department of Health
Children's Medical Services**
(850) 245-4200
web: www.doh.state.fl.us/cms

**Florida Diagnostic and Learning
Resources System**
web: www.fdlrs.com

Workforce Florida
web: www.workforceflorida.com/

OTHER FLORIDA ORGANIZATIONS

Career Development and Transition Project

The Transition Center at the University of Florida

web: www.thetransitioncenter.org

The Florida Center for Children and Youth

(850) 222-7140

e-mail: voices@Floridakids.com

web: www.FloridaKids.com

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

(850) 488-4180

(800) 850-7801

TDO: (850) 488-0956

TDO: (888) 488-8633

e-mail: FDDC@FDDC.com

web: fddc.org

The Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities

(850) 488-9071

Voice/TDD: (800) 346 4127

North Florida: (800) 342-0823

South Florida: (800) 350-4566 (for Spanish speakers)

e-mail: info@advocacycenter.org

web: www.advocacycenter.org

Arc Florida (formerly the Association of Retarded Citizens)

(850) 921-0460

e-mail: arcofflorida@comcast.net

web: www.ARCFlorida.org

Autism Society of Florida

(954) 349-2820

e-mail: ellen@autismfl.com

web: www.autismfl.com

Brain Injury Association of Florida

(800) 992-3442

(954) 786-2400

e-mail: info@biaf.org

web: www.biaf.org

Family Network on Disabilities of Florida

(800) 825-5736

(727) 523-1130

e-mail: fnd@fndfl.org

web: www.fndfl.org

Florida Easter Seal Society

(407) 629-7881 (TDD or Voice)

e-mail: info@fl.easter-seals.org

web: www.fl.easterseals.com

Florida Families of Children with Visual Impairments (FFCVI)

(813) 968-6468

e-mail: ffcvi@yahoo.com

web: www.ffcvi.org

Learning Disabilities Association of Florida

(941) 637-8957

e-mail: ldaf00@sunline.net

web: www.lda-fl.org

Prader-Willi Florida Association

(800) 926-4797

e-mail: National@pwsausa.org

web: www.pwsausa.org

Spina Bifida Association

(904) 261-6639

(800) 722-6355

e-mail: Psabadie@net-magic.net

Statewide Human Rights Advocacy Committee

(850) 488-6173

(Suncom) 278-6173

web: www.FloridaSAC.org/

**Tourette Syndrome Association
Florida Chapter**
(727) 418-0240
e-mail: tsafkeducation@yahoo.com
web: www.tsa-fl.org

TASH-Florida Chapter
(352) 846-2760
e-mail: gilles@ufbLufL.edu
web: www.tash.org/chaptersjflorida.htm

Transition to Independence Project
e-mail: pgamache@fmhl.usf.edu
web: tip.fmhLusf.edu

United Cerebral Palsy of Florida
(850) 878-2141
e-mail: ucpadm@nettally.com
web: www.nettally.com/ucp/ucpof.htm

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Alexander Graham Bell Association for
the Deaf**
(202) 337 -5220 (TDD or Voice)
web: www.agbell.org

**American Association on Mental
Retardation**
(800) 424-3688
(202) 387-1968
web: www.AAMR.org

American Foundation for the Blind
(212) 502-7600
(800) AFB-LINE
web: www.afb.org

**American Speech-Language-Hearing
Association**
(301) 897-5700
(800) 638-8255 (voice/TDD)
e-mail: actioncenter@asha.org
web: www.asha.org

Autism Society of America
(301) 657-0881
(800) 3-AUTISM
web: www.autism-society.org

**Children with Attention Deficit
Disorders**
(301) 306-7070, ext. 100
1-800-233-4050
e-mail: call_center1@chadd.org
web: www.chadd.org

Council for Exceptional Children
(703) 264-9474
(888) 232-7733
e-mail: service@cec.sped.org
web: www.cec.sped.org

Disability Resources

(information for independent living)
(516) 585-0290
e-mail: info@disabilityresources.org
web: www.disabilityresources.org

Federation for Children with Special Needs

(617) 236-7210
e-mail: FCSNinfo@fcsn.org
web: www.fcsn.org

International Dyslexia Association

(410) 296-0232
(800) 222-3123
e-mail: info@interdys.org
web: www.interdys.org

International Parents' Organization

(202) 337 -5220 (voice/TDD)

Learning Disabilities Association of America

(412) 341-1515
(888) 300-6710
e-mail: info@ldaamerica.org
web: ldaamerica.org

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

(703) 524-7600
(800) 950-6264
e-mail: helpline@nami.org
web: www.nami.org

National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments

(617) 972-7441
(800) 562-6265
e-mail: NAPVI@perkins.org
web: www.NAPVI.org

National Association of the Deaf

(301) 587 -1788 (Voice)
(301) 587-1789 (TDD)
e-mail: NADinfo@NAD.org
web: www.nad.org

National Easter Seal Society

(312) 726-6200
(312) 726-4258 (TDD)
(800) 221-6827 (voice)
web: www.easter-seals.org

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

(202) 884-8200
(800) 695-0285 (voice/TDD)
e-mail: nichcy@aed.org
web: www.nichcy.org

Office of Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Education
(404) 562-6350

Office of Special Education Programs

U.S. Department of Education
(202) 245-7459
web: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/OSERS/OSEP/index.html

Prader- Willi Syndrome Association

(800) 926-4797
(941) 312-0400
e-mail: national@pwsausa.org
web: www.pwsausa.org

Spina Bifida Association of America

(800) 926-4797
e-mail: sbaa@sbaa.org
web: www.sbaa.org

TASH-Disability Advocacy Worldwide

(focuses on inclusion and civil rights)
(410) 828-8274 (Voice)
(410) 828-1306 (TDD)
e-mail: info@tash.org
web: www.tash.org

United Cerebral Palsy

(800) 872-5827
web: www.ucp.org

OBSERVATION GUIDE—BEFORE TRANSITION IEP MEETINGS

(first of two pages)

Name of young person: _____ Age: _____

What things does your young person do best? _____

What needs does your young person have? _____

How does your young person seem to feel about:

School? _____

Work (if he or she goes to work)? _____

Himself or Herself? _____

Other people (friends, family, teachers, co-workers)? _____

How well does your young person take care of himself or herself (dressing, eating, staying clean, getting from place to place, buying things, etc.)? _____

What does your young person do to help you at home? _____

How well does your young person follow directions? _____

What does your young person like to do when he or she has free time? What are your young person's hobbies? _____

What does your young person *not* like to do? _____

How many friends does your young person have? _____
How old are your young person's friends? _____
What does your young person do with his or her friends? _____

How much, and how well, does your young person communicate with other people: _____

Does your young person talk? Yes No If no, how does he or she communicate? _____

What kinds of jobs or chores has your young person done? _____

What services does your young person receive from community agencies? _____

What assistive technology devices does your young person use? _____

Is your young person aware of the types of work available in the community? Yes No

What kind of job or career would your young person like to have? _____

Where would you like to see your young person living and working five years from now? _____

What does your young person most need to learn in order to be ready for adult life? _____

PARENTS' RECORD OF TRANSITION IEP MEETING

(first of two pages)

Did you get a written notice about the meeting? Yes No

If yes, date of notice: _____ Number of days before the meeting: _____

Did you get any other kind of notice? Phone call Visit Reminder note Electronic mail

Other _____

Did you ask to change the date, time, or place? Yes No

If yes, were you able to make a change? Yes No

Did you go to the meeting? Yes No

If no, why not? _____

If no, did the school staff ask you to help with the IEP in some other way? Yes No

How? _____

When was the meeting held? (Date) _____ (Time) From: _____ To: _____

Where was the meeting held? _____

Who was at the meeting?

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Was anyone invited who did not attend the meeting? Yes No

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

If a key person was absent, how was this addressed? _____

Did your child attend the meeting? Yes No

Why or why not? _____

Did your child actively participate in the meeting? Yes No

If yes, what did your child do? _____

Was there a need for more than one meeting? Yes No If yes, give date(s): _____

What information and opinions did you share at the meeting? _____

Did the IEP team discuss what type of diploma your young person will work toward? Yes No
Which diploma is your young person working toward? standard diploma special diploma

What is your young person's desired post-school outcome? (What kind of work, housing, education, and recreation arrangements does your child want for adult life?) _____

Were you and the school staff able to agree on the IEP? Yes No
If no, what did you disagree about? _____

If no, what did you do? _____

Did you get a copy of the IEP? Yes No Keep a copy of the IEP in your file.

CONTACT LOG

Use this page to record the dates of telephone or in person contacts with your child's teacher or other school personnel. Include notes about what you discussed.

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

CONTACT LOG

Use this page to record the dates of telephone or in person contacts with your child's teacher or other school personnel. Include notes about what you discussed.

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ In person Phone call Other _____

Notes: _____

AGE 14 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—REQUIRED PRACTICES

[On or before the student's 14th birthday]

Required practices are listed below. **Suggested** practices are listed on the back.

- Review the previous IEP or Transition IEP.
- Invite the student to his or her Transition IEP meeting.
- Provide notice to parent of the Transition IEP meeting, indicating that the student will be invited to attend and the purpose of the meeting is the development of a statement of transition service needs.
- Develop a desired post-school outcome statement on the Transition IEP.
- Develop a statement on the Transition IEP of transition service needs that focuses on course of study (description of instructional program and experiences).
- Document the diploma decision (standard or special diploma). (Note: This requirement must be addressed in the IEP or Transition IEP developed during the student's 8th grade year or the Transition IEP developed during the year of the student's 14th birthday, whichever occurs first.)
- Document provisions of instruction or information for the student in the area of self-determination – to effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and advocate for self.
- If the student does not attend the Transition IEP meeting, document other steps taken to ensure that the student's needs, preferences, and interests were considered.
- Obtain a signed release of information from the student's parent prior to sharing written information with agency representatives.

AGE 14 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—SUGGESTED PRACTICES

- Identify agencies that may need to be involved and therefore invited to the Transition IEP meeting held on or before the student's 16th birthday, or younger as appropriate.*
- Invite a representative of any agency already providing or likely to provide transition services to the student to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*
- Provide training or information to families in self-determination (including self-advocacy and self-directed Transition IEPs) and the Transition IEP process.*
- Ensure that each member of the Transition IEP team contributes relevant information about the student and assists in developing the Transition IEP.*
- Obtain a signed release of information from the student's parent prior to inviting agency representatives to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*

COMMENTS

AGE 15 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—REQUIRED PRACTICES

On or before the student's 15th birthday

Required practices are listed below. **Suggested** practices are listed on the back.

- Review the previous IEP or Transition IEP.
- Invite the student to his or her Transition IEP meeting.
- Provide notice to parent of the Transition IEP meeting, indicating that the student will be invited to attend and the purpose of the meeting is the development of a statement of transition service needs.
- Update desired post-school outcome statement on the Transition IEP.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of transition service needs that focuses on the student's courses of study.
- Review and if needed revise diploma decision.
- Document provisions of instruction or information for the student in the area of self-determination – to effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and advocate for self.
- If the student does not attend the Transition IEP meeting, document other steps taken to ensure that the student's needs, preferences, and interests were considered.
- Obtain a signed release of information from the student's parent prior to sharing written information with agency representatives.

AGE 15 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—SUGGESTED PRACTICES

- Identify agencies that may need to be involved and therefore invited to the Transition IEP meeting held on or before the student's 16th birthday, or younger as appropriate.*
- Invite a representative of any agency already providing or likely to provide transition services to the student to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*
- Provide training or information to families in self-determination (including self-advocacy and self-directed Transition IEPs) and the Transition IEP process.*
- Ensure that each member of the Transition IEP team contributes relevant information about the student and assists in developing the Transition IEP.*
- Obtain a signed release of information from the student's parent prior to inviting agency representatives to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*

COMMENTS

AGE 16 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—REQUIRED PRACTICES

On or before the student's 16th birthday

Required practices are listed below. **Suggested** practices are listed on the back.

- Review the previous Transition IEP.
- Invite the student to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Invite any agency likely to provide or pay for any transition services, or already providing or paying for services, to send a representative to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Ensure that the student's parent has signed a release of information form prior to sharing written information with agency representatives.
- Provide parent with a notice of the Transition IEP meeting indicating that the purpose of the meeting is the consideration of needed transition services, and the student will be invited to attend; and identify any agencies invited to send representatives.
- Update desired post-school outcome statement on the Transition IEP.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of transition service needs that focuses on courses of study.
- Develop a statement on the Transition IEP of needed transition services in the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, post-school adult living) and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
- If no transition services are needed in any of the required transition services activity areas, develop a statement to that effect.** (This is a requirement in Florida State Board of Education [SBE] rules.)
- When appropriate, develop statement of agency responsibilities or any needed linkages.
- Review and if needed revise the diploma decision.
- Document provisions of instruction or information for the student in the area of self-determination – to effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and advocate for self.
- If the student does not attend the Transition IEP meeting, document other steps taken to ensure that the student's needs, preferences, and interests were considered.
- If one or more agencies invited to send representatives to the Transition IEP meeting do not do so, document other steps taken to obtain their participation.
- If an agency fails to provide transition services described in the Transition IEP, reconvene the Transition IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the student's transition objectives.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative was unable to attend the Transition IEP meeting to obtain a commitment from the agency to provide or pay for needed transition services; document steps taken.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative did attend to ensure that appropriate information was provided to the agency and that services have been initiated or continued as indicated in the Transition IEP.

AGE 16 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—SUGGESTED PRACTICES

- Ensure that each member of the Transition IEP team contributes relevant information about the student and assists in developing the Transition IEP.*
- Provide training or information to families in self-determination (including self-advocacy and self-directed Transition IEPs) and the Transition IEP process.*
- Obtain a signed release of information from the student’s parent prior to inviting agency representatives to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*
- Describe the basis upon which a determination was made if no services are needed in one or more of the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, and post-school adult living).*

COMMENTS

AGE 17 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—REQUIRED PRACTICES

On or before the student's 17th birthday

Required practices are listed below. **Suggested** practices are listed on the back.

- Review the last Transition IEP.
- Invite the student to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Invite any agency likely to provide or pay for any transition services, or already providing or paying for services to send a representative to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Ensure that the student's parent has signed a release of information form prior to sharing written information with agency representatives.
- Provide parent with a notice of the Transition IEP meeting indicating that the purpose of the meeting is the consideration of needed transition services and the student will be invited to attend; and identify any agencies invited to send representatives.
- Update desired post-school outcome statement on the Transition IEP.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of transition service needs that focuses on courses of study.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of needed transition services in the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, post-school adult living) and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
- If no transition services are needed in any of the required transition services activity areas, develop a statement to that effect.** (This is a requirement in Florida State Board of Education [SBE] rules.)
- When appropriate, develop or update statement of agency responsibilities or any needed linkages..
- Review and if needed revise the diploma decision.
- Document provisions of instruction or information for the student in the area of self-determination – to effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and advocate for self.
- If the student does not attend the Transition IEP meeting, document other steps taken to ensure that the student's needs, preferences, and interests were considered.
- If one or more agencies invited to send representatives to the Transition IEP meeting do not do so, document other steps taken to obtain their participation.
- If an agency fails to provide transition services described in the Transition IEP, reconvene the Transition IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the student's transition objectives.
- Inform the parent and the student of the rights that will transfer to the student, at least one year prior to the student's 18th birthday
- Document on the Transition IEP that the parent and the student have been informed of the rights that will transfer to the student.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative was unable to attend the Transition IEP meeting to obtain a commitment from the agency to provide or pay for needed transition services; document steps taken.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative did attend to ensure that appropriate information was provided to the agency and that services have been initiated or continued as indicated in the Transition IEP.

AGE 17 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—SUGGESTED PRACTICES

- ❑ *Ensure that each member of the Transition IEP team contributes relevant information about the student and assists in developing the Transition IEP.*
- ❑ *Provide training or information to families in self-determination (including self-advocacy and self-directed Transition IEPs) and the Transition IEP process.*
- ❑ *Obtain a signed release of information from the student’s parent prior to inviting agency representatives to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*
- ❑ *Describe the basis upon which a determination was made if no services are needed in one or more of the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, and post-school adult living).*

COMMENTS

AGE 18 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—REQUIRED PRACTICES

On or before the student's 18th birthday

Required practices are listed below. **Suggested** practices are listed on the back.

- Review the previous Transition IEP.
- Invite the student to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Invite any agency likely to provide or pay for any transition services, or already providing or paying for services to send a representative to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Ensure that the student's parent has signed the release of information form prior to sharing written information with agency representatives.
- Provide parent with a notice of the Transition IEP meeting indicating that the purpose of the meeting is the consideration of needed transition services and the student will be invited to attend; and identify any agencies invited to send representatives.
- Update desired post-school outcome statement on the Transition IEP.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of transition service needs that focuses on courses of study.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of needed transition services in the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, post-school adult living) and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
- If no transition services are needed in any of the required transition services activity areas, develop a statement to that effect.** (This is a requirement in Florida State Board of Education [SBE] rules.)
- When appropriate, develop or update statement of agency responsibilities or any needed linkages.
- Review and if needed revise the diploma decision.
- Document provisions of instruction or information for the student in the area of self-determination – to effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and advocate for self.
- If the student does not attend the Transition IEP meeting, document other steps taken to ensure that the student's needs, preferences, and interests were considered.
- If one or more agencies invited to send representatives to the Transition IEP meeting do not do so, document other steps taken to obtain their participation.
- If an agency fails to provide transition services described in the Transition IEP, reconvene the Transition IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the student's transition objectives.
- Provide the parent and student a notice regarding the transfer of rights when the student attains his or her 18th birthday.
- Provide the student's parent with all notices required by IDEA.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative was unable to attend the Transition IEP meeting to obtain a commitment from the agency to provide or pay for needed transition services; document steps taken.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative did attend to ensure that appropriate information was provided to the agency and that services have been initiated or continued as indicated in the Transition IEP.

AGE 18 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—SUGGESTED PRACTICES

- ❑ *Ensure that each member of the Transition IEP team contributes relevant information about the student and assists in developing the Transition IEP.*
- ❑ *Continue to work closely with the student's parent where there are concerns about the student's ability to participate in the process of educational decision-making.*
- ❑ *Provide training or information to families in self-determination (including self-advocacy and self-directed Transition IEPs) and the Transition IEP process.*
- ❑ *Obtain a signed release of information from the student's parent prior to inviting agency representatives to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*
- ❑ *Describe the basis upon which a determination was made if no services are needed in one or more of the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, and post-school adult living).*

COMMENTS

AGES 19–21 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—REQUIRED PRACTICES

Until the student turns 22 or, at the discretion of the school district, through the school year in which the student turns 22, if the student has not received a standard diploma or its equivalent

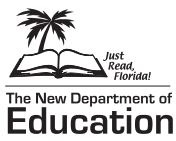
Required practices are listed below. **Suggested** practices are listed on the back.

- Review the previous Transition IEP.
- Invite the student to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Invite any agency likely to provide or pay for any transition services, or already providing or paying for services to send a representative to the Transition IEP meeting.
- Ensure that the student’s parent has signed the release of information form prior to sharing written information with agency representatives.
- Provide parent with a notice of the Transition IEP meeting indicating that the purpose of the meeting is the consideration of needed transition services and the student will be invited to attend; and identify any agencies invited to send representatives.
- Update desired post-school outcome statement on the Transition IEP.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of transition service needs that focuses on courses of study.
- Update statement on the Transition IEP of transition services needs in the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, post-school adult living) and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
- If no transition services are needed in any of the required transition services activity areas, develop a statement to that effect.** (This is a requirement in Florida State Board of Education [SBE] rules.)
- When appropriate, develop or update statement of agency responsibilities or any needed linkages.
- Review and if needed revise the diploma decision.
- Document provisions of instruction or information for the student in the area of self-determination – to effectively participate in Transition IEP meetings and advocate for self.
- If the student does not attend the Transition IEP meeting, document other steps taken to ensure that the student’s needs, preferences, and interests were considered.
- If one or more agencies invited to send representatives to the Transition IEP meeting do not do so, document other steps taken to obtain their participation.
- If an agency fails to provide transition services described in the Transition IEP, reconvene the Transition IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the student’s transition objectives.
- Provide the parent with all notices required by IDEA.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative was unable to attend the Transition IEP meeting to obtain a commitment from the agency to provide or pay for needed transition services; document steps taken.
- Follow up with agency representatives if an agency representative did attend to ensure that appropriate information was provided to the agency and that services have been initiated or continued as indicated in the Transition IEP.

AGES 19–21 TRANSITION CHECKLIST—SUGGESTED PRACTICES

- Ensure that each member of the Transition IEP team contributes relevant information about the student and assists in developing the Transition IEP.*
- Continue to work closely with the student’s parent where there are concerns about the student’s ability to participate in the process of educational decision-making.*
- Provide training or information to families in self-determination (including self-advocacy and self-directed Transition IEPs) and the Transition IEP process.*
- Obtain a signed release of information from the student’s parent prior to inviting agency representatives to attend the Transition IEP meeting.*
- Describe the basis upon which a determination was made if no services are needed in one or more of the required transition services activity areas (i.e., instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, and post-school adult living).*

COMMENTS



John L. Winn, Commissioner

ESE 312650