

Planning and Preparing

How and when do I develop a timeline for transition planning to postsecondary education?

Students begin with *themselves* – asking, “What are my abilities and interests?” “What do I want and need from my everyday life as an adult?” “What do I like and dislike about school work, chores at home, jobs I’ve had to do, hobbies, and volunteer commitments?”

Start taking positive steps by staying involved in your transition process. The key to successful transition to postsecondary education is **early planning**. It is essential for you to maintain high academic standards and expectations throughout your elementary, middle, and high school years.

Skill development and practice (time management, independent living, mobility skills, the ability to ask for specific help when you need it) are also important.

The following questionnaire will help in planning for your transition.

Questions Students Should Ask Their IEP Team Members or Support Network

The following are questions, recommended skills, and steps needed in planning for postsecondary education. Check them off as you address each area.

How do I develop self-advocacy skills?

- Find effective ways to explain your disability and your specific needs. Practice with a teacher and a counselor.
- Communicate strengths and weaknesses (courses and types of assignments that were easier or more difficult).
- Explain skills that can help you learn.
- Explain academic areas where you may need accommodations (extended test-taking time, note taker, lecture notes, books on tape, and so forth).
- Explain current services provided (accommodations or extra help that have been successful).

- Approach instructors at the beginning of the course regarding what accommodations are needed.
- Explain legal rights (IDEA, ADA, Section 504).
- Communicate what is a reasonable accommodation.
- Actively participate in your IEP meetings by sharing your interests and postsecondary goals with the team. Make sure transition plans are documented in your IEP.

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Schools assist students in writing

Pre-High School

- Develop Measurable Postsecondary Goals at the age of 14 (or younger if determined by the IEP team) The goals are for education or training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living.
- Plan for high school classes (consider college prep classes).
- Develop a list of postsecondary options of interest.
- Develop an understanding of disability and learning styles.
- Develop study skills.
- Start saving money.
- Identify transition needs and career planning goals through the IEP process.
- Remediate and/or compensate for basic-skill deficits.

Ninth Grade

- Contact a guidance counselor and design a class schedule.
- Develop a clear understanding of the nature of your disability and how it affects learning.
- Take courses or participate in groups that promote skills in time management, studying, assertiveness training, stress management, and exam preparation.
- Prepare for all classes.
- Explore career options (interest inventories, career fairs, discussion with school personnel and parents).
- Develop skills for academic independence (time management, study skills, note taking, and so forth).

- ___ Participate in extracurricular activities (athletic and nonathletic).
- ___ Continue to remediate and/or compensate for basic-skill deficits.
- ___ Determine what types of courses are necessary for admission (keep in mind, modified courses may not be acceptable for admission to some postsecondary institutions).
- ___ Investigate assistive technology tools (communicative device, unique computer needs, TTY, and so forth). Learn to use as many kinds of software as you can (word processing, spreadsheets, and web site design will be especially helpful).

Tenth Grade

- ___ Continue academic preparation and remediation/compensation strategies, and identify any assistive technology needs.
- ___ Identify interests, aptitudes, and accommodation needs.
- ___ Continue or develop self-advocacy skills (asking for help, communicating needs to instructors, and so forth).
- ___ Meet with guidance counselor to discuss colleges and college requirements.
- ___ Find out if the schools you are interested in require or recommend that candidates take the ACT or SAT exams. If they do, make preparations to take the appropriate exam.
- ___ Attend college fairs.
- ___ Visit colleges and other postsecondary education training options.
- ___ Gather information about college programs and about services offered for students with disabilities.
- ___ Identify application deadlines for postsecondary support programs.
- ___ Investigate eligibility requirements and services available through the WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and other adult service providers such as Human Services, Center for Independent Living (CIL) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partners.
- ___ Participate in volunteer and paid work experiences.

Eleventh Grade

- ___ Continue academic preparation and remediation/compensation strategies, assistive technology needs, and self-advocacy skills.
- ___ Focus on matching interests/abilities and career goals to appropriate postsecondary education choice.

- ___ Identify appropriate postsecondary choice.
- ___ Take ACT or SAT with or without accommodations.
- ___ Establish a tentative career goal.
- ___ Identify people to write recommendations for you.
- ___ Invite DVR counselor and other appropriate adult agency representatives to IEP meeting for discussion and planning of post high school options. Complete application, eligibility and Order of Selection (OOS) process and begin discussion about the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) process.
- ___ Tour postsecondary campuses.
- ___ Investigate services offered by postsecondary setting and determine which settings match individual needs and goals.
- ___ Learn to use local public transportation options.
- ___ Obtain picture identification card or driver's license.
- ___ Obtain documentation of disability from current assessment (within two years of graduation date) because colleges require assessments.

Twelfth Grade

- ___ Strengthen self-advocacy skills (your legal responsibilities after the age of 18).
- ___ Prepare transition packet for disability documentation that includes: evaluation reports, transcripts, test scores, current IEP, medical records, writing samples, and letters of recommendation.
- ___ Role-play interviews.
- ___ Talk with students who are receiving services at colleges and other postsecondary education training settings about their experiences.
- ___ Schedule an interview/tour with institutions of interest.
- ___ Prepare applications.
- ___ Jointly develop the IPE with DVR counselor which identifies goals, services, and responsibilities. Develop service plans with other adult service agency providers as appropriate.
- ___ Schools provide students with a summary of performance (SOP), which includes a review of academic achievement, functional performance, and recommendations, which assist the student in achieving his or her measurable postsecondary goals.