



Preparing Young Adults
with
Disabilities for
Success in Adult Life

A Guide
to
Transition Planning

What is *Transition*?

What will life be like once a student leaves high school? Thinking about any child's future is often difficult - especially if the child has special needs.

Planning for the future of a young adult with a disability is an on-going process. Transition is a process required by federal and state law. It involves identifying what a student expects to do when he finishes school, and then planning a school program to best reach those individual outcomes.

Transition planning is like a bridge from the security and structure of school to the challenges and risks of adult life. It is a process that focuses on improving a student's ability to obtain and maintain employment; to access housing, recreation and leisure opportunities; and to participate in post-secondary education options. Young adults themselves, along with their parents, play an important role in the transition process.

Transition Planning has been a good idea for a long time. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Chapter 14 of PA School Code required Transition Planning for every special education student at age 14. The transition planning process begins at 14 when the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team determines the course of study the student will take while attending secondary school. At age 16, or earlier if needed, transition planning in three outcomes areas, post-secondary education, employment and community living, must occur. The IEP team determines the specially designed instruction, goals and objectives needed in school to enable students to realize selected outcomes.

Students with disabilities can remain in school to age 21 if there are continuing transition needs. For example, young adults with disabilities may remain in school past the typical graduation date if they have additional need to acquire skills for employment or independent living.

Transition Means...

- Future Planning
- Individual Transition Plans
- Vocational Assessment (Job Interests) and Work Experiences
- Community Experiences
- Post-Secondary Education
- Connecting with Agencies

Desired Outcomes or Goals In What Areas?

It is never too early to begin transition planning.

Transition Planning involves thinking about what a student will do after graduation in the following areas:

Employment

Options to consider should include competitive employment, volunteer work, supported employment, sheltered employment, military service.

Post-Secondary Education or Training

Choices to consider should include business/trade/technical school, 2 or 4 year college or university, certificate programs.

Community Life

Options to consider should include living arrangements, transportation, recreation, financial planning, healthcare, access to resources.



What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning begins at age 14 when the IEP team determines the course of study the student will take. This may be vocational education, college preparation or career education. By the time a student turns 16 (or younger if suggested by the IEP team) the student's IEP is required to have special areas included in the IEP. They are the following:

- **A written statement of selected outcomes/goals based on assessment of the student's preferences, interests, needs and abilities in the areas of post secondary education, employment and community living**
- **The coordinated set of activities needed to support identified outcomes**
- **Community agencies which may provide services and support to the student**
- **Annual goals, objectives, specially designed instruction and related services needed to realize selected outcome/goal.**

Who Should Attend a Transition Planning Meeting?

Student
Parent
Special education teacher
Regular education teacher
School district representative
Related services personnel
Vo Tech representative
Agency representatives
Advocates

What is Vocational Assessment ?

Vocational assessment is an ongoing process designed to help students and parents understand the young person's job-related interests and abilities. In order to get complete information about the student's interests and abilities, several methods of assessment (both formal and informal) should be done. Assessment can include such activities as the following:

- Vocational interests/preferences
- Ability tests
- Learning preferences/styles
- Worker style preferences
- Worker characteristics
- Job try-outs
- Individual observation

Federal and state special education laws require vocational assessment when it is appropriate.



How Can a Student Get *Vocational Training?*

Many activities can be called vocational training. Such activities could include (but should not be limited to):

Vocational/Technical School (regular or modified)

Industrial Arts/Home Economics/Business Education

School-based jobs (time-limited non-paid jobs)

Community-based work experiences (paid or time-limited non-paid)

Job shadowing or job try-outs

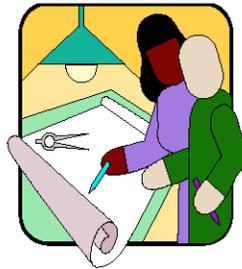
Volunteer work

Summer employment program

Opportunities are limited only by the imagination of the Transition Planning Team.

What is Supported Employment?

Supported employment involves jobs-for-pay in the community for students with disabilities. This choice uses special job placement, intensive training with job coaches, and ongoing follow up and support. Students' employment in the community is "supported" by educators and/or agency personnel.



Does Transition Planning Apply to Students Going on to Higher Education or Training After High School?

Yes. Transition Planning for a student going on to further education will look different from a plan for a student who is going directly into employment. Many transition activities should be planned to help this student reach his or her desired goals.

Transition Planning for students going on to higher education or training could include such activities as the following:

- Taking part in academic programs while in high school which meet the requirements of higher education programs
- Understanding and communicating needed accommodations
- Identify support services at post-secondary schools to access campus life and course work
- Exploring careers by visiting job sites
- Apply for accommodations needed for SAT/ACT
- Getting a driver's license
- Having a summer job
- Understanding post secondary funding options
- Developing a portfolio or resume



What Can Parents Do to Help in Transition Planning?

- Discuss your child's future with your child.
- Talk with your child about jobs and work.
- Attend IEP meetings; express your views, ask questions.
- Be informed of special education standards and laws - **know your rights and responsibilities!**
- Help your child prepare a transition portfolio.
- Be aware of local agencies, the services they offer and eligibility procedures. Communicate with appropriate agencies.
- Keep accurate records on your child: birth certificate, medical, educational, work, social security, IEPs, Evaluation Reports, etc.
- Involve your child in activities that help him/her to become a good decision maker and to develop self-advocacy skills.
- Help your child to become involved in community activities, expand friendships and practice social skills.
- Encourage your child to practice independent living skills such as budgeting, shopping, cooking and housekeeping.

What is the Role of the Student in Transition Planning?

- Know your interests, preferences, needs and abilities.
- Know about your disability and what accommodations you need to be successful.
- Speak up and ask for what you need on your own behalf.
- Take high school courses which help you realistically achieve your goals when you graduate.
- Actively participate in your IEP meetings.
- Participate in career awareness activities, community-based instruction and work-experience activities.
- Be responsible for yourself at home, in school and in your community.
- Seek help when needed.
- Be persistent in working toward your goals.

What is the Role of the School in Transition Planning?

Begin the Transition Planning Process

At the age of 14 (or younger if requested by the student's IEP team) determine the course of study and include a transition plan in the student's IEP.

Develop an Appropriate IEP

Provide an appropriate education program so that students can access employment, post secondary education and community options when they leave high school.

Provide Appropriate Assessments as Needed

Should include assessment of interests and abilities.

Provide Community-Based Experiences

Provide an appropriate education program so that students can access employment, post secondary education and community options when they leave high school.

Contact with Appropriate Agencies

Identify agencies which will help the student as he or she leaves high school and work together with those agencies.

Can Community Agencies Help in Transition Planning?

Yes, adult service agencies have a big part in Transition Planning. However, students must be **eligible** for agency services, unlike the school system where students are **entitled** to services according to their IEP. Working with agencies can sometimes be confusing and the process can be involved. The school and family should work together to identify helpful agencies and agency eligibility requirements at an early stage in Transition Planning.



What Agencies Can Be Helpful?

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

Can provide vocational evaluation, career counseling, job training and placement. Can provide funds for other agencies to provide job-related services.

Berks County CareerLink

Can provide an array of employment and training services. Utilizes a team approach to conveniently serve individuals seeking work.

Berks County Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR), Service Access & Management (SAM)

Through case management, can provide funds for employment, supported employment, pre-employment placements, residential supports and family support services.

Social Security Administration

Determines eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Provides information about reasons to work and the effect of employment on benefits.

Berks County Agency Directory

Abilities in Motion
210 North Fifth Street
Reading, PA 19601 610-376-0010

AHEDD
1800 North 12th Street, Suite 160
Reading, PA 19604 610-375-7692

Berks County CareerLink
501 Crescent Ave
Reading, PA 19605 610-988-1300

Berks County Intermediate Unit
Training and Consultation
River's Chase Business Center
1111 Commons Boulevard
Reading, PA 19605 610-987-8557

Berks County Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
2045 Centre Avenue
Reading, PA 19605 (Voice) 610-685-4520
(TTY) 610-685-4525
(VP) 866-320-9333

**Berks County
Agency Directory
(cont'd)**

Berks County Learning Disabilities Association P.O. Box 6894 Wyomissing, PA 19610	610-988-8457
Berks Personnel Network (BPN) 1015 Rockland Street Reading, PA 19604	610-288-1448
Blindness and Visual Services 300 G. Laird Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-7013	1-866-227-4163
Community Skills Program 1150 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 245 Wyomissing, PA 19610	610-376-3390
Goodwill Employment Services 310 North Wyomissing Avenue Shillington, PA 19607	610-777-7877
Mental Health Association of Reading and Berks County 122 W. Lancaster Ave., Suite 207 Shillington, PA 19607	610-775-3000

**Berks County
Agency Directory
(cont'd)**

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200
Reading, PA 19605
610-621-5800
1-800-442-0949

Social Security Administration
201 Penn Street
Reading, PA 19601-4041
(Voice) 800-772-1213
(TTY) 800-325-0778

Prospectus Associates, Inc.
840 William Lane
Reading, PA 19604
610-372-4637

Service Access & Management, Inc. (SAM, Inc.)
19 N. 6th St.
Reading, PA 19601-4301
610-236-0530

The ARC of Berks County
1829 New Holland Road, Suite 9
Reading, PA 19607-2228
610-603-0227

Threshold Rehabilitation Services
1000 Lancaster Avenue
Reading, PA 19607
610-777-7691

For more information about
Transition Planning call:

your local school district transition coordinator
or

Berks County Transition Coordinating Council
Berks County Intermediate Unit
1111 Commons Boulevard
P.O. Box 16050
Reading, PA 19612-6050
610-987-8495
www.berksiu.org



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