



# **Practical Tips to Help IEP Teams Develop Appropriate Transition Plans**

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# What is a Transition Plan?

- A map with clear directions to help a student develop her potential and achieve her hopes and dreams
- Outcomes of future career, educational goals, and independent living goals
- Look forward over period of years
- Focus on the skills necessary after graduation or after age 22
- Include services and supports
- Should be in place when the student is 14.5



# Who Creates the Plan

- Developed by the IEP team as part of the IEP
- Student must be invited if meeting's purpose is to consider post-secondary goals and services needed.
- With consent, school must invite “any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services” (ie: Division of Rehabilitation Services)



# Elements of a Transition Plan

- Transition Assessments
  - Goals and Post-Secondary Outcomes based on assessments
- Transition Services
  - Includes course of study



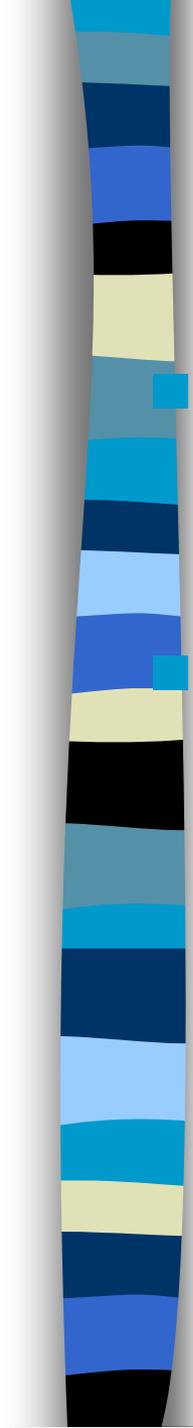
# Transition Assessments

- Provide information for IEP teams to use in developing and writing practical, achievable, and measurable post-school goals and to identify the transition services necessary to help a student reach those goals.
- At a minimum, IEP teams should administer transition assessments (formal and informal) in the areas of education and training, employment, and independent living.



# Jonathan

Jonathan, a student with a learning disability, graduated high school in four years because he had the credits to graduate. But with only a 5th grade reading level, no work experience, and poorly developed social skills, Jonathan could not find a job. His transition plan had focused on researching college programs, but he didn't want to go to college. He had never written a resume and did not know where to look for jobs. He didn't think that he had any skills that an employer would like.



# Jonathan: Transition Assessments

## Problem?

- Jonathan doesn't think that he has any skills that an employer would like

## Solution?

- Transition assessments!
- These assessments can identify student strengths and weaknesses related to transition
- Identifies gaps in skills related to further education, employment and independent living
- Provides baseline data for the Transition Plan



# Transition Assessments

- Transition assessment should provide answers to the following questions:
  - What does the student want to do after secondary school (education or training, employment)?
  - Where does the student want to live (apartment, family home, group home)?
  - How does the student want to take part in the community (transportation, recreation, community activities, etc.)?



# Transition Assessments

- Transition assessments consist of a variety of formats and include:
  - Behavioral assessments
  - Aptitude tests
  - Interest and work values inventories
  - Personalities or preference tests
  - Career maturity or readiness tests
  - Self-determination assessments
  - Work-related temperament scales
  - Vocational assessment
  - Transition planning inventories



# Transition Assessments

- Begin assessments BEFORE a student turns 14.5 and BEFORE goals or services have been selected
- Foundation for developing post-secondary goals
- Ongoing process
  - Not required to conduct assessments annually
  - Should continue to collect data that adequately captures the student's progress, abilities, needs, preferences, and interests to ensure a student's transition plan continues to accurately reflect goals for post-secondary life



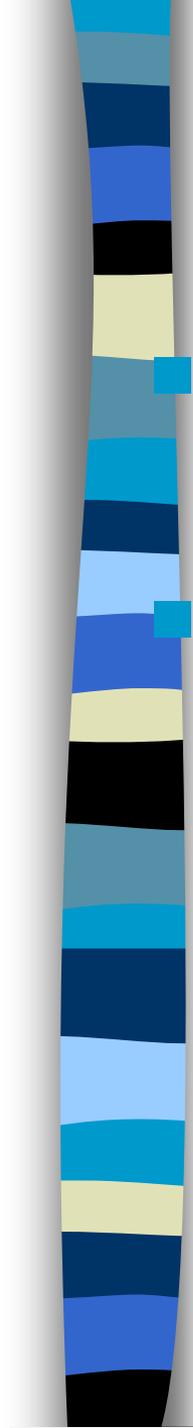
# Transition Planning Goals

- Appropriate measurable post-secondary goals;
  - Same criteria as other IEP goals. SMART goals
  - Transition goals require criteria for completion and progress reports
- “based on the student’s needs, taking into account the student’s strengths, preferences and interests.”  
34 CFR §300.43(a)(2)
  - **Yankton School District, 93 F.3d. 1369 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996)**
  - **Gibson v. Forest Hills School District Board of Education, 62 IDELR 261 (S.D. Ohio 2014)**



# Transition Planning Goals

- According to an Illinois IHO, a district deprived a student of FAPE by failing to provide him with appropriate transition services. The evidence showed that the student's transition plan was devoid of measurable goals and wasn't based on a comprehensive transition assessment. Accordingly, the IHO ordered the district to revise the student's transition plan once it conducted an appropriate transition assessment. In re: Student with a Disability, 115 LRP 10858 (SEA IL 03/02/15)



# Jonathan: Post-Secondary Goals

## ■ Problem?

- Jonathan's own goal was not aligned with his transition plan

## ■ Solution?

- Post-secondary goals should be student-centered
- Focused on the three areas: employment, education or training, and independent living
- Parents should be involved in the transition planning process and speak often with their children regarding their interests and future plans



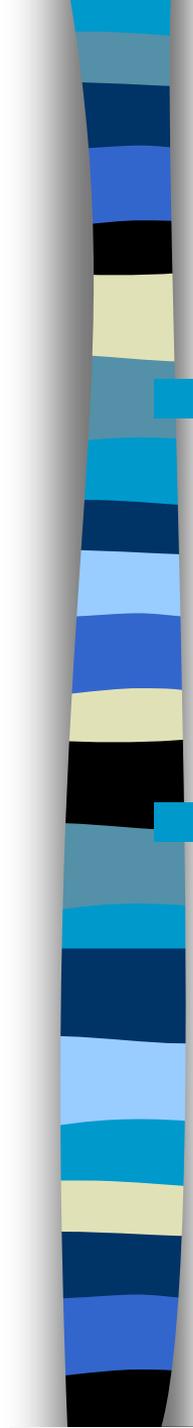
# Post-Secondary Outcomes

## Good Examples:

- Laura will go to a four-year college and major in math.
- Starting in June 2014, Jane will ride the train by herself to her job at the bakery, where she will get employer-offered training, to improve her culinary skills.

## Bad Examples:

- After graduation, Maria will explore her career options (too late).
- Matthew wants to be an NFL player after high school (not realistic).



# Jonathan: Course of Study

## ■ Problem?

- Jonathan graduated in four years despite having academic and functional skills gaps
- Jonathan was not ready to leave high school

## ■ Solution?

- Students with disabilities can remain in school until the day before their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday
- Can defer graduation to work on IEP skills, including transition



# Jonathan: Transition Services

## ■ Problem?

- Jonathan had never written a resume and did not know how to look for jobs.
- Jonathan didn't want to live with his grandmother, but didn't know about other options.

## ■ Solution?

- Individualized educational strategies to improve academic and functional skills for achieving post-secondary goals



# Transition Services

- Must be written into the IEP;
  - Includes courses of study;
    - Description of the coursework necessary to prepare a student for post-secondary activities and goal achievement and should list every course the student is required to take in order to graduate
    - Course of study required even if non-diploma track
  - Individualized, results-oriented process;
  - Focused on **improving academic and functional achievement.**\*
- \* 34 CFR §300.43 (maximization language)



# IDEA definition: Transition Services

- “A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a result-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation.”

34 CFR §300.43(a)(1)



# Transition Plan and Services as Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

- The *Rowley* standard has been upheld by courts in transition related cases.
  - *Board of Education of the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v Rowley*, 458 US 176 (1982)
- But transition is a RESULTS ORIENTED PROCESS;
- Focused on Improvement of academic and functional achievement;
- To facilitate student from school to post-school activities.



# Transition Services

- ***Must*** include:

- Instruction (*examples*: take an adult living course; take an ACT/SAT prep class; have transportation training; get tutoring in reading).
- Community experiences (*examples*: buy groceries; volunteer at the animal shelter; look at apartments for rent; open a bank account).
- Job and other adult living objectives (*examples*: practice interviewing; apply for DRS; job shadowing; get a driver's license; learn how to self-advocate).



# Transition Services

- **May** include, if appropriate:
  - Daily living skills (*examples*: learn to cook; practice organizational skills; learn to use an ATM card; hygiene skills).
  - Functional vocational evaluation.



# Remedies

- **Request an Independent Educational Evaluation** to obtain reliable and accurate assessment data
- **Request mediation** to return to a high school or a transition-based program
- **Request a due process hearing** to return to school, challenge an inappropriate transition plan, and obtain additional educational services
- **File an administrative state complaint** regarding the school's failure to write a transition plan



# Recent Cases

- *District of Columbia Pub. Schs.*, 115 LRP 40497 (SEA DC 05/15/15),
- *In re: Butte Sch. Dist. No. 1*, 73 IDELR 198 (D. Mont. 2019)
- *Letter to Pugh*, 69 IDELR 135 (OSEP 2017).
- *In re: Student with a Disability*, 115 LRP 10858 (SEA IL 03/02/15).
- *Bohn v. Cedar Rapids Cmty. Sch. Dist.*, 69 IDELR 8 (N.D. Iowa 2016)
- *Joaquin v. Friendship Public Charter School*, 66 IDELR 64 (D.D.C. 2015)



# Practical Tips to Help IEP Teams Develop Appropriate Transition Plans

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