



Adulthood Transition: An Overview

Description

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What is adulthood transition?

Adulthood transition is a process by which the school district prepares a student in special education for life after high school. If your child has an IEP and is 16 years old, the District must prepare an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).

When should transition planning begin?

Transition planning can begin when your child is 14 years old. In order to initiate this process, you must request that the district evaluate your child for transition services and prepare an ITP. If you do not wish to begin transition planning that early, you can wait to request a transition evaluation. However, the District must assess your child and prepare an ITP by the first IEP meeting held after your child's 16th birthday, regardless of whether you have requested it. Therefore, if your child is 16 years old, has had an IEP meeting since his/her birthday, and does not have an ITP, the district is out of compliance with California and federal special education law.

What is an ITP?

An ITP is a document that is attached to your child's IEP that outlines a plan to prepare your child for life after high school. This plan should be based on your child's individual needs and interests and should not be vague or generalized.

The ITP will look similar to the "Goals" section of the IEP, in that it outlines objectives for your child to achieve within a certain period of time. The ITP goals differ from regular IEP goals in that, rather than focusing on education-related skills, they work on enabling your child to navigate the outside world.

Generally, there are three components of an ITP: education, employment, and independent living skills. Each section should contain goals that are appropriate, attainable, and of interest to your child.

The education section of the ITP will focus on post-secondary education and the goals your child needs to accomplish in order to pursue post-secondary education. For example, a diploma-track student who wishes to go to university may have goals that would enable him/her to attend university,

such as researching various university programs and completing the application process. A student who wishes to pursue vocational training should have goals that focus on locating and preparing for a vocational program. Other students may have goals related to their transition programs with the district.

The employment section of the ITP will focus on preparing your child for his/her future job. As is true for all other sections of the ITP, this section should be tailored to your child's specific employment interests. Goals in this section may focus on applying for jobs and learning employment-related skills.

The independent living skills section of the ITP will focus on skills that enable your child to live with minimal assistance. This includes transportation training, personal hygiene, food preparation, community access, and financial management. These goals should be appropriate and attainable for your child based on their present ability. Not all students will be able to achieve independent living; however, the ITP should attempt to teach your child some independent living skills, even if independent living is not in his/her immediate future.

How do I make sure that my child has a beneficial ITP?

To the greatest extent possible, communicate with your child about his/her interests, wants, and needs in regard to adulthood transition. It is never too early to look into realistic post-secondary options that appeal to your child's interests. Advocate for ITP goals that are realistic but challenging and will help your child navigate the world after high school.

Start the conversation about adulthood transition with your child's IEP team when your child is a pre-teen. Advocate for the inclusion of transition skills in your child's IEP goals. When your child turns 14, request a transition evaluation to get the ball rolling.

The district has an obligation to prepare your child for transition into the community. The earlier this process begins, the more time your child has to get ready for that transition. Do your best to hold the district to their obligation.

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