

Connecticut's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services



IDEA and Transition Planning Simplified

Transition refers to the process by which students move from the world of school to the world of adulthood. For students with ASD changes can be challenging. So much change all at once can be daunting for those students with ASD.

To help students prepare for the inevitable transition, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** requires that schools begin addressing transition needs for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) no later than the age of 16. Connecticut law requires an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) be developed at the annual PPT following your child's 15th birthday (or younger if appropriate). Whenever the transition plan is first developed, it is an integral part of the IEP and carries the same legal authority.

In accordance with **IDEA** your child's ITP must include:

- Transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living (if appropriate)
- Appropriate and measurable goals to address:
 - Employment
 - Post-secondary training
 - Education
 - Independent living skills (if appropriate)
 - Community Involvement
- Transition services to assist your child in reaching those goals

IDEA defines "transition services" as a coordinated set of activities that is a "**results-oriented process** focused on improving the academic and *functional* achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities".

Your child will become a member of the IEP team when he or she reaches transition age and should be included in all decisions related to what he or she will do after graduation. The transition plan is to be **supportive**, meaning it is designed to facilitate your child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education and training, integrated or supportive employment, adult services, independent living and community participation.

Transition planning must be **student-centered**. It is to be based upon your child's need, taking into account strengths, preferences and interests. Your child's school may ask you and your child to complete questionnaires designed to help you and your child to think about what he or she likes and does not like to do, his or her talents, sensory sensitivities, your child's learning style, and available community supports. Work trials or job sampling may also be a part of the transition process.

IDEA requires that the transition plan be **comprehensive**. Activities need to be coordinated with each other and address both academic and *functional* achievement. In addition to the development of employment skills, transition services can include community experiences and other activities to build life skills (i.e. using public transportation, money management, housekeeping, food preparation, health and hygiene, time management, community participation, self-advocacy, and social skills).

If your child is planning to go to college or other post-secondary educational opportunities the ITP should specify when and how your child will complete all academic prerequisites, mandatory testing (i.e. SAT/ACT) and admission applications. If your child's goal is to find employment after high school, the ITP should also include development of vocational skills as well as interviewing skills, completing job applications, and developing appropriate workplace social skills.