Partners Resource Network
Empowerment Through Education

Dude, Where's My Transition Plan?

What is "Transition?"

Transition means changing from one thing to another.

Transitions can be exciting because the next step you take will be a whole new adventure. Transitions can also be a little scary because you might have to learn how to do things you haven't done before.

My parents and teachers keep talking about "transition planning". What is that?

When your parents, teachers or other adults in your school talk about "transition planning", they are talking about things you can do now to get ready for the time after you leave high school. That future may seem far away, but the more you plan now, the easier your first steps into the adult world will be.

When you were a young child, the grown-ups in your life probably did most of the planning for your future.

That's okay because that was their job. The difference between being a young child and being a teenager is that planning for your future becomes your job.

In fact, transition planning is required across the country, by law, to start by the time you are 16 years old. In Texas, it is required to start even earlier, by the time you are 14 years old.

You need to choose goals that matter to you. That means you need to figure out where you want to be and what you want to be doing.

What does my "Individualized Education Program (IEP)" have to do with transition planning?

For planning your life after high school, your Individualized Education Program or IEP is like a roadmap.

It shows where you are going and how you are going to get there. "Individualized" means about you. Your IEP should show the goals you want to reach and the supports you need to reach them.

Paying attention to what's in your IEP is how you can make sure that you learn the skills in high school to do what you want with your life after you graduate.

Ask your teacher about a "Self-Directed IEP". This would put you in the driver's seat and set you up to lead your IEP meeting!

What are self-directed services?

Having "self-directed services" means you are in charge of the services you get.

One important thing to know about self-directed services, they can't happen without self-determination (knowing what you want and need) and self-advocacy (speaking up for yourself).

Learning how to speak up for yourself can be hard.

Once you know what you want and need, you have to be able to tell other people.

That's the only way to make your dreams come true!

What do people mean when they talk about "supports"?

Transitions often mean that you have to try doing things you haven't done before. The good news is that you don't have to figure out how to do all this by yourself. You can ask other people to help you when you need it. That help is what we mean by supports.

The kinds of supports we need changes, depending on what we want to do. Sometimes we might need a person to help us (like give us a ride or help us think through a problem); sometimes we might need a thing (like a wheelchair, calculator, or computer); and sometimes we might need a service (like tutoring). Often we use more than one kind of support at a time.

Whatever you need, you can be sure it isn't exactly the same as what everyone else needs. While everyone uses supports, the key is to figure out what supports would be the most helpful to meet your own needs so that you can reach your own goals.

Advice from other students:

- Start work on transition planning early! Write down your goals, plans, and what you like.
- Learn good communication skills so you can tell people what you want.
- Learn about resources like SSI (Supplemental Security Income), vocational rehabilitation, and adult services. Get information on all available options.

- Take a more active role in meetings. Ask more questions!
- Join groups that can help, like local advocacy groups, church groups, and community education classes.
- Look into co-op and work-based learning programs which can be done through school.
- Get more work experience by volunteering. Even better, try to work part-time for pay.

- Take classes in independent living skills. Learn how to cook, shop, budget, and how to recognize and count money.
- Find out how to access community resources, services and emergency systems, and how to get help filling out forms.
- Learn more about making good decisions, and then the self-advocacy skills to share them!

- If you can, learn how to drive and get your driver's license! If that's not for you, learn how to use other transportation systems like the bus!
- Be serious. Do your homework and budget your time. Learn to use a calendar or planner to write down your assignments and to help you plan time to study.
- List your strengths and challenges. Find out what you're good at and put extra effort into areas that are strengths.
- Set goals and go for them! Don't be disappointed if you can't do everything, though, no one can!

List your strengths:

1. A time I felt really proud of myself was when...

2. My best friend would describe me as a person who is...

3. One thing that my teacher, boss, or parents have always liked about me is that I...

4. One thing that I am interested in is...

5. One of my skills that I hope to use in my work is...

What is most important to you?

Rank in order (1, 2, 3, etc.) the areas you want to work on now for your future:

_____ Job/Career
_____ Housing
_____ Social/Free time
_____ Finances
_____ Education (high school/college program)
_____ Transportation

Reach your goals one step at a time:

Circle one goal area:

- Job/Career
- Education (high school/college program)
- Housing
- Recreation/leisure
- Personal/social
- Transportation

Identify one long-term goal for your area that you chose. For example, in the area of "recreation/leisure" my long-term goal before I graduate is to make two new friends that I share common interests with and do not "hang out" with now.

Area: _____

Long-Term Goal (1-4 years or more)

_____

_____

Next, identify two short-term goals related to your long-term goal.

For example, a possible short-term goal that relates to my long-term goal of meeting new friends could be "in the next three months I will sit with a new person at a different lunch table and introduce myself."

Short-Term Goal

_____

_____

Short-Term Goal

_____

_____

After High School, the Rules Change

BOTTOM LINE: Services available to you after high school are based on eligibility.

You need to find the services and provide proof that accommodations are necessary! This isn't high school, but you can be prepared.

Let's Compare:

High School Services	Adult Services
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); free and appropriate public education (FAPE)	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
School services are an entitlement (from ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met).	Adult services are based on eligibility which may be different for each agency.
School attendance is mandatory.	Consumers (you) decide to use an adult service agency to support them in their employment goals.
School districts are required to identify students with disabilities through free evaluations and the individualized education program (IEP) process.	Consumers (you) are responsible for disclosing and providing documentation of a disability. They must be self-advocates!
Students receive special education and related services to address needs based on identified disability.	Consumers (you) apply for services needed through various adult service agencies.
Services include individually designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on IEP.	Services are individually designed through Individual Plans for Employment or a similar individualized plan developed with the consumer (you).
Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parent(s) and/or student.	Progress toward employment goals are monitored by the consumer (you) and adult service provider. Self-advocacy is a must.
Schools assist in connecting the student with the community support agencies if so identified as a transition need according to the IEP.	Consumers (you) must request services needed and identify what agencies would best meet their needs.

Checklist:
Your Self-Advocacy Skills

I can do this!	I need to work on this	I need help with this	
			Talking about my disability
			Knowing what my strengths are
			Setting goals for myself
			Working with others
			Sharing my ideas with others
			Knowing what I need to complete a task
			Knowing which people I can trust to ask for help
			Speaking up politely when I disagree
			Asking questions when I don't understand
			Taking part in my IEP and transition planning meetings
			Knowing when I need to go to the doctor
			Talking to my doctor about my health care

Money Matters

How much does your favorite food cost?

The things we want to do, like go to the movies, and the things we need to do, like eat, all cost money.

Do you have a budget? Whether or not you are making money now, you can start planning a budget that would help you plan to have money to spend later.

A great money resource is someone called a "money mentor." Basically, a money mentor is an adult who you can look to for advice and guidance when it comes to money matters. These individuals, who are already in your life, can really help you make the most of your hard-earned money.

So who could you ask to be your money mentor? A good mentor is someone you know well and can trust, knows something about money, and shows a genuine interest in your success. Your parents are probably the first choice for helping teach you a thing or two about money, but there are other possibilities.

A local business owner, neighbor, or your favorite teacher can also be helpful. With your parents' permission, you might enlist the help of a trusted adult to teach you what they know about money. Many banks have young adult banking services. Such programs are helpful resources that are made available to you right in your own community.

Where do you want to call home?

Home is a special place. It's not just where you live. It's the people you want to be with, and the things you want to have around you (like furniture, pictures, music, plants, and pets). It's activities you do like cooking, celebrating holidays, and having friends over. It's a place to relax and a place where you can choose to spend some time by yourself.

Where will you live after high school? Do you want to live on your own or with others? Will you live with your family or move in with a roommate? Do you want to live in the city or out in the country?

Living arrangements are what you do to live where and how you want to live.

I've always lived in my parent's home. What other choices are out there?

There are many choices you can make about where and how you will live after high school. Here are some choices of living arrangements:

Buying a home is a dream for many people, but it can be hard to do right out of high school. You need to have saved a lot of money, have a steady job that pays enough money, and be able to show that you pay your bills on time. This might be something you want to plan to do in the future.

Renting is when you pay someone money to live in a home that they own.

It usually costs less than buying your own home. Renting a home costs money, too, but if you earn enough money, or have family that can help, or if you choose to live with other people so you can all share the expenses, renting a home might be something you can afford to do now.

There are agencies (formal supports) that provide other choices for living arrangements:

- A few people live together (these are called group homes or supervised apartments)
- People get the supports they need to live on their own in their own homes (this is called supported living)
- People live with other families (these are called foster or sponsor families)

Independent living means living in your own home and directing your own supports.

If you choose independent living as an option, you can still receive the supports you need, but it's your responsibility (again, with help from family and friends if you need it) to manage those supports.

These supports are often paid for with both your own money and money from a government funding source like Medicaid.

Transportation

How do you get to your friend's house? When you need something from the store, how do you get there?

When planning for your life as an adult, you also have to think about how you're going to get where you want to go.

If your parents drive you where you need to go, have you talked about putting a driving schedule together that takes your time and their time into consideration?

Is there a bus route that could take you where you need to go? What's stopping you from finding out? How can you find out what public transportation there is in your area?

As a part of your Individual Education Program (IEP), you can begin working with Vocational Rehabilitation to prepare to meet your transportation needs.

To Qualify for a Regular Driver License (Class D):

- You must be at least sixteen (16) years old
- You must pass a vision screening test
- You must pass a Driving Knowledge test
- You must pass a Driving test

Does your high school offer a Driver Education Class? If not, you can investigate the private driving schools in your area and talk to Vocational Rehabilitation about the best option for you.

Checklist: Your Health Care

	Yes	Someone else does this	I need to learn this
I understand my health care needs and can explain them to others.			
I can explain to others how my customs or beliefs might affect my health care decisions.			
I call for my own doctor appointments.			
I prepare questions for my doctor before the appointment.			
I call in my own prescriptions.			
I know when I need to refill my prescriptions.			
I know my symptoms that need quick medical attention.			
I know where my medical records are at home.			
I help monitor my medical equipment so that it is working well.			
I carry my health insurance card everyday.			
I have a plan so that I will have health insurance when I become an adult.			

Cheatsheet: My Health Care

My Doctors:

Dr. _____ is who I see for general care and check-ups, and for _____

I see my doctor _____ (weekly/monthly/yearly/as needed).

The office I go to is at: _____

When I go to the doctor I get there by (driving/taking a bus/taxi/my family drives me/etc) _____

My Specialty Doctors:

I see Dr. _____ for _____

I see this doctor _____ (weekly/monthly/yearly/as needed).

The office I go to is at: _____

When I go to the doctor I get there by (driving/taking a bus/taxi/my family drives me/etc) _____

My Medication:

I take _____

Dr. _____ prescribed me the medication(s).

I take my medicine in the _____ (morning/lunch/evening/bedtime)

The reason I take the medication(s) is _____

I go to _____ to get my medication(s).

Things that are important to know about my medication(s) and how they may affect me are: _____

Special Equipment or Supplies:

The mobility devices I use are: _____

Other special equipment I use is: _____

I use these (every day/when eating/when I travel): _____

_____

Cheatsheet:
Allergies & Emergencies

I am allergic to:_____

This is how I might react: _____

My eyes water:	Yes	No
I sneeze:	Yes	No
My behavior might change:	Yes	No
I break out in a rash:	Yes	No
I may have swelling:	Yes	No
I have difficulty breathing:	Yes	No

If I have an allergic reaction, you can help me by: _____

_____

Do you know what to expect if you have an allergic reaction? It's important that you share this with your friends and coworkers and tell them what to do if that happens.

I carry an Epipen	Yes	No
I carry an Inhaler	Yes	No
I wear a Medical Alert Bracelet	Yes	No

A Medical Alert Bracelet or Necklace is usually engraved with information about your allergy, disability or special healthcare need. In case of an emergency it can help alert medical personnel to your needs.

Do you have an In Case of Emergency (ICE) Person?

If you carry a cellphone, choose the contacts you would want to be called in case you have an emergency. Next to their phone number, put the letters "ICE" and rescue workers or medical personnel will know who to call.

Do you have a Food Allergy?

Tell your friends and coworkers about your food allergies. Don't give in and try a food that might make you sick. Suggest restaurants that are less likely to serve food that you are allergic to (for example if you are allergic to shellfish, stay away from seafood restaurants).

Tell food servers about your food allergy. Explain the medical need to avoid the food. Ask for a list of ingredients before placing your order.

Tips:

- Choose simple items from the menu that do not have sauces and spices.
- Test the food before eating it: look at the food, smell it, and take small bites first.

Tips for Internet Safety

Personal Information: Don't share your last name, home address, school name, age or phone number. Just because someone asks for information about you does not mean you have to tell them anything. Remember that posting information about your friends could put them at risk.

Screen Name: When creating your screen name or user name, do not include personal information like your last name or date of birth.

Online Friends: Don't agree to meet an online friend unless you have your parents' permission and meet them with someone you trust. Do not meet them alone. Unfortunately, sometimes people pretend to be someone they are not. Remember that not everything you read online is true.

Photos: Think before posting your photos. DO NOT send messages or post semi-nude or nude pictures of yourself or anyone else! Personal photos should not have identifying information such as the license plate of your car, name of your school or name of your apartment complex in the background.

Use the privacy settings of social networking sites: Set it so that people can only be added as your friend or to contact you if you approve it. Set it so that people can only view your profile or information about you if you have approved them.

Downloading: Make sure the online file or program you want to download is trustworthy. If you're not sure, Google it first to make sure other people haven't already found out that it's a virus. Email attachments sometimes contain viruses. Never open an attachment from someone you don't know.

Bullying: Don't send or respond to mean or insulting messages. If something happens online that makes you feel uncomfortable or seems wrong, talk to your parents or to a teacher at school or church.

Online Ads: Don't buy anything online before making sure it is from a trustworthy seller. Look it up first.

Nothing is free: Some ads try to trick you by offering free things or telling you that you have won something as a way of collecting your personal information.

Pop Quiz: True or False?

	True	False
I can vote in State and Local Elections		
I can start voting for President at age 21		
I can sign by myself to get a loan (for example, to pay for school or a car)		
If I do not have enough money, I do not have to pay back my loan or credit card debt		
At the doctor's office, in order to receive medical treatment, I have to sign to give "informed consent"		
I cannot get medical treatment unless my parent is informed and also gives consent		
I can control who gets to see my personal medical information		
I can live wherever I want to live		
I can buy and drink alcohol		
I can buy and smoke cigarettes		
I can be called to serve on a jury to make a decision about a case in court		

Answer Section:

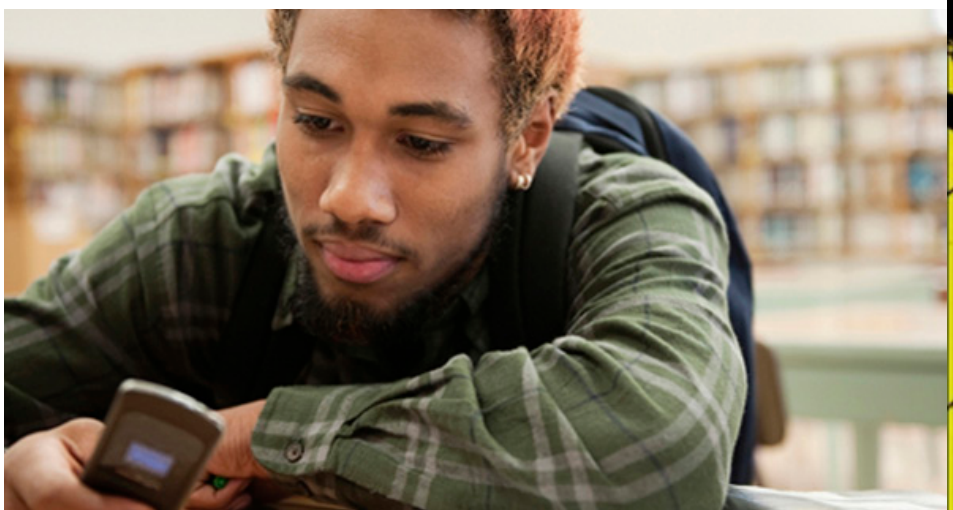
- In the U.S.A. when you turn eighteen and are a citizen, you can vote in local, state and federal elections...including for your choice of President!

  Register to vote in Texas at: https://www.votetexas.gov/

- There are different kinds of loans. To qualify for most loans, you have to be 18; for student loans sometimes you can be younger. You have to be a legal citizen, and have a history of responsible borrowing or "credit." It takes time to build "good credit," and without it you probably need someone who does have good credit to help you get the loan. This person, typically someone like your parents, is called a "co-signer."

- When you are older than 18, you are responsible for the way you spend your money. If you don't have enough to pay back a loan or credit card bill, you will need to work with your bank or credit card company to pay them back as soon as you can. When you are younger than 18, your parents are still responsible for you, and therefore they're still on the line to help you pay back what you owe.

- To receive medical treatment, the doctor must know that you understand the treatment that you need, and that you want it. If you aren't able to understand your options for medical treatment, or explain what you want, then someone like your parent or legal guardian must provide "informed consent" before you receive treatment.
- After you turn eighteen, you have the right to live wherever you want. There are different living arrangements that adults can choose. However, whether you have the money to live the way you want to live is just one of the things that you must consider before making this decision.
- When you turn 21, you are legally allowed to buy and drink alcohol. You are also responsible to know if you should not drink alcohol because of the medicine you take.
- When you turn eighteen, you are legally allowed to buy and smoke tobacco products, like cigarettes. However, we recommend against it, as on average smokers die 13 to 14 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Serving on a jury of your peers is one of the most important roles that we have as citizens. When you turn eighteen and are a citizen, as long as you can do the job with or without reasonable accommodations you can be called to be a juror. For more information about reasonable accommodations go to www.ada.gov or contact the Southwest ADA Center at http://www.southwestada.org/.
- **ADDITIONAL INFO:** Did you know that you can request new evaluations or additional testing before you graduate or leave high school for your life as an adult? Many colleges and universities like or want to see a current evaluation. Texas schools can decline to do a reevaluation if one is not due. If you have questions about evaluations, we can help! Contact Partners Resource Network at 1-800-866-4726.



Top-Notch Resources in Texas

Partners Resource Network
PACT, PATH, PEN, and TEAM Projects

http://prntexas.org/

We are a non-profit agency that operates the Texas statewide network of Parent Training and Information Centers or PTIs. PTIs are funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

We help parents, families, and youth with disabilities understand their rights and responsibilities under IDEA, obtain and evaluate resources and services, and participate as team members with professionals in planning services.

Learn more about our Youth Leadership Program by calling (409) 898-4684 or 1-800-866-4726.

Fact Sheets for Youth from Partners Resource Network

- 4 Steps for Stronger Self-Advocacy
- 5 Memory Tips and Tricks
- Assertive Communication
- Disability Disclosure – Advantages and Disadvantages
- Disability Disclosure in Postsecondary Education
- Disability Disclosure on the Job
- How to Negotiate to Get What You Want or Need
- Major Differences Between High School and Postsecondary Disability Services
- Reasonable Accommodation at Work
- Self-Advocacy and My ARD/IEP
- Self-Advocacy in Higher Education
- Student Action Plan Against Bullying
- Tips for Communicating with Teachers
- What is Self-Determination?
- Why Should I Become A Self-Advocate?

Download the fact sheets at http://prntexas.org/youth-leadership/

Disability Rights Texas

https://www.disabilityrightstx.org/

The mission of Disability Rights Texas is to help people with disabilities understand and exercise their rights under the law, ensuring their full and equal participation in society.

Higher Education Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities

http://tcdd.texas.gov/resources/publications/

Designed for students with disabilities, this guide focuses mainly on attending college, but it also touches on other options, such as online training and technical and trade schools. Additional options include job training programs, adult education programs and new transition models for students with disabilities.

IDEA Manual

https://www.thearcoftexas.org/idea-manual/

The Manual for Parents and Students about Special Education Services in Texas

Making My Own Choices

https://www.disabilityrightstx.org/en/category/sdm/

An easy-to-follow guide on Supported Decision-Making Agreements from Disability Rights Texas.

Navigate Life Texas

https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/

This website is for families and parents of children with disabilities or special health-care needs and is designed to offer support, inspiration, resources, and links to services available.

Secondary Transition Guidance

https://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=2147496883

On this page of the Texas Education Agency's website, you will find information about transition from school settings to post-school settings.

Texas Transition and Employment Guide

https://www.transitionintexas.org/page/143

Provides youth, young adults, parents and professionals with secondary transition resources to facilitate progress towards post-secondary goals.

Texas Education Agency's Graduation Toolkit

http://www.region10.org/r10website/assets/File/Graduation%20Toolkit.pdf

This toolkit provides details about the Foundation High School Program, benefits and explanation of the Distinguished Level of achievement option, endorsement choices, checklists and resources.

Our Favorite National Resources on Transition

Got Transition

https://www.gottransition.org/index.cfm

Got Transition™ aims to improve transition from pediatric to adult health care through the use of new and innovative strategies for health professionals and youth and families.

HEATH Resource Center

https://www.heath.gwu.edu/

The HEATH Resource Center specializes in postsecondary education options for individuals with disabilities. Among other resources, you'll find online learning modules focused on various aspects of life after high school.

On the Job: Stories from Youth with Disabilities

https://www2.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdfs/YS.pdf

This booklet compiles the stories of six young people with significant disabilities on the job, for whom early work experiences have played a vital role, as did an emphasis on using natural supports.

Overview of College Resources for Students with Disabilities

https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/students-with-disabilities/

Student services offices and disability coordinators at many colleges work to make campuses inclusive environments through specialized advocacy, support, and academic services. Check out this resource to learn more.

Person-Centered Planning

https://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/independent-community-living/person-centered.asp

What is it? Here's the short and sweet introduction to person-centered planning.

Secondary Transition Toolkit

https://www.pyln.org/pyln/resources/english

The Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network (PYLN) has created a secondary transition toolkit to assist youth in their transition into the adult world. The best thing about the toolkit is that it was written and designed by youth with disabilities for youth.

Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers

https://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/to14.pdf

This brief guides job seekers through a three-stage career development process that includes assessing their interests, researching the job market, and marketing themselves to potential employers.

Think College

https://thinkcollege.net/

Think College is a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability.

Transition Coalition's Planning for the Future

https://transitioncoalition.org/blog/tc-materials/planning-for-the-future/

A workbook to help students, their families, and professionals to plan for life after high school.

Winning in College: A Guide for Students with Disabilities

http://www.edsmart.org/students-with-disabilities-college-guide/

The transition from high school to college life is difficult enough for any number of students without considering a disability. Odds are that if you have a disability and you made it through high school, you've done it with the help of a very disciplined and structured routine order of classes. College life is a very different game, allowing you to make a lot of choices and decisions for yourself.

Whose Life Is It Anyway?

https://waismanucedd.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/74/2017/05/WLIIA.pdf

This publication is a unique exploration of the emotions and relationships between three key transition partners: Becky, the youth; her mother, and her teacher. It includes talking points for group discussion about relationship building and best practice in adolescent transition.

Youthhood.org

http://www.youthhood.org/index.asp

This is a very interactive site for youth to use to start thinking about what they want to do with the rest of their lives, designed to help youth plan for the future. (Psst! Good for adults, too.)

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Contact us, we can help!

Phone: 409.898.4684

Toll Free: 1.800.866.4726

Email: partnersresource@sbcglobal.net

Visit us online at www.PRNTexas.org

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STEP, Inc. collaborated on the original document. STEP, Inc. serves as Tennessee's Parent Training and Information Center and improves the lives of Tennessee families of children with disabilities. http://www.tnstep.org/

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