

Planning Your Education and Transition for Life after High School



1. **If you receive special education services while you are still in high school**, by the time you are 14 ½ years old:
 - You will be asked to come to your IEP (Individualized Educational Program) meetings to discuss your goals for life after high school.
 - You can request several **IEP/Transition Planning meetings** during the school year.
 - Be sure to include health goals on your IEP. For more, go to the recorded webinar, *Health and Transition to Adulthood: Building the Foundation for Success*, at <http://illinoisap.org/projects/medical-home/transition/resources-for-families/>
2. These meetings are very important to you and YOU are the most important team member. Be sure to attend and be an active participant.
3. Your job is to **speak up** about your interests, strengths and skills, and let them know what you want to do to get ready for:
 - Your future job
 - Going to college
 - Living out on your own
4. **Special Education laws** state legal requirements for transition services to support your goals of employment in the community or for further education. There are still several things you need to do to prepare for life after high school:
 - You may find the guide helpful from the Illinois State Board of Education, *Educational Rights and Responsibilities*, at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/parent_rights.htm.
 - The school should assist with your therapy and health care needs during the school day.
 - If you have any problems, request an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns. Remember to keep written records of everything you do (meetings, chats, etc.).
 - If you still disagree with your school, either ask for mediation in writing or locate an advocate to assist you. For assistance locating an advocate, call **Equip for Equality in Illinois** at **1-800-537-2632**.
 - You have the right to invite people from other agencies, such as your DSCC Care Coordinator, your Division of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Specialist, your Service Coordinator from Division of Developmental Disabilities, and others to your IEP meeting.
 - If the IEP Team, which includes you and your parents, determine that your transition needs can be met by participating in transition programs on college campuses or in community-based settings, these services should be included in your IEP.
5. **You may find the *Transition Planning Checklist* on the next page helpful.**

Transition Planning Checklist

- ☐ **Confirm the date you will graduate.** Illinois law states that you are eligible for special education until the day before your 22nd birthday.
- ☐ Find out if you will receive a regular high school diploma or a certificate of attendance.
- ☐ Find out if you will be able to take part in the graduation ceremony.
- ☐ **If you are planning on going to college:**
 - Take your ACT or SAT in your junior year of high school.
 - Decide which college or university you want to go to.
 - Find out about financial aid to help with your tuition and educational expenses.
 - Talk with a disability counselor on the college campus.
 - Plan with your doctors, school nurse, IEP team, and UIC-Specialized Care for Children Care Coordinator about meeting your health needs while at college.
- ☐ **If you are planning to go to work:**
 - Find out what local agencies provide job coaching. Contacting adult providers before you graduate or “age out” will help to ensure services will continue after graduation. This may also prevent you from being placed on a long waiting list for adult services.
 - Find out if you are eligible for vocational services by going to your local Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/ Division of Developmental Disabilities/ Division of Mental Health office and file the necessary paperwork.
 - Decide on a career.
 - Find opportunities to job shadow (watching someone already doing the type of job you want to do).
 - Request information about post-high school training programs at local vocational schools, community colleges, business schools and other training schools.
 - Plan for any health accommodations you may need in the workplace. For more information, visit the Job Accommodation Network online, <http://askjan.org>.
- ☐ **Start planning if you are going to move out on your own:**
 - Where are you going to live and how will you pay for it.
 - What furniture and house wares will you need.
 - Contact the local **Center for Independent Living** for help with planning and building skills for living on your own: <http://www.incil.org/locations.asp> or call toll-free **1-800-587-1227**.
 - Plan for what you will need and practice skills to care for your own health.
- ☐ Discuss your transportation needs. If you will need assistance, request and fill out applications for public transportation services.
- ☐ Request information about social/recreational opportunities for young adults with disabilities in your community. Ask for contact information.