

Planning Your Education and Transition for Life After High School

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools
School Meetings, Work and Independence



As a high school student, you play a big role in making sure you get the special education services you need. These tips can help you value this role and feel more confident by knowing your rights. By the time you are 14 1/2 years old:

- Your special education services team should invite you to your Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to discuss your goals for life after high school.
- You can request an IEP/transition planning meeting any time you are concerned about your plan.
- You should include health goals in your IEP.

You and your parents are part of your IEP team. Remember, YOU are the most important team member and should always go to your IEP meetings.

Your job is to speak up about your interests, strengths and skills and what you want to do to get ready for:

- Your future job
- Going to college or trade school
- Your desired living goals as an adult

Special education laws for transition services support your goals for work, further education and independent living. Knowing your rights will help you get ready for life after high school.

- You may find this guide from the Illinois State Board of Education helpful: “Educational Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois” at www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf.
- Your school should help with your therapy and healthcare needs during the school day.
- If you have any problems, ask for an IEP meeting to voice your concerns. Remember to keep written records of all you do (meetings, chats, etc.).
- If you still disagree with your school, either ask for mediation in writing or find an advocate to help you. To find an advocate, call Equip for Equality in Illinois at 1-800-537-2632.
- Invite others to your IEP meeting, such as your Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) Care Coordinator, your Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor, your Independent Service Coordinator (ISC) from the Division of Developmental Disabilities and others.
- If your IEP Team decides a transition program at a local college or in the community will best meet your needs, be sure these services are written in your IEP.
- If you have a 504 Plan, you may not have the same right to school-based transition plans that students with IEPs have. You’ll need to check with your school to see what’s offered. If your district doesn’t offer transition planning, VR services may be able to help you with work, education related to career goals and independent living.

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 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 attend.
 - Find out about financial aid to help with your tuition and other expenses.
 - Talk with a disability counselor on the college campus.
 - Plan with your doctors, school nurse, IEP team and DSCC Care Coordinator about meeting your health needs while at college.
- If you are planning to go to work:**
 - Find out if job coaching is available. Get in touch with adult services before you graduate or “age out” to plan for services after graduation. This way you may avoid being put on a long waiting list for adult services.
 - Go to your local Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/ Division of Developmental Disabilities/Division of Mental Health office to learn about vocational services and apply.
Find your local office at www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12.
 - Decide on a career.
 - Find opportunities to job shadow (watching someone already doing the type of job you want to do).
 - Learn 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 at askjan.org.
- If you are going to move out on your own, start planning:**
 - Where you are going to live and how will you pay for it.
 - What furniture and housewares you will need.
 - Contact the local **Center for Independent Living** for help with planning and building skills for living on your own. Visit their website at www.incil.org/locate/ or call toll-free at **(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 help, 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.

We're here to help.

To learn more about the Division of Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at: dsccl.uic.edu

