Understanding Your Right to DRS Services During High School – Transition Services

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Equip For Equality

▸ Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system for the State of Illinois

▸ **Mission:** Advance the human & civil rights of people with disabilities in Illinois

▸ **Free legal assistance** for people with disabilities about issues related to their disability

▸ **Legal teams:** Civil Rights, Special Education, Independent Monitoring Unit

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www.equipforequality.org
Client Assistance Program (CAP)

- **CAP**: Established by the Rehabilitation Act
- **What CAP does, generally:**
  - Helps people who apply for or receive services under the Rehabilitation Act, including vocational rehabilitation and independent living services
  - Advises and informs people about their rights under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Across the country, most CAPs are housed outside of state government; many within the state P&A
- As of **July 1, 2022**, CAP was redesignated from within DRS to **Equip for Equality (EFE)**
The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

Work in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities.

- The Division of Rehabilitation Services is an adult service agency housed within the Illinois Department of Human Services
- DRS provides both home services support and vocational rehabilitation (VR) support.
  - Focus of CAP is with the DRS VR program
Who is eligible for DRS services?

To qualify for DRS services an individual must:

- Want to work
- Have a significant physical or mental impairment
- That makes it difficult to work

*This includes high school and transition students who need assistance in preparing to enter the workforce or are looking for part-time work experiences.
Transition Services

CAP Role: Provide information and advice to assist DRS customers and potential applicants in accessing VR services while in school

How we can help:

▸ Help youth and their families get connected with Pre-ETS or DRS services in their community
▸ Answer your questions about special education transition services
▸ Help you advocate for appropriate transition services in school that allow your client to access VR services
Transition Services in School
The Right to Transition Services

Transition services are a **coordinated set of activities** for a child with a disability that are designed to be within 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, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

These services are based on the **individual** child’s needs, taking into account their strengths, preferences, and interests.

34 CFR § 300.43(a).
The Transition Plan

- **Student driven process**, mapping out a student’s future with clear directions to help the student develop her potential and achieve her goals.

- Age 14 ½ through the end of the school year of their 22\(^{nd}\) birthday or when they graduate high school.

- Created by the IEP team.

- Outlines the student’s current levels, goals, and the services the student needs to reach those goals.
“Age-Appropriate” assessments related to training, education, employment, and, if applicable, independent living skills

- **What** does the student **want to do** after school?
- **Where** does the student **want to live**?
- **How** does the student **want to take part in the community**?
- **What** skills does the student need to work on to achieve their goals?

Examples:
- Behavioral assessments
- Aptitude tests
- Interest and work values inventories
- Personality or preference tests
- Self-determination assessments
- Vocational assessment
Assessments: What should you look for?

When were the assessments completed?

Were there a variety of comprehensive assessments?

Were appropriate assessments done in all the categories?
Based on the child’s “strengths, preferences, and interests”

Focused on Employment, Education or Training, and Independent Living.

Reviewed annually and should become increasingly specific as the student comes closer to leaving high school.

Example:
By June 2023, Jane will ride the train with minimal support and be on time for her job at the bakery 85% of the time.

Non-Example:
Matthew wants to be an NFL player after high school.
Post -Secondary Goals: What should you look for?

Do the goals **match** what the student wants to do now?

Are these outcomes **measurable**?

Can the student **work towards** these outcomes?
List every course the student is required to take to graduate
  - Opportunity to discuss need for services beyond 4-year high school model

Individualized to meet the student’s needs, including if the student requires more than four years in high school
  - Does this student’s goal require certain courses?
  - Will certain courses be helpful for the student to achieve her goals?
Course of Study: What should you look for?

- Does this plan make sense?
- Has the team considered the individual student’s goals in planning?
- Does the plan consider services beyond 18?
Individualized education strategies to improve the student’s academic and functional achievement.

- What services & supports are needed to achieve her goals?

**Must Include:**
- Instruction
- Community Experiences
- Job and other adult living objectives

**If appropriate:**
- Daily Living Skills
- Functional Vocational Evaluation
- Linkages for Post-Graduation
Examples of Transition Services

- Instruction
  - high school courses
  - career program
  - post-high school curriculum
- Evidenced-based reading methodologies
- Behavior programs
- Specialized consultants
- Related Services
  - Transportation, AT, Counseling, etc.
- Community experiences
- Development of employment (job shadow/placement)
- Post-school adult living objectives
- Acquiring daily living skills
- Evaluations (assistive technology, vocational, etc.)
- Special education and enhanced related services
Services: What should you look for?

Are these services addressing all the **student’s goals** and what they need to reach them?

Are all services and supports discussed by the team **documented**?

Is it clear **who** is providing these services and **when**?
## Dispute Resolution Options

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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Education Evaluation (IEE)</strong></td>
<td>Request an IEE to obtain reliable and accurate assessment data.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IEP meeting</strong></td>
<td>Request an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns with the IEP team and revise the transition plan or IEP services.</td>
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<td><strong>Mediation</strong></td>
<td>Request mediation to reach a binding, out of court resolution with the district.</td>
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<td><strong>Due Process Hearing</strong></td>
<td>Request a due process hearing to bring the issue before an impartial hearing officer to decide.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative State Complaint</strong></td>
<td>File a state complaint with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to get the state to investigate the problem and issue findings.</td>
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Advocacy Tips

- Talk to your child and their team
- Document everything
- Ask Questions
- Know Your Rights
- Write down your disagreements
- Seek Help
Transition Services through DRS
Pre-Employment Transition Services

- Services designed for youth to be prepared to enter the workforce and move towards greater independence
- Available for all students with a disability
- Do not require you to be a DRS customer already and does not take the place of VR eligibility process
- Provided through partnerships with school and local agencies
Pre-Employment Transition Services

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences in integrated settings, in and out of school
- Counseling on post-secondary opportunities
- Workplace readiness training
- Self-advocacy skills
Pre-ETS Programs

Fast Track

- Serves potentially eligible individuals
  - 14–21 years old
  - Not already a DRS customer
  - Enrolled in school
- Work on developing self-advocacy and pre-employment skills

STEP

- Serves potentially eligible students and students already found eligible for DRS services
- Work experience program that includes work-based learning experiences, both in school and in the community
DRS Customers

- Work with DRS counselor to develop appropriate Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) based on student’s employment goal
  - Similar to IEP, this outlines the student’s goal and what services DRS will provide to help them achieve it.
- Can still participate in STEP program and other Pre-ETS services with an IPE
- VR must coordinate with school transition planning, this can include attending IEP meetings
Examples of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

- Job training and job coaching
- Assistance with finding a job
- Paying for supplies needed for employment, i.e. uniform, tools, licensure fees, etc.
- Paying for college or another training program
  - This now includes dual enrollment courses
- Providing Assistive Technology
- Paying for Vocational Evaluations
- Providing Independent Living support (transportation and housing)
Understand the services offered by DRS and how to access them

Know the rights and responsibilities of your child when it comes to accessing services

Ask what it means

Communicate – share information, have conversations, invite personnel to IEP meetings, et.c

Seek Help

Strategies for Collaboration
Action Steps:

- Review your child’s current transition plan
  - Visit EFE’s transition planning module for ideas on improving your plan
- Confirm your child is connected with DRS:
  - Pre-ETS program or an open case
- If not connected with DRS, get connected
- If needed, request an IEP meeting to discuss transition planning (in writing).
  - Ask that DRS be present at this meeting
How to connect with DRS

▸ Find the local office online based on county and zip code

▸ Call your office or fill out online referral form.

▸ Typical wait time is 2 weeks for initial contact from DRS to discuss application after submitting referral
Resources and Contact Information
Resources

- CAP and Special Education Fact Sheets
- Transition Timeline
- Transition Planning Module
- Referrals to local organizations and agencies

EFETransition Plan Module
Special Education Clinic

To help students with disabilities secure a free appropriate public education. Anyone with a special education concern or question can call our statewide helpline for assistance.

The Clinic Provides:

- Self-Advocacy Assistance
- Sample Letters and Forms
- Trainings to Interested Groups
- Legal Advocacy, in Select Cases

866-543-7046
https://www.equipforequality.org/issues/special-education/
specialed@equipforequality.org
How to reach CAP

- **Phone:** 1-855-ILCAP-25 (855-452-2725)
- **Email:** cap@equipforequality.org
- **Website:** www.equipforequality.org/cap
  - Calendar of upcoming trainings and recordings of past trainings
  - Coming Soon:
    - Fact sheets, sample letters and worksheets (available in Spanish and English)
    - ASL & other languages to come
Questions?