

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

Emily Wilson & Rachel Weisberg  
January 6, 2023





# 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

**Voice: 800.537.2632 TTY: 800.610.2779**  
**[www.equipforequality.org](http://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:



\*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<sup>nd</sup> 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: 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: should you look for?

## What



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: you look for?

## What should



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

## Independent Education Evaluation (IEE)

Request an IEE to obtain reliable and accurate assessment data.

## IEP meeting

Request an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns with the IEP team and revise the transition plan or IEP services.

## Mediation

Request mediation to reach a binding, out of court resolution with the district.

## Due Process Hearing

Request a due process hearing to bring the issue before an impartial hearing officer to decide.

## Administrative State Complaint

File a state complaint with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to get the state to investigate the problem and issue findings.

# 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

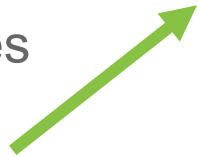
# Resources and Contact Information




# Resources

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

## EFETransition Plan Module



 <b>EQUIP FOR EQUALITY</b> <b>INTERACTIVES</b>	<p><i>Learn more about your student's</i>  <b>TRANSITION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>EN ESPAÑOL</b></p>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<p>In Illinois each student with an Individualized Education Program "IEP" must have a <a href="#">transition plan</a> as part of her IEP, at least by the time she is 14.5 years old. <b>Equip for Equality's Transition Plan Training Module</b> will help you get the transition planning process started.</p>
<b>TOPICS</b>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<p>One of life's most challenging transitions occurs when a student prepares to leave high school and transition to adult life. This is true for students with disabilities and their families and requires planning to prepare for the future. In Illinois each student with an Individualized Education Program "IEP" must have a <a href="#">transition plan</a> as part of her IEP, at least by the time she is 14.5 years old.</p>
<b>BASIC INFO</b>	<p>This module will guide you through each part of the transition process. At the end, you will be able to download a helpful document to bring to your next IEP meeting. This document is a template to guide the IEP team while developing the transition plan.</p>
<b>TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS</b>	<p>As you work through the training module, please remember the student is the most important person in this process. Successful transition planning is a results-driven process, based upon the student's skills, interests and abilities. You, the student, should answer the questions in this training module.</p>
<b>OUTCOMES &amp; GOALS</b>	<p><b>References</b></p>
<b>COURSE OF STUDY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">U.S. Department of Education – 34 CFR 300.320(b)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Illinois State Board of Education Secondary Transition</a></li> </ul>
<b>TRANSITION SERVICES</b>	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
<b>REPORT</b>	

# 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](mailto:cap@equipforequality.org)
- ▶ **Website :** [www.equipforequality.org/cap](http://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?

