SPECIAL EDUCATION RIGHTS: ILLINOIS EDITION

Transition Plans: Getting Your Child Ready for Life After High School

This fact sheet answers:

- What Is a Transition Plan?
- Can My Child Stay in School After She Gets All Her Credits?
- Do I Need to Become My Child's Guardian When She Turns 18?
- And More

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What is a Transition Plan?

A transition plan is a part of your child's IEP that lists the goals and services your child will work on to get ready to be an adult. It helps teach your child the skills she will need to live, work, and play in the community.

Who Makes the Plan?

The IEP team, including you and your child, and any person or organization that can help give or pay for services, such as the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

When Is the Plan Made?

The plan should be a part of your child's IEP by the time she turns 14 ½.

What Is the First Step in Making a Transition Plan?

The school should evaluate your child to figure out her goals after high school and learn more about her strengths and weaknesses.

What Is in a Transition Plan?

A transition plan should include:

- Goals
- Services
- Instruction
- Time in the community outside of school

Goals

A transition plan should say what kind of education and training your child will receive after high school, what kind of job she will have, and how she will live in the community.

Good examples of goals:

- Latonya will go to a four-year college and major in math.
- Starting in June 2020, Jane will ride the train by herself to her job at the bakery, where she will get employer-offered training to improve her baking skills.

Bad examples of goals:

- After graduation, Rachel will explore her career options (too late).
- Mary will be a professional basketball player after high school (not realistic).

Services

If your child needs services such as speech, physical therapy, social work, Assistive Technology, or travel training, she can get them as part of her transition plan.

Instruction

The transition plan must list all the classes your child will take while in high school to help her do what she wants to do after graduating. Your child can take an ACT/SAT prep class or learn skills like cooking, how to take care of herself, or how to pay bills.

Community Experiences

Your child's transition plan must have activities outside of school that get her ready to live in the community. These can be such things as buying food, taking the bus, getting an ID, visiting housing options, or joining a club.

Can My Child Stay in School After She Gets All of Her High School Credits?

Yes. If the IEP team thinks it will be good for your child to stay in school, she can stay in school until the end of the school year after her 22nd birthday.

Your child can use this time to work on her daily living and job skills. She can also attend school for part of the day and work at a job the other part of the day.

Do I Need to Become My Child's Guardian When She Turns 18?

No. When a young person turns 18, she becomes an adult, which means she gets to make her own life choices. You do not need to become your child's guardian unless you, your child, and people who work with your child think it is needed. There are ways you can share responsibilities with your child when she becomes an adult, while still respecting her age and wishes.

If your child wants YOU to be in charge of her IEP when she turns 18, she can sign a form called a "Delegation of Rights." By signing this form, your child is giving her right to make school decisions to you. If you hold your child's school rights, the school needs to check with you—instead of your child—about big decisions like when your child is ready to graduate or leave school.

If your child wants to make school decisions for herself, she can still get your help by having you come to her meetings to help her understand her rights.

If you have questions about your student's school rights when she turns 18, contact Equip for Equality's Special Education Helpline at 1-866-543-7046. If you have questions about alternatives to guardianship, contact Equip for Equality's Civil Rights team at 1-800-537-2632. You can also visit www.EquipforEquality.org to learn more about your child's rights.

What Can I Do If I Am Not Happy with My Child's Transition Plan?

If you are not happy with your child's transition plan, you can ask for an IEP meeting. Give the school a list of your concerns and ask that they make changes.

See Equip for Equality's "**What to Do When You Disagree with the School**" fact sheet to learn more about ways to challenge your child's transition plan. ■

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Have More Questions?

Call our Special Education Rights Parent Helpline.

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