



Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

# Navigating the IEP Transition Maze:

## Strategies for Success:

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## Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

- Unique alliance of people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities.
- National law and policy center dedicated to protecting and advancing disability civil and human rights.
- VISION: a just world where all people live full and independent lives free of discrimination.
- Disability rights are civil rights.
- Information is power!  
Children with disabilities who have consistent, knowledgeable advocates are most likely to receive appropriate services & supports!

# TAKING THE LONG VIEW: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- What are our Priorities as Parents, Youth and Advocates for Youth?
  - Person Centered Planning
  - Quality of Life
  - Community engagement
  - Culturally appropriate support
  - Youth led, Youth directed to greatest possible extent

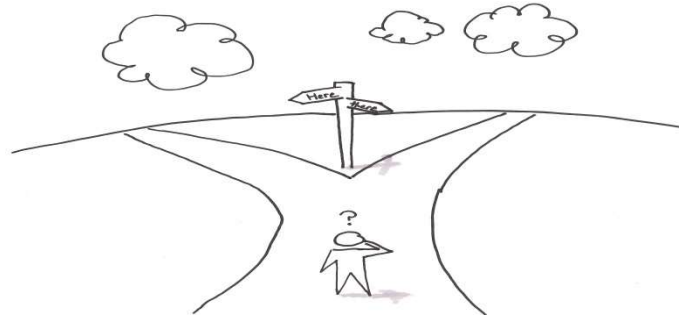


**“Nothing About Us Without US!”**

# SOME KEY LIFE SKILLS

- Knowing **WHO** can help and how to **REACH** them
- Knowing how to **ASK** for help
- Handling disappointment/ Skills for Coping/Recovering
- 
- Flexibility—When the Plan doesn't go as planned!
- Self Advocacy/Knowing RIGHTS
- Self Care/Independent Living (as appropriate)  
....build these into everything we teach!

# IEP: ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE



**I** is for **INDIVIDUALIZED** -- NOT COOKIE CUTTTER

**E** is for **EDUCATION** -- More than just “**Academics**”

**P** is for **PLAN** -- A (flexible) guide to the future (not just “winging it” or getting student through one year)

**Tip:** No need to choose between diploma track and functional life skills—some need both!

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What do we mean by “independence”, “community” and “inclusion”?
- How do we measure quality of life? Success?
- How many of us are doing what we thought we’d do when WE were 18-22?
- When ARE “typical” young people truly independent?
- What skills/experiences did WE need to be successful?
- Youth with disabilities are YOUTH first.

# PURPOSE OF IDEA CONNECTS DIRECTLY WITH TRANSITION PLANNING

- Purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is “to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services **designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living**” (300.1).
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include statements describing students’ present levels of **academic** achievement and **functional** performance (PLoPs) (300.320(a)(1))—EVALUATION!!!

# PURPOSE OF IDEA CONNECTS DIRECTLY WITH TRANSITION PLANNING

Congress noted that the long term goal of this important law was to:

- Increase opportunities for people with disabilities and promote self determination and quality of life
- Increase civic engagement by focusing on improving outcomes (high school graduation, college attendance, employment, independent living in community)





# IDEA TRANSITION REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Transferring rights at the age of majority (18 unless conserved)—Student is Decision Maker! Consider **Supported Decision Making**.

<http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/state-review/california>

- ✓ Summary of Performance before graduation/exit-critical information about this student FOR this student!
- ✓ Transition services provided to support GOALS (academic, employment and functional)

# IS A INDIVIDUALIZED TRANSITION PLAN DIFFERENT THAN AN IEP?

- NO. An ITP is required PART of the IEP for all students after age 16 in CA (sooner is better)
- BUT often helpful to schedule a meeting at age 15 to develop/refine transition plan, and schedule at least one meeting per year focused solely on this important part of the IEP!
- Plan, Adapt and modify as student grows!

# SO WHAT'S AN ITP? IMPORTANT PART OF IEP



Individualized **T**ransition **P**lan

- GOALS always drive SERVICES (not reverse)
- In California, no **LATER** than age 16.
- **WHAT** does the student want to do? **GOALS**
- What **skills, knowledge, experiences, help, training** will student need to do it?
- HOW can IEP team support that?
- **SPELL IT OUT! Be specific!**



# IDEA REQUIREMENTS:

Transition language in the IEP at age 16

**AT THE LATEST** in California!

**Remember:** Services can begin as early as IEP team determines necessary. Get Students involved early! Start at transition to high school.

- ✓ MEASURABLE postsecondary goals
- ✓ Based on age APPROPRIATE assessments related to: training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent/functional living skills
- ✓ Providing a Summary of Performance upon school exit

# WHAT IS NEEDED?

- Learning doesn't end with special education. All students with disabilities should be encouraged to seek out and access adult learning opportunities while in school.
- Education and Training after high school can change not only employment outcomes, but self image and social connections
- Lifelong learning requires two things:
  - **The expectation that it should happen**
  - **The instruction needed to access it**
- That's where WE come in!

# THE ORDER MATTERS!

- Present levels (starting line) help us work with student to create:

Long term, measurable post-secondary goals (what will student DO) in 3 KEY areas:

--Learning/Education (college or other school type activities)

--Employment (job—earning a living— internships, supported employment, full time job)

--Independent Living (functional life skills such as budgeting, self care, calendaring, mobility/transportation)

# LET'S START AT THE VERY BEGINNING: MPSG'S

The IDEA requires:

***Appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals (MPSG)***  
*based on age-appropriate assessments related to  
training, education, employment, and, where appropriate,  
independent living skills*

So—what IS a **MPSG**?

Answer: what the student plans to do upon school exit

Specific. You could check.

Reasonable. Not a pipe dream.

# **LET'S START AT THE VERY BEGINNING:**

Examples:

- Joey will attend a two year program at Chabot Community College and get certified as a smog technician and work in the auto repair industry.
- 
- Mary will enroll in the Jobcorps program and live independently in the dorms there.
- DeAndre will attend a UC, and enroll in pre-med classes, with a long term goal of becoming a doctor
- Micah will work in supported employment learning to care for animals

**Tip: Could you go CHECK to see if student did it?**



# STEP 1: PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

- Where we are starting from guides where we can go and how we get there.
- We start by understanding (with input from YOUTH and all team members and others involved with youth) what **STRENGTHS** and **CHALLENGES** a student starts with in order to create a reasonable, appropriate plan
- **REMEMBER: Assessment and Evaluation: More than just a career survey OR Interest Inventory. Team needs DATA**

# **STEP 2: USE PLOP TO DEVELOP POSTSECONDARY GOALS**

- Training/Employment = a program leading to high school completion or certificate like adult education or a short-term training program like a vocational program.
- Education = community or technical colleges (generally two-year programs) or college or university (generally four-year programs)
- Independent Living = skill set needed to make your life work—budget, shop, nutrition, organizing, handling conflict, dealing with frustration, vote, file tax returns, interact with law enforcement.

# **STEP 3:**

## **CONNECT ANNUAL IEP GOALS WITH POSTSECONDARY GOALS**

Questions to consider:

- Does the student know what her post-school goals are for education or training? If no, create goals around that!
- Can the student explain his disability and support/accommodation needs?
- Does student know what medication she takes, and know when and how to schedule medical/dental appointments independently?
- Does the student know that college is option? College exploration goals support MPSGs

# **CONNECT THE DOTS: WHAT GOALS FOR IEP ARE NEEDED?**

- Complete UC a-g requirements and prepare for SAT/ACT to be eligible for a UC.
- Learn self care skills to prepare for job training program (grooming, laundry, time management)
- Create a PORTFOLIO containing a resume, an introduction to an employer or teacher, letters of recommendation, sample work products
- Learn computer skills required and increase keyboarding skills from 20 wpm to 40 wpm.
- Increase self regulation skills by learning to accept positive criticism without meltdown
- Know how to shop, budget, prepare a meal

# GOALS COME OUT OF ASSESSMENT— WHERE IS THE STUDENT NOW?

- **What is an age-appropriate goal?**

Age-appropriate means chronological rather than developmental age—Cognitive level does not mean treating youth like a child.

- **What is the purpose of transition assessments?**

To set **Present levels of Performance** and provide the team (including YOUTH) with meaningful information to make appropriate decisions.

- Insufficient information is a major obstacle to collaboration and planning! Need for actual evaluation, not just surveys.

# WITHOUT GOALS, TRANSITION PLAN BECOMES A TRANSITION TO NOWHERE.

- ITP inadequate where not based on transition evaluation, contains inadequate transition services, lacks goals that are meaningful, appropriate and measurable.
- Beware the “career exploration” inventories. Can help, but NOT an assessment!
- ITP is a FLEXIBLE roadmap to a destination that matters!



# **DON'T RULE OUT COLLEGE:**

## **Many new options!**

- Experience-what does it feel like to learn with other adults outside of high school To follow a routine independently? Check out: **THINK COLLEGE** Website
- Adult Connections—Relationships, social engagement, access to typical peers, and other SWD's working on similar goals.
- Process-how do you access learning as an adult? Find help?
- Content-I am interested in art history, computers, theater and want to know more
- Open the door for later down the road—Developmental DELAYS mean late bloomers

# KEY INDEPENDENT LIVING GOALS OFTEN LEFT OUT!

- Registering to vote and learning how to fill out ballot.
- Securing an ID card or Driver's License, Passport.
- Completing a job application
- Sexual Health and Responsibility
- Interacting with Law Enforcement/knowing legal rights
- Using Assistive Technology/equipment independently or knowing how to hire assistants to help with care/equipment
- Creating a "rental resume" to apply for housing
- Creating a letter of introduction for instructors, employers
- Budgeting
- Using a calendaring system
- Connecting with Others/avoiding isolation



# EXAMPLES: INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Many higher functioning students get this left OUT of their ITP. It's critical!
- Example: Independent Living Post-Secondary Goal: Results of the Casey-Ansell Life skills assessment document that Gavin needs to learn how to manage money, budget, and hire a personal assistant so he can live independently
- MPSG: With the help of a Personal Assistant, Gavin will live independently in a dormitory setting at college.
- IEP goals: Gavin will create a monthly budget that is realistic based on his SSI estimate; Gavin will conduct mock interviews with prospective attendants using a checklist developed with his special ed teacher based on what kind of helper works best for him.

# SOUNDS NICE, BUT WE ALL KNOW HOW TEENAGERS ARE...

Just because it's HARD does not mean we GIVE UP.

Goal must always be to increase participation FROM a present level TO a higher level!

- Students who can't explain why they have an IEP need to learn this.
- Students who resist help need to learn how to accept it.
- Can't run their own IEP meeting? GOAL for next year.



# **SOUNDS NICE, BUT WE ALL KNOW HOW TEENAGERS ARE...**

Dealing with Student Resistance--Ideas to Consider:

- Case Manager: Pre- IEP interview (could be YouTube video). Extra credit opportunity.
- Skype them in for 10 minutes this year, 30 next year, in person by 18...
- Written statement to team-what's working. What isn't.
- Video/picture of student doing what she loves
- Student work products (art, report, recent success)
- Ask: Can student explain disability? It's impact on them? What accommodations/supports work for them?

# **SOUNDS NICE, BUT WE ALL KNOW HOW TEENAGERS ARE...**

Explore opportunities to Increase Self Advocacy:

- Yo! Disabled and Proud
- Disability Pride, History, Awareness
- Autistic Self Advocacy network, NAMI, other Support and Advocacy Groups.
- Movies, books, articles on successful adults with disabilities.
- Just keep trying—opportunity to see options is key!

# CONNECTIONS/INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION MATTERS!

- Once a student receives a regular diploma or turns age 22 (or ends that school year), the school district has no responsibility. Don't let this turn into a "cliff" student (and family) falls off. Build bridges.
- Critical to coordinate interagency services as early as possible
- Look to Regional Center, Independent Living Centers, County Foster Care/AB 12), Department of Rehabilitation, and College Disabled Students Programs for services and supports. Invite agencies to transition IEP's.

# **OTHER REQUIRED STEPS ALONG PATH TO IEP EXIT: SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE?**

Part 1: Background information

Part 2: Student's postsecondary goals

Part 3: Academic and functional performance

Describes accommodations/modifications

Part 4: Recommendations to assist goals

Part 5: Student input (recommended)

- **Note: This is NOT an assessment. However, in most cases, to access DSP services in college, recent (No more than 3 years) assessment is required. Pay attention to when last triannual will be due—don't waive assessment!**

# WHAT IS A SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE?

The purpose of the summary is to provide the student with a document that will help establish eligibility for reasonable accommodations and supports in post-school settings. It is also useful for the Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Assessment process.

**It is NOT an assessment in itself!**

# So what does this all LOOK like?

- Gavin's Plan
- MPSG leads to IEP goals and to IEP transition related activities that can be monitored, measured and are adaptable
- Gavin is at the CENTER of the plan!



Transition Activities/Services (including activities that link the student to adult services)	Responsible Individual/ Describe Responsibilities	Date to be Completed
Instruction	PARENTS, SPED Teacher, Workability Staff Gavin will increase his use of assistive technologies (voice to text, calendaring with reminders, skype) and practice independent living skills (e.g., doing laundry, meal preparation, budgeting, using assistive technologies for movement).	05/2016
Related Services	With the help of his parents and Special Education teacher, Gavin will research Personal Assistants available in the area of his chosen postsecondary school, and begin to interview potential personal assistants.	06/2016
Community Experiences	Gavin will tour his chosen dormitory, and (with the help of his parents) map out accessible routes through campus (e.g., from the dorm to class buildings).	05/2016
Employment	Considered, but not appropriate at this time	
Daily Living Skills	With the help of the Special Educator, Gavin will create a list of ways his disability impacts his daily living, and practice/develop strategies to help him overcome each impact.	05/2016
Adult Living	Gavin will participate in one to two community events in the area in which his postsecondary school is located prior to the start of college.	09/2016
OTHER	Gavin will contact his doctor to get a referral to a therapist in the area of his postsecondary school.	05/2016

# DOCUMENTING DISABILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION

- In testing (SAT, ACT, AP exams) education, student must request and document need for accommodation—most schools assist but ASK no later than end of sophomore year
- Same in employment context, but applicant must balance risks of disclosure in employment context with benefits. Great Goal Area! If, When and How should I disclose my disability?
- NOTE: Triannuals in high school really matter for this reason. Records review is easier, but may not be adequate.

# CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR COLLEGE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Must have up-to-date evaluation (generally not more than 3 years old—senior year is ideal)
- IEP or 504 plan may be insufficient—need **ASSESSMENTS** and/or **Medical/Psychiatric REPORTS**
- Special education/Section 504 eligibility helps – not legally essential, but in practice, often critical!
- Evaluation must be by qualified professional
- Must show impairment in comparison to average population
- Must link need for accommodation to impairment
  
- Suggestion: Request any and all records by April of Senior/final year of public school.

# INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

- Consider steps for applying and determining eligibility
- Assistance with securing enrollment
- Plan for effective use
- Examples: Center for Independent Living, Department of Rehabilitation, Center for Assistive Technology, County Mental Health, Social Security Admin, Adult Assisted Living Program...
- The school district is charged with making linkages to other agencies when needed.
- New Program: DOR YOUTH
- <https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/StudentsandYouth>

# FOR STUDENTS WITH COGNITIVE OR FUNCTIONAL DISABILITIES

- Don't rule out college or training—but emphasize PREPARATION and SUPPORT
- If Student will need adult support/assistance long term, plan should STILL be to increase connectedness, community participation, independent decision making
- Ask: What MATTERS to this student? What experiences, subjects, activities light them up?
- Plan: If parent/aide not in the picture, HOW will we make sure caregivers/support staff in new settings understand what pleasure, distress, pain, sadness look like, and what training is needed to ensure this?
- Focus on inclusion in community, participation in full life.

# FOR STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

- Transitioning to new therapists, psychiatrists, support is difficult. Begin planning for that at least six months in advance.
- Goal possible around how to know if therapist is good fit for them
- Knowing what medications, side effects, refill requirements are is critical goal.
- Self Regulation—knowing when to drop classes, take breaks, read warning signs is key.
- Teaching student to identify and access care is essential!

# WHAT CAN ADULTS DO TO HELP?

- Help youth make doctor appointments, learn to calendar
- Provide incremental independence opportunities
- Ensure youth understands his/her disability, and can explain it to others
- Make sure student understands **LEGAL rights** and **responsibilities**
- Encourage youth to USE accommodations.
- Create Portfolio—letter of intro, list of accommodations that work, a list of skills, strengths, interests, letters of recommendation, resume.

Practice! Visit DSP offices with student but let them lead. Colleges want direct contact with students, and will not share information without student permission (and prefer NOT to in most cases).

Audit a college lecture, and prep student for expectations for behavior/engagement.

Consider when and whether to step in, and use person centered approaches to planning

Avoid “rescue mode, use “coaching” model

Create simulations of interviews, conflicts, etc.

**Always, always—a plan B (C, D...)**

# EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH STUDENT AND SCHOOL

- Families provide critical relevant information!
- Participate in the process—listen, question, collaborate and challenge on high stakes issues
- Negotiate in good will—follow through on your end, ask what you can do to support teachers, staff.
- Remind team of who this youth IS and what he CAN do. Strengths based!
- Share/What am I most worried about?
- Is there something I can recommend?
- If your child cannot participate in meeting, speak to their dreams and interests—bring them in in any way possible.
- Bring in concrete examples of strengths and challenges to help team understand.
- Know when to step back!



# SO WE HAVE A PLAN...

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- We monitor the plan—is it working? Does it need changing? Are there implementation problems?
- We gather data—how can we know if plan is working without information?
- We focus on self advocacy in all we do—student led, student centered
- Advocacy matters—how WILL we teach student these skills? IEP goals?
- **TIP:** Call IEP meeting to focus ONLY on transition plan!

# FINAL REMARKS

- Transition Planning should start early
- Plan must be Person/Strength Centered
- Plan must link activities, classes and learning at school to post secondary goals—education is more than a formal degree. It's a GATEWAY.
- Parents are critical partners in the process
- Students should be increasingly in the driver's seat from 16 on.
- Interagency collaboration is key AND HARD.
- Plan for dreams but offer reality checks—we all learn to live within our own limits.

# RESOURCES

- **CA Department of Education Transition Resources:**

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/st/>

- **Age of Majority Info for Parents:**

[https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.6&disp=safe&realattid=f\\_i1876po96&zw](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.6&disp=safe&realattid=f_i1876po96&zw)

- **Indicator 13 Goals (compliance review tool)**

- [https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.3&disp=safe&realattid=f\\_i1873ekz3&zw](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.3&disp=safe&realattid=f_i1873ekz3&zw)

- Department of Rehabilitation Youth Programs:

- <https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/StudentsandYouth>

- Regional Center of the East Bay:

- <http://www.rceb.org/>

- **Transition Brochure for Teens:**

- [https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.5&thid=1490aefd189d41fe&mt=application/pdf&authuser=0&url=https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%3fui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.5&disp=safe&realattid=f\\_i1874sk95&zw&sig=AHIEtbQ8uqwi3H2eQ0WEkUCekHP0PwoEda](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.5&thid=1490aefd189d41fe&mt=application/pdf&authuser=0&url=https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/%3fui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.5&disp=safe&realattid=f_i1874sk95&zw&sig=AHIEtbQ8uqwi3H2eQ0WEkUCekHP0PwoEda)

# Sample Transition Plans for a Variety of Student Needs:

- <http://transitionhelpforstudentswithcerebralpalsy.wmwikis.net/Sample+Individualized+Transition+Plan>
- <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/transitionadult/>
- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/goals-example-sheet.pdf>
- <http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/transition/tgoalsiep.aspx>
- <https://intra.wps60.org/transition/staff-development/43.html>
- <http://www.yodisabledproud.org/>
- [https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.2&disp=safe&realattid=f\\_i1872zf72&zw](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=dfb2f922b3&view=att&th=1490aefd189d41fe&attid=0.2&disp=safe&realattid=f_i1872zf72&zw)

# Before you go!

- Please complete your Evaluation form!
- Thank you for coming!

