



Transition Planning Guide

Because growing up with support means growing into possibility

What Is Transition Planning?

Transition planning helps students with disabilities prepare for life after high school—whether that means college, employment, independent living, or community involvement. It's part of the IEP process and typically begins by age 14–16.

Key Areas to Explore

Education & Training

- Postsecondary goals (college, trade school, life skills programs)
- Accommodations in higher ed (504 plans, disability services)
- Self-advocacy skills for navigating new environments

Employment

- Career interests and strengths
- Job readiness skills (interviews, resumes, workplace behavior)
- Vocational training, internships, or supported employment options

Independent Living

- Daily living skills (cooking, cleaning, budgeting)
- Transportation planning
- Housing options (with family, supported living, group homes)

Community & Social Life

- Building friendships and social networks
- Participating in clubs, recreation, or volunteer work
- Accessing community supports and services

Transition Planning Steps

1. Start Early: Begin conversations by age 14
2. Set Goals: Include postsecondary goals in the IEP
3. Build Skills: Focus on independence, self-advocacy, and life skills
4. Explore Options: Visit programs, attend fairs, talk to providers
5. Create a Timeline: Map out steps for the next 1–5 years
6. Review & Update: Revisit the plan annually and adjust as needed

Tips for Families

- Involve your child in every step—they are the expert on their life
- Focus on strengths, not just needs
- Celebrate progress, even if it's slow or nonlinear
- Ask questions and seek support—transition planning is a team effort
- Keep records and build a “Transition Binder” with key documents

Printable Ideas to Pair With This Guide

- “Transition Timeline” planner
- “My Goals & Strengths” worksheet
- “Life Skills Checklist”
- “College & Career Exploration” scroll
- “Self-Advocacy Scripts” card set
- “Support Network Map” template

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