

IEP Transition Components

Transition to Adulthood

SECOND EDITION

GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS





This publication is a result of the recommendations of the Ohio Autism Taskforce and the support of the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Transition to Community Task Force. Funding for the Transition to Adulthood Guidelines for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders has been made possible through the support of the Ohio Department of Education.

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What Is Transition to Adulthood?

“Transition to adulthood” is a complex and ongoing process that starts as soon as a child is born and continues as the child becomes an adolescent, to early adult life and then through the stages of adulthood. While this process is complicated at best for any person, the individual with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) faces unique challenges that require specialized considerations. This set of guides will help the user understand these challenges and raise awareness of these important considerations

A critical time for transition planning is in the early years of middle school through the first few years following graduation from high school. This time period is the focal point of the *Transition to Adulthood* guides and will assist the individual with ASD and his or her team in reviewing the issues of adulthood related to employment, postsecondary education and adult living during these years. Implications for the individual with ASD to consider are highlighted throughout. Identification of resources and many active links to important information are provided. Use this set of guides as a reference and resource and to help frame a way to think about the issues related to adulthood.

Introduction to IEP Transition Components

In this volume, *IEP Transition Components*, the user will be introduced to the legislation that supports transition planning for the individual with a disability, as well as the legislation that provides for ongoing services for adults with disabilities. Each step of the IEP transition planning process will be explored to allow users to review their own documents and plans. The goal of this volume is to assist in creating a process that results in a meaningful IEP document for the youth with ASD that will serve as a guide for the team in the future.

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Summary

Secondary Transition

Transition to adulthood is an exciting and important time in the life of all youth, including youth who learn differently, understand the world uniquely or require assistance to reach their full potential. Although many of these youth are gifted and demonstrate multiple talents, their struggle to navigate a typical education system or adult world often results in the need for assistance or accommodations.

Over the course of many years, it was found that the only way to ensure needed supports and services for these differently abled youth and adults was to identify them as eligible or entitled to specially designed instruction, services and supports and to identify them as “disabled.” Legislation was passed in order to outline the process. Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) often fall under this label of “disability” and, therefore, may be eligible or entitled to supports, services and/or education.

The activities and services that youth with disabilities receive during the transition from school to adulthood and the subsequent services to support adults in employment, education and community living are supported by legal mandates. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Federal Developmental Disabilities Act, Workforce Investment Act and Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Transition youth found eligible for specialized education services in high school receive these services and supports through the rights afforded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

The major legislative mandate that supports the structure of school-based transition services is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004. This is an entitlement program, meaning that by law all students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. IDEIA of 2004 identifies specific transition requirements for students from age 16 (age 14 in Ohio) and provides general guidance for transition teams related to the content of transition plans.

Legislation for Adult Services

There are many adult service agencies and legislative mandates for adults with disabilities. In Ohio, three are critically important when considering employment and independent living for persons with ASD:

- Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) determines eligibility for adult services under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act, which requires substantial impairments in at least three of seven life activity areas. DODD generally provides lifespan services and support including employment and residential programs and supports for youth and adults with the most significant disabilities.
- The Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) determines eligibility for service according to a disability definition contained in the Workforce Investment Act and Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. RSC generally provides employment services with some limited residential and education support if needed for success in employment.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that also addresses discrimination. The ADA prohibits discrimination against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities who can do the essential requirements of a job with reasonable accommodations. It also requires that businesses and public places be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Entitlement and Eligibility

One of the most important legal concepts related to transition is the difference between the “entitlement” provided by IDEIA and the “eligibility” status created through meeting the requirements of adult service agencies. The IDEIA of 2004 outlines services (including transition services) that students with disabilities are entitled to receive once assessments deem them eligible for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). However, when these students graduate and become adults, they are no longer entitled to services based on the educational guidelines. Instead, they must meet eligibility requirements for adult services. These requirements vary across agencies, which means that an adult may be deemed eligible for services from one agency (such as Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation [BVR]) and not from another agency (such as Department of Developmental Disabilities [DODD]).

Additionally, once eligible, the adult may face waiting lists and limited services as services are not mandated to be provided to all who are eligible. In short, “eligibility” in the adult services world means that one can be eligible and still wait for long periods of time if not deemed to be a “priority.”

IDEIA 2004 and Secondary Transition Highlights

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), uses the term “transition services” to indicate:

- a coordinated set of activities
- within a results-oriented process
- a focus to improve academic and functional achievement
- movement from school to post-school activities, including: postsecondary education, employment, and independent living or community participation
- a plan based on the individual’s needs, strengths, preferences, and interests
- a plan that can include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. [602(34)]

This means that the IEP transition plan should clearly show how the school program and services will lead to adult employment, postsecondary education and successful adult living. If the plan focuses solely on the accomplishments during the school year, it does not meet the intent of the law.

The Transition Coalition describes transition as a:

- **Results-oriented process**
- **Student-centered process**
- **Coordinated effort**

Transition Indicators Focus on a Results-Oriented Process

IDEIA 2004 includes data collection and data reporting requirements for each state. Each state must collect data for 20 specific indicators and describe the methods of data collection in the State Performance Plan (SPP).

Four outcomes indicators in the required group of 20 concern transition:

- **Indicator 1:** Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma. (Graduation indicator.)
- **Indicator 2:** Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school. (Drop-out indicator.)
- **Indicator 13:** Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals. (Quality of IEP indicator.)
- **Indicator 14:** Percent of youth with IEPs who within one year after graduation have been competitively employed or enrolled in postsecondary school or both. The Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS) collects these data from graduates in Ohio.

Each state must also report on the outcomes identified from the collected data in the Annual Performance Report (APR). Read more: Ohio's Part B State Performance Plan for 2005-2010.

Indicator 13 Checklist

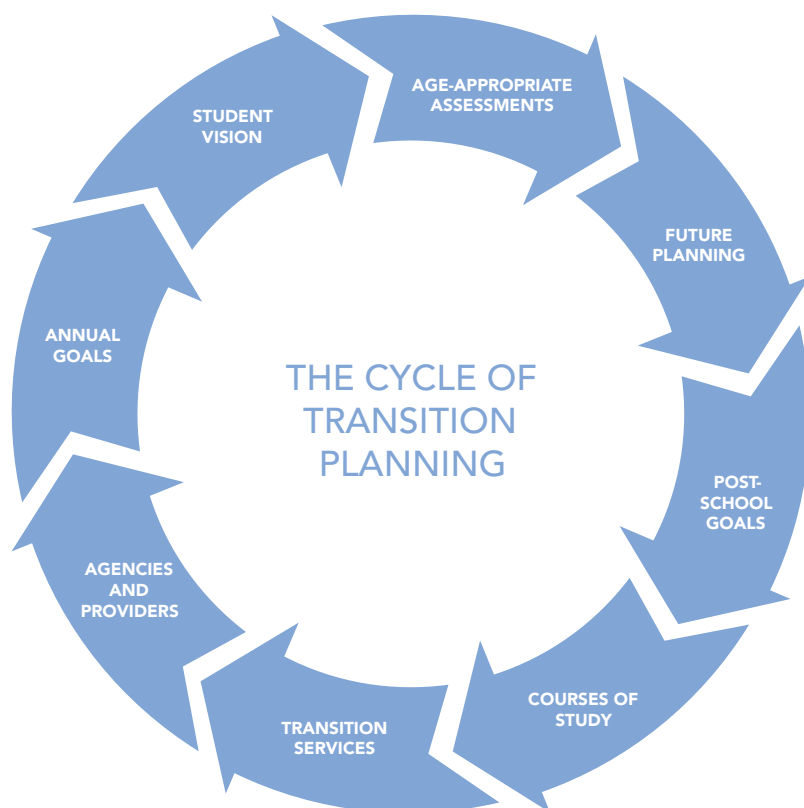
The National Secondary Transition and Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) is funded by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to assist states in building capacity to support and improve transition planning, services and outcomes for youth with disabilities. NSTTAC has developed an Indicator 13 Checklist to help states address the quality of IEP indicators. Educators and parents can use the checklist to ensure that a completed transition plan includes all the required elements of Indicator 13. The NSTAAC Indicator 13 checklist is available at the NSTTAC website.

Additional IDEIA Highlights

- In Ohio, formal transition planning is required to begin no later than age 14. Documentation of the initial steps of transition planning must appear on the IEP that is in effect when the student turns 14. Therefore, the plan may be initiated when the student is 13 years of age. (Federal law indicates age 16 as the required age to begin transition planning.)
- When the IEP team meets to discuss the child's postsecondary goals and transition services, the child must be invited to the meeting. If he or she does not attend, the child's interests must be considered.
- Measurable postsecondary goals must be developed for each student based on age-appropriate transition assessments. Post-school or adult goals must focus on training/education, employment and independent living skills.

The Transition Process

Transition planning is a thoughtful and systematic process that begins no later than age 14. While there may be variations in the methods and activities used in the process, the basic steps are the same. In reality, these steps do not occur in a linear process, but are blended and ongoing. Some steps overlap. Some are concurrent. Also, the process is cyclic, as plans are developed, new information is discovered, revisions are made and new data are collected. To understand each component and allow for an organized approach to transition planning, steps are described in a discrete manner. However, in practice, teams will find that the lines between the steps fade and the process becomes an ongoing system of movement towards meaningful adult life.



Meet Robert

Robert is a youth who, like many his age, dreams of being an independent adult. He has strong interests that drive both his career goals and his social life. Robert has many strengths that have been noted as a child. He also struggles with some important skill areas that would be necessary for independence as an adult. Robert identifies his family as his mother, stepfather, grandmother, younger sister, and "Aunt Jane," a close friend of the family. Robert was diagnosed as having autism at age 3. He receives specialized instruction and service through an IEP.



Meet Antonio

Antonio is a youth who plans to enter a four year university following high school. He has several areas of great interest and skill. Antonio has been a strong academic student for all his school career. However, he struggles with the social aspects of school and community environments. These social challenges as well as difficulties with handwriting and organization have resulted in eligibility for the services of an IEP. Antonio's family includes his mother, father, and two younger twin brothers. Antonio was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome at age 7.



Meet Carla

Carla is a young lady who found her interests early in life, music! Everyone who knows Carla knows that music is part of her connection to the world around her. Carla struggles in many areas of independent living and academics. She has recieved specialized instruction, therapies and supports through an IEP since she was in preschool. Although she attends several general education classes, she requires specialized instruction in alternate environments. Carla's family includes her mother and father (although they are divorced), an older sister and an older brother. Carla was diagnosed with autism and intellectual disability at the age of 2-1/2.



Step 1: Conduct Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments

Early steps in transition planning involve the initial assessment of a student's career interests, needs, preferences and strengths using age-appropriate transition assessments. This can include parent and student surveys, career interest inventories, observations in multiple environments, functional vocational assessments and more. The student can help direct this process by communicating his/her vision of the future to the IEP team. The vision becomes the focal point for transition planning, including age appropriate transition assessment. (Review OCALI Transition Booklet Two, *Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment* for detailed information.)

Information obtained from Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments should include a description of the student's academic and functional skills and accommodations needed to participate in the general education curriculum. Assessments should also describe the how the student's current skills and intended course of study align with future plans, career needs, interests, preferences and strengths. Essentially, the information obtained from Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment should describe what the student will need to learn in high school and how he/she may best learn those skills in order to prepare for the meaningful adult life described in the vision.

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Robert

As Robert approached middle school, his vision for the future became more focused on his life following high school. Excerpt from vision: "Robert wants to work with cars. He would like to be able to make simple repairs on cars or do some type of work that involves cars. Robert would like to eventually live in an apartment close to people he knows. He feels strongly that being able to go to the movies, shopping and swimming will be important parts of his adult life." In addition to the vision, Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments (AATA) include the following items that further develop and refine future planning and identify needed transition services:

- Opportunities for Robert to shadow mechanics in several body shops
- Observations of Robert on the job site performing tasks
- Formal vocational assessments through BVR
- Employability checklists that focus on global employability skills
- Assessment of life skills related to independence
- Observing Robert's skills using the bus (transportation assessment)
- Other formal and informal assessment that lead the team to a better understanding of Robert's strengths and needs

Antonio

Antonio always knew he wanted to go to college. Both of his parents attended college and have always had the vision of Antonio graduating from college. Although Antonio has several areas of interest and academic strength (i.e., math and all sciences, especially chemistry), he is not sure where he wants to concentrate his studies in college. More information is also needed about the independent living skills, social skills and problem solving skills he will need to successfully navigate a college campus. Finally, accommodations for college courses need to be identified in order that Antonio can select a college that fits his needs. Antonio's ongoing Age Appropriate Transition Assessments include:

- Exploration of colleges and universities via web sites, phone conversations and several onsite visits
- Career interests surveys
- Auditing a college class near his home
- Shadowing/visiting individuals in both math and science careers
- Observations by teachers and parents related to social interactions and problem solving
- Interviews with Antonio and self-assessment of skills
- Employability life skills assessment with a focus on the skills that reflect the "hidden curriculum" of the workplace and school
- Identification of current accommodations provided to Antonio in his academic classes
- AIR Self-Determination Assessment
- SAT practice tests and formal SAT testing

Carla

Carla has always known that a day without music will not be a day of her life! This information alone was a place to begin AATA. The team needs to know how to incorporate music in her adult life in terms of employment, independent living and to support adult learning. Although Carla's skills have been assessed throughout her educational career, the team has to now consider those assessments in light of her adult life and the skills she will need to be as independent as possible, to be employed and to continue to learn. Carla's ongoing Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments include:

- Interview and checklists completed by Carla's family and teachers about her skills, interests, needs and supports related to daily living, leisure activities, independent living skills and socialization/communication
- Observations of Carla's social, communication and problem-solving skills in multiple settings such as classroom, restaurants, stores, home, fitness center, etc., and reflecting on the current level of these skills and how they compare to the skill level that she will need as an adult
- Observation of the extent to which Carla is able to apply her academic skills in multiple environments (home, school, community)
- Results of a variety of community-based work experiences to determine areas of interest and skill
- Identification of employment, educational and leisure opportunities that can include and build on her interest in music

Steps in Transition Planning

Step 2: Review Future Planning

Future planning begins with the IEP team reviewing the vision for the student's adult life. If more specific information is needed to frame the student's vision for the future, a team meeting can facilitate a future-focused discussion with the student and family by having them describe what they envision a typical week for the student will include after he graduates from high school. How will he spend leisure time? Where will he live? What type of adult learning will he engage in after graduation. Where does he want to work? If the vision of the future does not seem well-developed, this is the opportunity to identify additional Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments that can assist in clarifying and developing a clear vision for the future.

MORE EXAMPLES ►

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Robert

Robert's future planning and vision was developed and refined as he neared age 14.

"Robert would like to develop his automotive skills to be able to make simple repairs on cars and work at least part-time in a small car shop. Within several years after graduation, he would like to live in an apartment close to people that he knows and can trust. He wants to continue to

grow and learn new skills as an adult by taking adult education classes in areas of interest. He also wants to be able to regularly go to the movies, swim year-round and go shopping. "

Antonio

Antonio has been thinking about life after high school for many years. He is anxious to move into an adult world where he believes his intelligence will be respected by his college professors.

"Antonio is committed to attending a university to study math or chemistry following graduation from high school. He plans to pursue a career in a field such as chemical engineering where he could work in the field of aerospace engineering, plastics and polymer manufacturing or pharmaceuticals. At college he would like to

live in a dorm in a private room. He would like to connect with a social circle of a few friends that who similar interests. Following college, he hopes to locate employment that is within several hours from his family home, although he plans to live in his own apartment."

Carla

Carla's family helped the IEP team craft a vision that they knew reflected what made Carla happy and fulfilled.

"Carla and her family want her to have the opportunity to do meaningful work in their local community, with the necessary supports. This work needs to be in a structured and predictable setting, but does not have to be the same every day. She will do best in settings that allow her to move frequently, will allow her to use her hands, involve music and have limited interactions with an ever-changing customer base. Carla will live in the family home immediately after high school.

However, the vision is for Carla to move to a supported residential setting that suits her needs in terms of personal space, trained support staff, structure, daily leisure activities and access to the community. This move will need to occur soon after high school as the family is concerned they will not be able to offer the necessary support in the family home for Carla as an adult. Carla will continue to learn new skills as an adult. She will need on-the-job training in her employment and individual instruction to learn new daily living and leisure skills."

Step 3: Develop Post-School Goals

Based on the student's vision for the future and using the information generated from Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments, the student, family and team should develop measurable post-school goals. These postsecondary goals describe a student's adult life intentions related to (a) employment, (b) postsecondary education /training, and (c) independent living. Initially, goals may be broad (e.g., employment and on-the-job training after graduation). Later they may become more specific (e.g., paid integrated clerical work with employer training).

The individual with ASD who is relatively independent in the school environment and/or at home may not initially be viewed as needing a postsecondary goal in the area of independent living. However, due to the social, communication, organizational and adaptive behavior challenges associated with ASD, most will need some preparation, support and service in independent living. This includes students who are college bound.

MORE EXAMPLES ►

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Robert

Employment: Following high school, Robert will work part-time independently in a body shop making car repairs

Education: Following high school, Robert will take classes at the Eastland adult education program in areas related to his interests, such as small engine repair, locating the right apartment and meal preparation

Independent Living: Immediately following high school, Robert will live in the family home taking on more responsibilities to prepare for his move to his own apartment

Robert's goals suggest that his IEP needs to focus on:

- Working without a job coach being present each day
- Being able to participate in an adult education class
- Completing daily living skills such as home safety, cleaning, laundry, nutritional meals, etc.

Antonio

Employment: After high school and college graduation, Antonio will work full-time in the field of aerospace engineering, plastics and polymer manufacturing or pharmaceuticals.

Education: After high school graduation, Antonio will attend a four-year university to study math and/or science to prepare for his desired employment.

Independent Living: After high school and when he attends college, Antonio will live in the dorm in a private room.

Antonio's goals suggest that his IEP needs to focus on:

- Researching, selecting and applying to a university
- Living in shared space (even if he is in a private room)
- Problem solving daily issues such as scheduling study time, making meal selections and dealing with schedule changes, etc.
- Learning to advocate for necessary accommodations in university classes

Carla

Employment: Following high school, Carla will work part-time in a community setting with limited customer traffic doing jobs of her interest and skill with necessary daily supports.

Education: After high school, Carla will participate in on-the-job training to learn the specific components of her employment and will also participate in individual instruction in daily living skills to extend her independence when possible

Independent Living: Immediately following high school, Carla will continue to live in the family home until the appropriate supported residential setting is available.

Carla's goals suggest that her IEP needs to focus on:

- Identifying the features of a successful employment environment
- Connecting to adult service agencies for employment and residential support
- Meaningful academic and community experiences to broaden her exposure to options
- Applying academic and daily living skills to authentic settings that reflect what her life will be after graduation

Step 4: Identify Courses of Study

After the postsecondary (adult life) goals have been defined, the educational team will identify a multi-year description of the needed course(s) of study that support the student's vision and future plan. Examples include:

- Advanced academics (generally needed for four-year colleges)
- General academics (to prepare for two year college)
- Career and technical education (for technical schools and employment after graduation)
- Applied academics (for those moving directly to employment)
- Community-based training (often preferable for students who need to learn by doing)
- A combination of the above options

Some IEP teams may decide to add more detail by attaching a list of courses that would generally be pursued within the student's desired course of study. The purpose of the identified course of study is to reasonably prepare the student to pursue the identified post-school goals of education, employment and independent living following high school. Identification of the appropriate course(s) of study for each postsecondary goal requires careful consideration by the IEP team.

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Robert

Overview of postsecondary goals:

"Robert will independently work part-time in a body shop making car repairs, attend adult education classes in the community, and plans to move to his own apartment."

Course of Study

In order to achieve this adult outcomes, Robert's course of study from ages 14 to 22 (assuming he is extending graduation) needs to include academic instruction, vocational instruction, and functional living skills.

The IEP team created a schedule that allowed Robert to attend several general education classes and also receive the necessary tutoring or specialized instruction in the core areas. He also attend a life skills class to work on targeted social skills and social competency. Opportunities were identified and facilitated in the general education environments to allow Robert to practice the social competences he was learning. Finally, he attended vocational activities and community work experiences that focused on car repair.

Antonio

Overview of postsecondary goals:

"After high school and college graduation, Antonio will attend a four-year college and then work in the field of aerospace engineering, plastics and polymer manufacturing or pharmaceuticals. He plans to live in the dorm and then independently in his own apartment."

Course of Study

In order to achieve his dream of college, employment and adult living, Antonio's course of study needs to include:

- A rigorous academic preparation
- Specialized instruction in targeted areas of daily planning, problem solving, safety and social competencies

- Self-determination instruction and preparation to advocate for accommodations in college

Although Antonio's daily schedule in high school was quite heavy, the team was able to identify one class period where Antonio received instruction and assistance in the areas of specialized instruction that he required. All teachers were provided with information regarding the focus of this instruction for the week allowing them to reinforce the concepts of self-advocacy, problem solving, etc., within the context of the general curriculum.

Carla

Overview of postsecondary goals:

"Following high school, Carla will work part-time in a community setting with support in an area of interest and skill. She will receive on-the-job training for her employment and also instruction in daily living skills. She plans to move from the family home to a supported residential home when the appropriate supported and individualized setting is available."

Course of Study

In order to achieve an adult life that reflects quality and individualization, Carla's course of study needs to include:

- Applied academics in authentic community settings
- Work experiences in multiple community environments
- Individualized instruction in daily living skills that align with activities in her home and future residential setting

Step 5: Determine the Extent and Type of Transition Services Needed

In order to be able to achieve the identified postsecondary goals, students will require some type of service. These services are described as “Transition Services” and are directly related to the adult life goal (not an annual goal). These services are provided prior to graduation to prepare the student for the identify postsecondary goal. The following are several types of transition services to consider.

- **Instruction:** Consider the need for specific types of training that support transition to the post-school goal. This might include areas such as self-determination and disability awareness, or specific types of instruction such as occupational skill training or on-the-job training.
- **Community Experiences:** Identify ways in which the student’s classroom learning can be applied in authentic settings. For college-bound students, this might include attending actual college classes. For students planning to enter employment, this should generally include authentic community work experiences, such as job shadowing, volunteering or paid employment. Work experience while in high school has been shown to be a predictor of post-school success.
- **Development of Adult Living Objectives:** Identify ways that the student can develop and make her career plans work such as the IACP of the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) or other career planning approaches. Transition specialists and guidance counselors may also be helpful.
- **Related Services:** Identify how to address the student’s disability relative to her post-school goals and what types of services might be needed. This might include work site accommodations for students with physical and sensory disabilities, organizers and checklists for students with cognitive disabilities and behavioral supports and flexible scheduling for students with emotional disabilities.
- **Daily Living Skills Training:** Identify activities of daily living a student may need to achieve a post-school goal. For students entering work, this training often includes travel and may include issues such as hygiene, personal appearance, health and safety and money management. For a post-school goal of independent living, this might also include menu planning, cooking, home maintenance and shopping.
- **Functional Vocational Assessment:** Assess student interests and aptitudes relative to employment goals or vision, student interests and needed supports. This is generally part of Age-Appropriate Aransition Assessment.

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Robert

Overview of postsecondary goals:

"Robert will independently work part-time in a body shop making car repairs, attend adult education classes in the community, and plans to move to his own apartment."

Team discussion determined that Robert's transition services should include assessment to determine his current level of skill in the area of auto repair, as well as his ability to transfer his study skills to the adult education environment. He will require instruction in social skills in order to interact effectively with coworkers and customers. Robert also needs to gain understanding of the aspects of adult education that may be different from high school. Although Robert demonstrates some daily living skills, he will need continued instruction in this area so that he can become independent and competent to achieve his postsecondary goals. Following are some of the specific transition services that the team felt would address these needs.

Transition Services

Employment: Vocational assessment to determine current abilities in the area of car repair and related skills, job shadowing/work experience in an auto body shop to assess his ongoing interest and improve skills related to community employment and auto mechanics, specialized instruction in social competency related to interactions with supervisor, coworkers and customers.

Education: Instruction in how to identify adult classes, register and travel to the class in a timely manner. Community experience to take an adult education class to become familiar with the location, the pace and structure of the courses and to apply study and social skills.

Independent Living: Daily living skills training by participation in a life skills class.

Antonio

Overview of postsecondary goals:

"After high school and college graduation, Antonio will attend a four-year college and then work in the field of aerospace engineering, plastics and polymer manufacturing or pharmaceuticals. He plans to live in the dorms and then independently in his own apartment."

Antonio's team determined that his transition services should include experiences that provide additional assessment as well as improve his skills related to his adult goals.

Transition Services

Employment: Community experiences/shadowing of chemical engineer to confirm career direction.

Education: Related service for an assistive technology assessment related to accommodations for college courses, community experiences visiting campuses.

Independent Living: Community experiences visiting dorms and planning an overnight experience.

Carla

Overview of postsecondary goals:

"Following high school, Carla will work part-time in a community setting with support in an area of interest and skill. She will receive on-the-job training for her employment and also instruction in daily living skills. She plans to move from the family home to a supported residential home when the appropriate supported and individualized setting is available."

Transition Services

Employment: Community work experiences in areas of interest and potential work/volunteer opportunities, functional vocational assessment, assistive technology assessment

Education: On-the-job instruction in community work experiences.

Independent Living: Life skills instruction, community experiences in residential and leisure opportunities to assess future needs.

Step 6: Involve Needed Adult Service Agencies and Providers

Adult service agencies should become involved in the student's transition planning no later than two years prior to graduation! In some cases, these agencies can assist or provide services (such as assessment or work experiences) during the high school years. However, availability of and eligibility for adult services vary for students with differing needs and skills, which is why connecting early to adult community resources is an essential part of transition planning.

Examples of those to include in transition planning:

- Local Rehabilitation Services Commission counselor
- Department of Developmental Disabilities service support administrator
- Vocational school career center teacher or counselor
- School and private therapists and counselors
- Local autism advocate
- Local mental health representative
- Social Security Administration representative
- College disability services coordinator

Learn about several adult agencies here:

- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD)
- Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC)
- Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS)
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH)

While the IEP transition team needs to coordinate efforts with local agencies outside the school (such as those listed above), the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the transition services and supports are provided is that of the local school system in which the student is enrolled. Section 614 of IDEA states that,

"If a participating agency, other than the local educational agency, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP . . . the local educational agency shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the child set out in the IEP."

Adult Service Eligibility and the Youth with ASD

High school may be a structured, familiar, protected environment where a student with ASD may be able to function with supports developed over a number of years with familiar people and accommodations. This same student may not be prepared for the challenges of adulthood where supports are not mandated at the level provided in schools. After leaving high school, these issues can become barriers to successful employment or postsecondary education settings if support is not continued through the adult service system.

However, accessing the services and supports from agencies such as DODD or ORSC can only occur when one is deemed eligible through the processes of each agency. Sometimes individuals with ASD may have difficulty qualifying because:

- Strengths may overshadow the needs for service and support (strengths hide challenges)
- Challenges may be perceived as overwhelming barriers to meaningful employment (challenges hide strengths)

Accurate and timely assessment to determine eligibility to adult services can help bridge the gap from the high school support plan to the adult support systems.

***NOTE:**

The step numbers in this booklet do not indicate the step numbers of the Ohio IEP form. However, information generated from the steps in this guide aligns with the content of the IEP transition plan. You may review the Ohio IEP form here.

Robert

Robert's vision is to live independently and work part-time in the community and attend adult education classes. Agencies and organizations that Robert's team may consider include:

- Rehabilitation Services Commission/Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (RSC/BVR)
- Teacher from adult educational program in automobiles
- Manager of automotive business
- Jobs and Family Services representative

Antonio

Antonio's postsecondary goals include attendance at a four-year college and then working in the field of aerospace engineering, plastics and polymer manufacturing or pharmaceuticals. He plans to live in the dorm and then independently in his own apartment. Agencies and organizations that Antonio's team may consider include:

- College disability services representative
- Rehabilitation Services Commission/Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (RSC/BVR)
- Mentors from field of interest
- Private therapist

Carla

Carla's vision for the future includes part-time employment in a community setting with supports (on-the-job training). She plans to move to a supported residential home and will need continued training in independent living skills. Agencies and organizations that Carla's team may consider including:

- Department of Developmental Disabilities case manager (service and support administrator)
- Rehabilitation Services Commission / Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (RSC/BVR)
- Potential employers
- Potential residential support providers
- Potential customized employment job developers/job trainers
- Social Security Administration representative
- Private therapist

Step 7: Align Annual Goals to Adult Outcomes

It is important that transition planning drive the IEP as the student nears graduation. This means that there should be a clear and meaningful connection between what the student is learning in high school to what she will be doing after leaving high school. For example, if a student is in a clerical community work experience, align IEP goals for this experience to the student's quality and/or quantity of work. This might mean that the IEP annual goals include teaching general filing skills, phone skills and how to take and deliver a message. These skills are then transferred and applied during the clerical community work experience.

Another example of aligning annual IEP goals to postsecondary goals might be teaching a student to understand, accept and use constructive criticism in order to successfully work with supervisors or professors after graduating from high school and moving into the world of work or college.

MORE EXAMPLES ►

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Robert

Robert's vision is to live independently and work part-time in the community and attend adult education classes. Annual IEP goals that may support this vision include:

- Robert will work independently for 30 minutes using a visual schedule to complete a job-related task (employment)
- Robert will use a list of identified study strategies to complete homework assignments (adult education)
- Given common community living situations, Robert will identify those that are unsafe and how to correct the errors (independent living)

Antonio

Antonio's postsecondary goals include attendance at a four-year college and then working in the field of aerospace engineering, plastics and polymer manufacturing or pharmaceuticals. He plans to live in the dorm and then independently in his own apartment. Annual IEP goals that may support this vision include:

- Antonio will independently organize his weekly calendar to successfully include time for class, studying, homework and leisure activities (independent living and education)
- Given situations that occur on the job and in the classroom, Antonio will identify inappropriate employee-employer and student-professor interactions and how to correct the errors (employment and education)

Carla

Carla's vision for the future includes part time employment in a community setting with supports (on-the-job training). She plans to move to a supported residential home and will need continued training in independent living skills. Annual IEP goals that may support this vision include:

- Given job coach and environmental supports, Carla will complete vocational tasks in school environments such as office, library, teachers' lounge (employment)
- Carla will follow a visual schedule to safely prepare and clean up a meal (lunch) using tools such as microwave, knife, refrigerator, water, cleaning fluids, etc. (independent living)
- Carla will use coping skills and strategies (example: 5-Point Scale) to manage anxiety when corrected by adult (teacher, aide, job coach) (employment)

Leaving High School: Summary of Performance

IDEIA 2004 requires schools to provide a Summary of Performance (SOP) to students with disabilities served through an IEP or a 504 Plan when graduating or leaving high school. The SOP should be completed during the final year of high school and is most meaningful when the student has the opportunity to actively participate in the development of this summary. The SOP includes:

- A student's academic achievement and functional performance
- Recommendations for how to assist the student in meeting his/her postsecondary goals
- Information based on the student's unique needs and focused on goals following high school

The intent of the SOP is to provide crucial information to people who may assist the student in the future in a summary documentation that goes with the student when he/she leaves high school.

Read about Summary of Performance on the Ohio Department of Education website.

Robert

As Robert exited high school, his Summary of Performance included the following information:

Robert is able to work 35 minutes on a vocational assignment given a visual checklist of each step. He will need this same type of support in his job and vocational programs.

While Robert's ability to complete homework has improved, he still requires reminders from adults in the home to remember to check the assignments and review the quality of his work. Robert should continue work on developing

independence in this area. However, until that time, a support person should be identified to help remind/prompt him to check for completion and quality of assignments.

Robert is able to identify and correct unsafe community situations such as fire, use of equipment and securing a house or apartment. However, Robert does not always recognize dangerous situations involving people's intentions (such as people asking for money). He will need continued mentoring in this area.

Antonio

As Antonio exited high school, his Summary of Performance included the following information:

Antonio is talented in the area of academics, as indicated in the summary of his academic performance previously noted in the SOP. His area of interest for college has been narrowed to plastics and polymer manufacturing. He is capable of the coursework but will need continued assistance in organizing and balancing

his time for studying, leisure, class, rest, daily living chores, etc.

His interpersonal skills have improved, but it is likely that as he encounters new experiences of college, he will need coaching to determine how to act and react especially in situations involving his peer group.

Carla

As Carla exited high school, her Summary of Performance included the following information:

Carla has shown skills and interest in the areas of clerical work. She has improved her independent work skills using a variety of strategies, especially visual schedules and checklists (with the iPad) and video modeling.

Carla uses the same visual supports in the home to complete tasks. It will be necessary to continue these supports throughout her adult life and across environments.

Carla's coping skills for situations that occur frequently has improved using video modeling and the 5-Point Scale. However, she is less successful coping in novel situations that cause anxiety. Additional strategies should be explored to help her regulate her emotions in these situations.

Activities to Facilitate Transition Planning

- Begin early to discuss, experience and practice skills for adult life.
- Become knowledgeable about the legal requirements to qualify for services from agencies and organizations.
- Create opportunities for students in school that align with post-school environments, such as work, recreation and independent living in order to allow students to experience success and determine needed supports
- Join local and national advocacy and support groups in order to network and learn about resources. Understanding the rights afforded through the IEP process and the intent of the transition process is the platform to ensure that the student is receiving the necessary services.

Create a Vision

Use multiple methods of expression to document a future adult-focused vision. Use words, photographs, art, film, collage or other meaningful ways to communicate how the youth sees his or her life as an adult. This type of activity can set the stage for creating a meaningful and unique transition plan. Family members and close friends can assist the student in considering aspects of adult life that may be hard for the student to conceptualize and express.

MORE EXAMPLES ►



Activities for Students

What Will Your Day Look Like?

Using a day planner, record a date 1-2 months after the student graduates from high school. Develop a daily schedule that reflects the student's vision of his or her adult life. The schedule should reflect the employment, education and leisure vision. Discuss and explore the types of plans, skills and connections that will be necessary to make this a reality.

Social and Leisure Life

Develop a contact list of a variety of social and leisure options that exist for young adults in the community. Refine the list to determine items that are of interest to the youth. Identify the skills that the youth or young adult will need to successfully participate.

Where Can You Volunteer?

Visit and participate in a variety of volunteer situations to learn about the opportunities and needs of the community. The youth can support his or her community in this area and cultivate interests that lead to career development.

Mentorships

Shadow, meet with, interview or observe adults in the careers and field of choice. Consider all aspects of the potential employment. Does this career or job fit the vision for the future? Is the student "on course" to develop the needed skills?

Who Are the Employers in Your Community?

Take a walk or a drive around your community. Visit, record and discuss the types of employers in your local community, including large and small businesses, merchants and service agencies. Discuss what these business, agencies and organizations provide for the community. Highlight employers and organizations that peak an interest or match a skill area of the youth.

Where Do People Live in the Community?

Visit (in person and virtually) the variety of living and housing options that exist in the community. Do these reflect the vision for the future or could they be modified to complete this vision?

Fitness and Health Options

Search out, review, visit and participate in wellness and fitness centers as a consideration for future membership. Look at the variety of fitness programs and types of exercise options that are available and identify those that meet the student's health and wellness needs.

Everyone Needs Assistance

Consider the assistance, mentoring, supervision or facilitation the student may need as an adult. Is it likely that the student will need the services of an agency? Coworkers? Family? Friends? Technology? Make a list of all the possible people, agencies and technologies that assist the student as he/she enters adulthood.

Vision Statement

For IEPs taking effect by age 14, the vision statement on the IEP should include statements related to the student's adult life plan and long-term outcomes related to employment, postsecondary education, post-school adult living and community participation.

From Vision to Transition

The vision statement and present levels of performance will contribute to the development of the student's high school courses of study at age 14 and to the development of measurable postsecondary goals by age 16.

School, Home and Community Involvement

Transition planning is an ongoing process that must begin at age 14 in Ohio schools. However, important skills development should occur before age 14. Best practices support the development of skills so that students can perform in the adult environments they will enter as adults, including residential, postsecondary education, leisure and work environments.

Responsibilities

Parents and students should know their legal rights regarding transition planning and services and the importance of their participation in the process. School district transition teams need to know how to meet their responsibility for transition planning.

Using the ASD Transition Guideline Booklets

Without planning, adult service agencies and providers may not recognize or address needs unique to individuals with ASD. Issues such as sensory, social or communication deficits may cause individuals to fail in school, be fired from a job or engage in activities that put them at risk. The set of guideline booklets identifies specific issues related to ASD with recommended strategies and supports. Areas such as communication, sensory processing, socialization, repetitive behaviors/routines and deficits in executive functions will need to be addressed in the areas of age-appropriate assessment, employment, residential living, and community and postsecondary education.

Tools & Resources

This list of helpful resources is included to assist the user in accessing additional information.

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Rules

This site provides information about the state legislation and administrative rules that govern the actions, roles and requirements of Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD).

IDEIA 2004 and Secondary Transition

This site provides information about the requirements for secondary transition for students who are provided services through an IEP.

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education

OSERS supports programs that help educate children and youth with disabilities, provides for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

The Transition Coalition

The Transition Coalition offers several free online modules related to transition, including a module that provides an overview of the transition requirements of IDEA.

A Parent's Guide to Section 504 in Public Schools

This article explains Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which is a civil rights law that can provide educational benefits to students with learning challenges who may not qualify for an IEP.

OAR: A Guide for Transition to Adulthood

Chapter 1 in the Organization for Autism (OAR) transition manual focuses on agency help and legal information.

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC)

Offers information about RSC services, consumer rights and responsibilities.

2012 EDITION



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