



# Transition: Special Education, Planning, Services & IEP

## Transition Services (Ages 16–21)

As your student gets older and progresses through school, her/his special education program is required to focus more intentionally on preparing your student for life after s/he graduates or “ages-out” of the school system.

Your student’s transition out of the district’s special education program is addressed by adding a transition plan to your student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Transition services must be included in your student’s IEP **beginning the year in which s/he reaches age 16, at the very least, or earlier** if the IEP team determines it is appropriate.

Transition planning is **a process to help students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) decide what they want to do after high school.** It also helps them figure out how to get there.

The purpose is to help teens prepare to be independent young adults. There sure is a lot to think about and plan for! Just remember, take one step at a time. There are people and resources that can help you along the way.

1. Are you actively involved in your planning?
2. How do you tell others what you want?
3. How does your IEP, transition goals affect your life as an adult? What type of training/classes do you need to reach your long range goals?
4. Are you building on your strengths?
5. What accommodations do you need?
6. What types of assistive technology are available?
7. What do you need to attend college? What types of financial aid are available? What accommodations are available?

Prior to ninth grade, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of a student with a disability focuses mainly on the student’s educational and functional needs and what services the school will provide to help the student make educational progress. At age 16 (or earlier if the IEP team decides it is necessary), a student’s IEP changes to focus more intently on preparing a student for life after graduation. A transition plan is added to a student’s IEP as the student prepares to ‘transition’ out of the district’s special education program and into the adult world. The IEP will also continue to include a focus on education and functional needs. Expected graduation date is based on the date a student enters 9th grade. If a student needs to change the expected graduation date, it should be documented on the IEP transition plan in the year in which the student turns 16 (WAC 180-51-035). The process is important in bringing together schools, students, families, and community agencies in a joint effort to plan the most appropriate path to adult life.

Check out Parent to Parent website for “Transition School-Age to Adulthood Guide/Packet” for a lot more information and details. <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx>

### The Transition Planning Must:

- start before the student turns 16;
- be individualized;
- be based on the student's strengths, preferences, and interests; and
- include opportunities to develop functional skills for work and community life.

### Who Develops the Transition Plan?

- The IEP team;
- The student;
- Parents;
- Optional—employers, college representatives, student advocates

### What is the Transition Team's Job?

- Identify the student's vision for his/her life beyond high school;
- Discuss what the student is currently capable of doing in both academic and functional areas;
- Identify age-appropriate, measurable goals

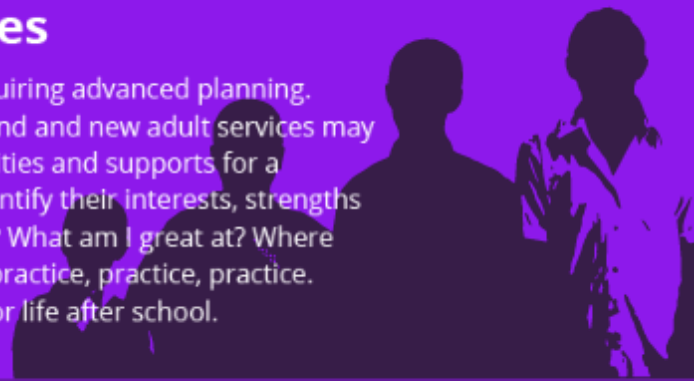
### **Six Essential Steps to take when Creating a Transition Plan for your Student's IEP:**

1. Conduct transition assessments (formal and/or informal) to identify your student's:
  - Strengths (talents/skills)
  - Interests (desired career/line of work)
  - Preferences (desired work/school or living environment)
  - Needs (accommodations, modifications, and other support(s) to minimize limitations resulting from a disability)
2. Develop appropriate and measurable post-secondary goals based on transition assessments data related to:
  - Education/Training (required goals area)
  - Employment (required goal area) · Independent Living (required if determined appropriate by the IEP team)
3. Identify individualized transition services in the areas related to supporting your student's achievement of post-secondary goals and/or meeting graduation requirements.

Some key example areas to consider are: Instruction · Related Services · Community Experiences · Development of adult living objectives
4. Write a relevant course of study that takes into consideration what types of classes your student should plan to take during the remainder of their time in the school to support her/his identified post-secondary goals. Multi-year planning may be necessary.
5. Coordinate services with Adult Service agencies that your student might utilize after he/she is no longer eligible for education services.
6. Write IEP goals to support the post-secondary goals identified for your student.  
[OSPI – http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/Transition.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/Transition.aspx)

# Transition Planning for Youth with Developmental Disabilities

Where to begin? Transitioning to adulthood is a process requiring advanced planning. Some of the supports a child under 18 has will come to an end and new adult services may begin. Parents may need to develop new expectations, activities and supports for a growing adult. The person with the disability will need to identify their interests, strengths and their next steps. What do I want to do after high school? What am I great at? Where will I live? Successful transitions require early planning and practice, practice, practice. Start the process as early as you can to prepare your child for life after school.



Grade 8

Grades 9 and 10

16yrs old

18+ yrs old

## 18-21 Year Old Transition Program

Each school district provides special education services for students ages 18-21 old differently. Common learning activities include job training including writing resumes, interview skills, and on the job training, life skills such as shopping, cooking, budgeting, and using public transportation. Talk to your school district to determine the services they provide and what will be appropriate for your student. We encourage students to take advantage of special education services and remain in school through age 21; school is an entitlement, adult day services or not.

When will my student “age-out” of special education? Your student is eligible to receive special education services from the school district beginning at the age of 3 and up to the age of 21. Your student does not remain eligible for special education services if s/he graduates with a high school diploma before s/he turns 21. If your student turns 21 after August 31 of the current school year then, s/he remains eligible through the remainder of that school year.

## Graduation and Exiting School

The IEP should identify the circumstances in which the student will exit school. In all circumstances, there is no requirement that the student completes their IEP goals.

The two most common circumstances are:

- The student meets all requirements for high school graduation including earning enough required credits, passing mandatory state assessments, etc. as described in the IEP. Depending on the accommodations and modifications identified in the IEP, a student in this category may graduate with a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA)
- The student is eligible for the 18-21 year old program and continues in school until they “age out” at the end of the school year during which they turn 21. All students in this category will receive a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). Students eligible for the 18-21 year old program are allowed to participate in high school graduation activities and ceremonies with their same-aged peers. They will not receive their high school diploma and will remain eligible to receive special education services. In this case, they have shared in the experience of graduation, but have not officially exited.

# KEY POINTS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS

**Alignment: IEP and IPE alignment facilitates a seamless service deliver process.**

#1	<b>Individualized Education Plan (IEP)</b>	<b>Participate</b> in your IEP or child's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)) development to ensure that transition services are addressed in your child's IEP by age 16 (or earlier, depending on your State's laws). Students with disabilities and their representative are critical members of the IEP Team and have valuable information that is needed for quality transition planning
#2	<b>Be Familiar with the Steps to Transition</b>	Schools should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Invite</b> student;</li> <li>2. <b>Administer</b> age appropriate transition assessments;</li> <li>3. <b>Determine</b> needs, interests, preferences, and strengths;</li> <li>4. <b>Develop</b> postsecondary goals;</li> <li>5. <b>Create</b> annual goals consistent with postsecondary goals;</li> <li>6. <b>Determine</b> transition services, including course of study needed to assist your student in reaching those goals;</li> <li>7. <b>Consult</b> other agencies, in particular, the VR agency; and</li> <li>8. <b>Update</b> annually.</li> </ol>
#3	<b>Implementation of Transition Services</b>	Provide transition services as identified in the IEP. Pre-employment transition services are provided under the Rehabilitation Act. Alignment of the IEP and IPE facilitates a seamless service delivery process.
#4	<b>Referral to VR and/or other Adult Agencies</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pre-employment transition services provided under the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate;</li> <li>2. Familiarize yourself with laws relating to other programs; and</li> <li>3. Learn about community agencies that provide services to support students, such as travel training and daily living skills.</li> </ol>
#5	<b>VR Application Process</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Share employment interests and capabilities during the intake interview.</li> <li>2. Focus on assessment(s) to lead to the student's postsecondary goals</li> </ol>
#6	<b>Individualized Plan for Employment</b>	Once a student has been determined eligible for VR services, the IPE must be developed and approved within 90 days, and no later than the time the student leaves the school setting.
#7	<b>Common VR Services Available under the Rehabilitation Act</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transition services;</li> <li>2. Vocational counseling;</li> <li>3. Vocational training;</li> <li>4. Postsecondary education;</li> <li>5. Supported employment services;</li> <li>6. Career development; and</li> <li>7. Job placement.</li> </ol>
#8	<b>VR Service</b>	As a result of the student or youth with disability: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Achieving an employment outcome; or</li> <li>2. No longer pursuing an employment outcome and, therefore, determined ineligible for VR services</li> </ol>

## **Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS)**

School-Based Transition Services School-based transition services are provided under IDEA by schools to assist and support students with disabilities in preparing for employment. School activities may include but are not limited to developing independent living skills, providing career exploration, community and/or school-based work experiences to develop knowledge about work habits and responsibility, and academic preparation. Secondary school transition services are no longer provided when a student graduates or leaves school. [What are Pre-Employment Transition Services?](#) Significant changes in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 2014 now provide VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) agencies across the nation with the opportunity to provide expanded services in [five specific focus areas](#) to students with IEP or 504 plans, whether or not they have applied or been found eligible for DVR services. These services can be provided to groups of students who are eligible or potentially eligible for DVR services, and also individually to students who have open cases with DVR.

## **School Foundations**

The Job Foundation is an effort to engage students earlier in targeted employment planning and connection to the adult service system. Community-based employment providers will use their expertise to gather important foundational information about skills and supports needed for a job. They will work in partnership with school staff to leverage vocational, academic, and life skill preparation being done in the schools on behalf of the individual student. The intent is that with a completed Job Foundation, a student and their team will have an actionable next step for employment. The employment provider will be ready to serve the student through DVR in either a Community Based Assessment or job placement plan in their last year of school. Students are asked to commit to stay in school to continue skill development, access school resources, and be eligible for the SSI student earned income exclusion if they get a job. The ultimate goal is more students complete transition programs with a job or secondary education connection. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DDA/dda/documents/DDA%20Job%20Foundation%20Guidelines.pdf>

## **School to Work Program**

A program of Island County Developmental Disabilities designed to help students achieve employment in their final year of the Transition Program . Students must be clients of DDA and must apply in the spring before the student's final year of school. Taking part in this program with help connect students with adult waiver services. Talk to the teacher or go to this website for more info. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/developmental-disabilities/services/school-to-work.aspx>

To discuss these programs: Contact Mike Etzell (360)678-7883 [mikeet@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:mikeet@islandcountywa.gov)





Job Foundation	School to Work
<p><b>What is the purpose of Job Foundation?</b>  Engage, connect and plan earlier for students in their second to last year of school through discovery and the completion of the Job Foundation report that includes actionable next steps for employment.</p>	<p><b>What is the purpose of School to Work?</b>  To increase the number of students with developmental disabilities who will leave school with paid employment and provide a smooth transition to adult services and community life.</p>
<p><b>What is it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pilot project through OSPI, DDA, DVR and Snohomish County</li> <li>• Gives employment providers increased discovery time with second-year transition students to prepare for employment</li> <li>• A bridge to School to Work</li> </ul>	<p><b>What is it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A job placement program</li> <li>• Occurs over the course of a transition student's third/final year</li> <li>• The goal is paid employment when the student leaves school</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who is it for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who are DDA eligible</li> <li>• Students who will apply for Social Security/SSI</li> <li>• Students in their second year of Transition, ages 19-20 years old</li> </ul>	<p><b>Who is it for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who are DDA and DVR eligible</li> <li>• Students who have applied for Social Security/SSI</li> <li>• Students in their third/final year of Transition, ages 20-21 years old</li> <li>• Students who have a completed Job Foundation report by the end of their second year</li> </ul>
<p><b>When is it available?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's second year of Transition</li> </ul>	<p><b>When is it available?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's third/final year of Transition</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who is involved? Who are the partners?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student/Family (team)</li> <li>• Schools/Educational Service Districts (ESD)/Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)</li> <li>• County</li> <li>• Employment Providers</li> <li>• State Agencies (DDA and DVR)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Who is involved? Who are the partners?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student/Family (team)</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• County</li> <li>• Employment Providers</li> <li>• State Agencies (DDA and DVR)</li> </ul>
<p><b>In summary...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report is completed by an employment provider working with the student and the school</li> <li>• The county approves the report and it is shared with DDA and DVR</li> <li>• The report is a guide for further supports as needed and to transition to School to Work in the student's third/final year</li> </ul>	<p><b>In summary...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student works with their employment team (employment provider, teacher, DDA case manager, DVR counselor and County, etc.) to set and create future employment goals</li> <li>• Job Foundation report will be used along with planning, discovery and assessments as needed</li> <li>• Job development occurs</li> <li>• Preferably, student will be employed by June when they exit school</li> <li>• Student will transition to ongoing career path services through DDA</li> </ul>



# Special Education Resources

The following resources can provide information and support as well as dispute resolution options regarding questions, concerns and conflict with Special Education in K-12 Public Schools in Washington State.

## Information and General Support

Resource	Description
<p><b>Washington State Governor’s Office of Education Ombuds (OEO)</b>            (866)297-2597  <a href="http://www.oeo.wa.gov">www.oeo.wa.gov</a></p>	<p>Facilitates resolution of individual complaints regarding issues or concerns that impact any student in Washington’s Public School system. Provides public information, consultation, and referrals regarding Washington State Public education system. Trains families, educators and community based professionals about the public education system, conflict resolution and effective parent engagement.</p>
<p><b>Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)</b>  <b>Special Education Parent Liaison</b>            (360)725-6075  <a href="https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/family-engagement-and-guidance/need-assistance">https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/family-engagement-and-guidance/need-assistance</a></p>	<p>The OSPI Special Education Parent Liaison is available as a resource to parents in non-legal special education matters to answer questions, provide information and referral, and assist parents to understand complaint processes and district procedures. The Special Education Parent Liaison does not advocate on behalf of any one party.</p>
<p><b>US Department of Education: IDEA website</b>  <a href="https://sites.ed.gov/idea/">https://sites.ed.gov/idea/</a></p>	<p>The federal government’s website about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that dictates special education law. Has extensive information about each area addressed in IDEA</p>
<p><b>Office of Special Education Programs</b>            Department of Education general (800) 872-5327            Office of Special Education Programs (202) 245-7459  <a href="https://sites.ed.gov/idea/">https://sites.ed.gov/idea/</a></p>	<p>The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs’ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website has a lot of information about the IDEA and its implementing regulations. Resources are organized by topic and many are in an easy to read question and answer format.</p>
<p><b>Washington PAVE</b>            (800)5PARENT  <a href="https://wapave.org/">https://wapave.org/</a></p>	<p>PAVE is a parent-driven organization that works with families using trained parent volunteers to problem-solve special education related problems and concerns. Services available statewide. PAVE specializes in support for <u>military</u> parents in their STOMP program.</p>

Special Education Resources Continued.....

Resource	Description
<p><b>Wrights Law</b>  <a href="https://www.wrightslaw.com/">https://www.wrightslaw.com/</a></p>	<p>Parents, advocates, educators, and attorneys come to Wrightslaw for accurate, up-to-date information about special education law and advocacy for children with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Washington Autism Alliance &amp; Advocacy</b>            (425)836-6513  <a href="https://washingtonautismalliance.org/">https://washingtonautismalliance.org/</a></p>	<p>Specializing in Autism, WAAA offers support on special education issues including information, training and possible legal consultation.</p>
<p><b>Open Doors for Multicultural Families</b>            (253)216-4479  <a href="https://www.multiculturalfamilies.org/">https://www.multiculturalfamilies.org/</a></p>	<p>We engage and partner with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities and their families. We use a cultural brokerage model to navigate services, provide specialized programming, and advocate for systems change.</p>
<p><b>Special Education Technology Center (SETC)</b>            (509)963-3350  <a href="https://www.cwu.edu/setc/">https://www.cwu.edu/setc/</a></p>	<p>All school districts in the state of Washington and the personnel who work in those districts.</p> <p>Any student, preschool through age 21, who formally receives special education services and who may require assistive technology to access their education.</p> <p>Families of special needs students. (Services must be accessed through the school district serving their child.)</p>
<p><b>Seattle University</b>            Center for Change in Transition Services            (206)296-6494  <a href="https://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/">https://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/</a></p>	<p>The Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) is a Washington State Needs Project funded annually with federal resources from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The goal of CCTS is to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in the state.</p>
<p><b>Pacer's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment</b>  <a href="https://www.pacer.org/transition/">https://www.pacer.org/transition/</a></p>	<p>Learning Center: Find helpful information and resources on transition topics such as independent living, postsecondary, education and employment.</p>



# Dispute Resolution Options

## Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)

(866)297-2597 [www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov)

- Listen to concerns and address questions about the K-12 public education system
- Use informal conflict resolution tools to support collaborative problem-solving and promote education justice
- Provide coaching, facilitation, and training about family and community engagement and systems advocacy

## OSPI Citizen's Complaint (360)725-6075

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/dispute-resolution/file-community-complaint>

A community complaint is a written statement to OSPI, alleging that a federal or state special education rule or law has been violated by:

- A school district,
- Another public agency serving special education students,
- An educational service district, or
- The state.

## Sound Options Mediation

(800)692-2540 <http://sometg.com/our-services/conflict-intervention/>

Sound Options Group serves as the Administrative Agent to OSPI and DCYF to provide Special Education Mediation in Washington State. This resource is a federally mandated service under the IDEA and is available at no cost to families, educators, and service providers. Participation is voluntary for all parties.

## Special Education Due Process Hearings

Special Education Due Process hearing is a formal, legal proceeding conducted by an administrative law judge. A written request for due process hearing is made by a parent or district relating to issues about the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or provides of Free Appropriate Public Education FAPE to a student. Requests must be made within-and allege violations that occurred not more than **2 years** before the date you knew or should have known about the allegations.

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/program-improvement/technical-assistance/dispute-resolution>

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/dispute-resolution/special-education-due-process-hearing-decisions>