

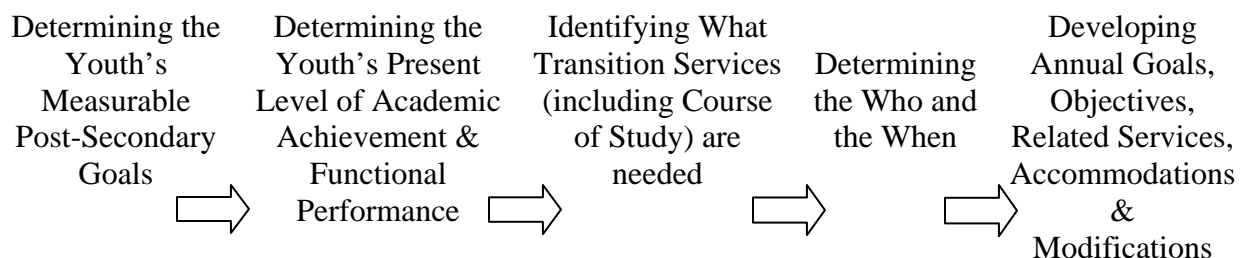
# Key Component – Writing the Transition Plan in the IEP



This section discusses the IEP transition planning components required under IDEA 2004 and the NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities. Since no law spells out how IEP teams complete these requirements, we are going to use a model that many New Hampshire school districts have been using to develop transition plans. This model, described by Dr. Ed O’Leary, is aligned with the transition planning requirements of an IEP. This method is also considered nationwide as a best practice in secondary transition planning.

Typically, IEP development begins with reviewing evaluations and information about the youth and determining their present levels of performance. Using the present level of performance, annual goals are written and the process ends with filling in the transition planning requirements – measurable post-secondary goals and transition services. What makes O’Leary’s model more effective for transition planning is that it starts with what is often considered the end point – what a youth wants to do after high school and then back plans. IEP teams focus on what a youth’s goals for post school life are, determine what the youth’s skills are in relation to those goals and then asks, what are the transition services, including the course of study, needed by youth to support them in reaching their goals?

To create the transition plan in the IEP, we will break it down into steps that will build upon one another. The process looks like this:



(O’Leary, 2005)

While we will not describe the process for developing annual goals, objectives, etc., we will talk about how transition planning requirements impact the annual goals and objectives.



Youth with disabilities must be invited to their IEP meetings anytime transition is being discussed. However, there is no requirement that the youth attend the meeting. If a youth chooses not to attend, their strengths, interests and preferences must be gathered and considered by the IEP team when developing the IEP.



- o In order for transition planning to be effective, youth must be involved at some level. Not all youth will be willing to attend their IEP meetings, but they all have something important to say. There are a variety of ways youth can participate in the IEP and transition planning process. See **Key Component – Give Youth an Opportunity to Get Involved** for more information and tools to support youth involvement in the transition planning and IEP process.

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Writing the Transition Plan in the IEP—page 14

## Step



## **MEASURABLE POST-SECONDARY GOALS**

The starting point for transition planning are a youth's Measurable Post-Secondary Goals. What is a Measurable Post-Secondary Goal? It is a specific statement of what a youth wants to achieve after high school.

These goals are based on their interests, preferences and strengths.

**Measurable Post-Secondary Goals** are required in the following areas:

**Education &/or Training** – This includes any post secondary learning activity including college, community college, technical training programs, apprentice programs, on the job training, job corps programs, and the military.

**Employment** – This includes full and part time employment, independent and supported employment, volunteer opportunities, work study programs, internships, or any type of career oriented goal.

**Independent Living Skills, if appropriate** – This includes living arrangements, leisure and recreation, community participation, and other adult living areas such as financial responsibilities and transportation.



### Transition Planning Tips!!

- o IDEA 2004 states that a Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in Independent Living Skills is not required unless the IEP team determines it is appropriate. The IEP team may not see this area as appropriate or requiring special education, however, families should think about the independent living goals they and their youth may have outside of the IEP process.

Measurable Post-Secondary Goals may not start out being specific. Youth may not have a lot of experiences and may need to “test drive” some options. Youth may have a general idea about their future, may not have really thought about it or had enough experiences to know what they want to do after high school. The IEP is reviewed and revised annually, so youth's post-secondary goals can evolve. However, by a youth's last year of school, whether they are graduating at 18 or 21, the Measurable Post-Secondary Goals should be measurable and specific to the youth's goals for life after high school. We will talk more about the process for refining Measurable Post-Secondary Goals in **Key Component – Review and Revise**.

Because a school has no control over whether or not a youth actually achieves his or her postsecondary goals, IEP teams are sometimes hesitant to write specific and measurable goals for post-secondary goals. There are too many variables for a school to control. Unlike Measurable Annual Goals, schools are not held accountable for whether the youth attains their Measurable Post-Secondary Goals because the youth will be continuing to work towards achieving these goals long after graduation. It is a school's responsibility to prepare the youth towards achieving their Measurable Post-Secondary Goals.



## Important Details!

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The New Hampshire Department of Education is sending a survey called the Post-School Data Collection Survey to all youth with an IEP during the previous school year who exit special education because they have graduated or aged out of eligibility. The survey asks youth with disabilities whether they are enrolled in post secondary education, employed or both one year after leaving high school. The survey is not tracking whether the youth is employed or studying in the field they had said they were interested in their transition plan, but whether they are employed or in school at all. The state is required to send summary data to the Office of Special Education Programs at the US Department of Education. No identifying information is attached to the report. For more information on the Post-School Data Collection Survey <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/News/SPEDOutcomes.htm>

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Measurable Post-Secondary Goals, while based on the youth's strengths and interests, must also be based on age appropriate transition assessments. These age appropriate assessments can be formal evaluations such as functional vocational evaluations, state assessments, or other more informal methods like daily living skills checklists and interest inventories. Conversations can also provide important information in the planning process and can be used to help collect information. The information gathered by the IEP team will also be used when writing youth's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, another other important component of the IEP. The IEP team will discuss and decide which assessments (formal and informal) are necessary and appropriate and are responsible for conducting them. Schools may collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation to conduct a vocational evaluation, however, the school is responsible to ensure that it is conducted within the requirements and timeframe specified by the NH Rules.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o **Key Component – Thinking about the Future** has information and tools to help youth determine their goals and provide information in developing Measurable Post-Secondary Goals.



### HOW THIS CAN WORK—

### SARAH'S TRANSITION PLANNING STORY

Sarah knows that she wants to go to college, but is not sure what she wants to study. She likes writing, but isn't sure what that could lead to for a career. Sarah's measurable post secondary goals might start out looking like this:

- Education/Training: I/Sarah will go to college.
- Employment: I/Sarah will have a job that will use my skills and passion for writing.

Notice that Sarah and her IEP team did not include a Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in independent living skills. All areas do not necessarily have to be addressed if the youth does not have a goal in that area or the youth, family and IEP team do not anticipate the need for planning in the area at that time. However, each time the IEP is reviewed, all Measurable Post-Secondary Goal areas should be discussed to see if there are goals or needs to be addressed. At this time, Sarah and her IEP team do not think that a Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in independent living skills is necessary, but will reconsider this decision based on her evolving post school vision and needs.



## HOW THIS CAN WORK—

### RYAN'S TRANSITION PLANNING STORY

There may be times when we have concerns over the goals that youth have for life after high school. Many times, youth want to be the next David Ortiz, 50 cent or Carrie Underwood. A youth may say they want to be a doctor because their mom is a doctor and their grandfather was a surgeon. The youth's family and teachers may think that goal is not attainable for them because of their disability or challenges. It can be a difficult task to try to bring goals to a realistic level. There are some strategies that we can use.

Though his parents and the IEP team have agreed that Ryan will be staying in school until his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, they'd like to start transition planning. Ryan's case manager asks the school guidance counselor for help with figuring out what Ryan wants to do after high school. The guidance counselor meets with Ryan, his parents and his case manager to do a future's planning activity. She facilitates a discussion about what Ryan wants his life to be like after high school. When asked, Ryan says that when he graduates he wants to be a state trooper like his dad and grandpa. His parents believe that this is not a realistic goal for Ryan and that he is only saying this because of his family's history. They have tried to tell him they didn't think that he can be a state trooper, but Ryan just gets angry. His family feels his cerebral palsy will prevent him from passing the physical requirements and that his cognitive disability prevents him from being able to use higher order thinking and make the quick decisions necessary for such a demanding job. The guidance counselor asks Ryan to think about why he wants to be a state trooper and what it is about the job that he likes or interests him. She makes a list of what he says that will be very important later in Ryan's transition planning. He says he wants to be a state trooper because:

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| - My dad and grandpa are | - People like them                     |
| - They are brave         | - People listen to them                |
| - They are important     | - They are great friends to each other |
| - They get to drive fast | - They have guns                       |

All the information gathered during this discussion was taken back to Ryan's IEP team to assist them in writing a transition plan. Because the IEP team wants Ryan's IEP to be reflective of his post school goals, his Measurable Post-Secondary Goals may look like:

- Education/Training: I/Ryan will attend the Police Academy.
- Employment: I/Ryan will be a state trooper.
- Independent Living Skills: I/Ryan will live on my own independently after high school.

Where  
do I  
find this in  
the IEP?



If you take a look at your child's IEP you might have a hard time finding a section called Measurable Post-Secondary Goals. This is because the IEP formats used by most school districts are based on the transition requirements of IDEA 97 and Measurable Post-Secondary Goals were not required then. The content of transition planning has not changed rather just how certain components are worded. So the transition planning components we discuss are easily translated into your child's IEP.

When using the IEP in the NH Special Education Information System (NHSEIS) Transition components should be included in the section called **Transition Student's Preferences, Needs and Interests**.

**Measurable Post-Secondary Goals** are found in the column called **Student's Interests**.

- Where you see Post-Secondary Training and Learning is where you should find/put the youth's **Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in Education &/or Training**
- Where you see Future Employment (Integrated employment or as appropriate, supported employment) is where you should find/put the youth's **Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in Employment**
- The other three sections (Future Home / Independent Living, Future Community Participation & Adult Services) have been combined into one Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in Independent Living, if appropriate. So a youth's **Measurable Post-Secondary Goal in Independent Living** can be found/put in any of those three boxes.

Step



## **PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Now that Sarah, Ryan and their IEP Teams have identified their Measurable Post-Secondary Goals, they will write each youth's **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance**. IEPs have always included present levels, but now we want to make sure that we are including what skills, strengths, interests and needs they have related to their Measurable Post-Secondary Goals.

See the Appendix for Ryan and Sarah's IEPs to see how they and their teams wrote their Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance.

Where  
do I  
find this in  
the IEP?



When using the IEP in the NH Special Education Information System (NHSEIS), you can find this in the IEP section called **Transition Student's Preferences, Needs and Interests**. The youth's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance in relation to their post-secondary goals are found in the column called **Present Levels of Performance**

- Where you see Current Training and Learning Opportunities in Preparation for Post-Secondary Training is where you should find/put the youth's **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance in Education &/or Training**
- Where you see Current Job Skills is where you should find/put the youth's **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance in Employment**
- The other three sections (Current Home, Independent Living Skills, Current Community Participation & Current Adult and Adult Type Service) have been combined into one called Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance in Independent Living. So a youth's **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance in Independent Living** can be found/put in any of those three boxes.

Step

**3** A

### **TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING COURSE OF STUDY**



IDEA 2004 combined Transition Services and Course of Study into one component that is required to be part of the IEP in place when a youth turns 16. The NH Rules, however, separates the two and requires that the Course of Study be included in the IEP starting at age 14.



We will actually be breaking **Transition Services, including Course of Study**, into two separate steps. We will start by focusing on the **Course of Study**. The **Course of Study** is a long range plan that lays out the educational program (including the classes, work experiences, work study, internships and other opportunities) that will assist the youth in meeting their post secondary goals. As with the Measurable Post-Secondary Goals, the Course of Study may start out broad and will be refined over time. A Course of Study may begin as addressing the typical graduation requirements or courses typically taken to complete specific programs such as vocational education programs, post secondary education preparation or programs for those staying in school until they are 21. However, a Course of Study should also include classes, opportunities and experiences that directly relate to the youth's post school goals, interests and preferences. It must also be rigorous enough to allow the youth to complete all graduation requirements in the event they change their mind about going to college or vocational program.



The Course of Study in the IEP provides a visual for youth to see how the courses they are taking in school connect to their post school vision. Plotting out the Course of Study also provides an opportunity for the IEP team to discuss and plan for “potential pitfalls”.



## HOW THIS CAN WORK—

### SARAH’S TRANSITION PLANNING STORY

In plotting Sarah’s course of study, she and her guidance counselor started with the school handbook and plugged in the courses required for college preparatory. They also allowed for some courses that would help her explore different forms of writing and literature to help her narrow down her interests and strengths. Then they reviewed her course of study with her IEP team. As part of the courses identified as required to meet her college goal were 4 credits of foreign language. Based on evaluation and Sarah’s needs, the IEP team feels that Sarah’s dyslexia may make a foreign language class a challenge. Since the IEP team has realized this early in the planning process, they were able to brainstorm some options. Sarah and her IEP team have decided that she will take sign language classes at the local adult learning and obtained permission from her high school for this to count towards her foreign language requirement. This arrangement will allow her to meet the foreign language requirement while addressing her unique learning needs. See Sarah’s IEP in the Appendix for what her full course of study might look like.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o The Course of Study can also serve as a motivator for youth. For those who may be continuing their high school experience until age 21, youth can see that the later years of their education may not be spent in class, but perhaps in community based learning, job opportunities or even in classes at the local community college. It can include vocational courses and should include courses that match the youth’s interests and prepare them for post secondary opportunities.
- o For those who are at risk for dropping out, a Course of Study can visually demonstrate how the classes they are taking now and in the future connect and are preparing them for what they want to do. It may also show them things to “look forward to” in the classes that are not requirements and more electives.



## HOW THIS CAN WORK—

### RYAN'S TRANSITION PLANNING STORY

Ryan is not pleased with the idea of staying in school until he's 21. The IEP team and Ryan plot out the classes he's going to take over next several years. Then they list out the work experiences and community activities, in general terms, that they see happening after what would be considered his senior year. Ryan sees that he'll be working and not going to school every day. Where Ryan imagines he's working with the police department, the IEP team clarifies that this will be determined as Ryan gets closer to his last year in school. At least Ryan feels a bit more comfortable with the long range plan. The IEP team explains that next year they will revisit this list and make changes to better fit what he wants to do. See Ryan's IEP in the Appendix to see what his full course of study may look like.

Where  
do I  
find this in  
the IEP?



When using the IEP in the NH Special Education Information System (NHSEIS), you can find the Course of Study in the section called **Transition Academic Transition Plan, and under the heading Projected Courses to be taken each year.** This section lists the courses to be taken in the 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as a place to list courses projected to be taken if the youth is continuing in school until age 21. It is also the place where you will find the number of credits required by the school district for graduation and the anticipated graduation or completion of program date.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o IEP teams should consider including the school's guidance counselor as part of the team. They have important information regarding the district's credit requirements, post-secondary education programs and other course selection information that should be discussed during the transition planning process. Parents can request that the guidance counselor be invited the IEP meeting.
- o The school's course catalogue/student handbook is a very important resource in planning a Course of Study.
- o Course of Study is not limited to classes. It can also include community experiences and Extended Learning Opportunities. Ask your IEP team about your school district's policies for Extended Learning Opportunities and to consider if they might be appropriate in your youth's transition plan.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Youth should consider interviewing or having a discussion with someone who is working in their field of interest to find out what they feel would be helpful in terms of courses or experiences. This could be included as a Transition Service in the IEP, which we will discuss next.
- o The resources included in **Key Component – Thinking about the Future** can assist youth in figuring out their post-secondary goals and also provides useful information to help with planning a Course of Study.

Step



## B TRANSITION SERVICES

The **Transition Services** are the activities or “steps” that need to happen to prepare the youth to meet their post secondary goals. IDEA 2004 requires that Transition Services be a coordinated set of activities designed in a results-oriented process that is connected to the youth’s Measurable Post-Secondary Goals. Transition Services should be focused on improving the youth’s academic and functional performance. In other words, these are the skills, experiences, activities, opportunities and connections the youth needs in order to reach their post secondary goals and the “action plan” to reach them.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Although Transition Services are not required to be part of the IEP until age 16, nothing prohibits IEP teams from including them earlier or at age 14 as best practice suggests. If Transition Services are not being discussed at age 14, parents should request the IEP team include them.
- o In trying to determine what Transition Services are needed, the questions to be answered are: What would anyone who wanted to be/do (insert their post secondary goal) need to:
  - be able to do?
  - have for skills?
  - have for abilities?
  - know how to do?
  - have accomplished?
  - have for education or training?
  - enjoy doing?



## HOW THIS CAN WORK—

### RYAN'S TRANSITION PLANNING STORY

After the guidance counselor wrote down what it was about being a state trooper that he liked, she asks Ryan and the group to brainstorm what anyone who wanted to be a state trooper would need to be able to do or have to do.

- Not be afraid/be brave
- Go to college and get a degree in criminal justice
- Pass a rigorous physical exam
- Go to the police academy
- Be able to think and act quickly
- Be able to work well under pressure and stress
- Be able to drive

While his family and other IEP team members believe this list demonstrates that Ryan's goal is not attainable for him, Ryan believes differently and still wants to be a state trooper. This information was shared with the remainder of his IEP team and the team decided that transition planning needed to focus on career exploration in the early stages. The IEP team thinks this will help Ryan discover for himself the barriers to his being a state trooper and help him to decide if this is an attainable option. This will also allow for exploration of other options that match his interests. See Ryan's IEP in the Appendix for all his Transition Services.



## Important Details!

IDEA 2004 requires IEP teams to include **Transition Service** needs in the areas of instruction, related services, community experiences, employment and other adult living and post school objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The IEP team must also decide who is responsible for what services as some may require linkages to outside agencies or be the responsibility of the youth and/or family.

Over the next several pages, we will look at each of these **Transition Services** areas in more detail

**Instruction**—These activities include course work, educational experiences or skill development needed to prepare the youth for college, training programs or other post secondary learning opportunity.

Important instruction activities to think about:

- Instruction on and opportunities to learn and practice self advocacy skills with teachers, at team meetings, at the workplace, with adult agencies, etc.
- Instruction on disability awareness, communication skills, self disclosure
- Direct instruction on organizational skills and strategies
- Direct instruction on study and time management skills and strategies
- Direct instruction on test taking and note taking skills
- Instruction about the special education and IEP process
- College exploration or research
- Instruction on rights and responsibilities after high school
- Learning about their own learning styles, strengths and needs



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o For information and resources to help youth learn about the IEP and special education process, see **Key Component – Give Youth an Opportunity to Get Involved!**
- o For information and resources to support college exploration, see **Key Component – Thinking about the Future**
- o For information and resources to help youth learn about their rights and responsibilities after high school, see **Key Component – What Else Do I Need to Know?**

**Related Services** – Special Education laws use the term Related Services in two ways and this can be confusing when we are doing transition planning. In developing IEPs, teams determine what related services (such as speech and language therapy or physical therapy) are necessary to assist the child in meeting their goals and accessing the curriculum. When we talk about related service needs for transition services we are talking about the activities and connections needed to prepare the youth to address their support (related services) needs after high school.

Important related services activities that should be considered:

- Connection to adult service providers
- Locating services to provide note taking services, tutoring, coach, mentor or reader services
- Evaluation for/acquiring/learning about assistive technology
- Learning about their special health care needs
- Navigating the adult health care system
- Navigating the Mental Health care system
- Guardianship options
- Connection to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o NH Family Voices [www.nhfv.org](http://www.nhfv.org) has a great deal of resources and information on the transition from pediatrics to adult services also known as health care transition. They also have information on benefits, insurance and Medicaid.
- o NAMI has created a guide book for families of children with mental illness that includes a chapter on transitioning to the adult mental health system. <http://naminh.org/documents/ChildGuide2007.pdf>
- o For more information about adult services, see **Key Component – What Else Do I Need to Know?**

**Community experiences-** These activities are designed to help the youth gain skills to and connections necessary for them to actively participate in the community. This would include recreation, leisure, social and civic responsibility, etc.

Important Community Experiences:

- Registering to vote and/or selective service
- Participation in clubs or organizations in the community based around interests
- Driver's license or Non-driver's ID
- Training on accessing and using public or community transportation

**Employment-** This includes the opportunities to learn work related skills (soft skills such as communication, job safety, work ethic) job finding and retaining skills, as well as volunteer opportunities, career exploration and work experiences.

Important employment related transition services:

- Instruction on how to find a job / job finding strategies
- Completing a job application
- Interviewing skills
- Learning about employer expectations
- Learning employability skills such as punctuality, appropriate attire, cleanliness/hygiene etc.
- Connection to Vocational Rehabilitation
- Participating in job shadows
- Locating and attending job fairs
- Participating in NH Mentoring Month



Transition  
Planning  
Tips!!

- o For more information and resources around employment, see **Key Component – Thinking about the Future.**
- o For information and resources to help youth learn about their rights and responsibilities after high school, see **Key Component – What Else Do I Need to Know?**

**Post-School Adult Living:** This area includes daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.

**Acquisition of Daily Living Skills, if appropriate** – Often, we only consider daily living skills as needed for those with developmental disabilities. But daily living skills include things like balancing a check book and paying the bills, something all youth need to know about.

Important daily living skill acquisition related transition services:

- Money management skills (balancing check book, budgeting)
- Self-care and hygiene
- Personal safety
- Living situations and housing options
- Phone skills
- Emergency preparedness
- Computer skills

**Functional Vocational Evaluation, if appropriate:** A functional vocational evaluation not only assesses the youth’s interests and what they might be good at in terms of employment, but should also look at what they have for job related skills, what they need for skills and key components for employment. It is often assumed that this type of assessment is “automatically” performed as part of the transition planning process, however it is not. IEP teams should discuss conducting a Functional Vocational Evaluation and parents can request that one be conducted. For more information on functional vocational evaluations, please see **Key Component – Thinking about the Future.**



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o While the need for Transition Services in the areas of Acquisition of Daily Living Skills are only considered if the IEP team feels they are appropriate, best practice tells us we should consider this for all youth. This area include things such as living/housing options that may not be a school - based responsibility so families need to be aware and consider needs in this area when doing transition planning.



Where  
do I  
find this in  
the IEP?



When using the IEP in the NH Special Education Information System (NHSEIS), you can find the Transition Services in your child's IEP in the section called **Transition Academic Transition Plan**. The **Transition Areas** are listed and under the Goal heading is where you can find the services (or activities) that correspond to that Transition Area. There should be at least one Goal (activity) connected to each of the youth's Measurable Post-Secondary Goals. There can be more than one Goal listed each Transition Area. We will talk about the next two boxes (Begin Date & Agency/Person Responsible) in the next step.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Some of these Transition Services areas might seem to overlap. Obtaining a Non-driver's ID card could be considered an activity under Community Experience or it could be considered a Daily Life Skill activity. Either Transition Service Area is appropriate as long as the activity is connected to one of the youth's Measurable Post-Secondary Goals.
- o Also, some of the Transition Service areas may not be appropriate for all youth. For instance, Sarah may not need related services after high school. When thinking of the Transition Services needed, however, families need to think beyond what a school would be responsible for providing.
- o The Area Agencies and Vocational Rehabilitation created a guide to assist youth with developmental disabilities and their families with transition planning <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/adultlearning/VR/AreaAgencyTransitionManual.htm>

Step



## **THE WHO AND THE WHEN**

Once all of the Transition Services/activities have been identified, the IEP team should look at who is responsible for what Transition Service/activity and when each will happen. Everyone will have some responsibilities in the transition process. Remember, a transition plan is a long range plan so not all the activities are going to (or need to) happen in that particular IEP year. Those activities that special education is responsible for now become annual goals and/or objectives. These are the goals and objectives that the school district is responsible for ensuring that the youth meet.



## HOW THIS CAN WORK— SARAH'S TRANSITION PLANNING STORY

One of the Transition Services identified by Sarah and her IEP team is to explore local colleges. The IEP team determines that the family and Sarah should be responsible for taking her on visits because that is what any family would do. Her guidance counselor, however, will help Sarah identify colleges or programs that have supports that would be appropriate for Sarah because that is what a guidance counselor would help all students do. See Sarah's IEP in the Appendix for all her Transition Services.



### Important Details!

During the transition planning process, the IEP team might identify needs that they are not able or responsible to address. The IEP team should assist the family in identifying and linking to possible resources to support those Transition Service needs the school is not responsible for.

It is important to know that if another agency or person (this includes the youth and/or parent) is responsible for providing a Transition Service and fails to, the school district is not responsible to provide the Transition Service. The school district is, however, responsible to bring the IEP team back together to figure out how to obtain or provide that Transition Service. Sometimes IEP teams may be hesitant to put things in a transition plan because they do not want to be held accountable if someone (including the parent) fails to follow through. IDEA 2004 is very specific that it is not the schools responsibility to provide the Transition Service in the event an outside agency or person fails to.



### Transition Planning Tips!!

- o When thinking about the “who” we often start by thinking about what agencies provide services. These agencies can be:
  - Your local Area Agency (who provides services to adults with developmental disabilities),
  - Community Mental Health Centers
  - Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Granite State Independent Living



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o For more information about resources in NH, check out these resource guides available through NH Family Voices:  
**Maneuvering the Maze** <http://www.nhfv.org/Publications/Maneuvering%20Through%20the%20Maze%202-05.pdf>  
**Plugged In** <http://www.nhfv.org/Publications/New%20Teen%20Guidebook.pdf>
- o It's important to think about what families have for natural resources and what they can contribute to the transition plan. What connections or supports exist within the local community that may not be “agency” or service delivery system related? IEP teams and families should also consider non-agency related community members such as:
  - Representatives from the local community college or college the youth may be thinking of attending
  - The youth's current employer – They can provide valuable information about what a youth's current skill levels are and what supports or skills need to be developed to continue the youth's employment after high school.
  - Other family members or friends who will be or can provide support after high school.

Where  
do I  
find this in  
the IEP?



When using the IEP in the NH Special Education Information System (NHSEIS), you can find this right next to the **Transition Area and Goals** in the **Transition Academic Transition Plan**, you see sections called **Begin date** and **Agency/Person Responsible**. Each **Goal** should have a corresponding date indicating when it will happen and list who is responsible for it happening. There may be more than one person responsible for an activity and that person/agency can include the youth, parent or outside agency. Since the Transition Plan is a long range plan, the begin date may not be within this IEP period.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o As part of the IEP development, a schedule for its monitoring and review of progress should be discussed and agreed upon by the youth and IEP team. This includes monitoring and progress on the transition plan. When developing how progress will be monitored, the team should discuss:
  - How often will the transition plan be reviewed? (Best practice suggests quarterly or in conjunction with the issuing of report cards.)
  - Who will be involved in the review? The youth should always be involved in the review of the transition plan. Other members may include the parents, case manager, guidance counselor, and friends.
  - If the parents are not part of the review, how will they be informed of the review.
- o It is required that the IEP, which includes the transition plan, is reviewed and revised annually. However, youth need more frequent opportunities to go through their transition plan. For more information on reviewing the transition plan, see **Key Component - Review and Revise**.

# Key Component – What Else Do I Need to Know?



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## **Age of Majority, Guardianship and Transfer of Rights**

In the state of New Hampshire age 18 is considered the Age of Majority. This means youth are considered adults and their own guardian regardless of whether they have graduated from high school. Therefore, they take control over their educational rights and are now responsible for signing the IEP. Schools are required to inform youth by age 17 of the rights that will transfer to them, however this area may need to be reviewed more frequently and earlier. If a youth is capable of being their own guardian but does not want to sign the IEP, they may have a parent continue as their educational decision maker and should do so in writing. See PIC's website [www.picnh.org](http://www.picnh.org) for a sample letter that you may use to notify the team of this.

In some cases, there may be concerns regarding whether a youth has the capability to be their own guardian. There are several guardianship options including guardianship of the person, guardianship of the estate and temporary guardianship. For more information on guardianship and guardianship options:

- Your local Area Agency <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/BDS/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/bds-area-agencies.htm>
- Office of Public Guardianship <http://www.opgnh.org/>
- Clerks of County Probate Court <http://www.nh.gov/judiciary/courtlocations/index.htm#probate>

## **The Adult Service System – Entitlement vs. Eligibility**

Children with disabilities found eligible for special education under the IDEA 2004 and the NH Rules are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) from age 3 to graduation with a regular high school diploma or to the age 21, whichever comes first. The IEP lists the services and supports required to provide the child with a disability with a FAPE and a school must provide the services listed in the IEP. Once a youth graduates with a regular high school diploma or turns 21, whichever comes first, they are no longer entitled to a free appropriate public education. They may however, be eligible for other adult services. Adult services are dependent on eligibility and funding availability and do not begin until a youth is 21. It is important to know that just because

a youth was eligible for special education services in high school does not automatically qualify them for adult services, as the criteria for eligibility are different. There are also wait lists for many services. This is one of the many reasons that transition planning is so important.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o The state is divided into 10 regions and each has a local Area Agencies that provides services to adults with developmental disabilities. Many Area Agencies have transition specialists or other staff who assist youth with developmental disabilities and their families during the transition process. The Area Agency can be involved in the transition planning process and IEP development. They can also assist youth and families in accessing benefits (such as Social Security, Social Security Disability, Medicare) and making guardianship arrangements. For more information on the local Area Agencies, <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/BDS/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/bds-area-agencies.htm>
- o The state also has 10 local Community Mental Health Centers that can provide mental health services to adults with mental health issues. Some have staff that work specifically with youth transitioning from children's services to adult services. For more information on their locations and services, <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/BBH/regions.htm>
- o Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) also has staff called Transition Specialists who work with transitional aged youth. VR is the most common partner in transition planning and can offer support in job searches and employment. For more information on VR <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/adultlearning/VR/transition.htm>
- o Another great resource for independent living planning is Granite State Independent Living [www.gsil.org](http://www.gsil.org). They provide tools and resources around employment, community living, benefits planning and self-advocacy. A representative from GSIL can also be included as part of the IEP team to assist with transition planning.

## College vs. High School

As mentioned before, entitlement for a free appropriate public education under IDEA 2004 and the NH Rules ends once a youth graduates from high school with a regular high school diploma or reaches age 21, whichever comes first. However, youth with disabilities have rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. These are civil rights laws that prohibit colleges and other post secondary institutions from discriminating against youth with disabilities and allows for equal access. However, the youth still must be able to meet entrance requirements.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Learning about their rights and responsibilities after high school is an important aspect of transition planning and should be included as a Transition Service in the IEP. For more information on Section 504 and rights and responsibilities in college, check out the US DOE's brochure <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

It is important to know that there are no IEPs in college and while services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are available, there are no 504 plans either. Supports in college are very different from the supports and services available in high school. A youth will be responsible to self-identify that they have a disability and be able to provide appropriate documentation of their disability. This means they must be able to explain their disability, provide current documentation of their disability and describe exactly what they require for accommodations.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Youth need to be taught self-advocacy skills and communication skills to assist them in being able to discuss and describe their disability, strengths and needs. Self-advocacy and communication skills training and goals can be Transition Services in the IEP.
- o Kids As Self-Advocates ([www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org)) has some great materials to help with self-advocacy and communication skills. For other self-advocacy tools, see **Key Component – Give Youth an Opportunity to Get Involved**.
- o The Summary of Performance document may be a tool to assist youth in describing their disability and needed supports. See later in this section.

In general, most colleges and universities require current evaluations to document that a youth has a disability and requires accommodations. Usually, an evaluation is considered to be current if it was conducted within the last 3 years. There may also be requirements regarding who or what type of evaluator has conducted the evaluation.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Re-evaluation is not required prior to graduation with a regular high school diploma or aging out of special education, so IEP teams should discuss the need for a reevaluation to document disability.
- o While there are general standards of what is considered appropriate documentation of a disability, a youth should research to see what the post secondary institutions they are interested in have for a requirement. This research can be listed as a Transition Services in the IEP. For more information about Transition Services, see **Key Component**

Section 504 provides for reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations can include extended time, sign language interpreters, and note takers. Modifications or changes in what is expected on the youth in terms of course work (such as having less reading assignments) are not required to be provided. Many colleges/universities have Offices of Disability Services. Some may offer tutoring services and charge a fee for this because tutoring is not considered a reasonable accommodation under Section 504. Post-secondary institutions are also not required to provide related services such as speech and language or physical therapy, though some may for a fee.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o While there are general standards of what accommodations are offered, a youth should research to see what the post secondary institutions they are interested in offer for services. This research can be listed as a Transition Services in the IEP. For more information about Transition Services, see **Key Component – Writing the Transition Plan in the IEP.**
- o Most colleges/universities have an Office of Disability Services that can provide information about accommodations.
- o Also, the US DOE has a guide <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>
- o For more information on college and college planning, see **Key Component – Thinking about the Future.**



## The World of Work

Just like with college, there are no IEPs in the world of work. However, youth with disabilities have rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. These civil rights laws prohibit employers from discriminating against youth with disabilities. The youth must have the skill, experience, education and other job-related requirements of the position and be able to perform essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations. To be eligible for reasonable accommodations, the youth must have a disability and be qualified for the position that they are applying for.



### Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Learning about their rights and responsibilities after high school under the ADA and Section 504 is an important aspect of transition planning and should be included as a Transition Service in the IEP. For more information on Section 504 and rights and responsibilities, visit the Office of Civil Rights [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr) for more information.

It is important to know that there are no IEPs in the work of work while there are protections under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there are no 504 plans either. A youth will be responsible to self-identify that they have a disability, be able to explain their disability and describe exactly what they require for accommodations.



### Transition Planning Tips!!

- o Youth will be responsible to self-identify to an employer that they have a disability and require accommodations as well as to describe what they need for accommodations. Youth need to be taught self-advocacy skills and communication skills to assist them in to be able to discuss and describe their strengths and needs. Self-advocacy and communication skills training and goals can be Transition Services in the IEP. For more information about Transition Services, see **Key Component – Writing the Transition Plan in the IEP**.
- o Kids As Self-Advocates ([www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org)) has some great materials to help with self-advocacy and communication skills. For other self-advocacy tools, see **Key Component – Give Youth an Opportunity to Get Involved**.
- o The Summary of Performance document may be a tool to assist youth in describing their disability and needed supports. See later in this section.

The ADA provides for reasonable accommodations in the work place. Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the job, work environment or to the way things are usually done that allow the youth an equal employment opportunity. Reasonable accommodations can include making the office or job site accessible, modifying a work schedule, modifying the equipment, and providing readers or interpreters. Removing a primary job responsibility or lowering the work load to less than what is expected of all employees are not considered reasonable accommodations.



## Transition Planning Tips!!

- o What a youth will need for reasonable accommodations will depend on their needs and the work they will be doing. Granite State Independent Living or Vocational Rehabilitation can help evaluate a work environment and help determine what accommodations may be needed. This can be listed as a Transition Service in the IEP. For more information about Transition Services, see **Key Component – Writing the Transition Plan in the IEP**.
- o For more information on what is considered a reasonable accommodation, see OCR's guide <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oseers/products/employmentguide/appendix-4.html>.
- o Also, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/> has information on rights and responsibilities and resources for employers in making accommodations.

## Summary of Performance

When a youth graduates from high school or ages out of eligibility at age 21, IDEA 2004 requires they be provided with a document called a Summary of Performance. The Summary of Performance must include:

- A summary of the youth's academic achievement and functional performance
- Recommendations on how to assist the youth in meeting their post-secondary goals.

Most colleges/universities and other post-secondary institutions do not consider the Summary of Performance to be appropriate documentation of disability. It is designed to be a tool to be used by youth in achieving their post-secondary goals. It can be used as a tool help a youth describe their disability and support and accommodation needs to a college or employer.

The NH Department of Education has developed model forms for the Summary of Performance. They can be accessed at [http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/SpecialEd/documents/StudentPerformance\\_000.doc](http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/SpecialEd/documents/StudentPerformance_000.doc)