



Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

A photograph showing a group of diverse young people in a library setting. In the foreground, the back of a person with dark hair and a red and white plaid shirt is visible. To the left, a young man with long dark hair and a denim shirt looks towards the right. In the center, a young woman with glasses and a tan turtleneck sweater is looking towards the right. On the right side of the frame, a young man in a white shirt is partially visible. In the background, a young man in a brown corduroy sweater and jeans is seated in a wheelchair, smiling and holding a piece of paper. Bookshelves filled with books are visible in the background. Overlaid on the right side of the image is a large, white, sans-serif text block.

Centering Youth in the Transition Planning Process: Effective Advocacy and Overview



- Unique alliance of people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities
- National law and policy center dedicated to protecting and advancing disability civil and human rights
- Disability rights are civil rights
- **VISION:** a just world where all people live full and independent lives free of discrimination
- Educate legislators and policy makers on issues (such as IDEA, ADA) affecting rights of people with disabilities

***DREDF is working hard to protect and support the civil rights of people with disabilities during this pandemic--visit our website for more information.**

Parent Training and Information Centers

- PTI are places where families can get help to understand their child with a disability education rights and learn to use them effectively
- PTIs offer **free** trainings for parents of children with disabilities, youth and community members
- There is a PTI in every state and territory in the United States
- To find a PTI near you, visit the:
 - [Center for Parent Information Resources.](#)
- The PTI at DREDF now serves the North Coast Region!
To Contact us:
 - 800-348-4232 (toll free)
 - 510-644-2555 x 5227 (voice)
 - iephelp@dredf.org (Email)



CA Region 5 Counties

If you live in the Region 5 counties listed below, you'll connect with one of [DREDF's](#) Education Advocates. Call us at 1-800-348-4232 or email iephelp@dredf.org

- Calaveras
- Del Norte
- El Dorado
- Humboldt
- Nevada
- Placer
- Plumas
- Sacramento
- San Joaquin
- Sierra
- Siskiyou
- Stanislaus
- Trinity
- Tuolumne

CA Region 5 Counties

Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center will provide technical assistance to families, youth, and professionals in these Region 5 counties. You can call Matrix's Helpline at 1-800-578-2592.

- Alpine
- Amador
- Butte
- Colusa
- Glenn
- Lake
- Lassen
- Mendocino
- Modoc
- Shasta
- Sutter
- Tehama
- Yolo
- Yuba

Learning Objectives

- How is the Transition Planning Process connected to the IEP and purpose of the IDEA/Special Education?
- What is person centered planning? Why does it matter?
- What are barriers to effective transition planning? How can we address these?
- Basic Overview of Transition Planning
- How can we bring YOUTH into the process early and meaningfully?
- Tips for collaborating with schools, outside agencies and youth
- Resources

Purpose of Special Education and the Individuals with Disability ACT (IDEA) Connects Directly with Transition Planning

The Purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is “to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services **designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living**” (300.1)



Taking the Long View: A Vision for the Future

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

“Nothing About Us Without US!”



What Do ALL Youth Need? Key Life Skills

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



Questions to Consider

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

Remember: Youth with disabilities are YOUTH first!

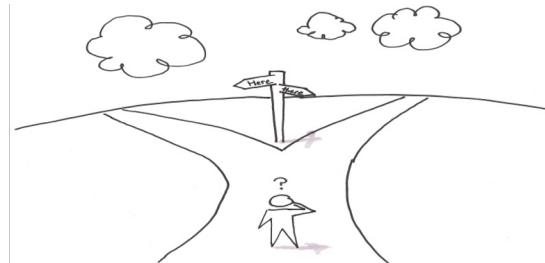


Person Centered Planning

- An ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their future
- Success depends on the commitment of a team of individuals who care about the focus person. These individuals take action to make sure that the strategies discussed in planning meetings are implemented
- Goals can be to:
 - identify opportunities for the focus person to develop personal relationships
 - participate in their community
 - increase control over their own lives
 - develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve these goals.
- Person Centered Planning and IEP teams often struggle to move student into the CENTER but that is the goal!



IEP: Roadmap to the Future



I → is for **INDIVIDUALIZED** — NOT COOKIE CUTTER

E → is for **EDUCATION** — More than just “**Academics**”

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

Tip: No need to choose between diploma track and functional life skills — MANY YOUTH NEED BOTH!

What IS a Transition Plan?

It's how we fulfill the long term purpose of Special Education!

- PART of the IEP, not separate
- In place **no later than age 16** (CA)
- Individualized to student's specific strengths, needs and wishes
- Based on data, evaluation, information about student and family priorities, values, goals
- Tied to goals, services, supports that help it become achievable (What does student need to learn, practice to get there?)
- Not just a checklist--meaningful!
- [Transition Assessment Request Sample Letter](#)



Where Do We Start?

Where is Student NOW and where do they want to GO?

- Present levels and student / family vision are the starting line that helps team create long term, measurable postsecondary goals (MPSG's) in 3 KEY areas:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Independent Living

No matter the challenges, being part of a community and having quality of life are priorities!



Measurable Postsecondary Goals MPSG's

The IDEA requires:

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

These “big picture” goals guide HOW we develop the IEP

So—what IS a MPSG?

- Answer: What the student plans to do upon school exit
- Specific: You could check
- Reasonable: Not an impossible dream. Achievable

Secondary Transition Planning: The Basics

3 Areas of Measurable Postsecondary Goals (more on this later)

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



Without Goals, Transition Plan Becomes A Transition to Nowhere

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



Connect Annual IEP Goals with MPSG'S

The long term goals must connect to the short term IEP goals

Questions to consider:

- Does the student know what her post-school goals are for education or training? If no, create goals around that!
- Can the student explain his disability and support/ accommodation needs?
- Does student know what medication she takes, and know when and how to schedule medical/dental appointments independently?
- Does the student know that college is option? [Inclusive Postsecondary Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

why?
how? who?
WHEN?
Where?

Key Independent Living Goals Often Left OUT!

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

Examples: Independent Living

- Example: Gavin wants to go to college. But he struggles with functional life skills despite high academic abilities.
 - **Independent Living Postsecondary Goal:** Results of the Casey-Ansell Life skills assessment documents that Gavin need to learn how to manage money, budget, and hire a personal assistant so he can live independently
 - **MPSG:** With the help of a Personal Assistant, Gavin will live independently in a dormitory setting at college
 - **IEP goals:**
 - Gavin will create a monthly budget that is realistic based on his SSI estimate
 - Gavin will know how to conduct mock interviews with prospective attendants using a checklist developed with his special ed teacher based on what kind of helper works best for him

Common Barriers to Effective Transition Planning

- Moving Youth into the Driver's Seat
- Dealing with Student Resistance--Ideas to Consider:
 - Case Manager: Pre- IEP interview (ex. YouTube video). Extra credit opportunity
 - Zoom Student in for 10 minutes this year, 30 next year, in person by 18...
 - Written statement to team-what's working. What isn't
 - Video/picture of student doing what she loves
 - Student work products (art, report, recent success)
- Students who can't explain why they have an IEP/disability need to learn this (**GOAL**)
- Students who resist help need to learn how to accept it (**GOAL**)
- Can't run their own IEP meeting? (**GOAL**)
- Unrealistic Goals--the “baseball player” example

Ask: Can student explain disability? It's impact on them? What accommodations/supports work for them?

Ideas for Parents: Think Coaching Model!

- Help youth make doctor appointments, learn to calendar
- Provide incremental independence opportunities
- Ensure youth understands his/her disability, and can explain it to others
- Make sure student understands **LEGAL rights** and **responsibilities**
- Encourage youth to **USE** accommodations
- Create Portfolio—letter of intro, list of accommodations that work, a list of skills, strengths, interests, letters of recommendation, resume
- Practice! Visit DSP offices with student but let them lead. Colleges want direct contact with students, and will not share information without student permission (and prefer NOT to in most cases)
- Audit a college lecture, and prep student for expectations for behavior/engagement
- Consider when and whether to step in, and use person centered approaches to planning
- Avoid “rescue mode,” use “coaching” model
- Create simulations of interviews, conflicts, etc.



Don't Rule OUT College: Many New Options!

- Consider value of experience - what does it feel like to learn with other adults outside of high school?
- To follow a routine independently?
- To participate in community and be independent “with training wheels”?
- [**Think College | Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog**](#)
- Adult Connections — Relationships, social engagement, access to typical peers, and other SWD's working on similar goals
- Open the door for later down the road — Developmental DELAYS mean late bloomers
- See [**Podcast Series: Autism Goes to College**](#)



For Students with Cognitive OR Functional Disabilities

- Don't rule out college or training — emphasize PREPARATION and SUPPORT. Not all college is degree based — how about a college experience?
- If Student will need adult support/assistance long term, plan should STILL be to increase connectedness, community participation, independent decision making, quality of life
- Ask: What MATTERS to this student? What experiences, subjects, activities light them up?
- Plan: If parent/aide not in the picture, HOW will we make sure caregivers/support staff in new settings understand what pleasure, distress, pain, or sadness look like, and what training is needed to ensure this? How can team document this for future?

For Students with Health/Mental Health Needs

- Transitioning to new doctors, therapists, psychiatrists, is difficult.
Begin planning at least six months in advance
- Does student need goal around how to find an adult therapist?
- Knowing what medications, side effects, refill requirements are is critical goal
- Self Regulation — knowing when to drop classes, take breaks, read warning signs is key
- Teaching student to identify and access care is essential!

Family/School Team Collaboration

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

Interagency Collaboration

- Consider steps for applying and determining eligibility
- Assistance with securing enrollment
- Plan for effective use
- Examples: Regional Centers, Independent Living Centers, Child Welfare, Department of Rehabilitation, County Mental Health, Social Security Admin, Adult Assisted Living Program...
- The school district is charged with making linkages to other agencies when needed
- Explore Department of Rehab programs for Youth:

[CA Department of Rehabilitation: Employment, Independence & Equality](#)

Takeaways

- Transition Planning should start early
- Plan must be Person/Strength Centered, Culturally Appropriate
- Parents are critical partners in the process
- Students should be increasingly in the driver's seat no later than 16
- Interagency collaboration is key AND HARD
- Plan for dreams but offer reality checks — we all learn to live within our own limits



Q&A - Evaluations

Please take some time to fill out the evaluation while we answer your questions



Resources

- [Making Sure Your Child's Needs are Met as Schools Return to In-Person Learning](#)
- [CA Department of Education Transition Resources: Secondary Transition Planning - Special Education \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)
- [Age of Majority Info for Parents: Transfer of Parental Rights at Age of Majority | The Wrightslaw Way](#)
- [Indicator 13 Goals \(compliance review tool\):](#)
- [Department of Rehabilitation Youth Programs: CA Department of Rehabilitation](#)
- [Sample Transition Plans](#)
- [Exemplar IEP Transition Plans](#)
- [Understood: Download: Sample IEP Transition Plan and Goals](#)
- [Five Steps for Developing Effective Transition Plans for High School Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
- [College Information:](#)
- [Think College | Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog](#)
- [College is Possible for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Resources for Distance Learning: Transition

Teaching Transition Skills During COVID-19

- [5 ways to give students virtual work-based experiences](#)
- [Transition to Adulthood for Students](#)
- [Supporting Transition in a Virtual World](#)
- [Ten Steps Toward Transition](#)
- [Managing Social Distancing: Resource for Young People to Make COVID-19 Social Distancing NOT SUCK](#)
- [Teens & COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities During the Outbreak](#)
- [Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)
- [Transition Resources in the 2020-2021 School Year](#)

Resources for Youth

- [The Youthhood - Where teens prepare for life after high school](#)

This is a very interactive site for youth to use to start thinking about what they want to do with the rest of their lives, designed to help youth plan for the future.

- [Best Practices in Self-Advocacy Skill Building | Center:](#)
 - [What is self-advocacy, and why is it important?](#)
 - [Resources for youth themselves](#)
 - [Fact sheets, toolkits, and training materials on self-advocacy](#)
 - [Resources in the Parent Center network](#)
 - [Resources in other languages](#)
- [Resources for “Everything You've Wanted to Know about Sexuality Issues But Were Afraid to Ask”](#)
- [Self-Advocacy: Find the Captain in You!](#)

Video (10 minutes) | A funny and fun way to introduce self-advocacy to young people with disabilities. Follow two hosts with dry humor on their morning news talk show
- [Connecting, Organizing, Educating Youth with Disabilities – YO! Disabled & Proud](#)
- [Autistic Self Advocacy Network/Nothing About Us without Us](#)
- [Crip Camp](#)
- [College is Possible for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- [Podcast Series: Autism Goes to College](#)
- [Inclusive Postsecondary Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)