

# PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD WITH AN IEP

Planning for the transition to adulthood is essential for students with special needs. After a student graduates or leaves the school system, there is no guaranteed program to continue the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Children who have an Individualized Education Program are required by the IDEA to begin the transition process by age 16. The Individualized Education Program must include measurable goals that teenagers can work toward during the remaining high school years.

## Options to explore

Focus on achievable goals and consider the range of possible options available for post-secondary life:

- **College** - two- and four-year colleges offering opportunities for students with disabilities to continue learning
- **Continuing and adult education** - courses offering opportunities for students to expand their knowledge in a wide range of areas
- **Vocational training** - trade schools preparing students for a specific occupation, such as culinary arts or electrical service and repair (a high-school diploma is often required)
- **On-the-job training** - short-term, on-site training for a specific job
- **Competitive employment** - mainstream jobs paying the going rate
- **Supported employment** - paid employment for people with severe disabilities where a job coach provides guidance
- **Adult day programs** - programs providing a work environment in a supervised setting with other workers with disabilities



## Involving the student in transition planning

Planning for a child's future is a collective effort. Under the IDEA, every student with a disability must be invited to attend Individualized Education Program meetings discussing post-secondary options or transition services. Students' strengths, needs and weaknesses should be taken into consideration during the planning process.

Parents should encourage teenagers to take an active role in their transition planning. Involvement can be increased by asking about interests and goals. Teach teenagers self-advocacy skills, such as how to request accommodations and assist in setting personal goals for the last few years of high school and beyond.



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