

COPY

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Headline: **Taking charge of your education**

Subhead: Transition Planning for Your Future

Topic Titles:

- What is Transition Planning?
- Developing an IEP
- Developing an ITP
- Planning for Life After
- Get Involved Now
- The College Experience
- Your Rights

Intro Copy:

What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning is the process of laying out the steps that will help you transition from an adolescent to an independent adult. It's the time when you plan for what will happen after you leave high school and enter into life as a young adult. Whether you are preparing for post-secondary education (for example -- education beyond high school such as college, vocational or trade school) or preparing for a job, transition planning is an ongoing process that requires you to be actively involved in decision-making while also involving your family, your school and community agencies.

This section on Education will provide you with information, worksheets and guides to help you, your family, and your school establish a transition plan, as well as present you with resource sites dedicated to helping you become

the successful adult you have the potential to be. There is a section with helpful tips for parents and family members too, and how they can help support you as you begin to think about life as an adult.

High school is just the start of the road toward a fulfilling life...what follows after are new challenges and new possibilities. The more you know about what to expect the better you'll thrive!

So, let's get started.

TAGLINE:

Talent Knows No Limits

Individuals with disabilities may need specialized support in school settings. If this is the case, support needs are documented in one of two ways:

1. Individualized Education Program (IEP): This is the way most students with disabilities receive support and accommodations. Individuals with an IEP are considered "special education students".

OR

2. 504 Plan: This is a way for students to receive needed accommodations and support, even though they may not qualify for special education.

Both an IEP and a 504 Plan tell your teacher what accommodations (or adjustments to your school environment) need to be made in order for you to do your schoolwork.

If you aren't sure whether you have an IEP or a 504 Plan, you can always ask one of your teachers or your school counselor. Because most students with disabilities in California

have an IEP (as opposed to a 504 Plan), we are choosing to focus on IEPs in this chapter. However, if you would like more information on 504 plans, please see this website:
<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/legal-rights/section-504.gs?content=868>

Whether you have a 504 Plan or an IEP, your success after high school depends upon you knowing what your disability is, and what accommodations you need to be successful in college or in the workplace! You need to know what supports you need in order to be the best high school student, college student, or employee you can be!

New Section:

Developing an Individualized Education Program - IEP

An Individualized Education Program, or IEP, is essential to figuring out your educational goals. The enactment in 2004 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a well-thought out IEP be developed and updated yearly so that you have a map of what you need to do to move on after high school. It takes into account your needs, preferences and abilities. IEPs are provided for individuals who need them, starting at the pre-school level through the end of high school. Development of your IEP requires input from you, your family, your teachers and your school.

Your IEP plan:

- records your goals
- keeps track of your academic, cognitive and functional performance
- and notes the accommodations and assistive technology that you need to be successful in high school.

Sub section:

But first...what's the difference between a Certificate of Completion and a High School diploma?

In order to properly plan for what you will do after high school, it's important to understand the difference between a Certificate of Completion and a high school diploma, since achieving one or the other can affect your future opportunities.

— A certificate of completion will show that you have completed at least *four years of high school*. The IEP team will decide what you need to do to get your certificate. In addition, each school district may have their own set of requirements for awarding a certificate of completion. Keep in mind that many colleges and employers require diplomas over certificates when considering enrollment in college or when hiring someone for a job.

— A high school diploma states that the student *successfully met all high school requirements*. Since this document records what you studied and how you did, it gives colleges and employers a clearer sense of your experience and skills. In California to earn a high school diploma there are a certain number of credits and specific classes that must be taken and passed, including one year of Algebra.

Sub section:

And Now...Your IEP

We've included a number of worksheets to help guide your thinking. When you're done, you'll better understand what you need to do to get ready for life after high school, whether that means more education (including vocational school or college), a job, or both!

- Begin with the Person-Centered Planning process – This process brings you and the

people who are interested in your future together so you can develop an action plan based on what you would like to do – it takes into account your dreams and hopes and is the foundation for your IEP. The worksheets involved (3 in all) will help you take a closer look at yourself and your options.

- Work with other students – Working with other students is a great way to discover new ideas. Hearing what other people’s goals are may lead you someplace you never thought of before.

The following worksheets can be useful tools to have with you at your planning meetings. Don’t worry about not knowing an answer for every question – that’s where your parents, teachers, vocational counselors, Workability I/Transition Partnership Project (TPP) Staff, case worker, and/or transition specialists can help.

Linda O’Neal: There are several ways to participate in the Person Centered Planning Process, see the Collaborating with Students in Teaching, Decision Making & Self-Advocacy Person Center Planning Process [summary in the tool kit.](#)

Person-Centered Planning Process
Worksheet # 1 – The story of You.

Your History:

What schools have you attended?

What activities do you participate in at school? Outside of school?

What special events have affected your life?

Your Places:

Where do you like to spend your time?

What do you like about these places?

Is there anything you'd change about these places? What would that be?

Your Support Group:

Which family members will participate in the transition programs you are or will be involved with now, and in your adult life?

What agencies will be involved?

Which friends or community members will play a part in your transition programs and your adult life?

Your Story:

What is your biggest nightmare about life after high school? (We've all had one at one time or another, so don't be afraid to share, it's the best way to conquer it.)

What are your biggest strengths, gifts and talents? (Don't sell yourself short, write them all down, these are what will make your dream possible.)

What is your biggest need to make your dream come true?

Person-Centered Planning Process

Worksheet # 2 – Thinking Before Learning

What are your educational goals?

What kind of classes would you like to take?

How will you pay for school, books, living accommodations?

What kind of transportation will you use?

What kind of support will you need to be successful?

Will you need or want to disclose your disability to request academic accommodations?

How many hours a week would you like to spend in classes?

Are there other types of educational activities you'd like to participate in? Mentoring? Work-study? Internships?

Person-Centered Planning Process
Worksheet # 3 –The Future’s Wide Open

What are your dreams and hopes for the future?

What worries you about the future?

Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

What support would you need to get there?

The following script will help you lead your own IEP meeting. It includes topics of discussion to help you get what you need for your transition plan. (Be sure to fill out the worksheet that follows this script *before* your meeting, so you’ll be well prepared for the topics you’ll be discussing.)

You may want to let your teacher know that you would like to assume a leadership role in the IEP process. Prior to the meeting, meet with your teacher to discuss goals, objectives and activities for the next year. Educators traditionally write draft IEP goals and objectives in third person. You can request that your goals be written in first person. “I statements” will help to ensure that your perspective is taken into account.

Additionally, you may want to let your teacher know that at the IEP Meeting you would like to:

- Introduce IEP Members
- Summarize your present levels of performance
- Talk about your plans for the future
- Ask questions of team members

An example is included below:

My IEP: __ (name) _____

Date of meeting: _____

Hi, my name is _____ and we're here for my IEP meeting.

Would everyone please introduce themselves?

I want to talk about my strengths and interests. They are...

Would anyone like to add to my strengths?

Mom and Dad, do you have any thoughts or concerns about what we've talked about so far?

I have a right to special education services because...

Right now in school I am doing/feeling...

My grades are...

From last year's IEP, I met these goals...

This year, my goals are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Does anyone have questions about these goals?

Now I want to talk about accommodations. Some accommodations I use in the classroom and during testing are...

Does anyone have questions or suggestions about my accommodations?

All of my teachers will get a copy of my updated A & M plan.

For my exit exam I use the following accommodations and modifications...

After high school, I plan to...

My work experiences are...

My other transition activities are...

Does anyone have information that will help the IEP team make decisions?

Does anyone have any questions for me?

Here is a copy of my procedural safeguards. These rights become mine when I turn 18.

Would everyone please sign the IEP form?

Thank you for coming.

Fill out the following worksheet *before* you start your IEP meeting.

Topics to be shared at my IEP Meeting

Date of meeting: _____

My strengths are...

My Interests are...

My goals for this year are:

Goal # 1: _____

Goal # 2: _____

Goal # 3: _____

My current school year:

Grades: _____

Favorite class: _____

Easiest class: _____

Hardest class: _____

Accommodations I use now:

My current work experience or extracurricular activities are:

(You may want to bring copies of your current resume to share with IEP Team Members.)

My plans after high school are:

Support I will need after high school:

Other transition activities I'm doing now or would like to learn about:

New Section: Developing an Individual Transition Plan - ITP

An Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is a very important part of your IEP.

While the IEP focuses on your education, an Individual Transition Plan, or ITP, focuses more on life. It is an ongoing process that establishes the global skills required to achieve your dreams and goals. The ITP drives the necessary services and support needed from age 16 until you exit high school and requires that a course of study be set to ensure that you earn a Diploma or a Certificate of Completion.

In simpler terms, the IEP is all about what you'd like to study and do after high school, and the ITP is about the concrete steps you need to take to make sure you will be able to do this and more. The ITP identifies measurable post high school goals including: training/education, employment, and independent living skills.

Things may change along the way, after all, your favorite song, food and color change sometimes, so can your goals. But with a set plan, adjusting to changes is actually easier..and you may find that while the in-between steps may change a bit, your ultimate

goal to lead a successful and fulfilling life will not.

In addition, the ITP specifies transition activities that will be completed during the next year to assist you with your preparation for your independence and success. The activities should support the development of your after school goals.

Sub section:

Summary of Performance

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is a report provided by your school, summarizing your academic achievements and performance. Academic and/or employment accommodations are included as well. Its purpose is to identify the resources and supports you currently use as well as makes it easier for you and your family to plan for those that you may need as an adult.

The Summary of Performance and ITP is important to assist your transition from high school to higher education, training and/or employment. This information can help establish your eligibility for reasonable accommodations and supports in higher education settings such as college and other training programs.

The SOP **must** be completed during the final year of a student's high school education. However, it is useful to develop this document much earlier. You can be responsible for updating its contents with the help of your teacher.

Sub section:

Transition Services

In truth, transition planning starts before birth, it's something that your parents, family and other support members have been doing for you all your life. Now as you become able to make your own decisions and take on more responsibility for your future, it's important that you are aware of the transition services available to you.

There are a number of activities you can complete to help you with your transition planning. Check out the tools and information on these websites.

www.dor.ca.gov — Department of Rehabilitation — employment related counseling, training, support, job placement and more.

www.heath.gwu.edu — HEATH Resource Center — guidelines for helping high school students actively participate in transition planning.

www.ahead.org — AHEAD — professional organization committed to post-secondary participation of people with disabilities.

www.going-to-college.org — what to do to enter college and what expect once there.

www.schoolguides.org — resource with valuable info on topics such as lesson plans, career tips, and more

www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html — DO-IT — online tutorials for students preparing for college

New Section:

Planning for Life After High School

Get Involved Now

It's never too early to become involved in activities and programs that will lead you to a successful post-high school experience. Think about school related clubs, student council, volunteering, internships and work-study programs. These extra curricular activities are terrific ways to learn new things, gather information and expand your thinking. Plus:

- it looks good on your college application and helps you figure out your interests.
- it's a great way to gain valuable experience and build your resume.
- it's a great way to make new friends!

Sub section:**Tips for Parents**

All students applying to traditional degree programs are held to the same academic standards and procedures. While more and more colleges are accommodating students with disabilities, they are not covered by IDEA, therefore, students with disabilities are not “entitled” to the services and support they get in high school. Instead, they must demonstrate that they are eligible for certain services and support. While a student with disabilities still has certain rights, as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, there are limits to what colleges are required to provide and adjust. However, programs do exist to help students with disabilities get accommodations and services to assist them to succeed in higher education.

Some services such as transportation from home to school and assistance with using the restroom or eating lunch are not required to be provided by colleges and universities under the ADA or Section 504. These services may be essential for your child to attend college. You may need to talk with Disabled Student Services and other students who have the same needs about creative solutions to meet these needs.

Visit www.heath.gwu.edu for information on finding the right post-secondary institute.

Sub section:**How to help your child prepare.**

There are many steps parents can take to actively participate in their child’s transition planning. For example:

- First and foremost, foster independence and encourage your child to become involved in his/her IEP planning.
- Talk about college, how it's different from high school and what will be expected.
- Visit a college to help your child get “a feel” for the environment.
- Encourage your child to take a college class while still in high school.

For more tips and ideas visit:
www.thinkcollege.net

Sub section:

Getting acquainted with college.

Preparing to choose a college is exciting and can be a lot of work, but it can also be a lot of fun! Here are some suggestions to help make it less overwhelming.

- Visit the schools you are interested in – be sure to carefully review the campus topography and buildings in case mobility is an issue.
- Gather information regarding entrance exams and whether exam accommodations will be provided.
- Connect with the school's disabled student services office.
- If the college has on-campus housing, visit dorms and other living accommodations — develop a plan if personal care assistance will be needed (see “Independent Living” chapter in this toolkit for more information on personal care assistance).

- Plan for financial funding. This is a big one. The following websites provide useful information on scholarships, grants and more. Be sure to visit the college Financial Aid Office.

www.dor.ca.gov — Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) — may be able to pay for post-secondary education related to an employment goal. However, even if such financial support is approved, you will need to apply for federal financial aid grants (not loans) in order for DOR to pay for you to attend college.

www.cccco.edu — Board of Governors (BOG) — sets guidelines for colleges. If eligible, the BOG waives some community colleges fees.

www.fafsa.ed.gov — info on obtaining financial aid for post-secondary education

www.csac.ca.gov — info on financial aid for college and career training

www.fastweb.com — largest database for scholarships, plus financial aid and tips on student life

apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp — online search site for scholarships, internships, grants and loans.

incighteducation.org/scholarships.php — scholarship fund

scholarships4students.com/special_scholarships/html

DisabilityInfo.gov:
www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=84 — financial aid and scholarships.

New Section:

The College Experience

College is radically different from high school. The structured environment you're used to in high school no longer applies. Instead, your success will be determined by your ability to handle an entirely new level of independence — one in which self-determination and self-discipline will be key.

Sub Section:

High School vs. College

General Differences between High School and College Programming

Classes

	High School	Post Secondary
1	Usually follow a school-directed schedule and proceed from one class to another.	Individual students must manage their own time and schedules.
2	General education classes dictated by state/district requirements.	Class based on field of study; requirements may vary.
3	Typically a school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters. Summer classes may be offered but are not used to accelerate graduation.	Academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters plus a week for final exams. (Some institutions are on a trimester schedule.) Courses are offered fall, spring, and summer semesters, and summer classes may be used to accelerate graduation.
4	Class attendance is usually mandatory and monitored carefully.	Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. (Lack of attendance may impact performance.)
5	Classes generally have no more than 30 – 35 students.	Classes may have 100 or more students.
6	Textbooks are typically provided at little or no expense.	Textbooks can be expensive. (An anticipated range for a full-time student is \$200-400 per semester.)
7	Guidance is provided for students so that they will be aware of graduation requirements.	Graduation requirements are complex and vary for different fields of study. (Note: You are responsible for monitoring your progress and seeking advice.)
8	Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the student's IEP.	Modifications that change course outcomes will not be offered. (Hint: Modified High School courses may not be accepted in the admission process.)

Instructors

	High School	Post Secondary
1	Grade and check completed homework.	Assume homework is completed and students are able to perform on a test.

2	May remind students of incomplete assignments.	May not remind students of incomplete assignments. It's your responsibility to check with your instructor to see if requirements are being met.
3	May know student's needs and approach students when they need assistance.	Are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact when assistance is needed.
4	May be available before, during, or after class.	May require students to attend scheduled office hours.
5	Often provide students with information missed during absence.	Expect students to get information from classmates when they miss a class.
6	Present material to help students understand what is in the textbook.	May not follow the textbook. Lectures enhance to topic area. (You need to connect lectures and textbook.)
7	Often write information on the board or overhead to be copied for notes.	May lecture nonstop. If instructors write on the board it may be to support the lecture, not summarize it. (Good notes are a must!)
8	Teach knowledge and facts, leading students through the thinking process.	Expect students to think independently and connect seemingly unrelated information.
9	Often take time to remind students of assignment and test dates.	Expect students to read, save, and refer back to the course syllabus. (Syllabi are your way of knowing exactly what is expected of you-when assignments are due, and how you will be graded.

Studying

	High School	Post Secondary
1	Study time outside of class may vary (maybe as little as 1-3 hours per class.)	Generally need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
2	Instructors may review class notes and text material regularly for classes.	Review class notes and text material regularly. (Use the time between classes carefully.)
3	Expected to read short assignments that are discussed and re-taught.	Substantial amounts of assigned reading and writing may not be directly addressed in class. (It's up to you to read and understand assigned material or access support.)

Testing

	High School	Post Secondary
1	Frequent, veering small amounts of material.	Usually infrequent (2-3 times a semester.) Maybe cumulative and cover large amounts of material. (You need to organize material to prepare for tests.) Some classes may require only papers and/or projects instead of tests.
2	Make-up tests are often available.	Make-up tests are seldom an option and may have to be requested.
3	Test dates can be arranged to avoid conflicts with other events.	Usually, scheduled tests are without regard to other demands.
4	Frequently conducts review sessions	Faculty rarely offer review sessions; if so,

	emphasizing important concepts prior to tests.	students are expected to be prepared and to be active participants.
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Grades

	High School	Post Secondary
1	Given for most assigned work.	May not be provided for all assigned work.
2	Good homework grades may assist in raising over grade when test grades are lower.	Tests and major papers provide the majority of the grade.
3	Extra credit options are often available.	Generally speaking, extra credit options are not used to raise a grade.
4	Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have adverse effect on grade.	First tests are often “wake up” calls to let you know what is expected. (Hint: Watch out! They may account for substantial part of your final grade. Contact instructor, academic advisor, or student accessibility personnel if you do poorly.)
5	Graduation requirements may be met with a grade of D or higher.	Requirements may be met only if the student’s average meets the departmental standards. (Generally a 2.0 or higher.)

Bottom Line

	High School	Post Secondary
1	High School is structured with most decisions being managed by your parents or the state/district. Success is a combination of your efforts and those of others.	College is less restricted and promotes independence. Each college has its own requirements. And, your success is a direct result of the effort you put into it.

Sub section:

Support for the College Experience

Although the college experience is one of independence, it doesn’t mean you have to go at it alone. Your family should always be your first level of support. Keep your parents and friends up to date with how you’re doing — call, text, email, IM, facebook, tweet — there’s no excuse for not letting those you love and who care about you know what’s going on. And when you need help..ask.

In addition to friends and family, your college has a host of support services you can turn to. Counselors, tutors and study groups are great for keeping up on your academics. Even if you’re doing well, make a point of talking to

your teacher and counselor every now and then to see if you're on track. Join a study group or sign up for a tutor — it's a great way to share ideas about the subject matter or learn even better ways to study.

Mentoring is another excellent way to get real-world advice on a field you may be interested in, or how an adult with a disability has handled the transition from high school to post-secondary education or employment. What better way to learn about something than from a person already doing it. Chapters for Disability Mentoring Day are available statewide — visit your local independent living center (www.cfilc.org) or disabilitymentor.net to find a list of mentors.

And, don't forget internships. These are a valuable way to gain experience in a field of interest, and maybe even gain a contact for a great job after college graduation. Look to the college internship boards for opportunities.

Sub section:

Planning for Accommodations

“Accommodations” refers to changes in classroom or exam setting needed to lessen the impact of a disability. It can include testing accommodations (i.e. more time for tests or test taking in a quiet environment), sign language interpreting, classroom materials in an accessible format you can use (such as large print, electronic text, or Braille), lab assistance, reduced college course load (taking fewer classes), adapted seating and more.

It is important to know that colleges and universities do not have to provide accommodations if they drastically change the curriculum of the class.

Each college has its own set of services that they will provide, some of which are required by law. You should find out what services and programs exist and what your college of interest will and will not do. For more information, one of several great websites to visit is: www.heath.gwu.edu. And of course, you should talk to the college's Disabled Student Services office or Disability Services Coordinator.

New Section: Your Rights

While some requirements that apply through high school will continue to apply upon leaving high school and entering post-secondary education, many rights and how they are addressed will change. It's important that you understand these changes.

This section will briefly cover the basics. For more detailed information, please obtain a copy of the ADA Section 504 and Title II by contacting:
www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/auxaids.html.

- Post secondary schools are not required to provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), but they are required to apply the same admission requirements to you as they do to all applicants.
- You do not have to inform a post-secondary school of your disability — this is purely voluntary and you may choose not to do so until you have been admitted. But, if you want them to provide academic adjustments or modifications, you will have to let them know at the time you request accommodations. The school may require you to provide documentation for your disability. Each school will set their own requirements for documentation, these may include: diagnosis

of your disability, how it affects your academic performance, credentials of the professional providing the diagnosis. Find out early what your school of interest will need.

- Academic adjustments are made depending on the disability and the individual's need. The school is not required to lower or substantially change basic requirements, services, programs or activities that would cause undue financial or administrative burdens. Be sure to communicate what your needs are ahead of time and research what a school is and is not required to do.
- A school may not charge you for any academic adjustments, nor charge extra for programs and activities available to other students who do not have disabilities.
- Most post-secondary schools have a Disability Services Coordinator (aka Disabled Students Program Director, Section 504 Coordinator or aka ADA Coordinator) – this is your contact person for dealing with any issues that may come up – from discrimination to getting the correct academic adjustment made.

For more information on your civil rights and access to FAQ's, visit:
www.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html.

New Section:

Alternative to College

College is not for everyone, but the chance to live a fulfilling life after high school is! Vocational training can be a good option in many cases and there are many resources available to get you started.

The Regional Occupational Program (ROP) provides vocational and occupational training. There are local chapters across the country so check online for the office in your area. In

addition, the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), as mentioned previously, offers employment-related counseling, training, and even job placement. Following is a short list of additional sites you can access for information on post-high school job training.

www.carocp.org — Association of Regional Occupation Centers — provides vocational training.

www.centralonestop.com —work development services for all job seekers and employers.

Plus, check out the Drive of Your Life website at www.driveofyourlife.org — it provides great online tools for learning about yourself, higher education and different careers.

Closing Section:

What life is all about!

College or any type of post-secondary education or training can be the most exciting time of your life. It's the time when you will learn to be on your own, meet new people, see new things and start a path toward the most independent life possible for you. Take full advantage of every resource, family and friend, ask questions, make lists, don't limit yourself, and be honest about what you want and what you are capable of. And most of all..enjoy yourself!