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ABOUT TRANSITION

Numerous follow-up and longitudinal studies of youth with disabilities in areas such as employment, living arrangements, post-secondary education and training, and community participation have shown that these individuals do not succeed as well as young adults when compared to the general population. In order to improve these outcomes for youth with disabilities, transition services requirements were included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA P.L. 101-476). The basic purpose of including transition components in the legislation is to better prepare students with disabilities to gain access to the supports and services necessary to reach their desired outcomes and become as independent as possible. The transition planning process should promote successful movement from school to post-secondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community participation based on a student's preferences, interests and abilities.

The concept of transition is simple. First, help students and their families think about their life after high school and identify desired outcomes. Then, design their school and community experiences to ensure that the student gains the skills and connections necessary to achieve those outcomes. The transition services requirements of IDEA provide opportunities to:

- Help students and families think about the future and consider what they want to do after high school.
- Plan how to make the high school experience most relevant to the student's desired outcomes.
- Help students and families make connections to supports and services they may need after high school.



PURPOSE FOR CHARTING THE COURSE

Growing up is not easy! It is even more complicated for young adults with disabilities. Far too many students with disabilities leave school lacking the academic, technical, and social skills necessary to find and/or maintain employment, and often the jobs they do find are low paying and offer no health benefits.

As students prepare to move from school to community living and employment, good program planning can help them become independent, productive adults. Identifying the challenges students will face as adults, plus preparing and assisting them to meet those demands successfully, requires careful transition planning which begins at the earliest age possible.

This kit is designed to help teachers, parents, and students:

- Understand the transition concepts and processes;
- Determine and conduct appropriate assessment activities;
- Successfully complete the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to meet transition compliance requirements;
- Develop comprehensive long-term student plans for transition using a portfolio checklist to frame the process;
- Access appropriate agencies and resources;
- Use the transition planning process to ensure that student's move from school to post-secondary education, community living and employment with appropriate support

HOW TO USE CHARTING THE COURSE

Charting the Course is designed for teachers, administrators and agency personnel to use as a resource to support effective transition planning for students receiving Special Education services and to provide guides, checklists and tools for use during that process.

The “toolkit” contents include:

- Rules and regulations as defined by IDEA for transition planning
- Application of these “rules and regulations” in lay terms for parents, educators, and students
- Handouts, *Fast Facts* and Booklets to share with parents
- Inventories, tools and strategies for transition planning assessment including: careers and independent living
- Real world examples and case studies of students’ and their families’ experiences during the process
- Terminology and Agency information
- Fair Labor practices
- Handy Pocket guides for students
- Suggested publications and Internet Resources

THE INTENT OF CHARTING THE COURSE

The intent of the toolkit is exactly that – a kit of tools. It is designed to provide educators with the conceptual framework for transition, materials to obtain and organize student information, also to inform and effectively involve students and parents in the transition planning process. The kit is organized so that it is easy to use, locate items to re-file or add additional materials.

There are 8 primary sections in the tool kit. Each section is identified with a different colored set of tabs. Within each section are “section dividers” providing further definition of the contents for that section. Each section is numbered separately with the title of the section and the section dividers in the footer.

The Section, “Tools, Templates and Worksheets” [red] is full of materials to assist you in assessing students, creating a variety of handouts for students and parents and developing a body of evidence as part of the student’s transition portfolio. These tools, templates and worksheets are examples of the materials you will use or give your students and parents as you move together toward the student’s transition from school to community living and employment.

We anticipate that you will personalize the kit by adding more “tools” or information and updating the materials that are there when it is appropriate. We have created a space on each section divider for you to identify additions to the contents so you can keep track of where new materials are located in the kit.

