

TRANSITION ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral and ongoing part of the transition process. The most essential purpose for doing transition assessment is to assist students in learning about themselves so that they are actively involved in preparing for their own career ambitions.

IDEA 2004 requires “appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon *age appropriate transition assessments* related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills” (§330.320[b][1]) In Colorado, transition assessment is required “beginning with the first IEP developed when the child is age 15, but no later than the end of 9th grade, or earlier if deemed appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter...” (1 CCR 301-8 4.03(6)(d)(i))

Both short-range and long-range transition planning and assessment essentially, should begin as early as kindergarten. The IEP should contain information related to independence skills and career development. By the time a student reaches middle and high school, assessment should become more systematized and focused on transition to specific adult outcomes.

While the law does not define age-appropriate transition assessment, the Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children defines transition assessment as an “...ongoing process of collecting data on the individual’s needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living and personal and social environments. Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)”

Transition assessment should include multiple sources of data viewed through a transition lens. The assessment should reflect the student’s current needs, strengths, interests, and preferences, the postsecondary goals the student would like to achieve and steps the student will need to take to accomplish or redefine his/her goals. Summary statements about the present level of performance serve as the foundation for the IEP transition planning process. In addition, the transition assessment data can be used for making decisions about instructional strategies and accommodations in instruction and the student’s environment.

It has been suggested that transition assessment information be gathered in the following categories:

- a. Academic
- b. Self-determination
- c. Vocational interest and exploration
- d. Adaptive behavior/independent living

(NSTTAC, 2013)

A comprehensive self-paced Module on ***Using Assessment for IEP Planning*** can be found on the CDE Transition Services web page at <http://www2.cde.state.co.us/transitionassessment/index.asp>

USING TRANSITION ASSESSMENT IN IEP TRANSITION PLANNING

Information from transition assessments may include results from formal or informal assessments, and should be documented in the IEP. This information is used to develop goals and possible objectives, and identify other agencies that will provide support and services to the student as an adult. Accommodations needed in postsecondary education and employment can also be determined. Focus on assessing career/vocational interests and skills are essential because of the emphasis on career development in IDEA 2004 and the importance of work in adult life. Work, defined as meaningful activities in which an individual regularly participates, may be full or part time employment, competitive or supported, paid or volunteer.

For example, a student who expresses an interest in attending business courses at a local community college after high school graduation has provided an important context for further assessment activities. First, the student, teacher, and family members must review grades, performance in any business-related work experiences, and performance in any high school business courses. Then, information regarding the community college business courses, enrollment procedures and requirements, academic support services, living accommodations, and financial support must be collected. For students with severe disabilities, the family, student, and teacher may decide to investigate recreation opportunities in the community. First, the student and family should be asked to identify activities of interest. Then, the teacher can explore support options available to the student in the community. Once these have been determined, the student should be allowed to try out the recreation activities while receiving the support needed.

CAREER/VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Definition

Career/Vocational assessment is the process of gathering information regarding a person’s abilities, aptitudes and interests related to career vocational training and employment potential. The evaluation/assessment is an ongoing process that should begin in the elementary grades and involve many individuals including the student, parents, classroom teachers, counselors, and administrators. (Maxam, 1985)

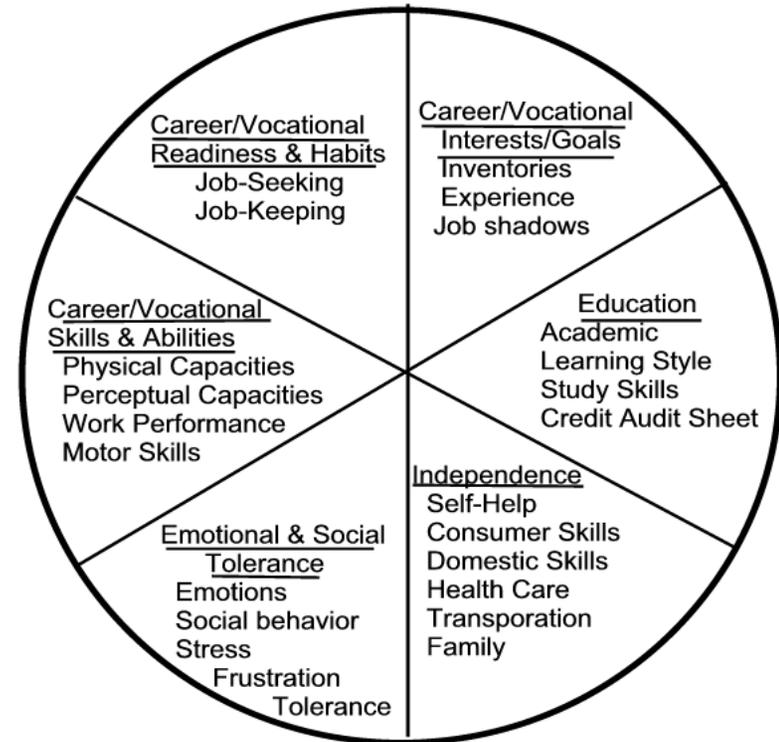
Purpose

Career/Vocational assessment is an individualized process designed to answer three broad questions about a person. This information is used to develop a long-range vocational plan.

1. Where is the individual presently?
2. Where is the individual going?
3. How do we get the individual there?

Scope and Content

There are six categories that you may consider when assessing an individual as part of the ongoing transition planning process. They are shown in the circle to the right.



In addition to formal and informal transition assessment, much information regarding a student already exists in school records or through parent information i.e., formal test results, attendance data, transcripts, and extra-curricular activities. Teacher, parent and student reports offer much information related to prevocational-skills, academic abilities and skills, daily living skills, interests and motivation. The six categories represent much of the information found in the Transition Portfolio. Review the student’s portfolio to assist in the transition planning process.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Although the student is the most essential player in the transition assessment process, family members should also play a key role in transition assessment, planning activities and the overall process itself. For students with moderate and severe disabilities, family members are often the foundation of transition planning and assessment and should be actively involved.

One of the roles of parents is sharing unique information about their child. They should be asked to provide information about their child's strengths, needs, interests and tolerances. Parent's hopes and dreams for their child may also be considered. It will be important to know whether parent's goals for their child are similar or different than the child's goals.

Understanding Family Culture

In order to be more effective and comprehensive in their planning, it is essential that transition team members consider and familiarize themselves with the cultural context of the family. This ensures that the plan will address and meet the distinctive characteristics, concerns and circumstances of the family.

For instance, Hispanic family members may define their roles differently in their child's life in comparison to African/European-American families. Hence, it is vital that the transition team reflect on how these roles vary from family to family and culture to culture.

The IEP team helps develop a transition plan that allows students to:

- Pursue activities that match their capabilities

AND

- Develop environments for participation in employment and leisure that correspond to the culture in which they grew up and are familiar.

