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ABOUT TRANSITION

Numerous follow-up and follow-along 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 (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 students’ preferences, interests, abilities, and needs.

The concept of transition is simple. First, help students and their families think about their life after high school and identify desired outcomes, and 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; and
- Help students and families make connections to supports and services they may need after high school.

Although the concept of transition is simple, the process of planning and providing transition services based on individual student needs may be challenging in our complicated systems of education with limited resources.
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 and preparing and assisting them to meet those demands successfully requires careful transition planning beginning at the earliest age possible.

This kit is designed to help teachers, parents, and students:
- Understand the transition concept and process;
- Determine and conduct appropriate assessment activities;
- Successfully complete the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet transition compliance requirements;
- Develop long-term student plans for transition using a portfolio to frame the process;
- Guide transition planning using tools and templates;
- Access appropriate agencies and resources; and
- Use the transition process to ensure that students move from school to 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 (i.e., to answer questions and provide information regarding effective transition planning); to identify how parents can support the process; to provide checklists of “what to do when” for parents
- Inventories, tools, and strategies for assessment in preparation and as updates for transition planning, 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
- Material and Internet Resources
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, and to inform and effectively involve parents in the transition planning process. The kit is organized so that it is easy to use, easy to locate items you are looking for and easy for you to re-file and add to it. There are 8 primary sections in the tool kit. Each of these sections is identified with a different colored set of tabs. Within each section are “section dividers” providing further definition of the contents of that section. Each section is page numbered separately with the title of the section and the section dividers in the footer for easy refilling of items you have used from the kit.

The Section, “Tools, Templates and Worksheets” is full of materials to assist you in assessing students, creating a variety of handouts for students and parents to develop a body of evidence as part of the student’s transition portfolio in the “Maintaining a Body of Evidence” portion of the section titled “Identifying the Destination”. These tools, templates and worksheets are examples of the materials you will use or give your parents and students as you move together toward the student’s transition from school to community living, postsecondary education, and employment.

We anticipate that you will make the kit your own by adding more “tools” and information in each of the sections 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 in the kit.

If there are additional materials you need to complete your information and resource “tools”, the Exceptional Student Services Unit of the Colorado Department of Education is always available to help you locate the resources you need. Call 303-866-6694 with your requests.