

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Presented by Krissella Lyons, VRC

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THE GOAL OF TRANSITION PLANNING

Transition planning is a process that helps prepare students for life after leaving school.



Such planning helps to minimize barriers that a consumer could encounter in the transition phase from school to adult life.

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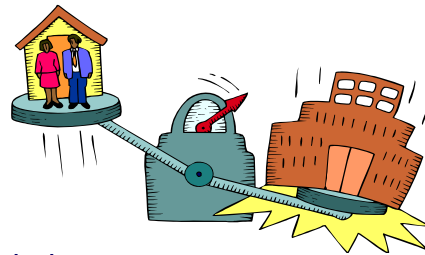
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Transition services are defined as a coordinated set of activities for a student that are designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post school activities including postsecondary education and vocational training.



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Transition services may also include:

- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living or community participation.

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Depending on the student's needs, the transition planning process could involve learning about and preparing for:

- Post secondary education
- Vocational training
- Employment goals and objectives



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Depending on the student's needs, the process could also involve learning about and preparing for:

- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation



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Since its inception, transition planning has stressed the importance of adult service agency involvement and collaboration with the school system to create a successful transition planning process. However, the school has lead responsibility for transition planning.



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Federal Transition Laws IDEA

In 1990, IDEA began emphasizing transition services. Beginning at age 14, a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must include a statement of needed transition services including, when appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or needed linkages.

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Federal Transition Laws (continued) Rehab Act

In 1992, the Rehab Act as amended, added transition services that promote or facilitate the accomplishment of long-term rehabilitation goals and intermediate rehabilitation objectives to the scope of rehabilitation services.

In addition, states are required to develop policies to ensure coordination between rehabilitation agencies and education agencies.

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Federal Transition Laws (continued) School-to-Work Act

The 1994 School-to-Work Act was designed to build state and local partnerships to create school-to-work options that prepare all students for high-skill, high-wage jobs or further education and training.

Combined, these laws create an effective coordinated process for students as they move through secondary educational settings into adult life.

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As a result of House Bill 2823 in the 78th Legislative Session, transition planning services are addressed in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).



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Transition Planning

Services are provided to eligible students with disabilities in both public and private schools. Any individual with a disability can apply with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services to see if they are eligible for services.

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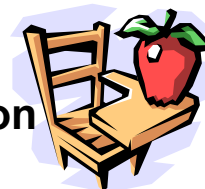
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Prior to graduation from high school, services are provided by public education. DRS' focus is on counseling and guidance and assessments not provided by schools.

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Free Appropriate Public Education FAPE



- School districts are required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students with disabilities.
- These services can include special education and related services.
- Transition planning can be a related service if required to assist the student in receiving a FAPE.

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Uniqueness of the Program



The Transition Program is a coordinated effort between public education and public agencies to provide a seamless move from the educational setting to the adult world of work.

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The Transition Program is designed to enhance and supplement services available through other agencies.

The Transition Program works with the Adult Vocational Rehabilitation Program to serve as a basis for a lifetime of independence and productivity in the adult world.



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The School Program can help the transition process by:



- Encouraging parents to plan optimistically and realistically for the success of their son or daughter beginning at the elementary school level.
- Orienting families to community agencies, explaining the responsibilities of each.
- Educating parents and the student about employment alternatives available in the local community.

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The School Program can help the transition process by:



- Involving parents and students in the transition planning process before the student graduates.
- Encouraging open lines of communication between the school counselor, the student, the parents, and the appropriate agencies.

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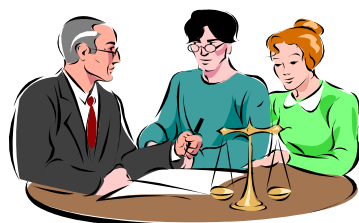
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To be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, an individual must:

- have a physical or mental disability that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment for the individual to employment;
- be capable of achieving an employment outcome after receiving VR services; and,
- require VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

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DRS counselors function as consultants to education personnel to assist in the transition planning process for students with disabilities.

Upon completion of high school, consumers receive services based on mutually agreed upon employment goals.

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Services may include, but are not limited to:

- medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations;
- counseling and guidance;
- training to learn job skills and appropriate work behaviors;
- rehabilitation technology devices and services to improve job functioning; and,
- job placement assistance.



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The process by which the DRS counselor get the wheels turning includes:

- obtaining records and other information to assist in determining the individual's impediment to employment; and,
- providing referral to other service agencies and community resources.



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The DRS counselor may also:

- provide counseling and guidance to assist in developing employment goals; and,
- provide information on the labor market and jobs in the community.

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The parent or guardian can support a smooth transition process by:

- Actively participating in the development of the students Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Knowing what training programs and employment options are available for the student.
- Talking with the student, teachers, and service providers about abilities, choices, and opportunities.

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Important planning questions for transition students:

- Do I want more education?
- Who can help me find a job?
- Who can help me with independent living skills?
- Who can help me learn more about my rights?
- What agencies can counsel me on the choices available?



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- Transition is a cooperative process.
- Family, teachers, agencies and students each have an important role.
- By working together, students with disabilities can achieve success in the adult world.

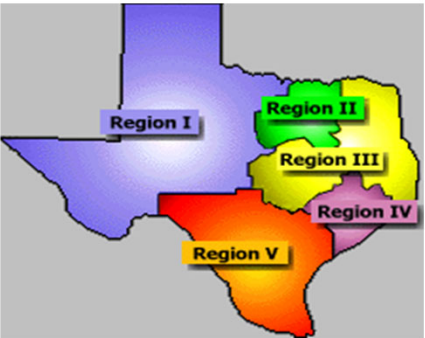


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