



Transition Plans: Preparing for Life After High School

A transition plan lists a student's goals and services they may need to prepare for adulthood. It also helps teach them the skills they need to live, work, and play in their community. The plan is created by an Individualized Education Program team made up of the student, the guardian, and any person or organization that can provide or pay for services, such as the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Centers for Independent Living.

Frequently Asked Questions

▶ What is a transition plan?

A transition plan is part of the student's Individualized Education Program that lists the goals the student will work on and the services they may need as they move into adulthood. It helps teach the student skills they need to live, work, and play in their community.

▶ Who makes the plan?

The Individualized Education Program team, which is made up of the parent, the student, and any person or organization that can provide or pay for services, such as the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Colorado Centers for Independent Living.

▶ When is the plan made?

The plan should be part of the student's Individualized Education Program by the time they turn 15.

▶ **What is the first step in making a transition plan?**

The school should evaluate the student to figure out their goals after high school and learn more about the student's strengths and weaknesses.

▶ **What is in a transition plan?**

A transition plan should include:

- **Goals.** The goals section should say what kind of education and training the student will have after high school, what kind of job they will have, and how they will live in the community. The goals should be specific and realistic.
- **Services.** Services include speech therapy, physical therapy, social work, assistive technology, or travel training. These services can be received as part of the transition plan.
- **Instruction.** The plan should list all the classes the student will take while in high school to help them do what they want to do after graduating. The student can take an ACT/SAT prep class or learn skills like cooking, how to take care of their own needs, or how to pay bills.
- **Community Experiences.** The plan must have activities outside of school that get the student ready to live in the community. These can be such things as buying food, taking the bus, getting an ID, visiting housing options, or joining a club.

▶ **Can the student stay in school after they get all of their high school credits?**

Yes. If the Individualized Education Program team thinks it will be good for the student to stay in school, they can stay in school until the day before their 22nd birthday.

The student can use this time to work on their daily living and job skills. They can also attend school part of the day and work at a job the other part of the day.

▶ **What are the options if I am not happy with the student's transition plan?**

Ask for a meeting with the Individualized Education Program team. Give the school a list of concerns and ask them to make changes. See the [Dispute Resolution in Education](#) resource.

► What are the timelines and resources for creating a transition plan?

Getting Started. By Age 15

The Individualized Education Program team must create the student's transition plan by age 15. Before making the transition plan, the school should complete transition assessments (tests) with the student. The guardian and the student should think about the student's strengths, likes, dislikes, future job options, and skills. The plan should include education, work and independent living goals for after high school. It should also list classes and services the student needs in high school to meet their goals for life after high school.

Transition Services In-Progress. Ages 15 to 16

The plan, goals, and tests should be looked at and updated every year to be sure they still match the student's goals, abilities, and interests.

The plan should have specific steps and resources for life after high school, such as work experiences or help applying to colleges. Discuss travel training with the Individualized Education Program team. Can the student take a bus or drive a car? What specific actions can the school take to help the student get these skills?

Think about the future. Will the student be ready to graduate in four years? If not, talk with the student about possibly delaying graduation so they can get more services.

Getting Ready for Graduation. Age 18

Is the student on track to graduate? Is the student ready to leave high school? Consider options for after graduation, including college, training programs, competitive and supportive employment, and day programs. If the student is not ready, consider delaying graduation so the student can receive additional special education services.

Think about special education services such as:

- **Dual Enrollment:** The student continues to get special education services while taking classes at a community college or participating in another education or training program.
- **Transition Services in School:** The student continues to get services in a neighborhood school or other school programs focused on preparing for future work, schooling, and/or independent living.

- Pathways to Inclusive Higher Education: Students with intellectual disabilities in Colorado have the option to attend college. [Learn more](#)ⁱ

▶ **What are the post-graduation programming and adult services I should consider?**

After graduation, talk with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation about transition and adult services. If your child is going to college, ask about the college's disability services.

No matter what the student chooses to do after graduation, look into available adult services:

- Colorado Office of Employment First: A service that helps individuals with disabilities and families understand how employment and other life decisions will impact their benefits. [Learn more](#)ⁱⁱ
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: This state agency provides a wide variety of individualized services for people with disabilities. These services may allow individuals to reach their employment goals and live independently. [Learn more](#)ⁱⁱⁱ
- Colorado Centers for Independent Living: These centers help individuals with disabilities get the services they need to live on their own. [Learn more](#)^{iv}
- Social Security Administration: Learn about services and benefits available. [Learn more](#)^v or call 1-800-772-1213.

▶ **How do I Learn more about services available through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation?**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) helps people with disabilities find, keep, or advance in jobs by providing services including:

- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) helps students with disabilities learn about job and education options, develop general work skills, and learn how to speak for themselves. These services prepare students to leave high school and either start working or join other programs after school.
- Education and Training programs designed to help students with application and enrollment, and help pay for college or training programs.
- Employment programs help students find job opportunities, assist with applications and interviews, and provide on-the-job coaching for a set period of time.

- Independent Living Services provide information and referrals, independent living skills training, individual and systems advocacy, cross disability peer counseling, and transition services (both out of assisted living facilities and for transition aged youth). [Learn more](#)^{vi}

Additional Information:

- [The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)^{vii}
- [Working with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- [The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services' Handbook](#)^{viii}
- [The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's Youth and Transition Services](#)^{ix}

▶ How Can the Disability Justice Client Assistance Program (CAP) program help with youth transition plans?

The Client Assistance Program assists people with disabilities access Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Centers for Independent Living and answer questions and concerns about those services. The CAP advocates try to resolve issues and complaints at the lowest possible level.

▶ How can case management agencies help?

Case management agencies assist individuals and families with accessing necessary Home and Community Based Services, Community First Choice services and other supports to meet their needs. [Find a Case Management Agency](#)^x near you.

▶ What are Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work incentives?

SSI is a work incentive employment support that helps people with disabilities and Blind SSI recipients go to work by minimizing the risk of losing their SSI or Medicaid benefits. [Learn more](#)^{xi}

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www.DisabilityJustice.com

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- ii <https://employmentfirstcolorado.org/benefits-counseling/>
- iii <https://dvr.colorado.gov/>
- iv <https://coloradosilc.org/colorado-centers-for-independent-living/>
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- ix <https://dvr.colorado.gov/youth-and-transition-services>
- x <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/case-management-agency-directory>
- xi <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-work-ussi.htm>