

What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning is an IEP Team process for deciding and recording which transition services a student with disabilities will need in order to build skills that prepare them for adult life. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities based on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do. Transition planning happens for all students with IEPs so that transition services start at age 14, or earlier if appropriate.

Why is Transition Planning Important for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

Students with ASD often have unique challenges, such as communicating with other people, changing their routines, adapting to their environment, and planning and being organized. Through transition services, schools support students with ASD to overcome challenges by building skills in middle and high school that will make them as independent as possible in their community, at work, and in education or training.



Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter

MA DESE Special Education Secondary Transition Website
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2007-1: Autism Spectrum Disorder
http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/07_1ta.html

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2017-1: Characteristics of High Quality Secondary Transition Services:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2017-1ta.pdf>



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
781-338-3000 | www.doe.mass.edu



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Federation for Children with Special Needs

The Schrafft Center
529 Main Street, Suite 1M3
Boston, MA 02129
800-331-0688 | www.fcsn.org

TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs

(Ages 14-22)



Autism Spectrum Disorder

A series of brochures produced by
The LINK Center - a project of the
Federation for Children with Special Needs,
and the Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Transition Planning for Students with ASD: What you need to know....

TIP 1: At the IEP Team meeting, talk about transition assessments that help the Team understand the student's strengths and needs and which skills they need to learn to be successful at school, at home, and in the community. Students with ASD may need to learn skills in these areas:

- Communicating with words, assistive devices, and/or body language
- Interacting with other people
- Managing anxiety
- Managing sensitivity to sound, touch, smell, etc.
- Planning and organizing
- Changing their routines or the environment
- Managing a tendency to focus narrowly on just one thing
- Managing repetitive movements or words

TIP 2: Based on the assessments, talk with all Team members about how the student will learn skills in middle and high school so they can be successful wherever they go in adult life:

- **To go to college or training:** Would the student benefit from previewing activities before they happen, from having visual cues, or from learning how to speak with professors and the Disability Services office (name of office may vary)? Does the student need learning experiences such as taking college-level classes, joining student council, or keeping track of their plans using the [My Career and Academic Plan \(MyCAP\)](#)?
- **To get and keep a job:** Does the student need [work-based learning](#), interview practice, or video modeling? Think about whether the student needs experience keeping a schedule, self-advocating, speaking to a supervisor, or using assistive technology.

Effective transition services help students with ASD to learn skills they can use when they are adults in many different environments.

- **To live as independently as possible:** Will the student need checklists, graphic organizers, or mnemonics to manage their own health care, finances, and daily schedule? Can the student use a calendar or phone app to be organized? Does the student need to learn self-determination skills?
- **To become an active member of the community.** Will the student need scripts to understand social rules? Could the student join a club or committee related to their interest? Does the student need to learn how to use transportation, connect with the [MassHire Career Center](#), or play sports?

TIP 3: Adult service agencies and community providers can have a role in transition planning, and can offer services that complement the transition services that the school provides.

- Representatives from adult service agencies (e.g. [Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services \(DDS\)](#) or [Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission \(MRC\)](#)) can be invited to attend the annual IEP meeting.
- MRC offers [Pre-Employment Transition Services \(Pre-ETS\)](#) for students with disabilities aged 14-22. Pre-ETS include: job exploration counseling, work readiness training, work-based learning experiences, counseling in postsecondary education, and self-advocacy.
- *At least* two years before the student expects to graduate from high school or turn 22, the IEP Team should talk about whether the student needs a [Chapter 688 referral](#). If so, the school completes the Chapter 688 form, the parent signs it, and the school submits the form to the adult agency.
- Students with ASD who may need adult services from DDS can apply for adult eligibility at age 17.
- Community providers such as [Arcs](#) or [Independent Living Centers](#) can play a role in transition planning by offering activities outside of the school to build social and communication skills, self-advocacy skills, and to offer opportunities to build friendships through mentoring and recreation.

Examples of Effective Transition Planning for Students with ASD

Jacob (age 17) needs to build his employment, independent living, and social skills. His vision is to earn an industry-recognized credential, work with computers, and live independently. Jacob has trouble with unexpected changes in routine which can cause him to get stuck and unable to problem-solve. The Team needs more information to understand Jacob's independent living skills, problem-solving skills, and community safety skills.

Assessments to consider

- Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (<http://www.skillslibrary.com/wbl.htm>)
- Assessment of life skills related to independence
- Transportation assessment

Annual IEP goals to consider

- Problem-solving strategies for managing unexpected changes
- Building independence in daily living skills like home safety, cleaning, etc.
- Developing strong community safety skills
- Finding work-based experiences in the community

Samira (age 15) plans to attend college. Samira has many math and technology skills but struggles with social skills. She also has difficulties with organization and decision-making. Her vision is to attend college, get a job, and live independently. The Team needs more information to understand Samira's independent living skills, social skills, and problem-solving skills.

Assessments to consider

- Career interest surveys
- Interviews with Samira and self-assessment of skills
- SAT/ACT practice tests; audit a college course
- Life skills inventory

Annual IEP goals to consider

- Self-advocacy skills necessary to advocate for accommodations in college
- Problem solving skills to navigate daily issues like planning for long-term projects, etc.
- Researching, selecting, and applying to colleges
- Building social skills

Start skill development in self-advocacy and self-determination as early as possible.