Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning

Families may help their youth with transition by becoming aware of predictors and benchmarks that support movement from middle school to high school and beyond. With awareness, families can seek and provide opportunities to participate in these activities. See the predictors of post-school outcomes legend below, for a list of the predictors, their icons and descriptions. *The Middle School Transition Trail Map*, a guide to help families navigate the transition to and from middle school is a companion resource you may find helpful. It is available at http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138 For additional information, please connect with your district's exceptional student education (ESE) representative. *(This resource was adapted from the Oklahoma Transition Council resource, Timeline of Transition Activities - https://ou.edu/content/dam/Education/zarrow/transition-resources/other-resources/Timeline%20of%20Transition%20Activities.pdf.)*

Legend – Predictors of Post-School Outcomes (Note: the numbers are correlated with the benchmarks by the icon; the numbers do not reflect level of importance)	
	1. **Career Awareness** is learning about opportunities, education and skills needed to choose a career that matches one's strengths and interests.
	2. **Career and Technical Education** (CTE), also referred to as "vocational education", consists of courses that prepare students for a specific job or career.
	3. **Community Experiences** are activities that occur outside of the school, supported with in-class teaching, where students apply academic, social and/or general work behaviors and skills.
	4. **Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma** – Exit Exams are standardized state tests that measure skill levels in content areas, such as Algebra or English that students must pass in order to earn a high school diploma. Diploma status is achieved by completing the requirements of the state awarding the diploma, including the completion of courses needed to fulfill the student's selected graduation pathway, such as the 24-credit, 18-credit and merit or scholar designation.
	5. **Goal-Setting** – Students who take part in goal-setting are more likely to be found employed after high school. Students who want to attend a college or university are more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education.
	6. **Inclusion in General Education** requires students with disabilities to have access to general education curriculum and participate in general education classes with peers without disabilities.
	7. **Interagency Collaboration** is a clear, purposeful and carefully designed process that promotes collaboration across agencies and programs to support outcomes for youth.
	8. **Occupational Courses** are individual courses that support career awareness, allow students to explore different career pathways and develop job skills through experience and teaching focused on their selected employment goals.
	9. **Paid Employment/Work Experiences** – Work experiences are activities that place students in a genuine workplace and may include: work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships and paid employment. Paid employment can include existing standard jobs in a company/organization or customized work assignments negotiated with the employer, but these activities always feature competitive pay (minimum wage or higher) paid directly to the student by the employer.

	10. **Parent Expectations** – There is a positive relationship between parents who hold high expectations for their students and positive post-school outcomes. Students with disabilities whose parents expect them to get a job, go to college and/or be able to support themselves are more likely to be found employed and accessing further education.
	11. **Course of Study (CoS)** is an individualized set of courses, experiences and curriculum designed to develop a student's academic and functional achievement to support the fulfillment of desired post-school goals.
	12. **Parent Involvement** means parents/families/guardians are active participants in all aspects of transition planning, supporting and advocating for their student.
	13. **Psychological Empowerment** is a component of self-determination that represents the belief there is a meaningful connection between one's behavior and the resulting outcomes.
	14. **Self-care/Independent Living Skills** are skills needed to manage one's daily personal needs. Self-care and independent living skills include being able to care for your own health needs, interacting with others, managing money and other financial matters, such as paying bills, and being able to live independently.
	15. **Social Skills** are behaviors and attitudes that help support the development of positive relationships with others through communication and cooperation. Social skills include problem solving when engaged in a social interaction, body language, speaking, listening and responding to verbal, written or other forms of communication.
	16. **Self-realization** is related to the self-determination component, self-awareness/self-knowledge, and specifically refers to the understanding of one's strengths and support needs.
	17. **Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy** is the ability to make choices, solve problems, set goals, evaluate options, take initiative to reach one's goals and accept the consequences of one's actions.
	18. **Student Support** is the network of people, such as family, friends, teachers and adult service providers, who provide services and resources in multiple settings to help students to transition from student life to adult life. This network of people who provide student support should keep in mind the student's postsecondary goals and be aware of the student's strengths, preferences, interests and needs.
	19. A **Transition Program** prepares students to move from high school to adult-life using transition planning and education to create a plan to help students achieve their post-school goals in education/training, employment and independent living as needed.
	20. **Travel Skills** – Students with disabilities who were able to travel independently outside the home, such as to school, a local store or a neighbor's house, are more likely to be involved in post-school employment.
	21. **Work Study** programs provide students the opportunity to learn through experiences that are designed to develop students' skills, attitudes and behaviors related to work. Work-study programs provide both academic and vocational education.
	22. **Vocational Education** consists of courses that prepare students for a specific job or career.
	23. **Youth Autonomy** – Students who show more independence and decision-making skills, such as planning weekend activities, volunteering, making decisions and making long-range plans independently, are more likely to be found in post-school education.

Directions for using this document: In the left column of the Benchmarks table, you will find the following:

- Benchmarks for middle school students and their families to work toward achieving.
- Icons that indicate how the benchmark activities are related to predictors of post-school outcomes.
- Discussion-starters for students and families.

The right column provides resources that can support students and families as they work toward meeting the benchmarks. Please note, many resources may be appropriate for more than one area.

Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning	
Personal Social Development	
Middle School Transition Benchmarks and Discussion-Starters for Students and Families	**Resources**
1. Students increase their self-awareness, including learning more about their disability(ies), strengths, preferences (likes/dislikes, including recreation and leisure activities) and needs. Ask: *Do you know/understand your strengths, interests, disability and needs? Does knowing yourself help you to make good decisions and help others to know you better?*	Toolbox for Self-Determination https://www.imdetermined.org/resource/toolbox-for-self-determination/ Project 10 Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=185 Project 10 Career Interests and Assessments Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=118
2. Students learn how to communicate effectively about their strengths, challenges, preferences and vision for the future. Also, become aware of self-disclosure and leadership opportunities. Ask: *How would you describe your disability to a teacher and explain what you need to do your best in the classroom?*	Project 10 Disclosing a Disability/Requesting Accommodations Webpage (includes the 4-1-1 on Disability Disclosure) http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=124 Students Determined to Take Control of Their Education and Their Lives https://www.imdetermined.org/about/history/module-four-students-determined-take-control-education-and-lives/
3. Students provide input regarding their present level of performance on the IEP.	Secondary - It's All About You! Get to Know Your IEP https://www.imdetermined.org/resource/secondary-its-all-about-you-get-to-know-your-iep-oc/

Ask: *In reviewing your IEP goals, what has been accomplished? Have you discovered new skills? What do you still need to work on and what kind of support will help you succeed?*	
4. Students learn how to meaningfully lead and/or participate in their IEP meetings to the greatest extent possible. Ask: *How do you currently participate in your IEP meeting? Are there ways you could participate more actively? Remember, your IEP is about you and preparing for your future!*	
5. Students learn about the relationship between their actions and the outcomes. E.g. when you make a schedule to complete your weekly tasks and follow it, your tasks get completed. Ask: *If you aren't satisfied with the outcome of something, how could your actions positively impact change?*	

Academic Planning	
Middle School Transition Benchmarks and Discussion-Starters for Students and Families	**Resources**
6. Students, their families and other members of the IEP team set goals and begin to identify transition service needs (this will be based on the results from transition assessments). Include instructional program and self-determination. 1003.5716 F.S. Ask: *How will your IEP goals in middle school help prepare you to transition to high school and adult life in the future?*	Connections: A Transition Curriculum for Grades 3 - 6 https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED440481 Self-Determination for Parents https://www.imdetermined.org/families/ Supporting Collaborations with Families to Ensure Effective Transitions http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=322#NS142 Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families (available in English, Spanish and Haitian-Creole) - http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138
7. Families learn about secondary transition, understand how to actively and effectively participate in the process and support their students in becoming stronger self-advocates. Per	

s.1003.5716 F.S. schools will provide information regarding district and state programs and services. 1003.5716 F.S. Ask: *How do you currently participate in the transition planning process? Remember that you and your student have valuable information to share with the IEP team to determine goals and supports needed; and it is okay to ask questions!*	Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Parent Services https://www.fdlrs.org/parent-services FDLRS Technology - https://www.fdlrs.org/technology Family Network on Disabilities (Parent Training and Information Center) https://fndusa.org/ Parent to Parent of Miami (serving Miami-Dade and Monroe) https://www.ptopmiami.org/
8. Students learn about available accommodations which could help support them to be successful; and how to request them. Ask: *How is the student currently receiving any accommodations? Discuss any questions with the IEP team. (See chapter four of "Accommodations: Assisting Students with Disabilities")* http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf	Staying Safe on Social Media and Online https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/publications/staying-safe-social-media-and-online Standing Up for Me (self-determination curriculum available through Project 10) - http://project10.info/SUFM.PHP Student-Directed IEPs http://blog.brookespublishing.com/9-first-steps-to-student-directed-ieps/
9. Students take an active role in monitoring progress on their IEP goals to increase the likelihood of goal progress and achievement. Ask: *Do you set aside time to regularly review IEP goal progress? (IEP meetings take place at least annually--schools will collect data to measure annual goal progress but students can also take an active role.)*	Self-Directed IEP (instructional tools) https://www.ou.edu/education/zarrow/resources/curriculum Students Transitioning to Adult Roles (STAR) Person-Centered Planning (PCP) http://project10.info/Star.php Supporting Content Learning Through Technology for K-12 Students With Disabilities - https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/IC-10_FINAL_09-10-14.pdf
10. Students and families participate in activities to increase access to, and skills related to technology. Please note postsecondary institutions rely on technology for communication and classwork. It is also very important to understand social media platforms and how to be a responsible online citizen.	Standard Diploma Requirements: Academic Advisement—What Parents and Students Need to Know - https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/sss/graduation-requirements/

Ask: *Have necessary technology skills been identified? What are some ways you can work on them together at home?*	Project 10 Family Involvement Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=322#NS142
11. Students, families and school staff discuss high school graduation options to ensure that students' middle school course of study helps prepare them for the graduation option they want to pursue. Ask: *Have you explored future career interests (additional activities are in the Career Pathway and Postsecondary Education sections below), and determined which graduation options prepare students for the career they desire?* *Academic* Advisement Flyer: https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/sss/graduation-requirements/ Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families (pages 5-6): http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138	

Community Involvement/Independent Living	
Middle School Transition Benchmarks and Discussion-Starters for Students and Families	**Resources**
12. By age 14 the LEA will invite a representative of any agency currently providing or likely to provide and/or pay for transition services to the student, such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR/VR), Division of Blind Services (DBS), Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), etc., to attend the IEP meeting. 1003.5716 F.S. Ask: *Is there an agency(ies) you would like to be invited to the IEP meeting?* **NOTE:** Consent of the parent(s), or consent of a student who has reached the age of majority and rights have transferred, is required prior to inviting a representative of any participating	Let's Go! A Guide to Getting Around Your Community in Florida https://fddc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/transportation-guidebook.pdf. A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities (OSERS, USDOE) - See page nine for consent https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/policy-guidance-transition-guide-postsecondary-education-employment-students-youth-disabilities-august-2020/ CareerSource Florida - http://careersourceflorida.com/

agency likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to attend a student's IEP team meeting. Consent is also required prior to releasing personally identifiable information to officials of participating agencies.	
13. Schools will provide information regarding the local Center for Independent Living (CIL) by age 12/during the student's 7th grade year. Students, with assistance if needed, should contact their local Center for Independent Living to inquire about supports and services to increase independence (e.g., medical equipment, assistive technology, transportation and other needs). Ask: *Are you familiar with your local Center for Independent Living? If not, research their website, call the office and/or schedule a time to visit.*	Adults with Disabilities Workforce Education Program http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/adults-edu/ Florida Afterschool Alliance - http://www.floridaafterschool.org/ Florida Afterschool Network - https://flafterschool.com/ Florida Centers for Independent Living - https://floridacils.org/ Find the CIL that is closest to you - http://www.floridacils.org/find-your-cil Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged https://ctd.fdot.gov/ Connections Guide: Tools and Resources For Adult Life https://www.fddc.org/publications/ Project 10 Transportation Webpage - http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=270
14. Students develop and practice money skills. Ask: *What can be done to increase the student's confidence and competence with handling and managing money?*	
15. Support the development of travel skills to enhance independence. Ask: *Are there new travel skills that can be learned and used? (Review the student's experience with travel skills.)*	The Friendship Circle - 10 Benefits of Chores at Home https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/10/24/the-ten-benefits-of-chores-for-your-child-with-special-needs/ The Friendship Circle - 12 Skills and 5 Household Chores that Can Serve as Preparation for Future Vocation https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2016/02/10/12-skills-and-5-household-chores-that-can-serve-as-preparation-for-future-vocation/
16. Students, their families and other IEP team members explore after school and summer advancement opportunities, such as: outreach programs from colleges and universities, social skill programs, and other clubs and extra-curricular activities.	Project 10 Financial Literacy Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=307

Ask: *What type of summer program(s) are available? Which would be most beneficial for the student?*	The Friendship Circle - How To Teach Chores To Your Special Needs Child https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/03/07/how-to-teach-chores-to-your-special-needs-child/
17. Students develop independent living skills through performing household tasks at home, such as laundry, setting the table, sweeping, grocery shopping, cooking and more. Ask: *Are there new tasks/skills to learn and practice? (Review the tasks the student performs at home.)*	The Autism Community in Action - Developing Lifeskills: Chores https://tacanow.org/family-resources/life-skills/ Accessible Chef - Includes visual recipes and adaptive cooking tools https://accessiblechef.com/ All I Ever Needed to Know, I Learned at the Grocery Store https://pathways.org/ever-needed-know-learned-grocery-store/

Career Pathway	
Middle School Transition Benchmarks and Discussion-Starters for Students and Families	**Resources**
18. Students learn about famous people with disabilities (via reading/listening to biographies, watching videos, interviews, etc.) and how they achieved their goals. Ask: *How are these individuals inspiring? How did they achieve their goals? (Find role models with disabilities in areas of the student's interests.)*	Project 10 Career Interests and Assessments Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=118 Kuder - Parents: Here's what you can do to help your child plan for a career https://www.kuder.com/blog/college-career-readiness/parents-heres-what-you-can-do-to-help-your-child-plan-for-a-career/ Barnes and Noble: Differently Abled Persons Biographies (not a free resource) https://www.barnesandnoble.com/b/books/peoples-cultures-biography/disabled-differently-abled-persons-biography/_/N-29Z8q8Zsxo
19. Students learn more about career options and complete Career Interest Inventories. Please note, students must take a Career and Education Planning course in middle school which results in an academic and career plan [1003.4156 (1)(e), F.S.]. Ask: *What are your career interests? Do you know the education/training requirements and job opportunities available in these career fields?*	Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), Pre-Employment Transition Services - https://transitionta.org/ Transition Youth Services at VR https://rehabworks.org/student-youth/youth-transition.html

20. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are available to eligible students with disabilities ages 14-21. The following are the five Pre-ETS areas: 1. Job Exploration Counseling 2. Work Readiness Training 3. Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs) 4. Self-Advocacy Training & Peer Mentoring 5. Postsecondary Educational Counseling *VR Pre-ETS flyer*: https://www.rehabworks.org/_resources/docs/flyers/pre-employment-transition-services.pdf Ask: *Would the student benefit from any of the pre-employment transition services offered by VR to support post-school success?*	Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) through VR https://rehabworks.org/student-youth/student-youth.html Florida Abilities Work Portal https://abilitieswork.employflorida.com/vosnet/Default.aspx Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment Toolkit (must create a free account to access) - https://transitionta.org/transition-assessment/ Connections: A Transition Curriculum for School 3 – 6 https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED440481 Florida Shines - Xello https://www.floridashines.org/xello Florida Workforce Development Board Resources http://www.floridajobs.org/workforce-board-resources
21. Students participate in work-based learning experiences (WBLE); this may include school-based enterprises, service learning and volunteer opportunities in the community, including the school. Ask*: Has the student been involved in a work-related experience? What was it like? Are there opportunities for new WBLEs or to expand previous experiences?*	Check with your local school district and Workforce Investment Board Youth Council for upcoming events.
22. Students and their families participate in resource fairs that include information related to college and careers with follow-up conversations occurring, particularly if students attend alone and/or without parent(s). Ask: *Which options appear to be aligned with the student's areas of interest? (Review the materials gathered at the resource fair.)*	

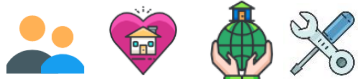| 23. Students and their families explore high school options, such as magnet programs and career academies based on students' interests and desired career pathway. Please note, schools will provide information regarding these opportunities in high school by age 12/during the student's 7th grade year. Ensure that CTE programs and opportunities to earn industry certifications while still attending school is explored (e.g. Certified Nursing Assistant, Welding, Food Handlers Certification, etc.). 1003.5716 F.S. Ask: *What are the various high school options available in your district? Which is/are best suited to the student?*	
Postsecondary Education	
Middle School Transition Benchmarks and Discussion-Starters for Students and Families	**Resources**
24. Students, families and other IEP team members plan for postsecondary education; this includes looking into high school programs and their requirements (schools will provide information by age 12/7th grade). Please note, the student's postsecondary goals must be developed by age 14 or before entering high school. 1003.5716 F.S. Ask: *Considering the student's career interests, is the student taking courses that will prepare him/her for the postsecondary education required to find employment in that field?*	Project 10 Planning for Postsecondary Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=327 Project 10 Inclusive Postsecondary Education Webpage http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=193 Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities - http://fcsua.org/ Florida Career and Technical Centers/Career and Technical Colleges http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/dist-ps-instit.stml The Florida College System, Disability Support Services https://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/student-services/disability-support-services.stml

25. Families assist students in researching colleges, universities and career and technical education programs. Plan visits whenever possible and support school-sponsored fieldtrips. Ask: *What are the student's needs for a successful postsecondary education experience and how will these needs be met? Review the guiding questions in "*Getting Ready for Educational Opportunities After High School: Families Supporting Students for Success". http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138	Think College - https://thinkcollege.net/ A Transition Activity Calendar for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired http://www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu/providers/tac/#3 Getting Ready for Educational Opportunities After High School: Families Supporting Students for Success http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138 Career and Technical Education: Enhancing Educational Experiences in Middle School, High School and Postsecondary Education http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138
26. Families of students with intellectual disabilities assist with exploring inclusive postsecondary education programs (IPSEs) designed to accommodate student needs and provide further instruction and training to prepare students for a career. Ask: *Are you aware of the growing opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to attend college? Check out the Project 10 web page on "Inclusive Postsecondary Education" to learn more.* http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=193	State University System, Students with Disabilities https://www.flbog.edu/universities/admissions-transfers/students-with-disabilities/ Florida Shines - Xello https://www.floridashines.org/xello
27. Families explore financial planning for postsecondary education. Ask: *What types of financial aid, grants and scholarships are available? Keep in mind that MyCareerShines has very helpful financial planning resources, including access to over 270 scholarship applications!*	

Looking Ahead	
Transition Activity and Discussion-Starters for Students and Families	**Resources**
28. Discussion regarding deferring receipt of a standard diploma must begin by age 14/before high school. Families become familiar with requirements to defer receipt of a standard diploma and extended transition programs. 1003.5716 F.S. Ask: *What are the possible benefits of deferring receipt of a standard diploma? Remember, the IEP team decides whether or not the student would be eligible to defer.* **Note:** The legislation that allows all students the opportunity to work toward a standard diploma also allows certain students with disabilities to defer receiving the diploma and continue to receive educational services from the school district. Deferral is necessary because students who receive a standard high school diploma are no longer eligible for a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Students who defer may participate in an extended transition program. Planning for deferral will take place with the student's IEP team well in advance of the student graduating. See the Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families (page 10): http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138	SSA Area Work Incentive Coordinators for North and South Florida http://www.socialsecurity.gov/atlanta/southeast/awic/index.htm *The Red Book - A Guide to Work Incentives* http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/ Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) and Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/WIPA.html 6A-1.09963 High School Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.09963 1003.4282(10)(c), F.S. Requirements for a standard high school diploma http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.4282.html Extended Transition Programs List (Florida) http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138
29. Students and their families connect with a Benefits Planner to talk about paid employment, which could include self-employment, and potential impact on Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits. Ask: *Are you aware of the Social Security employment supports and work incentives, such as the Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)? There are Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) across the state who can help with benefits planning, and their services are free!*	**Resources by Location** For each of the Florida school districts, Project 10 provides contact information for district personnel and brief descriptions of the transition-related resources available to students with disabilities. Resources fall within the following categories: Local School District, Employment, Local Agencies, Colleges and Universities, and Students and Families. Check out the available resources in your area - http://project10.info/ResourcesByLocation.php#NS82

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