

Essential Steps in Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Significant Support Needs

Effective Postsecondary Planning Begins with Assessments

Conducting transition assessments is the vital first step in developing a meaningful and individualized transition plan. These assessments provide insight into a student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs, ensuring that their measurable postsecondary goals (MPGs) are aligned with their aspirations for education, employment, career, and independent living after high school. To ensure that individual educational plan teams have the transition assessment data needed to develop the student's MPGs, and identify the transition services and course of study that will assist the student to achieve their MPGs, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Data must be collected on the students' strengths, needs, preferences, and interests.
- Data should be collected on various aspects of the student, such as their academic skills, career interests and aptitudes, self-determination and self-advocacy skills, and independent living skills.
- Transition assessment data should be obtained from multiple sources and should continue over time; one assessment at one point in time is insufficient (e.g., the results of one interview).
- Assessment or inventory data may be collected from a combination of formal and informal sources.
- Transition assessment data must be collected beginning at age 12 or 7th grade, whichever occurs first, in order for the student's MPGs to be in place by age 14 or the first day of high school, whichever occurs first, and be updated annually.



Documenting Secondary Transition Assessment Results

Take note of the following best practices when documenting the data collected from the transition assessments:

- Record the name of the assessment instrument and describe the procedure.
- Include the date the assessment/inventory was administered.
- Summarize the results and findings.
- Describe the student's strengths, preferences, and interests.
- Identify connections between the assessments and postsecondary education and career goals (education, training, employment, career, and independent living, if appropriate).
- Reference these connections in relevant sections of the student's IEP.
- **Remember:** if an independent living goal is not needed, there should be sufficient evidence to support this. The same holds true for the student's need for self-determination and self-advocacy instruction.

Secondary Transition Assessments Support Measurable Postsecondary Goals Development

Meaningful and relevant MPGs are based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, if appropriate, independent living skills. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and courses of study, are needed to assist the student in reaching these goals (Section 1003.5716(2)(c), F.S.).

Since MPGs must be student-driven, they should directly reflect the student's assessed interests and long-term goals. However, there are times when a student's career aspiration may seem difficult to attain as stated. In these cases, the IEP team should not dismiss the student's interest but instead develop goals that hover around the general idea by aligning transition services and supports to help the student explore related career pathways.

Aligning Secondary Transition Services with Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Effective transition planning ensures that transition services directly align with the student's MPGs in education and/or training, employment, career, and independent living. Transition services are not just a checklist. They are purposeful, individualized supports designed to help students successfully move from high school to post-school life.

What Are Secondary Transition Services?

According to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 CFR § 300.43, transition services are a coordinated set of activities focused on improving academic and functional achievement to support the student's movement to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.

Transition services must be:

- Results-Oriented – Designed to help students achieve their MPGs.
- Individualized – Based on the student's unique needs, strengths, and interests.
- Coordinated – Involving school, family, agencies, and community partners.
- Beyond a Referral – Providing direct support, skill building, and experiences.

Secondary transition services, including Pre-ETS, should be part of the student's IEP and may involve a range of activities.

These activities include a variety of instructional areas, related services, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, acquisition of daily living skills, and functional vocational evaluation.

1. Instruction

- **Academic Instruction:** This involves courses and activities that prepare students for postsecondary education or training. It could include academic coursework, study skills training, or specialized instruction designed to help the student achieve their goals in college or vocational school.
- **Vocational Instruction:** Teaching job-related skills through career and technical education (CTE) programs, work-study programs, or job-specific training, helping students gain practical knowledge and skills for future employment.



- **Independent Living Instruction:** Skills like money management, self-care, cooking, and using public transportation that support independent living and community integration.
- **Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Instruction:** Empowering students to make decisions, set goals, and advocate for themselves in education, work, and personal life, as well as the legal rights and responsibilities that transfer at the age of majority.

2. Related Services

Related services are supportive services necessary to assist students with disabilities in benefiting from their transition planning. These can include:

- **Speech and Language Therapy:** Supporting students who need help developing communication skills, which are critical for both education and employment.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Assisting students with developing fine motor skills, task organization, and adaptive skills necessary for work or independent living.
- **Physical Therapy:** Helping students improve mobility, strength, and coordination, particularly important for students who need physical accommodations or support in the workplace.
- **Transportation Services:** Providing assistance or training in how to use public transportation or arranging accessible transportation for students with mobility needs.
- **Psychological and Counseling Services:** Addressing mental health, emotional, or behavioral needs that may impact postsecondary goals in education or employment.



3. Community Experiences

These include activities and services that occur outside the school environment and help students develop real-world skills:

- **Internships, Job Shadowing, or Apprenticeships:** Providing hands-on experiences that help students explore careers and develop work-related skills.
- **Volunteer Work:** Allowing students to gain experience in different community settings, which can foster social skills and work habits.
- **Work-Based Learning (WBL) Programs:** Involving students in part-time jobs or vocational training experiences to build employability skills.
- **College Campus Visits:** Offer opportunities for students to explore postsecondary education options.



4. Development of Employment and Other Post-School Adult Living Objectives

- **Pre-ETS through VR:** Vocational Rehabilitation services, job coaches, or supported employment programs.
- **Career Counseling:** Guiding students through career exploration, résumé building, interview skills, and job search processes.
- **Postsecondary Education Planning:** Assisting students with applying to colleges, universities, vocational schools, or training programs, as well as exploring financial aid options.
- **Supported Employment:** Working with community agencies or VR programs to provide on-the-job training and ongoing support.



5. Acquisition of Daily Living Skills

- **Training in Daily Living Activities:** Teaching students life skills such as budgeting, grocery shopping, time management, and personal care, which are important for independent living.
- **Assistive Technology:** Providing tools or devices that help students with disabilities function more independently in daily activities, education, or employment.
- **Pre-ETS through VR:** Self Determination instruction



6. Functional Vocational Evaluation

- **Career and Job Skills Assessment:** This helps determine the student's strengths, interests, and areas for growth in terms of work readiness.
- **Provide Vocational Assessments:** guide decisions about the types of training, employment, or accommodations the student might need.

Connecting Secondary Transition Services to Course of Study

The multi-year course of study should be directly linked to the student's MPGs. The selected courses should help develop the skills and knowledge the student needs for their postsecondary education, employment, career, and independent living goals.

Example: A student wanting to become a mechanic could have a course of study that includes:

- Automotive Technology CTE courses
- Applied Math for problem-solving in mechanics
- Work-based Learning or internships at an auto shop

Example: A student wanting to live independently may have a course of study that includes:

- Life Skills & Financial Literacy courses
- Career Education/Work-Based Learning
- Community-Based Instruction (CBI) in grocery shopping, transportation, and self-care

Connecting Secondary Transition Services to Measurable Postsecondary Goals

The next five sections, A through E, will provide student examples and discuss the importance of developing MPGs and aligning those with appropriate transition services. Before selecting transition services, MPGs should be clearly defined and based on age-appropriate transition assessments. Writing vague or difficult to attain MPGs can lead to ineffective services. Aligning transition services with MPGs ensures that students are actively developing the skills and experiences they need for success beyond high school. Transition planning should go beyond agency referrals and focus on real-world, meaningful activities that directly impact the student's future.

A. Student Example: Measurable Postsecondary Goals for a Student with a Significant Cognitive Disability Who Wants to be a National Football League (NFL) Player

For a student with a significant cognitive disability who will defer his or her diploma to enter a transition program, the challenge is to honor the student's interests while developing attainable, functional goals that align with their abilities and incorporate strengths, needs, preferences, and interests obtained from age-appropriate transition assessments. The focus should be on career exploration, independent living, and skill-building in a related field that incorporates their love of football.



Example A – Develop MPGs

Education/Training Goal

*Within three months of completing the deferral program and exiting the K-12 system, the student will participate in a **vocational training program** to develop employment, daily living, and community participation skills, with an emphasis on opportunities related to sports, fitness, or stadium operations. (This type of support could be provided by VR or APD. This keeps them engaged in their passion while setting up a realistic training pathway.)*

Employment Goal

*Within three months of completing the community-based training program, the student will **work in a sports-related setting**, such as a stadium, gym, recreation center, or school athletic department, performing tasks such as setting up equipment, stocking concession stands, cleaning facilities, or organizing team gear with support as needed. (This type of support could be provided by VR or APD.)*

(If the student is physically active and enjoys movement, the job tasks can incorporate hands-on activities. If not, roles related to assisting with event preparation or working in a sports retail environment could be considered.)

Career Goal

*Within two years of receiving supervised support in a sports related setting, the student **will complete employment tasks without supervision/support** to meet his or her career goal.*

Independent Living Goal

*Within one month of completing deferral and exiting the K-12 system, the student will use a visual schedule or job coach support to **independently follow a daily routine, manage basic self-care and hygiene, and participate in community-based recreational activities related to sports.** (This helps them stay connected to their passion while developing real-world skills in time management, personal care, and social participation.)*

Align Secondary Transition Services with MPGs

While acknowledging the student's passion for professional football, the IEP team could develop transition services centered on career exploration and workplace readiness that also have connections to sports environments. This will equip the student with transferable skills applicable to a range of attainable employment and independent living outcomes.

Example A – Align Secondary Transition Services

1. Instruction, Related Services

- Career Exploration in Sports-Related Fields: Classroom activities and job training that introduce careers such as stadium operations, fitness center assistant, sports retail, and event setup.
- Workplace Communication & Self-Advocacy: Training in following multi-step directions, asking for help, and using visual schedules to navigate a workplace.
- Functional Literacy & Math for Employment: Instruction in reading simple schedules, understanding paychecks, and using money for purchases at a sports venue.
- Adaptive Physical Education & Recreation: Participation in adaptive sports programs to keep the student engaged in athletics while developing social and teamwork skills.
- Other related services as applicable.



2. Community Experiences

- Job Shadowing & Stadium Tours: Visits to stadiums, gyms, or recreation centers to see behind-the-scenes operations and interact with employees in related roles.
- Internships or Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE): Hands-on experiences setting up sports equipment, stocking concession stands, or assisting with field maintenance.
- Volunteering at Sports Events: Opportunities to help at local youth sports leagues, school athletic departments, or community recreation centers.

3. Employment & Career Development

- Supported Employment Services: Coordination with VR or job placement, job coaching, and customized employment opportunities in sports-related environments.
- Résumé Building & Job Applications: Helping the student create a simple résumé with visuals and practice completing applications for entry-level sports-related jobs.
- Work-Based Behavior Training: Reinforcing timeliness, task completion, teamwork, and following supervisor directions in structured work settings.

4. Independent Living & Daily Living Skills

- Travel Training: Teaching the student how to use public or arranged transportation to get to work or recreational activities.
- Personal Hygiene & Work Attire: Reinforcing self-care skills, such as dressing appropriately for work, wearing a uniform, and maintaining cleanliness in a workplace setting.
- Money & Budgeting Skills: Instruction on managing paychecks, making purchases at sports events, and saving for recreational activities.

5. Agency Linkages

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): Referral for job placement, workplace accommodations, and job coaching.
- CareerSource/Workforce Development Programs: Connecting to entry-level employment opportunities in stadiums, gyms, and recreation centers.
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Support for community participation, independent living skills, and transportation training.



B. Student Example: MPGs for a Student with a Significant Cognitive Disability/Medically Complex

MPGs for students with significant cognitive disabilities and complex medical needs can be broader and more diverse, emphasizing independent living, self-care, community participation, and daily functioning rather than traditional education or employment pathways. These goals should be individualized and person-centered, ensuring they align with the student's abilities, support needs, and long-term quality of life.

Example B – Develop MPGs

Education/Training

*Within one month of exiting the K-12 system, the student will **train** (exercise) in her home, with the support from a therapist, care attendant or parent, to build strength and stamina to better assist with transfers in the home. (Could add community vehicle transfers)*

OR

*Within one month of exiting the K-12 system, the student will participate in **training** through an adult service agency to learn skills to obtain community employment/supported employment or self-employment.*

Employment

*Within six months of exiting the K-12 system, the student will **work** in her home by using her direct access switch on a timed setting to turn on a chosen appliance to prepare her meal that will be fed to her by her caregiver or parent.*

OR

*Within six months of exiting the K-12 system, the student will receive **job-development** services from VR or a community rehabilitation program.*

Career

*After one year of preparing her meals, the student will prepare a meal once a week for her family with a **paid career benefit** (parent provided).*

OR

*After two years of **job development**, the student will participate in technologically supported self-employment or volunteer work.*

OR

*After two years of experience with personal care attendants, the student will **participate in the hiring of the personal attendants**.*

Independent Living

*Immediately after exiting the K12 system, the student will **live** at home with the parents and receive support from the care attendant. The student will make clothing preferences and assist the caregiver with dressing.*

OR

*Within one month of exiting the K-12 system, the student will participate in a daily routine with hand over hand support to learn skills needed to **live** in a supported living environment.*



Align Secondary Transition Services with MPGs

These transition services focus on building strength, developing functional skills, engaging in employment-related tasks, and increasing independence in daily activities. The transition services should be structured, person-centered, and designed to maximize independence and participation in the home and community.

Example B – Align Secondary Transition Services

1. Instruction, Related Services

- Physical & Occupational Therapy Coordination: Ensure the student receives therapy in school to develop strength, endurance, and movement techniques for assisted transfers.
- Home-Based Exercise Training: Work with PT/OT staff to develop an at-home exercise plan that can be followed post-exit.
- Assistive Technology (AT) Instruction: Teach the student how to use switch technology for accessing appliances.
- Self-Determination & Choice-Making Instruction: Incorporate communication strategies (e.g., Augmentative and Alternate Communication [AAC] device, picture choices) to assist with indicating personal preferences in daily routines.
- Community Mobility & Transfers Training: Work with therapists and caregivers on safe vehicle transfers for community access.
- Multisensory Teaching Techniques: Employ tactile, auditory, and visual learning methods to reinforce key skills. For example, using touchable educational tools, auditory feedback, and visual aids such as picture schedules or social stories to support learning.
- Other related services as applicable.

2. Community Experiences

- Community-Based Instruction (CBI) for Shopping & Clothing Selection: Teach student how to participate in selecting new clothing in a store or online with support.
- Public Transportation & Accessibility Training: Work with support staff on familiarizing student with transportation options for medical appointments or outings.
- Structured Meal Preparation in a Community Setting: Provide opportunities for student to practice meal preparation in a structured, accessible kitchen space outside the home.
- Participation in Social & Recreational Activities: Support the student's engagement in adaptive sports, community events, or social groups to enhance quality of life.
- Social Skills Development: Facilitate structured social interactions with peers through clubs, support groups, or organized social events like parties or movie nights. This will help the student develop their communication and interpersonal skills in a safe, supportive environment.

3. Employment & Career Development

- Assistive Technology Training for Employment Tasks: Provide direct instruction on how to use switch access to activate appliances and complete simple meal preparation steps.
- Job Skills Training in Functional Work Tasks: Develop a structured routine for completing meal prep tasks with a caregiver's support.
- Workplace Readiness Skills Development: Teach task sequencing, choice-making, and time management skills in preparation for her home-based work task.
- Job Coaching & Caregiver Training: Train caregivers on how to support student in performing her employment tasks independently while using AT.
- Expanded Meal Preparation & Cooking Instruction: Provide structured practice in preparing full meals with adaptive equipment.
- Structured Practice in Managing a Paid Role: Work with the family on setting up a system for the student to "earn" career benefit (e.g., managing payment tracking or expressing interest in continuing the role).
- Financial Literacy & Money Handling Instruction: If appropriate, provide training on understanding compensation, even if symbolic (e.g., using a visual savings tracker).
- Modified Work Tasks: For students who are unable to engage in traditional employment due to their medical needs, set up modified work tasks that align with their abilities. For example, simple tasks such as labeling items, sorting, or organizing supplies for a local business.

4. Independent Living & Daily Living Skills

- Choice-Making & Self-Determination Training: Develop structured opportunities for student to select clothing using a communication system (e.g., AAC, pictures, verbal choice prompts).
- Daily Living Skills Training: Provide instruction on assisting with dressing using hand-over-hand support or adapted techniques.
- Caregiver & Support Staff Training: Train family members and personal care attendants to encourage student's active participation in self-care routines.
- Meal Planning & Personal Nutrition Instruction: Teach the student how to choose meals and select ingredients with caregiver assistance.

- Long-Term Support & Benefits Planning: Ensure the student's Medicaid Waiver services, home care supports, and agency linkages are in place before exiting high school.
- Home & Safety Awareness Training: Educate the student on basic safety practices in the home, such as recognizing when help is needed and how to alert the caregiver.
- Health & Medical Management: Teach students how to manage their own medical needs (to the extent possible), including taking medication, using medical equipment, or communicating specific health needs.

The student should practice these skills in a safe and controlled environment with support as needed.



5. Agency Linkages

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): If applicable, support for job exploration and customized employment services.
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD): Connection to Medicaid Waiver services for long-term support, day programs, or employment services.
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Support for AT, advocacy, and accessibility training.
- Local Adult Day Programs: Enrollment in a structured program offering daily activities, social engagement, and vocational skill-building.
- Medicaid & Social Security Benefits Planning: Essential financial support and health services are provided through these agency services.

C. Student Example: Measurable Postsecondary Goals for a Student with a Significant Cognitive Disability Interested in Working in a Veterinarian's Office

Example C – Develop MPGs

Education/Training Goal

*Within three months of completing the deferral program and exiting the K-12 system, the student will **complete a community-based vocational training program focused on animal care**, such as on-the-job training at a veterinary office, with support (type of support could be provided by VR or APD).*

Employment

*Within three months of completing the community-based training program, the student will **work in an entry level position** in a veterinarian's office or an animal care setting in an in-office supported employment position, assisting with tasks such as cleaning kennels, stocking supplies, and providing basic animal care with supervision (type of support could be provided by VR or APD).*

Career Goal

*Within five years of receiving in-office employment support, the student will **complete employment tasks of cleaning kennels, stocking, and animal care without supervision** to meet career goal of veterinary assistant.*



Independent Living Goal

*Within one month of completing deferral and exiting the K-12 system, the student will **use a visual schedule and workplace communication strategies** to independently follow a daily routine, maintain personal hygiene for workplace readiness, and use public or arranged transportation to get to and from work.*

Aligned Secondary Transition Services with MPGs

To help the student achieve training, employment, and independent living goals related to animal care, transition services should focus on career exploration, workplace readiness, hands-on experiences, and community participation.

Example C – Align Secondary Transition Services

1. Instruction, Related Services

- Animal Care Skills Training: Instruction on basic pet care, handling, feeding, and cleaning tasks in a structured setting.
- Workplace Communication & Self-Advocacy: Training on using gestures, AAC devices, or visual supports to interact with supervisors and co-workers.
- Following Multi-Step Directions & Task Sequencing: Teaching the student to follow visual schedules or checklists to complete work-related tasks independently.
- Functional Literacy & Math for Employment: Learning to read simple schedules, recognize animal care symbols, and understand basic measurements for feeding or cleaning supplies.
- Other related services as applicable.

2. Community Experiences

- Job Shadowing at Veterinarian's Offices & Pet Care Facilities: Visits to observe and interact with staff at veterinary clinics, pet stores, or grooming facilities.
- Internships or Work-Based Learning (WBL): Opportunities to assist with feeding animals, stocking supplies, cleaning cages, and organizing pet care areas under supervision.
- Volunteering at Animal Shelters or Pet Adoption Centers: Hands-on experiences helping with pet care, walking dogs, or preparing food and water for animals.
- Participation in a School-Based Enterprise (SBE): Working in a student-run pet care program at school, such as a dog-washing or pet-grooming service.

3. Employment & Career Development

- Supported Employment Services: Collaboration with VR for job placement, on-the-job training, and customized employment opportunities.
- Résumé Building & Job Applications: Helping the student create a picture-supported résumé and practice completing simple job applications for pet-related businesses.
- Workplace Readiness & Soft Skills Training: Teaching appropriate behavior around animals, customer service skills, and teamwork.

4. Independent Living & Daily Living Skills

- Travel Training: Teaching the student how to use public or arranged transportation to get to work.
- Time Management & Work Schedule Skills: Learning to use alarms, timers, or visual schedules to follow a work routine.
- Personal Hygiene & Workplace Attire: Reinforcing skills for wearing appropriate clothing, washing hands, and maintaining cleanliness when working with animals.
- Money & Budgeting Skills: Basic instruction on understanding paychecks, budgeting for transportation, and handling small transactions at work or in the community.

5. Agency Linkages

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)/Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD): Referral for job coaching, supported employment, and career training in animal care settings.
- CareerSource/Workforce Development Programs: Connecting the student to entry-level jobs in pet care, animal shelters, or veterinarian offices.
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Support for workplace accommodations, self-advocacy, and independent living skills.
- Therapeutic or Animal-Assisted Programs: Exploring recreational programs that allow the student to engage with animals in a structured, supportive setting.

D. Student Example: Measurable Postsecondary Goals for a Student on an Access Diploma Interested in Becoming a Cook

Example D – Develop MPGs

Education/Training Goal

*Within three months of completing a deferral program and exiting the K-12 system, the student will participate in a **community-based vocational training program** or on-the-job training in the food service industry, such as a supported employment program, apprenticeship, or job coaching at a restaurant or cafeteria.*

Employment Goal

*Within one month of completing the training program/on the job training, the student will **work in a supported or entry-level food service position**, such as a prep cook, kitchen assistant, or cafeteria worker, following a structured routine with supervision as needed.*

Career Goal

*After one year of working and training as a prep cook/kitchen assistant with supervision, the student will meet the career goal of **becoming a prep cook assistant** independently.*

Independent Living Goal

*Within one month of completing a deferral program and exiting the K-12 system, the student will **independently follow a daily routine**, use a visual schedule to complete work tasks, and practice safe food handling and hygiene skills in a workplace or home setting. Student will also use public or arranged transportation to travel to and from work as needed.*



Align Secondary Transition Services with MPGs

To support the student's postsecondary goals in training, employment, and independent living, the following transition services could be included in the IEP:

Example D – Align Secondary Transition Services

1. Instruction, Related Services:

- Culinary Skills Training: Continued enrollment in the Culinary Arts CTE program, with a focus on food preparation, safety, and workplace expectations.
- Workplace Communication & Social Skills: Direct instruction on following multi-step directions, interacting with supervisors and coworkers, and self-advocating for needs.
- Food Safety Certification (if applicable): Training and accommodations to support earning a ServSafe Food Handler certificate, reinforcing food safety knowledge.
- Other related services as applicable.

2. Community Experiences

- Job Shadowing & Worksite Visits: Visits to restaurants, school cafeterias, and food service businesses to observe real-world job expectations.
- Internships or Work-Based Learning (WBL): Structured on-the-job training at a cafeteria, restaurant, or bakery, with a job coach or support staff as needed.
- Volunteering in Food Service Settings: Opportunities to assist with meal prep in community kitchens, senior centers, or school cafeterias to build experience.

3. Employment & Career Development

- Supported Employment Services: Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and local workforce programs to secure a job in the food industry with necessary supports.
- Job Application & Interview Practice: Teaching the student how to apply for jobs, create a simple résumé (with visuals, if needed), and participate in interviews with accommodations.
- Workplace Readiness & Task Sequencing: Training on using a visual checklist or app to track tasks (e.g., washing dishes, prepping food, cleaning workstations).

4. Independent Living & Daily Living Skills

- Travel Training: Instruction in using public or arranged transportation (e.g., bus, ride services, or employer-provided transport) to get to work.
- Time Management & Scheduling: Learning how to follow a work schedule, clock in/out, and take breaks appropriately.
- Personal Hygiene & Work Attire: Reinforcement of workplace hygiene, proper dress, and food service cleanliness standards.
- Money & Budgeting Skills: Basic instruction on understanding paychecks, budgeting for work-related expenses, and handling small transactions if applicable.

5. Agency Linkages

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): Referral for Pre-ETS, job coaching, and supported employment assistance.



- CareerSource/Workforce Development Programs: Connection to local job placement services and food service apprenticeship programs.
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Support with independent living skills, workplace readiness, and transportation training.

E. Example Student: Measurable Postsecondary Goals for a Nonverbal Student in a Wheelchair Who Requires an Aide

For a student with significant support needs, postsecondary goals should focus on maximizing independence, meaningful participation in the community, supported employment, and day programs. Goals should be tailored to the student's strengths and interests, with the ability to engage in functional tasks with assistance.

Example E – Develop MPGs

Education/Training Goal

*Within one month of completing the deferral program and exiting the K-12 system, the student will **participate in a community-based day program**, vocational training program, or supported employment services to develop functional skills related to daily activities, communication, and work-related tasks with necessary supports.*

Employment Goal

*Within three months of completing the training program, the student will **engage in meaningful, structured activities in a supported employment setting** or adult day program, completing tasks such as sorting, assembling materials, engaging in sensory activities, or using adaptive technology for workplace participation, with assistance. (If the student enjoys specific activities, such as interacting with textures, pressing buttons, or responding to music, their employment goal could incorporate these elements into a job setting.)*

Career Goal

*Within three months of supervised/supported structured employment, the student will **complete all tasks required using adaptive technology for workplace participation** without assistance.*

Independent Living Goal

*Within one month of completing the deferral program and exiting the K-12 system, the student will **participate in daily living activities with support, including personal care routines, social engagement, and mobility within the home and community**, using adaptive equipment and AT as needed. (If the student can use an AAC device, facial expressions, or gestures to make choices, this can be incorporated into independence goals for self-advocacy.)*

Align Secondary Transition Services with MPGs

For a nonverbal student with significant physical disabilities, transition services should focus on maximizing independence, communication, community participation, and structured vocational activities in a supported setting. The goal is to help the student engage in meaningful activities that promote self-determination and quality of life while considering necessary supports.

Example E – Align Secondary Transition Services

1. Instruction, Related Services

- Assistive Technology & AAC Training: Instruction on using AAC devices, switches, or eye-gaze technology for communication and interaction at work or in daily activities.
- Functional Literacy & Numeracy: Teaching recognition of personal information, signs, schedules, and simple number concepts to support daily functioning.
- Workplace Readiness & Participation: Training on following a structured routine, using adapted tools, and completing multi-step tasks with support.
- Self-Advocacy & Choice-Making: Helping the student communicate preferences, likes/dislikes, and basic needs in work and community settings using AAC or gestures.
- Other related services as applicable.



2. Community Experiences

- Community-Based Instruction (CBI): Regular trips to stores, restaurants, and recreational locations to practice navigating public spaces.
- Structured Volunteering Opportunities: Participation in adapted volunteer activities such as sorting materials, assembling items, or engaging in sensory-based tasks at a local nonprofit.
- Job Shadowing & Worksite Visits: Visiting day programs, supported employment sites, and workplaces that accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- Participation in Adaptive Recreation Programs: Engaging in music therapy, adapted arts and crafts, and movement-based activities to enhance social engagement.

3. Employment & Career Development

- Supported Employment Services: Coordination with VR for on-the-job training, job coaching, and workplace accommodations.
- Work-Based Learning (WBL) in a Structured Setting: Opportunities to engage in vocational tasks such as sorting, assembling, or using adaptive technology for work-related activities.
- Participation in a Community-Based Day Program: Enrollment in a program offering structured activities, skill-building, and social engagement post-graduation.

4. Independent Living & Daily Living Skills

- Personal Care & Hygiene Training: Ensuring the student participates as much as possible in self-care routines with assistance.
- Mobility & Transportation Training: Teaching safe use of wheelchair-accessible transportation with assistance.
- Daily Routine & Schedule Management: Using visual schedules, timers, or an AAC device to engage in structured activities.

- Social Engagement & Relationship Building: Opportunities to interact with peers, caregivers, and community members in meaningful ways.

5. Agency Linkages

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): If applicable, support for job exploration and customized employment services.
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD): Connection to Medicaid Waiver services for long-term support, day programs, or employment services.
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Support for AT, advocacy, and accessibility training.
- Local Adult Day Programs: Enrollment in a structured program offering daily activities, social engagement, and vocational skill-building.

Reflection

While examples of students, MPGs, and transition services help illustrate appropriate alignment in the transition IEP, keep the following thought in the forefront of your planning. **Secondary transition planning revolves around a specific student. Consequently, the MPGs, transition services, and the entire IEP should focus on the student's distinct and unique strengths, preferences, interests, and needs.**

Resources

- [Trainings by Request](#)
 - Writing Effective Transition Individual Educational Plans (TIEPs)
 - Using Transition Assessments to Write Measurable Postsecondary Goals
 - Using Deferment and Extended Transition Programming (ages 18-22) to Support Postsecondary Readiness for Students with Disabilities
 - Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy
 - Standing Up for Me- Plus
- [Publications](#)
 - Transition Requirements Checklist
 - Transition Assessments Chart
 - Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Guide
 - The Power of Student Engagement in Secondary Transition IEP Meetings