
The Family Guide to Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities



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The Family Guide to Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities



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Welcome

This guide is a tool designed for families who are planning for the successful transition of students with disabilities from school to adult life. Although the guide was written for parents and families of Florida's students with disabilities, other people involved in transition planning, such as students, teachers or agency representatives, may also find this guide to be helpful.



The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) defines a “parent”, according to section 1000.21(5), Florida Statutes (F.S.) as “. . . either or both parents of a student, any guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent.”

Secondary transition (which will be referred to as “**transition**” in this guide) planning focuses on the goals and vision you and your child have for the future. The purpose of transition planning is to provide your child with the services and supports he needs to make a successful move into adult life.

Transition planning begins before age 14 and is necessary for a variety of reasons. Benefits may include: dropout prevention; arranging supports and services which will be needed after exiting high school; and increasing students’ **self-determination** and **self-advocacy** skills. More information regarding activities which support secondary transition from an early age may be found in the section beginning on page ten.

It is important to remember that:

- Transition planning begins before the student turns age 14 in order for the IEP that will be in effect when the student turns 14 will include transition planning.
- Transition services are a part of the IEP, not a separate plan.
- Transition planning involves the student, the family, school staff, agency staff and others identified by the IEP team.
- Transition planning is not a one-time event.
- The transition process continues until the student exits from the school



Important Note: For general information about the education of students with disabilities (ages 3 to 22), refer to *A Parent’s Introduction to Exceptional Student Education in Florida* which is available from the Bureau Resource and Information Center (BRIC) at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7674/urlt/0064540-eseparent.pdf>.



Important Note: The forms in this guide may be reproduced. They are available along with the guide on the Project 10 website, www.project10.info, as individual documents. Please remember that the people at your child's school and/or within your local school district office are also great resources. They are there to help and support you.

Foundational Understandings for Families: Transition Legislation

The value of family involvement in the transition planning process cannot be stressed enough. A firm foundation for strong family support begins with a thorough understanding of transition legislation. Federal regulations are clear about defining transition services and in 2008 Florida rules were revised to better align with the IDEA 2004 definition of transition [34 CFR 300.43]. Rule 6A-6.03411, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), *Definitions, ESE Policies and Procedures, and ESE Administrators*, defines transition as follows:

"Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a **disability** that:

1. Is designed to be within a result-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a **disability** to facilitate the student's movement from school to post school activities, including **postsecondary education**, vocational education, integrated employment (including **supported employment**), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
2. Is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student strengths, preferences and interests;
3. Includes:
 - Instruction
 - Related services
 - Community experiences
 - Employment
 - Post-school adult living
 - **Daily living skills**, if appropriate
 - **Functional vocational evaluation**, if appropriate.
4. Transition services for students with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a student with a **disability** to benefit from special education."

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is helping to impact employment perspectives and practices nationwide. WIOA, which took effect in 2014, focuses on increasing the capacity of the nation's public workforce system and aspires to get Americans employed in high-quality jobs, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment. The joint memo released by the directors of the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Division of Blind Services (DBS) outlines the agencies' commitment to offer pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to transition aged students with disabilities.

Pre-ETS offered through the VR Youth Program include the following:

- Career exploration counseling
- Community-based work experience
- Work readiness training
- Self-advocacy instruction and peer mentoring
- Postsecondary education counseling

WIOA shares Employment First's goal, meaning that Florida operates on the principle that community-based, integrated employment is the first option for employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. The Employment First Act of 2016 unites major state agencies and disability service organizations in the common goal of building a sustainable system that supports employment and encourages self-sufficiency for all individuals with disabilities.

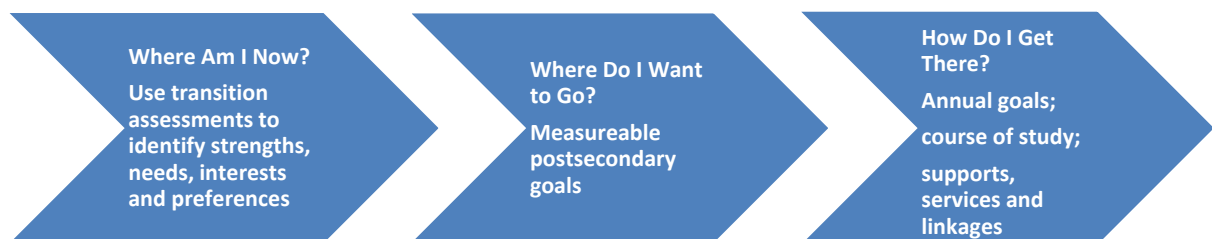
What Are Transition Services and Why Are They So Important?

When your adult child graduates and exits the school system he will no longer receive the same supports and services. What will happen in your child's life beyond the school schedule? What will your child's weekly schedule look like? What kind of activities will populate your child's calendar? All parents want their children to have active and fulfilling adult lives. **Transition services** are an essential part of achieving this goal.

The transition process is a "big picture" concept, and, yet, it must unfold on a daily schedule. Keeping the big picture in mind will help to guide the every day activities that will achieve your child's transition goals.



Figure 1. Three "big picture" questions that describe the transition process.



The purpose of transition planning is to provide your child with the services and supports he needs to make a successful move into adult life. Transition services are documented in the individual educational plan (IEP). The IEP is a living document that changes and develops as your child's needs change and develop. It is like a roadmap that plots an educational journey guiding your child through high school and into his/her desired post-school activities.

The **IEP** team identifies the services that will help your child make this transition. The team includes you, your child, teachers, additional school personnel and other individuals within the student's circle of support. When developing the IEP to be in effect when your child turns 16, the team may also include representatives of agencies that are likely to provide or pay for services your child needs. Agencies can only be invited with your consent or the consent of your child who has reached age 18, the **age of majority**, and rights have transferred.



Transition services help students prepare for **post-school activities**, such as:

- College or university programs
- Continuing and adult education
- Career and technical (vocational) training
- Employment
- Adult services from various agencies
- Independent living
- Community participation

Preparation for the IEP Meeting

It's a good idea to get ready for the IEP meeting in advance. Discuss goals and desires for the future with your child and his teachers before the meeting. Your child may be prepared to lead parts of the IEP meeting. If your child is not actively participating during IEP meetings, consult with IEP team members to determine appropriate ways for your child to exercise leadership during the IEP meetings.

You may receive a pre-meeting form that will help you prepare for the meeting. If not, you may use the *IEP Preparation and Observation Guide*, located in the appendix, to assist you in collecting your ideas about your child's strengths, needs, interests and other relevant information (p. 66). Remember to organize your records to bring to the meeting in order to have important information at your fingertips.



Important Note: Please refer to the Appendix for three sets of questions that can also assist you prepare for the IEP meeting. These lists of helpful questions include the following: *Questions to Consider Before IEP Meeting* (p. 71), *Questions to Ask at IEP Meetings* (p. 72) and *Questions to Consider When Planning Transition Services* (p. 73).

Before the IEP meeting, you may want, or in some cases, need to:

- Gather information about your child's present and future situation, such as recent IEPs, evaluations and work history.
- Learn about the contents of the IEP and what will happen during the IEP meeting.
- Think about what services, including **assistive technology**, your child may need to reach his measurable postsecondary goals.
- Sign and return consent forms which will allow the school to invite an agency to the IEP meeting that is likely to provide or pay for services.
- Sign and return the exchange of information form which will allow the school to share information regarding your child with other agencies that may provide transition services.
- Become familiar with local services that may help your child.
- Be sure you know which graduation option your child is working toward and the requirements (additional information regarding exit options is included in the section beginning on page 31).
- Record your child's skills, strengths, interests and successful strategies which may be helpful for others to know.

Transition Components of the IEP

You may already be familiar with the process of developing an IEP. Many elements will be the same, including the fact that it must be updated at least annually. However, the process of developing an IEP which includes transition services is a bit different because there are additional IEP requirements for students who are transition age (14 – 21). This section describes requirements related to transition components in the IEP.

Notice of the Meeting

The notice about the IEP meeting that will be in effect when your child reaches age 14 is different from previous IEP notices. In addition to the information required for all IEP meeting notices, the written notices for the IEP to be in effect at ages 14 and 15 must state the following:

- The purpose of the meeting is to identify the transition services needs of your child.
- Your child will be invited to the meeting.

For meetings developing an IEP to be in effect at age 16 and older, the **notices** must state the following:

- The purpose of the meeting will be consideration of postsecondary goals and transition services.
- Your child will be invited to the meeting.

- Additional participating agencies that may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services will be invited with your consent.

Participants

People who must be invited to the IEP meeting are:

- Student
- Parent (using the FDOE definition)
- One or more of your child's general education teachers, if your student is or will be participating in the general education environment
- A representative of the school district
- A representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services (if your child is age 16 or older, with consent)
- Any other person that you, the school, or an agency believes has knowledge of your child or special equipment used by your child

As previously mentioned, your child must be invited to participate in IEP meetings beginning with the meeting to develop the IEP to be in effect at age 14. If your child is not able to attend the meeting, the IEP team must take steps to make sure your child's preferences, needs and interests are taken into consideration.

If an agency invited to attend an IEP meeting is unable to participate in person, the school district may consider other options such as participating by conference call or web/virtual conferences. If an agency agrees to provide services but does not do so, the IEP team will need to meet again to find other ways to meet your child's transition needs.



Important Note: Any change in the IEP for your child's postsecondary goals must be approved by you. You may also select an independent reviewer to look at the goals for appropriateness.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Information from **age-appropriate transition assessment** should be reflected in the section that describes the student's **present levels of academic achievement and functional performance**. In addition to identifying the student's academic and functioning level, age-appropriate assessments determine the accommodations and modifications that may be necessary for the student to be successful. All IEP team members must have a clear picture of your child's abilities and interests. This



This information may come from your child's portfolio or file, as well as directly from your child, your family and close friends, teachers and agency staff. The information should include formal and/or informal transition assessment data and will be used to develop your child's measurable postsecondary goals. A sample IEP for a 12th grade student named Chad will be used to illustrate some of the IEP transition components. Chad's background information tells us that he has type 1 diabetes and an intellectual disability. He has been determined eligible to take access courses and the Florida Standards Alternate

Assessment (FSAA). The FSAA is an alternate assessment that is used for a student with a disability when a standard state- or district-wide assessment is not appropriate for that student. An excerpt from Chad's IEP regarding his present levels of academic achievement and functional performance focusing on independent functioning/self-advocacy is provided below.

Areas of transition assessment that help determine academic and functional levels of performance include:

- Interests
- Preferences
- Cognitive development and academic achievement
- Adaptive behaviors
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Emotional development and mental health
- Employability and vocational skills
- Community participation



Describe the present levels of achievement and functioning based on classroom data including observations, work samples and age appropriate transition assessments (if appropriate):

Chad interacts appropriately with his peers as well as adults. He stays on task during most activities and when asked to stop an unwanted activity/behavior, he does so immediately and without comment. He can sit quietly and complete his class work with no redirection. Chad is adequately organized and typically keeps his materials orderly and can find items when requested. Chad exhibits good personal hygiene and is able to take care of most of his personal needs. He dresses appropriately and follows all school rules. He sometimes stops and talks with classmates when he gets off the bus in the morning and before he gets on the bus in the afternoon. This has sometimes resulted in Chad's tardiness for first period and he often misses the bus at the end of the day. Once he is settled on campus, Chad knows where he is supposed to be at any given time of the day and he is able to navigate familiar places (e.g., the school campus) with no assistance. He can be trusted to run errands and returns promptly without detouring. His work ethic and ability to follow a schedule will be an asset in the work environment. Chad can order food with minimal assistance and knows what he can and cannot eat due to his diabetes. He needs no assistance with eating or toileting.



Important Note: *The IEP sample is taken from the Developing Quality Individual Educational Plan: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* (FDOE, 2015) and is available at <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070122-qualityieps.pdf>.

Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Measurable postsecondary goals describe what your child wants to do after exiting the school system. They are important because they give the IEP team a vision to work toward and create a framework for annual measurable goals and transition services.

Measurable postsecondary goals are written for three areas. These areas include the following:

- Education/Training
- Employment/Career
- Independent Living

Measurable postsecondary goals must meet the following requirements:

- They must be measurable. You must be able to count or observe it.
- They must be intended to occur after the student graduates from school.
- They must be reviewed annually, although, they may stay the same if they remain appropriate.

It is recommended that IEP teams develop separate measurable postsecondary goals for the designated areas. Examples could be developed from any of the following:

- “Immediately following graduation, the student will...”
- “Within six months of graduation, the student will...”
- “Within four years of graduation, the student will...”

Measurable postsecondary goals must be reviewed and updated each year. If your child’s postsecondary goals change after the annual IEP is written, it is your right, or your child’s right when he reaches the age of majority, to request an interim IEP meeting. Examples of Chad’s measurable postsecondary goals follow here:

Chad:

- Postsecondary education and/or training - Within 18 months of completing all requirements for and deferring the standard diploma, Chad will complete employment training through the University of Florida (UF) Health System in the medical field with a focus on patient transport.
- Employment and career- Within three (3) months of completing his employment training from the UF Health System, Chad will be employed at a local hospital. Within two (2) years of obtaining employment at a local hospital, Chad will meet his career goal of working in the patient transport department.
- Independent living- Within three (3) years of graduation, Chad will live independently with roommates and will receive support services to manage his daily health needs.



Important Note: The publication *Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families* provides information that will support the development of quality IEPs for students with disabilities. A quality IEP is in compliance with all requirements of state and federal laws and regulations and reflects decisions based on the active and meaningful involvement of

all members of the IEP team. Find the guide at <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070122-qualityieps.pdf>.

Measurable Annual Goals and Benchmarks or Short-Term Objectives

Measurable annual goals begin with determining your child's **present levels of academic achievement and functional performance**. A goal is then set that will direct your child's path for the next year and, ultimately, lead to the achievement of his **measurable postsecondary goals**. In addition to helping your child break down long-term goals into attainable yearly targets, measurable annual goals also serve as a way to measure your child's progress toward his measurable postsecondary goals.

The IEP team may develop **benchmarks** or short-term objectives to help a student move toward broad goals. Benchmarks or short-term objectives are only required for students with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to the access points. However, many school districts continue to develop short-term objectives or benchmarks for all students. All IEP team members should be involved in developing measurable annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives. It is especially important that the parent and child be involved. Examples of Chad's measurable annual goals follow.

Chad:

- By the IEP review date, when given written and visual information, Chad will explain the meaning of content-specific vocabulary.
- By the IEP review date, given real world examples, Chad will demonstrate and verbalize different ways to represent money (mixed coins, dollar amounts) in a variety of situations.
- By the IEP review date, Chad will ask for assistance when in unfamiliar places and use maps and visuals cues to find his way.
- By the IEP review date, Chad will notify an adult when he does not feel well.
- By the IEP review date, Chad will notify an adult when he needs to check his blood sugar level.
- By the IEP review date, Chad will improve his ability to give sufficient detail to others when explaining situations or when answering questions. He will use three different types of "WH" information (who, what, when, where, why) to help others understand his message.



Needs Addressed by Measurable Annual Goals

IEP goals may address needs in particular activity areas that relate directly to post-school life, such as community experiences and employment. Transition services activity areas that must be addressed are listed on pages 17 - 18 of this guide. The measurable annual goals or short-term objectives or benchmarks must reasonably enable your child to meet his measurable postsecondary goals.



Statement of Course(s) of Study (Transition Services)

Before your child turns 14, a statement of his course(s) of study leading to a standard diploma must be developed (Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(h)8., F.A.C., *Provision of Free Appropriate Public Education [FAPE] and Development of Individual Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities*). The course of study maps out how goals will be reached.

Here are some examples of **courses of study**:

- Advanced placement courses to prepare for college
- Career education courses to prepare for a career
- Courses in **daily living skills**, such as preparing meals, using public transportation and managing money

Here is a course of study example for Chad:

Chad is pursuing the 24-credit standard diploma via access courses. He is currently enrolled in the Access World History course in order to meet this requirement. Chad is taking three of his core courses in the general education setting including a **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** course (with **modifications**) to substitute for one of his science credits. Chad has achieved a passing score on the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA) and does not require a results waiver for graduation. Chad successfully took and passed an online course on life management skills last school year.



Through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Chad will participate in a paid internship before the end of the school year and will continue to receive job coaching services through VR after completing all requirements for and deferring the standard diploma. Children's Medical Services will also provide Chad with assistance in transitioning to an adult health care provider for monitoring of his diabetes and any other general health needs.

Transition Services

For IEPs developed to be in effect when the student turns age 14 and older, the IEP will address transition services that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of your child to help him with the movement from school to post-school. Some of the services listed below may not be needed by your child, such as related services; however, they must be considered (34 CFR 300.320(b) and (c)).

The following list provides examples of transition services:

- Instruction – formal instruction in school, home, or community, including **community-based instruction**, travel training, academic and career/technical education courses, orientation and mobility training, self-determination and self-advocacy training, and extracurricular activities. For example, if a student expressed interest in refinishing and/or building furniture, courses in wood-working could be incorporated into the student's course of study.
- Related services – support services that help the student benefit from instruction. Examples of related services that could be provided include the following:

- Occupational therapy (OT) or physical therapy (PT) assist students to participate fully in the school environment. For example, an occupational therapist could assist a student develop skills to maneuver throughout classroom and campus in a safe manner 90% of the time.
- Speech and language pathology and audiology services assist students to develop speech, language and auditory skills. For example, a speech and language pathologist or audiologist could assist a student with a hearing impairment to overcome barriers that prevent full participation in a physical education class. This could take the form of developing hand signals for communication and may involve working with the teacher and the other students in the class as well.
- Assistive technology services involve assessment to determine the student's assistive technology needs as well as the provision of appropriate assistive technology devices and the necessary training required to improve the student's functional capabilities (Beech, 2015). For example, a student with a cognitive disability may benefit from a reader pen that scans text and reads it aloud to the student or a student with a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia, may use technology for speech to text and/or text to speech assistance.
- Special transportation services can be provided to meet individual student transportation needs documented on the IEP. For example, if a student has a disability related to mobility, he or she may need the assistance of an aide to get to classes in a timely manner.
- Community experiences – participation in activities outside the school building, including community activities such as recreation, using public transportation and shopping. For example, a student who needs to develop skills for independent living might need an excursion to a grocery store where lessons learned about meal-planning and nutrition can be applied in a real-world setting. Refer to Project 10's guide on community-based instruction (CBI) for more information about this kind of learning.
- Employment – activities that prepare a student for employment, such as career education, development of good work habits, technical skills training, guided practice in school and community work situations, career placement, supported competitive employment and **on-the-job training**. For example, as a first step in preparing for a career, students may participate in career interest assessments to determine which careers include activities that they would enjoy doing.
- Post-school adult living – preparation for important adult activities, such as those necessary for living and participating in the community, including renting an apartment, paying bills, filing for insurance, voting and getting along with others. For example, students may need instruction in the legal implication of becoming an adult. Responsibilities and rights change once a person turns eighteen. An excellent resource to consult about adult responsibilities and rights is the Florida Bar's *#Just Adulting Legal Survival Guide* which can be found at <http://www.iustadulthood.com/>.



If appropriate for your student, the IEP team will also identify needed transition services in the following activity areas:

- Daily living skills – activities that teach your student to manage daily personal needs (preparing meals, grooming, budgeting, etc.) as independently as possible. For example, task analysis could be used to teach lessons in personal hygiene, including the following topics: brushing teeth; showering; shaving; trimming nails on fingers and toes; washing and styling one’s hair; and using deodorant. Task analysis breaks a task into individual steps that help the student remember how to complete a task.
- Functional vocational evaluation – an evaluation that collects information on your child’s career interests and aptitudes. This process may include multiple types of assessments and experiences that contribute to forming a reliable direction for job placement and career development. For example, a functional vocational evaluation may include interviews with the student, family members, teachers and/or supervisors about the student’s strengths, interests, aptitudes and work experiences. Local agencies may be able to assist with functional vocational evaluations. For example, VR providers can assist with Discovery, a person-centered approach to vocational assessment.



Important Note: Transition services may be addressed through the development of measurable annual goals or short-term objectives or in other sections of the IEP.

Overview of Differences in the IEP with Transition Components

Understanding the differences between an IEP and an IEP for a student who is transition age can be a challenge. Taking a “bird’s eye” overview of IEP components that are unique to students who are transition age may be helpful at this stage. Table 1 provides a list of characteristics that are unique to the Transition IEP. In addition, for a comprehensive checklist of transition services that provides more age-specific details, please see the *Transition Services Checklist* in the Appendix (p. 76).

Table 1

Unique Characteristics of the Transition IEP
Students must be invited to participate in IEP development and discussion of transition services. If the student does not attend the IEP meeting, the school district shall take other steps to ensure that the student’s preferences and interests are considered.
Parents must be notified that the purpose of the IEP meeting will include the development of a statement of needed transition services.
Age-appropriate transition assessments indicating the student’s strengths, preferences and interests are documented.
A statement of needed transition services and provision of transition services is included.
A statement of the outcomes and the additional benefits expected by the parent and the IEP team at the time of the student’s graduation.

A statement of intent regarding the course of study leading to a standard diploma with a scholar or merit designation as determined by the parent. (Any changes to the student's graduation option or waiver of standardized assessment results must be approved by parents or adult students.)

A statement of measurable postsecondary goals and career goals based upon age appropriate transition assessment is included, and, where appropriate, independent living skills needed to assist the student reach these goals. These goals are updated annually as needed. (Any changes to these goals must be approved by parents or adult students.)

A statement identifying the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) digital tool certificates and the CAPE industry certifications that the student wants to attain before high school graduation, if any.

Information and instruction regarding the student's need for development in the area of self-determination and self-advocacy are provided.

With the permission of the parent or the student who has reached the age of majority, representatives of any agency that may be responsible for providing or funding transition services must be invited to the IEP meeting.

A statement of interagency responsibilities regarding transition services is included. If a participating agency responsible for transition services, other than the school district, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP, the school district shall reconvene the IEP Team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the student.

In the year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, the school district must provide a notice by January 30th to the parent and student regarding the opportunity to defer the receipt of the standard diploma.

The request to defer receipt of the standard diploma must be received by the school district before May 15th in order for the student to continue receiving transition or related services. The request to defer is only needed once.

A Summary of Performance (SOP) is provided for students exiting with a standard diploma or aging out of their program. (Not a requirement, but frequently done in conjunction with the IEP meeting.)

Parents and students are informed, at least one year prior to the student's 18th birthday, about the rights that will transfer to the student. Documentation of the notification is included in the Transition IEP. A separate and distinct notice regarding the transfer of rights will be sent to the parent and student near (prior to) the student's 18th birthday.

* Transition services include: "instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation" (IDEA, 34 CFR 300.29(a)(3)).

Responsibilities and Linkages

The IEP team should create connections with agencies that can provide services for your child after he exits the school system. For IEPs developed to be in effect when your child turns age 16 or older, the IEP team will identify any community agencies that may provide services your child needs to achieve his measurable postsecondary goals. It is important that these agencies participate in the transition

process. Agencies can only be invited with parental consent or the consent of your child who has reached the age of majority. IEP teams (which include the parent) may choose to include agency personnel by conference call, web-based applications or other means if they cannot attend the meeting in person. Depending on your child's needs, key agencies with which to connect may include:

- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) center (Career and Technical/Vocational School)
- College or university
- Division of Blind Services (DBS), Florida Department of Education
- Division of **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**, Florida Department of Education
- Leisure and recreation service providers
- Medical, health, or mental health service providers
- Mental Health Program, Florida Department of Children and Families
- Other community-based organizations and providers of services to adults

Transportation Options

For most youth, with or without disabilities, the ability to travel is a key factor in becoming an independent adult. Youth will need to access various resources, services, and activities in their community. It is important to provide youth with disabilities training and options for transportation while they are in school so that they are prepared to travel to and from college and/or work. Parents and students can work with the teacher and the IEP team to ensure that transportation services and training is included in transition planning and the IEP. The Project 10 website has a page dedicated to Transportation and transportation-related resources: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=270>

Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

In the previous section it was noted that documentation reflecting consideration of your child's need for **self-determination** and **self-advocacy** instruction and/or information is a requirement. The Florida legislature added a statute in 2014 addressing the need for transition services to be identified in the IEP before the students reaches age 14. The purpose of this statute is to prepare the way for postsecondary goals and career goals to be included in the IEP at age 16. Considering the need for self-determination and self-advocacy instruction is a specified step in quality transition planning because it prepares students to actively participate in their IEP meetings (S. 1003.5716, F.S. (1)(a)). It is important to understand the scope of self-determination and self-advocacy.

Self-determination involves taking control and making decisions that affect one's life. Self-determination helps students with disabilities to:

- Make their own choices
- Set their own goals
- Manage their own lives
- Participate in decision-making



Self-advocacy refers to the skills necessary to be able to speak up for oneself or a cause. Self-advocacy skills include being assertive, knowing your rights, speaking up and negotiating.

A sample of the core components of self-determination are listed below. (See the *I'm Determined* website for the complete list of self-determination components, http://www.imdetermined.org/files_resources/131/core_components_of_self-determination.pdf.)

- **Choice-making:** Choosing within an activity, choosing between two or more activities, deciding when to do an activity, selecting who to participate with during an activity, deciding where to do an activity, refusing to participate in an activity, and choosing to end an activity at a self-selected time.
- **Decision-making:** Listing alternatives, identifying consequences, and selecting the best course of action.
- **Problem-solving:** Identifying the problem, figuring out the nature and cause of the problem as well as determining a solution to the problem.
- **Goal setting and attainment:** Identifying specific goals, develop tasks to achieve goals, and take action.
- **Self-regulation and self-management:** Managing one's own life; monitoring one's own behavior, including self-evaluation, self-instruction and self-reinforcement.
- **Self-advocacy and leadership skills:** Skills needed to speak up on one's own behalf; speak up; for transition-age students this may include participating in transition planning and decision-making during IEP.
- **Self-awareness and self-knowledge:** Having a basic understanding of strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and limitations; knowledge of how to use one's own attributes to influence quality of life.
- **Positive perceptions of control, efficacy, and outcome expectations:** To believe that an individual has control over outcomes that are important to one's life.

Self-Directed IEPs

The IEP is a crucial roadmap that guides the educational journey of students with disabilities and, as it is such an important tool and process, student involvement is essential. When students are uninvolved in IEP meetings, they infer that their opinions don't matter. When educational decisions are made for students and not with them, the development of self-determination skills is not encouraged and can be inhibited (Hawbaker, 2007). On the other hand, participating in and directing one's IEP meetings assists students to develop self-determination and self-advocacy skills. Self-determination has been shown to have a positive impact on adult life. Students who develop higher levels of self-determination skills are more likely than students with lower levels of self-determination skills to live independently, be employed, hold jobs with more benefits and develop financial independence (Hawbaker, 2007). Student leadership in the IEP process prepares students to take leadership and responsibility in adult life.



Important Note: There are additional resources related to self-determination and self-advocacy in the appendix. The *Self-Determination Checklist: Parent Assessment* developed by the *I'm Determined*

project is available in the appendix of this guide (p. 79). This tool can assist you identify areas in which your child is developing self-determination skills and areas in which self-determination skills need further growth.

IEP Teamwork

As you can see, for your child to have a successful transition into adult life, all members of the IEP team must do their part. Schools alone cannot prepare a student for adulthood. The family, community, service agencies and the student share this responsibility. Ultimately, your child benefits when the IEP team effectively and collaboratively designs and implements the Transition IEP. This section describes the various roles and responsibilities that each part of the team brings to the transition process.

School District/School Responsibilities

The school district is the primary hub through which agencies, families and students come together to ensure that the needs of the student are being adequately met. Providing free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities requires facilitating the design of well-written IEPs combined with ensuring the details of the plan are fulfilled.

Throughout the entire time a student is receiving exceptional education services, the school district is responsible for helping the student learn self-determination skills so that he can effectively participate in IEP meetings and self-advocate, as needed. These skills become even more necessary as students are transitioning from high school to post-school life.



Agency Responsibilities

Representatives from other agencies may be asked to attend IEP meetings. It is important to remember agencies can only be invited with your consent or the consent of your child who has reached the age of majority. These agencies are active participants in the transition process and may be invited to join IEP meetings for the following purposes:

- Assist and provide services to your child during the secondary transition period.
- Assist with some of the measurable annual goals, benchmarks or short-term objectives.
- Purchase, maintain and/or provide training on assistive technology for your child.
- Provide supports and services once your child has exited the school system.
- Share valuable information relevant to planning for your child's future.

Student Responsibilities

Your child also has responsibilities in the transition planning process. Students will want to do the following:

- Take an active role in developing the IEP.
- Complete age-appropriate transition assessments.

- Learn as much as possible about the transition process.
- Think about what services would be helpful in daily adult life, so that the transition team may invite the appropriate agencies to the IEP meeting.
- Think about plans for the future and determine a direction for the years immediately after exiting school.
- Meet and work with career and guidance counselors to determine which courses and other school experiences are required for post-school activities.
- Learn more about how to get the services and supports needed to achieve long-term goals.
- Develop and use self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- Attend class and complete homework assignments.
- Save money for post-school activities.
- Learn how to use and maintain the assistive technology that is needed and provided.
- Accept responsibility for chores at home.

Family Responsibilities

Families typically provide the most day-to-day support for their child from birth to adult life, thus their input is of great importance in determining what their child needs in order to make a successful transition from school to adult life. Parents should strive to take an active role in the transition process. If you do not understand something, or need more information, feel free to ask questions. Keep in mind that you are a valuable member of the IEP team and you also have the right to offer suggestions. Here are a few additional responsibilities for families in the transition process:

- Keep records of the transition-related services and activities.
- Review your child's IEP goals.
- Review graduation requirements and help make decisions about diploma options.
- Provide opportunities for your child to explore post-school options (e.g., employment, career centers, community colleges, state colleges, universities, living arrangements, recreation and leisure, and community service).
- Support your child in developing his measurable postsecondary goals.
- Support your child in writing personal letters of invitation for teachers and agency personnel to attend his IEP meetings.
- Conduct mock IEP meetings so your child can practice participating in the meeting.
- Help your child to develop a portfolio that includes an updated IEP, assessment scores, learning style information, class grades and overall grade point average (GPA), honors or awards, work evaluations, work experiences and other related information.



Important Note: Please see the Appendix for a one-page list containing the responsibilities for students, families and agencies – *Student, Family and Agency Responsibilities in the IEP* (p. 75).

Student and Family Involvement

The success of transition planning depends on each member of the team helping the student reach his postsecondary goals. Parents are a very important part of this process. Families can provide a wealth of information about their children and help them realize their life goals.

Research studies show that students are more likely to participate in **postsecondary education** and find employment when families are prepared to support their child's transition planning; are involved in transition planning activities; and are empowered to engage with multiple agencies and organizations available to provide transition-related **services** (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler & Coyle, 2016).

It is also important that your child participate as much as possible in the transition planning process, especially with decisions about what he would like to do after leaving school. The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004** (IDEA) emphasizes the importance of involving students in meaningful ways in the **IEP** process, and IEP participation is an essential step in the development and exercise of self-determination and self-advocacy. Student involvement in the IEP process will be discussed in greater detail in the section beginning on page six.



Becoming an adult involves much more than reaching a certain age or completing a certain number of high school credits. Youth learn the skills they will need as adults in school, at home and in the community. It is important for youth to have opportunities for a wide variety of experiences so they can explore their interests, put their skills to practice and align their abilities to their future goals. Youth need to set goals and plan for life as an adult.

Families play an important role in helping youth envision a future for themselves that is rooted in thoughtful planning and includes high expectations. All youth need the support of their families and other caring adults as they transition into adulthood. It is beneficial when youth dare to dream and set their goals high from an early age. Youth need to be supported as they consider what type of postsecondary training they want, where they want to go to college, where they want to work, where they want to live and what they want to do in their spare time.

Families can help ensure that youth are prepared to turn their dreams into reality by participating in transition planning. All youth benefit from a youth-driven, strength-based, individualized transition planning process that reflects a young person's interests, abilities and future goals.

Family Involvement Increases Student Support

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) recommends multiple strategies that families can use to support the transition of all youth and youth with disabilities into adulthood.

In 2005 the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), in collaboration with the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor, developed *The Guideposts for Success: A Framework for Families Preparing Youth for Adulthood*. The framework includes five guideposts, which are listed below; one of the five describes the involvement of family members.

1. **School-based Preparatory Experiences:** "...all youth need to participate in educational programs grounded in standards, clear performance expectations and graduation exit options..." (p.7).
2. **Career Preparation and Work-based Learning:** "In order to identify and attain career goals, youth need to be exposed to a range of experiences," (p.7).
3. **Youth Development and Leadership:** "...all youth need opportunities that allow them to exercise leadership and build self-esteem," (p.7).
4. **Connecting Activities:** "Young people need to be connected to programs, services, activities and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school options," (p.7).
5. **Family Involvement and Supports:** "All youth need the support of parents, family members, and other caring adults," (p.7). Participation and involvement of parents, family members and/or other caring adults promotes the social, emotional, physical, academic and occupational growth of youth, leading to better post-school outcomes.

Many strategies that families can use to support children transitioning into adult life are recommended for all students, including those with and without disabilities. Other strategies are specific for students with disabilities.

Strategies for Families of ALL Youth Transitioning into Adulthood

- Maintain high expectations
- Remain involved
- Help youth access information
- Take an active role in transition planning
- Help youth access networks of support such as FloridaShines, a rich resource that assists youth plan for postsecondary education and prepare for work

Strategies Specifically for Families of Youth with Disabilities Transitioning into Adulthood

- Understand the impact of disability
- Learn about disability rights and responsibilities
- Learn how to access services
- Understand individualized planning tools (p. 2)

Support for Families of Youth with Disabilities

Florida has a variety of resources to support families of youth with disabilities. Every state has at least one **Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)**. Florida has three which are operated by the Family Network on Disabilities (FND):

- Parents of the Panhandle Information Network (POPIN) covers the northern region, including Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Calhoun, Gulf, Bay, Washington, Jackson, Liberty, Holmes, Franklin, Wakulla, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Taylor, Madison, Hamilton, Dixie, Suwannee, Lafayette, Gilchrist, Columbia, Baker, Levy, Alachua, Union, Bradford, Nassau, Duval, St. John's, Clay, Putnam, Flagler, Marion and Volusia.
- Parent Support Network (PSN) serves the middle region, including Brevard, Citrus, DeSoto, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Manatee, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Lucie and Sumter.
- Parent Education Network (PEN) serves the southern region, including Lee, Collier, Hendry, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Martin, Charlotte and Glades.

Florida has two **Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs)**:

- Parent to Parent of Miami, Inc. serves Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.
- Project Empower of Northwest Florida serves Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties in the Western Panhandle area of Florida.



See Figure 2, a map with parent centers and the counties they serve (adapted from the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Parent Services).

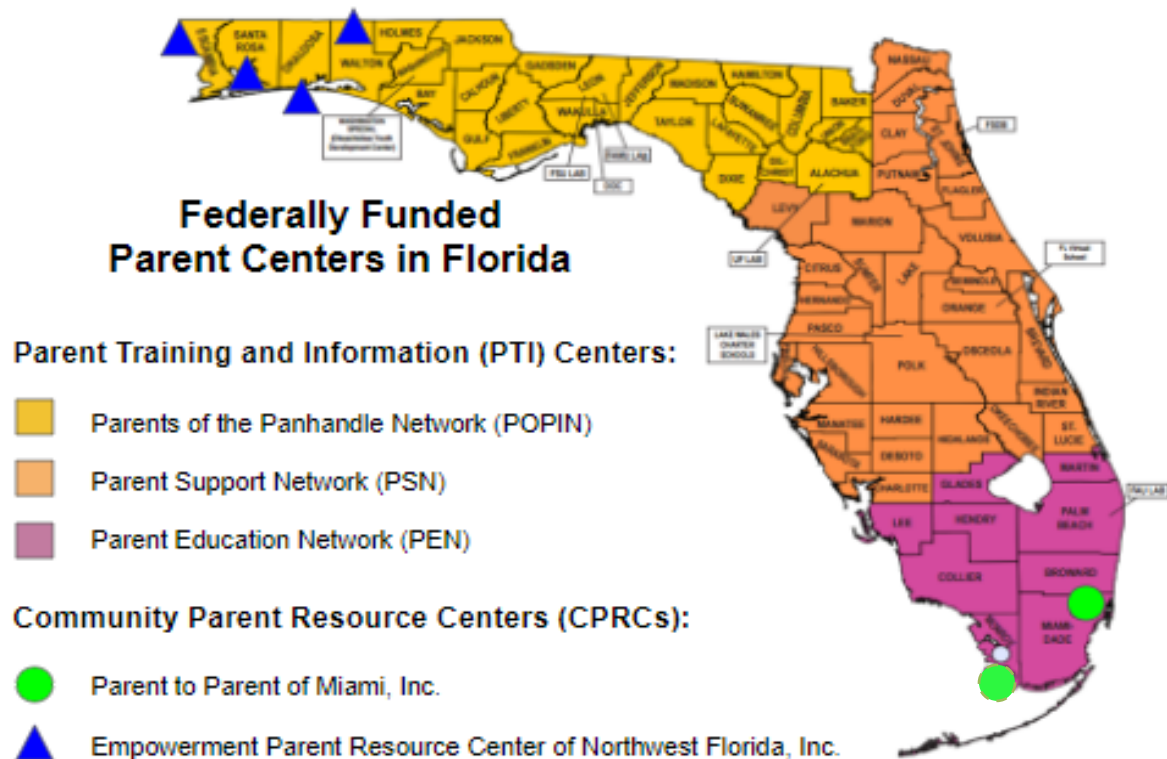
Contact information for all of these centers is located in the appendix within the Directory section. More information regarding PTIs and CPRCs may be accessed via the following website:

http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/bp3.pdf.



Important Note: Other local and state organizations that support parents may be located through Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Parent Services and/or your local school district transition contact.

Figure 2. Map of Florida Parent Centers



Getting a Head Start on Transition

It is never too early to plan for transition to adult life. Preparing your child for transition to adult life is a gradual process and starting early can have many benefits later on. The following are some suggestions for you to consider throughout your child's education.

Elementary and Middle School

- Encourage your child to strive for independence.
- Involve your child in activities that foster self-respect, self-esteem, and self-determination.
- Take your child into the community. Point out community members and talk about what they do.
- Encourage your child to talk about what he might like to do as an adult.
- Show your child how much you value your own work.
- Encourage your child to dress and groom appropriately and to take care of his own self-care or cleanliness needs.
- Assign your child specific duties around the house. Encourage your child to do them thoroughly and in a timely manner.



- Give your child an allowance and let him spend some of the money and save some. Help him learn how to budget.
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities outside of school, such as sports, clubs and music or art.
- Encourage your child to participate with you in community activities, such as visiting elderly people, helping neighbors in need, attending social events and shopping.
- Introduce your child to people who do various kinds of work. Include people with disabilities and people without disabilities.
- Take your child to work with you on “Take Your Child to Work Day.”
- Participate in your child’s IEP meetings; if you cannot attend in person, ask if you can participate by phone. If you have questions regarding the IEP reach out to the school. Keep a lookout for training opportunities available in the community, including those offered by the school district and also FDLRS Parent Services.
- Explain the IEP process to your child and have them participate in his IEP meetings.
- Include goals related to social and community skills in the IEP.
- As your child ages and enters middle school, be sure that the IEP team addresses career awareness, career exploration and career preparation. Help your child begin and/or update a career plan and transition portfolio.
- Monitor your child’s progress toward annual IEP goals by talking with team members and your child.
- Talk with other families who have gone through the transition process. Find out what has been helpful to them.
- Help your child develop self-determination and self-advocacy skills by involving them in making decisions and expressing preferences.
- Research community supports and services, including agencies such as the Center for Independent Living (CIL) and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD).
- Identify agencies that provide adult services, such as VR.
- Apply for services from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), which includes waiver participation. (Also see important note.)
- Visit postsecondary education, employment, and independent living programs to identify what options will be available when your child leaves school.



Important Note: Some agencies have very long waiting lists for certain services. This is currently the case for the Medicaid waiver which is available through APD. Even if your child will not need the full array of services while they are young, as they prepare for their transition to adulthood there may be a need for services such as Supported Living Coaching or Supported Employment. Getting on the wait list while your children are in elementary school will increase their chances of receiving these services by the time they exit high school.

High School

- Develop a plan to increase independence. Let your child make decisions and take reasonable risks.
- Encourage your child to become involved in community activities and increase his circle of friends.
- Encourage and support your child to find paid employment in the community.
- Help your child learn how to navigate the community as independently as possible. This may include learning how to use public transportation, or **paratransit**.
- Introduce your child to people with disabilities who are successfully employed.
- Help your child continue to develop and use self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- Participate in IEP meetings with your child. If you have questions regarding the IEP reach out to the school. Keep a lookout for training opportunities available in the community, including those offered by the school district and also FDLRS Parent Services.
- Help your child learn to lead parts of his own IEP meeting, such as discussing postsecondary goals, present level of performance, interests and areas he may need extra help.
- Address career education opportunities at the high school or career center in the IEP.
- Address employment training at actual work sites in the IEP.
- Encourage and assist your child as needed to update his career plan and transition portfolio.
- Help your child monitor progress on his IEP goals.
- Teach your child to be responsible for any special equipment he utilizes.
- Identify and apply for services provided by adult agencies.
- Investigate postsecondary education, employment and adult living options available in your community and beyond. Consider the eligibility requirements and the costs involved.
- Institutions of Higher Education that receive federal funding are required to provide support to students with disabilities to ensure they receive needed accommodations. However, some institutions are able to provide a more extensive array of services than others and it is important to research each one.
- Discuss self-disclosure with your child. This is an important discussion which may impact employment and the opportunity to receive **accommodations** in postsecondary programs. On the postsecondary level, services for students with disabilities begin with a visit to the Office of Disability Services. A student would consider disclosing a disability when accommodations are needed to be successful. On the employment level, a worker may choose to disclose a disability if work-related accommodations are needed. The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) provides a workbook for youth with disabilities entitled, The 411 on Disability Disclosure. It is available to download at http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf
- Consult legal experts about financial planning, estate planning, and, if needed, other decision-making alternatives. Keep in mind that full guardianship is the most restrictive option. There are many other options which do not completely remove your child's rights.



- Become aware of Social Security work incentives if your child receives **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** or **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**. Two Social Security Work Incentives for which your child may be eligible when they begin working are the Student Earned Income Exclusion and Impairment Related Work Expenses. If your child has previously been turned down for SSI or SSDI based on income, reapply for benefits after his 18th birthday, when your income will no longer be considered for eligibility purposes.



Important Note: Many parents and Social Security beneficiaries fear losing benefits when they start working. There are certified Benefits Planners located throughout the state who are able to assist, free of charge. More information regarding the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program may be found through the following link: <https://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html>. Another helpful resource is the Social Security Administration's Red Book: <https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/>. The Red Book is a general reference source for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals and counselors who serve people with disabilities. This resource addresses employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and the Supplemental Security Income programs.

Graduation and Post-School Options

There are several high school completion options available to public school students in Florida. Choosing a graduation option is an important decision. Opportunities for employment and further education and training can depend on the selected completion or diploma option.



Diploma Options

The diploma options in Florida currently include the following:

- 24-Credit Standard Diploma
- 18-Credit Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) Option
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Graduation Pathway (a minimum of 18 credits required)
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program
- Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma Program
- Performance-Based Exit Option/**GED**® Exit Option
- Special Diploma (this option is not available to students who began ninth grade in 2014-15 or later)

24-Credit Standard Diploma: There are three 24-credit high school diploma options. The majority of students with disabilities will complete the option available to all students. There are also two options available only to students with disabilities. Both require 24 credits and both allow students to substitute a CTE course with related content for one credit in English/Language Arts (ELA) IV, mathematics, science and social studies (excluding Algebra I, Geometry, Biology I and U.S. History). Students who choose the academic and employment option must earn at least .5 credit through paid employment. Students with significant cognitive disabilities earn credits via access courses and are assessed using an alternate assessment. For more details, refer to the graduation flyer *Florida 24 Credit Standard Diploma High School Graduation Options for Students Entering the Ninth Grade in 2014-15 and After* that follows this section.

18-Credit ACCEL Option: Students in the 18-credit ACCEL Option must meet all the graduation requirements for a 24-credit standard diploma, except they need to earn only three elective credits instead of eight and physical education and an online course are not required.

CTE Graduation Pathway: Students using this option must meet all of the requirements for a 24-credit standard diploma, except that only four elective credits are required. Two elective credits in CTE Courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification. Two elective credits are required in a work-based learning program, or up to two credits of electives, including financial literacy, to fulfill this requirement (a minimum of 18 credits required).

IB Diploma Program: The IB Diploma Program is designed for highly motivated students aged 16-19. It is based on a rigorous two-year pre-university course of study with international examinations and university credit.

AICE Diploma Program: The AICE Diploma Program is designed for students aged 16-19 who are seeking advanced study in preparation for college or university study. The AICE Diploma Program is based on the Cambridge International Examinations curriculum and assessment.

The Performance-Based Exit Option: The Performance-Based Exit Option is an alternate route to a diploma for students who are at least 16 years of age, do not have enough credits, have a low grade point average, or are overage for their current grade level. This option is NOT designed to be a preferred or accelerated program for early exit. The Performance-Based Exit Option uses the General Education Development (GED) tests. This option is also known as the “GED® Exit Option.” This option is NOT available in all schools or districts.

CTE Course Substitutions: CTE courses and ESE courses with related content may be substituted for English IV and for one credit in each of the core academic areas with the exceptions of Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology and U.S. History.



Important Note: Each year the FDOE posts an *Academic Advisement Flyer- What Students and Parents Need to Know*. These flyers contain the most recent updates to graduation requirements. These flyers are available at <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/graduation-requirements>. Another excellent resource that provides an overview of graduation options and additional transition information is the *Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families*, available at <http://project10.info/Publications.php>.

Florida 24-Credit Standard Diploma High School Graduation Options 2019-20

Diploma Designations

Students may earn one or more designations on their standard high school diploma.

Scholar Designation: To earn a Scholar designation a student must meet the following requirements:

- Earn one credit in Algebra II (must pass end-of-course [EOC] test)
- Pass the Geometry EOC
- Earn one credit in Statistics or an equally rigorous mathematics course
- Pass the Biology I EOC
- Earn one credit in Chemistry or Physics
- Earn one credit in a course equally rigorous to Chemistry or Physics
- Pass the U.S. History EOC
- Earn two credits in the same World Language
- Earn at least one credit in AP, IB, AICE or a dual enrollment course

A student is exempt from the Biology I or U.S. History assessment if the student is enrolled in an AP, IB or AICE Biology I or U.S. History course and the student takes the respective AP, IB or AICE assessment and earns the minimum score to earn college credit.



Merit Designation: To earn a Merit designation a student must meet the standard diploma requirements and attain one or more industry certifications from the list established per section 1003.492, Florida Statutes (F.S.). To earn industry certifications, students take CTE courses and must pass a related certification test. CTE programs are organized into 17 different career clusters.



Important Note: Waivers of statewide testing are available to students with disabilities; however, waivers are not permissible for the Scholar diploma designation.

Deferring Receipt of the Standard Diploma

The legislation that allows all students the opportunity to work toward a standard diploma, section 1003.4282, F.S., 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). There are two parts to deferral.

First, a student must have an IEP that “prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through 21.” This means that, because of the disability, a student needs continued education and services.

Second, a student must be enrolled in one of several specific educational programs. These programs include accelerated college credit, industry certification courses that lead to college credit, a collegiate high school, courses necessary for a Scholar designation and/or structured work-study, internship or pre-apprenticeship programs. School districts offer a variety of extended transition programs that meet these requirements.

Students defer in the semester in which they are expected to meet all of the requirements for a standard diploma. However, planning for the deferral must take place in advance so that the correct language is on the IEP and the team has time to choose the best program. The school district must provide a notice by January 30th to the parent and student regarding deferring receipt of the standard diploma. The parent/guardian, or a student who has reached the age of majority, must sign a document telling the school district that the student will defer by May 15th in order for the student to continue receiving transition or related services. Districts may allow a student who defers to participate in graduation activities. The request to defer is only needed once.

Students with disabilities who earn a standard diploma and do not defer are NOT eligible for any further services from the school district, **so it is very important that students with significant cognitive disabilities consider deferring receipt of their standard diploma.**

Students who earned a special diploma may return to the district and request educational services at any time before they turn 22 years of age.



Important Note: Students may request their high school diploma at any time after they defer. As previously mentioned, FAPE will end once the standard high school diploma has been received.

Free Appropriate Public Education, Ages 18–21

IDEA specifies that a FAPE must be available to all students with disabilities who have not reached age 22 and who have not earned a standard diploma. If a student graduates with a special diploma, a **certificate of completion**, a special certificate of completion, or **GED** and has not reached age 22, the school district must make FAPE available to the student (at the student's option) until the student's 22nd birthday or until he earns a standard diploma.

School districts may elect to offer multiple programming options for adult students. These options may be offered in a variety of settings, including a high school campus, special center, adult education center, career center, community college, state college, university, or community-based organization. Programming options may include:

- Coursework leading toward a standard diploma (including dual enrollment at state college or career center)
- Coursework leading toward a special diploma, available only to students who entered ninth grade prior to the fall semester of 2014, which may include community-based instruction and community-based employment training (including supported competitive employment)
- Career/work force education programs (including dual enrollment at state college or CTE center)
- Co-enrollment in adult general education to earn credits toward a standard diploma
- GED preparation courses

- Specialized programs for adults with disabilities
- Other programs developed by local school districts that enable a student to meet graduation requirements

Extended Transition (Programs for Students 18 – 22 Years Old)

When students defer the receipt of their diploma or return to high school to receive FAPE until reaching the age of 22, school districts offer programs that focus on preparation for adult living, particularly preparation for finding employment. The table that follows describes Types of extended transition programs available in Florida. Not all school districts offer the same programs. Contact your school district ESE Director to get more information. For a sample of extended program descriptions, see Table 2.

Sample of Extended Transition Programs (for Students 18 – 22 Years Old)	
Program	Description
Project SEARCH	A business-led, one-year, school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and relevant job-skills training through strategically designed internships with the primary objective of securing competitive employment.
Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) Programs	Inclusive, postsecondary education transition programs wherein students with intellectual disabilities take courses for credit or audit, leading to certifications, certificates of completion or a meaningful credential. They can be associated with a school district (dual enrollment) or independent. Programming also includes work experiences and internships with the primary objective of securing competitive employment upon exit.
District Specific Community Based Instruction (CBI) and Community Based Vocational Education (CBVE)	Both programs provide instruction in naturally occurring community environments providing students “real life” experiences. CBVE programs are vocationally orientated and take place in a business within the community wherein students learn specific employment skills working alongside paid employees. CBI programs can occur anywhere within the community and can cover a range of learning objectives.
District Specific Transition Programs	Varied programs at high schools, technical centers, or other sites where students continue to take courses through the school system. Some may participate in student-based enterprises, non-paid or paid employment, or learn technical, life and/or employment skills.
Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Training	Classes, curricula and programs to develop/enhance a student’s ability to speak and act on their own behalf and make decisions that affect their lives.
Social Skills Training	Classes, curricula, lessons and programs to help students who have challenges relating to other people.

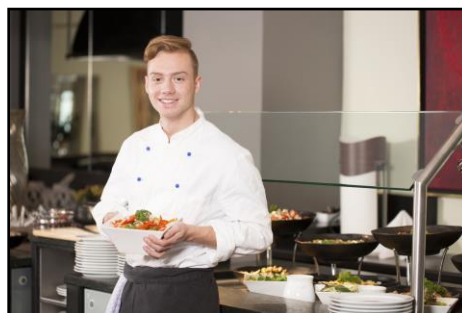
School-Based Enterprises	A set of entrepreneurial activities undertaken by students that provides an economic, social and educational return to the student, school and community.
Employability Skills Training	Classes, curricula, lessons and programs to teach students skills needed for employment.

Table 2

Post-School Options

Why is planning for postsecondary options for students with disabilities so important? Postsecondary activities are the primary focus of transition services. Students with disabilities want to participate in adult life, make positive contributions to their communities, develop a career, maintain a job and live as independently as possible.

Reports show that in the state of Florida 31% of working-age people with disabilities were employed in 2015. This is in sharp contrast to the 76.4% of working age individuals without disabilities who were employed (Erickson, Lee & von Schrader, 2016). Postsecondary education and training increases employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Studies indicate that individuals with disabilities who participate in postsecondary education experience higher rates of employment as well as a greater number of hours worked weekly. This trend of increased employability also applies to individuals who have a cognitive disability (Gilmore, Schuster, Zafft, & Hart (2001); Stodden & Conway, n.d.).



“Nationally, there is a growing interest in postsecondary education as a way to improve employment and other key life areas for individuals with intellectual disabilities (InD)” (Migliore, Butterworth & Hart, 2009). *Think College* is a national organization that is dedicated to the development, expansion and enhancement of inclusive higher education programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. College program coordinators reported on how students with disabilities are positively affected by postsecondary education in many ways. Here are the top four ways students are impacted:

- To gain employment or gain training for employment
- To participate in inclusive postsecondary classes
- To learn and exercise independent living skills
- To attain postsecondary educational benefits (Papay & Bambara, 2011)

Postsecondary options are an important educational priority in the state of Florida. A variety of options are being developed and/or expanded.

- **Florida’s colleges and universities** are required to offer disability services; the Offices of Disability Services are generally found under the Division of Student Services. These services may include classroom **accommodations** such as extended time on exams, note takers, access to assistive technologies and/or other services that address students’ specific needs. Access

links to Florida Colleges at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/colleges/> and Florida Universities at <http://www.flbog.edu/universities/>.

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** offers career preparatory programs that prepare students for jobs for a variety of job opportunities. With the help of partners in education, business and industry, and trade associations, each program includes the academic and technical skills required to be successful in today's economy. Access a list of Career and Technical Colleges and Centers in the District Postsecondary Institutions Directory at <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/dist-ps-instit.stml>.
- **Inclusive postsecondary education** programs for students with intellectual disabilities are expanding.
 - Legislation in 2016 paved the way to establish **The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities** at the University of Central Florida. This center is functioning as a statewide coordinating system to encourage and support the development of additional postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities through providing funds for student scholarships, program development and expansion and dissemination of information about programs and services for students with intellectual disabilities to students and families. Learn more about these programs at <http://fcsua.org/>.
 - The **Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE)** is a center that supports the development of inclusive postsecondary programs. FCIHE focuses on three objectives, including expanding the number of inclusive postsecondary education programs for students with disabilities at institutions of higher education in Florida; collaborating with inclusive postsecondary education programs to develop curriculum and credential alignment; and develop a base of research to be shared with inclusive postsecondary education stakeholders. Additional information about FCIHE is available at <http://ies.sdes.ucf.edu/consortium>.
- **Financial aid** is available through multiple sources. FloridaShines is an organization that promotes college enrollment, college success and career success. The FloridaShines website provides information about financial aid, including scholarships, grants and loans, based on academic achievement, financial need, fields of study and minority status. Access more information on financial aid opportunities at <https://www.floridashines.org/go-to-college/pay-for-college/financial-aid?inheritRedirect=true>. The Project 10 website features an informative page on financial planning that can be accessed at <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=198> and a page of scholarships and grants for students with disabilities is also available at <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=167>.
- **Employment** options can be enhanced by programs that are offered through school districts. Some of these programs include Project SEARCH, High School High Tech (HSHT), community-based vocational education (CBVE) and other programs for students 18 – 22 years old. Many of these programs are described in Project 10's Promising Practices at <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=74>.
 - Project SEARCH is a one-year high school transition program that prepares students with disabilities for integrated competitive employment through a workforce program centered on internship experiences, job skills and



employment skills. Learn more about Project SEARCH at <https://www.projectsearch.us/who-we-are/>.

- HSHT is designed to provide high school students with all types of disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to technology-related careers. HSHT links youth to a broad range of academic, career development and experiential resources and experiences.
- Non-paid CBVE programs have three components, including: vocational exploration, vocational assessment and vocational training within community vocational settings.
- VR is a key partner in the transition of students with disabilities from school to employment. VR Transition Youth Services help students with disabilities to find employment. VR can help students to access career counseling, postsecondary training and/or education and work experience. Students with disabilities may apply for VR as early as age 15. Learn more about VR Transition Youth Services at <http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml>.
- VR's Student Transition Activities Record (STAR) Program offers four pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students ages 15-21 who are in high school or are enrolled in training or education after high school. Students must have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan demonstrating a condition that interferes with preparing for, getting, or keeping a job. The Pre-ETS include:
 - Career Exploration Counseling
 - Work Readiness Training
 - Community-Based Work Experiences
 - Self-Advocacy Training
- Additional employment-related resources include CareerSource and Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD). Local CareerSource centers support businesses and job-seekers to promote successful employment outcomes for the benefit of everyone involved. APD is able to support its customers through supported employment for individuals on the Medicaid Waiver, individualized services through the Consumer-Directed Care Plus (CDC+) and the Employment Enhancement Project (EEP).



Important Note: See the appendix to access the resource, *Keys to Success: Attitude, Self-Advocacy and Preparation* on page 85. These guiding questions will help families of youth to explore and assess your child's readiness for postsecondary education opportunities.

Differences Between IDEA and ADA 504

Students and families should be aware that the rights of students with disabilities in secondary education are protected under different legislation than the rights of students with disabilities in postsecondary education. See Table 3 for an overview of the differences between accessing accommodations in high school and postsecondary education (Center on Technology and Disability Institute, n.d.; Differences Between High School and College Accommodations, n.d.; Meyers, n.d.).

Table 3

Differences in Accessing Services for Students with Disabilities Between High School and College	
IDEA K-12	ADA K-12 and Postsecondary
Secondary Education (Middle School and High School)	Postsecondary Education (Universities, Colleges and Career and Technical Colleges)
Legislation: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Legislation: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 504
Access services through Exceptional Student Education (ESE), School District	Access services through Disability Services Office
Emphasis on success: Modifying standards is a possibility; the curriculum can be modified through Access points curriculum.	Emphasis on equal access: Standards, course objectives and the curriculum cannot be modified; however, accommodations may be accessed.
Appropriate accommodations, as indicated on the student's IEP, can be provided.	Appropriate accommodations, as indicated through documentation, can be provided. Documentation would require a psychological/educational evaluation, and could also include a summary of performance from high school, an IEP, etc.
The school facilitates an evaluation.	The student is responsible for getting an evaluation and providing any other documentation of disability. Vocational Rehabilitation may be able to assist postsecondary students get the evaluation they need.
Students are determined eligible for ESE based on evaluation outcomes and IDEA disability categories.	Evaluation and other documentation must show the student's functional limitations and the impact of the limitations regarding the demands of postsecondary education in order to demonstrate the need for reasonable accommodations. More details are available at the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) website at https://www.ahead.org/about-ahead/about-overview/affiliates/connecticut/documentation
The individual educational plan (IEP) is the guiding document for providing ESE services.	The IEP and the Summary of Performance can be useful documents to share, but are not the guiding document for providing services to students with disabilities.
School personnel, discretionary project personnel and/or parents identify students potentially in need of ESE services.	Students must advocate for themselves through the Disability Services Office which includes the disclosure of a disability.
The school is responsible for arranging accommodations with classroom teachers.	Accommodations determined by the Disability Services Office may be communicated to the student's professors by office personnel or the student may be responsible for initiating accommodations with professors in each course.

Academic tutoring may be provided through ESE services.	Students with disabilities are responsible for identifying and accessing tutoring resources.
Parents have access to student records and are invited participants in IEP meetings.	Parents do not have access to student records without written consent from the student.

Planning for Adulthood

While education and employment are vital concerns for students transitioning into adulthood, there are additional critical needs to consider. This section will focus on other concerns, such as age of majority, guardianship, finances and independent living.

Age of Majority and Guardianship



At the age of majority, 18 years of age in Florida, the student gains all of the legal rights and responsibilities of an adult. At this time, the educational decision-making rights of parents, including parents of a student with a disability, transfer to the young adult.

Young adults and their parents may have different ideas about the best steps to take to reach their goals. If you and your child who is over age 18 disagree with each other on a course of action, the school district should help you to resolve this conflict. **Mediation** may be appropriate in such a situation.

Where there are concerns about the student's ability to participate in the process of educational decision-making, school district personnel should continue to work closely with the parents to ensure that appropriate decisions are made.

If the student has been determined incompetent by the court, then rights would not transfer to the student, but would be retained by the individual appointed by the court as the student's guardian. Please note that there are numerous options to consider regarding guardianship. There are alternatives to guardianship that employ the use of family, friends and/or advance directives. Additionally, there are different levels of guardianship to consider.

For more information on guardianship and other decision-making alternatives, refer to Disability Rights Florida,

http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/resources/disability_topic_info/turning_18_guardianship_other_options ; and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, *Lighting the Way to Guardianship and Other Decision-Making Alternatives, A Manual for Individuals and Families*, http://www.fddc.org/sites/default/files/file/publications/Guardianship%20Family%20Manual_0.pdf.

Finances

Identifying and accessing the resources available to support families that have members with disabilities is time-intensive, but essential. This is particularly important in the area of finances.

Programs that are available to individuals with disabilities include the following:

- **Medicaid Waiver:** The **Medicaid waiver** helps families to care for family members with disabilities at home. The waiver helps to provide necessary services that might otherwise be provided through a hospital or nursing home. APD handles the Medicaid waiver in the state of Florida through the system, iBudget Florida. Apply for services from APD and the Medicaid waiver at a local APD office. If your child is eligible for Medicaid waiver services, it is important to remember that there is a waitlist and, as students with disabilities prepare for their transition to adulthood, there may be a need for services such as Supported Living Coaching or Supported Employment. Applying for the Medicaid waiver while your child is in elementary school will increase the chances of receiving these services by the time he or she exits high school.
- **Supplemental Security Income:** The **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** provides monthly financial support to individuals who have limited financial resources and are age 65 or older, blind or have a qualifying disability. Children younger than age 18 may also qualify for SSI if he or she has a qualifying disability and if his or her financial resources fall within the eligibility limits. Families can find more information about how to apply for SSI benefits for their children at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/apply-child.html>.
- **Plan to Achieve Self-Support:** The **Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)** can help an individual who is receiving SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits to set aside earned income to prepare for a work goal. The earned income that is set aside under the PASS program is not included in determining one's SSI/SSDI payment amount. The following example from the 2017 *Red Book: A Summary Guide to Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities Under the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Programs* clarifies the benefit of PASS. With PASS, Billy can prepare for fulfilling employment that allows him to provide his own financial security.

"A Sample PASS (SSI ONLY)

Example 1 – Wages Being Excluded under an approved PASS

- Billy wants to go to school to become a social worker.
- Billy works part time and earns \$665 per month.
- We figure Billy's countable income using the earned income formula (See page 39)

$\$665 - \$20 = \$645 - \$65 = \$580$

$\$580 / 2 = \290 in countable income.

- Billy's earned income reduces his SSI benefit of \$735 by \$290 per month to \$445.
- He agrees to spend the \$290 in countable income on his education and we approve a PASS.
- We set aside this income and his SSI increases by \$290/month for the PASS timeframe. Billy receives \$735 in SSI benefits, and has \$290 to use for approved PASS expenses," (Red Book, 2017).

- **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act Accounts:** An **ABLE Account** provides the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to establish a tax-free account that can be used for medical and dental care, education, community-based supports, employment training, assistive technology, housing and transportation. This account allows individuals with disabilities to work and save money for specified expenses without negatively influencing eligibility for a federal

benefits program. Learn more about the advantages of the ABLE account, eligibility and enrollment at <http://www.ableunited.com/>.

Independent Living

The concept of independent living embraces the idea that individuals with disabilities may need daily assistance with their life activities, but they remain the best experts regarding their own needs. Ratzka (2005) explains independent living from the perspective of an individual with a disability,

Independent Living does not mean that we want to do everything by ourselves or that we do not need anybody or like to live in isolation. Independent Living means that we demand the same choices and control in our every-day lives that our non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends take for granted. We want to grow up in our families, go to the neighborhood school, use the same bus as our neighbors, work in jobs that are in line with our education and interests, and raise families of our own. We are profoundly ordinary people sharing the same need to feel included, recognized and loved (para 8).

Employment is a key piece of independent living and is the primary focus of the transition process. Helping students to move from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment is strategically necessary for the establishment of independent living and is a theme throughout this manual. Two additional key factors are housing and transportation.

Residential Options of Florida (ROOF) is an organization that exists to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to access affordable, inclusive housing. ROOF shares information on their website that helps families to assist their loved ones with disabilities to find housing that is aligned with their needs and preferences. Find more information about the transition to independent housing at <http://flroof.org/>. Also find *Housing in Florida: A Resource Guide for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities*, a product created by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) and the Florida Housing Coalition, available on the FDDC website at <http://www.fddc.org/sites/default/files/file/Housing%20Guide.pdf>

Transportation is a need that crosses most spheres of life. The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) endeavors to ensure the coordination of transportation service that enhances access to life-sustaining activities such as employment, health care, education. CTD serves older adults, persons with disabilities, people with low incomes and at-risk children who are dependent on others for transportation. Access more information about CTD at <http://www.fdot.gov/ctd/index.htm>. There is a Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) in each of Florida's counties. The CTC can be contacted directly to establish eligibility for transportation services and to arrange a ride. Find the CTC for your county at <http://www.fdot.gov/ctd/RiderInfo.htm>.

Final Thoughts

In summary, the entire educational experience prepares students for transition and it is critical that students, families, schools, state agencies, community organizations and everyone within the



students' circle of support work together to ensure that all students transition successfully to life beyond high school.

Helen Keller is noted for saying, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." The truth of that statement is evident throughout all of the stages and phases of transition. Through the combined efforts of all transition stakeholders, Florida students with disabilities can be effectively prepared for the future. Families and students are not alone in this process. So much more can be accomplished together than could ever be accomplished alone.

Appendix

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

On the next several pages you will find brief explanations of words used by people who work with students with disabilities. Different school districts may use these words in somewhat different ways. Always feel free to ask for definitions of words being used to describe a student or the student's education.

Academics

Academics refers to core subject areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science that students are required to take in school.

Access Points

Access points are academic expectations written specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities. As part of the Florida Standards, access points reflect the essence or core intent of the standards that apply to all students in the same grade, but at reduced levels of complexity. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible under IDEA will participate in access point courses and the Florida State Alternate Assessment (FSAA).

Accommodation

Accommodations are a different way of doing something that takes into account a person's disability. Accommodations are changes in how a student is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change the requirements of a course or the standards the student must meet. Compare with "modification."

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act

The ABLE Act provides the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to establish a tax-free account that can be used for medical and dental care, education, community-based supports, employment training, assistive technology, housing and transportation. This account allows individuals with disabilities to work and save money for specified expenses without negatively impacting eligibility for a federal benefits program.

Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment

Age-appropriate transition assessments refer to the collection of data on the student's needs, preferences and interests. Transition assessments should be completed each year and the information can be used in the transition IEP. Transition assessments can cover many areas, including employment, self-determination and self-advocacy, independent living and study skills.

Age of Majority

The age of majority refers to the age when a person becomes a legal adult. The rights of the parent of a student with a disability transfer to the student when the student reaches the age of majority. In Florida, this is 18 years of age.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)

APD works in partnership with local communities and private providers to assist people who have developmental disabilities and their families. APD also provides assistance in identifying the needs of people with developmental disabilities for supports and services. In order to be eligible for services, an individual must have a developmental disability which occurs prior to age 18. Disabilities served include Intellectual Disability, Autism, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy, Prader-Willi syndrome, Down syndrome, Phelan-McDermid syndrome, or individuals between the ages of 3-5 at high risk for a developmental disability.

Agency Responsibilities

Agency responsibilities refer to the services listed on an IEP that agencies have agreed to provide or help the school district provide.

Annual Goal

See “measurable annual goal.”

Assessment(s)

Assessments are tools or ways of collecting information about a student’s knowledge, skills and needs.

Assessment(s) may include formal and informal tests, observations and/or reviews of student’s portfolios or work samples. Also see “evaluation.”

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology refers to devices and/or services. See “assistive technology device” and “assistive technology service.”

Assistive Technology Device

An assistive technology device refers to equipment that is used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of children and young adults who have disabilities.

Assistive Technology Service

Assistive technology service refers to a service that directly helps a child or young adult with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device. This includes evaluating assistive technology needs; purchasing equipment; selecting, fitting and repairing equipment; and training the child or young adult, family, teachers, employers, or others in the use of the equipment.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks refer to statements in the IEP that describe major milestones a student must reach in order to achieve his “measurable annual goals.” In Florida, short-term objectives or benchmarks are only required for students who are assessed through Florida Alternate Assessment (FSAA). However, many school districts continue to develop short-term objectives or benchmarks for all students.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CTE refers to instruction and experiences designed to make students aware of the broad range of available careers, teach them general job preparatory skills and offer them **courses of study** that allow them to develop skills needed for specific careers. These may include career exploration courses, practical arts courses, diversified cooperative education, work experience, job entry programs and on-the-job training.

Certificate of Completion

This certificate is given to students who pass the required courses in high school, but do not earn the required grade point average and/or do not pass the state assessment and so are not eligible for a standard diploma.

Certificate of Completion-College Placement Test (CPT) Eligible

The CPT certificate is given to students who pass the required courses in high school and earn the required grade point average, but do not to pass the state assessment and so are not eligible for a standard diploma. Students who earn this certificate are allowed to take the CPT and be admitted to remedial or credit courses at a state college in Florida.

Community-Based Instruction (CBI)

Community-based instruction refers to instruction that takes place at locations in the community and is designed to help students perform skills such as grocery shopping and using public transportation. CBI often includes training in the classroom followed by practice in community settings. Often CBI is used to ensure that students can apply skills and knowledge learned through the Florida Standards in the community.

Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE)

CBVE is a vocational program designed for students with disabilities that provides work experience and training to students in community work settings.

Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)

A postsecondary degree, certificate or non-degree program sponsored by a college or career and technical education center that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education and is designed to support students with intellectual disabilities as they continue to receive instruction in academic, career and independent living to prepare for gainful employment.

Courses of Study

For the purposes of transition, courses of study describe the student's instructional program. For example, the student will take advanced placement courses leading to a standard diploma; or the student will participate in **community-based instruction** and career placement leading to a standard diploma for students who are taking the alternate assessment.

Daily Living Skills

Daily living skills are skills related to taking care of one's own personal needs as independently as possible. Examples include dressing for work, renting an apartment and buying a bus pass.

Deferral of Receipt of the Standard Diploma

Deferring the receipt of the standard diploma is done in order to continue to receive services under FAPE. There are two parts to deferral of the standard diploma. First, a student must have an IEP that "prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through 21." This is being interpreted to mean that a student must require services to be successful. Second, a student must be enrolled in one of several specific educational programs. The majority of students who earn a standard diploma via an option open to all students will not meet these criteria.

Discretionary Grant Project

These projects support the work of the FDOE and are funded by grant awards through the federal government. Discretionary grants can be used to support training, service delivery, research and conference projects.

Disability

A disability is a condition that makes it difficult for a student to learn or do things in the same ways as most other students. A disability may be short-term or permanent.

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment

The Florida EOC Assessments are designed to measure student achievement of the Florida Standards or the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for specific courses, as outlined in the course descriptions. These assessments are part of Florida's Next Generation Strategic Plan for the purpose of increasing student achievement and improving college and career readiness.

Eligible

The term eligible, in reference to a student who is an exceptional student as defined in Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.03031, F.A.C., means any child or youth who requires special instruction or related services and is enrolled in or eligible for enrollment in the public schools of a district.

Evaluation

A way of collecting information about a student's learning needs, strengths and interests. It is used to help decide whether a student has a disability and is eligible for ESE programs and services. It may include giving individual tests, observing the child, looking at records and talking with the student and parents. Also see "assessment."

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

The name given in Florida to educational programs and services for students with special learning needs (including those who have disabilities and those who are gifted). It is sometimes called "special education."

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Administrator

The ESE Administrator is the leader of a school district's ESE programs. This person works for the school district, not just one school.

Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) and students with visual impairments (VI) have unique needs that are specific to their needs. The ECC promotes the acquisition of compensatory skills that assist students who are deaf or hard of hearing and students who have visual impairments to access the core curriculum in a way that is equitable to students without disabilities. The ECC also promotes the acquisition of functional skills that assist students to access activities outside of the classroom, such as employment, recreation, social events and self-care. Orientation and mobility are necessary aspects of the ECC and are relevant to both compensatory skills and functional skills. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and students with visual impairments need to develop the skills needed to travel independently and learn from a variety of environments.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

FAPE refers to language used in the federal law to describe the right of a student, ages 3 – 21, with a disability to special services that will meet his individual learning needs, at no cost to parents.

Florida Standards

The Florida Standards are a set of objectives that describe what Florida's students are expected to know and be able to achieve at each grade level. Most students with disabilities are able to meet these standards if they have the right services and accommodations. The Mathematics Florida Standards (MAFS) include the K-8 grade level standards, 9-12 content standards (placed in high school courses as appropriate) and K-12 Standards for Mathematical Practice. The Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS) include the English Language Arts standards in grades K-12 as well as the content-area literacy standards for middle school and high school instruction in the following content areas: history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

Florida State Alternate Assessment (FSAA)

An alternate assessment is an assessment that is used for a student with a disability when a standard state- or districtwide assessment is not appropriate for that student. See "assessment(s)."

Functional Vocational Evaluation (FVE)

FVE is an ongoing process that identifies a student's career interests, work-related aptitudes and skills and need for training.

GED Diploma – (Tests of General Educational Development)

See "State of Florida High School Diploma."

General Curriculum

In Florida, the general curriculum is the Florida Standards which describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at various points in their education. The general curriculum leads students toward a standard diploma.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

The IEP is a written plan that describes the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the ESE services, supports, aids and accommodations or modifications that will be provided to that student.

IEP Meeting

The IEP meeting refers to the meeting that the IEP team holds to write the IEP. The IEP team must meet at least once a year to review the IEP to determine whether the annual goals are being achieved. The IEP may be revised, as appropriate, to address any lack of expected progress, the results of any re-evaluations, information about the student provided by the parent, the student's anticipated needs, or other matters. Parents must approve any changes to IEP goals. In addition to the required annual IEP team meeting, changes can be made to the IEP during an IEP team meeting held after the annual meeting, or, with the agreement of the parent and the district, without convening the IEP team.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is the most important United States law regarding the education of students with disabilities.

Interagency Council (IAC)

IACs facilitate an evidence-based strategy that supports post-school outcomes for students with disabilities through a cross-agency, collaborative approach. The coordinated efforts of IACs reduce duplicated services and fill gaps in services for students with disabilities.

Linkages

Linkages refer to connections between students with disabilities and agencies that provide adult services.

Measurable Annual Goal

Measurable annual goals refer to goals that are written as measurable statements of the skills and behaviors the student is expected to learn to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum. They must be designed to meet the student's academic and functional needs that result from the disability.

Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Measurable postsecondary goals refer to goals written to address postsecondary education, training, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills. They must be measurable, intended to happen after the student graduates from school and be updated annually.

Mediation

Mediation is a process in which parents and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the help of a person who has been trained to resolve conflicts. It may also be used to help parents and adult students with disabilities to resolve disagreements about the student's education.

Medicaid Waiver

The Medicaid waiver helps families to care for family members with disabilities at home. The waiver helps to provide necessary services that might otherwise be provided through a hospital or nursing home. APD handles the Medicaid waiver in the state of Florida through the system, iBudget Florida. Apply for services from APD and the Medicaid waiver at a local APD office.

Modification

A modification refers to a change in the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet or a change in what the student is taught or tested on. The change is based on the student's needs because of his disability. Compare with "accommodation."

Notice

A notice refers to a note or letter to parents about an action the school plans to take that will affect their child's education, such as holding an IEP meeting or changing the student's services or placement.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

OJT refers to instruction that provides students with work experiences and training provided in the job setting designed to help them acquire and apply knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to hold a job.

Paratransit

Transportation services for individuals with disabilities that are provided by public transit agencies and are additional to the traditionally provided routes. Door-to-door services may be available on-demand in some public transit systems.

Person-Centered Planning (PCP)

PCP is an approach to planning that places the person at the center of the process and focuses on the skills and abilities possessed by the individual. PCP also involves perspectives of family, friends and community members as everyone comes together to build a complete 360-degree view of the person during the planning process.

Post-School Activities

Post-school activities refer to activities that a student will pursue after finishing high school. Some post-school activities are postsecondary education, continuing and adult education, technical training, employment, adult services, independent living, recreation and community participation.

Postsecondary Education (PSE)

PSE is the next level of education after high school, such as college/university coursework or technical training.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Pre-ETS are provided through VR and serve students ages 15-21 who are in high school or are enrolled in training or education after high school. Students must have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan demonstrating a condition that interferes with preparing for, getting, or keeping a job. Pre-ETS include: career exploration counseling, work readiness training, community-based work experiences and self-advocacy training.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

The PLAAFP or present levels statement must accurately describe the effect of the student's disability on his/her participation and progress in the general curriculum. It should include a description of the student's current educational and functional performance, including grade or functioning level, to determine the goals and services the student needs. It must include a description of the remediation needed to pass the state assessment for students who participate in the general statewide assessment. For students of transition age (14-22), many IEP teams choose to incorporate age-appropriate transition assessment information into the present level of academic achievement and functional performance.

Related Services

Related services refer to special help given to a student with a disability in addition to classroom teaching. Related services help a student benefit from instruction. Examples of related services include transportation, career counseling, rehabilitation counseling, occupational therapy and physical therapy.

School-Based Enterprise

A set of entrepreneurial activities undertaken by students that provides an economic, social and educational return to the student, school and community. Student efforts are designed to enhance personal responsibility, an appreciation of risk versus reward and confidence in achieving and maintaining independence (Gamache & Knab, 2015, p.7).

Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy refers to the skills necessary to be able to speak up for oneself or a cause. Self-advocacy skills include being assertive, knowing your rights, speaking up and negotiating.

Self-Determination

Self-determination involves taking control and making decisions that affect one's life. Self-determination helps students to make their own choices, set their own goals, manage their own lives and participate in decision-making.

Short-Term Objectives (STOs)

STOs are statements in an IEP that describe small, measurable steps a student must learn or master before the student can reach one of his "measurable annual goals." In Florida, short-term objectives or benchmarks are only required for students who are assessed through Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA). However, many school districts continue to develop short-term objectives or benchmarks for all students.

Situational Vocational Assessment

A situational vocational assessment refers to an observation process that is used to gather information about a student's work-related behavior in a work environment. Students are generally instructed to perform work-related tasks to determine such competencies as their ability to lift, ability to follow multi-step directions, mobility skills and other related areas that are important in paid jobs.

Special Diploma

Legislation passed in Florida during the 2014 session repealed the special diploma statute effective July 1, 2015. The special diploma does not require its recipients to meet the same standards as those earning the standard diploma and may impact availability of post-school options. Students entering 9th grade during the 2014-15 school year and after must work toward a standard diploma. Students with disabilities who entered 9th grade prior to the 2014-15 school year may continue to work toward a special diploma if this is indicated on their IEP. There are two special diploma options for students who entered grade 9 prior to 2014-15: Option 1, which is

academic-focused; and Option 2, which is employment-focused. Specific criteria for these options are available from the school district.

Standard Diploma

Standard diploma is the diploma granted to all students, including students with disabilities, who meet state standards and requirements. All students entering 9th grade during the 2014-15 school year and after must work toward a standard diploma.

Standard Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities

Legislation passed in Florida during the 2014 session required that the State Board of Education create rules regarding additional ways in which students with disabilities, beginning with the 2014-2015 ninth grade cohort, may earn a standard diploma. Consequently, in addition to the standard diploma options available to all students, there are two additional standard diploma options available only to students with disabilities with an IEP. The first is a 24 credit standard diploma with academic and employment options. The second is a 24 credit standard diploma with access courses and alternate assessment. Criteria for these options are presented in this guide. Also see the related technical assistance paper, <https://info.fl DOE.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7322/dps-2015-34.pdf>

Standard Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities: 24-Credit with Academic and Employment Options

The 24-credit standard diploma with academic and employment options is a standard diploma option that is available only to students with a disability who have an IEP.

Standard Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities: 24-Credit with Access Courses and Alternate Assessment

This 24-credit standard diploma with is a standard diploma options that is available only to students with significant cognitive disabilities who take access courses and the alternate assessment.

Standard Diploma with State Standardized Testing Waiver

Florida has specific procedures that must be followed for a student to be eligible for a Standard Diploma with the state standardized testing waiver. This diploma may be granted to students with disabilities who earn the specified number of credits and grade point average, meet the Florida Standards and meet any other school district graduation requirements, but have not passed state standardized testing and for whom the IEP team has decided that the state standardized testing is not an accurate measure of the student's achievement.

State of Florida High School Diploma

Any student who is at least 18 years old and who has not earned a standard diploma may earn a State of Florida diploma by passing the tests of General Educational Development (GED).

The GED consists of separate tests in English, social studies, science, literature and mathematics. Students must also write a 200-word essay.

Summary of Performance (SOP)

IDEA (2004) requires public schools to provide students receiving exceptional education services a "Summary of Performance" (SOP). This summary of a student's academic achievement and functional performance should also include recommendations on how to assist the youth in meeting his postsecondary goals, including postsecondary education, training, employment/career and independent living. The SOP is completed for a child whose eligibility for special education services has terminated "due to graduation from secondary school, or due to exceeding the age eligibility for a FAPE under State law" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 [IDEA], §614(c)(5)(B)).

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI refers to Federal benefits paid to people with disabilities who have limited income. A child's eligibility is based on the income of his parents. Children who were not eligible because their parents' income was too high may become eligible once they reach age 18 and should re-apply.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

SSDI refers to Federal benefits paid to people with disabilities who have work credits or who were disabled before age 22 and have an eligible (disabled or deceased) parent.

Supported Employment

Supported employment refers to competitive work, paid at or above minimum wage, which provides regular opportunities for interaction with people who do not have disabilities. Supported employment typically includes job coaches or employment specialists who help students with disabilities to get and keep a job.

Tests of General Educational Development (GED)

See "State of Florida High School Diploma."

Transfer of Rights

At the **age of majority**, 18 years of age in Florida, the student gains all of the legal rights and responsibilities of an adult. At this time, the educational decision-making rights of parents, including parents of a student with a disability, transfer to the young adult.

Transition

For students with disabilities, transition is the process of getting ready to move from school to adult life. The process occurs over a period of several years and involves planning, goal setting, instruction, services and activities designed to make that move successful.

Transition Services

Transition services refer to a coordinated set of activities that helps a student move from school to post-school activities.

Vocational Rehabilitation

This state agency helps people with disabilities find and maintain employment and enhance their independence. VR Transition Youth Services focus on helping students, beginning at age 15, to make a seamless transition from school to postsecondary training, education and employment. See Pre-ETS.

Appendix B: Directory of State Agencies and Organizations

State Agencies and Organizations			
Agency/Organization	Purpose	Website	Phone
Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)	APD is the agency specifically tasked with serving the needs of Floridians with developmental disabilities (autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome and Prader-Willi syndrome).	http://apd.myflorida.com	Phone: (850) 488-4257 Toll Free: (866) 273-2273
Arc of Florida	The Arc of Florida is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.	http://arcflorida.org	Phone: (850) 921-0460 Toll Free: (800) 226-1155
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Centers By School District	This site provides a directory of CTE Centers available in each Florida school district.	http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/dist-ps-instit.stml	n/a
CareerSource	CareerSource Florida is the statewide workforce policy and investment board whose partners include the Department of Economic Opportunity, 24 local workforce development boards and 100 career centers throughout Florida. Together, they support businesses and job-seekers to create successful employment outcomes for the benefit of everyone involved.	https://careersourceflorida.com/career-assistance/	Phone: (850) 692-6887
Disability Rights Florida	Disability Rights Florida is the statewide protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in the State of Florida. Their services are free and confidential.	www.disabilityrightsflorida.org	Phone: (850) 488-9071 Toll Free: (800) 342-0823 Test Driven Development (TDD): (800) 346-4127
Employment First Florida	Employment First Florida's goal is to prioritize employment objectives for individuals with disabilities and help them find good jobs in their communities.	http://www.employmentfirstfla.org/	Phone: (617) 287-4300
Florida Abilities Work	Florida Abilities Work provides information to Florida employers looking to hire qualified job seekers with disabilities and to job seekers who are trying to find a job.	https://abilitieswork.employmentflorida.com/vosnet/Default.aspx#	Toll Free: (844) 245-3405
Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living (CIL)	Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living provides support and resource development for 15 CILs throughout Florida, which are community-based, non-profit agencies that empower persons with disabilities to move from dependence to	http://www.floridacils.org/	Phone: (850) 575-6004 Toll Free: (866) 575-6004

		independence.		
Florida Colleges and Universities	Florida Colleges List	This site provides a list of Florida Colleges.	https://www.floridacollegesystem.com/colleges.aspx	n/a
	Florida Colleges' Disability Support Services	This site provides a list of disability support providers by college.	http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academic-student-affairs/disability-support-services.stml	n/a
	Florida Universities List	This site provides information on Florida Universities, college planning and other related topics.	http://www.flbog.edu/	n/a
	Florida University Disability Resource Centers	This page provides a list of University Student Disability Resource Centers and web links to each center.	http://www.flbog.edu/forstudents/ati/disabilities.php	n/a
	State University System of Florida Admissions Tour	This site provides a matrix comparing characteristics of Florida Universities, fact sheets and a virtual tour through PowerPoint presentations.	http://www.flbog.edu/board/office/asa/admissionstour.php	n/a
	Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST)	FAAST provides advocacy and awareness activities that increase access to and acquisition of assistive services and technology to improve the quality of life for all Floridians with disabilities.	http://www.faast.org/	Phone: (850) 487-3278 Toll Free: (888) 788-9216
	Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged	The mission of this organization is to insure the availability of efficient, cost-effective and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons.	http://www.fdot.gov/ctd/	Phone: (850) 410-5700 Toll Free: 1(800) 983-2435 Hearing and Speech Impaired Call: 711 Florida Relay System
	Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE)	Consortium partners collaborate to increase the number of inclusive postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities. FCIHE assists with the alignment of curriculum and credentialing among institutions of higher education and provides mini-grants for program development and enhancement.	http://ies.sdes.ucf.edu/consortium	n/a

Florida Department of Education	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES)	BEES administers Florida's programs for students with disabilities to ensure the achievement of each and every individual's extraordinary purpose by expanding opportunities through collaboration of families, professionals, and communities who guarantee the highest expectations and individual success.	http://www.fldoe.org/eae/	Phone: (850) 245-0475
	Division of Blind Services (DBS)	DBS ensures help blind and visually impaired Floridians achieve their goals and live productive and independent lives.	http://dbs.myflorida.com/	Phone: (850) 245-0300 Toll Free: (800) 342-1828
	Division of Florida Colleges	The Division of Florida Colleges is the primary point of access to higher education in Florida.	http://www.fldoe.org/schools/highered/fl-college-system/index.html	Phone: (850) 245-0407
	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	VR is a federal-state program that helps Floridians with physical or mental disabilities get and/or keep a job.	http://www.rehabworks.org/	Phone: (850) 245-339 (Voice/TDD) Toll Free: (800) 451-4327 (Voice/TDD)
	Office of Workforce Education (Career and Adult Education)	Career and Adult Education is designed to meet the needs of Floridians through partnerships with public and private sectors to provide adult education and training to improve Florida's workforce.	http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/	Phone: (850) 245-0446
Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC)		FDDC advocates for and promotes meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities.	http://www.fddc.org/	Phone: (850) 488-4180 Toll Free: (800) 580-7801 TDD: (850) 488-0956 TDD/Toll Free: (888) 488-8633
Florida Health and Transition Services (HATS)		Florida HATS provides information and resources to ensure the successful transition from pediatric to adult health care for all youth and young adults in Florida, including those with disabilities, chronic health conditions or other special health care needs.	http://www.floridahats.org/	Phone: (813) 259-8604
Florida Shines		Florida Shines provides information and resources to assist high school students to go to college, including access to Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) for academic advising and distance learning.	https://www.floridashines.org/	Phone: (850) 922-6044 Toll Free: (877) 506-2210
Project 10: Transition		Project 10 assists Florida school districts and	http://project10.info	Phone: (727) 873-

Education Network	stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.	o/	4661
Residential Options of Florida (ROOF)	ROOF seeks to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to successfully obtain and maintain affordable and inclusionary housing of their choice.	http://flroof.org/	n/a
The Family Cafe´	The Family Café provides opportunities for collaboration, friendship and empowerment to individuals with disabilities and their families by serving as a facilitator of communication and information as well as providing a space for dialogue.	https://familycafe.net/who-we-are	Phone: (850) 224-4670 Toll Free: (888) 309-CAFÉ

Appendix C: Directory of Florida Parent Centers

Florida Parent Centers				
Agency/Organization	Purpose	Website	Phone	
Florida Parent Centers: Parent Training and Information Centers	Family Network on Disabilities (FND) of Florida	FND and the regional parent centers listed below are federally funded providers of Parent Training and Information (PTI) services. Assistance and support is provided to parents, educators, community organizations and faith-based groups to increase the kinds and types of parental involvement and engagement to increase student academic achievement across Florida.	http://fndusa.org/	Phone: (727) 523-1130 Toll Free: (800) 825-5736
	Parent Education Network Project (PEN)	Serves: Broward, Indian River, Lake, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk and St. Lucie	http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/pen/	Toll Free: (800) 825-5736 (in FL only) Phone: (727) 523-1130
	Parents Offering Parents Information and Networking (POPIN)	Serves: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Calhoun, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Nassau, Okaloosa, Putnam, Santa Rosa, Seminole, St. Johns, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton and Washington	http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/popin/	Toll Free: (800) 825-5736 (in FL) Phone: (727) 523-1130
	Parent Support Network (PSN) Project	Serves: Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Sarasota and Sumter	http://fndusa.org/contact-us/programs/psn/	Toll Free: (800) 825-5736 (in FL only) Phone: (727) 523-1130
Community Parent Resource Centers	Empowerment Parent Resource Center of Northwest Florida, Inc.	Aims to provide training and resources to the families/caregivers of individuals living with a disability. Serves Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties in the Western Panhandle area of Florida with plans to expand further east as the EPRC develops.	n/a	Phone: (850) 444-8554
	Parent to Parent of Miami, Inc.	Parent to Parent serves families in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties and helps to identify information, workshops and other resources to help families make decisions about early intervention, early childhood, education, vocational training, employment, college opportunities, as well as the laws that protect the rights of children and adults with disabilities.	http://www.ptopmiami.org	Phone: (305) 271-9797 Toll Free: (800) 527-9552

Appendix D: Directory of National Agencies and Organizations

National Agencies and Organizations			
Agency/Organization	Purpose	Website	Phone
Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)	CPIR serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities.	http://www.nichcy.org	Phone: (973) 642-8100
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	CEC is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.	http://www.cec.sped.org	Phone: (866) 509-0218 Toll Free: (800) 224-6830 TTY: (866) 915-5000
Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)	DCDT seeks to promote national and international efforts to improve the quality of and access to career/vocational services; increase student participation in career development; and influence policies related to transition services for persons with disabilities.	http://community.cec.sped.org/dcdt/home	n/a
Federation for Children with Special Needs	The Federation for Children with Special Needs provides information, support and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners and their communities.	http://fcsn.org	Phone: (617) 236-7210 Toll Free: (800) 331-0688
National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD)	The NCWD/Youth assists state and local workforce development systems to better serve all youth, including youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth.	http://www.ncwd-youth.info/	Toll Free: (877) 871-0744 TTY: (877) 871-0665
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)	NCIL is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities.	http://www.ncil.org/	Phone: (202) 207-0334 Toll Free: (877) 525-3400 TTY: (202) 207-0340
National Easter Seals Disability Services	Easter Seals provides services, education, outreach and advocacy so that people living with autism and other disabilities can live, learn, work and play in the community.	http://www.easterseals.com	Phone: (312) 726-6200 Toll Free: (800) 221-6827 TTY: (312) 726-4258
National Technical Assistance Center on	NTACT assists State Education Agencies, Local Education Agencies, State VR agencies	http://www.transit.ontario.org/	Phone: (704) 687-8606

Transition (NTACT)	and VR service providers in implementing evidence-based and promising practices ensuring students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, graduate prepared for success in postsecondary education and employment.		
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)	The OCR ensures equal access to education and promotes educational excellence throughout the nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.	http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html	TDD: (877) 521-2172 Toll Free: (800) 421-3481
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)	OSERS promotes inclusion, equity and opportunity for infants, toddlers, children, youth and adults with disabilities to actively participate in all aspects of life.	http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html	Phone: (202) 245-7459
Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) National Parent Center on Transition and Employment	PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment provides assistance and support to parents, youth and professionals on transition topics.	http://www.pacer.org/transition/	Phone: (952) 838-9000 Toll Free: (888) 248-0822
Social Security Administration (SSA)	SSA provides Social Security services to children, people with disabilities, widows, widowers and retirees. Use this search tool web link and your zip code to locate your local office.	https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp	Toll Free: (800) 772-1213 TTY: (800) 325-0778
TASH International Disability Advocacy	TASH advocates for human rights and inclusion for people with significant disabilities and support needs.	http://www.tash.org	Phone: (202) 540-9020

Appendix E: Educational Acronyms and Abbreviations

504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	EOC	End-of-Course
AA	Associate of Arts	ESE	Exceptional Student Education
AAS	Associate of Applied Science	ESY	Extended School Year
ACT	American College Testing	EWS	Early Warning System
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	F.A.C.	Florida Administrative Code
ADT	Adult Day Training Program	F.S.	Florida Statutes
ALJ	Administrative Law Judge	FAAST	Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology
APD	Agency for Persons with Disabilities	FAB	Functional Assessment of Behavior (also see "FBA")
AS	Associate of Science	FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
AT	Assistive Technology	FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment (also see "FAB")
BA	Bachelors of Arts	FCC	Family Care Council
BEES	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services	FCIHE	Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	FCIM	Florida Center for Interactive Media
BPIE	Best Practices in Inclusive Education	FCSUA	Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities
BRIC	BEES Resource and Information Center	FDDC	Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
C&C	Check and Connect	FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System
CARD	Center for Autism and Related Disabilities	FDOE	Florida Department of Education
CBI	Community-Based Instruction	FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
CBVE	Community-Based Vocational Education	FETPIP	Florida Education Training Placement Information Program
CCR	College and Career Readiness	FIN	Florida Inclusion Network
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	FND	Family Network on Disabilities
CIL	Centers for Independent Living	FSA	Florida Standards Assessment
CMS	Children's Medical Services	FSAA	Florida Standards Alternate Assessment
CPALMS	Collaborate, Plan, Align, Learn, Motivate and Share	FSDB	Florida School for the Deaf and Blind
CPT	Comprehensive Transition Program	GED	General Educational Development
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Provider	H/H	Hospital/Homebound
CSFA	Catalog of State Financial Assistance	HEOA	Higher Education Opportunity Act
CTE	Career and Technical Education	IAES	Interim Alternative Educational Setting
CWIC	Community Work Incentives Coordinator	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
DBS	Division of Blind Services	IEP	Individual Educational Plan
DCDT	Division on Career Development and Transition		
DCF	Department of Children and Families		
DD	Developmental Disability/Developmentally Delayed		
DHH	Deaf or Hard of Hearing		
DI	Differentiated Instruction		
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice		
E/BD	Emotional/Behavioral Disability		

IFSP	Individualized Family Support Plan	SE	Supported Employment
IHE	Institution of Higher Education	SEA	State Education Agency
InD	Intellectual Disability	SEDNET	Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional and/or Behavioral Disabilities
IPE	Individual Plan for Employment	SEIE	Student Earned Income Exclusion
IRWE	Impairment Related Work Expense	SGPPS	Small Group Planning and Problem-Solving
JAN	Job Accommodations Network	SI	Speech Impaired
LD	Learning Disability	SIM	Strategic Intervention Model
LEA	Local Education Agency	SiMR	State-Identified Measurable Result
LI	Language Impairment	SL	Supported Living
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
MH	Mental Health	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports	SOP	Summary of Performance
MW	Medicaid Waiver/ Med-Waiver	SP	Services Plan
NAMI	National Alliance on Mental Illness	SPP	State Performance Plan
NDPC/N	National Dropout Prevention Center/Network	SSA	Social Security Administration
NTACT	National Technical Assistance Center on Transition	SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
OCR	Office of Civil Rights	SSI	Supplemental Security Income
OHI	Other Health Impairment	SSIP	State Systemic Improvement Plan
OI	Orthopedic Impairment	STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
OJT	On-the-Job Training	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
ODEP	Office of Disability Employment Policy	SUFM	Standing Up for Me
OSEP	Office of Special Education (U.S. Department of Education)	SUS	State University System
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (U.S. Department of Education)	SWD	Student with a Disability (SWDs = Students with Disabilities)
OT	Occupational Therapy	TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
PASS	Plan for Achieving Self Sufficiency	TAP	Technical Assistance Paper
PBS	Positive Behavior Supports	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports	TD	Transportation Disadvantaged
PCP	Person-Centered Planning	TIEP	Transition Individual Educational Plan
PE	Physical Education	TPSID	Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
PLAFP	Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance	TTT	Train-the-Trainer
PSE	Postsecondary Education	TTW	Ticket to Work
PT	Physical Therapy	VI	Visually Impaired/Visual Impairment
PTI	Parent Training and Information Center	VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
QIEP	Quality Individual Educational Plan	WIPA	Work Incentives Planning and Assistance
RtI	Response to Intervention	WIOA	Work Innovation and Opportunity Act
RTR	Regional Transition Representative (Project 10)	WOTC	Work Opportunity Tax Credits
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test	WSC	Waiver Support Coordinator
SBE	School-Based Enterprise		
S-D	Self-Determination		

Appendix F: Local Contact List

Use these tables to gather information on school and community contacts. You may also choose to store this information in your cell phone for quicker access.

Local School Contacts			
School Name:			
Title	Name	Telephone	Email
Principal			
Assistant Principal			
Exceptional Student Education Director			
Transition Specialist			
Behavior Specialist			
Social Worker			
Guidance Counselor			
School Nurse			
Teacher			
Teacher			
Teacher			
Teacher			
Other School Contact			

Community Contacts			
Title	Name	Telephone	Email
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor			
Supported Employment Provider			
Independent Living Counselor			
Job Coach			
Transportation Contact			
College or University			
Career and Technical College/Center			
Academic Advisor			
Disability Services Coordinator			
Financial Aid Counselor			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			

Appendix G: IEP Preparation and Observation Guide for Families

Child's name: _____ Age: _____

What things does your student do best? _____

What needs does your student have? _____

How does your student seem to feel about:

School? _____

Work (if he goes to work)? _____

Himself or Herself? _____

Other people (friends, family, teachers, co-workers)? _____

How well does your student take care of himself or herself (dressing, eating, staying clean, getting from place to place, buying things, etc.)? _____

What does your student do to help you at home? _____

How well does your student follow directions? _____

What does your student like to do when he has free time? What are his hobbies?

What does your student not like to do? _____

How many friends does your student have? _____

How old are your student's friends? _____

What does your student do with his friends? _____

How much, and how well, does your student communicate with other people? _____

Does your student talk? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, how does he communicate? _____

What kinds of jobs or chores has your student done? _____

What services does your student receive from community agencies? _____

How is your student performing academically? _____

What are current academic needs? _____

What assistive technology devices does your student use? _____

Is your student aware of the types of work available in the community? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What kind of job or career would your student like to have? _____

Where would you like to see your student living and working five years from now? _____

What does your student most need to learn in order to be ready for adult life? _____

Appendix H: Parents' Record of IEP Meeting

Did you get a written notice about the meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, date of notice: _____ Number of days before the meeting: _____

Did you get any other kind of notice? ☐ Phone call ☐ Visit

☐ Reminder note ☐ Electronic mail ☐ Other _____

Did you ask to change the date, time, or place? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, were you able to make a change? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you go to the meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, why not? _____

If no, did the school staff ask you to help with the IEP in some other way? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, complete the remainder of this form for your records.

How? _____

When was the meeting held? (Date) _____ (Time) From: _____ To: _____

Where was the meeting held? _____

Who was at the meeting? _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

Was anyone invited who did not attend the meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name & title: _____

Name & title: _____

If a key person was not able to be present, how was this addressed? _____

Did your child attend the meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not? _____

Did your child actively participate in the meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what did your child do? _____

Was there a need for more than one meeting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, give date(s): _____

What information and opinions did you share at the meeting? _____

Did the IEP team discuss what type of diploma your student will work toward? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Which diploma option is your student pursuing?

- ☐ 24-Credit Standard Diploma
- ☐ 18-Credit Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL)
- ☐ International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program
- ☐ Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma Program
- ☐ Performance-Based Exit Option/GED® Exit Option
- ☐ Special Diploma (**not available to students who began ninth grade in 2014-15 or later**)

What are your student's measurable postsecondary goals?

(Education, Training, Employment, Career and, if needed, Independent Living) _____

Do you have any questions or concerns about the IEP? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what are they? _____

What are the steps you will take to address your concerns? _____

Did you get a copy of the IEP? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Keep a copy of the IEP for your records.

Appendix I: Contact Log

Use this page to record the dates of telephone or in-person contacts with your child's teacher or other school personnel. Include notes about what you discussed.

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Date: _____ ☐ In person ☐ Phone call ☐ Other _____

Notes: _____

Appendix J. Questions to Consider Before IEP Meetings

Questions to Consider Before IEP Meetings
What things does your child do best?
What needs does your child have?
What is your child's attitude about school?
What is the status of your child's self-concept?
What is your child's attitude about other people (friends, family, teachers, co-workers)?
If your child is employed, what is your child's attitude about employment?
How well does your child take care of himself/herself (dressing, eating, self-hygiene, getting from place to place, buying things, etc.)?
What kind of jobs or chores does your child do to help at home?
How well does your child follow directions?
What does your child like to do when he/she has free time? What are his/her hobbies?
What does your child not like to do?
How many friends does your child have? How old are they?
What activities does your child share with friends?
Does your child talk? If no, how does he/she communicate?
How much and how well does your child communicate with other people?
What services, if any, does your child receive from community agencies?
How is your child performing academically?
What are your child's current academic needs?
What assistive technologies, if any, does your child use?
Is your child aware of the types of work available in the community?
What are your child's job or career interests?
Where would you like to see your child living and working five years from now?
What does your child most need to learn in order to be ready for adult life?

Appendix K. Questions to Ask at IEP Meetings

Questions to Ask at IEP Meetings	
For Secondary School Personnel	What are the career and vocational objectives on my child's IEP?
	Will my child participate in job training, if appropriate?
	On what social skills does the IEP team think my child needs to work?
	I would like my child included in more vocational classes. What classes do you suggest?
	What types of vocational assessments are administered to determine my child's interests and strengths?
	Will my child be taught functional math and reading?
	What functional activities contribute to independence?
For Postsecondary Programs	What training programs are offered?
	What is the length and cost of the programs?
	What are the entry requirements of the program?
	What support devices are available to him/her?
	How and where can financial assistance be obtained?
	What is the application procedure?
	Do you provide assistance in locating a job when my child finishes your program?
For Adult Service Agencies	What programs and services are offered by your agency?
	What types of disabilities do you serve?
	How do you determine eligibility?
	What is the cost for your program? Can financial assistance be obtained and, if so, whom do I contact?
	Is there a waiting list for your programs? If so, how long?
	Who is the contact person?
	How old does my child have to be to receive your services?
	What is the duration of the services?
	What is my role and level of involvement?
	Do you offer individual and family counseling?

Appendix L. Questions to Consider When Planning Transition Services

Questions to Consider When Planning Transition Services	
Clinical Services	Will your child be connected to appropriate adult services by the time they turn 18?
	Which services will be needed for stabilization?
	Will your child need a case manager and will he/she be eligible for one in the adult system?
	Which services will be needed for recovery?
	Which support services will be needed to enable your child to transition successfully?
	Will your family need access to day care, parent training or domestic violence services?
Housing	Where will your child live? (e.g. at home, at school, in public group housing with supports, in private housing away from home)
	Will the housing be safe, affordable, adequate and dependable?
	Will your child be able to live on his/her own or does he/she need a supervised setting?
	Will an application for community housing be needed to be completed?
Financial Supports	Will your child be entitled to benefits such as Supplemental Security Income?
	Will your child be self-supporting?
	Will a Special Needs Trust be necessary?
	Will an application for Public Assistance and Food Stamps be necessary?
Transportation	Will your child have the skills and resources to get around the community? (e.g. driver's license, use of public transportation and taxi services, specialized transportation needs)
	Will your child need to complete an application for reduced fares for public transportation?
Medical/Insurance Concerns	What special health concerns does your child have?
	Will your child have access to health insurance as an adult?
	If so, will this insurance cover any inpatient mental health and chemical dependency treatment, if necessary?
	Will your child need access to ongoing medical care and emergency medical care?

	Will your child need to complete an application for Medicaid insurance?
Employment and/or Postsecondary Education	Will your child have a job in the community or will your child attend a college or trade school?
	Will your child have the necessary skills to pursue his/her choice of career or college?
	Will your child need independent living skills training?
	Will your child need supports or accommodations to succeed at work or at college?
	Will your child need to complete an application for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) services?
Social, Personal, Recreational	Will your child have the skills necessary to develop positive social interactions?
	Will your child need to develop effective communication skills with family members?
	Will your child have access to telephone, voicemail and e-mail?
	How will your child spend his/her free time?
	Will your child have hobbies, interests or belong to social groups?
Advocacy and Guardianship	Will your child be able to advocate for himself/herself or does he/she need training to develop self-advocacy skills?
	Will your child need to obtain benefits, treatment, and reasonable accommodations at work or at school that he/she is entitled to receive?
	Will your child be capable of decision-making or is there a need to establish legal guardianship? If so, call the Commission on Quality of Care for a guardianship packet at 1-800-624-4143.
	Will your family need to do any estate planning to reflect the unique needs of your child?
	Will your child know how to access the legal system if necessary?

Appendix M. Student, Family and Agency Responsibilities

Student, Family and Agency Responsibilities in the IEP Process	
Student Responsibilities	Take an active role in developing the IEP
	Complete age-appropriate transition assessments
	Learn as much as possible about the transition process
	Think about what services would be helpful in daily adult life, so that the transition team may invite the appropriate agencies to the IEP meeting
	Think about plans for the future and determine direction for the years immediately after exiting school
	Meet and work with career and guidance counselors to determine which courses and other school experiences are required for post-school activities
	Learn more about how to get the services and supports needed to achieve long-term goals.
	Develop and use self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
	Attend class and complete homework assignments.
	Save money for post-school activities.
	Learn how to use and maintain the assistive technology that is needed and provided.
	Accept responsibility for chores at home.
Family Responsibilities	Keep records of the transition-related services and activities.
	Review your child's IEP goals.
	Review graduation requirements and help make decisions about diploma options.
	Provide opportunities for your child to explore post-school options (e.g., employment, career centers, community colleges, state colleges, universities, living arrangements, recreation and leisure, and community service).
	Support your child in developing his measurable postsecondary goals.
	Support your child in writing personal letters of invitation for teachers and agency personnel to attend his IEP meetings.
	Conduct mock IEP meetings so your child can practice participating in the meeting.
	Help your child to develop a portfolio that includes an updated IEP, assessment scores, learning style information, class grades and overall grade point average (GPA), honors or awards, work evaluations, work experiences and other related information.
Agency Responsibilities	Assist and provide services to your child during the secondary transition period.
	Assist with some of the measurable annual goals, benchmarks or short-term objectives.
	Purchase, maintain and/or provide training on assistive technology for your child.
	Provide supports and services once your child has exited the school system.
	Share valuable information relevant to planning for your child's future.

Appendix N. Transition Services Checklist

Transition Services Checklist						
Transition Services Requirements for Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) developed for students age 14 – 21 * Bold represents IDEA (federal) requirements <i>* Italics represent additional requirements in Florida legislation</i>	AGE					
	14	15	16	17	18	19-21
	* Gray boxes denote items that are not required for that age group.					
Provide notice to parent of the IEP meeting, indicating that the student will be invited to attend and that the purpose of the meeting will be to identify transition services.						
Invite the student to the IEP meeting.						
<i>After obtaining written consent from the parent or adult student to invite an agency representative and release personally identifiable information, invite a representative of any agency to attend the IEP meeting that is already providing or likely to provide transition services to the student.</i>						
Document steps taken to ensure that the student's strengths, preferences and interests were considered.						
Discuss measurable post-secondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment in the areas of education, training, employment, including career goals, and independent living (where appropriate).						
Develop measurable post-secondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment in the areas of education, training, employment, including career goals and independent living (where appropriate). (If there are changes to postsecondary or career goals included in an IEP, the parent or adult student must approve the changes; parents may choose an independent reviewer to help decide if the change is appropriate.)						
Develop annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needed.						
Discuss diploma designations (Scholar and/or Merit) in the IEP meeting and determine if the student will work toward one. The decision is made by the parent until the student has reached the age of majority and parental rights have transferred.						
Document the diploma decision. Note: This requirement must be addressed in the IEP developed before a student turns 14.						
<i>Review the diploma decision and revise if needed.</i>						
Develop a statement regarding the student's course of study leading to a standard diploma (description of instructional program and experiences).						
Update the statement regarding the student's course of study leading to a standard diploma (description of instructional program and experiences), if needed.						
Begin identifying transition services needs of students (through annual goals, short-term objectives/ benchmarks, or services). Document the need for self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student to participate in IEP process.						
<i>Develop a statement identifying the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) digital tool certificates and the CAPE industry certifications that the student wants to attain before high school graduation, if any.</i>						

Transition Services Requirements for Educational Plans (IEPs) developed for students age 14 – 21 * Bold represents IDEA (federal) requirements <i>* Italics represent additional requirements in Florida legislation</i>	AGE					
	14	15	16	17	18	19-21
	* Gray boxes denote items that are not required for that age group.					
Continue identifying transition services needs of students (through annual goals, short-term objectives/ benchmarks, or services). Document the need for self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student to participate in IEP process.						
Develop transition services in each of the needed transition services activity areas (i.e. instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, post-school adult living and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation) that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student. (Services can be provided earlier as appropriate.)						
<i>Develop the statement of outcomes and additional benefits expected by the parent and the IEP team by the time the student graduates.</i>						
<i>As needed, revise the statement of outcomes and additional benefits expected by the parent and the IEP team by the time the student graduates.</i>						
Reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the student’s transition objectives if an agency fails to provide transition services described in the IEP.						
<i>Discuss and document deferring receipt of a standard diploma prior to the year the student will meet graduation requirements. This is required in order for the student to continue receiving transition or related services. (Age may vary based on multiple factors.)</i>						
In the year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, if a student will defer receipt of the diploma, the request to defer must be received by the school district before May 15th in order for the student to continue receiving transition or related services. The request to defer is only needed once. (Ages may vary depending on when graduation requirements are completed.)						
Discuss the transfer of rights and responsibilities that occur at age 18, including the options that are available to assist with decision-making.						
Inform the parent and the student of the rights that will transfer to the student, at least one year prior to the student’s 18th birthday, and document the notification on the Transition IEP.						
Provide the parent and student a separate and distinct notice regarding the transfer of rights near (prior to) the student’s 18th birthday.						
Provide a Summary of Performance (SOP) for students exiting with a standard diploma or aging out of their program.						
If the student is graduating prior to age 22, provide the parent and adult student with “Notice of Change of Placement” prior to graduation. (Age may vary based on multiple factors.)						
Additional Consideration: Vocational Rehabilitation provides pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) that begin at age 14 for students with disabilities and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Exploration Counseling • Work Readiness Training • Self-Advocacy Training • Postsecondary Educational Counseling • Community-Based Work Experiences 						

Appendix O: Self-Determination Parent Checklist

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Self-Determination skills help you to know

- ☐ Yourself
- ☐ Your goals
- ☐ Supports you need to reach your goals



Use the following scale to rate the statements below:

- 3 = almost always/most of the time 2 = sometimes
1 = rarely or never 0 = not observed

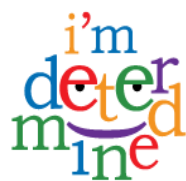
Rating					
3	2	1	0		My child sets goals to get what he/she wants or needs.
3	2	1	0		My child makes plans for reaching his/her goals.
3	2	1	0		My child checks his/her progress when working toward his/her goals.
3	2	1	0		My child attends his/her IEP Meetings.
3	2	1	0		My child participates in his/her IEP Meetings.
3	2	1	0		My child knows the goals listed in his/her IEP.
3	2	1	0		At school, educators listen to my child when he/she talks about what he/she wants or needs.
3	2	1	0		At home, I listen when my child talks about what he/she wants or needs.
3	2	1	0		My child has others in his/her life who help him/her to accomplish goals.
3	2	1	0		My child asks for help when he/she needs it.
3	2	1	0		My child knows what he/she needs, what he/she likes and what he/she enjoys doing.
3	2	1	0		My child tells others what he/she needs, what he/she likes and what he/she enjoys doing.
3	2	1	0		My child helps to make choices about the supports (educational services) and accommodations that he/she needs in school.
3	2	1	0		My child can describe his/her learning difficulties to others.
3	2	1	0		My child believes he/she has control to direct his/her life.
3	2	1	0		My child takes care of his/her personal needs (clothes, chores, meals, grooming).
3	2	1	0		My child makes friends with others his/her age.
3	2	1	0		My child can make good choices.
3	2	1	0		My child believes that working hard in school will help him/her to get a good job.

1. What is one (1) goal that your child has for himself/herself?

2. List three (3) things that your child is doing to reach this goal.

3. How can people around your child (teachers, family, friends, etc.) help to build his/her self-determination skills?

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Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education
Training and Technical Assistance Centers - I'm Determined Project
Self-Determination Checklist ~ Parent Assessment

Appendix P: Youth Employment Skills Parent Checklist

The Youth Employment Skills Parent Checklist was developed, with permission, from the NCWD (2012) publication, "Helping Youth Build Work Skills for Job Success: Tips for Parents and Families," (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/helping-youth-build-work-skills-for-job-success-tips-for-parents-and-families/>).

Parents and families can use the publication and checklist as a guide to help their youth develop skills that will help them get and keep a job. The checklist is organized according to five sections. Sections one through four are categories of work readiness skills that are important for all entry level jobs: communication, interpersonal, decision-making and lifelong learning. Section five addresses inclusion of work skills in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and Summary of Performance (SOP). After each category, there are guiding questions and strategies provided that families can use to help their youth develop employment skills.

Section 1: Communication Skills

Communication skills involve the ability to read with understanding, convey ideas in writing, speak so others can understand, listen actively and observe critically.

1. Is your youth able to gather, process, and use information by observing his environment?

How can you help?

- ☐ Help your youth identify his learning style.
- ☐ Plan family activities that help youth develop their powers of observation.
- ☐ During a long car or bus trip, ask your youth to find and write down a few road signs and billboards.
- ☐ If your youth has a visual impairment, help him become familiar with common accessibility strategies, such as large print or screen reader programs.

2. Does your youth convey ideas using written language or through other technologies?

How can you help?

- ☐ Keep an eye on your youth's writing style and make sure that he understands that it is important to use correct punctuation, complete sentences and accurate spelling in other forms of written communication.
- ☐ Have your youth practice sending thank you notes for appropriate occasions.
- ☐ Have your youth practice clear handwriting and proficient keyboarding skills.
- ☐ Bring a job application home or find one online and have your youth fill it out.
- ☐ Help your youth create an e-resume using PowerPoint, pictures, and video.

3. Does your youth understand what he reads?

How can you help?

- ☐ Discuss the importance of reading with your youth, and encourage him to find materials to read for pleasure.
- ☐ Ask your family member to read a passage from a book or newspaper article, and have him answer questions you ask about what is read.
- ☐ If applicable, advocate that your youth's IEP address skill building in functional reading.
- ☐ Investigate job accommodations that might address reading difficulty in the workplace.

Section 2: Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills involve the ability to guide others, resolve conflict and negotiate, advocate and influence, and cooperate with others.

1. Is your youth able to show others how to do a task?

How can you help?

- ☐ Speak to your youth about the importance of being able to teach others how to do a task.
- ☐ Explain that your youth must know how to do a task before he can teach others how to do it.
- ☐ Help your family member understand that the easiest way to guide somebody through a task is to break that task into manageable segments.
- ☐ Ask your youth to identify a task with multiple steps and guide you through it.
- ☐ Discuss the concept of positive reinforcement with your family member.

2. Is your youth effective in advocating for what he thinks should be done and influencing others towards their point of view?

How can you help?

- ☐ Encourage your youth to participate in school or community-based activities that promote leadership.
- ☐ Ask your youth to identify something their school or community needs, such as a new playground, public swimming pool, or teen center.
- ☐ Have your youth present the case for this need to an impartial person, such as a relative or teacher.
- ☐ Give your youth constructive feedback on the proposal, and ask him to modify the proposal based on the feedback you give.

3. Does your youth use his creativity?

How can you help?

- ☐ Plan a family garage sale and ask your youth to be in charge of promotion.
- ☐ Encourage your family member to enjoy age appropriate brain teasers and other puzzles that promote creative problem solving.
- ☐ Create a made-up situation, such as “the Nature Club needs money for a field trip to the National Forest,” and have your youth brainstorm possible solutions.
- ☐ Encourage your youth to enter a piece of art, creative writing, or homemade film into a local contest or to take a class in an area of interest.
- ☐ Explain to your youth about when they can use creativity in the workplace.

Section 3: Decision-making Skills

Decision-making skills involve the ability to use math to solve problems and communicate, solve problems and make decisions, and plan.

1. When given a task, is your youth able to plan a course of action?

How can you help?

- ☐ Consider purchasing a digital voice recorder so your youth can record directions or job tasks given by an employer.
- ☐ Give your youth a vague task, such as “make dinner,” that requires steps to plan; have him write out and describe steps to you; and help your youth complete the task.
- ☐ Encourage your youth to ask questions about details of the tasks when vague directions are given and the next steps are unclear.

2. Does your youth need assistance in solving problems and making decisions?

How can you help?

- ☐ Watch a local news broadcast and ask your youth to summarize the problem or conflict detailed in each story.
- ☐ Have your youth offer a possible solution to the issues on the news.
- ☐ Schedule an informational interview with a worker from a job your youth is interested in.
- ☐ Role-play a situation with your youth where an issue arises at work that he will need to report on. Have him practice describing what the situation was, who was involved and what steps he took to remedy the situation.

3. Does your youth use math to solve problems and communicate?

How can you help?

- ☐ Help your youth become familiar with mathematic symbols, numbers, and phrases.
- ☐ Use home improvement tasks as an avenue to work on math-related problem solving.
- ☐ Encourage your youth to re-check the calculations using a calculator or computer.
- ☐ Keep your weekly grocery receipts and ask your family member to create a chart that shows what your grocery spending is for a two-month period.

Section 4: Lifelong Learning Skills

Lifelong learning skills involve the ability to take responsibility for learning, reflect and evaluate, learn through research as well as use information and communications technology.

1. Does your youth use technology, such as computers, with proficiency?

How can you help?

- ☐ Create a checklist of technologies and programs that are commonly used on the job; use school resources, libraries, volunteer experiences, and technology you might have in the home to ensure your youth is familiar with each. List on his resume.
- ☐ Encourage your youth to take computer classes in school, at the library or through other community agencies.
- ☐ Make sure your youth is aware of how to use computers and technology appropriately in the workplace.
- ☐ Consider exploring what is available in the area of assistive technology (e.g., Florida Alliance for Assistive Technology [FAAST], www.faast.org).

2. Does your family member seek information from other sources when faced with a problem or task?

How can you help?

- ☐ Discuss the importance of employees being able to gather information to solve problems.
- ☐ Ask your youth to find a new dessert that your family can bring to a holiday gathering, using three different sources of information (e.g., Internet, cookbook, television)
- ☐ Have your youth use an Internet search engine to research a topic of interest.
- ☐ Role-play with your youth a situation where he has to ask a co-worker or supervisor for help or advice.

3. Is your youth able to recognize and count money and to make change if necessary?

How can you help?

- ☐ Use actual money or purchase an imitation money set that includes coins and have your youth practice identifying the currency and coins.
- ☐ Carry cash when shopping for small items and have your youth interact with the cashier and pay for the items.

- ☐ Help your youth find opportunities to practice working with money (e.g., yard sale, concession stand, selling raffle tickets).

Section 5: Including Work Skills in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and Summary of Performance (SOP)

Families of students receiving special education services can advocate for incorporating goals that relate to building work skills into their youth's IEP. In addition to requiring an IEP for youth with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) also requires public schools to provide students receiving special education services a "Summary of Performance" (SOP). This summary of a student's academic achievement and functional performance should also include recommendations on how to assist the youth in meeting his postsecondary goals. The SOP is provided to students with disabilities who are due to graduate with a standard diploma, or exceed the age eligibility for a free and appropriate public education. The SOP is most useful when linked with the IEP process and the student has the opportunity to actively participate in its development.

1. Does your youth's IEP address work skills?

How can you help?

- ☐ Advocate for IEP goals that teach reading for understanding.
- ☐ Advocate for goals that teach technology skills.
- ☐ Advocate for goals that provide community- and school-based work experiences.

2. Does your youth's SOP include work skills?

How can you help?

- ☐ Make sure that your youth's SOP lists work skills that he has mastered.
- ☐ Make sure that your youth's SOP includes work-related academic and interpersonal or soft skills that he has mastered (e.g., counting money, reading and following instructions, following directions from supervisors).
- ☐ Consider including an updated resume with the SOP.

Summary

Youth with and without disabilities can increase their chances of successful employment by acquiring the work skills that employers seek. Families need to be aware that youth develop these skills from a variety of sources, including through the influence of family life and activities. Families are partners in the effort to build work skills. By providing opportunities for youth to build and practice key work skills, families can set the stage for a lifetime of employment success and community participation.



Important Note: The Youth Employment Skills Parent Checklist was developed, with permission, from the NCWD 2012 publication, "Helping Youth Build Work Skills for Job Success: Tips for Parents and Families," http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/infobrief_issue34.pdf.

Appendix Q: Keys to Success: Attitude, Self-Advocacy, and Preparation – Postsecondary Education Guiding Questions

The key to the success of youth with disabilities in postsecondary education is their attitude, ability to self-advocate and preparation. The following are some guiding questions and recommendations for families of youth with disabilities to help prepare them for postsecondary education (Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education (2011)).

1. Does your youth understand his disability?

Youth with disabilities need to know the nature of their disability and how their disability impacts their learning. Youth should also know their strengths, interests, and which accommodations have helped them be successful in learning. They will need to be able to explain these things to the disability office coordinator and staff. These skills can be learned while in school and practiced during the IEP process, so that youth are prepared to describe their disability and advocate for supports that will help them success in college.

2. Does your youth accept responsibility for his success?

Youth with disabilities who want to go to college will move from a school system where adults advocated for and directed their learning and accommodations to a postsecondary education system that requires them to advocate for themselves and be responsible for their own learning. As stated by OCR, “Students with disabilities need to understand that, while federal disability laws guarantee them an equal opportunity to participate these laws do not guarantee that students will achieve a particular outcome, for example, good grades” (p. 1).

3. Is your youth taking an appropriate preparatory curriculum?

Students who plan to go to college when they graduate will need to complete a course of study that will adequately prepare them. In Florida, ALL students, including students with disabilities, are expected to graduate with a standard diploma. There are courses of study that prepare students for college (see section on graduation requirements). It is important for youth to meet with their high school guidance counselor to make sure their on the right course of study. It is also important for youth with disabilities to learn study skills and be able to write well; taking advantage of tutoring and workshops while in school can help prepare youth for the demands of college.

4. Has your youth learned time management skills?

Youth with disabilities typically receive a high amount of guidance and direction in high school to follow schedules, on where and when to go to classes, and what to bring to class. This level of monitoring and support will not be provided in the postsecondary setting; rather, youth will be responsible for managing their own time, schedules, and assignments. It is critical for youth with disabilities to develop time management skills while in school so they can be successful once they are on their own in college.

5. Does your youth have computer skills?

Youth with disabilities will need to have good computer skills to be successful in college, so they should be learning computer skills while in school. There are many postsecondary tasks that must be completed using a computer, including: applying to college and for financial aid, registering and paying for classes, completing assignments and research, accessing grades, and email correspondence – just to name a few. Assistive technology can help students who have visual, hearing, physical, or other disabilities use computers. Youth with disabilities can work with the college’s disability services office, as well as computer lab and library staff, to coordinate technology tools that will help them use computers.

6. Have you and your youth considered supplemental postsecondary education preparation programs?

Many colleges and universities have summer programs for students who are still in high school so they can

experience campus life. Living in a dorm, socializing in the student center, instruction in certain areas (e.g., math, technology, study skills), and dining in the food court or cafeteria are just a few of the experiences typically provided. Parents can work with their youth's high school teacher to identify preparation programs at their local college or university.

7. Have you guided your youth in researching postsecondary education programs?

It is important for youth with disabilities and their families to research colleges and universities and learn about available supports and services, as well as the process and requirements for arranging needed accommodations. Meeting with student disability services office to learn about what they provide and documentation requirements can be very helpful when deciding which college or university to attend.

8. Have you and your youth considered getting involved on campus?

The first year of college can be very challenging, especially if your youth will be living far from home. New student or freshman orientations are a great place to begin learning about the campus, making friends, and deciding in which activities to participate. Many colleges and universities have special offices (e.g., student life, student engagement) that have staff available to help students find the organizations that best suits their needs, talents, and interests.

To access the full publication entitled, "Transition of Students with Disabilities to Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators," visit <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transitionguide.html>

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