

# The Power of Student Engagement in Secondary Transition Individual Education Plan (TIEP) Meetings

**A resource for families to assist with the navigation of TIEP participation for themselves and their youth.**

It is essential for our students with disabilities to receive all the supports they need to be successful in school in order to prepare for post-school activities, such as training, postsecondary education, employment, career, and independent living. Active participation and engagement by families and their youth in TIEP meetings is an essential activity that assists them to design a meaningful TIEP to successfully transition from secondary education to post-school life.



## Benefits of Students Actively Participating in their TIEP Meetings

In the state of Florida, school districts are required to invite students to attend the TIEP meeting at age 12 or in the 7th grade, whichever occurs first. These TIEP meetings provide numerous critical benefits that support personal growth, school achievement, and life-long success, such as:

Benefits	Descriptions
<b>Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Skills</b>	Students learn to express their needs, strengths, and goals, helping them advocate for themselves in school and beyond.
<b>Increased Engagement</b>	Students who participate in their education planning often feel more invested in their learning and take greater responsibility for their progress. Increased engagement improves academic, behavioral, and psychological performance, resulting in positive secondary and postsecondary outcomes.
<b>Better Understanding of Their Support System</b>	Attending TIEP meetings allows students to see how teachers, parents, and support staff work together to help them succeed. Students gain a sense of “belonging” to the school and school culture when they are part of a team of support.
<b>Greater Independence and Confidence</b>	Actively contributing to discussions about their education helps students build confidence and develop independence as they transition to adulthood.
<b>Improved Goal Setting</b>	Students who participate in their IEP meetings better understand their academic and personal goals, making it easier for them to work toward those objectives.
<b>Enhanced Transition Planning</b>	As students prepare for life after high school, involvement in IEP meetings ensures they understand postsecondary options, career paths, and independent living skills.
<b>Stronger Communication Skills</b>	Engaging in discussions about accommodations and services helps students develop vital communication and interpersonal skills.
<b>Legal Rights Awareness</b>	Understanding their IEP teaches students about their educational rights, empowering them to advocate for the support they need.

# Legislation that Supports Active and Effective Student Participation in the TIEP Meetings



## Student Invitation to TIEP Meetings

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students must be invited to attend their TIEP meetings when transition services are discussed beginning at age 16 or earlier if appropriate. In Florida, students are required to be invited to TIEP meetings at age 12 or in the 7th grade, whichever occurs first.

- This provision encourages students to participate in decision-making, set goals, and advocate for their needs, which are foundational aspects of self-determination.
- The best option for the student to share input on transition services that will be provided is to attend the TIEP meeting.
- If the student does not attend the TIEP meeting, the public agency shall take other steps to ensure that the student's strengths, preferences, and interests are considered.

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.322/b/2/i;>  
**Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(b)(4), F. A. C.**



## Transition Services

Transition services focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities. Florida law requires that transition services be in place to support the student's measurable postsecondary goals beginning at age 14, or the first day of high school, whichever occurs first.

**Transition services** are a coordinated set of activities for students with disabilities that:

- Are based on the individual student's needs, taking into account their strengths, interests, and preferences.
- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.43;>  
**Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(b)(4), F. A. C.**



## Transfer of Educational Rights at Age of Majority

When students reach the age of majority (age 18 in the state of Florida), all rights transfer to the student unless they have a guardian or another type of decision-making assistance.

- This includes making educational decisions, such as how their parents will be involved.
- Student participation in TIEP meetings prior to age 18 will better prepare them for the transfer of rights.
- School districts must provide a notice to the student and parent at least one year prior to the student reaching the age of majority, and a separate notice when they turn 18. More information regarding the notices and decision-making options can be found in the publication, "[Considering Age of Majority, Transfer of Rights and Decision-Making Options](#)".

**34 CFR s. 300.520; Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(b)(4), F. A. C.**



## Summary of Performance

Before a student exits special education, IDEA requires schools to provide a Summary of Performance (SOP) that documents a child's academic achievement and functional performance, and includes recommendations for achieving postsecondary goals.

- An SOP is required for students with disabilities who graduate or age out of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- Since the intent of the SOP is to provide crucial information to those who may assist the student in the future, as a best practice, educators should prepare an SOP with adequate time to gather information, including student input, prior to the student exiting high school.
- Districts may develop their own forms, use the Florida template, or others.

**IDEA regulations Section 1414(c)(5)(B)(i);  
Rule 6A-6.0331(8)(f), F.A.C.**

# Strategies for Families to Support their Students' Active and Effective Participation in TIEP Meetings

Families play an important role in supporting students in attending, participating in, and contributing to their TIEP meeting(s). The information below describes strategies families could use to achieve positive outcomes.



## Provide Post-Meeting Reflection & Reinforce Participation Over Time

- After each meeting, discuss with the student what went well and what can be improved.
- Celebrate successes and help students reflect on their contributions and what they have learned.
- Continue building their self-advocacy and decision-making skills for future TIEP meetings.
- Help them set goals for their next TIEP meeting.

## Educate Students About the IEP Process

- Explain what an TIEP is, why it's important, and how it helps them succeed.
- Break down the meeting process in a way they can understand.
- Discuss who will be at the meeting and their roles.

## Involve Students in Setting Goals

- Help your child identify personal and academic goals before the meeting.
- Discuss accommodations and support that help them learn best.
- Encourage them to think about what they want to improve or change.

## Teach and Build Self-Advocacy Skills Early

- Encourage your child to speak up about their needs and preferences at home and in school.
- Teach them about their strengths, challenges, and learning styles.
- Role-play different scenarios where they may need to express themselves.

## Provide Opportunities for/Practice Participation

- Rehearse what they might say in the meeting.
- Encourage them to ask questions and express concerns.
- Role-play different parts of the meeting to build confidence.

## Support Students Empowering Their Voice

- Remind them that their input is valuable and will be taken seriously.
- Encourage them to share their experiences about what works and what doesn't in their education.
- Validate their feelings and let them know their voice matters.

## Suggestions for IEP Teams- Visuals and Accessible Materials

- Provide easy-to-understand summaries of their TIEP with visuals or simplified language.
- Offer audio or video explanations for students who may struggle with reading.

## Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Legislation and Instruction

Beginning at age 12 or 7th grade, whichever occurs first, IEP teams must consider a student's need for instruction in the area of self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student's active and effective participation in an TIEP meeting. The goal is to support students to participate in their TIEP meetings to the greatest extent possible. For information about building self-determination skills, please check out the Project 10 "[Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Guide](#)". **S. 1003.5716, F.S.**

**\*Important Note:** Students do not have to participate in the entire TIEP meeting.  
Students can participate in all or segments of their TIEP meeting.

# Resources

Below are some state and national resources to help empower students to actively participate in their TIEP meetings and engage in their transition planning process.

## Project 10: Transition Education Network (P10)



Project 10 is an IDEA-funded state project which supports school districts and school-based personnel, as well as other relevant stakeholders, including parents, agencies, and community organizations as they assist students with disabilities to successfully transition from school to postsecondary life. Project 10 has a variety of “Publications” and some of them are included below:

- [Transition Requirements Checklist](#)
- [Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Guide](#)
- [Student Educational Rights Checklist](#)
- [Considering Age of Majority, Transfer of Rights and Decision-Making Options](#)

## PACER Center



The PACER Center is a nationwide parent training and information center for families of children and youth with all disabilities from birth to young adults. The PACER Center also operates the National Parent Center on Transition and Employment. There is a wealth of information and resources, including webinars, on both websites. Some of their publications are listed below:

- [Parent Guide: How You Can Help Your Child Learn to Be a Good Self-Advocate](#)
- [Student Guide: Teens and Young Adults with Disabilities: Be Your Own Best Advocate](#)
- [Document: How Can My Child Be Involved in the IEP Process?](#)



## I'm Determined

The I'm Determined project, a state directed project funded by the Virginia Department of Education, focuses on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determined behavior. The website includes a variety of resources for youth, families, and educators, including videos, toolkits, surveys, templates, and more. Below are a few examples of their resources:

- [Parent Path to Success](#)
- [One-Pager: Identity & Self-Awareness](#) (to capture the student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs)
- [Student Involvement in IEP meeting video modules](#)
- [Parent](#) and [Student Exit Surveys](#) (to be completed following IEP meetings)
- [Student IEP participation in IEP meeting checklist](#)
- [Self-Determination Student Checklist](#)