

Understanding Best Practices for Deferment through Student Scenarios


This training was developed by Project 10: Transition Education Network, an Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) funded state project through the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES).

1

Objectives

After this training, participants will be able to:

- Define deferment of receipt of the standard high school diploma according to Florida law.
- Describe the five deferment options available for students with disabilities (SVWD).
- Identify postsecondary options and considerations.
- Review key transition individual education plan (TIEP) components and their essential role in successful deferment and postsecondary planning.
- Apply deferment practices through student scenarios.
- Locate resources to support deferment planning and understanding.






2

Deferment

Definition and General Considerations and Implications



3

Rachel	Joey	Zach
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -10th grade -Intellectual Disability -Autism Spectrum Disordered -Language Impaired -Wants to be a Chef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -11th grade -Specific Learning Disability -Reading Deficiency -Wants to be a welder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -12th grade -Cerebral Palsy -Intellectual Disability -Eye Gaze device -Enjoys music, watching tv, and his family




4

Deferment and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	
Legislative Underpinning	Considerations/Implications
<p>Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) 2004:</p> <p>IDEA specifies that a free and appropriate public education (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 or she earns a standard diploma.</p>	<p>All students with disabilities are on one of several pathways to earn a standard diploma.</p> <p>A standard diploma acquisition is considered a change of placement after which the state will no longer have to provide the student with FAPE.</p>

5

Deferment and Florida Law	
Legislative Underpinning	Considerations/Implications
<p>Section 1003.4282(9)(c), Florida Statutes (F.S.):</p> <p>A student with a disability who meets the standard high school diploma requirements in this section may defer the receipt of a standard high school diploma if the student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Has an individual education plan that prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through age 21; and Is enrolled in accelerated college credit instruction pursuant to s. 1007.27, F.S. industry certification courses that lead to college credit, an early college program, courses necessary to satisfy the Scholar designation requirements, or a structured work-study, internship, or pre-apprenticeship program. 	<p>Deferment is additional time to implement experiences and skill readiness to support successful postsecondary outcomes.</p> <p>Deferment services and programs should be specific and intentional to support students' needs and to ensure progress toward their postsecondary goals.</p> <p>Continue to consider Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).</p>

6

Rachel	Joey	Zach
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ACCESS Diploma -Language Therapy (Pragmatics) -Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy -CTE Culinary Arts Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standard Diploma -Learning Strategies -Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy -CTE Welding Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ACCESS Diploma -Cerebral Palsy -Intellectual Disability -Language Impaired -Nonverbal/Eye Gaze device

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7

Definition of "Is Enrolled"

- "Is enrolled" for the purposes of deferment eligibility could be interpreted as either:
 - A student is **expected** to successfully meet all entrance criteria for an eligible deferment program, including required program application deadlines, by the conclusion of the academic semester/year in which they meet graduation requirements, or
 - A student **actively** enrolled in a deferment eligible program prior to the conclusion of the academic semester/year in which they meet graduation requirements and remain eligible to continue enrollment in that program at the start of the following semester/year.
- The IEP for a student who will defer may require amendments prior to the start of the program.

8

The Deferral Timeline and Florida Legislation

By age 14 or prior to beginning high school (whichever occurs first)

Section 1003.5716, F.S.

- A statement documenting discussion of deferment process

Continue annually until the year prior to when the student is expected to meet graduation requirements

Section 1003.5716, F.S.

- A statement documenting discussion of deferment process

Prior to the year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements

Section 1003.5716, F.S. & Rule 6A-1.09963, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)

- A signed statement by parent or adult student indicating the deferral process is understood and the choice to defer or not to defer

By May 15 of the year the student meets graduation requirements

Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C.

School districts inform parent/student that:

- FAPE obligations end if diploma is not deferred
- Deadline for diploma deferral or acceptance is May 15
- Failure to attend graduation ceremony does not constitute a deferral

9

General Deferment Considerations & Implications

- ❑ Disability types are not specified in Florida Statutes as criteria for participation in a deferment program.
- ❑ Accuracy and dissemination of deferment information and deferment program offerings to all relevant stakeholders are essential.
- ❑ The IEP team must be knowledgeable of the criteria to defer receipt of a standard diploma.
- ❑ IEP teams must be able to discuss any applicable enrollment and application processes for deferment programs and incorporate any identified needs into the student's IEP as appropriate.
- ❑ Deferment may be a more restrictive setting for many SWD versus entry directly into postsecondary settings.



10

Considerations for Students on a Standard Diploma Graduation Option via Access Points

- ❑ The impact of a student having the most significant cognitive disability affects all aspects of the student's academic, independent, home/community living, leisure, and vocational activities.
- ❑ Deferral of the standard diploma may be essential for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are pursuing their diploma via ACCESS courses, in order to facilitate their attainment of post-secondary goals.
- ❑ Deferment for students pursuing their diploma via ACCESS courses prioritizes the student's long-term success and ensures they have the supports necessary for a smooth transition into post-school life.



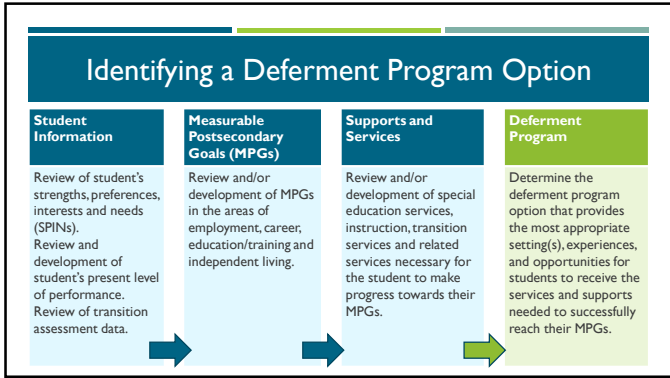
11

Deferment Options

A Review of Florida's Five Categories of Eligible Deferment Programs



12



13


Deferment Options At-a-Glance

	1. Accelerated College Credit	2. Early College Programs	3. Industry Certification Courses Leading to College Credit	4. Scholar Designation	5. Structured Work Study, Internships or Pre-Apprenticeships
Program Focus	Academic	Academic	Academic and/or Employment	Academic	Academic, Employment and/or Independent Living
Academic Rigor	High	High	Medium-High	High	Low-High
Setting	High School and/or Postsecondary Institution	High School and/or Postsecondary Institution	High School and/or Postsecondary Institution	High School	High School and/or Business/Community Site
Application Process	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Sometimes

14

3. Industry Certification Leading to College Credit

- Career Technical Education (CTE) helps learners develop the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for college and careers.
- CTE emphasizes real-world skills and practical knowledge within a student's career of interest. CTE is a cost-effective way for students to start a career in as little as one or two years of school.
- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has a wide variety of CTE degree and certificate programs across 17 Career Clusters.
(<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/>)



15

Industry Certification Leading to College Credit-Considerations

- ❑ Available courses and programs for industry certification will vary by school district.
- ❑ Some Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs may have eligibility requirements.
- ❑ Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can benefit from CTE programs with modifications as allowable.
- ❑ Project 10 CTE resources
 - Career and Technical Education: Enhancing Educational Experiences in Middle School, High School and Postsecondary Education
 - Project 10 Topical Brief on CTE (January 2019)



16

5. Structured Work-Study, Internship, or Pre-Apprenticeship Program

- ❑ Most students who defer will be enrolled in a structured work-study, internship, or pre-apprenticeship program.
- ❑ These programs can be tailored to meet a wide range of students' needs.
- ❑ Availability will vary by school district.
- ❑ Some programs have an application process, eligibility requirements and/or enrollment caps.



17

Structured Work Study

- ❑ Structured work study provides work-readiness training through a combination of academic, employment, and independent living instruction. Structured work study can be provided in the following ways:
 - Pre-vocational skills
 - Community-Based Instruction (CBI)
 - Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE)
 - On-the-job training
 - Work-Based Learning Experiences (VR)
 - School-Based Enterprise (SBE)



*Students may participate in more than one of these structured work study options.

18

Skill Elements of Structured Work Study

Various skills, based upon student's needs, can be addressed during structured work study, such as:

- Self-determination and self-advocacy
- Social interaction
- Pro-social behavior
- Travel and mobility
- Communication
- Activities of daily living (ADL)
- Independent living



19

Postsecondary Options

A Review of Postsecondary Options and Considerations, including Self-Determination Skills



20

Project 10's Postsecondary Options At-a-Glance

Postsecondary Option	Self-Determination	Considerations
<p>College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires an application process Requires financial aid Requires a high school diploma or GED Requires a minimum GPA Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires self-advocacy skills Requires social interaction skills Requires communication skills Requires independent living skills Requires self-determination skills Requires self-advocacy skills Requires social interaction skills Requires communication skills Requires independent living skills Requires self-determination skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a high school diploma or GED Requires a minimum GPA Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units
<p>Technical School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires an application process Requires financial aid Requires a high school diploma or GED Requires a minimum GPA Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires self-advocacy skills Requires social interaction skills Requires communication skills Requires independent living skills Requires self-determination skills Requires self-advocacy skills Requires social interaction skills Requires communication skills Requires independent living skills Requires self-determination skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a high school diploma or GED Requires a minimum GPA Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units
<p>Vocational Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires an application process Requires financial aid Requires a high school diploma or GED Requires a minimum GPA Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires self-advocacy skills Requires social interaction skills Requires communication skills Requires independent living skills Requires self-determination skills Requires self-advocacy skills Requires social interaction skills Requires communication skills Requires independent living skills Requires self-determination skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a high school diploma or GED Requires a minimum GPA Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units Requires a minimum number of credits Requires a minimum number of hours Requires a minimum number of units



http://project10.info/Documents/P10x_Postsecondary_Options_At-a-Glance_8.9.24.pdf

21

Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

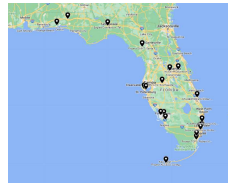
- Students with intellectual disabilities may want to consider participating in a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP) or explore postsecondary programs outside of Florida.
- Information regarding the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) must be provided annually beginning at age 12/during 7th grade. FPCTPs should be discussed as part of the transition planning process.
- FCSUA: <https://fcsua.org/>
- Think College: <https://thinkcollege.net/>



22

Considerations for FPCTPs

- FPCTPs have an application process and entrance criteria; and some may have waiting lists.
- FPCTPs offer certifications (e.g., industry certification, program specific certifications, etc.).
- Students can apply to any program in the state (note: some have residential housing and support).
- Students attending a FPCTP may be eligible to receive a \$7,000 annual scholarship.
- Agencies are available to support students in FPCTPs, such as VR.



23

Deferment and the TIEP

Overview of Transition IEP Requirements and Deferment Implications



24

STEP 1 Conduct age-appropriate transition assessment data.

STEP 2 Establish postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment data.

STEP 3 Identify transition services, annual goals and agency linkages that support achievement of students' MPGs.

TIEPs BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

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25

IEP/TIEP Requirements

- Transition Assessment
- Measurable Postsecondary Goals
- Annual Goals
- ESE Instruction and Services
- Transition and Related Services
- Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy
- Provision of Information
- Agency Linkages
- Documenting the Deferment Discussion
- Course of Study
- Graduation Options and Diploma Designations
- Outcomes and Additional Benefits
- Summary of Performance

Resource: Project 10's Transition Requirements Checklist:
http://project10.info/Documents/Transition_Requirements_Checklist_w_Legislative_Updates_FINAL_12.14.23_1.pdf

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26

Key IEP/TIEP Requirements and their Deferment Implications

- IEP and TIEP components are reviewed annually to ensure students' successful current and future progress towards earning a standard diploma and achievement of their postsecondary goals.
- Deferment planning is embedded in the following IEP/TIEP components:
 - Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments
 - Annual Goals
 - Measurable Postsecondary Goals
 - Special Education, Transition Planning/Services and Related Services
 - Course of Study

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27

Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments

Rachel	Joey	Zach
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Xello -Curriculum-Based Assessment -Teacher developed Assessment -Independent Living Form *Wants to be a Chef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student Dream Sheet -Curriculum-Based Assessment -O*Net Interest Profiler -Student Interview *Wants to be a Welder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher-Created Assessments -Picture Inventory -Interview with parents -Personal Preferences Indicators *Loves music, movies and his family

28

Impact on Measurable Postsecondary Goals (MPGs)

Rachel	Joey	Zach
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -On the job training in a restaurant -Assistant to a Sous Chef -Sous Chef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Earn Welding Certification at Lively -Apprentice Welder -Master Welder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enroll in an adult day care performing arts center -Participate in music class activities -Become a member of the center's performing music group

29

Annual Goals Support MPGs

Rachel	Joey	Zach
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reading -Math -Communication -Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reading -Math -Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reading -Math -Communication -Independent Functioning

30

ESE Instruction, Transition Services, Transition Planning, and Related Services

Rachel	Joey	Zach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Specially Designed Instruction -Instruction in Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy -Language Therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ESE Consultation -Learning Strategies -Instruction in Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Specially Designed Curriculum -Instruction in Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy -Language Therapy -PT/OT -Transportation

31

ESE Instruction, Transition Services, Transition Planning, and Related Services

Rachel	Joey	Zach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pre-Employment Transition Services -Linkage to outside agencies (VR, APD) -Practice self-advocacy skills -School-based work experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Linkage to outside agencies (VR) -Job Coach -Attend career fair -Instruction in budgeting and financial planning -Practice and demonstrate self-advocacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Linkage to outside agencies (VR, APD) -Support facilitation

32

Course of Study Implications

Rachel	Joey	Zach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standard Diploma via Access -Structured Work Study -Courses -Work Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standard Diploma with Industry Scholar designation -Industry Certification Leading to College Credit -Courses -Industry Certifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standard Diploma via Access -Structured Work Study -Courses -Work Experience

33




The Deferment Years

Guiding Questions, Logistics, Considerations and Ending Deferment




34



Deferral Logistics and Considerations

- Participation in Senior year and/or graduation ceremony/activities are district determined.
- The school year in which a student meets standard diploma requirements is the one associated with the date printed on a student's standard diploma.
- The IEP team will continue to collect data, document annual goal and deferment program progress and make appropriate adjustments as needed.
- The IEP team will use progress monitoring data to make decisions regarding deferment program completion and/or student diploma acquisition.


35



Ending Deferment

- Deferment enrollment (and hence, FAPE) ends when one of the two actions formally occurs:
 - Student turns 22 (age 22 is defined by each Florida district's Policies and Procedures) or,
 - Student takes receipt of their standard diploma.

Note: Specific deferment program completion can be considered an expectation within an IEP for a student to take receipt of their standard diploma.



36



Ending Deferment

		
		
<p>-Years 1-3 Structured Work Study -Year 4 Project SEARCH Takes Receipt of Standard Diploma</p>	<p>-Year 1 Earn Welding 4 Certificate Takes Receipt of Standard Diploma</p>	<p>-Years 1-4 Structured Work Study FAPE ended at age 22 and Takes Receipt of Standard Diploma</p>

37

Deferment: Key Takeaways


- Deferment is the mechanism in which some students with disabilities may continue FAPE despite meeting standard diploma requirements.
- The criteria, timeline and activity requirements for deferral of a standard diploma is contained in [s.1003.5716, F.S.](#), and [Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C.](#)
- Transition IEP activities and requirements serve to prepare students with disabilities to be successful in postsecondary settings, including those students who may enroll in extended transition programs prior to exiting K-12 education.

38

Deferment: Key Takeaways

- Preparation for deferment eligibility and enrollment begins well in advance of a students meeting graduation requirements.
- Deferment is an opportunity and provides additional time for specific and intentional programs, services, experiences and skills to be afforded to students who need specialized instruction, transition services and related services to support meeting their unique measurable postsecondary goals.
- Postsecondary goals should not be achieved prior to exiting K-12 (including deferment years).



39

Deferment Resources

- Project 10 Resources
 - Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families (page 12): http://project10.info/Documents/Secondary_Transition_Roadmap_FINAL_3.10.22_ENGLISH.pdf
 - Project 10 Topical Brief, December 2022, "Deferment Requirements and Procedures": http://project10.info/Documents/December_TB_2022.pdf
 - Additional Project 10 Publications (e.g., Transition Services Checklist): <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138>
 - Project 10 Statewide Webinar: Myth-Busting Deferment: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=188#NS107>
- Legislation
 - Section 1003.5716 FS: http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.5716.html
 - Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C., High School Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=6A-1.09963>

40

Deferment Resources

- FDOE Resources
 - Accommodations: Assisting Student with Disabilities (2018): <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf>
 - Career and Technical Education: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/career-tech-edu/>
 - Graduation Requirements web page: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/sss/graduation-requirements/>
 - Pre-Apprenticeship contacts web page: <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/apprenticeship-programs/contacts.shtml>

41

Presenter


Contact Information

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For more information visit our website at www.Project10.info

Evaluation Link



Updated 3/11/25

42
