



Understanding Deferment of Receipt of a Standard Diploma: A Parent's Guide to Extended Transition Programming

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).

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 (SWD).
- Identify postsecondary options and considerations.
- Review key transition individual education plan (TIEP) components and highlight parents' perspectives in successful deferment and postsecondary planning.
- Locate resources to support deferment planning and understanding.



Deferment

Definition and General Considerations and Implications

Deferment and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Legislative Underpinning

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) 2004:

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.

Considerations/Implications

All students with disabilities are on one of several pathways to earn a standard diploma.

A standard diploma acquisition is considered a change of placement after which the state will no longer have to provide the student with FAPE.

Deferment and Florida Law

Legislative Underpinning

Section 1003.4282(9)(c), Florida Statutes (F.S.):

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:

1. Has an individual education plan that prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through age 21; and
2. **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.

Considerations/Implications

Deferment is additional time to implement experiences and skill readiness to support successful postsecondary outcomes.

Deferment services and programs should be specific and intentional to support students' needs and to ensure progress toward their postsecondary goals.

Continue to consider Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

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.

At what age and/or grade are deferment discussions required by the IEP team?

14

16

14

9th grade or 14 y/o

14

8th grade

14 year old or 9th grade

TIEP meeting

14

10th grade.

14

by their 10th grade year

CLICK to group responses



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 deferral 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 deferral process

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

Section 1003.5716, F.S. & Rule 6A-109963, 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 deferral⁸

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.

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.



Deferment Options

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

Identifying a Deferment Program Option

Student Information

Review of student's strengths, preferences, interests and needs (SPINs).
Review and development of student's present level of performance.
Review of transition assessment data.



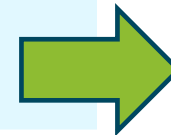
Measurable Postsecondary Goals (MPGs)

Review and/or development of MPGs in the areas of employment, career, education/training and independent living.



Supports and Services

Review and/or development of special education services, instruction, transition services and related services necessary for the student to make progress towards their MPGs.



Deferment Program

Determine the deferment program option that provides the most appropriate setting(s), experiences, and opportunities for students to receive the services and supports needed to successfully reach their MPGs.

Deferment Programming Considerations

Consider individualizing deferment programs or schedules to accommodate the unique needs of a student.

- ❑ This could involve augmenting existing programs with additional elements to better address and fulfill the student's needs, thereby ensuring a more comprehensive and tailored approach to their education and development.
- ❑ It is important to begin with the needs and postsecondary goals of students when devising new deferment programming options, while leveraging community and school/district resources.

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

1. Accelerated College Credit

According to s. 1007.27 F.S. Articulated acceleration mechanisms:

- ❑ It is intended that articulated acceleration serve to shorten the time necessary for a student to complete the requirements associated with the conference of a high school diploma and a postsecondary degree, broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, or increase the depth of study available for a particular subject.
- ❑ Articulated acceleration mechanisms shall include, but are not limited to, dual enrollment and early admission as provided for in s. 1007.271, F.S., advanced placement, credit by examination, the International Baccalaureate Program, and the Advanced International Certificate of Education Program.
- ❑ Credit earned through the Florida Virtual School shall provide additional opportunities for early graduation and acceleration.

Accelerated College Credit- Considerations

- ❑ Available accelerated college credit options will vary by school district.
- ❑ Requirements may vary depending on dual enrollment in an academic or vocational program.
- ❑ These programs may have rigorous eligibility requirements, such as GPA and previous coursework.
- ❑ Method of documentation of course completion is a district-based decision. (e.g., impact on GPA, pass/fail, letter grades).
- ❑ District interdepartmental and postsecondary institution collaboration may be necessary.



2. Early College Programs

□ Section 1007.273, F.S. defines Early College Programs:

- *...The term “early college program” means a structured high school acceleration program in which a cohort of students is enrolled full time in postsecondary courses toward an associate degree. The early college program must prioritize courses applicable as general education core courses under s. 1007.25, F.S. for an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree...*

□ In addition:

- *... Each student participating in an early college program must enter into a student performance contract which must be signed by the student, the parent, and a representative of the school district and the applicable Florida College System institution, state university, or other institution participating pursuant to subsection (4). The performance contract must include the schedule of courses, by semester; student attendance requirements; and course grade requirements. . .*

Early College Programs- Considerations

- ❑ Requires an articulation agreement between the district and college.
- ❑ Eligibility requirements vary by district, program and/or articulation agreement, and may include:
 - Assessment scores
 - GPA
 - Application
- ❑ Cohorts may begin as early as grade 9.



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/>)

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
 - CTE Course Substitutions: The Who, What, When, Why, and How Technical Assistance Guide (2025) and Addendum

4. Courses for Scholar Diploma Designation

In addition to the requirements of s. 1003.4282, F.S., a student must satisfy the following requirements per s. 1003.4285, F.S.:

- ❑ Earn 1 credit in Algebra 2 or an equally rigorous course
- ❑ Earn 1 credit in Statistics or an equally rigorous math course
- ❑ Earn 1 credit in Chemistry or Physics
- ❑ Earn 1 credit in a course equally rigorous to Chemistry or Physics
- ❑ Earn 2 credits in the same World Language
- ❑ Earn at least 1 credit in AP, IB, AICE, or a dual enrollment course
- ❑ Pass Geometry, Biology* & U.S. History* EOCs
- ❑ Resource: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/sss/graduation-requirements/>

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

Courses for Scholar Diploma Designation- Considerations

- ❑ The IEP team should consider the timeline for completion of the required components.
 - School counselors may need to be involved to support appropriate scheduling.
- ❑ The IEP team can review relevant past discussions and notations related to the student's intention to pursue a Scholar diploma designation.
- ❑ Required statewide testing results cannot be waived.
- ❑ Documentation method of course completion is a district-based decision.
(e.g., impact on GPA, pass/fail, letter grades).

General Considerations for the First Four Deferral Options

- ❑ Alignment of the program option with the student's transition assessment data, course of study and measurable postsecondary goals
- ❑ Documented IEP team discussions
- ❑ Modifications & accommodations
- ❑ Specially designed instruction, related services, and transition services
- ❑ Logistics
 - Staff/service delivery
 - Schedule
 - Setting
 - Transportation

Refer to the [Deferment FAQ](#) document and Deferment Webinars, Parts [1](#) and [2](#), for further logistical information

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.



Let's take a **closer** look
into these options!

Internships

- ❑ Internships are exploratory or preparatory paid or unpaid work-site experiences where students work for an employer or agency for 40 or more hours to learn about a particular industry or occupation.
- ❑ Activities may include special projects, a sample of tasks for different jobs, or tasks from a single occupation. Internships may include community service (service learning) placements if they meet the above requirements and are related to the student's program of study or career goals.
- ❑ County governments and/or other community organizations, such as CareerSource, may offer internship opportunities to high school students.



Internships- Project SEARCH

- ❑ Nine-month transition-to-work internship program for people with disabilities.
- ❑ Total immersion in a business-led setting with hands-on training and the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills.

Medical Facilities	Universities and Colleges	Large Retail Stores
Hotels, Resorts, Conv. Centers	School District Offices	Manufacturing
City and County Governments	Zoos	Distribution Facilities

- ❑ Project SEARCH interns work in three rotations and have support from a team that includes their family, instructors, skills trainers and local and state agencies.
- ❑ The outcome of this one-year program is competitive, integrated employment.



Project SEARCH

For more information, visit P10's Project SEARCH website page: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=357>

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

- ❑ Pre-apprenticeship programs provide training in work readiness and other foundational skills to prepare youth or adult workers to succeed in a registered apprenticeship program.
- ❑ Registered pre-apprenticeship programs provide an avenue for both adults and youth who are at least 16 years old to become qualified to enter registered apprenticeship programs.
- ❑ District school boards and community colleges are often involved in pre-apprenticeship programs, assisting sponsors in providing related technical instruction. Programs for high school students may begin in the junior year and may include on the job training with participating employers.

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:

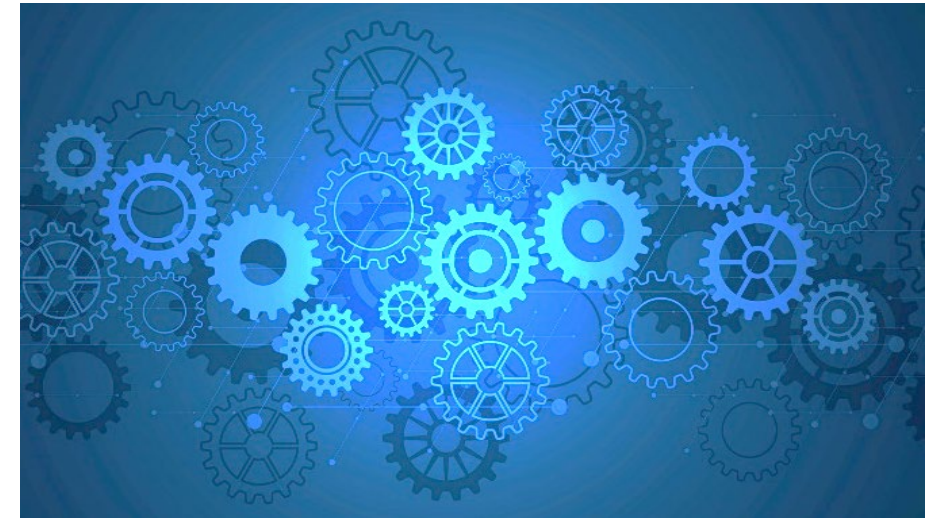
- ❑ Pre-vocational skills
- ❑ Community-Based Instruction (CBI)
- ❑ Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE)
- ❑ On-the-job training
- ❑ Work-Based Learning Experiences (VR)
- ❑ School-Based Enterprise (SBE)



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

Components of Structured Work Study

- ❑ **Instruction** to address students' transition services needs and special education services
- ❑ **Support** as needed from related service providers (therapies, transportation, mental health counseling, etc.)
- ❑ **Staff** that support employment (job coach/supported employment specialists, job developers, paraprofessionals, etc.)



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

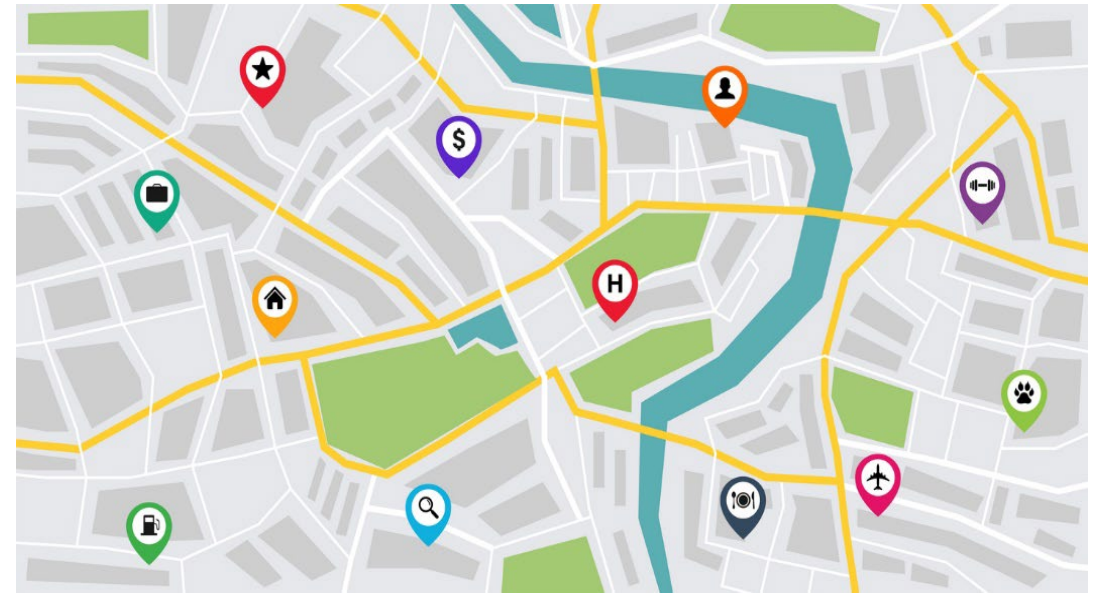


Scheduling

- ❑ As with the previous deferment options, a student's school day may look differently when they are enrolled in structured work study, for example:
 - Partial or full day
 - A few days out of the week or Monday through Friday
 - The student may be on different campuses/sites
- ❑ The student's schedule may include services provided by community agencies (e.g., VR Pre-Employment Transition Services)
- ❑ The scheduling is an IEP team decision and is driven by the student's needs.

Setting

- ❑ Multiple settings could be used to support student experiences in deferment.
- ❑ With LRE in mind, deferment programs can be implemented in a variety of settings. The following are a few examples:



School campus	Community provider	University/college campus	Government offices
Charter school	Regional cluster site	Business location	Faith-based organization

Transportation

- ❑ Transportation is considered a related service (IDEA, Part B) and is an IEP consideration in how a student accesses their specially designed instructional needs.
- ❑ Some deferment programs require independent student transportation.
- ❑ Below are several transportation options that may assist structured work study development:

District school buses, vans, cars, etc.	Transportation Network Company
Rental cars	Paratransit
Public transportation	Transportation Disadvantaged/Council on Aging
Contracting with a provider	Carpool
Faith-based provider	Parents, personal (bike, scooter, car, etc.)
Creative solutions: WBLE funds, business/community, IDEA funds, Driving Choice Grant Program, grants	

Parent Pro Tips

1. **Learn the Deferment Requirements Early-** Understanding Florida's deferment criteria help families plan and avoid missing critical deadlines such as the May 15 deadline.
2. **Match Potential Deferment Program Options to Your Student's Needs and Postsecondary Goals-** Each deferment option offers different settings, rigor, and experiences. Work with the IEP team to determine the one that best supports your student's postsecondary goals.
3. **Begin Exploring Programs Before Senior Year-** Many programs require applications, GPA thresholds, assessment scores, or prerequisite coursework. Starting the exploration process early helps ensure your student can meet requirements on time.
4. **IEP Team Decisions-** The IEP team will determine if the student meets deferment criteria. If a student meets deferment criteria, the IEP team will also determine the student's schedule, transportation, specially designed instruction, transition services, and related services, as applicable.



Postsecondary Options

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

Predictors of Postsecondary Outcomes

http://project10.info/Documents/Predictors_of_PSOs_-23-5.18.22_1.pdf

Predictors of Postsecondary Outcomes

Transition from school to adult life requires collaboration and planning by many stakeholders. Students, families, teachers, schools, school districts and community agencies work together to support student success. To assist students in preparing for life after high school, researchers have identified the following predictors that have been shown to support post-school outcomes for students, including the areas of postsecondary education/training, employment and independent living.

For a student with an individual educational plan (IEP), Florida legislation requires planning to begin by age 12 and defines transition as “a coordinated set of activities” that are designed to promote movement from life as a student to life as an adult. By the age of 14, each IEP meeting should include discussion and identification of postsecondary goals related to education, employment and may include independent living skills. As you make choices related to your student’s future and transition from school to adult life, consider and discuss how to use these predictors to support your student throughout the journey.



Predictor #1 Career Awareness

Career Awareness is learning about opportunities, education and skills needed to choose a career that matches one’s strengths and interests.

Ideas for Families

- + Discuss skills and qualifications needed for careers in which your student is interested.
- + Discuss connections between academic skills your student is learning with careers that require those skills.

Exercising Self-Determination Skills in Postsecondary Settings



- ❑ Once students with disabilities exit the K-12 system their rights are still protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ❑ Individuals with disabilities who would like to receive accommodations in institutions of higher education and through the employment process need to disclose their disability. This requires self-awareness and self-advocacy skills.
- ❑ There are pros and cons of disclosure; however, for many individuals, accessing accommodations may be critical for their post-school success.

Project 10's Postsecondary Options At-a-Glance

Postsecondary Option	Brief Description	Considerations
Employment	<p>There are different types of employment to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time/part-time • Customized employment • Self-employment • Internships and on-the-job training (OJT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple adult agencies support employment, such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR/VR). • Social Security beneficiaries may be eligible for work incentives. The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program has free benefits planners who can assist. • Individuals with disabilities have the right to request accommodations; however, they must self-disclose that they have a disability. The Job Accommodations Network is a helpful resource.
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	<p>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. There are a wide variety of CTE degree and certificate programs across 17 Career Clusters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may choose to self-disclose if they would like to request accommodations for courses and/or testing. • There may be restrictions regarding accommodations in CTE programs, including industry certification testing. • Modifications to the curriculum/testing is not allowable at the postsecondary level. • Some programs have eligibility requirements which should be considered in the student's high school course of study.
Colleges and Universities	<p>This category may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and community colleges- Colleges offer stackable workforce credentials including certificate programs, associate in science degrees and associate in arts degrees, which transfer to a bachelor's degree program. Many colleges also offer workforce bachelor's degree programs in areas of high demand. • 4-year universities- Florida has 12 state universities. High school students should work with school counselors to find the best fit for their educational needs and qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State colleges and universities have offices to support students with disabilities; however, students must disclose that they have a disability in order to access potential accommodations. • Florida's State University System, and various programs of study, are highly competitive. A student's high school course of study should align with eligibility requirements for admission. • Agencies can support students' postsecondary education, such as VR. • Transition services can include exploring colleges, applying for financial aid, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive higher education programs- Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (PCTP) offer students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to experience college. Think College is the national resource, and in Florida there is the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships are available to students who attend Florida PCTPs. • Inclusive higher education programs vary widely, including certifications available and support; some also offer residential housing.
Apprenticeship Programs	<p>Registered Apprenticeship Programs can vary from 1-5 years. Registered apprentices have the opportunity to earn money while learning skills through on-the-job training and related classroom instruction. Certifications earned through registered apprenticeship programs are recognized nationwide. Florida has a concentration of apprenticeships in construction programs such as electricity, plumbing, pipefitting and heating and air conditioning installation and repair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each county in Florida has a specific list of occupations supported by apprenticeships. • Some examples of registered apprenticeship programs include the fields of construction (electricity, plumbing, pipefitting, heating/air conditioning installation/repair, etc.), machinists, childcare, chefs, mechanics, IT specialists and other "non-traditional" trades.
Adult Education	<p>Adult education programs emphasize basic skills such as reading, writing, math, and English language competency. The major programs areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult basic education • Adult high school • GED preparation • English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available to individuals ages 16+. • Enrollment in secondary school is not required. • Intended for individuals who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent. • IEP teams may consider this option for students who have dropped out or who have not met graduation requirements before age 22.
Military	<p>The military consists of multiple branches and various entry points and roles (both active and non-active duty). They offer some in-house training programs which can assist with career pathways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test. • Each branch has specific entry requirements. Visit: Requirements to enlist in the U.S. Military for more information. • Service in the military may assist with paying for college in the future.
Additional Activities	<p>Additional activities may include recreation and leisure, volunteering, civic engagement, leadership and Adult Day Training (ADT) programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult agencies may be able to support some of these additional activities. • Community resources are available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Parks and Recreation, etc.).

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/>

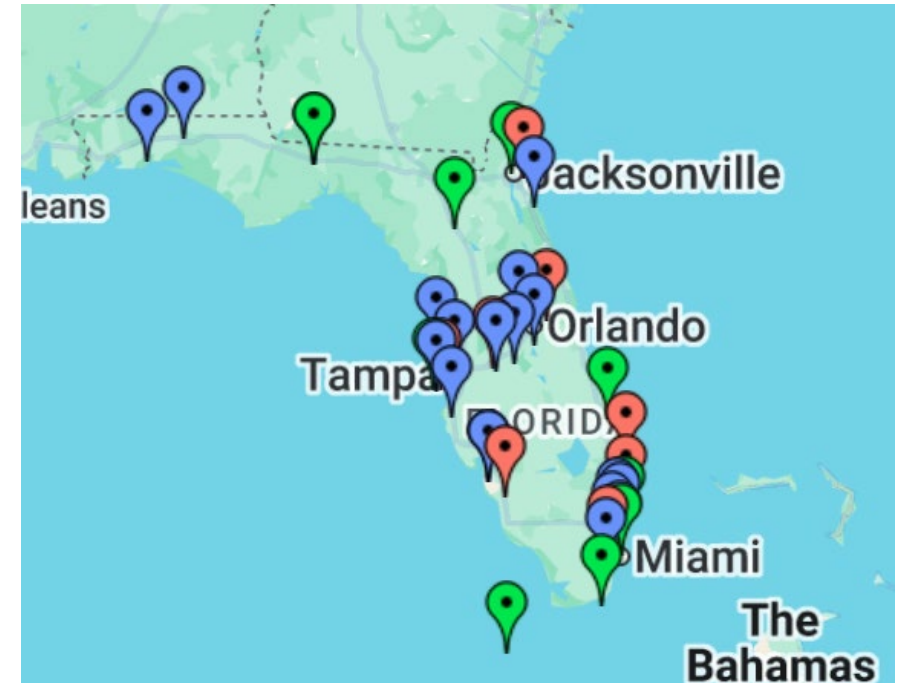
Florida Center for Students with
UNIQUE ABILITIES

❑ Think College: <https://thinkcollege.net/>

 **ThinkCollege**
INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (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.



Helpful Resource:
[FCSUA: Find a Program](#)

Parent Pro Tips

1. **Build Postsecondary Readiness Early-** Help your student practice skills needed for college, career, and independent living such as time management, communication, and task completion.
2. **Prioritize Opportunities for Work & Community Experiences-** Work experience, community involvement, and real-world skill development are some of the strongest predictors of positive post-school outcomes. Encourage participation in internships, job exploration, and community-based activities whenever possible.
3. **Strengthen Your Student's Self-Determination Skills-** Provide opportunities for practice, especially self-advocacy, problem-solving, and the discovery and understanding of one's own strengths and needs. Students will need these skills to disclose disabilities and request accommodations in college and employment settings.
4. **Explore College Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities-** Learn about FPCTPs and similar programs. These programs offer campus experiences, certifications, and employment pathways tailored for students with intellectual disabilities.
5. **Review Entrance Requirements and Apply Early-** Many postsecondary programs have application processes, entrance criteria, and sometimes waiting lists. Begin looking into requirements early so your student can prepare and meet deadlines.



Deferment and the TIEP

Overview of Transition IEP Requirements and Deferment Implications



“A goal without a plan is just a wish”

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

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

Select 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.
- ❑ Some key components related to deferment planning and/or consideration involve:
 - Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments
 - Annual Goals
 - Measurable Postsecondary Goals
 - Special Education, Transition Planning/Services and Related Services
 - Course of Study
 - Provision of Information

Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments- Deferment Implications

- ❑ Captures data on students' strengths, preferences, interests, and needs in terms of education/training, employment and career, and independent living, as appropriate.
- ❑ Used to align and address other components in the IEP:
 - Measurable postsecondary goals and annual goals
 - Specially designed instruction
 - Related services and other transition services
- ❑ Determines the student's need for instruction/information in the areas of self-determination and self-advocacy.
- ❑ Planning/preparing the student for a particular deferment program

Helpful Resource: Project 10's Transition Assessments Chart:

https://project10.info/Documents/Transition_Assessments_Chart_updated_03.20.25_.pdf

Measurable Postsecondary Goals- Deferment Implications

- ❑ Measurable postsecondary goals play a crucial role when IEP teams consider criteria for deferment.
- ❑ Will drive the student's deferment programming in the following ways:
 - Selection of the deferment option
 - Determining the student's course of study leading up to the deferment program and while in the deferment program
 - Determining deferment program progress, and if any adaptations are needed
- ❑ Changes in a student's postsecondary goal(s) may impact their deferral program options, and other transition components that support the new postsecondary goal.

Annual Goals- Deferment Implications



- ❑ Reflects the emphasis of the functional, academic, and transition-related skills the student requires to prepare for and attain postsecondary goals.
- ❑ The IEP team may determine that the student continues to need special education services, related services, and/or transition services during deferment to make progress on annual goals, which serve as essential steps toward progressing toward or meeting measurable postsecondary goals.
- ❑ Ongoing progress monitoring on annual goals during deferment helps the IEP team evaluate whether the student is ready to accept their diploma, end deferment, and/or transition into postsecondary experiences.

ESE Instruction and Services- Deferment Implications

- ❑ Can vary greatly among the various deferment programs.
- ❑ IEP team consideration: What supports and services, provided by a **certified ESE teacher**, does the student need to make progress towards their measurable postsecondary goals and annual goals?
- ❑ Examples may include:
 - Learning strategies to support a student in dual enrollment, Scholar designation courses, industry certification courses and/or early college program courses
 - Modifications to industry certification courses (as allowable)
 - Instruction delivered in community settings
 - Instruction in self-determination/self-advocacy

Transition and Related Services- Deferment Implications

☐ Transition services:

- Can be identified in the present levels which drive annual goals, short-term objectives and/or benchmarks.
- Can also be documented within the Transition Services section of the IEP by a list of activities the student requires to make progress towards their measurable postsecondary goals in education and/or training, employment and career, and independent living (if appropriate).
- Should be specific and individualized for the student.

☐ Related services:

- A shift in thinking from what these services have typically looked like.
- Consider related services that are necessary for a student to progress towards achieving their postsecondary goals, which include settings prior to meeting standard diploma requirements and during deferment (if applicable).

Special Education	Transition Planning and Services	Related Services
<p>Services provided by an ESE teacher that are required to help a student make progress towards their postsecondary goals.</p>	<p>Activities and supports that help a student prepare for postsecondary life, based on students' needs, preferences, and interests.</p>	<p>Supportive services that allow for students with disabilities to benefit from special education services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning strategies ■ Instruction delivered in community settings ■ Instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Travel training ■ Job coaching ■ Links to outside agencies that can assist with long-term supports for the student ■ Instruction in budgeting and financial planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specialized transportation ■ Language therapy ■ Mental health counseling ■ Occupational and/or Physical therapy

Course of Study- Deferment Implications



❑ The course of study:

- Continues to be documented on the IEP through the student's time of deferment
- Is used to communicate deferment program completion requirements and/or expectations for the year.
- Supports students to meet their MPGs.



- ## ❑ While in deferment status, a student's course of study should describe the deferment program that they are in and the requirements (e.g. courses, internships, work experience, industry certifications, etc.).

Provision of Information (Age 12/7th Grade)

- Information and referral forms, links, and contacts, must be provided to the students and families at IEP meetings regarding:
 - The school district's high school-level transition services, career and technical education, and collegiate programs available to students with disabilities and how to access these programs.
 - School-based transition programs
 - Information regarding programs and services available through:

Florida's Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA)	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR/VR)	Division of Blind Services (DBS)
Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)		Florida Centers for Independent Living (CILS)

Resource: The 411 on the Big 5: Sharing Transition-Related Information with Students with Disabilities and Their Families:
http://project10.info/Documents/The_411_on_the_Big_5_5-Page_version_for_Easy_District_Printing_for_Vetting_3.25.24.pdf

Provision of Information- Deferment Implications

- ❑ The IEP team should use the provision of information to make meaningful connections and agency linkages that are individualized to meet the student's needs throughout the transition planning process.
- ❑ A student's present levels of performance, transition assessment data and measurable postsecondary goals can support a focused provision of information discussion and deferment program selection.
- ❑ Review eligibility requirements and application deadlines for specific deferment programs and plan accordingly.
- ❑ Examine postsecondary options and available support for students who opt not to defer or may be ineligible to do so.

Parent Pro Tips

1. **Start Early & Stay Engaged-** Talk with your student about their strengths, interests, and long-term goals early on. This helps guide IEP and transition planning throughout middle and high school.
2. **Review Transition Assessments Each Year-** Transition assessments shape postsecondary goals and deferment decisions. Make time to review them annually so you understand your child's evolving needs and strengths.
3. **Encourage Self-Advocacy-** Support your student in speaking up about their needs, accommodations, and goals. These skills become essential in college, work, and adult life.
4. **Understand Postsecondary & Deferment Options-** Learn about deferment programs and requirements early. Some have deadlines and eligibility requirements.
5. **Stay Organized & Communicate Often-** Keep track of IEP documents, deadlines, and agency referrals. Regular communication with the school team helps ensure smooth planning and progress.



The Deferment Years

Guiding Questions, Logistics, Considerations and Ending Deferment

IEP Team Guiding Questions

The following are sample questions that should be a part of the determination process:

- ❑ Collectively, what do the student's postsecondary goals, course of study and present levels of academic and functional achievement indicate?
- ❑ Will the student continue to need specially designed instruction and transition services provided by the school district after meeting graduation requirements in order to make progress towards and/or achieve their measurable postsecondary goals?

IEP Team Guiding Questions (continued)

- ❑ Could the student achieve progress towards their measurable postsecondary goals by taking receipt of their standard diploma and receive accommodations and services provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?
- ❑ What agency linkages and services have been part of the student's transition plan, and are these agencies and services available/needed in deferment and/or in postsecondary life?
- ❑ Are there program applications, prerequisites, deadlines and or eligibility requirements needed for a desired deferment program (and has/will the student meet those)?

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.

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.

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.



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).

Project 10 Regional Transition Representatives (RTRs)



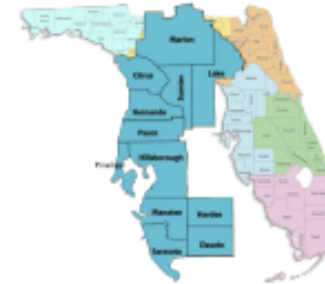
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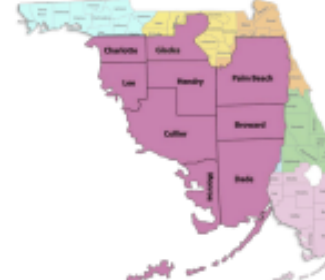
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Evaluation Link