

Transition Planning

Overview

Transition is the process all students go through as they move from a high school setting to what lies beyond. Transition programs assist students and their parents plan for life after high school in a proactive and coordinated way. An effective transition program provides students with the tools and the confidence to assume responsibility for their educational and employment decisions as they move into adulthood.

Transition planning is essential for deaf students who experience unique educational and life challenges as a result of their hearing loss; among them communication barriers, lack of effective accommodations, and intentional and unintentional discrimination.

What is transitioning planning?

Transition planning is a team process that engages the student, their teachers, parents or guardians, and other service providers. It is complex and will look different for each student.

A strong transition plan is one that starts as early as middle school and is articulated in an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) that works in tandem with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

As part of the process, the team engages in dialogue and discovery to map out a transition course of action. Among others, they:

- Conduct assessments that identify the student's strengths, needs, likes, and dislikes in such areas as academics, careers, employment and extracurricular/social.
- Identify postsecondary goals, whether they be employment, education or training, or independent living.
- Create a course plan for the classes that the student will need to complete in order to meet postsecondary and annual goals.
- Agree on annual high school goals that support the postsecondary goals, including opportunities to strengthen self-determination and self-advocacy skills.

Essential Transition Questions

- What kinds of extracurricular experiences will provide opportunities to learn social and problem-solving skills?
- What kind of classes will prepare the student for postsecondary programs and/or employment?
- Will the student work in high school?
- Will the student participate in general education classes or will they need more intense training to achieve their postsecondary goals?
- What types of accommodations are needed in different situations?

Why is the student's involvement so important?

It is widely believed that when a person is involved in the identification and decision making of an activity, goal, or plan, the person has a greater stake in the outcome. This belief is no different for deaf students. However, for this population, where ready access to incidental learning is limited, student involvement in transition planning is critical. Students need to learn what their strengths and needs are, understand their hearing loss and/or other disabilities and how it affects them in different settings, and explore what they want to do after they complete their high school education. Their opinions, wants, and desires need to be taken into consideration if transition goals are to be on target.

While it is important that the student contribute, participate, and practice important transition skills, the role of the family in transition planning should not be underestimated. They are able to contribute information that the school does not have about the student's life and support systems outside of school. And, with their understanding of the transition plan and its importance to their child's success comes a greater prospect for their commitment and contribution to the plan.

Transition planning...

- Is student-focused.
- Ensures students are involved and their contributions are incorporated in the plan.
- Involves families actively in the transition process.
- Uses transition assessments to gather valuable information to aid in planning.
- Checks in with the student often about barriers encountered and accommodations used.
- Annually reviews the transition plan and revises as needed. (It is okay if a student's goals change year to year.)
- Takes time, so start early!

The Law

The federal government requires that schools do transition planning for deaf students starting at age 16. This requirement is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA also mandates that students be invited to their annual transition planning meetings.

Additional Resources

- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT):
www.nsttac.org
- Deaf Self-Advocacy Training:
www.deafselfadvocacy.org
- Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR):
www.parentcenterhub.org/resources/
- Stanberry, K. (2016) *Transition planning for students with IEPs*. Retrieved from:
www.tinyurl.com/GStranition

Additional resources on this subject may be available at www.NationalDeafCenter.org.

