

TRANSITION TOOL KIT FOR PARENTS

Tips and Strategies for Transition Planning

The transition planning process involves a few simple rules that, if followed, will yield positive results for students. Below is an explanation of each rule, as well as suggested tools for implementation of each rule.

Rule #1: Be Future-oriented

Project where students want to be in their early adult years and plan backward through all the steps necessary to get there. See the sidebar for an example of future-oriented planning.

A future-oriented approach highlights the relevance of today's schoolwork for tomorrow's outcomes. This approach enables students to see what needs to be accomplished, to anticipate possible obstacles, and to initiate plans to overcome roadblocks.

Tools To Assist With This Rule

The *Educational and Career Planning Portfolio* (Attachment A) is a transition planning tool designed to help students and their parents identify and develop realistic post-secondary goals. By maintaining a record of all academic coursework, career-related coursework, academic and career assessments, work experiences, and extra-curricular activities, the *Career Portfolio* guides students to career decision-making that reflects both their interests and abilities.

The *Career Portfolio* includes four pages that form a folder to enclose relevant information, including:

- **Contents Checklist** indicates which assessment information and/or resumes are enclosed
- **Career Goal and Objectives** are charted each year during development of students' transition plans
- **Assessment Record** provides summary information of enclosed assessments
- **Academic Planning Card** charts students' course planning and SOL test results
- **Student Activity Record** captures all career-related courses, work experiences, and extracurricular activities in which students have participated

The *Career Portfolio* is the foundation and is initiated with students' first transition IEPs, at age 14 or in grade 8. The portfolio then follows students through their high school years. Additionally, the *Career Portfolio* is an ideal tool for capturing information needed to complete the **Secondary School Transition Summary** (Attachment K) prior to graduation.

The following additional tools can assist in ensuring that the planning process is future-oriented and may be included in the *Career Portfolio*:

- *Charting Your Future – Middle School* (Attachment C) and *High School* (Attachment D) helps students determine the

Charting Your Future

Johnny wants to be a doctor. To reach this goal, Johnny will need to graduate from medical school.

To get into medical school, he'll not only have to attend college, but do well enough to qualify as a medical school candidate.

To do that he'll need to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma with a concentration in sciences, and so on back to 8th grade, where Johnny should earn good grades in science and pass the SOL tests.

steps they must take to reach their goals. Students identify where they would like to be, in terms of both career and personal goals, by age 25. This can be reviewed each year to determine what needs to be accomplished to achieve identified goals.

- *IEP-304 Transition Services to Consider* (Attachment F) gives a brief description of each transition service listed on page 3 of the IEP - the transition plan - along with actions to take, and who to contact.
- *Turning 18: Resources for Young Adults* (Attachment H) provides information students need to know when they reach the age of majority

Rule #2: Start Early and Review Annually

IDEA requires that transition planning begin early. The key to effective transition planning is to start early with a long-range plan as described above and then revisit the plan at least once a year to see if it continues to make sense. For the continuing story of Johnny, see the sidebar *Charting Your Future II*.

Charting Your Future II

If Johnny still wants to be a doctor and has passed the 8th grade SOL and earned good grades in science, then he is on track to achieve his goal.

If he hasn't accomplished these two objectives, Johnny and his family need to make some decisions:

1. Will Johnny spend more time on his homework, get some tutoring, and/or enroll in a remediation class so he can reach his goals and continue with the original plan; OR
2. Is the original plan unrealistic?

If Johnny doesn't want to be a doctor anymore OR if the original plan was unrealistic he can choose another career goal and make another future-oriented plan.

Tools To Assist With This Rule

- *Transition Planning Checklist for Students and Parents* (Attachment E) can be completed at home by students and their family members to help identify their transition planning priorities. This input is particularly useful in finalizing the independent living objectives in Section D of IEP-2
- *Charting Your Future - Middle School and High School* (Attachments C, D)
- *Transition Timeline – Middle School to Graduation* (Attachment B) provides a year-by-year list of transition-related activities designed to prepare students for a variety of post-secondary outcomes. It presents an overview of all the activities involved in transition planning from middle through high school. Students choose among the activities listed based on their long-term goals.
- *Suggested Transition Activities* (Attachment G) can be used to draft transition goals in Section D on IEP-2.

Rule #3: Revise, Revise, Revise

Beginning transition planning early and reviewing plans regularly enables students and families to monitor the appropriateness of their transition plans in order to fine-tune goals and plans during the years leading to graduation. See *Charting Your Future III: Johnny's revised plan*.

Tools To Assist With This Rule

- *Transition Timeline – Middle School to Graduation* (Attachment B)
- *Charting Your Future - Middle School and High School* (Attachments C, D)

The Parent's Role

Three rules for effective transition planning that maximize options and opportunities include:

1. Be future-oriented
2. Start early and review annually
3. Revise, revise, revise

Middle school students - Focus on the process rather than being overly concerned with a realistic outcome. Once students learn the basics of transition planning, they will continue to practice the process throughout their high school years and will refine their goals and probably change their career choices many times.

All students - Help students identify objectives that need to be accomplished (i.e., tests passed, diploma earned, skills mastered) to achieve the long-range goal.

All students - Be sure to review the plan regularly. Discuss with students and staff whether adequate progress has been made.

High school students – Be sure to complete the **Secondary School Transition Summary** (Attachment K) before each student graduates from high school. This is a new requirement of IDEA 2004.

Appendix: Resources lists Career and Transition Services (CTS) transition contacts and phone numbers to assist you, contact information for post-secondary service providers, and some Website resources that may be helpful.

Charting Your Future III

If medical school is unrealistic for Johnny, he could explore health-related occupations that require less rigorous academic preparation.

Johnny would then revise his plan accordingly and list the things he needs to accomplish over the next year. This list then becomes the basis for his transition plan.

The following year, he will measure his progress against the plan and continue to make choices about the path he wants to pursue.