T
here is no one formula for a successful transition. The path through and out of high school is rarely a straight line, in great part because learning and growing are synonymous with change—changing minds, discovering new goals, altering preferences, and developing new understanding and strengths. So while transition efforts do involve a process, include a plan, and entail some very specific requirements that are defined by law, they also present puzzles to be solved and paths to be uncovered. Within the context of an educational system that is responsive to each child and to the whole child, transition can be flexible, developmentally appropriate, and reflective of each child’s individuality—respecting evolving dreams and creating an environment where those dreams can become reality.

This guide lists many of the activities and considerations that may be part of the transition process for students with disabilities as they leave K–12 education and enter adulthood—college, technical training, career, and community living.

Context
Transition for students with disabilities consists in general of three interconnecting parts:

1. Beginning as early as possible, students and their family members are part of Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams that work collaboratively to develop immediate- and long-range goals mapped to employment, along with plans to achieve those goals.

2. Students' high school experiences are shaped to ensure that the students acquire the skills and knowledge they need to realize their goals and dreams for success in adult life.

3. The resources, post-school supports, and programs that students need for adult success are put in place before the student graduates from high school or turns 22, whichever comes first.

The Role of All Adults
From birth, parents, caregivers, and teachers can contribute to each child’s eventual success in adult life by remembering that career development starts young—and then:

- Helping the child develop communication skills
- Promoting social-emotional competence
- Supporting self-advocacy skills
- Encouraging positive behaviors
- Having conversations with the child about
  - what the child likes to do
  - what the child’s strengths are
  - what supports the child needs
  - what the child might like to do for work as an adult
- Advocating for inclusive settings in schools

Transition Planning Checklist
Before the student turns 16—but ideally as early as possible—transition planning is initiated and integrated into the student’s IEP. Essential parts of transition planning include:

- Student invitation to the meetings
- Transition assessments
- Measurable annual goals
- Postsecondary goals
- Postsecondary goals updated annually
- Transition services and activities
- Collaboration with adult agencies, where appropriate
- Course of study to support goals
- Summary of Performance (SOP) completed before the student leaves high school

Resources in Schools
Local educational agencies (LEAs) have some flexibility in the way they use their education dollars to address the needs of the students they serve. As a result, the transition programs, resources, and supports often differ from one LEA or school to the next. Within each local context, however, parents and educators will want to find ways to ensure person-centered plans, career interests surveys, knowledge and awareness of postsecondary education options, and training and connections with agencies that provide job-readiness skills and support.

The infographic on the next two pages was designed to give students, parents, educators, and service providers a sense of the elements involved in transition, the options that may be available, and the language they may need to ask questions, advocate for more or different services, and ultimately secure the best possible postschool outcomes for California’s students.
Transition Road Map

Post-high school Options
Adult school
Apprenticeships
Trade school
Online industry certification
Community college
Industry certification
AA degree
Transfer degree
Four-year college

College
Community College
Diploma
Alternate Pathway

Supported/Customized Employment

Training
Diploma
Alternate Pathway

A-G Requirements
CTE Pathway
Vocational Assessment

High Academic Standards
Students contribute to the formal transition plans in their IEPs

High School
Vocational Assessment

Junior High School

Elementary School

Preschool
Part B begins

Part C

Birth

High Expectations from Families

Essential Career Readiness Skills (Soft Skills)

Job-search strategies
Collaboration
Creativity
Communication
Critical Thinking

Self-Awareness especially of goals, strengths, interests, and dreams

Essential Skills

Behavior
Communication
Self-Determination

Social-Emotional Health including friendships

Key

A-G Requirements:
The high school courses that students must complete (with a grade of C or better) to be eligible for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU).

DDS: Department of Developmental Services
CTE: Career Technical Education
IEP: Individualized Education Program
Part B: IDEA preschool and school services
Part C: IDEA Early Start services for infants and toddlers

Agency Support for Youth and Adults

Always listening to the student’s voice: “Nothing about me without me.”

Agency Support for Young Children

Social Security Administration
Department of Rehabilitation
Independent Living Centers
Probation
Employment Development Department
One-Stop Career Centers

Health and Medical Care
Child Care
Regional Centers/ODS
Parent Training and Resource Centers

Early Head Start
Head Start
Mental Health Services
Child and Family

For students with developmental disabilities

Nothing about me without me.
There also must be evidence that the student was an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services, appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon the student’s sixteenth birthday. Students must be invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

Secondary Transition Goals and Services
The percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services, • including courses of study that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, • and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

Federal Performance Indicators
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to develop a state performance plan/annual performance report (SPP/APR) that evaluates the state’s efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of the IDEA. The SPP/APRs include indicators that measure child and family outcomes and other indicators that measure compliance with the requirements of the IDEA. Two of these indicators are designed to reflect how the state and its local educational agencies are preparing students with disabilities for adult life. California reports annually on the following:

Indicator 13:
Secondary Transition Goals and Services
The percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services,
• including courses of study that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals,
• and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs.

Indicator 14:
Post-School Outcomes
Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:
A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.