



Special Education Series

** This is basic information and does not constitute legal advice.*

Tips for Parents: Transition Services

What are Transition Services?

Transition Services are coordinated activities for a child with a disability, which are designed to get your child ready to move from school to adult life. In planning these activities, you should think about what type of adult skills you and your child want. The types of adult skills may include:

- Postsecondary education. This includes attending junior and community colleges which may lead to a Certificate or Associate's degree. It may also include four year colleges and universities which may lead to a Bachelor's degree.
- Vocational education. This activity is designed to give your child certain skills for specialized occupations (such as an electrician, dental assistant, or welder). The training programs may last anywhere from two (2) weeks to two (2) years and require a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate.
- Integrated or Supported employment. This includes "on the job" support that allows your child to learn and keep a job. Supported employment gives children with severe mental or physical disabilities the opportunity to have a job in their community.
- Continuing and Adult education. Continuing education is for personal enrichment and may include classes such as cooking, sewing, or gardening. Adult education is more of a vocational, or skills-based, approach that provides instruction to individuals sixteen (16) years of age or older who are no longer being served by the public schools. Adult education may include classes such as woodworking, health care, and business education. Adult education programs may also be available to prepare individuals for GED tests.
- Adult services. Once your child is no longer eligible for services under the public school system, he or she may be eligible to receive services through the Social Security Administration (SSA) or the Vocational Rehabilitation System (VRS).
 - The SSA can provide children with disabilities with cash benefits, work incentives, and Medicaid coverage under the Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs. You can find the nearest SSA office by:
 - Calling 1-800-772-1213 to directly ask questions or to find the SSA office near you;
 - Calling the TTY number 1-800-325-0778; or
 - Visiting the SSA web site at <http://ssa.gov/>

- The VRS can provide services ranging from job training to job placement and follow-up.
 - Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509
Phone: (402) 471-3644 / 1-877-637-3422
TDD: 1-877-637-3422
Website: www.vocrehab.state.ne.us
 - Vocational Rehabilitation has many offices throughout Nebraska. To find one near you, please call 1-877-637-3422 (1-877-NE REHAB).
- Independent living. This includes coordinating where your child will live and the skills that are necessary to take care of himself or herself.
- Community participation. Integrating your child into the community is an essential part of transition planning. This includes recreation and leisure activities that your child will participate in as well as the personal and social skills that will be necessary for your child to live effectively.

Who is eligible for transition services?

If your child has been found to be “a child with a disability” as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51, he or she may be eligible for transition services (see “Tips for Parents” Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation” and “Tips for Parents: Independent Educational Evaluation” materials). Rule 51 sec. 007.07B8 (2006). Whether your child requires transition services is decided on his or her individual needs.

The Individual Education Program (IEP) Team decides, on an individualized basis, whether transition services are necessary for your child in order to receive a “free appropriate public education (FAPE).” Transition services can only be provided to your child if it is listed as necessary in your child’s IEP. Rule 51 sec. 007.07B8b (2006).

When must transition services be provided?

When a child with a disability reaches age sixteen (16), a written transition services statement must be included in the IEP (see “Tips for Parents: Individualized Education Program” material). The transition services statement must be updated annually with the rest of the IEP. Rule 51 sec. 007.07B8 (2006).

A school may provide transition services to younger students when it is appropriate. This may be particularly important for students with severe disabilities or for those who are at risk of dropping out of school before age 16.

If an agency other than the school district decides not to provide transition services to your child, the IEP Team should meet and identify other strategies to meet the goals set out in the IEP. Rule 51 sec. 007.07B8c (2006).

What must be included in a transition services statement?

Transition services are based on your child’s needs, taking into account his or her strengths, preferences, and interests. Transition services may include instruction, related services, community experiences, the

development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, learning daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The written transition services statement should include:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills. Rule 51 sec. 007.07B8a (2006), and
- Specific transition services that are needed to help your child in reaching these goals. Rule 51 sec. 007.07B8b (2006).

Who participates in determining what transition services will be provided?

Your child’s IEP team will determine what transition services will be provided (see “Tips for Parents: Individualized Education Program” material). However, it is important for your child to participate in and take an active role in shaping the transition services. Parents also play an important role in this process and should be involved as much as possible.

If transition services are going to be discussed at the IEP meeting, the school district must give you notice of the meeting and tell you that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss transition services. The school district must also include a statement that it will invite your child and list any other agency that will be invited to attend. Rule 51 sec. 007.06B1 (2006).

How do I request transition services?

You may want to request an IEP meeting to discuss whether your child needs transition services.

It is a good idea to put all communications regarding your child’s special education services between you and school administrators and staff in writing. Be sure to write down conversations and events that affect your child’s schooling. Note the date, who was involved, what was said, and the resolution. You may want to create and maintain a file with all of your child’s school information such as report cards, evaluation reports, and Individual Education Programs (IEPs).

All requests for evaluations or meetings should be made in writing to your child’s school principal. You should keep a copy for your own records. Send your written request to the school via certified, return receipt requested mail. Attach the return receipt to your copy of the request and keep this in your file.

Additional resources:

- *Tips for Parents: Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation.* Nebraska Advocacy Services (2006).
- *Tips for Parents: Independent Educational Evaluation.* Nebraska Advocacy Services (2006).
- *Tips for Parents: Individual Education Program.* Nebraska Advocacy Services (2006).
- *Connections...to Transition 101.* National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) 2006. This article includes several resources which will help you create a transition services plan with your child's IEP Team.
- *Resources for Adults with Disabilities.* NICHCY 2004. This article includes contact information of organizations and agencies you can contact for more specific information.
- *Nebraska State Resources.* NICHCY 2006. This is a list of organizations in Nebraska that you can contact for more information and to advocate for your child with a disability.
- *Parental Rights in Special Education.* Nebraska Department of Education Special Populations Office (August 2005).

Sample Letter

You may wish to use similar language when requesting an Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting to discuss transition services for your child:

[Principal's Name]
[School's Name]
[School Address]
[City, State, Zip code]

Re: [Your child's name] – Request for an Individual Education Program meeting

Dear [Principal's Name]:

Please consider this letter as a formal request for an Individual Education Program (IEP) team meeting for my child, [Your child's name]. It is my understanding that I have a right to request an IEP meeting at any time, pursuant to the provisions of 92 NAC 51 (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51). I would like to specifically discuss transition services for my child.

To prevent complications with my schedule, please notify me of the date and time of the meeting one week in advance. I appreciate your prompt attention to this request and ask that you respond in writing by [Insert a date two (2) weeks from the time mailed], and that the meeting be held by [Insert a date five to ten days later than the previous date]. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[Your City, State, Zip]
[Your Phone number]