

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Transition Planning as a Collaborative Effort

No one individual or agency can provide comprehensive transition planning for a student. Transition planning requires the collective effort and commitment of all key stakeholders in a student's life. As the transition planning team begins to form, it is critical that each member knows why they are serving on the team and their role in assisting the student to identify and plan for their future goals.

The success of the transition planning process hinges on the ability of each member to follow through on agreed-upon activities. The following describes possible team members and their roles.

The STUDENT

The student's interests, desires and goal aspirations are a critical part of transition planning. They should attend their PPT meetings and be encouraged to participate as fully as possible in their transition plans.

Before a student can feel confident and self directed in participating in their PPT meeting, specific skills training may be required to prepare them to do so. Below are some key points that should be considered in preparation for a student's active participation in the process:

- STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW IT IS THEIR RIGHT TO BE AT THE IEP MEETING.
- THEY NEED TO FEEL THAT THEIR OPINION IS VALUED.
- THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE IEP PROCESS AND THEIR ROLE IN THIS PROCESS.
- THEY MUST HAVE THE CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS/CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE.
- THEY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE ACTIVITIES/SERVICES TO BE INCLUDED ON THEIR IEP.
- THEY MUST COMMIT TO TAKING "OWNERSHIP" AND FOLLOWING THROUGH ON ANY OBJECTIVE THAT IS ASSIGNED TO THEM.

The FAMILY and Other Significant People in the Student's Life

The families (parents, guardians) know the student the best and should have a major role in transition planning. They can serve as:

- *Case Managers* who share information about the individual and coordinate efforts among the school personnel, home and adult providers.
- *Role Models* who stress the importance of work and community living.
- *Risk Takers* who are willing to let their child participate in inclusive community life.
- *Financial Planners* who can access information about financial assistance programs and assist their child in making informed decisions that affect their child's long-term interests.
- *Advocates* who are informed about transition, program options, and community services and will offer opinions about what is most appropriate for their child.
- *Facilitators* who provide encouragement and opportunities to develop independent living skills.

EDUCATORS (Regular and Special Education)

Both regular and special educators will serve as facilitators of transition planning. Their roles may include:

- Providing information about postsecondary education and vocational training opportunities.
- Providing information about, and making referrals to adult service providers for families and students.
- Providing functional curriculum experiences that teach students the skills necessary for adult life.
- Developing appropriate work experiences, providing job leads, and helping students obtain jobs prior to graduation.
- Advocating for the student and assisting them and their families to advocate for themselves.

SUPPORT STAFF

Support Staff, including guidance counselors, vocational educators, transition specialists, and speech and language pathologists can assist in helping students identify their strengths and needs and offer programming strategies/accommodations to help meet those needs.

ADULT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Adult Service Providers, such as the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Adult Service

Connecticut State Department of Education/Bureau of Special Education
Transition Task Force/Transition Training Manual

Providers, Community Colleges, Universities, and Residential and Vocational Facilities, can help by sharing information about their services and eligibility requirements, answering questions about options after high school, and participating in the multidisciplinary IEP meeting. Adult service providers should be encouraged to become more visible in their communities by developing a process to market their services.

REMEMBER!! SPECIAL EDUCATION IS AN **ENTITLEMENT** PROGRAM. ADULT AGENCIES LIKE THE BUREAU OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (BRS), DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION (DMR) AND DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES (DMHAS) ARE **ELIGIBILITY** PROGRAMS. EVEN IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS ELIGIBLE FOR THEIR SERVICES, IF NO MONEY IS AVAILABLE, THEY ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE SERVICES.

EMPLOYERS

While it may be unrealistic to assume that an employer can attend all IEP meetings for students, they can help by providing input to the school, student and family regarding what qualifications and attributes they look for in potential employees. They can provide information about their companies, and any positions they may have available. Most importantly, employers have established a strong network among themselves, and can serve as advocates for other businesses in the community to become involved in community-based training options.

Team members need to ask themselves several questions as they prepare to focus on the student's transition planning needs:

- What information can I provide?
- What predictions can I make?
- What questions can I raise for others to consider?
- What resources, services, supports, can I make available to assist in the implementation of the student's transition plan?

Adapted from the Iowa Transition Model: A Guide For Transition Planning