

# Transition Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

From the iTransition App by the Disability Rights Center of Kansas

Go to [www.iTransitionKS.org](http://www.iTransitionKS.org)  
or download the app at the iTunes (Apple) or Google Play (Android) app stores.

## What is a Transition Plan?

A transition plan helps you move into adult life after high school. It helps you reach your dreams. Your school must develop a written transition plan as part of your Individualized Education Program (IEP). Having an effective transition plan is important. It helps you get the right services and supports so you can do what you want after high school. A transition plan can help you do things like get a job, train for a job, continue your education, and live independently.

## What are transition services?

If you have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), you have a right to transition services. Transition services are the skills you need to be a successful adult. These skills include social skills, employment skills, independent living skills, and community activities.

Everyone must work together so you can transition from high school to being an adult. Teamwork is key. The student, parents, IEP team members, teachers and community supports and resources must all work together as a team.

By age of 14, a student's IEP must explain the transition services needed for that student. It must detail what classes and educational services you need to help prepare you to move to adult life. By age 16, the IEP Team must write the actual transition plan. Both of these things may happen earlier if the child may be at risk of not completing high school.

A student's right to transition services ends when the student graduates high school or reaches the age of 22, whichever comes first.

Transition planning occurs as part of the IEP process. Make clear before the IEP team meeting that you want to discuss the transition plan. The IEP Team writes the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) during the IEP Team meeting.

The Transition Plan must be about the student's needs, wants, and goals. It should also include goals and timelines for Team members. This will help ensure progress on the transition goals.

Effective transition planning involves the student completing several of tests to help determine the student's interests, skills, and goals.

## **What services are available from Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation?**

The Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program can provide many services and supports to help qualified students with disabilities move to adult life. VR may pay for things like college, technical training, getting a job, new job skills, work-related items – such as tools, clothing, assistive technology ... and so much more.

Your IEP Team must refer students to VR for services. It is VERY important that you and your family follow up on this referral and apply for VR services. VR has caring and capable staff members. However, it is really important that you follow through and contact VR. Too often students and parents do not follow up with VR. That means they lose out on the getting VR's great services, such as paying for college, training, or many other needed supports and services.

## **What can I expect when I contact Vocational Rehabilitation?**

When you are ready, VR will provide you a written plan to support your goals. Think of this plan as being similar to your Individual Education Program (IEP) at school. The VR plan has a similar name, but a different purpose. This written plan is called an "IPE" (Individual Plan for Employment). The IPE has your specific job goal and the VR services to help you be successful in your goal.

The student and the VR counselor work together to write the IPE. Again, teamwork is important. You and your counselor must review the plan yearly. It must list dates, your job goal, when you will start working, needed VR services, and your requirements for participation. Your IPE lists services and who pays for them. VR usually has 90 days to develop this plan. For transition-age students in high school, VR must develop the plan before the student graduates. This provides a seamless transition from school services to VR services.

Here is how VR determines the need for its services. The following must be true for you:

1. You have a physical or mental impairment,
2. Your impairment is a substantial impediment to employment, and
3. You need VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

In Kansas, the VR program is located in the Division of Kansas Rehabilitation Services, under the Department for Children and Families.

## **What is an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?**

The federal IDEA law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and the Kansas Act for Exceptional Children require schools provide an individualized education plan for each eligible student. This plan is called an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a written education plan created by the IEP team. This education plan should meet the students' educational and social needs. When the parent signs the IEP, it is a legal agreement between the parent and school detailing the services for the student. The team reviews the IEP yearly.

To ensure that the written education plan (IEP) is right for you the IDEA law requires the IEP team to think about the following:

- Strengths of the student
- Concerns of the parent for their child's education
- Results of the initial evaluation and/or most recent evaluation
- The academic, developmental and functional needs of the student
- Behavioral concerns
- Limited English proficiency
- Braille needs
- Communication needs
- Assistive technology
- Extended School Year
- Notification to Kansas Rehabilitative Services
- Physical Education needs
- Potential harmful effects from receiving special education

The IDEA law also requires the education plan (IEP) include the following:

- A statement of the student's skills, abilities and emotional behavior
- A list of any special education and related services the student may need to learn
- Specific academic, behavioral and/or social goals to measure student's progress
- How the student will participate in statewide testing
- What services the student will receive
- How often these services will be required. How long they will last.
- Starting at age 14, inclusion of transition services (see prior FAQs on transition)

### **How is eligibility for special education determined?**

The school conducts a detailed educational evaluation. The parent signs a written consent for the evaluation. The school must complete the evaluation within 60 school days. The school must provide the parent a copy of the schools written evaluation. The IEP Team discusses the results.

A student is determined eligible for special education if:

1. they meet one of the 13 categories of eligibility identified in the IDEA,
2. the student is in need of special education and related services. The student must need these services because of his or her identified eligibility in order to benefit from education.

If the school says the student cannot have an IEP, a parent may request another evaluation. The school must pay. The parent picks a professional that has the right education and skills. The school may provide the parent a list of potential independent evaluators. You are not required to select a professional from the school's list. The district must either grant your request to pay for this evaluation or ask for a Due Process Hearing.

## **How can I be an effective advocate with my IEP team?**

State what you want. Be clear. The only purpose of the IEP Team is to come up with an education plan for the student. This is all about the student's needs. Give the IEP team examples of how what you are asking for will help the student.

Remember that teamwork can help you ask for what you want. Build strong relationships with IEP team members. The IEP Team members have a lot of educational knowledge. You are the expert about yourself. You and your parent know best about your needs and goals. You should respect the education experts. Listen to them. Engage them. However, remember to be clear and ask for what you want and need. You are the expert with that.

The student's relationship with their IEP team will be a long-term one, lasting until the student graduates high school or turns 22. Try not burn any bridges. You can disagree without being disagreeable.

Special education has many professional terms. These terms can be confusing and scary to parents and students. Ask the IEP team to explain any term you do not understand. Remember, no one on the IEP team knows the student's interests, likes, and goals better than the student and his or her parents.

Good transition planning requires the student and parent tell the team the student's long-term plans and goals after high school. The more you share your hopes and dreams with the IEP team, the better your transition goal will be.

Transition meetings must focus on what the student wants to do. It is about the student's interests. The IEP team must listen to the student. Students may find it difficult to tell their interests, dreams, and hopes for their future to the entire IEP team. The parent and student should work together to find the best way for the student to tell the IEP team what they want and need in order to move to adult life.

Here are some ideas for a student to get his or her points across to the IEP team:

- Complete the transition app survey. This gives you a written document. We call it the student's "Draft Transition Plan." You then share this plan with your IEP Team. It contains your goals for education after high school. It will detail recommended transition services to assist you in reaching your goals. Advocate for the services and things listed in your "Draft Transition Plan." Ask for the services and things listed in your "Draft Transition Plan."
- Write down your goals for adult life prior to the IEP meeting. Share these with the team.
- Ask your parent to help you tell the IEP your goals
- Speak up for yourself in the IEP meetings. Again, no one knows you better than you do.

## **What are my rights to reasonable post-secondary academic accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?**

A college or university may not discriminate against an individual solely based on disability. They must provide reasonable accommodations to the student's known disability. These accommodations must give the student an equal opportunity to participate in the school's programs, activities, and services. This includes everything from the classroom to extracurricular activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide students with disabilities powerful protections from discrimination.

Who is eligible for these rights?

A student must have a mental or physical impairment that:

- substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- or has a record of such impairment
- or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Below are a couple of examples of help a student may receive from a college:

- free auxiliary aids
- modifications participate and benefit from their education ...
  - For example, extra time, notes, specialized materials, audio books, special technology.

There are limitations to your rights in college. Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act only applies to schools that receive federal funds. Some schools do not receive financial aid or federal funding. Colleges do not have to modify class content or academic standards if it fundamentally alters their program. This simply means that colleges are not required to reduce their standards for grading or degree requirements because of a person's disability. Colleges can request adequate medical documentation from the student that proves the need for the requested help and the connection to the student's disabilities.

### **Who is the app for? Who designed it?**

This app is intended to serve as a guide to Kansas students, parents and educators on transition planning based upon requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Kansas Act for Exceptional Children. Individuals residing outside of Kansas may use this free app, but it is recommended that you first check your state laws to ensure the information is applicable in your state. It's always a good idea to consult with your state's Protection and Advocacy System (P&A) to find out how the tools of this app may be applicable in your state (go to [www.ndrn.org](http://www.ndrn.org) to find the P&A in your state). The information contained in the app is not legal advice. Please contact an attorney in your state for advice if you need specific advice.

