

10

Transition and Youth Services

Section Purpose

Provide information on the legal and practical aspects of transition of students with disabilities to adult life, and how the One-Stop system can assist with this process.

Section Contents

- A) **One-Stop Systems and Transition From School to Adult Life:** An overview of the role of One-Stop systems and their role in successful transitions of students with disabilities into community employment.
- B) **Transition Services - The Basics:** A summary of the legal requirements and responsibilities in transition services.
- C) **Youth Services and Individuals with Disabilities:** A summary of youth services under WIA and how young people with disabilities meet the qualifications for these services.
- D) **One-Stops: Getting Involved in Transition:** A variety of ideas and strategies for involvement of One-Stop systems in meeting the needs of youth with disabilities
- E) **Definition of Transition - Under IDEA (1997):** The legal definition and requirements for transition from the Individual with Disabilities Education Act
- F) **Resources on Transition & WIA Youth Services:** Resources for local One-Stop systems pertaining to serving young people with disabilities

One-Stop Systems and Transition from School-to-Adult Life

By David Hoff, Institute for Community Inclusion

In the disability world, the term “transition”, refers to the activities and processes that occur to prepare a young person with a disability to move from school to adult life. Employment is a major emphasis during transition and there are a variety of ways that One-Stop systems can participate.

Why One-Stop Systems Should Be Involved in Transition Services

- **WIA Clearly Calls For It** - The Workforce Investment Act regulations clearly state that One-Stop systems are to play a significant role in the delivery of services to youth, including youth with disabilities. Each state’s workforce plan must specifically address how the state will address the needs of youth with disabilities in its workforce investment system.
- **Transition and One-Stops - A Perfect Match** - A major emphasis during transition is identification of resources in the community, and collaboration among various organizations such as funders of adult services, service providers, families and the school, to help the student develop and pursue his or her goals. A major role of One-Stop systems is being a mechanism for access to information and resources for individual’s employment and training needs. Given these complimentary objectives, the One-Stop system can be of great assistance in assisting students to achieve their vocational goals.
- **An Investment in the Future** - By assisting in the proper preparation of youth with disabilities for adulthood, One-Stop systems can play a role in assisting young people with disabilities to begin their adult lives with the training and work experience needed for long-term career success.

How One-Stops Can Help Any Young Person

- **Be a Resource on WIA Youth Services** - The relationship between One-Stop systems and WIA youth services (overseen by the Local Workforce Board and Youth Council) varies by local area. However, youth programs are a One-Stop partner, and One-Stop systems and Centers at a minimum can serve as information and referral mechanisms for those services. Young people can visit One-Stop Centers to gather information on WIA youth services (services for individuals ages 14-21) offered in the local workforce investment area. Find out if they may be eligible, and how to access these programs. Youth services under WIA include programs such as formula-funded Youth Activities, Youth Opportunity Grants, and the Youth Opportunity Movement. It may also be helpful for One-Stop Centers to have available information on other community-sponsored youth programs.
- **Provide Access to One-Stop Services** - Services offered by the One-Stop system can benefit not only adults seeking employment and career advancement, but also youth just entering the job market, and even those young people who are not currently looking for a job but need to learn the basics of a successful job search.
 - Unlike WIA youth services, which are largely restricted to certain populations (including some youth with disabilities), any individual age 18 or older can access adult core services, and also be considered for intensive and training services.

- WIA regulations state that individuals age 18 to 21 who are receiving youth services may also simultaneously access adult services.
- There is also no prohibition against any youth under 18 using One-Stop services as long as the funding for such services is not restricted to adults.

WIA encourages youth to be introduced to One-Stop services early in their career development, and stresses the use of the One-Stop system as an entry point for obtaining education, training, and job search services.

Quality Services for All Students = Quality Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are no different from other youth: they need help deciding what career areas to explore, accessing further education and training, and gaining work experience. Youth with disabilities are best served, by offering quality services to meet the needs of all young people. Individuals with disabilities can then be assisted and supported as needed to fully benefit from these services. Here are some fairly simple ways that One-Stop systems can help all young people.

- **Be welcoming:** When students come into the One-Stop Center, make them feel welcome!
- **Help with job-seeking skills development:** One-Stop Centers can help students develop the job search skills that they'll need throughout their careers, including resume development, contacting potential employers, development of interview skills, etc.
- **Assist with job searches:** Like any other customer, One-Stop Centers can assist young people with finding employment, through job listings, employer contacts and other One-Stop services
- **Provide information on training and education options:** One-Stop Centers can assist young people in identifying appropriate training and education opportunities that are available for entering and advancing in careers
- **Provide information on youth and general services:** Put together a clear, simple listing of the types of services available for students from the One-Stop Center and the local workforce investment system. This information should include available WIA youth services and how to access them. Be sure to also include adult services for individuals 18 and over. Distribute these to students and educators.
- **Provide access to experiential education:** Many students, with and without disabilities, gain early work experiences through internships, apprenticeships, mentor programs, cooperative education programs, summer work programs, etc. Help students and schools connect with local businesses for career days, internships, and jobs.
- **Provide workshops targeted to youth:** One-Stop staff are experts on how to find a job. Staff can share this expertise by conducting classes specifically for young people, in school settings and/or at the One-Stop Center. These could possibly be done in collaboration with school staff.
- **Outreach:** Invite students and educators to tour the One-Stop Center. Through outreach to schools and young people, One-Stop systems can teach students about the resources available via the One-Stop system, how to access those services, and how to make best use of them throughout their professional lives.
- **Staff knowledge about youth services:** Make sure One-Stop staff understand what WIA youth services are, and how to assist an individual in accessing youth services.

Transition Services - The Basics

What law covers transition services for students with disabilities?

Requirements for transition services are governed by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997. In addition to IDEA, state and local laws and regulations may have additional requirements. See the last page of this section for excerpts from the text of IDEA.

Why is there such an emphasis on transition services?

Students with disabilities are entitled to receive educational, vocational, and other services until graduation or until they turn 22, whichever comes first. (Some students with disabilities graduate with their class at 17 or 18. However, other students, particularly those with more significant disabilities, continue to receive services from the education system until age 22.) Once this entitlement to services from the education system ends, students with disabilities who need assistance may be served by the adult service system. However, adult services are not an entitlement, and are provided only as funding and resources are available.

“Individuals who have left school become solely responsible for identifying where to obtain the services they need and for demonstrating their eligibility to receive the services. Therefore, for many students with disabilities, identifying relevant adult service providers, establishing eligibility to receive adult services, and having interagency responsibilities and linkages stated in the IEP, all while still in school, is essential to ensure a smooth transition from school to adult life.” (NICHCY, 1993, p. 5)

Transition under IDEA mobilizes all interested parties and service providers to help students with disabilities develop dreams and goals, and the services needed to achieve them.

What is an IEP?

An IEP (Individual Education Plan) is required for every student with a disability receiving special education services. The IEP is updated annually at an IEP meeting, which develops the student’s education program for the following year. Participants typically include the student’s teachers, a school representative, and the parents. At any IEP meeting where transition will be discussed, it is required that the student be invited. Representatives of any agency that is likely to provide transition services are also invited, which could include a local One-Stop system. Additional participants can include transition specialists (experts in transition services and identifying adult resources) as well as other interested individuals.

What are the specific requirements for transition under IDEA?

- A “statement of transition needs” is required beginning at age 14 (or younger) as part of the IEP process. This is updated annually and provides a vision for transition outcomes for the student, including desired outcomes in adult living, post-secondary education, and employment.
- No later than age 16 (and possibly earlier), transition services must begin as part of the student’s educational activities. These services, designed to achieve the desired transition outcomes for the student, are outlined in the “statement of transition services” in the IEP. This statement is updated annually, with additional information and modifications based on the

student's preferences and experiences. Among the areas addressed within this statement are interagency responsibilities and linkages. If a One-Stop has a significant role in transition, its role would be addressed in this part of the IEP.

- IDEA requires that transition activities be based upon individual students needs, taking into account the student preferences and interests. These activities must include:
 1. Instruction
 2. Community experiences
 3. Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives
 4. If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluations.

Do all activities related to transition occur within the classroom setting?

Not necessarily. A wide variety of activities may occur outside the classroom, including job exploration, work activities, and other community activities.

Who pays for transition services?

IDEA makes it clear that the financial responsibility for transition services is shared. While school districts pay for many of the costs related to transition services, "the local education agency should not bear the costs of transition services which, according to the IEP would have been borne by another participating agency (IDEA, 1997)." Schools would not have to reimburse One-Stop systems for the use of universally-accessible core services. Schools would only have to pay One-Stop systems for those services to which the student is not otherwise entitled and for which no other funding mechanism can be identified. As stated earlier, many youth with disabilities meet the eligibility criteria for WIA youth services, and therefore this could be a funding mechanism for transition services.

References:

Helping Students with Cognitive Disabilities Find and Keep a Job. NICHCY Technical Assistance Guide, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1999. National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, Washington, DC. Available at: www.nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/ta3book.htm

Transition Services in the IEP. NICHCY Transition Summary, Vol. 3, No. 1, March 1993; National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, Washington, D.C. Available at www.nichcy.org/pubs/transum/ts8txt.htm

Youth Services and Individuals with Disabilities

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) establishes a coordinated system to help low-income young people between the ages of 14 and 21 define their educational and career goals. Low-income youth are eligible to receive employment and training services through funds allotted to states on a formula basis. Services are provided throughout the year, under the direction of Youth Councils, which WIA requires be established in each local workforce area. WIA provides a comprehensive service strategy for youth, with year-round services for eligible youth.

What are the types of youth activities that are available under WIA?

WIA states that the following services must be made available to participants in youth programs*:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school offerings
3. Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing
5. Occupational skill training
6. Leadership development opportunities, including such activities as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, team work, and other activities
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, that may occur both during and after program participation
9. Follow-up services
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

Local programs have the discretion to determine what specific program services will be provided to a youth participant, based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy.

In what ways are youth with disabilities considered eligible for WIA youth services?

While young people with disabilities can qualify for youth services under the same criteria as any other individual, WIA includes provisions to ensure that youth with disabilities have additional opportunities to participate.

- When determining income criteria for eligibility, for youth with disabilities WIA considers only the personal income of the teenager, not the income of his/her family.
- Up to five percent of participants in youth programs do not have to meet income criteria, as long as they are from specific populations, one of which is youth with disabilities.
- Low-income youth with disabilities who need additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment are specifically designated as eligible for youth services.
- Any youth who meets the income eligibility criteria for receiving cash payments from any Federal, state, or local public assistance program (such as SSI benefits from Social Security), is automatically eligible for youth services.

The bottom line: given these criteria, many if not most young people with disabilities ages 14-21 are eligible for youth services under WIA.

One-Stops: Getting Involved in Transition

By David Hoff, Institute for Community Inclusion

One-Stop systems can assist with the transition process by:

- providing quality, universally accessible services for all young people
- by considering the needs of young people with disabilities in the design and delivery of such services
- by providing support and assistance as needed by young people with disabilities as they use One-Stop services.

Additionally, One-Stop systems can be involved in the transition process by:

- Helpfully responding to requests - One-Stop Centers can be involved in transition simply by giving helpful responses to requests for assistance by individuals involved in transition planning. As part of the transition to adult life, One-Stop Centers should expect that educators, students with disabilities, and parents will make contact with the Center to discuss the availability of local employment and training services. Be prepared with information and ideas for these youth.
- Actively seeking involvement - One-Stop systems may wish to participate in transition activities beyond responding to requests for assistance, through actively seeking involvement. There is even the possibility that One-Stops could access additional funding for more active involvement in the transition process. The following are some ideas on ways to learn about opportunities for more active involvement by One-Stop systems in transition services.
 - 1) School contact: Contact your local school or school district's department of special education; ask to talk to the person in charge of the transition of students with disabilities in the school or district. (This individual could be the Special Education Director, vocational staff, rehabilitation staff, etc.) Discuss how One-Stops might be involved in transition activities.
 - 2) Find out if services are subcontracted: Find out if the local school or district is subcontracting vocational assessment and job placement services, and the possibilities for the One-Stop system to be involved in providing such services.
 - 3) Contact transition teams: Some communities have developed community-level transition teams. These groups are known by such names as "community transition team," "interagency community council," and "local transition advisory group." If such a team exists, meet with this team, to discuss possible roles for the One-Stop system in the transition .
 - 4) Contact parent groups: Get in touch with parent groups, which can be a good vehicle for involvement in transition. Many communities have parent groups and organizations focused on the needs of their children with disabilities. Each state has a Parent Teaching and Information Center (PTI) which may be a source of contacts. If you don't know how to get in touch with your state's PTI, contact the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities - NICHCY (contact information is in the resource listing at the end of this section).

- 5) Examine existing interagency agreements: IDEA is clear on the need for interagency linkages at higher levels, beyond individual agency-to-school staff contacts. "Each State Plan for special education sets forth policies and procedures for developing and implementing interagency agreements between the State Education Agency (SEA) and all other State and local agencies that provide or pay for services with children with disabilities (NICHCY, 1999)." A state or local interagency agreement may already exist between the public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system (a One-Stop partner), the public education agency, and/or the workforce investment system, and the state or district-level education agency. If such agreements exist, find out what mechanisms, parameters, and requirements exist for One-Stops to be involved in transition services via these linkages.
- 6) Involvement via LWIB or Youth Council:
Explore One-Stop system involvement in transition activities via the Local Workforce Investment Board or Youth Council, which must include education officials. These connections are particularly useful when School to Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) program representatives are involved.
- 7) Additional contacts: Get in touch with the National Transition Alliance, and other organizations listed in the resource section, to find out more about transition, and contacts for your local area.

References:

Helping Students with Cognitive Disabilities Find and Keep a Job. NICHCY Technical Assistance Guide, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1999. National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, Washington, DC; available at www.nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/ta3book.htm

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An Example of an Innovative Approach of One-Stop Collaboration with the Education System

Imagine a mini-WorkForce (One-Stop) Center in each high school. That's the dream of Darryl Larson, coordinator of the High School Youth Ambassador Project, Minnesota WorkForce Center-Downtown St. Paul.

Using a grant, Larson has connected with school-to-work coordinators at five St. Paul high schools and hired five students. In the fall, those students spent 50 hours learning about the services available at WorkForce Centers. The students learned about techniques such as "creative job searching", skills identification, resumes and cover letters, interviews, networking, and computer resources.

Larson expects the WorkForce Center ambassadors to take their newfound knowledge back with them to their schools and teach other students how to take advantage of these services. "I'd like to see a mini-WorkForce Center in every high school," Larson said. "It's important that students learn about and prepare for the world of work."

Adapted from the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies web site: www.icesa.org/articles/template.cfm?results_art_filename=mnworkhs.htm

Definition of Transition - Under IDEA (1997)

Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that:

- is designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
- is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and
- includes
 1. Instruction;
 2. Related services;
 3. Community experiences;
 4. The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
 5. If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

IDEA (1997) - Statement of Needed Transition Services

Transition planning begins not later than age 14 as part of the IEP, is updated annually, and requires that school district:

- invite student and family to team meetings
- consider student's needs, preferences and choices
- identify & implement all transition services at age 16
- include future-oriented outcomes, goals & objectives: education/instruction, community living skills, employment (functional vocational evaluation as needed) related services & post-secondary education
- invite liaisons from the appropriate human service agencies
- describe interagency responsibilities or needed linkages
- notify of transfer of parental rights at age 17

Resources on Transition and WIA Youth Services

For information on services for youth under WIA:

Youth Activities (Formula-Funded)

A coordinated system established under WIA to help low-income young people and other youth with significant needs, between the ages of 14 and 21, to define their educational and career goals. At least 30% of formula funds must help out-of-school youth in local communities.

www.doleta.gov/youth_services

Youth Opportunity Grants

Grants awarded to organizations in impoverished areas to establish broad partnerships and Youth Community Centers through which young people between the ages of 14 and 21 can gain access to a wide range of employment, training, educational, and supportive services.

www.yomovement.org

Youth Opportunity Movement

A broad-based national initiative to engage businesses, foundations, celebrities, and other community partners to support youth living in high-poverty areas in identifying and achieving their employment and educational objectives.

www.yomovement.org

Additional information, as well as state and local contacts for youth services can be found at: www.doleta.gov/youth_services

National School-To-Work Learning & Information Center

400 Virginia Ave., SW

Washington, DC 20024

Voice: (800) 251-7236

Fax: (202) 488-7395

E-mail: stw-lc@ed.gov

Web site: www.stw.ed.gov

This is the national resource center for School-to-Work programs. Extensive information is available on School-to-Work programs, including some information specific to students with disabilities.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

P.O. Box 1492

Washington, DC 20013

Voice/TTY: (202) 884-8200; (800) 695-0285

Fax: (202) 884-8441

E-mail: nichcy@aed.org

Web site: www.nichcy.org

Provides information & referral regarding children and youth with disabilities (birth to age 22) for families, educators, and other professionals. Has an extensive number of free publications on transition and other topics. Maintains listings of disability-related organizations, parent groups, and professional associations at the state and local level.

National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities

Transition Research Institute
University of Illinois
117 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
Voice: (217) 333-2325
E-mail: nta@aed.org
Web site: www.dssc.org/nta/

NTA has a variety of information and resources, including information on model transition services and connections between transition and School-to-Work

National Transition Network

430 Wulling Hall
86 Pleasant Street SW
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Voice: (612) 626-8200
E-mail: ntn@icimail.coled.umn.edu
Web site: <http://ici2.coled.umn.edu/ntn/>

NTN provides consultation and advice on transition, publishes a variety of resources, and maintains a list of state contacts.

PACER Center

8161 Normandale Boulevard
Bloomington, MN 55437-1044
Voice: (800) 537-2237 or (952) 838-9000
Fax: (952) 838-0199
TTY: (952) 838-0190
E-mail: pacer@pacer.org
Web site: www.pacer.org

PACER has a variety of activities focused on improving quality of life for children and young adults with all disabilities. PACER has a wide array of information and publications available on transition.

Job Search Curriculum for Students

A helpful resource for assisting students to use their personal networks and connections is *Building Community Connections for Transition Age Youth*, a detailed curriculum for training students on job seeking. Copies can be obtained by contacting:

Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)
300 Longwood Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
Voice: (617) 355-6506
Fax: (617) 355-7940
TTY: (617) 355-6956
E-mail: ici@tch.harvard.edu
Web site: www.childrenshospital.org/ici