

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

STRATEGIES TO HELP STUDENTS NARROW DOWN POSTSECONDARY GOALS AND INTERESTS

Secondary transition services must be in effect prior to the beginning of students' ninth grade year or upon turning 16 years of age, whichever comes first, or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team.

The purpose of a transition service plan is to assist students in building the skills and supports they need to reach their post-school goals transitioning from school to post-school environments. Transition requires support from multiple sources so students and their families can make choices, develop connections, and access services prior to leaving high school.

Even though IEP teams may understand the importance of a compliant and meaningful transition plan, developing one can be challenging, especially when many middle school and high school students are unsure of what they want to do after high school.

The following strategies are provided to assist IEP teams and students with narrowing down postsecondary goals and interests.

Strategy #1

Conduct multiple types of assessments in the areas of education/training, employment, and independent living/community participation.

Postsecondary and annual transition goals must be based on the results of transition assessments and updated annually. If the IEP team is struggling with writing the postsecondary and annual goals, it is most likely due to the lack of transition assessment results.

Strategy #2

Recognize that students' postsecondary goals can and should change.

Many students are still focusing on what they want to do in 9th and 10th grade. By 11th and 12th grade, students' goals should become clearer. Therefore, it is crucial for IEP teams to start transition planning as early as possible to help students develop specific postsecondary goals.

RESOURCES

Guideposts for Success

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/guiding-your-success-tool/>

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

<https://transitionta.org/>

OSDE-SES Secondary Transition

<https://sde.ok.gov/secondary-transition>

OU Zarrow Center

<http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow>

Secondary Transition (Pepper)

<https://www.pepperpd.com>

Strategy #3

Provide early and continued opportunities for students to explore different jobs.

Students should be out in the community as much as possible and participating in a variety of career related activities throughout their education. Here are some suggested activities:

- Elementary activities: Guest speakers, career fairs, business/industry field trips, and web research.
- Middle school activities: Career-focused projects and assignments, job shadowing, career mentoring, and service projects.
- High school activities: Career technical courses and programs, project-based learning, work experience, internships, and apprenticeships.

Strategy #4

Discuss and assess all aspects of jobs, including physical demands and working conditions.

For example, does the student prefer to stand or sit for the majority of the workday? How much structured time or downtime does the student need? Does the student prefer a quiet or loud environment? Is the student able to adhere to rules and safety regulations?

Strategy #5

Suggest related jobs that may be a better match for student's level of education, experience, and training.

A student may say she wants to be a rocket scientist. While that may not be realistic, it's an opening to find out as much as possible about why the student wants to be a rocket scientist and to use the student's interests to explore related occupations. Students can research related occupations and the levels of education, experience, and training necessary to perform the occupations using [O*NET](http://www.onetonline.org), www.onetonline.org.

Strategy #6

Focus on general employment skills.

- These include knowing:
- How to sign your name;
- Your social security number;
- How to request an accommodation from an employer;
- What to say and not say at a job interview; and
- Proper use of cell phone at a job.

Strategy #7

Consult outside agencies.

According to IDEA, IEP teams must invite a representative of any participating agency to the IEP team meeting, to the extent appropriate, and with parent or student consent if the student is 18. People outside of the school have a lot to offer. They bring new ideas and different perspectives. They may be able to help the student focus and give ideas on what they can provide.

Strategy #8

Document a student's uncertainties and address them through the annual transition goals and coordinated activities.

For example, if a student is trying to decide between being a welder or a construction worker, the annual goal might be: *Student will present a poster or PowerPoint presentation comparing/contrasting the two careers of being a welder or construction worker, concluding the presentation with their choice of career to the class or IEP team with 90% accuracy of necessary content noting grammar and presentation skills.*

Coordinated activities might include: researching welding and construction work and listing the pros and cons of each career.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions for Students

1. What are your greatest strengths?
2. What goals do you have for your future?
3. How can your teachers and parents help you achieve your goals?

Tips for Teachers

1. Complete the Secondary Transition Course in Pepper (located within OK EdPlan) to learn more about the requirements of Secondary Transition under the IDEA.
2. Visit the OU Zarrow Center for a list of transition assessments and free curriculum to access important transition skills to help students succeed in life!
3. Infuse transition skills into the general education curriculum (See Tying the Knot).

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