



# **BUILDING A BRIDGE**

**From School to Adult Life for Young  
Adults with Disabilities in Idaho**

**A manual to help develop post school goals and transition activities and services**

# BUILDING A BRIDGE



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Dear Reader,

The contents of this manual are put together to assist you in planning and preparing for transition from high school to adult life. As you work through this process it is important to remember what it is like to live through these exciting and challenging years. The work at hand is about the dreams and choices that each youth has anticipated making for years. Now they will begin to act on those choices, testing them, keeping some, but throwing others away as they go. Even though parents, teachers and other people in supportive roles may think they have a clear picture of what a young person's life will look like, the people that make those final decisions should be the youths who will live these lives. As our young people leave high school, our homes and maybe even our communities, to seek out their own way, the path may look fuzzy and sometimes scary, but it is also an incredibly exciting time filled with hope and promise for the future.

This manual has been created, and then revised many times over the years, by the parents, both staff members and volunteers, and the educators of Idaho Parents Unlimited. It has once again been produced with consideration of the full spectrum of beliefs and backgrounds of youth with all types of disabilities and their families. We hope this resource will be useful to you as your role evolves to assist, support and facilitate our youth as they design their own adult lives.



**Idaho Parents Unlimited, Inc**

1878 West Overland Road  
Boise, ID 83705

In Boise 342-5884  
1-800-242-IPUL (4785)  
[www.ipulidaho.org](http://www.ipulidaho.org)



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## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

**Building a Bridge** is a workbook to guide students, their families, and the people who work with them through the process of creating an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which includes post-school goals and transition activities and services, (in short, a transition plan).

An overall understanding of transition and the important issues to keep in mind throughout the transition process is presented first. These first sections include an overview of transition; a brief summary of the laws that govern the process; the importance of record keeping; the roles of transition team members; and the importance of advocacy, person-centered planning and self-determination.

**Building a Bridge** then provides information regarding other topics teams need to consider as a student approaches age eighteen and helpful resources to contact for assistance in planning.

The final section of the workbook provides a step-by-step process for determining student strengths, preferences, goals, and aspirations, and for developing post-school goals, transition activities and services based on this information.

We suggest using a three-ring binder to organize the information gathered during this process. More guidance on how to organize, and what to include in, this binder is in the section entitled “Important Suggestions for Record Keeping.”

## WHAT IS TRANSITION PLANNING?

Transition Planning is a process that brings a student with a disability together with the people and agencies directly involved in helping the student prepare for, and participate in, the post-school environment and the community. The transition process is designed to ensure that the student will acquire the skills, and have access to the support services, necessary to make the transition from school to successful adult life.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), developing transition goals and activities on the IEP must be done at the IEP team meeting prior to a student’s sixteenth birthday or earlier if the team decides it is necessary. The four areas that post-school goals must address on the IEP are employment, post-secondary training and education, independent living, and community participation. The IEP team, including the student, decides what skills, support services, and assistive technology (AT) the student needs to successfully transition to post-secondary life.

The value of an IEP transition team meeting is to share knowledge about the student’s strengths, interests, and preferences and to create a plan of needed and valuable experiences during the high school years. The team then updates this information at least annually, but more often when changes occur. These discussions and decisions help everyone involved understand their role in helping the student build the transition bridge.

Based upon the student’s needs and preferences, the written plan must identify post-school goals and the transition activities or services needed to reach those goals. The plan must state what kind of services and assistive technology will be required to meet the goals; who is responsible for providing the services; where, when and how those services will be provided; and how long the services will continue. The plan should identify how student skill levels will be measured. It should also address how services will be adjusted to

assure attainment of identified goals and to assure no interruption of needed services upon completion of secondary school.

## **TRANSITION: A FEDERAL MANDATE**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in 1987. A transition amendment was included in 1990. Under the revisions of 2004, transition services were given renewed emphasis.

(a) Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that --

(1) Is designed to be within a results oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes— (i) Instruction; (ii) Related services; (iii) Community experiences; (iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation. (IDEA, 2004 § 300.42)

IDEA requires that no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16, the IEP will have ... “appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on the age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills.”

The new definition for transition services means a coordinated set of activities...”designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child...to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. (IDEA, 2004300.42)

IDEA also requires that at least once per year IEP teams consider assistive technology (AT) in conjunction with the annual IEP meeting. AT is any device or piece of equipment that helps individuals with disabilities to lead independent and productive lives. Within the transition process, the IEP team should give thoughtful consideration to AT needed to achieve vocational and independent living goals.

A new requirement of IDEA 2004 requires that when the student leaves the public school they have a summary of their transition-focused assessments written in a way that communicates the key information about the student's disability, in detailed enough form to determine that a substantial limitation to a major life activity exists at the present time, i.e., that major limitation is relevant to learning and the learning environment, and is sufficient to determine that reasonable accommodations are necessary and will lessen the impact of the disability on a relevant major life activity. (IDEA 2004 § 300.305)

### **Resources:**

**Idaho Special Education Manual**, the manual that all Idaho school districts are required to follow in their provision of Special Education services, can be accessed at : <http://www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/manual/sped.asp> .

Another excellent resource on special education law is [www.WrightsLaw.com](http://www.WrightsLaw.com) .

The full text of the IDEA legislation is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/idea/pdf>

The IDEA legislation that pertains to transition planning in the IEP, Section 300.347 Content of the IEP and Section 300.348 Responsibilities for Transition Services, can be found at [http://www.cec.sped.org/law\\_res/doc/law/regulations/regs/SubpartC.php](http://www.cec.sped.org/law_res/doc/law/regulations/regs/SubpartC.php) .

## **KEY LAWS RELATED TO TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE**

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) re-affirms the right of all children to a free and appropriate public education program. It further states that the IEP must include a statement of needed transition services.
- Enacted In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is designed to ensure that work, transportation, living, and recreational opportunities are accessible to students with disabilities (and all people with disabilities) when they leave school.
- The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) establishes a national workforce preparation and employment system to meet the needs of businesses, job seekers, and those who want to further their careers. The WIA established the One-Stop Career Center system and Navigators to assist individuals to access a wide range of employment services. People with disabilities must be served with non-disabled individuals.
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which was reauthorized recently is now a section of the Workforce Investment Act. The purpose of this Act is to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, inclusion and integration into society.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities by any organization or institution that receives federal financial assistance. Like the ADA, Section 504 is a broad civil rights statute, and the two laws have similar or identical provisions, but Section 504 applies only to institutions and programs receiving federal financial assistance. Section 504 affects a wide range of educational practices, including:

- Provision of services to students
- Physical accessibility
- Employment
- Compliance procedures

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 508) requires that federal agencies' electronic and information technology be accessible to people with disabilities. A lot of information technology is used in educational arenas, but all too often either the hardware or the software is not truly accessible to the students or employees with disabilities who are intended to use it. Too often web content or operational educational software is not designed to be accessible. The potential for information technology to maximize independence, participation, and production by students with disabilities will only occur when we all procure, develop and use accessible information technology.

- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990, now a section of the Workforce Investment Act, expands the original Act of 1984. Enacted to increase the quality of vocational instruction, it includes all

students. It further promotes high quality vocational programs and directs vocational educators to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in these programs.

- The Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (Tech Act) increases people with disabilities access to, and funding for, assistive technology. In Idaho, the Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development administers the Tech Act through the federally funded Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP). The Project provides statewide information and assistance to Idahoans regarding assistive technology. The IATP, in partnership with the State Department of Education (SDE), provides AT assessments and trainings for Idaho educators and students with disabilities.

**A comparison of IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA:**

	<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Section 504</b>	<b>ADA</b>
<b>Mission</b>	To provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment	To establish a “level playing field” and prevent discrimination based on a disability	Strengthens Section 504 and extends coverage to employment, private institutions and other previously unnamed agencies and organizations
<b>Applies to</b>	All public schools, pre-kindergarten to 12th grade or age 21 if enrolled in a public secondary program	All institutions and programs receiving federal financial assistance. Includes private institutions where students receive federal financial assistance (i.e., colleges and universities receiving federal aid).	Public and private education, employment, transportation, accommodations and telecommunications, regardless of whether there is federal funding (i.e., all colleges and universities).
<b>Covers</b>	Those who have educational disabilities that require special education services to age 21 or graduation	All qualified persons with disabilities regardless of whether they received services in elementary or secondary school. A person is “otherwise qualified” if the person is able to meet the requisite academic and technical standards, with or without accommodations.	All qualified persons with disabilities and people without disabilities who are discriminated against because of their relationship with a person with a disability.
<b>Defined as</b>	Disabilities covered are defined in the Act and are too numerous to list here.	No specific list of disabilities. The definition of a person with a disability is a person with a physical or mental impairment that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantially limits one or more major life activities.</li> <li>• Has a record of a disability</li> <li>• Is regarded as having a disability</li> </ul>	Same criteria as Section 504. HIV status, contagious and non-contagious diseases are also defined as disabilities.
<b>ID/Process</b>	Responsibility of the school. No expense to the parent or the student. Transfer of parental rights to the student at age 18.	Responsibility of the student to self-identify to the institution and provide appropriate documentation of disability.	Same as Section 504

Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability:  
[www.stlcc.cc.mo.us/fv/moahead/guidebook/laws2.html](http://www.stlcc.cc.mo.us/fv/moahead/guidebook/laws2.html)

## IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS FOR RECORD KEEPING

Often parents and students find working with adult service providers a confusing and time consuming process. During the transition planning process parents and students may need to contact several different agencies to collect documents and to complete numerous applications. A record-keeping system can assist families to keep track of which organizations, and who within those organizations, were contacted, and what information was exchanged. Keeping updated copies of documents, such as those listed below, can assist in this process.

- Birth Certificate
- Naturalization or citizenship papers when applicable
- Social Security eligibility notification
- High school transcripts
- Most recent IEP
- Eligibility documentation
- Evaluations, tests and therapist's reports.
- Any on-the-job training reports or other work experiences
- Letters of recommendation from any previous employers
- Accurate notes of telephone conversations with agency personnel. (A phone log has been provided in this guide.)
- Copies of applications filled out for jobs, services and training opportunities
- Resumes and/or resume fact sheets
- Personal statements written by the student
- Letters written to an agency
- All letters and notices received from agencies
- The required Summary of Performance received when graduating or leaving special education.
- High School Graduation Documents

Periodically reviewing documents to determine what organizations need to be called; what issues are still pending; or information needs to be gathered can help in transition planning.

Parents and students may want to consider keeping documents in a three ring binder with pocket dividers in order to store brochures and handouts. Because agencies do not maintain documents indefinitely, and many agencies require the same types of information, parents and students may need to keep copies of some of these documents indefinitely.





## **ROLES IN TRANSITION PLANNING**

The student and each member of the IEP Team, including representatives from adult agencies and the community, have an essential role to play in the development of IEP transition goals and activities. The student should be involved in deciding who is to be included in the planning team, beyond the core required participants. All participants need to meaningfully contribute to the process.

### **The Student's Role**

The student is the most important member of the IEP team and should participate as much as possible in all planning meetings. This enables the student to take ownership of the transition plan, and also helps the student learn to advocate for him or herself. The student's identified strengths, preferences, goals and aspirations is the driving force in developing the transition plan. The student therefore must assist in the creation and the implementation of the transition plan for it to be meaningful and successful.

### **The Parent's Role**

Parents are required IEP Team members. They have information about their child that is critical to effective transition planning. Only by learning about the student's abilities at home and in the community can the team fully understand the student's needs. However, to the maximum extent possible parents should encourage their student to speak for him or herself in this process. Parents should become informed advocates about quality transition planning and about services and agencies in the community that can assist their son or daughter in achieving independence and success in their communities.

### **The School's Role**

The school is a primary resource in preparing for transition from school to work and adult life. Teachers, guidance counselors, vocational educators, social workers, psychologists, etc., are essential to the transition planning process. The school provides the framework for success by: developing curriculum; providing vocational assessment, instruction, and training, both at school and in the community; and encouraging interagency collaboration, parental involvement and strong student participation.

### **The Adult Agency's Role**

Once a referral has been made to an appropriate adult service agency, a representative from that agency may become an important member of the IEP Team. Under IDEA, a parent or a student at age of majority must give permission for outside agency personnel to attend an IEP meeting to discuss transition. By attending, the representative will begin to know the needs, strengths and abilities of the student well before graduation from the high school program. They can share knowledge about services available through the agency and about employment opportunities in the area. They can help focus the student's school experiences in realistic directions.

## **Resources**

**Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR):** [www.state.id.us/idvr](http://www.state.id.us/idvr)

Idaho Parents Unlimited (IPUL) or your regional Department of Health and Welfare can identify DDAs, **Developmental Disability Agencies**, in your area.

See pages 33-34 for additional resources and agencies.



## PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

Person-Centered Planning is an informal process and can help in transition planning. A group of people (family, friends, teachers or other concerned helpers) meet with a person who has a significant disability to help him or her plan a desirable future. The individual who has a disability tells the group what he or she wants and needs. If the person is unable to actively direct or participate in this process, the people closest to the individual shares what they believe the individual wants and needs based on their knowledge and observations of the individual. The process focuses on goals for employment, participation, and independence so that the person's individual preferences can be honored, respected and implemented.

Many different person-centered planning tools have been developed that could be used in the transition process: MAPs, Personal Futures Planning, PATH planning, Essential Lifestyle Planning, and Dream Cards are a few examples. For additional information here are some resources:

- The PACER Center at [www.pacer.org/tatra/personal.htm](http://www.pacer.org/tatra/personal.htm)
- PEATC at [www.peatc.org/NEXT\\_STEPS/intro/brief.htm](http://www.peatc.org/NEXT_STEPS/intro/brief.htm)
- IMPACT: Transition to Empowered Lifestyles Project Person-Centered Planning at [www.ptimpact.com](http://www.ptimpact.com)

## ADVOCACY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

### Advocacy

Advocacy is a learned process that includes:

- knowledge of the student's desires, disability, and needed accommodations and supports,
- knowledge of the student's disability rights and responsibilities,
- knowledge of resources for determining rights and responsibilities under various disability related systems,
- communicating or having a support system for communicating, the above information to service providers and other persons that impact the student's life.

Self-advocacy is a process where the student directs the above process as much as possible. It is an important part of self-determination.

## Self-Determination

A critical component of the transition process, self-determination, is having choice and control over one's own life. It means being able to make decisions, to define goals for one's self, and to take the initiative to achieve them. Since the student's strengths and interests, as well as their needs, are the basis of transition planning, it is important for students to learn how to actively participate in selecting future goals. If the school and the home have both been giving the student opportunities to express their preferences and to make their own choices and decisions, the student should be ready to actively participate in transition planning.

Below are some simple ways in which one can encourage the development of self-determination skills in students. They all involve encouraging students to make as many decisions for themselves as possible.

- Provide opportunities to make simple everyday choices, such as what to wear, what game to play, what to eat, who to invite to a party, etc.
- Provide opportunities for planning for the future by daily use of a day planner, calendar, or other tool.
- Provide opportunities for planning activities that are pending, such as what to take for the field trip tomorrow, or what and how much is needed from the store for the class party.
- Provide choices of strategies for learning, such as "Do you remember the spelling words better if you write them out, say them to yourself, or see them?"
- Ask the student to reconsider choices he or she has made in the recent past so he or she can evaluate the consequences. "This morning you spent your lunch money on a candy bar on the way to school. Now it's lunch-time and you're hungry. What decision do you wish you had made?"
- Help the student to set simple goals and evaluate the progress toward that goal. "You have an exam/project coming up. Have you started to study? Do you think you will be done in time?"
- Assist the student in recognizing his or her strengths and weaknesses in key areas (math, reading, writing, memory, physical activities, socializing) and to discuss ways to get around or ways to use their strengths to compensate for their weaknesses, such as with the use of assistive technology or support services.

Taking control over one's own life also means taking responsibility for one's life. The slogan of those who are learning and practicing self-determination is "Nothing about us, without us!"

For assistance or additional information about self determination, here are some resources:

- The Self-Advocate Leadership Network, [www.hsri.org/leaders](http://www.hsri.org/leaders)
- Family Village, [www.familyvillage.wisc.edu](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu)
- The Center for Self Determination at <http://self-determination.com>
- The National Youth Leadership Network [www.nyln.org](http://www.nyln.org)
- <http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Publications1&Template=/CustomSource/Products.cfm&ICID=290> for two publications on teaching self determination, published by the Council For Exceptional Children



## OTHER IMPORTANT TOPICS TO CONSIDER

### AGE OF MAJORITY

At 18 years of age, a person in Idaho becomes a legal adult whether or not he/she has a physical or mental disability. Special Education rights transfer from the parent to the student at this time unless the IEP team agrees the student is unable to provide informed consent with respect to his special education program. However, even when Special Education rights transfer to the student ... "the right to receive written notice is always retained by both the parent and the adult student. The parent will continue to receive copies of any notices, including written notices and invitations to IEP team meetings that the adult student receives." (The Idaho Special Education Manual, 2007)

As part of the transition process, young adults move from services of entitlement to services based on eligibility. Under IDEA students are entitled to educational services up to the age of 21 or graduation if earlier than 21. After that, they must meet eligibility criteria to qualify for adult services.

At the age of 18, the Social Security Administration assumes an individual with a disability is an adult. Financial eligibility for SSI benefits is re-determined on individual assets rather than those of his or her parents. (If receiving survivor benefits, the young adult may experience an increase in benefits as a disabled adult child.) The Social Security Administration also re-determines eligibility for benefits based on adult disability categories. The transition team may help prepare for this re-determination by assuring evaluations are current and complete.

### FINANCIAL ISSUES

If the student is capable of making the most of the necessary day-to-day decisions, but is not capable of managing the financial aspect of life, there are options other than guardianship. If the student is a Social Security beneficiary, and needs monitoring and guidance related to paying bills and day-to-day expenditures, then a representative payee may be appointed to receive and disperse funds. When the student reaches age 18, a parent needs to complete an application to the Social Security Administration to be appointed as a payee.

Another option is opening a **joint bank account**. Both of these options do not require a guardianship or a conservatorship.

If there is a considerable amount of property involved, and if no trust has been set up, a **conservator** can be appointed to make decisions about the property of a protected person. This requires a court action.

If money is to be left to the young person through a will, and if that money would make the young person ineligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid, then that money can be put into a **special needs trust**. Trusts that can be established to enhance the individual's life while protecting eligibility for SSI and Medicaid. Trusts are controlled by a trustee who holds both the assets and income for the benefit of the individual with a disability. Trusts are legal documents and parents should seek consultation with an attorney knowledgeable in this area of practice.

For assistance with these or other financial issues, contact the following:

- Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc. (Co-Ad) may be reached in the Boise area at 336-5353- or 1-800-632-5125.
- Your Lawyer
- The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program located within Co-Ad at 1-800-632-5125
- Call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213, TTY number - 1-800-325-0778, or visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) .

## HEALTH CARE ISSUES

Health care related goals should be considered in transition planning. As young people prepare for transition to independence, it is important for them to assume some responsibility for their own health care. Parents and young adults need to identify health related skills that can be performed independently, as well as those where community support and resources will be needed for the young person to assume responsibility for his or her own health care and communication with health professionals. Issues of sexuality and reproductive health; of parenting and child development; and of health care financing resources should also be considered.

To help develop transition planning goals to meet health care needs, the transition team should consider the following questions.

- How does health affect choices made in other areas of planning?
- Is there a need to identify a new physician if going to college away from home?
- How does health affect plans for living independently in the community or having a home or apartment?
- Does the young adult understand all his or her health care needs?
- Does the student know where to go to fill a new prescription?
- Do they know all the side effects of their medication?
- Who will make health care decisions?
- What does the student do in case of an emergency?

If the young person needs help in making medical decisions, a **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care** can be legally executed at age 18. This authorizes a family member or other concerned person to make medical decisions on behalf of the young person.

For additional resources pertaining to health care needs and transition visit:

- KASA (Kids as Self Advocates) [www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org)
- American Academy of Pediatrics [www.pediatrics.org](http://www.pediatrics.org)
- Healthy & Ready to Work [www.hrtw.org](http://www.hrtw.org)
- US Department of Health and Human Services at [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)
- Family Voices at [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org)

Each of these web sites have links to many resources concerning transition age students and health issues.

## GUARDIANSHIP

Parents do not automatically become their adult child's guardian. If necessary to pursue guardianship, they should initiate an inquiry about the process in the year before their child's 18th birthday. Guardianship may be considered if the individual is likely to experience substantial harm due to an inability to provide for personal needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, safety, and/or an inability to manage his or her property or financial affairs. (See above and previous page for a discussion of guardianship alternatives.)

Guardianship is a court-ordered relationship between a competent adult (a guardian) and an adult with cognitive or mental health impairments (proposed ward). A guardianship grants the ability to give consent and make certain decisions to a guardian, but does not ordinarily mean that the guardian will have financial responsibility for the ward's care or service.

During the court process, the proposed ward may be represented by an attorney of their own choosing or the court will appoint an attorney to represent him or her. Guardianships can be as limited or as broad as necessary. But when self-determination is the goal, a limited guardianship allows the individual with a disability the right and the responsibility to make decisions about his or her life as much as possible.

**Full or general guardianships** give the guardian the right to make decisions for the person with a disability in nearly all areas of life and should only be used when absolutely necessary. **A partial or limited guardianship** can be tailored to address only those areas that are of major concern.

There are three laws in Idaho under which guardianship can be established. It is important for parents to consult professionals who are familiar with the legal issues involved in these complex issues to determine which statute is applicable.

- Idaho Code §66-401 et seq governs guardianships for people with developmental disabilities:
- Idaho Code §15-5-303 et seq or the probate code governs guardianship for incapacitated persons
- Idaho Code § 66-317 et seq govern guardianship for individuals in mental health crisis

The following organizations can be consulted for additional information:

- Idaho Parents Unlimited, Inc. (IPUL, Inc)
- Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc.
- For an article on Rethinking Guardianship, go to the National Program Office on Self Determination at [http://iod.unh.edu/Self-Determination/newsletter1249/newsletter\\_show.htm-doc\\_id=24854.htm](http://iod.unh.edu/Self-Determination/newsletter1249/newsletter_show.htm-doc_id=24854.htm)

Referrals to attorneys familiar with disability issues, estate planning, special needs trusts, and guardianship issues can be obtained from the Lawyer Referral Service at 334-4500 or on-line at [http://www2.state.id.us/isb/lrs/lrs\\_search\\_panel.asp](http://www2.state.id.us/isb/lrs/lrs_search_panel.asp)

## PLANNING A MOVE

If planning to move after secondary school, it is important that team members determine what services will be available in the new locale. While it is true that many support services for persons with disabilities are federally funded and therefore exist in all states, the eligibility criteria and the availability of services under these programs vary greatly from state to state. While disability related criteria for SSA funded programs are the same throughout the nation, the amount an eligible beneficiary receives may vary, as some states offer a cash supplement to SSI beneficiaries.

Many states also have an order of selection for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Under an order of selection, only those eligible VR clients with the most severe disabilities receive services. (Idaho currently does not have an order of selection.)

Medicaid funded services and the eligibility criteria for these services also differ among states. For example, many states have waiting periods, some as long as eight years, for Home and Community Based Waiver Services.

Within the state of Idaho, available services also vary. Health and Welfare may be piloting a program in only one or two regions. Students, while approved for a service under Medicaid, may not be able to find a service provider in certain regions or cities. While Health and Welfare has tried to standardize services across the state, a service approved in one region may not be approved in another when annual reviews occurs. Subsidized housing availability and waiting times also vary within Idaho.

## DISABILITY RELATED RIGHTS

### Educational Rights

If a parent or an adult student disagrees with the proposed transition plan, there are several dispute resolution options under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). **Mediation** is a voluntary, informal process in which an impartial third party (a mediator) helps resolve disagreements. Mediation helps build positive working relationships, encourages mutual understanding, and helps parties focus on their common interest: the student. The ultimate goal of mediation is a binding written agreement that is acceptable to both parties. A request for mediation may occur when: the parties involved are unwilling or unable to modify their positions without outside assistance; after making a good faith effort, the parties face an impasse in attempting to resolve the dispute; or a request for a due process hearing occurs.

A signed, written **complaint** may be filed with the State Department of Education (SDE) by an individual or organization who believes the district or other educational agency has violated a requirement of IDEA. The district will forward information to the SDE as necessary to provide for a timely resolution of the complaint and will take corrective action if required by the SDE as part of the complaint resolution.

**A Due Process Hearing** provides both parties the opportunity to present their concerns, points of view, evidence, and reasons for their opinions in a formal hearing held before a hearing officer. Due process procedures may be initiated by parents, or the adult student, or the school district when these parties are unable to reach an agreement about an appropriate transition program for the student, and other approaches to planning the person's program have been exhausted. Either the parents or the student or the school district can initiate a due process hearing by written request. However, one should keep in mind that due process hearings may take longer to resolve, and are more adversarial than other options. The SDE has a booklet entitled *Making Good Choices: Opportunities for Resolving Conflict* available upon request that explains these options in more detail.

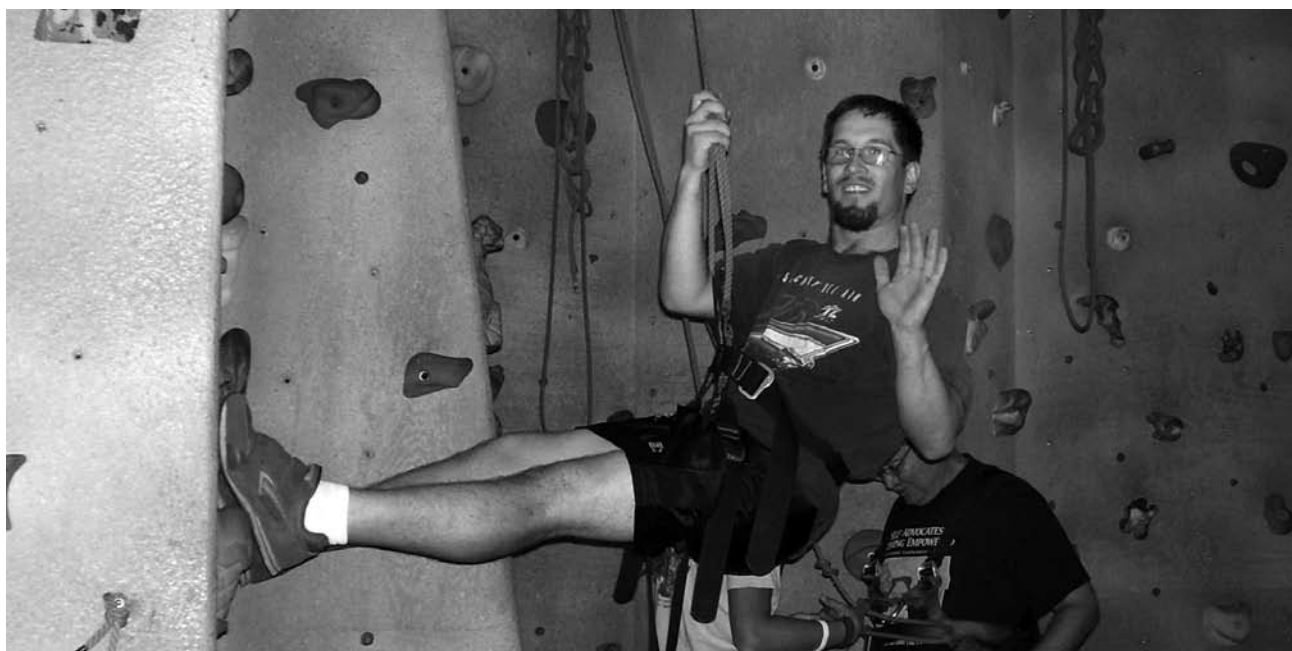
For more information regarding educational due process rights contact:  
Idaho Parents Unlimited, Inc, (IPUL) - (208) 342-5884 (V/TDD) or 1-800-242-IPUL  
Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc., (Co-Ad) - 336-5353 or 1-866-262-3462  
Idaho Sate Department of Education - 334-3940

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Complaints or disagreements about Vocational Rehabilitation Services may be directed to the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) regional manager. Complaints about services at the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired may be directed to the Field Services Chief. If, after contacting these individuals, the complaint is unresolved, or the student is hesitant to contact these agencies, the Rehabilitation Act funds the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to help consumers of rehabilitation and independent living services resolve complaints. Call Co-Ad Inc. at 1-866-262-3642 to request CAP services.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

General articles on these transition issues and others are available from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) and from PACER at [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org). You may request information from IPUL if you don't have internet access.



# A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO TRANSITION PLANNING

## THE FIRST STEP IS TO DREAM A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Dreaming is the first step in achieving transition goals. (This may be done through person-centered planning.) It is important for the student and the parents to discuss the student's hopes, dreams and visions for the future. This time of transition is a golden opportunity to try a variety of experiences "on for size."

Share this information with the other members of the IEP team. Then, everyone on the team can think of ways to help make the dreams a reality. Looking ahead and planning for the future helps the student, parents, and the IEP team focus on the student's interests, strengths, and abilities and build on that knowledge. It encourages the young person to make choices about the future and to identify strategies and assistive technology to achieve goals and participate in the life of the community. The student's dreams are the driving force throughout transition planning. This may also encourage the adult members of the team to recognize, create, and provide opportunities for the young person that may not presently exist within the community.

Having identified a "vision for the future," even though the vision may change over the years ahead, the IEP needs to include activities that will allow the student to make that vision a reality. **The following pages will help to organize the transition planning process.**

## AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN DEVELOPING TRANSITION GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Prior to leaving school a student should have become capable of expressing, in some manner, a sense of and knowledge of the following personal characteristics:

- An awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses, including an understanding of one's disability
- An ability to know what one likes and dislikes
- An understanding of one's needs to enable one to live as independently as possible
- Self-advocacy skills that allow one to express preferences and make choices and advocate for support services and accommodations
- An ability to display appropriate social skills for participating in the adult community
- A basic knowledge of one's rights under law
- A basic knowledge of community resources that can be of help
- An awareness of the specific AT devices and software that the student is currently using.

**Graduation** is one of the first things to discuss when developing plans for transition from school. Every student should receive a high school diploma if they have met the requirements as agreed upon by the IEP team and the Board of Education. Unless the student meets the regular requirements for a high school diploma, each student on an IEP has the right to receive special education services until the age of 21. A method of demonstrating proficiency, that takes into consideration the student's individual needs and abilities, is an important part of the IEP.

A State Board of Education rule "requires a demonstration of proficiency regarding the 10th-Grade Idaho Achievement Standards [The test for this is called the Idaho Standards Achievement Test or ISAT] as a condition of graduation." IEP teams can determine the method by which a student will demonstrate proficiency. This can be separate from the federal requirement that all students in 10th grade and in grades 3 to 9 have to take the ISAT.

"Each student receiving special education services will include as part of his or her IEP a statement of how the student will demonstrate proficiency in the Idaho Achievement Standards as a condition of graduation, if it is different than meeting proficient or advanced scores on the high school ISAT or an Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA)." (The Idaho Special Education Manual 2007)



Each school board is required to establish a (mechanism as an alternative for meeting the requirement) for students who cannot pass the ISAT with a proficient or advanced score. Such a student may appeal to the local school board to use the plan established.

## TRANSITION PLANNING AREAS

Bearing in mind the issues listed above, the student, with the assistance of the IEP team, should consider the questions below in deciding on post-school goals and in developing transition activities and services to address those goals. These questions are divided into the four main areas that the post-school goals and transition services need to address.

**1. Employment** - What kind of work would you like to do? What kind of training will you need for that work? What kind of an environment will you enjoy working in? Will you need on-the-job support? What kind(s) of AT will you need to perform the work?

*Supported Employment* is an option to consider when making career choices for people with severe disabilities. Supported employment provides on-the-job training and support as needed to obtain and maintain meaningful employment. It is a paid job in the community for people with disabilities who have previously been excluded from working alongside peers without disabilities. An example of supported employment is having a long-term, on-site job coach. Assistance in getting information about supported employment is available from the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

**2. Post-Secondary Training and Education** - Are you interested in continued education? If so, can you identify the schools, colleges, or vocational institutions that will help you to meet your goals? What supports and AT will you need? There are no IEP's in college. Therefore you need to understand your disability and know what accommodations are most helpful to you, and be able to communicate about them and be responsible for advocating for yourself to see that you get the accommodations that you need.

**3. Independent Living** - Where would you like to live? (With your family or on your own? With a friend or with several friends?) What kind of skills and AT will you need to learn to make that living arrangement happen? (Cooking, cleaning, shopping, using transportation?) How will you take care of your health needs? How will you manage your financial needs? Can you develop and follow a budget?

**4. Community Participation** - Will you be able to travel to work and pursue leisure activities within the community? Will you be able to access the services that can help you? Do you have hobbies and interests outside of school? Will they be enough to fill your leisure needs and hours as an adult? How will you be able to find friends and maintain relationships with friends and family? Do you know how to vote?

The following pages look at these four areas more closely and help the student and his or her family to identify the services and supports that may be necessary for the student to prepare for the transition from school to adult life. This guide can equip students and families with the knowledge to help them make their goals and hopes for the future a reality. Keep in mind that, although we have divided the information into four areas, many of the skills needed for one area are also needed in other areas.



# EMPLOYMENT

## Assessment

Vocational Assessment is an on-going process designed to help parents, students and educators understand and provide for a young person’s vocational preferences, skills and potential. It is a process to measure skills, not deficits, and should begin during the middle school years and continue through high school. Everyone’s job interests change over the years, and a young person with special needs is no exception. A “Vocational Assessment” is a compilation of information about many areas of a student’s abilities, including: academic, aptitude, behavioral/social, medical, psychological, and styles of learning. Much of this information can be gained by reviewing school records, in-school vocational experiences or a situational assessment in the community. Information from you, the student, and from your parents is a vital part of the assessment process.

**Assessments can be done in the following ways. Check the assessments you have done.**

### Vocational Assessment

These activities can help you find out what you do best.

Student/parent interview _____
Student’s interests _____
Student’s aptitude _____
Formal Assessment _____
Situational Assessment _____
Teacher/school personnel feedback _____

**Do you know and understand the results of these tests?**

**Self Knowledge:** Check the appropriate column to show what you know and how well you know it.

Questions	Yes	Sometimes	No
1. Do you know what you do well in school?			
2. Do you know what you do well outside of school?			
3. Can you easily explain your skills and strengths to other people?			
4. Do you know how you learn best?			
5. Do you inform you teacher how you learn best?			
6. Do you inform your employer how you learn best?			
7. Do you ask for help when you need it?			
8. Do you take responsibility for your own behavior?			
9. Do you know what “reasonable accommodation” means?			
10. Do you know what accommodations you need in school in order to be successful?			
11. Do you know what accommodations you need on the job in order to be successful?			
12. Do you know what AT you need?			
13. Do you know how to ask for accommodations to meet your needs?			

Adapted from *The 411 on Disability Disclosure, A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities*, by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability and the Office of Disability Employment Policy.

For more information about vocational assessments, contact district special education staff or the school guidance counselor, the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, all of which can refer you to other organizations as appropriate.

## Services and Supports

Check the ones that need to be addressed.

### Career Guidance Services

These activities can help identify where your talents might fit.

Counselor Services \_\_\_\_\_  
 Access to computerized career information \_\_\_\_\_

### Work Experiences

These activities can help you to find out about jobs and what you enjoy doing.

In School \_\_\_\_\_  
 In the Community \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Shadowing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Study \_\_\_\_\_  
 Summer Job \_\_\_\_\_  
 Volunteer Work \_\_\_\_\_

### Employment Support Services

These services are available to help you learn to do a job successfully.

Competitive Employment \_\_\_\_\_  
 Support on the Job \_\_\_\_\_  
 Transitional Employment \_\_\_\_\_  
 School to Work Programs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Coaching \_\_\_\_\_

### Career Related Courses

Your plans will require certain courses in school to help you reach your goals.

Vocational/Technical \_\_\_\_\_  
 College Bound \_\_\_\_\_  
 Computer Literacy \_\_\_\_\_

### Adult Service Agencies

You may be eligible for help from one of these agencies.

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department of Health and Welfare \_\_\_\_\_  
 Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Private Providers \_\_\_\_\_

### Post-Secondary Education Training Opportunities

You need to ask about opportunities, such as these, for career building outside of schools.

Workforce Investment Act, Individual Training Account \_\_\_\_\_  
 Community Technical Colleges \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business/Trade Schools \_\_\_\_\_  
 College Support Services \_\_\_\_\_  
 Adult Education \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vocational Rehabilitation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired \_\_\_\_\_

Trade and Technical Schools are designed to prepare students for gainful employment in recognized occupations. They typically place great importance on job placement for their graduates.

The “one stop” career center in your area can offer links to community job-training and career services. You can find the one stop center and other resources in your area at <http://www.careeronestop.org/> . Enter your zip code in the service locator feature. This allows you to investigate all the possible resources in your community that can help you in career development.

## Essentials

Two items are essential in order for an individual to get a job: a social security card (with one’s social security number on it) and a driver’s license or state issued identification card. You will need your birth certificate in order to obtain either. For a social security card, apply to the Social Security Administration office in your area. Either a driver’s license or an identification card is available at your local Department of Motor Vehicles.

## Qualities for an Employee

These are skills that employers rate as essential qualities in employees.

Check those areas that need to be addressed or identified.

Employment skills	Assessment of the Student’s Skills	Needs training	Needs support
Punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is ready for school on time</li> <li>• Is at the appointed place at the time agreed</li> </ul>		
Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends consistently</li> <li>• Comes equipped with the necessary tools</li> <li>• Calls if late or absent</li> <li>• Follows through on assigned duties</li> </ul>		
Pride in work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does careful and accurate work</li> <li>• Attempts to correct mistakes</li> </ul>		
Respect for authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is polite to supervisors/adults</li> <li>• Accepts assignments, instruction, correction</li> </ul>		
Enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes pride in assigned job</li> <li>• Shows initiative in doing new jobs / duties</li> </ul>		
Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has good personal hygiene</li> <li>• Dresses appropriately for the job</li> </ul>		
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens</li> <li>• Works well with other people</li> <li>• Has appropriate social behaviors</li> <li>• Expresses needs, questions, desires</li> </ul>		
Ability to use transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows appropriate behavior in vehicles</li> <li>• Is able to get to work area from drop-off point</li> <li>• Knows how to use public transportation</li> <li>• Obtains a driver’s license</li> </ul>		
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjusts to changes in assignments</li> <li>• Is able to learn new, related tasks</li> </ul>		

Identification of your skills, together with the needs identified on the previous pages will help determine goals for employment that need to be addressed in the transition IEP. Once the goals are identified, transition services or activities can be written to meet those goals.

### Questions to Answer: A Checklist

After long range goals have been determined, ask the following questions to assess your needs and identify the activities that will be necessary to include in the transition plan in order to achieve those long-range goals. Check those areas that need to be addressed:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Have your interests and abilities as determined through vocational assessments been discussed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have the skills necessary to obtain competitive employment?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Will you need some support to obtain or maintain employment?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are you aware of the possible options regarding work?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you accessed the school-to-work program in your school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you had any work experience?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are you taking appropriate career-related courses (either vocational or college bound)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have good social skills appropriate for the job and living in the community?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have the Assistive Technology necessary to obtain employment?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you contacted agencies outside the school system that may be able to assist you to meet your goals? Such as: Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR); Private Developmental Disabilities Agencies; Department of Health and Welfare Bureaus of Adult Services and Developmental Disabilities Agencies; Independent Living Centers; the Idaho Assistive Technology Project; or Community Rehabilitation Programs.

If the answer is “NO” to any of these questions, the IEP Team should include activities in the IEP that will address these areas and provide you with the skills and experiences necessary to prepare you for finding and keeping a job. Where the activities will take place and who will be responsible for them, as well as timeliness for completion must also be noted.

### Goals and Activities

Goal statements need to be as specific as possible. If skills are to be developed, be sure to specify which skills. Here are some statements that reflect employment goals: “The student will...”

- go to college
- become involved in a post-secondary training program to develop skills needed for a competitive job in \_\_\_\_\_ field (a field that matches the interests and abilities of the student)
- develop (specific) vocational and academic skills required to enter an on-the-job training or apprenticeship program
- develop (specific) skills to seek and maintain employment
- develop (specific) work skills and behaviors needed to work in a semi-supervised employment situation
- develop the necessary (specific) work skills for an ongoing supported work environment

Another way to think about employment may be to think of working toward your “dream” job by taking a number of different steps toward it. Some of those steps might be:

- Temporary work (filling a job that will only be available for a short time)
- Part time work
- Job sharing (Two workers share one full-time job)
- Volunteering
- International Exchange programs
- AmeriCorps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)
- Military
- Civilian Service Employees in military installations
- Entrepreneurship

**Write some goals and activities that would be helpful to you, based on information that you have discovered in this section:**

## POST-SECONDARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION

### Assessment

Look at these options and check those that might help you to meet your goals.

- Community College (2 yrs.)
- College or University (4 yrs.)
- Apprenticeship
- Adult Education
- Vocational Technical School or College
- Trade or Business School
- Vocational Technical Centers
- Military
- Community Rehabilitation Programs
- On-the-Job Training
- Job shadowing
- On-site visits or volunteering

Differences Between Vocational Technical Schools, Community Colleges and Bachelor Degree/Colleges and Universities:

Vocational Technical Schools	Community Colleges	Bachelor Degree/Colleges & Universities
Prepare for a specific occupation through skills training	Offer associate degrees and certificates in variety of areas	Multitude of degrees: associate, bachelor and graduate programs
Integrate academic curriculum with hands-on training	Some certificate programs may be hands-on. Other programs are academic based.	Few hands-on programs Most academic based
Tuition varies	Tuition is reasonably priced	More costly - charge higher tuition and fees
Typically no residential halls	Typically no residential halls	Option for residence hall living or commuting
Admission requirements vary	Open admissions, some majors have selective admissions requirements	Competitive admissions
Public or proprietary	Public or proprietary	Public or private
Smaller student/teacher ratio	Typically offer more support services and allow more time for adjustment to college life	Tend to be larger both physically and student/teacher ratio

Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability [http://www.stlcc.edu/fv/moahead/guidebook/fronttext/trans\\_school.html](http://www.stlcc.edu/fv/moahead/guidebook/fronttext/trans_school.html)

## Services and Supports

When enrolling in a two- or four-year institution, an IEP alone may not establish eligibility for accommodations, assistive technology, or auxiliary services. Therefore, it is very important to check with the student disability services office at your school to obtain a copy of their documentation requirements. At a minimum, documentation describing your disability must be detailed enough to determine that a substantial barrier to learning exists and contain a history or recommendations of how you have been successfully assisted in the past.

Most colleges and universities have an office of student disabilities services. However, students need to advocate for the accommodations and AT that they need, and should understand that services at this level may look different from those they had in high school. Whereas accommodations in public schools are put in place to assist the student to be successful, in college the intent is to make it possible for the student to understand instruction, and be able to demonstrate learning. Whether the student is successful is totally up to the student.

If you plan to participate in a program offered at a private institution or school, such as a technical or trade school, you will need to inquire about what accommodations will be available if you attend. These institutions do not usually have an established office to assist students with disabilities but there may be an individual that oversees these things. They are more informal in their approach. Be sure to ask if accommodations are available and how to request them.

Keep in mind that many colleges and universities have tutoring services in each subject area for all students. These are paid for with student tuition and students rarely take sufficient advantage of them.

Here are other questions that you need to answer for yourself: Do you want to move away from home or go to a local school? If accessibility is an issue for you, is the campus/training site you want to attend accessible? Is transportation an issue? Is there accessible transportation at the school of choice and in the community? Is housing accessible? Do you have the skills necessary for independent campus living, such as how to use an ATM machine, use a computer, manage money, use the course catalog, read a campus map, schedule and keep appointments? Will financial assistance be necessary? Do you have the skills to make new friends?

Areas where you may need help, a checklist

- Study Skills
- Time Management
- Organizational Skills
- Preparing for the SAT/ACT's
- Understanding college entrance or training program requirements
- Identifying accommodations and AT you may need
- Determining whether the accommodations you need will be available to you
- Assistive Technology

## Essentials

**As a student, which is for you?**

**Trade and Technical schools** are designed to prepare you for employment in recognized occupations. Their programs can take anywhere from two weeks to two years to complete. Generally entrance requirements are a GED or a high school diploma. They typically put great importance on finding jobs for their graduates.



**Colleges** offer an opportunity for continued education which may be required for certain jobs.

**Community colleges** are publicly funded, have either no or low-cost tuition and offer a wide range of programs, including vocational and occupational courses. Generally the only admissions requirement is a high school diploma or its equivalent.

**Junior colleges** are usually privately supported, and the majority provide programs in the liberal arts field.

**Four-year colleges and universities** offer programs of study which lead to a Bachelor's degree after successful completion of four years of prescribed course work.

If you are thinking about additional training or school after high school, you need to think about and plan for some of the basic differences between high school and programs after graduation.

- In high school, you spend more time in class for each subject than in most vocational training programs or college. This means that you have more opportunities for contact with, and assistance from, your teachers in high school. In technical school or college, professors have limited office hours and are thus less available for assistance.
- In high school, homework is frequently done in class or in study halls. After high school the student is responsible for budgeting time for study. As a general rule, college students need to spend three hours doing homework for each hour spent in class. This can take even longer for students with learning problems.
- Accommodations are not necessarily available for last minute term paper editing, test preparation, or content tutoring. Students must plan for needed accommodations.
- High school classes typically have 20 to 30 students, whereas freshman and sophomore classes in college can often have as many as several hundred students, which can be much more distracting.
- Whereas high school classes require the student to complete and hand in assignments frequently, resulting in frequent feedback, grades in post-secondary classes often are based on only a half dozen or fewer assignments or exams for the entire term.
- Grading in some high school classes may occasionally be based on "effort" or "degree of improvement," whereas post-secondary school grades are based almost entirely on the mastery of subject matter.
- In high school, parents, teachers, and other adults help students to manage and structure their time. In training program(s) and college classes, it is up to the students to manage their own time.

If you have decided where you want to continue learning, are you taking courses in school that will enable you to apply for entry to one of these programs?

If you will have to take the ACT or SAT entrance exams in order to get into the institution of your choice, have you considered whether you will need to have accommodations for those exams? (Many vocational programs require students to take the COMPASS test or a similar assessment of basic reading, math, and writing skills.)

Accommodations might include extended time, readers, interpreters, etc., but you must make advanced arrangements for them.



**Goals and Activities**

**Write some goals that would be helpful to you based on information you have discovered in this section:**

## INDEPENDENT LIVING

### Assessment

These are some of the skills you will need to learn so that you can live on your own. Check the appropriate column that best describes your situation.

Skill Area	Specific Skill	Mastered	Need Training or Support
Decision Making	Can make decisions in all areas		
Cooking	Menu planning & nutrition Operates appliances Food preparation Follows a recipe Food storage including leftovers Cleaning up afterwards		
Cleaning	Knows tools & supplies Knows procedures Maintains clean environment Puts clothes in hamper Uses washer and dryer Folds clothes Puts clothes away		
Shopping	Where to shop What items to select How to pay		
Personal Hygiene	Manages personal hygiene Is neatly groomed Dresses appropriately Maintains dental hygiene		
Transportation	Personal—automobile or bicycle Can ask for directions Public – bus or taxi Specialized – wheelchair Specialized – van Can read a map		
Self Advocacy	Directs own IEP meeting Knows rights & responsibilities Understands own disability Requests help when needed Knows resources and supports Knows AT needs		
Medical & Support Services	Can access health care, private or public Can make and keep appointments Can question and respond to doctors Knows how to read a thermometer Can access counseling if needed		

Medical & Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can purchase medications and take appropriately</li> <li>Needs personal care services</li> <li>Uses assistive technology</li> <li>Can maintain assistive technology</li> <li>Evacuation plan/fire drill</li> <li>Portable medical summary</li> </ul>		
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With family or in foster care</li> <li>Intermediate care facility, group home</li> <li>Supervised living</li> <li>Independent living (House, apartment)</li> <li>Shared independent living (roommate)</li> <li>Understands leases</li> <li>Knows tenant/landlord responsibilities</li> </ul>		
Housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleans own room</li> <li>Makes own bed/changes linen</li> <li>Takes out trash</li> <li>Chooses decorations for room</li> <li>Does minor repairs (changes light bulbs)</li> <li>Basic mending/sewing skills</li> </ul>		
Financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manages a bank account</li> <li>Can make out checks &amp; pay bills on time</li> <li>Budgeting</li> <li>Knows how to access public assistance services, such as SSI, SSDI, or the other services through the Department of Health and Welfare, Idaho Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach</li> <li>Insurance</li> </ul>		
Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knows emergency procedures</li> <li>Knows where flashlights and batteries are</li> <li>Can use a fire extinguisher</li> <li>Knows how to turn water off</li> <li>Knows where extra key is kept</li> <li>Can unclog sink or toilet</li> </ul>		
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can locate bathroom in unfamiliar building</li> <li>Can use a pay phone or has cell phone</li> <li>Can use phone book</li> <li>Can get library card</li> <li>Can get ID card or license</li> <li>Can use post office</li> </ul>		

The IEP team should discuss all areas of concern and decide whether you need help in acquiring those skills. If “YES”, your IEP should include activities to teach the skills. It must also include information about where the skills will be taught – at school, at home, or in the community – and must identify who will be responsible for teaching the skills and within what time frame.

## Services and Supports

### Residential Options

Choices of where to live depend upon an individual's abilities and personal preferences. It is important for families to become informed about the variety of options and visit alternatives early in the transition planning process. Many of these options will be more affordable with a roommate. Some of the options to look for in your community are:

- individual homes or apartment, with or without supports
- cooperative housing
- rent-subsidized apartment
- room and board
- dormitories
- community residence (supported living)
- supervised apartments
- adult family care
- group home

If you decide that living in a group home or supervised living arrangement is a preference or even a remote possibility, your name may need to be placed on a waiting list. Developing private or cooperative housing options also takes time. As the alternatives are considered, think also about what adaptations, furnishings, and supports will be needed and how the costs will be covered.

### Essentials:

**DON'T GIVE UP** if at first it appears that services and programs are not available. Know what you want and develop a clear plan for attaining your goal. Find support for your plan, and learn how the "systems" work. Don't let "we have always done it this way" and "we don't have the funds" be excuses for not looking for alternative pathways.

Be willing to compromise as a stepping-stone to your dream. Young people with disabilities are increasingly making a successful transition from school to adult life and are viewed as valued contributing members of their communities.

In order to get a loan to finance training, to purchase a house or condo, or to start up your own business, you may need to have established a good credit rating.

### Goals, Activities and Services

Whatever decision you and your family make about where you will live as an adult, it is important that you develop the skills and have the AT necessary to be as independent as possible and to participate in present and future life decisions.

When writing post school goals and transition activities to go with those goals, remember to be as specific as possible. As noted in the assessment checklist on pages 18 and 19, each area of independent living is made up of many specific skills. Goals written into the IEP for the student regarding independent living might include statements such as: "The student will . . ."

- develop the necessary skills to make independent decisions;
- develop the ability to take care of personal needs independent of others;
- learn to manage personal needs utilizing necessary supports;
- develop the necessary skills to live in a supervised apartment or group home
- learn skills necessary to maximize the ability to function independently within a family environment

**Write some goals and activities that would be helpful for you, based on the information you have discovered in this section:**

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### Assessment

Check those areas that need to be addressed or identified:

#### Leisure/Recreation

Find out about opportunities for fun in your community in these areas.

- Sports
- Social Clubs
- Community Programs
- Specialized Recreation
- Special Interest Clubs
- Church Groups

#### Civic Responsibilities

Find out how you can become actively involved and what you can do to improve the quality of life in your community.

- Political Groups
- Advocacy Groups
- Civic/Neighborhood Groups
- Volunteer Opportunities such as at nursing homes and hospitals, faith organizations, food banks, art organizations, political campaigns, animal shelters, community beautification projects, nature centers, museums, libraries, etc.
- Non-profit organizations
- Register to vote and vote in elections
- Register for the selective service; documentation from your doctor may be necessary for verification of disability.

#### Services and supports

Find out if any of these opportunities are available or could be created in your community.

- Community mentoring activities with adults in formal or informal settings
- Peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities
- Exposure to role models in varied settings and contexts

In Idaho, there are several opportunities for high school students to learn about advocacy skills, meet others with disabilities, and develop mentoring and peer support. Further information is available from the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities.

**Idaho Youth Leadership Forum:** Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a leadership, citizenship and career development program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Youth are chosen to serve as delegates from their communities at a five-day conference in Boise. Student delegates get information about civil rights, career development, and resources related to assistive technology and community support. Each delegate writes a personal leadership plan and makes a commitment to follow through on goals. Favorite YLF activities include a morning spent job shadowing with a career mentor in their desired profession and a meeting with policymakers to talk about current issues.

**Idaho Self Advocate Leadership Network:** Idaho Self Advocate Leadership Network is a statewide self-advocacy organization of people with disabilities working together for change. Trained teams in each region of the state are teaching people how to speak up for themselves to have choice and control in their lives. They provide presentations across Idaho on self-advocacy, self-determination, assertiveness skills, friendship and other topics.

**Mission Statement:**

*To advance equality through growth, education, and advocacy by providing opportunities so individuals with disabilities may achieve their greatest unique potential.*

**Idaho Partners in Policymaking:** Idaho Partners in Policymaking is designed to prepare individuals to be effective leaders and advocates for people with disabilities. The training program is for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities. The program explores disability issues and builds skills that individuals need to influence legislation and policy effectively to obtain the most appropriate services for themselves and others. The overall goal is to achieve a productive partnership between people needing and using services and those in a position to make policy and law.

**Tools for Life Transition Conference:** The statewide Tools for Life Conference is held each spring for students, families, school personnel, and others. Information about transition areas, as well as social activities for students, are offered over two days. A small registration fee is charged but scholarships are available.

**Essential Skills**

**Checklist for the student**

Before developing activities for community participation, answer the following questions:

How do you spend your leisure time? Alone? With family? With friends?

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What sports, games, or hobbies do you enjoy? \_\_\_\_\_

What sports, games, or hobbies would you like to learn? \_\_\_\_\_

Where in your community can you participate in these activities? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you make friends easily? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you describe your disability and related needs? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you need assistance in letting people know about your needs?

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Do you find it hard to ask for help? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you use a telephone? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you read a map, or a bus or train schedule? \_\_\_\_\_

Social skills are important if one is to become a part of a community. Social skills are often difficult to learn



because they are not taught formally but are a part of incidental learning. We depend on language to relate to others. But just as important, we also use non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures, etc. Knowing how to wait our turn, respond appropriately, make eye contact, pay attention and express interest in what others are saying are all part of what makes for a successful social life in our community. Do you have the necessary skills or the needed supports and assistive technology in this area? \_\_\_\_\_

Family members as well as counselors, speech/language therapists and teachers can help give feedback to you to help you recognize and practice improving social behaviors.

### **Goals and Activities**

These statements reflect long-range community participation goals: “The student will . . .

- develop (specific) skills to live within the community
- develop (specific) skills to access the available resources
- develop the ability to utilize recreational and leisure resources in the community independently or with support services
- develop the necessary (specific) skills and abilities to advocate for his/her own rights

**Write some goals and activities that would be helpful to you, based on information that you have discovered in this section:**

## **Bringing It All Together**

What would you like to do when you leave school? (Use the space below and write it down.)

What do you need to learn while in high school? (Use the space below and write it down.)

What do you need to do both at school and at home to make your hopes and dreams come true? (Use the space below and write it down.)

Look at your goals and activities often. If you need to, change them as you learn more about each area.

Planning and working on goals now will help to make your dreams and visions for adult life come true.

## Record of Contacts

Name of Program	Date contacted	Contact Person	Notes Services available, eligibility requirement referrals, etc.

## Agencies Providing Services for Adults with Disabilities

Challenges when looking for a particular service include: finding an agency that provides the service needed, finding an agency that has knowledge about a particular disability, and/or finding an agency without a waiting list of eligible persons with disabilities. Even if an agency does not offer a needed service, be sure to ask what services the agency does provide and their eligibility requirements. Asking questions is often the catalyst that leads to information about other opportunities. In addition to the agencies listed below, school personnel may know about other resources or call the organizations listed below for additional information about services for transition-aged young adults.

**Idaho Parents Unlimited, Inc. (IPUL)** Is a statewide networking organization dedicated to the attainment of appropriate services for people with disabilities; promoting better public understanding of the problems facing children and adults with disabilities; promoting programs in Idaho which provide parent training, special services, advocacy, and information and referral services; stimulating communication and joint activities among parent support and training organizations; promoting coordination with all public and private agencies and organizations, promoting parent/professional collaboration; and providing a network for dissemination of information through publications, workshops and conferences in the state of Idaho.  
[www.ipulidaho.org](http://www.ipulidaho.org)

**Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc. (Co-Ad)** protects and advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities. If an individual is denied vocational employment services, or encounters changes in the delivery of services, Co-Ad may intervene to resolve differences. CO-AD may be reached in the Boise area at 336-5353 or 1-866-COADING (1-866-262-3462) or on their website: <http://users.moscow.com/co-ad>

**Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR)** provides service to assist persons with physical and/or mental disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. IDVR can provide individualized services to eligible persons that may include vocational assessment, guidance and training, career education and on the job training, supported employment services and rehabilitation technology services. Contact your regional IDVR office or go to their website: [www.state.id.us/idvr](http://www.state.id.us/idvr)

**Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI)** provides services to assist people with blindness or visual impairments to obtain, retain, or regain employment. ICBVI can provide individualized services to eligible clients that may include alternative skills of blindness, assessment, vocational guidance and counseling, training, and rehabilitation technology services. Contact your regional ICBVI office or go to their website: [www.state.id.us/icbvi](http://www.state.id.us/icbvi)

**The Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP)** provides statewide information and assistance to Idahoans regarding assistive technology (AT) and provide AT assessments and trainings for educators and students with disabilities. [www.idahoat.org](http://www.idahoat.org)

**Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities** promotes the capacity of people with developmental disabilities and their families to determine, access, and direct the services and/or supports they need to live the lives they choose, and to build the communities' ability to support their choices. Phone: 1-208-334-2178 or <http://www.icdd.idaho.gov>

**Independent Living Centers** assist persons with physical and/or mental disabilities to live independently in their communities. There are six centers in Idaho. Services may include assistance in obtaining modifications to a home or vehicle, adaptive equipment, personal care assistance, advocacy, peer counseling and independent living skills training. [Http://www2.state.id.us/silc/](http://www2.state.id.us/silc/)

This is not an inclusive list but rather a sampling of the larger statewide groups available to assist in this process. Many other wonderful organization such as the **Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health** and the **Family to Family 360 Project** are also available statewide to assist in providing opportunities for youth with disabilities. Be diligent in your search for resources. If you run into difficulty in finding what you need call Idaho Parents Unlimited and we will assist you.

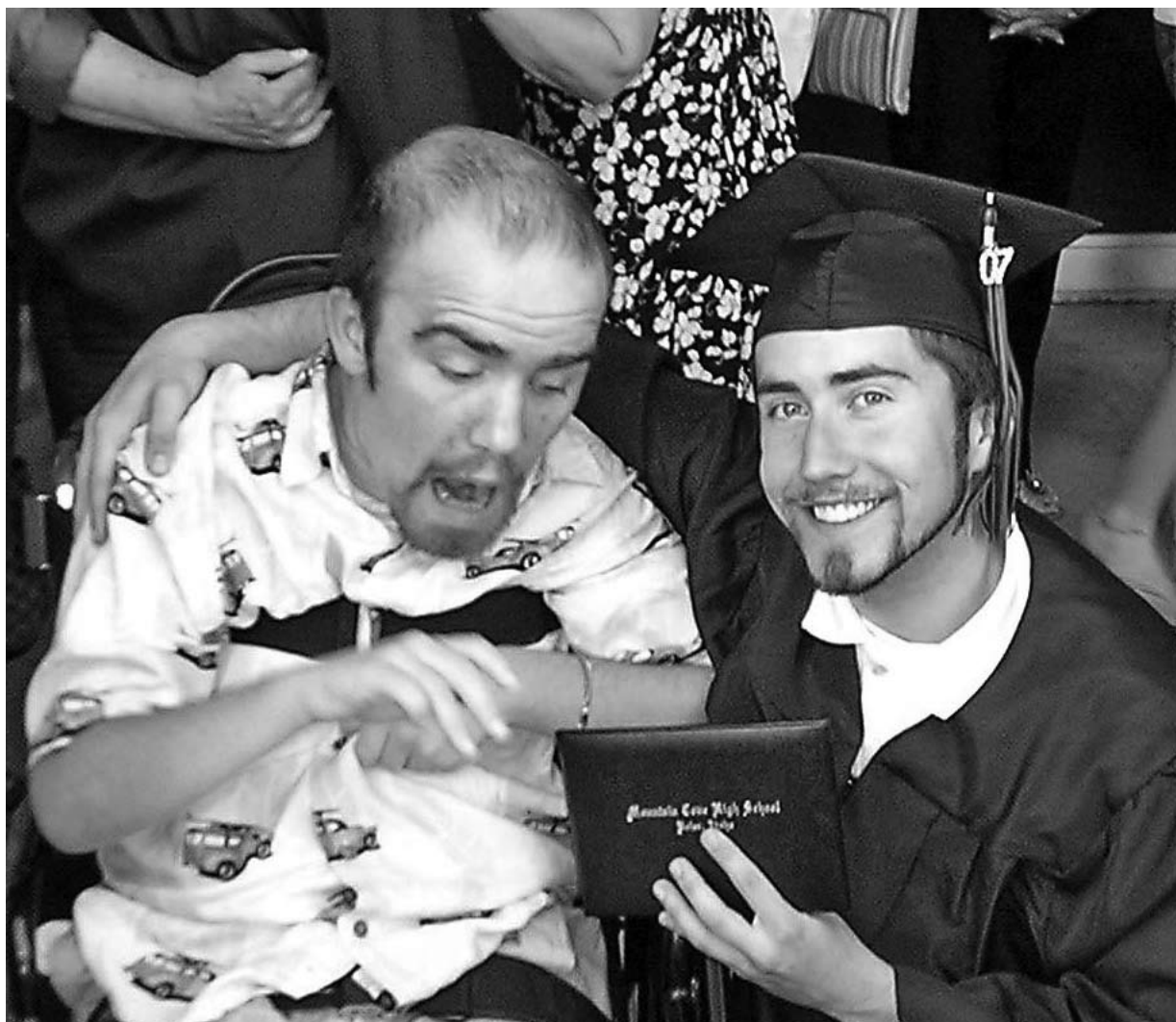
## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Social Security Administration (SSA)** administers Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI), and Work Incentives. Call 1-800-772-1213 between 7a.m and 7p.m. Monday through Friday for information, applications, and appointment times.

**Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center** at [www.peatc.org](http://www.peatc.org) ; click on Next Steps for Planning the “Next Steps” to Adult Life for Students with Disabilities.

**The National Center for Secondary Education and Transition** at <http://www.ncset.org/topics/sdmhs/resources.asp?topic=30> has some helpful resources and links for parents.

**The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities** has many free publications for families and youth available on their website at <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/>





**Idaho Parents Unlimited, Inc**  
1878 West Overland Road  
Boise, ID 83705

In Boise 342-5884  
1-800-242-IPUL (4785)  
[www.ipulidaho.org](http://www.ipulidaho.org)