

Transition Practices in Kentucky

“The purposes of this title are to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and **prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living**”.

--IDEA, 2004

The purpose of education is to prepare the individual for future opportunities in education, employment, and independent living. When an individual turns 22, the state is no longer required to provide services. Thus, the transition years are critical for skill development, and for getting the family ready for the upcoming transition.

According to state law, transition preparation begins when the student is 14 years old and is a “results oriented process”, “based on the individual child’s needs...strengths, preferences, and interests.” School systems have the responsibility to their students to build the skills necessary for life after the school system.

Adults with ASD can work and achieve a quality, personally satisfying lives. To do so, appropriate transition planning is necessary to ensure that students have the necessary life skills to live in the community. Wehman, Datlow Smith, and Schall (2009) recommend several characteristics that should be a part of transition practices and plan:

Recommended Characteristics of Transition Practices

1. Implement positive behavior supports to address behavior challenges
2. Match IEP goals to the student and family’s vision for the future
3. Take advantage of inclusive experiences
4. Provide a variety of community based experiences
5. Assist in the coordination of ‘seamless’ transition to new resources and service providers in the community

When thinking about the future, we must remember that the community does not offer the same protection as a school. While a teacher may be able to understand a student’s unconventional communication technique, a community member may not have the depth of experience to reciprocate such an understanding. It is essential that the community be informed and educated about people with disabilities, but schools must give students the tools they need to function as well.

The student, family, and IEP team must build an effective and individualized transition plan that looks like a blue print for the student’s future. Together, the team must plan for skills needed in the student’s immediate future, as well as down the road. Additionally, it’s not enough to plan just for employment or a potential living situation, but for a well-rounded ‘whole life’.

Additional Resources

Higher Education and Disability: Education Needs a Coordinated Approach to Improve Its Assistance to Schools in Supporting Students <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1033.pdf>

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center www.nsttac.org

Kentucky’s Transition One Stop www.transitiononestop.org

Kentucky Transition Signal www.hdi.uky.edu/ktcp