

# Transition Planning

**TS**  
Tip Sheet

## Overview

Transition is the process all students go through as they move from high school to what lies beyond. Transition programs help students and their parents plan for life after high school in a proactive and coordinated way. An effective transition program provides students with the tools and confidence to assume responsibility for their educational and employment decisions as they move into adulthood.

Transition planning is essential for deaf students, who experience unique educational and life challenges as a result of their hearing loss, including communication barriers, lack of effective accommodations, and intentional and unintentional discrimination.

## Essential Transition Questions

- What kinds of extracurricular experiences will provide opportunities to learn social and problem-solving skills?
- What kind of classes will prepare the student for postsecondary programs and/or employment?
- Will the student work in high school?
- Will the student participate in general education classes or need more intense training to achieve postsecondary goals?
- What types of accommodations are needed in different situations?

## What is transitioning planning?

Transition planning is a team process that engages the student, their teachers, their parents or guardians, and other service providers. It is complex and looks different for each student.

A strong transition plan starts as early as middle school and is articulated in an individual transition plan that works in tandem with the student's individualized education program.

Through dialogue and discovery, the team maps a transition course of action, including the following:

- Conducting assessments that identify the student's strengths, needs, likes, and dislikes in areas such as academics, careers, employment, and extracurricular/social activities
- Identifying postsecondary goals, whether employment, education/training, or independent living
- Creating a course plan for the classes needed to meet postsecondary and annual goals
- Agreeing on annual high school goals that support the postsecondary goals, including opportunities to strengthen self-determination and self-advocacy skills

## Why is the student's involvement so important?

It is widely believed that when a person is involved in the identification and decision making of an activity, goal, or plan, the person has a greater stake in the outcome. For deaf students, whose ready access to incidental learning is limited, student



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involvement in transition planning is critical. Students need to learn what their strengths and needs are, understand their hearing loss and/or other disabilities and how it affects them in different settings, and explore what they want to do after they complete their high school education. Their opinions need to be taken into consideration to keep transition goals on target.

Though it is important that the student participate in the process and practice transition skills, the role of the family in transition planning should not be underestimated. The family can contribute information that the school does not have about the student's life and support systems outside of school. And when the family understands the transition plan and its importance to their child's success, they are more likely to be committed and contribute to the plan.

## Effective Transition Planning

- Is student-focused
- Ensures that students are involved and their contributions are incorporated
- Involves families actively in the transition process
- Uses transition assessments to gather valuable information
- Includes regular checks with the student about barriers encountered and accommodations used
- Includes annual reviews—and revisions if needed (It's OK if a student's goals change year to year.)
- Takes time, so start early!

## The Law

The federal government requires that schools do transition planning for deaf students starting at age 16. This requirement is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which also mandates that students be invited to their annual transition planning meetings.

## Related Resources

- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: [www.nsttac.org](http://www.nsttac.org)
- Deaf Self-Advocacy Training: [www.deafselfadvocacy.org](http://www.deafselfadvocacy.org)
- Center for Parent Information and Resources: [www.parentcenterhub.org/resources](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/resources)
- Stanberry, K. (2016) *Transition planning for students with IEPs*. Retrieved from [www.tinyurl.com/GStransition](http://www.tinyurl.com/GStransition)

Additional resources on this subject may be available at [www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resources](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resources)



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