

Transition Planning in High School IEPs

(Bison Bridge Behavioral Insights Parent Resource — K–12 Edition)

What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning is a required part of the IEP process that begins **no later than age 14** in Kansas. It prepares students with disabilities for life after high school — whether that means college, job training, employment, or independent living.

Transition planning helps answer the question: **“What will life look like after graduation, and how can we support this student to get there?”**

Key Areas of Transition Planning

The IEP team must work with the student and family to build goals and supports in these areas:

1. Education or Training

- College, technical school, on-the-job training, or adult education programs
- May include application support, disability services connections, or high school course selection

2. Employment

- Job readiness skills (e.g., interviewing, resume writing)
- Internships, work-based learning, or school-to-work programs
- Support in exploring strengths and preferences for future work

3. Independent Living (if appropriate)

- Managing money, transportation, healthcare, or household tasks
- Self-advocacy and decision-making
- Supported living or community resources

Transition for Students with More Significant Support Needs

Not all students will follow the same path. For students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, transition planning may focus on:

- Daily living and self-care skills
- Functional communication and safety awareness
- Structured job placements or supported employment
- Life skills programs in high school
- Continued support in adult day programs after graduation

These students still deserve a voice and vision for adulthood — even if their path looks different.

Community Connections: Adult Services and Supports

Planning ahead means helping families connect to systems outside of the school. These may include:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR):** Helps with employment and job coaching
 - **Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDOs):** Coordinates services for individuals with ID/DD
 - **Centers for Independent Living (CILs):** Teaches skills and provides advocacy for independent living
 - **Mental Health Centers:** Offers case management or continued therapeutic support
 - **Medicaid Waiver Programs:** Can provide in-home, residential, or personal care services
 - **Social Security Administration:** Financial benefits like SSI and disability eligibility
 - **Guardianship or Supported Decision-Making:** Education on legal options for adulthood
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What the Law Requires

Under IDEA and Kansas state regulations:

- A transition plan must be in place **by age 14**
- The student must be **invited** to their IEP meeting starting at this age

- Transition goals must be based on **age-appropriate assessments** of the student's interests, strengths, and needs
 - The IEP must include **measurable postsecondary goals** and **transition services** to help reach them
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What Parents and Students Say

- “I didn’t know we needed to think about life after high school so early — but I’m glad we did.”
 - “Helping my teen identify a goal made school feel more purposeful.”
 - “When we brought in outside services early, the handoff after graduation was so much smoother.”
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Parent and Student Reflection Space

- What does my child enjoy doing — and what are their strengths?
 - What supports might they need in a job, college, or living situation?
 - What skills do we want to build now to support future success?
 - Which adult service systems do we need to learn more about?
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Important Reminder

Transition planning is not a checklist — it’s a process. Your child has the right to dream, plan, and prepare for a meaningful adult life. You have the right to be involved, ask questions, and make sure the IEP reflects real goals for the future.

To learn more, visit www.ksde.org, your local CDDO, or Vocational Rehabilitation office for support with next steps.