

COUNTDOWN TO IEP TIMELINE

YOUNG ADULT/FAMILY



Student Name _____ IEP Date _____

Directions for Transition IEP Review and Development:

Use this checklist for your child, anchored to their specific IEP due date. This planner is designed to help Students and Families understand the steps that are attached to Transition Planning.

3 Months Before IEP Due Date

Assessment: My Checklist for the School:

Give my child at least two new tests. I want to see fresh results from this school year that show what my child is interested in and what they are good at right now.

- Keep the conversation going. These shouldn't just be "one and done" tests. I want the school to keep checking in on my child's progress throughout the year.
- Focus on my child. The tests shouldn't be generic. They need to be picked specifically for my child's unique strengths and goals for the future.

Questions I can ask the team:

- "What two new assessments did you use this year to learn about my child's interests?"
- "How do these tests help us plan for what my child will do after high school?"
- "How are you changing these tests to make sure they actually fit my child's specific needs?"

Goal: I want to make sure the school is using up-to-date information to help my child get ready for life after they graduate.

Course of Study: My Checklist for the School.

Look at the transcript. Let's look at the classes my child has already taken and the ones they are signed up for next.

- Check the "Why." Do these classes actually help my child reach their goals for after graduation? (For example: If they want to work with animals, are they taking science or animal care classes?)
- Explain "Life Skills." If my child is in a special program or "life skills" class, the school needs to write down exactly what they are learning and how it helps them reach their specific goals.
- Plan all the way to the end. The list of classes shouldn't just be for this year—it needs to go all the way to graduation (and include any "18+" programs if they stay past senior year).
- Connect the dots. There should be a clear statement in the IEP that says: "My child is taking [Class A] because it helps them reach [Goal B]."

Goal: I want to make sure that the courses my child is taking contributes to my child's PSGs. Is the path clearly connected to the areas of their PSGs and written in language they will understand.

Agency Consent: My Checklist for the School:

Ask for my permission, and if my child is 19, they must also consent. The school cannot invite outside agencies to meetings unless I say "yes" in writing first. I can bring outside people who may assist as well.

- Invite the right people. If there is an outside group that can help my child find a job or live on their own, I want them at the table.
- Sign the form. I have to sign the consent form yet, I need to do it now so these helpers can come to the next meeting.

Questions I can ask the team:

"Which outside agencies do you think would be a good fit to help my child reach their goals?"

"Can we make sure the agency representative is invited early so they actually show up?"

Goal: I want my child to have a "warm handoff" to the real world. By inviting these agencies now, my child can meet the people who will help them with jobs, training, or living skills after the school years are over.

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2 Months Before IEP Due Date

Measurable Postsecondary Goals: My Checklist for the School:

- The "Big Three" Goals: Does my child have a specific goal for School/Training, Jobs, and Living Skills?
- Talk to my child first: Before the school writes these goals, did they actually sit down with my child to ask what they want?
- Use "The Graduate Rule": These goals should describe what my child will be doing after they leave high school, not just what they are doing now.
- Use "Will" power: The goals shouldn't say my child "wants to" or "plans to." They should say my child "will" do it. (Example: "Sam will work part-time in a bakery.")
- Make it clear: The goals should be written in plain English so my child understands exactly what they are working toward.

Questions I can ask the team:

- "Did you and my child look at the latest test results together before writing these goals?"
- "Are these goals 'measurable'? How will we know for sure when my child has reached them?"
- "Can we rewrite this goal so it's easier for my child to explain it to someone else?"
- "How does this goal connect to the classes they are taking right now?"

Goal: If the goals are blurry, the plan to get there will be blurry, too. I want to see a clear "target" so my child can stay motivated and we can all see the progress.

Who's on the team: My Checklist for the School:

- What general education teachers are included and what is the connection to my students' Course of Study?
- Who will be present from the administration and the counseling team, if appropriate? What is their connection to my students' IEP?
- How was my child's input into team members included?
- What supports that are being included that are not a part of the IEP services but provide learning, behavior or mental health supports for my child?

Questions I can ask the team:

- How can we make sure the team is present for the entire IEP?
- How did the team members provide input for the present level of performance or other IEP input?

Goal: The investment of the team provides clear outcomes and responsibilities for my child's IEP and learning.

Notes

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2 Months Before IEP Due Date

Transition Services: My Checklist for the School

- Show me the steps. What specific activities—like job tours, learning how to use a bus, or practicing an interview—will the school do with my child this year?
- Make them "countable." These shouldn't be vague. I want to see activities that have a clear beginning and end so we can check them off the list when they are done.
- Make it personal. The activities should match my child's specific goals. If they want to be a chef, they should be practicing cooking or visiting a kitchen, not just doing generic "work skills."
- Prove it's happening. I want to see notes or documentation showing that last year's activities were actually finished.

The Four Areas to Watch:

- Instruction: What are they being taught in class? (e.g., learning how to budget money).
- Community Experiences: Are they getting out of the building? (e.g., visiting a local college or a grocery store).
- Employment: Are they practicing for a job? (e.g., writing a resume or doing a "job shadow").
- Related Services: Do they need extra help to get there? (e.g., working with a therapist on social skills for the workplace).

Questions I can ask:

- "Can you show me the list of activities planned for this semester?"
- "How does 'Activity A' specifically help my child get closer to their goal of 'Job B'?"
- "Who is responsible for making sure these activities actually happen, and how will I know when they are finished?"

Goal: If the services are unclear or unrelated, the connection for my child will be unclear as well. Providing specific activities that connect the PSGs to the learning is essential.

Annual Goals: My Checklist for the School:

- The "Crucial Link": At least one goal must clearly connect to life after high school. If the goal is "using a planner," the IEP should say that this is being taught so they can succeed in college or a job.
- The Starting Line (Baseline): Every goal needs to show where my child is starting right now with hard numbers. (Example: "Sam currently uses a planner 2 days a week.")
- The Finish Line (Goal): It must show exactly where we want them to be by the end of the year. (Example: "...to 4 days a week.")
- The "SMART" Test (Understanding "SMART" Goals) - check every goal against this list:
- Specific: Does it say exactly what they will do?
- Measurable: Can we count it or see it happen?
- Achievable: Is it realistic for my child this year?
- Relevant: Does it actually help them reach their big future goals?
- Time-bound: Does it have a date for when we will check their progress?

Questions I can ask the team:

- "Which of these goals is the 'Bridge Goal' that connects today's learning to their future career or college?"
- "What data or test results did you use to pick the 'Starting Line' (baseline) for this goal?"
- "How often will you send me updates so I can see if they are on track to hit the 'Finish Line' by the end of the year?"
- Parent Tip: If a goal feels too vague—like "Sam will improve his behavior"—ask the team to make it "SMART."

Goal: Annual goals are the stepping stones that your child will work on in the immediate future to get to their long term goals. Clear learning paths, instruction and measurement that your child understands can create buy in to learn.

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Prep your Child: My Checklist for the School

- The Pre-Game Chat: Sit down with your child and discuss "Did anyone at school sit down with you recently—just one-on-one—to talk about what you want to do after you graduate?"
- The "Coach" Role: Discuss with your child "Did your teacher talk to you about speaking up at the next IEP meeting? Do you feel like you have a plan for what you want to say about your own goals and dreams? Tell me what that looks like or means to you."
- Connecting the Dots: Try asking: "Do you see how the classes you're taking right now actually help you get to the job or college you want later? Does the connection make sense to you, or does it just feel like random schoolwork?"
- A Full Review: Try asking: "Did your teacher show you the results of those interest tests you took? Did they walk you through the list of activities and classes they're planning for you so you know exactly what's going on? Can you explain this to me?"

Questions I can ask:

- "How are you helping my child practice what they want to say during the meeting?"
- "Does my child feel comfortable explaining their goals to the rest of the team?"
- "What tools (like a slideshow, a script, or a checklist) is the school providing to help my child lead their portion of the IEP?"

Goal: I want my child to feel confident and heard. When they lead their own meeting, they take "ownership" of their future. It stops being a "school plan" and starts being their plan.

Prep other Family members or myself: My Checklist for the School

- The "Pre-Meeting" Meeting: Did a teacher reach out to me before the official meeting to walk me through the draft plan?
- Explain the "Why": Did they explain how my child's current skills (the "Present Level") match up with the goals we are setting for the future?
- Clear up the Jargon: Did they explain terms like "Post-Secondary Goals" or "Agency Consent" in a way that actually makes sense to me?
- A Two-Way Street: Did they give me a chance to ask questions or suggest changes to the goals before they were "set in stone"?

Questions I can ask the team:

- "Can we schedule 15 (or 30) minutes to go over the draft goals together before the big IEP meeting?"
- "I'm looking at these test results—how exactly do these results lead to the goal you've written here?"
- "Is there any paperwork or 'teacher-talk' in this draft that you can explain to me in simpler terms?"

Goal: I am an equal member of the team. If I don't understand the process, I can't advocate for my child. When the school preps me, it turns the meeting from a "presentation" into a real conversation where my voice counts.

Student Invitation: Your child should be invited to the meeting, attend, and provide input into their IEP. Even if your child doesn't attend, they *must* have be invited. They may attend part or all of the meeting. The IEP must be scheduled at a time that works for you and your child.

Questions I can ask the team:

- How has my child been prepared to participate as fully as possible in their IEP?

Goal: My child is at the center of the IEP. Their buy-in is essential in making this plan work. Ownership helps to increase the liklihood of success.

Agency Invitation: Make sure the agencies that you have identified or that the school has identified are invited in plenty of time to make sure they can attend, either in person or virtually.

Questions I can ask the team:

- What areas do the agencies we are inviting connect to my child's PSGs? Have we included community involvement?

Goal: Having others involved as my child moves from one level to another is important to increase quality of life and advocacy.

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During the IEP Meeting

Annual Update: Discuss the new data and how progress is recorded. There are two sections to record this information. The Present Level of Performance is to record academic, behavioral or communication (or other) data that shows what your child is presently doing. The Transition Present Level of Performance shares data as it relates to Employment, Education/Training, Independent Living and Community Involvement.

Share Parent Concerns: What are the Strengths, Preferences, Interests and Needs you see at home, school and in the community?

Discuss proposed areas for goals: Plan to discuss two different areas for goals.

- Postsecondary goals – these are goals in 2, possibly 3 areas for what your child will do AFTER they exit secondary education with a diploma or aging out of services.
- Annual goals – these are the goals that will occur NOW (during school provided services). These are those that the school can teach to help your child move towards the Post-secondary goals.

Discuss proposed transition activities and services: Plan to discuss the activities and services that support growth and development for your child towards the Post secondary goals they have set.

Discuss proposed supports: Plan to ask questions about supports that may be available that could include Assistive Technology, Speech/Language Services, OT or PT, whole school systems of supports and any other areas.

Discuss Agency supports: Plan to look at the connectivity between agency supports and adult life. If you need support applying for supports, now is a good time to ask for those connections, supports or services.

Discuss Services: Plan to ask about what type of services (direct instruction, resource support, speech services, etc.), how often they will happen, where they will happen and what the intended outcome is.

Discuss Anticipated Graduation: Plan to ask about services through senior year and possibly into 18+ transition programming. All decisions are TEAM decisions and must be based upon progress. It is important to know that some students will need additional services past senior year. As long as a signed high school diploma is not received, they remain eligible for special education services to work towards IEP goals and academic progress.

Discuss long term supports This may include supported decision making or guardianship and who can support these decisions. Questions about Enable accounts or other financial resources can be directed to the proper support agencies. Discuss Age of Majority and how it affects educational decision making and other decision making.

After the IEP Meeting

Allow time for the IEP document to be drafted : You should have a draft of the IEP completed within 5 working days.

Review the draft and provide any changes to the IEP case Manager: Changes will be made within 10 working days or the IEP will be reconvened to provide continued IEP input.

- If you don't find something or are finding items you don't remember, ask for a review to items. It's always okay to ask questions!

Goal: Clearly understood planning creates better outcomes. Ask questions, look for language you understand and review with your child to make sure the team is on the same page.

Notes: