

TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE

Tips for Teens

1. **Take part in your Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.**

You are an important part of the team that plans the best way for you to learn. Others who should be there include at least one exceptional student education teacher, another teacher, and your parent(s). You might also invite a school administrator (required for some meetings), testers, friends, an advocate, employer (boss) or other family members.

2. **Learn about transition.**

Transition involves all the things that will help you reach your goals. The classes you take, and learning through jobs and experiences outside of school should all connect to prepare you for the future.

3. **Know your rights. Learn to be your own advocate.**

Your exceptional student education department has a list of your rights. The more you know, the better you will be able to stand up for yourself and be a good advocate.

4. **Take advantage of testing.**

Different kinds of tests may help you know what choices will be right for your future. Your school, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and adult service agencies may offer one or more of the following kinds of tests: vocational tests, interest inventories, career exploration and others.

5. **Know yourself** - your likes, dislikes, interests, hobbies, strengths, and school subjects.

Think about yourself and talk about yourself to others (teachers, parents, friends, coach, boss). The better you know yourself, the easier it will be to plan your future.

6. **Explore future opportunities** - work, housing, transportation, education, training and fun. Try volunteering and paid work. Get a driver's license and learn how to use public transportation. Check out different types of housing and how much they cost. Develop hobbies and interests.

7. **Know and work with people who can help you.**

Different people who can help you may be named at your TIEP, such as counselors, social workers or case managers from different agencies. Get their names, agencies and phone numbers on paper. Ask about the right time to talk with them. If they don't call you, then you should call them.

8. **Learn from doing things in the community.**

The transition IEP may direct you to work. Vocational or technical training, job shadowing, school to career programs or part time work may all be worthwhile experiences. Ask about these options at your school.

9. Set goals and take action to achieve them.

You know a lot about yourself and have people and agencies that may help. Choose what you want to do. Plan what the next steps might be. Think about when you might be able to do them. Then follow through.

10. Review your goals each year. The transition IEP team meets at least once each year to write new goals. This is a good habit. When things change in your life, think if you need to change your goals.

11. Participate – It's your life!

Adapted by members of RITIE from "Transition Tips and Tools," a publication of The PACER Center, 4826 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55417-1098