

Diploma Options

Tennessee has four approved diploma options. IEP teams should presume that a student will earn the regular diploma unless there is strong data to suggest that one of the other diplomas is most appropriate. The following is a summary of the four diplomas:



TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA

- Students must earn the 22 minimum credits required for graduation.
- Students are not prohibited from obtaining a traditional high school diploma solely due to relying on supports, accommodations, or modifications.
- Students who earn a traditional diploma are no longer eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Students who earn a traditional diploma may have limited access to adult disability services.



ALTERNATE ACADEMIC DIPLOMA

- Available for students who participate in the Alternate Assessment.
- Students must earn the 22 minimum credits required for graduation, but may earn the credits through modified course requirements.
- Students must make satisfactory progress towards the student's annual goals and must have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.
- Students who earn an alternate academic diploma remain eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA and may continue working towards a traditional high school diploma until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22-years-old.



OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA

- Available for students who have not met the requirements for a traditional high school diploma, and may be best for students who want to work right after high school.
- Students must have completed the 10th grade, have completed the Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA), and have completed two years of paid or unpaid work experience.
- Students must make satisfactory progress towards the student's annual goals and must have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.
- Students who earn an occupational diploma remain eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA and may continue working towards a traditional high school diploma until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22-years-old.



SPECIAL EDUCATION DIPLOMA

- Available for students who are unable to meet the requirements of the other three diploma options.
- Students must make satisfactory progress towards the student's annual goals and must have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.
- Students who earn a special education diploma remain eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA and may continue working towards a traditional high school diploma until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22-years-old.