



A Family Guide to the Transition-Focused Individualized Education Program (IEP)

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Introduction to Postsecondary Transition Planning

Postsecondary transition planning is a process that helps students and their families get ready for life after high school. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a student's individualized education program (IEP) must include a transition plan by the time they turn 16. Some states, like Tennessee, require transition planning to begin earlier, starting at age 14 (State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-09-.12). This allows students to have more time to explore their interests, set goals, and build the skills they need for adulthood.

Transition planning is done with the student, their family, and school staff. The goal of transition planning is to help the student plan and prepare for their future, such as attending college, finding a job, connecting to their community, or living independently.

This guide was made to help you, as a family member, understand the transition planning process. It will explain each part of the transition plan, other parts of the planning process, and share available resources.

Why is transition planning important?

Transition planning helps your student plan what they want to do in the future. They will figure out their preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS). Identifying PINS will help match your student with available services and activities in high school that will help your student reach their future goals. Transition planning happens before a student leaves high school, but some of these services and activities will stop when your student leaves high school. This is why it is best to begin early and connect your student with the right services and support to prepare for life after high school.

What is the transition plan?

The transition plan is part of your student's IEP and is reviewed at least once a year during the annual IEP meeting. However, it can be updated more often if needed, especially as your student grows and their interests, strengths, or measurable postsecondary goals (MPSGs) change. More information about measurable postsecondary goals is on page 8.

What are the parts of the transition plan?

- MPSGs
- Present level of academic achievement and functional performance
- Transition services
- Course of study
- Transition measurable annual goal(s)

Each part of the transition plan is important in helping your student reach their goals and we will go over each section in this guide.

All About the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

Who attends the IEP meeting?

When your student turns 14, they must be invited to their IEP meeting. 34 C.F.R § 300.321(b)(1). They do not have to attend, but they should be encouraged to do so. The IEP meeting is about their education and future, so it's important for them to be part of the planning process. The parent or guardian should also be encouraged to attend the IEP meeting so they can take part in making their student's plan. Parents and guardians can provide valuable information about their student and what will help their student succeed in the future.

Below is a table of members who must be present or provide information for the student's IEP meeting.

| Member | Member's Role at the IEP Meeting |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Special education teacher | The special education teacher can talk about what areas the student may need support in during the school day. |
| General education teacher | The general education teacher can provide updates about the student's academic progress. They can also review the supports that are currently in place for the student and whether more or less support is needed. |
| School district representative | The school district representative (often a local education agency [LEA], or school, representative, such as a principal) ensures that all parties are following the law to protect student rights and school interests. They know district and school policies and can provide resources. |
| Interpreter of evaluation results | The interpreter of evaluation results (often the school psychologist or other educator) is responsible for presenting and explaining any evaluation and assessment results to the IEP team. |

Other people who may be invited to the IEP meeting include:

- school counselor;
- speech, occupational, or physical therapist;
- career and technical education (CTE) instructor;
- behavior consultant;
- social worker;
- adult services agency representative;
- paraeducator or other support staff who work with the student;
- sports coach or club organizer, such as a choir director or robotics teacher;
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) provider;
- employer and/or job coach; and
- any other person the student or family wants to invite.

Why are family and student involvement important in the IEP meeting?

The IEP is a plan made just for your student, and every plan is unique. No one knows your student better than you. Both you and your student should be at the meeting to talk about what they are interested in, what they need help with, what they are good at, and what they want to achieve in the future. By being an active

participant in the IEP meeting, you and your student can create a plan that is based on what your student needs and will help them succeed.



How Students Can Be Involved in the IEP Meeting

Each student may join in their IEP meeting differently, depending on what makes them feel comfortable. When students take part in their IEP meetings, they help make a plan for their future that fits their goals.**Before the meeting, students can:**

- Invite team members to the IEP meeting.
- Make a vision board that reflects their goals for the future.
- Create a recorded message using a phone, tablet, or other speech-generating device.
- Make a list of questions to ask during the meeting (including questions about how their strengths can help them with challenges).
- Gather examples of their work, photos from work experiences, or feedback from employers (including both successes and challenges) to share during the meeting.

During the meeting, students can:

- Introduce team members.
- Talk about their preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS).
- Share what helps them learn and what makes school easier or harder.
- Give a presentation about themselves.
- Check off items on the meeting agenda as they are discussed.
- Lead the IEP meeting based on their comfort level and readiness.



How Families Can Be Involved in the IEP Meeting

Before the meeting, you can:

- Read and review the draft IEP with your student.
- Review the purpose and structure of the meeting.
- Prepare your student for who will be at the meeting.
- Help your student create a presentation or vision board for the meeting at home.
- Practice self-advocacy skills with your student.

During the meeting, you can:

- Share insights about the student’s strengths, interests, challenges, and learning needs.
- Talk about what works best at home and what might help in school.
- Ask about transition services and support for future planning.
- Encourage the student to speak up about their needs and goals.

Transition Assessments

Definition

Transition assessments gather information about a student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS) related to the four measurable postsecondary goals (MPSGs) your student will work toward after high school. There are four goal areas, including employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living, and community involvement. Transition assessments may include a variety of tests and materials. Usually, transition assessments are completed by the student, but they can also be completed by someone who knows the student well, such as a parent or guardian, teacher, coach, or mentor. This is especially helpful for students who may have trouble expressing their PINS independently.

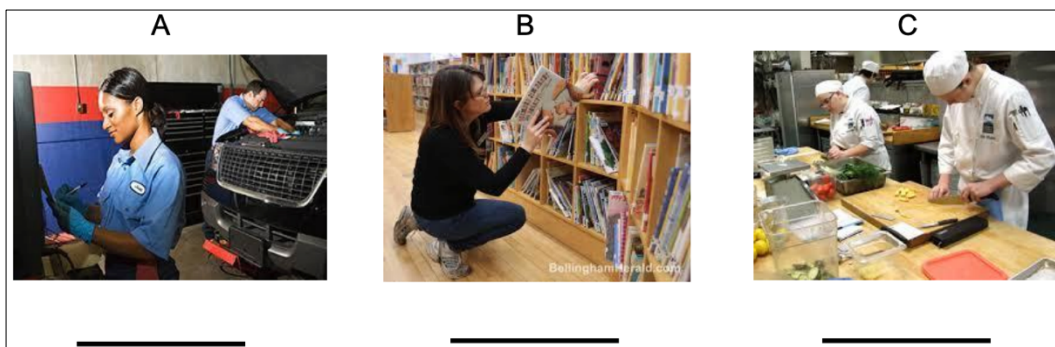
Why are transition assessments important?

The information from transition assessments is used to guide your student's transition plan within their individualized education program (IEP). Specifically, information is used to set goals for after high school based on your student's interests. Assessment information is also used to figure out which skills your student should work on and to identify services and activities that will help them reach both their in-school and post-school goals. You can read more about transition assessments in [Interpreting and Utilizing Transition Assessments for Students with Disabilities](#).

Examples

Transition assessments cover many topics related to employment, postsecondary education and training, community involvement, and independent living. For example, in the area of employment, transition assessments can help your student explore jobs they are interested in, evaluate whether they have the skills needed for those jobs, and better understand their work behaviors. Examples of work behaviors include managing time, interacting with others, and working independently or with a team.

Transition assessments also come in many forms. These may include online tools, informal interviews with teachers, written surveys, or picture-based activities. Depending on your student's needs, the IEP team will select the most appropriate transition assessments to gather meaningful information about your student. One example of a transition assessment that doesn't require reading is the [Pictorial Interest Inventory](#)¹, which uses images to help identify interests. A sample of an assessment item is shown below.



¹ Tennessee Department of Education provides links to external websites for informational purposes only. The provision of links to external, nondepartmental websites does not constitute endorsement or approval by the department for any information provided on nondepartmental media. The department does not bear responsibility for the accuracy, legality, or content of any external site or for that of subsequent links.

To complete this assessment, the student points to the pictures of jobs that interest them. At the end, the pictures are scored using a rubric, and the results reveal what kinds of jobs might interest the student.

To find this assessment and additional transition assessments for students with different needs, visit the [Transition Tennessee Assessment Database](#). This database includes over 100 assessments that can be filtered by topic, cost, language, who completes the assessment, and other helpful filters.



How Students Can Be Involved in Their Transition Assessments

| Students can: |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share what kinds of jobs they are interested in and what skills they would like to develop. • Complete different transition assessments to learn more about postsecondary options and life skills. • Review transition assessment results with family members and teachers to help set goals for the future. |



How Families Can Be Involved in Transition Assessments

| You can: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a transition assessment and provide insight on what your student may need in the future. • Discuss assessment results with your student to help set realistic goals. • Talk with the IEP team about any areas of transition you want to be assessed, such as your student’s ability to live independently. |

Below is a short list of transition assessments that can be completed by family members and found on the Transition Tennessee database. This list is not a complete list of assessments.

- [AIR Self-Determination Assessment](#) (see Footnote 1)
- [PEATC Life Skills Checklist](#) (see Footnote 1)
- [Transition Readiness Assessment](#) (see Footnote 1)

Measurable Postsecondary Goals (MPSGs)

Definition

An MPSG is a goal your student will work toward after high school. In Tennessee, there are four MPSG areas:

- **Employment:** The type of job your student will have after high school.
- **Education and/or training:** The type of education or training your student will participate in after high school. Some examples are colleges, technical schools, and job-training programs.
- **Independent living:** How your student will live as independently as possible. This can be where they will live, how they will get to work and access the community, or skills they need to live more independently, such as how they will plan and cook meals.
- **Community involvement:** The ways your student will be involved in their community. Some examples are joining a club, becoming a member of a gym, or using community resources.

In Tennessee, all students with disabilities must have MPSGs written for employment and education/training as part of their transition plan. They also may have MPSGs written in their transition plan for independent living and community involvement, depending on their individual strengths, needs, and future goals. If your student is on the Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD) or if your student takes the alternate assessment, they must have all four MPSGs written in their transition plan.

Examples

Below are examples of all four MPSGs for a sample student named Shayna.

| Areas | MPSG examples |
|------------------------|--|
| Employment | After graduation, Shayna will work full time as a salesperson at Macy's. |
| Education and training | After graduation, Shayna will complete on-the-job training to build her sales and customer service skills and knowledge at Macy's. |
| Independent living | After graduation, Shayna will create a weekly grocery list using a meal planning guide. |
| Community involvement | After graduation, Shayna will engage in weekly spin classes at the YMCA. |

The MPSGs in your student's individualized education program (IEP) when they are 14 years old may change as they get older and their interests evolve. As your student moves through high school, the goals in their IEP should become more specific to reflect their developing skills and plans for the future.



How Families Can Be Involved with MPSGs

Outside of the IEP meeting, you can:

- Talk with your student about their goals for the future in each MPSG area.
- Help your student explore job opportunities, volunteer work, and life skills.
- Encourage your student to practice independent living skills like budgeting, cooking, and finding transportation.
- Connect early to adult service agencies and support programs that can help your student after high school.

Questions you can ask the IEP team:

- How is my student progressing toward their postsecondary goals?
- Are these goals realistic for my student?
- What support will my student need after high school to reach their goals?
- Are there agencies or services we should connect with now?
- What can I do at home to support my student's future plans?

When students, families, and schools work together on MPSGs, they create a strong plan for a successful future.

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

Definition

Each goal in your student’s individualized education program (IEP), such as math, reading, or fine motor starts with a section called PLAAFP. The PLAAFP summarizes assessment data, such as test scores, classroom work, and teacher observations to explain how your student is doing right now. This information is important because it helps you, your student, and the IEP team understand your student’s strengths and where they may need additional support to reach their goals.

When your student turns 14, their IEP must include a transition PLAAFP. This will include results from transition assessments to highlight how your student is making progress and where more support may be needed.

Example

Below is an example of a PLAAFP for a sample student named Taylor who is interested in a career in nursing after high school.

| Taylor’s transition PLAAFP |
|---|
| <i>Taylor completed the O*Net Career Cluster Interest Inventory (8/1/24), and her three highest career clusters were Health Science, Education & Training, and Hospitality & Tourism. In an interview (8/2/24), Taylor expressed interest in pursuing a career as a licensed practical nurse, aligning with her assessment results. She has completed a nine-week work-based learning placement at a nursing home, achieving an average score of 30/50 on the nursing home’s employment rubric (5/10/24). According to the rubric, Taylor excels in welcoming new residents and measuring medication, but her other health impairment (OHI) contributes to difficulties with taking initiative, following directions, and seeking assistance when necessary. According to the parent survey (8/8/24), Taylor’s parents report she has made significant progress in independent living. She can manage basic daily tasks such as personal hygiene. However, Taylor expressed in her interview (8/2/24) that she would like additional support with household responsibilities, particularly learning how to cook simple meals.</i> |



How Students Can Be Involved in Their PLAAFP

| Students can: |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the PLAAFP to make sure they understand the information it says about them.• Provide feedback about the assessment data reported in the PLAAFP.• Share their transition strengths and areas of need when planning for adulthood.• Advocate for the help they need at school or on the job. |



How Families Can Be Involved in the PLAAFP

You can:

- Ask questions at any time. Transition plans include a lot of data and information.
- Ask the IEP team for clarification on anything that is lacking information, unclear, or not representative of your student. Asking questions helps make sure everyone is informed and prepared to plan the best path for your student.



Course of Study (COS)

Definition

A COS is a multiyear plan that outlines the courses your student will take in high school to support their measurable postsecondary goals (MPSGs) and help them prepare for their future. The COS should align with your student’s interests, skills, and goals, and can be adjusted as those change, but they must meet state graduation requirements. For more information on Tennessee’s graduation requirements, visit: <https://www.tn.gov/education/families/graduation-requirements.html>.

Why is the COS important?

The COS is a requirement of the transition plan. It helps the IEP team choose the appropriate classes for your student based on their future goals. For example, if your student is interested in a career in welding, they might consider participating in the welding career and technical education (CTE) pathway. Alternatively, if your student is interested in working as a chef, they might consider taking culinary arts classes. Ask your school what CTE classes are available at your high school. If your school does not have the exact CTE pathway that matches your student’s postsecondary goals (goals for after high school), the IEP team can help your student find other classes of interest.

Example

Below is an example of a COS for a sample student who is interested in a career in construction.

| Grade | Courses |
|-------|---|
| 9th | English I (1 credit), Algebra 1 (1 credit), Lifetime Wellness (1 credit), Biology (1 credit), Spanish I (1 credit), Fundamentals of Construction (1 credit), Special Education Intervention (Reading, 1 credit), Principles of Transition: Introduction to Self-Determination (1 credit) |
| 10th | English II (1 credit), Algebra 2 (1 credit), Chemistry (1 credit), Spanish II (1 credit), U.S. History and Geography (1 credit), Residential and Commercial Construction I (1 credit), Special Education Intervention (Reading, 1 credit), Principles of Transition: Focus on Adulthood (1 credit) |
| 11th | English III (1 credit), Geometry (1 credit), Physics (1 credit), Physical Education (0.5 credits), Personal Finance (0.5 credits), World History and Geography (1 credit), Residential and Commercial Construction II (1 credit), Special Education Intervention (Reading, 1 credit), Principles of Transition: Planning for Postsecondary (1 credit) |
| 12th | English IV (1 credit), Pre-Calculus (1 credit), Computer Science (1 credit), U.S. Government and Civics (0.5 credits), Economics (0.5 credits), Construction Practicum (1 credit), Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum (3 credits) |



How Students Can Be Involved in Their COS

Students can:

- Pick elective classes that match their future work goals and education interests.
- Talk to teachers or counselors about adjusting their courses as interests change.
- Explore CTE pathways to gain hands-on experience in different careers.
- Work with counselors to make sure their elective choices will meet graduation requirements for their diploma path.



How Families Can Be Involved in the COS

You can:

- Discuss your student's strengths and interests to help select appropriate courses.
- Ask for information about classes or programs that support your student's goals.
- Encourage your student's participation in CTE classes that align with their interests and goals by building a strong school partnership.
- Attend parent information or course registration sessions to stay informed and help with planning.
- Request information about the Principles of Transition courses, such as *Introduction to Self-Determination*, *Focus on Adulthood*, and *Planning for Postsecondary*. These courses help students develop skills for employment, education, and independent living after high school.

When students and families help make the COS, it helps create a clear and meaningful path that supports the student's goals for after high school.

Transition Services

Definition

In Tennessee, transition services are a required part of the transition plan and must be included in your student’s individualized education program (IEP) beginning at age 14, just like the other parts of the plan. These are activities your student can participate in at school, at home, or in the community to help them reach their post-school goals. Transition services are designed to meet each student’s strengths, needs, and goals and are updated every year in your student’s IEP. Because every student is different, their transition services may look different from another student’s transition services. Schools, families, and outside agencies should work together to provide students with disabilities opportunities to learn the skills they’ll need for life after high school.

Why are transition services important?

- They are tailored to your student’s individual needs, strengths, and goals.
- They provide school and community-based experiences to help students succeed after graduation.

Examples

Below is an example of transition services for a sample student named Quinn. Quinn wants to work at a bank as a bank teller after she graduates from high school. These are two of Quinn’s transition services that will help her reach her employment goal.

| Quinn’s transition services |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instruction: Quinn will receive instruction in self-management skills using a self-monitoring tool for task completion.• Employment and Postsecondary Living Objectives: Quinn will complete job shadowing at various financial institutions, including a local bank and a district central office. |

These services will help Quinn become a bank teller after high school. Through the first transition service, she will receive instruction that will help her develop strategies to stay on task by monitoring her own behavior. Quinn will also engage in job shadowing at local financial institutions through her second transition service. This gives her a chance to see what other opportunities are available through a banking or financial career.



How Students Can Be Involved in Their Transition Services

| Students can: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk about their future goals and what support they need to achieve their goals.• Explore job shadowing, internships, or community programs.• Practice self-advocacy by asking about transition services that match their interests.• Participate in skill-building activities like budgeting, transportation, or completing job applications. |



How Families Can Be Involved in Transition Services

You can:

- Work with the IEP team to identify helpful transition services that can be completed at home or in the community.
- Ask the school to provide services that support your student's strengths and needs.
- Help set up college tours or job visits.
- Practice independent skills to prepare for living outside the family home.
- Take an active role in providing transition services that take place in the home or community.
- Have your student talk to family members about their jobs and career paths.
- Encourage your student to be as independent as possible when engaging with service professionals when shopping, going to appointments, ordering food, etc.
- Teach transportation and community safety skills.

When students and families actively engage in transition planning, they build a strong foundation for success after high school!

Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs)

Definition

MAGs are specific, measurable goals that are written in your student's individualized education program (IEP) to be accomplished in one year. These goals are made specifically for your student based on information about their current skills and abilities as described in the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) section of the IEP. If your student requires short-term objectives to help them achieve their goal, or if they are working toward an Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD), teachers must include short-term objectives that outline the specific benchmark goals.

The school will collect data on your student's progress toward these goals and provide quarterly progress throughout the year. Your student may already have MAGs in areas like reading, math, behavior, or other areas. As part of the transition plan, your student must have at least one MAG that directly supports their measurable postsecondary goals (MPSGs). This goal should help them build a transition-related skill that will support future success in employment, education/training, independent living, or community involvement.

Why are MAGs important?

MAGs provide a clear roadmap for your student to improve on the identified areas of need necessary to make progress in curricular or non-academic skills throughout the school year. MAGs are specific goals that help students develop the skills they need during high school to achieve their postsecondary goals.

These goals must:

- Be tailored to each student's postsecondary goals and based on their PLAAFP.
- Directly address deficits or barriers preventing the student from progressing in the general curriculum or achieving postsecondary goals.
- Meet compliance standards when transition-related annual goals or objectives are present in the IEP.

Components of a Strong MAG:

- **Skill:** What specific skill is the student working to achieve?
 - The skill should be:
 - directly related to the PLAAFP,
 - observable and measurable,
 - aligned to the curriculum or an age-appropriate functional skill, and
 - something that the student has multiple opportunities to practice throughout the day.

*Note: The skill **should not** simply be an academic standard that will be taught in the current grade or an expectation that exists for all students in that grade, like coming to class on time or following the teacher's directions.*

- **Condition:** What conditions are necessary for the goal to be achieved?
 - Examples:
 - Specific setting or environment (e.g., in the general education setting, in English Language Arts, during recess, in a noisy environment, etc.)
 - Specific scenarios (e.g., engaging in unstructured time with peers, during group work, when observably frustrated, when given independent work, etc.)
 - Visual or verbal prompts

- Other supports or accommodations necessary for the student to achieve the goal with the greatest level of independence possible
- **Criterion for Accuracy:** What are the criteria for determining if the student has met the goal?
 - Examples of possible criteria:
 - Accuracy- the number of correct responses expected
 - Frequency- the number of times the student will demonstrate the behavior or skill
 - Standard for behavior- the minimum expectation to demonstrate the behavior
 - Completion of a work product
 - Recorded data

Examples

Hector wants to work in a restaurant after graduation. As indicated in his transition assessment, he needs support in self-monitoring his job performance. Therefore, the following transition MAG could be appropriate for him:

| Hector's MAG |
|---|
| When provided with a daily self-evaluation checklist containing job performance expectations (punctuality, cleanliness, teamwork, and safety), Hector will accurately rate his own performance as measured by comparing his ratings to his supervisor's feedback in at least 75% of weekly reviews. |



How Students Can Be Involved in Their MAGs

Students can:

- Talk about areas they need to improve and how those skills are connected to their MPSGs.
- Track their progress toward meeting their transition MAG throughout the year and celebrate achievements.
- Ask teachers and family for support in reaching their transition MAG.



How Families Can Be Involved in MAGs

You can:

- Help the student identify goals related to the skills they need to achieve their MPSGs through a MAG.
- Support learning at home through real-world activities related to MAGs.
- Check in on your student's progress at school.
- Ask your student's teachers how to reinforce skills outside of school.
- Provide encouragement to your student to build confidence and motivation.

By connecting school learning to real-world experiences, students gain practical skills that support their IEP and transition goals.

Outside Agency Participation

Definition

An outside agency is a group of people that provides services and support to individuals with disabilities. Agencies play a key role in helping students with disabilities as they transition from high school to adulthood. It is important to learn about the local and state agencies in your community that can support your student, such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), disability service providers, and other community organizations. By using the knowledge and resources of these outside groups, teachers and others can create plans for your student based on their unique needs and goals. These partnerships are an important part of the transition process starting at age 14. Agencies can identify available resources, make the transition to adulthood smoother, and empower students to succeed.

Why are outside agencies important?

Working with outside agencies is important for helping students move from high school to adult life. Schools can partner with organizations to create a team of people that can help each student, ensuring they receive the necessary resources to achieve their individual goals.

Examples of Types of Agency Support:

- Funding for college, job training, and career programs
- Assistance with finding and keeping a job
- Help with money and understanding benefits like Social Security
- A trusted staff member and support for living on your own
- Social and recreational activities

Examples

Below are two student examples. Each student has unique needs, and they are connected to different outside agencies to ensure they receive the most appropriate support.

| Student example |
|--|
| Liam, a senior with a specific learning disability, plans to major in engineering in college and will need assistance with college expenses. He wants to disclose his disability so he can continue receiving accommodations in college. Two agencies the school should invite to the individualized education program (IEP) meeting are VR and a Disability Services Office (DSO) representative from a local college or university. |
| Outside agencies to help Liam reach his goals |
| <p>VR can assist Liam with covering expenses such as tuition, room and board, and books that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or other sources don't cover. A VR representative can guide Liam and his family through the application process for VR services.</p> <p>The staff in the DSO can explain how the disability disclosure process works in college, advising Liam and his family on what documents are needed, how to schedule appointments, and other important details.</p> |

| Student example |
|---|
| Eli, a junior with an intellectual disability, wants to enter the workforce when he graduates from high school. However, he will need support to access the workplace. He also wants to get involved in recreational activities. Two agencies the school should invite to the IEP meeting are Employment and Community First Choices (ECF Choices) and a representative from the local accessible recreation program. |
| Outside agencies to help Eli reach his goals |
| <p>ECF Choices can provide individualized services to help Eli access and maintain employment. Their representative can explain how to apply and the types of support they can offer.</p> <p>Local recreation programs give Eli chances to join activities or sports, make friends, and be a part of his community. Two examples with groups in Tennessee are Special Olympics and Best Buddies.</p> |



How Students Can Be Involved with Outside Agencies

| Students can: |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore outside agencies and ask how they can help with career or education goals.• Meet with agency representatives at IEP meetings to understand available services.• Apply for services early to avoid gaps in support after high school.• Take part in job training, college preparatory programs, or community programs. |



How Families Can Be Involved with Outside Agencies

| You can: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about adult services that will replace special education services after graduation.• Begin learning about and working with agencies multiple years before the student graduates to prevent gaps in support.• Communicate your student’s needs related to funding for education or job programs, job training, and disability services with agency representatives.• Help your student with applications for college aid, benefits, and job programs. |

By connecting with outside agencies early, students and families can build a strong support system for life after high school.

Summary of Performance (SoP)

Definition

The SoP is an overview of your student's high school years. It highlights your student's strengths, needs, and the types of support they may require in postsecondary settings, such as college or the workplace. The SoP is finished in your student's last year of high school but can be updated any time it needs to be changed. The SoP:

- helps your student understand their strengths and needs and identify what types of support they might need after high school;
- helps teachers, counselors, and other professionals who are helping your student plan for life after high school; and
- shares with colleges, disability-focused agencies, and future employers of how to best support your student.

Why is the SoP important?

The SoP is like a roadmap for your student's future. It provides essential information for everyone helping the student, so they receive the appropriate accommodations after high school. After high school, outside agencies help determine how your student can get help, which is why it is essential to make connections with them before your student graduates. The SoP can help inform those outside agencies on how to best support your student.

A well-written SoP can:

- **Help students get the right support.** This roadmap helps make sure your student receives the right kind of help in college, at work, or anywhere else they go after high school.
- **Make the transition easier.** The SoP makes it easier for your student to move from high school to adulthood because it gives everyone the information they need to help your student succeed.

The SoP is a valuable tool that helps your student with their future by making sure everyone understands the right support is in place as they move forward.

Examples

In the SoP, you will find:

- **Background information about the student.** This section includes basic information like name, birthday, disabilities, and contact information.
- **Their goals.** This section lists the student's goals for after high school. These goals could include employment, education and training, independent living, and community involvement goals.
- **Information about current levels in:**
 - **academics** (high school grades, skills in reading, math, writing, personal finance, communication, and other subjects);
 - **cognitive abilities** (skills in problem solving, attention, memory, critical thinking, etc.); and
 - **functional performance** (how the student interacts with others at school, work, and in the community; self-care skills; mobility; self-determination; safety; time-management; organization; etc.).

- **Recommendations for supports.** This section offers suggestions on how to help the student succeed after high school. This might include modifications and accommodations that have helped the student be successful in the school or community setting, along with special equipment or support services.
- **Recommendations for next steps.** This section offers suggestions for the next steps to take after leaving high school. This could involve applying for Vocational Rehabilitation, meeting with an American Job Center, contacting a Disability Services Office at a college of interest, completing job applications, or meeting with other agencies that could provide support.
- **The student's voice.** This section includes the student's own thoughts and feelings. It is where the student tells what they think about their disability and how it affects them, what they are good at, and what kind of help has worked well for them in the past.

The student section of the SoP has questions for you and your student to discuss:

- How does your student's disability affect their schoolwork and activities (like grades, relationships, assignments, projects, communication, time on tests, getting around, and after-school activities)?
- In the past, what things have teachers, or your student, tried to help them do well in school (like aids, special equipment, physical changes, other services)?
- Which of these supports and changes have worked best for your student?
- Which of these supports and changes have not worked well for your student?
- Are there any other supports or changes your student might need?
- What are some of the strengths and needs you want professionals to know about as your student goes to college or work?

Take time to talk about these things with your student. Their input is important as they get ready for the next steps after high school.



How Students Can Be Involved with the SoP

| Students can: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with their family or teacher to complete the student section of the SoP.• Share their experiences about what helps them succeed in school and daily life.• Identify accommodations they may need in college or at work.• Participate in discussions about their strengths, challenges, and goals. |



How Families Can Be Involved with the SoP

| You can: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the SoP with your student to make sure their needs are clearly communicated.• Encourage self-advocacy by helping your student express what works best for them.• Provide insights on what accommodations and supports you think have been most effective.• Help plan next steps, such as contacting college disability services or job support agencies.• Support your student in sharing the SoP with service providers, postsecondary institutions, employers, and others to ensure they receive appropriate accommodations and supports. |

Final Thoughts

Family involvement is key to helping students with disabilities transition successfully into adulthood. Families that provide consistent support, advocacy, and guidance help students gain life skills, confidence, and independence.



How Families Can Support the Transition Process

You can:

- Actively participate in the individualized education program (IEP) meetings to ensure your student's needs are being met.
- Encourage self-advocacy and decision-making skills to empower your student.
- Help your student explore job training, education, and independent living options.
- Stay informed about available programs, scholarships, and support services.
- Encourage your student to build a strong network of teachers, counselors, service providers, and mentors.
- Set realistic, achievable goals and celebrate progress to keep your student motivated.
- Prepare your student for challenges and teach them how to problem solve.
- Connect with outside agencies, special education training centers, and advocacy organizations to learn more about special education and community services.

When families stay engaged and proactive, students are more likely to thrive in adulthood with the tools and support they need to succeed.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Below are frequently asked questions for each category of this guide.



FAQs About the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

1. I've been to the IEP meetings for my student before, and they have not been there. Why does my student need to be invited to the IEP meeting now?

Starting at age 14, federal law states that your student must be invited to their IEP meeting, in accordance with 34 C.F.R § 300.321(b)(1). Your student will be provided with an invitation to their IEP meeting to sign indicating if they will be in attendance. They do not have to attend, but they should be encouraged to do so. The IEP meeting is all about your student and their future, so they should be present to help develop their plan.

2. How can my student participate in their IEP meeting if they use different ways to communicate?

There are many different ways for your student to participate in their IEP meeting. Your student can participate by using an assistive communication device and by preparing ahead of time with their teacher. For example, your student can create a prerecorded presentation about their interests and strengths or introduce the members of their team at the meeting.

3. Does my student sign their IEP?

If your student attends their IEP meeting, they sign as a participant of the IEP. If they do not attend the IEP meeting, they should not sign the IEP. All special education related rights vest in the child when the child attains 18 years of age, unless a determination otherwise has been made in accordance with T.C.A. §§ 34-1-101 et seq. and §§ 34-3-101, so if a student age 18 or older does not have a power of attorney or conservatorship, the student signs as participant and is giving consent to implement the IEP.

4. What are procedural safeguards?

Procedural safeguards are the rules and procedures that protect you and your student throughout the special education process under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) law. The document explains the procedural protections, such as:

- confidentiality of information,
- state complaint and dispute resolution procedures,
- procedures when disciplining students with disabilities,
- requirements for unilateral placement by parents of students in private school at public expense,
- advocacy services, and
- free and low-cost legal services.

A copy of the procedural safeguards must be provided to parents prior to an initial referral to special education, once a year and, upon receipt of the first state complaint or due process complaint in a school year (if applicable), and whenever there is a disciplinary action that constitutes a change of placement. Parents may also request a copy at any time.

To learn more about procedural safeguards or if you have questions about them, visit the Tennessee Special Education Services website: <https://www.tn.gov/education/legal-services/special-education-legal-services.html>.



FAQs About Measurable Postsecondary Goals (MPSGs)

1. Can my student continue their education when they graduate?

Yes, there are several types of postsecondary options available for students to continue their education. However, the type of postsecondary opportunities available will depend on the diploma your student earns. Each diploma opens different doors, and understanding these options can help you and your student plan for what comes next.

| Diploma type | Opportunities available after high school |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Traditional high school diploma | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional four-year universities and colleges• Two-year colleges (community college)• Technical colleges such as the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)• Trade schools <p>Note: Colleges/universities have disability services offices that can help your student get accommodations to support their success.</p> |
| Alternate academic diploma (AAD) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical college with programs that do not require a high school diploma.• The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Smyrna. More information can be found below.• Inclusive higher education programs. More information can be found below. <p>Note: Diploma allows students to remain in school until the end of the school year in which they turn 22.</p> |
| Occupational diploma | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical college with programs that do not require a high school diploma.• The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Smyrna. More information can be found below.• Inclusive higher education programs. More information can be found below. <p>Note: Diploma allows students to remain in school until the end of the school year in which they turn 22.</p> |
| Special education diploma | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical college with programs that do not require a high school diploma.• The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Smyrna. More information can be found below.• Inclusive higher education programs. More information can be found below. <p>Note: Diploma allows students to remain in school until the end of the school year in which they turn 22.</p> |

TRC Smyrna is a state-run training center that provides career and technical education to prepare people with disabilities for independence (in whatever way that looks like for each person) and getting a job.

Inclusive higher education programs are non-degree certificate programs that teach students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) skills for living independently and getting a job. Students in these programs typically take college classes, have internships and jobs, and participate

in social activities with other students on campus.

Below is the contact information for the inclusive higher education programs in Tennessee as of 2025.

| Program | Program website | Contact Information |
|---|---|---------------------|
| ACCESS at East Tennessee State University | https://www.etsu.edu/coe/access/ | (423) 439-7586 |
| Eagle Access at Dyersburg State Community College | https://www.dscc.edu/eagle-access/ | (731) 286-3208 |
| EDGE Program at Union University | https://uu.edu/programs/education/edge/ | (731) 661-5382 |
| FUTURE Program at UT Knoxville | https://cehhs.utk.edu/futureut/ | (336) 253-0167 |
| IDEAL Program at Lipscomb University | https://lipscomb.edu/student-life/student-services/access/ideal-program | (615) 966-5098 |
| Next Steps at Vanderbilt University | https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/nextsteps/ | (615) 343-0822 |
| Tiger Access at Chattanooga State Community College | https://tnihealliance.org/tiger-access/ | (423) 697-4472 |
| TigerEDGE at Tennessee State University | https://tnihealliance.org/tigeredge-at-tennessee-state-university/ | (615) 963-7480 |
| TigerLIFE at University of Memphis | https://www.memphis.edu/tigerlife/ | (901) 678-4303 |

2. Can my student go to work when they graduate?

Yes, your student can go to work. There are multiple ways your student can build their work skills to prepare them for employment when they graduate.

One way students can develop their work skills is through Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is a program that places students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in internships at community businesses the year after high school. If your school district has Project SEARCH, you and your student can apply to see if they are eligible to participate. There are many Project SEARCH sites available in school districts across Tennessee. Check with your student's high school or visit this

website to see if a program is available near you: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/vocational-rehabilitation/transition-services/project-search.html>.

Another way to develop work skills is through an apprenticeship. An apprenticeship is when a person is trained in a trade or profession by working alongside a skilled professional. Students can also develop work skills while still enrolled in school by enrolling in youth apprenticeship programs. Tennessee has a website with many apprenticeship programs available. Check to see if an apprenticeship is available near you: <https://www.tn.gov/apprenticeshiptn.html>.

Students can also use the Transition Tennessee student website to learn about exploring work options, what resources and services to use to get a job, and more. Visit <https://transitiontn.org/student/work/> to explore the website.

3. Are there opportunities for my student to create social connections in the community when they graduate?

There are many ways for your student to build friendships and stay connected in their community after graduation. Just like anyone else, individuals with disabilities can participate in community activities, clubs, and events that match their interests. In addition to the everyday opportunities available to everyone, here are some programs specifically designed to support social connections for individuals with disabilities:

- Special Olympics offers year-round sports and competition for individuals aged two and above with intellectual disabilities. To find a local program near you, visit: <https://www.specialolympicstn.org/get-involved/find-special-olympics-near-you?locale=en>.
- Best Buddies has several programs for students to create social connections. One of them is One-to-One Friendships, where students with disabilities are connected to peers their age with or without disabilities to build friendships. Visit <https://www.bestbuddies.org/tennessee/> to learn more about the programs Best Buddies offers in Tennessee.

The local library or recreation center may be a good place to start when finding other local community opportunities. Beyond these, there are many other ways for your student to engage socially, such as volunteering, joining clubs or faith-based groups, participating in community classes, and exploring local events. Encouraging your student to pursue their interests is a great way to help them form lasting connections.

4. Are there opportunities for my student to develop independent living skills when they graduate?

Yes, there are six Centers for Independent Living (CILs) located across Tennessee that can help your student learn skills to become more independent. These centers can help your student learn skills like:

- advocacy,
- independent living,
- peer support,
- information/referrals, and
- transition services.

CILs are not residential centers. Therefore, these are not places where your student can live. Below is the contact information for all six Tennessee CILs.

| <i>Centers for Independent Living Information</i> | | |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Name | Location | Website |
| disABILITY Resource Center | Knoxville, TN | https://drctn.org/ |
| Empower TN | Nashville, TN | https://empowertennessee.org/ |
| Memphis Center for Independent Living | Memphis, TN | https://www.disabilitymidsouth.org/ |
| <i>Centers for Independent Living Information</i> | | |
| Name | Location | Website |
| Tri-State Resource and Advocacy Corporation | Chattanooga, TN | https://1trac.net/ |
| TARP Center for Independent Living | Paris, TN | https://tarp1.org/ |
| Jackson Area Center for Independent Living | Jackson, TN | https://www.j-cil.com/ |



FAQs About the Course of Study (COS)

1. What diploma options are available to my student?

In Tennessee, there are four different diploma options available to students. The individuals with disabilities education act (IDEA) says that the COS must show the progression of courses helps the student meet their measurable postsecondary goals (MPSGs). Below is information about each diploma. You can find more information about the diploma options in Tennessee in the [Diploma Decision Guide](#).

2. What if my student's school does not offer a program of study that aligns with their MPSGs?

If your student's school does not offer a program that aligns with their goals, your student's teacher and you can with the school counselor to find alternative courses and opportunities that still align with your student's goals.



FAQs About Transition Services

1. Will transition services be available to your student after high school?

No, transition services are only available while your student's individualized education program (IEP) is in effect. However, students may receive services from adult service agencies once they exit high school. The planning for adult services typically begins during high school. You can talk to your student's teachers about how to connect to adult agencies while your student is in high school to ease the transition to adulthood.

2. What are some examples of transition services available for my student at school?

There are many types of transition services that can be offered at school to help your student prepare for life after high school. These services are based on your student's needs, goals, and interests, and are included in their IEP. Local education agencies (LEAs) are responsible for providing transition services as part of the IEP, but outside agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or local community organizations can also help provide transition services when appropriate. The goal is to create a coordinated plan that supports your student's successful transition into adulthood.

One example of transition services provided at school is Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Pre-ETS are offered to students between the ages of 14-21 and help students prepare for life after high school. Pre-ETS are a partnership between high schools and VR. Areas of Pre-ETS instruction can include:

- job exploration counseling (learning about different types of jobs),
- work-based learning experiences,
- workplace readiness training (practicing skills needed for jobs),
- instruction in self-advocacy, and
- counseling on postsecondary education opportunities (learning about college or training programs).

To learn if Pre-ETS is available at your student's school, talk to your student's teacher or transition coordinator. If not, you can contact VR at 1-833-772-TDHS (8347) or email VR.TransitionServices@tn.gov.



FAQs About Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs)

1. Can my student's MAGs be adjusted?

Decisions about what gets included in your student's individualized education program (IEP), including their MAGs, happen during the IEP meeting. MAGs are based on data collected and shared by IEP team members and are connected to areas of need identified through the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). If you have any questions or concerns about anything included or excluded in your student's IEP, you should say something at the meeting. As a parent, you are an important member of the IEP team, and what you think matters.

2. Should my student's goals change every year?

Yes, measurable annual goals (MAGs) are meant to be goals for a single year based on current educational needs. This is why we call them *annual* goals. Your student's teacher(s) or other special education service providers will monitor progress on every MAG on your student's IEP. However, if your student is not progressing in their goals, it may be necessary to have an IEP meeting to discuss possible reasons and if there is a need to update the goals or services. Ideally, your student will show growth in each goal area. Then the IEP team will set new goals to continue to support and challenge your student at the next annual IEP meeting. Annually, new goals will be written into their plan based on progress and updated information about their needs and goals.



FAQs About Outside Agency Participation

1. For agencies to take part in my student's individualized education program (IEP) meetings, do I have to sign the consent form?

Yes, the school must have your permission before inviting representatives from outside agencies to join your student's IEP meetings. Signing a consent form ensures that these agencies can be involved in discussing and supporting your student's educational needs.

2. Will outside agencies be involved in my student's life after high school?

This depends on different factors. Not all students with disabilities will require support from adult service agencies. Depending on the type of agency and your student's individual needs, adult supports may be appropriate. Early discussions with the IEP team will provide you with connections to appropriate representatives from adult service agencies.

3. Are there waiting lists to get involved with adult service agencies?

Yes, some adult service agencies and programs do have waiting lists. It's a good idea to start the application process early to help avoid any gaps in support once your student graduates.

4. How do I know which agencies should be invited to my student's IEP meetings?

The agencies you invite should be based on your student's needs and goals for adulthood. On page 35 there is a list of adult service agencies and organizations that you might consider contacting.



FAQs About the Summary of Performance (SoP)

1. Why should my student take part in writing the SoP?

The SoP documents your student's goals after high school and how they plan to reach those goals when they graduate. The SoP is most useful when the student is able to take part in the creation of it as the document outlines their future plans.

2. When can my student request a copy of their SoP?

The SoP is a working document and a draft can be created at any time for students prior to the final copy. Your student may request a copy of their Summary of Performance (SoP). They may also request a copy after graduating from high school.

3. Who writes the SoP?

Typically, the special education teacher writes the SoP but other individuals who work with your student may contribute information such as general education teachers, service providers, or paraeducators. Your student will also be contributing information to their SoP in the student interview section.

4. Who should my student share their SoP with?

The SoP documents the support your student received in high school and therefore, may need in postsecondary settings. Your student can share their SoP with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, employers, human resource professionals, disability services office at universities/colleges, service coordinators, tutoring centers, and any other agency/resource that assists your student in reaching their goals.

Terms You May Hear in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

Below is a list of terms you may hear in the IEP meeting. Many of these words or phrases are commonly used in special education.

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Accommodations | Instructional or environmental changes that help a student with a disability learn the same things as other students. Accommodations change how a student accesses instructional materials or participates in activities or classes, but do not change what they are expected to learn. <i>Examples: access to a screen reader, extended time, alternate testing environment</i> |
| Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) | Methods that help people communicate using supports or alternative modes. AAC allows people to express their thoughts, ideas, or needs when they are not able to effectively use oral language. <i>Examples: Sign Language (ASL), pictures, letter boards, voice output technology</i> |
| Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) | A federal law that provides individuals with disabilities access to services. The ADA is a civil rights law that removes barriers and grants equal access and opportunities for all persons with disabilities across their lifespan. |
| Assistive technology (AT) | Any device or equipment that helps a person with a disability function independently. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), AT includes devices, tools, or services. <i>Examples: wheelchairs, canes, pencil grips, augmentative communication devices, selecting, fitting, and customizing devices; evaluating for and training on the use of AT.</i> |
| Behavior intervention plan (BIP) | A plan to support student behavior and make changes to the environment to promote success. <i>Examples: modifying the classroom environment, activities, curriculum, instructional delivery, incentives, consequences</i> |
| Course of study (COS) | A list of classes included in the individualized education program (IEP) that match the student's interests and the requirements of the chosen diploma option for high school. |
| Due process hearing | A type of dispute resolution process. A due process hearing is held before an administrative law judge; the student's parents and the local education agency (LEA) present evidence, and the judge makes a written determination on the issues detailed in the due process complaint. |

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Special education (SPED) | An individualized program of specially designed instruction and services designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, adhering to federal and state regulations and rules. Some school districts refer to special education as “exceptional education.” |
| Extended school year services (ESY) | Special education and related services that are provided outside of the regular school year (typically during the summer) and are determined necessary based on data that a student will experience significant regression on their individualized education program (IEP) goals in the absence of continued educational support. |
| Functional behavior assessment (FBA) | A process used to identify the causes of student behavior. The results of an FBA are used to help the individualized education program (IEP) team in developing interventions to address student behavior. |
| Free appropriate public education (FAPE) | An entitlement guaranteed to all students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This federal law ensures students with disabilities receive an education comparable to what is available to their peers without disabilities at no cost to the parents. |
| Family educational rights and privacy act (FERPA) | A federal law that protects the privacy of student records while giving parents/guardians the right to access their student's educational records and to consent to the release of those records. When a student turns 18 or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the student oversees their records unless they sign a FERPA release. |
| Individualized education program (IEP) | A legal document that plans the special education and related services and supports for a student identified with a disability. The IEP is developed by a team of professionals, the student, and the parent/guardian. |
| Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) | A federal law that governs special education in the United States and guarantees all qualifying students with disabilities in public schools the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). |
| Local education agency (LEA) | The public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools. |
| Least restrictive environment (LRE) | The expectation that students with disabilities should be educated alongside their peers without disabilities as much as possible. It is about giving students what they need while including them with other students without disabilities. Some schools use the word “inclusion” to |

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| | mean providing special education or related services in the general education setting. |
| Measurable annual goals (MAGs) | Specific and measurable goals in the individualized education program (IEP) that are based on a student's individual needs and describe what the student is expected to achieve in the educational setting over a one-year period. |
| Measurable postsecondary goals (MPSGs) | Measurable goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to employment, education/training, and, when appropriate, independent living skills and community involvement that reflect a student's goals for life after high school. |
| Modifications | Changes to what the student is expected to learn. These changes make it easier for the student to learn standards by breaking down essential concepts. Modifications may have implications for diploma options. |
| Occupational therapy (OT) | A related service that addresses a variety of challenges including developing fine and gross motor skills, improving sensory processing, teaching coping strategies, and providing assistive technology. |
| Paraeducator | A support person who works under the supervision of a licensed special education teacher to provide instructional, functional, or behavioral supports to students with disabilities. Some school districts may also use teaching aides or educational assistants to provide classroom-based or small group support to students. |
| Present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) | Statements that summarize the student's current levels of functioning, including both academic and functional skills in various educational domains. |
| Prior written notice (PWN) | A written summary provided to the family that is separate from the individualized education program (IEP) describing the school's proposal of changes, or refusal to change a student's identification of disability, evaluation, placement, or services. |
| Physical therapy (PT) | A related service that addresses a student's access to their educational environment through functional skills to increase mobility and/or independence. |
| Reevaluation | Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a student's needs and eligibility for special education services must be reviewed and determined at least every three years or at the request of an individualized education program (IEP) team member. |
| Speech-language therapy (SLT) | A related service that addresses communication-related deficits, such as speech-sound disorders, speaking fluency (such as stuttering), and language expression and comprehension skills, including the use of augmentative or alternative communication (AAC). |

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| | <i>Examples of AAC: Sign Language (ASL), pictures, letter boards, voice output technology</i> |
| Summary of performance (SoP) | This document outlines a student's functional and academic performance and plan for achieving their future goals. It is required to be completed before the student exits high school. It serves as a tool for adult service providers, employers, or postsecondary education institutions to identify what services or supports may benefit the student. |
| Transition plan | Beginning at age 14, this is a written plan included in the individualized education program (IEP) that prepares a student for life after high school. |
| Transition services | Educational activities and supports included in the transition plan within the individualized education program (IEP) designed to assist students with disabilities in reaching their measurable postsecondary goals. |

Outside Agency Information

Use this table to learn about different agencies in Tennessee and how to contact them.

| Name of organization | Services provided | Contact info and links |
|--|--|---|
| American Job Center (AJC) | <p>American Job Centers (AJC) offer recruiting events, workshops on resume-writing and interviewing skills, help people pursue certifications, and more. There are AJCs in all 95 counties of Tennessee. To find the information for your county, go to the link in the contact information box.</p> | <p>Find an AJC in your county: https://www.tn.gov/workforce/jobs-and-education/job-search1/find-local-american-job-center.html</p> |
| <p>Department of Disability and Aging (DDA)</p> <p>Employment and Community First ECF CHOICES</p> <p>Katie Beckett</p> | <p>The Department of Disability and Aging (DDA) in Tennessee helps people with disabilities. It does this in a few ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA provides Medicaid services so people can get help at home and in their communities. • DDA runs homes that provide 24-hour care for people with disabilities. • DDA offers family support to families caring for a member with a disability. <p>DDA works directly with people or through other providers.</p> | <p>Help desk for eligibility: (877) 224-0219</p> <p>DDA regional phone numbers:</p> <p>West: (866) 372-5709</p> <p>Middle: (800) 654-4839</p> <p>East: (888) 531-9876</p> |
| <p>Disability Coalition: WorkAbleTN, Brain Links, and Family Voices</p> | <p>The Tennessee Disability Coalition is an alliance of organizations and individuals joined to promote the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkAbleTN helps individuals with disabilities explore employment options. • Family Voices of Tennessee provides information, training, and assistance to families as they navigate service systems. • Brain Links enriches the lives of Tennesseans with traumatic brain injury by training and empowering the professionals serving them. | <p>List of staff emails: https://www.tndisability.org/our-staff</p> |

| Name of organization | Services provided | Contact info and links |
|--|--|---|
| Disability Rights TN (DRT) | Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) works to protect the rights of people with disabilities and/or mental illness in Tennessee. DRT provides resources and information to help solve issues or may open a case. There is no cost. | Submit a form: https://www.disabilityrightstn.org/get-help/ Phone: (800) 342-1660 |
| Family Engagement in Special Education (FESPED-TN) | Family Engagement in Special Education (FESPED-TN) empowers parents and caregivers and increases family engagement in special education. They have many resources on their website that explain different areas of special education, including transition. | Submit a form: https://familyengagementtn.com/contact/ |
| Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence (MAPs) | The Medicaid Alternative Pathways to Independence (MAPs) program helps people with disabilities learn skills for work, independent living, community involvement, and hobbies. The program provides tools, technology, and support to help people achieve their personal goals. | Email: DDA.MAPS@tn.gov |
| Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) | Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are provided for students with disabilities in high school. The five required Pre-ETS are job-exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, postsecondary counseling, workplace readiness, and self-advocacy. | Email: VR.TransitionServices@tn.gov |
| Tennessee Disability Pathfinder | Tennessee Disability Pathfinder helps people with disabilities, their family members, the community, and professional support partners find and access resources, support, and services available to meet their needs. | Contact information: https://www.tnpathfinder.org/contact Phone: (800) 640-4636 |
| Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN) | The Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN) provides staff in schools and families access to training, resources, and supports designed to help students with disabilities, ages 3-22. To receive assistance in transition, as well as other areas such as behavior, family engagement, assistive technology, and more, fill out a referral. | Submit a referral for assistance: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e8ab8cf93a0942cf931fc31864cb62c3 |
| The Arc Tennessee | The Arc Tennessee works to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are included and are able to make the choices that affect their lives. There are many chapters of The Arc Tennessee. Check the | Contact information: https://www.thearcctn.org/contact-us/ |

| Name of organization | Services provided | Contact info and links |
|--|---|---|
| | website to see which chapter is local to you and what services they offer. | |
| TN Caregiver Coalition | The mission of the Tennessee Caregiver Coalition is to be responsive to the needs of caregivers by providing relief and support services. They help primary caregivers who are caring for someone with special needs in the same home. They can provide and identify resources for your self-care plan. | Email: info@tncaregiver.org Phone: (615) 269-8687 |
| TN Center for Decision-Making Support | The TN Center for Decision-Making Support provides easy-to-understand, accurate information about all decision-making support options for people with disabilities. | Submit a form: https://www.tndecisionmaking.org/contact/ |
| TN Inclusive Higher Education Alliance | The TN Inclusive Higher Education Alliance provides information on all postsecondary education opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Tennessee. | Email: ucedd@vumc.org |
| TN Technology Access Program (TTAP) | The TN Technology Access Program helps individuals with disabilities and their families find and get the tools they need to live independent, productive lives. | Email: TN.TTAP@tn.gov |
| TN START Assessment and Stabilization Teams (TN START AST) | The Tennessee START Assessment and Stabilization Teams (TN START AST) are a statewide resource for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have complex behavioral or mental health needs. | Submit a form: https://stateoftennessee-cvlyz.formstack.com/forms/ast_referral_for_m |
| TNSTEP | TNSTEP provides information and training related to special education rights, equal access to quality education, and connections to community resources for families of youth with disabilities. | Contact information: https://tnstep.info/general-contact-2/ Direct contacts: https://tnstep.info/direct-contacts/ Phone: (800) 280-STEP |

| Name of organization | Services provided | Contact info and links |
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| Transition Tennessee | Transition Tennessee is the online home for training and resources on preparing students with disabilities for life after high school. Representatives can answer your questions or connect you to the appropriate resources. | Submit a form: https://transitiontn.org/contact/ Email: info@transitiontn.org |
| Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) | Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) serves people in Tennessee with disabilities, including those in middle school and high school, by preparing them for employment. Clients are assigned a team of VR professionals who collaborate with the customer to create the customer's individualized plan for employment (IPE). | Phone: (833) 751-0597 |