



Life After High School

10 Transition Questions for Teens and Parents to Consider

We have all thought about what we want to do when we “grow up.” For most teenagers, high school is a time when they have to move from thinking and dreaming to planning and working toward real goals. All students face the big transition from high school to the “real world,” and students with disabilities may face that transition with even more factors to consider. Preparing how to meet those special needs is the purpose of transition planning for students with IEPs.

The federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requires transition planning and services for all students who have an IEP starting at age 16. However, in Iowa, IEP teams must include transition-related goals in the IEP beginning at age 14. The student must be involved in this process.

The three areas focused on during transition planning are Living, Learning, and Working

We all need a core circle of support to get where we want to go in life. That’s why it is important for teens and parents to discuss concerns for their life when planning for life after high school.

No one has all the answers. You should bounce ideas off family and friends to create the best solutions for your child’s unique situation.

These questions are designed to help you start meaningful discussions. The questions are written from a student’s point of view to encourage students’ involvement.

1. What are my interests and how can I include them in my goals for the future?
2. Do I attend my IEP meetings and have the skills to advocate for myself?
3. Where do I want to live?
4. Do I understand and have the required documentation of my disability?
5. What supports and services will be available to me after I turn 18?

6. Do I have the skills I need to live independently (if I choose to)?
7. Do I have the skills I need to manage my finances?
8. Will I need a legal guardian or representative? If so, what does my family need to do?
9. What skills do I need to go on to college?
10. Do I have the “everyday” skills (sometimes called soft-skills) I need to be successful at a job?

The answers to these questions will be useful as you meet with IEP teams, colleges, potential employers, service providers, and others to discuss your child’s future!

Related Resources

Look for the following information sheet at www.askresource.org/resources

- Age of Majority

And browse the resources and information available on the following websites:

- Transition Iowa, www.transitioniowa.org
- The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition Parent Briefs, www.ncset.org/publications/default.asp#parent
- Iowa Department of Education, www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/special-education/special-education-programs-services/secondary-transition

ASK Essential Questions

- How will my student be involved in his/her transition planning?
- How are my student’s strengths and interests reflected in the living, learning and working goals?
- What services will be provided to help my child achieve his/her transition goals?



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