

# Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

## Transition Services

### What are Transition Services?

Transition Services are coordinated activities for a child with a disability, which are designed to get your child ready to move from school to adult life<sup>1</sup>. In planning these activities, you should think about what type of adult skills you and your child want. Transition services may involve facilitating your child's movement from school to the following:

- **Postsecondary education.** This may include attending junior and community colleges, which may lead to a Certificate or Associate's degree. It may also include four-year colleges and universities, which may lead to a Bachelor's degree.
- **Vocational education.** This involves organized educational programs to prepare individuals for either paid or unpaid employment, or for preparation for a career that does not require a degree<sup>2</sup>. Vocational education may include activities designed to give your child certain skills for specialized occupations (such as electrician, dental assistant, or welder). The training programs may last anywhere from two (2) weeks to two (2) years and require a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate.
- **Integrated or Supported employment.** This includes "on the job" support that allows your child to learn and keep a job. Supported employment gives children with severe mental or physical disabilities the opportunity to have a job in their community.
- **Continuing and Adult education.** Continuing education is for personal enrichment and may include classes such as cooking, sewing, or gardening. Adult education is more of a vocational, or skills-based, approach that provides instruction to individuals sixteen (16) years of age or older who are no longer being served by the public schools. Adult education may include classes such as

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 51 sec. 003.63 (2017)

<sup>2</sup> Rule 51 sec. 003.56B (2017)

woodworking, health care, and business education. Adult education programs may also be available to prepare individuals for GED tests.

- **Independent living.** This includes coordinating where your child will live and the skills that are necessary to take care of himself or herself.
- **Community participation.** Integrating your child into the community is an essential part of transition planning. This includes recreation and leisure activities that your child will participate in as well as the personal and social skills that will be necessary for your child to live effectively.

### **Are there any additional considerations for transition-age students?**

You may also consider learning about resources available through the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Vocational Rehabilitation system (Nebraska VR).

- The Social Security Administration (SSA) can provide individuals with disabilities with cash benefits and work incentives under the Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) program. You may want to inquire about the PASS (Plan to Achieve Self Support) program or the Ticket to Work program. You can find additional information by:
  - Calling 1-800-772-1213 to directly ask questions or to find the SSA office near you;
  - Calling the TTY number 1-800-325-0778; or
  - Visiting disability-specific resources through the SSA website at <https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/eng/overview-disability.htm>
- In Nebraska, a person is not automatically enrolled in Medicaid once he or she has been approved for SSI. An individual must file a separate application for Medicaid. However, Nebraska uses the same standards to determine eligibility for Medicaid as the Social Security Administration does for SSI.
- Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) can provide services ranging from job training to job placement and follow-up.
  - Nebraska VR  
Nebraska Department of Education  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509  
Phone: (402) 471-3644 / 1-877-637-3422  
TDD: 1-877-637-3422  
Website: <http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/index.html>

- Vocational Rehabilitation has many offices throughout Nebraska. To find one near you, please call 1-877-637-3422 (1-877-NE-REHAB).

### **Who is eligible for transition services?**

If your child has been found to be “a child with a disability” as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51, he or she may be eligible for transition services (see “Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation” and “Independent Educational Evaluation” materials)<sup>3</sup>. The transition services that your child requires will be decided based on his or her individual needs<sup>4</sup>.

The Individual Education Program (IEP) Team decides, on an individualized basis, what transition services are necessary for your child in order to receive a “free appropriate public education (FAPE).” Transition services can only be provided to your child if it is listed as necessary in your child’s IEP<sup>5</sup>.

### **When must transition services be provided?**

No later than when a child with a disability reaches age sixteen (16), a written transition services statement must be included in the IEP (see “Individualized Education Program” material). The transition services statement must be updated annually with the rest of the IEP<sup>6</sup>.

A school may provide transition services to younger students when it is appropriate. This may be particularly important for students with severe disabilities or for those who are at risk of dropping out of school before age 16.

If an agency other than the school district fails to provide transition services to your child, the IEP Team should meet and identify other strategies to meet the goals set out in the IEP<sup>7</sup>.

### **What must be included in a transition services statement?**

Transition services are based on your child’s needs, taking into account his or her strengths, preferences, and interests. Transition services may include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other

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<sup>3</sup> Rule 51 sec. 006 (2017)

<sup>4</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.07A9b (2017)

<sup>5</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.07A9 (2017)

<sup>6</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.07A9 (2017)

<sup>7</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.07A9c (2017)

post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, learning daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The written transition services statement should include:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills<sup>8</sup>, and
- Specific transition services that are needed to help your child in reaching these goals<sup>9</sup>.

### **Who participates in determining what transition services will be provided?**

Your child's IEP team will determine what transition services will be provided (see "Individualized Education Program" material). However, it is important for your child to participate in and take an active role in shaping the transition services. Parents also play an important role in this process and should be involved as much as possible.

If transition services are going to be discussed at the IEP meeting, the school district must give you notice of the meeting and tell you that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss transition services. The school district must also include a statement that it will invite your child and list any other agency that will be invited to attend<sup>10</sup>.

### **How do I request transition services?**

You may want to request an IEP meeting to discuss whether your child needs transition services.

It is a good idea to put all communications between you and school administrators and staff regarding your child's special education services in writing. Be sure to write down conversations and events that affect your child's schooling. Note the date, who was involved, what was said, and the resolution. You may want to create and maintain a file with all of your child's school information such as report cards, evaluation reports, and Individual Education Programs (IEPs).

All requests for evaluations or meetings should be made in writing to your child's school principal. You should keep a copy for your own records. Send your written request to the school via certified, return receipt requested mail. Attach the return receipt to your copy of the request and keep this in your file.

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<sup>8</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.07A9a (2017)

<sup>9</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.07A9b (2017)

<sup>10</sup> Rule 51 sec. 007.03A10 (2017)

## **Additional resources:**

- Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation - Disability Rights Nebraska
- Independent Educational Evaluation - Disability Rights Nebraska
- Individual Education Program - Disability Rights Nebraska
- Transition "Starters" for Everyone - Center for Parent Information & Resources (Updated February 2018). This article includes several resources which will help you create a transition services plan with your child's IEP Team.
- Center for Parent Information & Resources. This is a resource providing information created by Parent Centers that serve families of children with disabilities.
- IDEA Part B Parents' Rights in Special Education (Age 3-21) - Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education (August 2018).

## Sample Letter

You may wish to use similar language when requesting an Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting to discuss transition services for your child:

[Principal's Name]

[School's Name]

[School Address]

[City, State, Zip code]

Re: [Your child's name] – Request for an Individual Education Program meeting

Dear [Principal's Name]:

Please consider this letter as a formal request for an Individual Education Program (IEP) team meeting for my child, [Your child's name]. It is my understanding that I have a right to request an IEP meeting at any time, pursuant to the provisions of 92 NAC 51 (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51). I would like to specifically discuss transition services for my child.

To prevent complications with my schedule, please notify me of the date and time of the meeting one week in advance. I appreciate your prompt attention to this request and ask that you respond in writing by [Insert a date two (2) weeks from the time mailed], and that the meeting be held by [Insert a date five to ten days later than the previous date]. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your City, State, Zip]

[Your Phone Number]