



Parents who have concerns about their child's access to special education services, including a meaningful transition process, can contact DRC-NH to speak with an attorney free of charge.



Schools are required to engage in a meaningful transition-planning process which includes transition-related goals, services, and courses of study.

Special Education Series Transition Planning



Preparing for Life After High School *Transition Planning Rights and Resources*

Students who receive special education services are entitled to transition supports and services. In New Hampshire, planning for these supports and services may begin when the student turns 14 or, if appropriate, even earlier. Transition supports and services should be included in all Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and are designed to help children and youth with disabilities prepare for adult life. Federal and state laws require schools to provide these services to help students plan for post school activities such as college, vocational education, employment, adult services, and independent living.

A Meaningful Transition-Planning Process

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide individualized transition services as part of a student's IEP.

- Transition planning should be based on **students' interests and goals**. Best practice is to use **person-centered planning to develop post-secondary goals** related to training, education, employment and/or independent living. These goals should inform the IEP's annual measurable goals. All these goals must be **updated annually** and reflect the changing interests, needs, hopes, and dreams of each student.
- Post-secondary goals and annual measurable transition goals should be based on **age-appropriate assessments** that help to determine which services would be most beneficial for a student. These assessments can be formal or informal and are usually related to training, education, employment, and, if appropriate, independent living skills.
- Like other types of measurable goals, annual transition goals must be **clearly written and measurable**. The goals need to be written so that progress can be easily monitored. If progress is not being made, then the IEP team needs to explore barriers to progress and make adjustments either to transition services or transition goals.

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Disability Rights Center - New Hampshire (DRC-NH) is dedicated to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights by people with disabilities.

DRC-NH is New Hampshire's designated Protection and Advocacy agency and authorized by federal statute "to pursue legal, administrative, and other appropriate remedies" on behalf of individuals with disabilities. We are a statewide organization independent from state government or service providers.

Transition-Planning Process *Continued from page 1*

- › The annual measurable transition goals should be supported by academic and related services that help the student make progress on those goals. Depending on the goal, related services might be provided by an outside agency such as Vocational Rehabilitation.
- › The IEP must contain students' current and projected **courses of study**. This includes academic classes, vocational activities, life skills experiences, or other curriculum that help students reach their individual goals.
- › In addition to annual IEP meetings, Parents can ask to include periodic **transition planning meetings** as part of a student's IEP. These meetings allow parents to monitor the student's progress towards their annual IEP goals.
- › The school must **invite students** to attend their IEP meetings if the purpose of the meeting is to consider transition planning. The school must provide a written invitation to the student's parents.
- › Students and their parents have a right to request that an invitation be extended to any **representatives of participating agencies** to request their participation in the IEP meeting. This could include an Area Agency case manager, a representative from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), a case manager from a community mental health center, community employers, or anyone else from the student's circle of support.

What should a quality transition process look like?

- A successful transition process creates opportunities for students to gain skills and experiences to help them live, work, and learn as independently as possible.
- Transition planning can begin at age 14 or earlier and should always begin well before a student exits high school.
- Post-secondary and annual transition goals should be student-driven and reflect the student's dreams and aspirations. To do this, students need to participate in the planning process as much as possible.
- Transition goals and services should help students access community-based vocational training, including paid employment. They should also provide for recreational opportunities and travel training.
- Transition goals and services that involve organizations outside of school create opportunities for collaboration and to develop a strong network of support.
- Students should be given information about inclusive higher education and opportunities to explore post-secondary educational options.



Developmental Services

In New Hampshire, developmental services are provided by contractual agreement between DHHS and ten non-profit area agencies located throughout New Hampshire. Parents should apply for services at their designated area agency while their child is still in school. If the child is found eligible, the area agency will offer services to support the family and will prepare for the child's transition to adult services. Before the child turns 18, the area agency should assist the family with the process of enrolling the child in Social Security and Medicaid. In addition, students with developmental disabilities may qualify for home and community adult services. In order to ensure that these services are in place as soon as they are needed, an area agency should be invited to participate in transition planning at IEP meetings as early as possible.

Employment Supports

It is important to engage VR early in the transition planning process so they can help students prepare for a career or education after high school. Parents and/or students can request that the school invite VR to participate in transition planning.

To contact your regional VR office, look here: www.education.nh.gov/vr

VR representatives are required to attend an IEP meeting if invited. If VR refuses or fails to send a representative to the meeting, parents and/or students may file a complaint with the NH Client Assistance Program (CAP): <http://silcnh.org/cap/what-is-cap/>

For more information on developmental services visit
<https://drcnh.org/issue-areas/developmental-disabilities/>



*If you have questions or concerns about your rights regarding transition services, call Disability Rights Center-NH at 1-800-834-1721 to schedule an appointment to speak with an attorney free of charge. More information can be found at www.drcnh.org.

Additional Resources

Next Steps New Hampshire: Next Steps NH is a comprehensive platform of resources for students, families, educators, and community partners. <https://nextsteps-nh.org/>

Parent Information Center (PIC) has a variety of resources related to special education and other services including toolkits for students: <https://picnh.org/>

NH Family Voices has a vast library of resources to assist individuals and families, and hosts family-to-family chats to support youth and families in transition: <https://nhfv.org/>

United State Department of Education (US DOE) has a lot of information about transition services, including an annual guide for students: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/>

Still feeling overwhelmed? Connecting with a community of other individuals, families, and professionals working towards improved quality in transition services can help you feel more supported and informed. The New Hampshire Transition Community of Practice (NH Transition COP) is group of people who share a passion for transition. For more information or to be added to the mailing list go to: <https://nextsteps-nh.org/professional-development/transition-community-of-practice/>

Disability Rights Center - NH

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MISSION: The Disability Rights Center is dedicated to eliminating barriers to the full and equal enjoyment of civil and other legal rights for people with disabilities.

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TDD access also through NH Relay Service

VOICE AND TDD: 1-800-735-2964

This publication was supported solely by federal funding from grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living/Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; U.S. Department of Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services; Social Security Administration; and a grant from the New Hampshire Bar Foundation.

The contents are solely the responsibility of the grantees and do not necessarily represent the official views of the grantors.