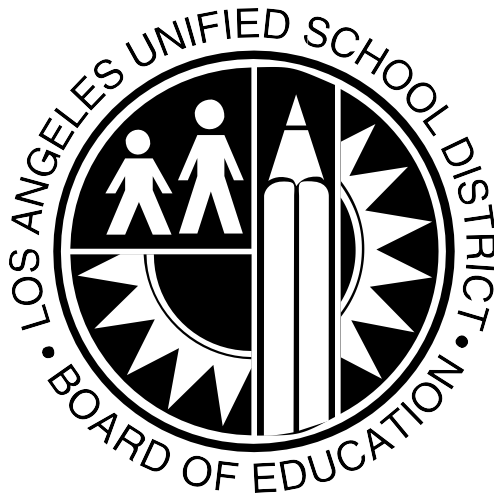


Los Angeles Unified School District
Division of Special Education

THE ITP AND YOU

An Informational Guide for Students with Disabilities
Ages 14 and Older and Their Families about the
Individual Transition Plan (ITP)



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Dear Students and Families:

The purpose of this booklet is to provide students with disabilities (beginning at age 14 or younger if appropriate) information regarding transition services. The guide serves as a tool for students taking part in the development of the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) portion of their Individualized Education Program (IEP). As members of the IEP team, students will participate in making important decisions when planning for post-secondary goals in education and/or training, employment and, if appropriate, daily living. We hope this resource helps when planning for life after high school.

We encourage you to read this guide and “The IEP and You” guide before the IEP team meeting. It is also important to review “A Parent’s Guide to Special Education Services” (including “Procedural Rights and Safeguards”), which you received with the IEP meeting notification form.

If you have any questions about the IEP, special education, or the information contained in this booklet, please speak to the transition teacher at your school or go to our website, dots.lausd.net.

*Division of Special Education
District Office of Transition Services*

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INTRODUCTION

What are transition services?

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities to help students with disabilities and their families prepare for life after high school. Life after high school may include job training, college, employment, independent living, or assistance from public agencies. Transition activities, which indicate student strengths, abilities, needs, preferences, and interests, are developed from the results of age appropriate assessments. The results of these assessments help IEP teams develop appropriate post-secondary goals in the areas of education and/or training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills.

What is transition planning?

Students and their parents should begin planning for their future early on. Although transition services begin at age 14, it's never too early to think about and start working towards the end goals of independence and success in adult life. Questions that families consider could include: What will the student do after high school? Will they go to college or a vocational school? Will they work in supported employment or get a competitive job? Will they live independently or continue to live at home? Will help be needed from other agencies to carry out these plans? By the time the student is 14 years old, the IEP must include activities to help the student move from high school to life as an adult in the community. This process is transition planning.

What are the stages of transition planning?

Prior to a student's 14th birthday, the student's areas of strength, ability, need, preference, and interests are identified through age-appropriate assessments embedded in the instructional program. These are then documented at the IEP meeting in the ITP. Services may be documented in the form of transition activities in the areas of education and/or training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills. Transition activities at this stage may involve instruction around career awareness and career exploration. This includes knowledge of personal strengths, learning styles, and various occupations.



Annually, the ITP is updated to show new areas of student strength, preference, and interest. Transition activities occur throughout the year to help students learn to find and keep employment, understand differences in post-secondary education options, and achieve financial literacy amongst other topics. Post-secondary goals are determined based on the student's desires after completing high school and documented in the ITP, along with the transition activities for the year that will support student post-secondary goals. The IEP document may also include connections to community agencies, if appropriate.



Before a student's 18th birthday, families are informed about "age of majority". When turning 18, the right to make educational decisions transfers to the student. However, there are legal alternatives to this rule. Parents and students must be informed about the transfer of rights by the IEP team. This act of communication is then documented on the IEP beginning at least one year before the student's 18th birthday.

TIP: Parents and students should get a head start in understanding "age of majority" rights and responsibilities.

What is an Individual Transition Plan?

Transition planning is written in the IEP in a section referred to as the Individual Transition Plan (ITP). The ITP section of the IEP is reviewed and revised at least once a year as part of the IEP team meeting. Transition plans can begin earlier than age 14 if the IEP team determines it is appropriate.

An ITP is intended to help the student plan for post-school living that may include any of the following:

- Post-secondary education (2 or 4 year college or business school)
- Vocational training (for example, training in computers or auto mechanics)
- Supported or competitive employment
- Independent living
- Community participation

Who participates at the IEP team meeting?

Students and families are key members of the IEP team. When an ITP is going to be developed at an IEP team meeting, the student must be invited to the meeting. This is done by including the student's name on the "Notification to Participate in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting" form. On page 3 of the ITP, parents are asked annually to indicate if there are outside agencies currently or prospectively providing transition services to the student and if permission is given to invite the agency the following year.

TIP: Students and parents are key members of the IEP team.

How important is student participation?

Student involvement is the most important part of transition planning. The student must be notified of the IEP team meeting in writing. The student may take part in the following ways:

- Take an active role in the IEP meeting by asking questions or leading the IEP meeting
- Set goals and participate in transition activities to reach goals
- Find out about local resources and services
- Listen and respond to team members present at the meeting
- Provide information regarding personal strengths, abilities, needs, preferences, and interests

TIP: Students should develop decision-making and communication skills in order to express their plans for the future during the IEP meeting.

How important is parent participation?

Parent participation is a key component to successful transition planning. Parents must be notified of the IEP team meeting in writing. Parents take part in the following ways:

- Take an active role in the IEP meeting by asking questions
- Communicate transition related concerns to the IEP team
- Ask questions about transition assessment results
- Help your child with transition activities (you can find examples on our website, dots.lausd.net, or through your school's transition teacher)
- Contact the transition teacher assigned to your child's school for information and resources

TIP: Parents should be active members of the transition team. Parents can take an active role in helping their student with their transition activities. Transition activities may include participation from families, schools, the community, and outside agencies. To get the most out of the IEP team meeting, it is best to prepare in advance.

What are the components of an ITP?

The results of transition planning are documented in the ITP. The specific items documented are:

- Agency involvement, if any
- Transition assessments conducted and the results
- The student’s interests and preferences
- The course of study, or courses needed from the date of the IEP meeting until culmination
- Post-secondary goals related to education/training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills
- Transition activities to help the student achieve the post- secondary goals in education/training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills
- People responsible for helping the student complete the transition activities

TIP: Transition services should be aligned with the student’s strengths, abilities, needs, preferences, and interests.

What is a transition assessment?

In order to write an ITP that addresses a student’s individual needs, the school will use age-appropriate transition assessments embedded in the instructional program. The purpose of a transition assessment is to determine student transition needs based on interests and preferences. Assessment tools may include interest inventories, interviews, academic assessment results, or student work samples. Age-appropriate transition assessments assist IEP team members with information regarding post-secondary education, employment, social skills, community participation, and independent living skills. The results of the assessment are then used to develop meaningful post-secondary goals and transition activities for the student.

TIP: Transition assessments help the IEP team make informed decisions for the student’s future.

What are post-secondary goals?

The school provides transition services that support the student in achieving their post-secondary goals. Post-secondary goals are goals that a student hopes to achieve **after** leaving high school such as going to college, attending a vocational training program, getting a job, or living independently. The IEP team must include post-secondary goals in the student's ITP in the areas of education and/or training, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills.

What are transition activities?

Transition activities are a set of activities designed to help the student meet the post-secondary goals written in the ITP. Transition activities may include classroom or small group instruction, field trips, employment preparation, daily living skills, and related services such as occupational or physical therapy. People responsible for helping the student complete these activities may include teachers, parents, family, the student, and other appropriate school staff. Sometimes community agencies are involved in providing transition activities.

How is the community linked to the ITP?

Several local agencies that help students with disabilities and their families receive transition services include:

- Department of Rehabilitation
- Regional Centers
- Social service agencies
- Institutions of higher learning such as community colleges
- Health and mental health agencies
- Community-based organizations

TIP: Parents and students can contact school-site transition teachers to help identify local agencies available to support transition planning and activities.

How long do students receive transition services?

Transition services are provided until the student:

- Receives a diploma, or
- Reaches the age of 22 if enrolled in school, whichever comes first.

What are the graduation requirements for a diploma?

District graduation requirements are periodically changed by the LAUSD Board of Education. They should be discussed at every IEP team meeting by reviewing the student's Individual Graduation Plan, part of the ITP course of study.

To receive a diploma the student must:

- Complete required coursework;
- Earn the minimum required number of credits for their graduation year;
- Complete any California state requirements applicable for a given year;
- Meet non-course requirements (e.g. computer literacy, select career pathway, service learning).

Students with disabilities who earn a diploma have completed their high school education and are no longer eligible for District services.

What happens if the student does not meet graduation requirements for a diploma?

If the student does not earn a diploma, he/she may earn a certificate of completion. A certificate of completion may be given to students who access standards within the general or alternate curriculum. Per California Education Code, section 56390, students with an IEP can earn a certificate of completion by meeting any one of the following conditions:

- Satisfactory completion of credits of a prescribed alternative course of study as identified on the student's IEP; or
- Satisfactory achievement of his/her IEP goals and objectives during high school as determined by the IEP team; or
- Satisfactory high school attendance, participation in the instruction prescribed in his/her IEP, and achievement of the transition goals and objectives.

Students with disabilities who qualify for a certificate of completion are eligible to participate in one graduation ceremony and any school activity related to graduation in which students without disabilities would be eligible to participate.

Students who earn a certificate of completion may continue to pursue a diploma and are eligible to continue receiving special education services through 22 years of age or until earning a diploma.

What is a Summary of Performance?

Before a student exits high school with a diploma, reaches age 22, or exits with a certificate of completion and does not plan to continue, the teacher prepares a document separate from the IEP called the *Summary of Performance*. This document is a summary of academic achievement and functional performance and includes recommendations for supports required to assist the student in working toward their post-secondary goals. The *Summary of Performance* will help explain the student's need for reasonable accommodations and supports when transitioning to post-secondary settings for education, training, employment, or the acquisition of independent living skills.

What resources are available if I still have questions?

Below is a brief list of resources for more information:

- The principal, special education staff, and transition teacher at your school
- A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)
- The IEP and You Booklet
- School and Family Support Services (213) 241-6701
- California Department of Education (CDE) website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>
- U.S. Department of Education website: <http://idea.ed.gov>
- Los Angeles Unified School District's special education website: <http://sped.lausd.net>
- District Office of Transition Services website: <http://dots.lausd.net>

Telephone Numbers

LAUSD School and Family Support Services	(213) 241-6701
California Department of Education (CDE)	(916) 445-4613