

Guidance for the Development of Postsecondary Goals

IDEA regulations require IEP Teams to develop appropriate measurable postsecondary goals for students of transition age. Further, these goals must be based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. The Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) Analysis of Comments and Changes to the IDEA regulations states that "the only area in which postsecondary goals are not required in the IEP is in the area of independent living skills." (71 Fed Reg. 46540, 46668 (Aug 14, 2006)). This means that every transition IEP must include postsecondary goals in the areas of employment and education and training. When appropriate, the IEP must also address postsecondary goal(s) in the area of independent living.

Transition assessments related to education, training, employment, and independent living provide information about students' strengths, interests, and preferences as they prepare for adult life. These data serve several purposes, the first of which is to enable students to develop postsecondary goals that capture their unique visions for adulthood. A second, related purpose is to enable students to refine their postsecondary goals throughout secondary school, as time, experience, and additional assessment data inform the need for such revision. A third purpose is to inform local education agencies of the need to provide transition services that will prepare students to achieve their postsecondary goals. IDEA identifies the following post-school activities, or areas, for which correlating transition services may be needed:

- Postsecondary Education
- Vocational Education
- Integrated Employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and Adult Education
- Adult Services
- Independent Living
- Community Participation

Transition assessment data generated using *employment* measures enable Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams to craft appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals and correlating transition services that make it possible for students to secure satisfying post-school employment. The work may be part-time or full-time, and it may require support services, but it is employment provided in integrated settings for competitive wages.

Information generated using *educational* measures support the development of postsecondary goals and correlating transition services in three areas – postsecondary education, vocational education, and continuing and adult education. Typically, goals for postsecondary and vocational education correspond to students' post-school employment plans; continuing and adult education postsecondary goals complement post-school goals for employment, independent living, and/or community participation.

Data provided using *training* measures allow IEP teams to design postsecondary goals and/or correlating transition services in potentially all arenas of adult life. Postsecondary training may be required first for students to realize postsecondary goals for integrated employment, postsecondary education, vocational education, continuing and adult education, independent living, and/or community participation. Additionally, training may be required to enable students to access adult services that will support them in post-school environments.

Measures that provide independent living data offer information useful in fashioning postsecondary goals and correlating transition services in the areas of independent living and community participation. Such data address activities related to finances, shopping, housing, housekeeping, food preparation, laundry, personal care, leisure, medical, safety, health and wellness, family relationships and responsibilities, socially responsible behavior, transportation, civic responsibility, and community service.

Goals and activities that address self determination may relate to all postsecondary activities and environments. There are many sub-skills found under the broad area of self determination. These sub skills are:

- Decision-making
- Choice-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal-setting & attainment
- Internal locus of control
- Positive attributes of efficacy and outcomes expectancy
- Self-Observation
- Self-Evaluation
- Self-Reinforcement
- Self-Instruction
- Self-Advocacy & Leadership
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Knowledge

Developing postsecondary goals for some students may be challenging because of the intensity of the disability. Using age-appropriate transition assessments will help to guide teams as they develop these goals. Maintaining a focus on what students can do, with necessary supports and as the health and stamina of the students allow, will help teams to think beyond traditional employment, training, education, and independent living goals.

The examples that follow illustrate the relationship among transition assessment categories, areas of post-school (adult life) activity, and postsecondary goals.

Sample Student #1 (Standard/Advanced Studies Diploma)

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed full-time as an Certified Public Accountant |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn a baccalaureate degree in accounting • Complete prep class to sit for the Certified Public Accountant exam |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a summer internship at an accounting firm • Complete tax preparation training in order to generate income to defray college expenses • Take art lessons • Complete a CPR class to volunteer with Fire Department EMTs |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire and take medication according to schedule • Utilize self determination skills in the community. • Use a digital scheduler to be on time for volunteer work • Vote in local, state, and national elections |

Sample Student #2 (Standard/Advanced Studies Diploma)

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed full-time as a journalist |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn a bachelor’s degree in journalism • Earn an associate’s degree at the community college prior to transferring to a university to work to earn the bachelor’s degree |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete training in the art of creating editorial cartoons |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in adult case management and counseling services through the community services board mental health program when juvenile case management ends • Volunteer during college to write for a non-profit organization • Access (a) the public transit system to reach summer job following high school graduation and (b) the university shuttle to attend college classes |

Sample Student #3 (Modified/Standard Diploma)

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work full-time as a home health care assistant |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete coursework to become a licensed home health care aide/nurse's assistant |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete study skills course at the community college following high school graduation • Complete requirements to maintain CNA certification • Participate in checking account management training provided by the bank |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live in an apartment with a friend who shares expenses • Maintain balanced checking and savings account |

Sample Student #4 (Modified/Standard Diploma)

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed as an automotive technician |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the requirements for an Associate’s Degree in Automotive Technology |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete automotive technology courses that are provided through employer once hired as a mechanic |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live in own apartment • Volunteer for Habitat for Humanity when new Habitat homes are constructed in the community |

Sample Student #5 (Special Diploma)

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work part-time as a physical therapy clinic aide |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete coursework to become a licensed home health care aide/nurse's assistant |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in on the job training to acquire skills required for employment as a physical therapy clinic aide • Participate in dance training at the recreation center • Complete route training to use public transit to/from work independently |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live in the community in a group home or other supported housing • Attend local dance productions • Participate in volunteer opportunities provided through the Arc/day support/group homes |

Sample Student #6 (Special Diploma)

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be employed as a ticket scanner at the local sports arena |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in therapeutic recreation activities of interest |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete training to use emerging communication technologies that replace those being used when he/she exits high school • Complete Edible Education (healthy eating) program through county Parks and Recreation |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in leisure activities that include attending hockey games; participate in community recreation center activities and outings; eat at restaurants; view movies; listen to music, stories, and books • Ride city buses equipped to transport wheelchairs • Vote in local, state and national elections |

Below are examples of postsecondary goals for three students. These goals are based on transition assessments related to education, training, employment, and independent living and provide information about students' strengths, interests, and preferences

Mark is a high school student with an intellectual disability. He has a concurrent hearing loss and uses an amplification system. Mark has experienced seven (7) employment training internships over the past two (2) years. He has expressed a strong interest in working in his current retail setting; a large retail store. Mark is gregarious, follows a visual schedule on his technology device and completes most tasks without prompting. He has strong family ties and supports. Mark has a Medicaid Waiver and utilizes on the job supports through the Dept. of Rehabilitative Services.

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work part time in a retail store. |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a sign language class, with supports, at a community college |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete on the job training in customer service offered by his employer. |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an independent living class at the Central Virginia Independent Living Center. |

Jonathan (Jon) is 18 years old and has been enrolled in a hospital education program after a recent car accident. He uses a power wheelchair for ambulation. Jon’s traumatic brain injury affects his fine motor skills and short term memory. He has responded positively to the use of a small notebook computer with a touch screen. His occupational therapist has installed schedules and word processing software. Jon is coping with several changes: his right leg has severe nerve damage, he no longer lives at home and he has no memory of the accident. Jon has 10 high school credits toward a Standard diploma.

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work part time as a student advocate through the Traumatic Brain Injury Foundation. |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete classes through Thinking About College, with supports offered through an educational coach |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a training program regarding instructional technology at a state rehabilitation facility. Jon was accepted in this program following his eligibility for services from the Dept. of Rehabilitative Services |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete mobility training to access public transportation through the Resources for Independent Living Center. |

| <p>Alicia is a 14 year old student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). She uses a communication program on her laptop computer and prefers highly structured schedules. Alicia withdraws from crowds and rough textures by running and slapping her palms against a wall. She participates in services in her local high school including occupational and speech therapy. Alicia has recently begun exploring careers through placements in her school and community. Her transition team works closely with her family and her instructional assistant. Based on her transition assessment an employment setting may include photocopying in an office or with a delivery company.</p> | | |
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| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | AREA OF ADULT LIFE (Post-School Activities) | POSTSECONDARY GOAL |
| EMPLOYMENT | Integrated Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work part time in an employment setting that meets her needs and preferences. |
| EDUCATION | Postsecondary Education Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a class in social competence offered by the local community college and co taught by faculty; community services board personnel and persons with ASD. |
| TRAINING | Related to Integrated employment Related to Higher Education Related to Vocational Education Continuing and Adult Education Related to Independent Living Related to Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a training program to improve communication skills in the community and in an employment site. • Learn and use a problem solving model to make food and wardrobe choices. |
| INDEPENDENT LIVING | Independent Living Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the communication skills learned in high school. |

For technical assistance and resources in all areas of Middle/Secondary Transition contact:

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