

Special Education

Measurable Postsecondary Goals and Transition Needs

Measurable Postsecondary Goals

For students beginning with the first IEP to be in effect when the student is age 15 (and at a younger age, if determined appropriate) and updated at least annually, the IEP must include measurable postsecondary goals based on the student's preferences and interests, as they relate to transition from school to post-school activities, in the areas of:

- employment (e.g., integrated competitive employment);
- postsecondary education and training (e.g., career and technical education and training, continuing and adult education, college); and
- independent living skills (when appropriate) (e.g., adult services, independent living or community participation).

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center defines a postsecondary goal to be "generally understood to refer to those goals that a child hopes to achieve after leaving secondary school (i.e., high school)" rather than

"the process of pursuing or moving toward a desired outcome."

http://www.nsttac.org/tm_materials/post_secondary_goals.aspx.

Postsecondary goals identify the student's long-term goals for living, working and learning as an adult. The projected postsecondary goals in the student's IEP establish a direction for the school, student, student's family and any participating agencies to work towards in recommending transition activities for the student. These post-school goals guide planning for activities that prepare the student to move from school to post-school activities and for discussion with appropriate public and private community agencies regarding their contributions to the student's transition process. The student's IEP should include goals, services and activities to incrementally prepare the student to achieve the measurable postsecondary goals.

Students and parents need to be involved in developing these goals. Information to develop a student's measurable postsecondary goals should be obtained using a variety of formal and/or informal methods which may vary from student to student, including but not limited to vocational assessments, assessment of postsecondary education skills, interviews with the student and/or parent, strength-based assessments and teacher observations.

The measurable postsecondary goals are intended to acknowledge the student's needs, preferences and interests and should be expressed in terms of the student's aspirations for the future. Goals may be written using the student's own words, in answer to such questions as:

- What do you want to do when you finish high school?
- If you go to college, what do you want to study?
- What kind of work do you want to do?

- What do you want to learn more about?
- Where do you plan on living?

The measurable postsecondary goals can be general or specific since they will be reviewed and, as appropriate, revised annually to reflect the student's current aspirations as well as his or her ability to narrow general interests to specific directions concerning postsecondary plans. For example, when Maria first begins to participate in the transition planning process, projected postsecondary goals may be broad in scope: "Maria will work in the technology field." Later, after involvement in career and technical education courses and work experiences, the IEP might more specifically state that "Maria will attend a 4-year college to study computers with the goal of working as a computer programmer."

Examples of Post-Secondary Goals:

Education/Training

- John will enroll in the general Associates Degree program at ZYX Community College in September 2012.
- Joan will attend a two-year community college course and gain a qualification in culinary arts.
- Karen will complete a one-year course at a cosmetology school.
- John will take a course in dog grooming.
- Emma will complete a training course as a Certified Nursing Assistant.
- Jack will participate in on-the-job training as a painter and decorator.

Employment

- Thomas will become employed as an apprentice carpenter.
- Damien will work for at least one year as a trainee veterinary technician in order to gain relevant employment experience.

Independent Living

- Matthew will live in an apartment with friends.
- Chris will obtain his driving license after graduation from high school.
- Andrea will shop for groceries independently using a list.

Transition Needs and Courses of Study

For students beginning with the IEP to be in effect when the student is age 15 (and at a younger age, if determined appropriate), the IEP must include a statement of the transition service needs of the student that focuses on the student's courses of study, such as participation in advanced placement courses or a vocational education program, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, as they relate to transition from school to post-school activities.

The IEP should identify the high school curriculum that will prepare the student to meet his/her post secondary goals. Examples of courses of study might include Regents coursework and/or sequence of courses in a career and technical education field related to the student's post-secondary goals.

This section of the IEP should also identify other needs of the student such as:

- Joey needs adult assistance to travel in the community
- Darcy needs instruction in functional reading and mathematics.
- Guy needs to develop self-advocacy skills.
- Ravon needs to learn to use public transportation.
- Sydney needs to learn computer and time management skills.
- Savannah needs to complete necessary coursework for graduation with a regular diploma.
- John needs to complete courses in automotive career and technical education.

Based on the postsecondary goals and transition needs of the student, annual goals and objectives or benchmarks and other activities can be developed to help the student incrementally develop skills, knowledge, experiences and contacts with resources, as needed, to work toward these desired postsecondary goals. The specific coordinated set of activities, including instruction, to be provided for the student to achieve his/her postsecondary goals is documented in a later section of the IEP (See "Coordinated Set of Transition Activities").

Quality Indicators

Measurable postsecondary goals and transition need statements:

- reflect the dreams, aspirations and hopes of the student.
- reflect the student's strengths, preferences and interests as they relate to transition from school to post-school activities.
- are written to the greatest extent possible in the student's own words.
- are reviewed and updated at least annually.
- become increasingly specific as the student comes closer to the time he or she will be leaving school.
- are developed with direct student involvement.
- are written in such a way as to guide the development of annual goals and recommendations for transition services, linkages and activities.
- are based upon age-appropriate transition assessments relating to training, education, employment and where appropriate, independent living skills.