By the time a student with an "IEP" (or a Section 504 plan) reaches age 16, the IEP must include a "Transition Plan" that identifies the student's postsecondary (post high school) education, employment and independent living goals. Goals can be set too low if team members devising the transition plan are not sufficiently aware of the postsecondary options available to students with disabilities. This 5 part series is intended to equip the stakeholders in the student's future with resources and information to help them have meaningful input in the creation of a transition plan that keeps postsecondary expectations realistic and high. Specifically, this series will cover:

Part 1: The Transition Plan – What is it?
Part 2: **Postsecondary Education Options**
Part 3: **Postsecondary Employment Option**s
Part 4: **Independent Living Skills**
Part 5: Creating the Transition Plan

Before reading this series, consider creating a transition planning table (see sample image pictured with this article) to write down notes and ideas as you read. A free copy is available from the author via **email**.

Part 1: The Transition Plan - What is it?

A. Transition Plan (Overview)

Transition Plans: Under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), students with disabilities must be provided with free and appropriate public education and related services ("FAPE") that **"meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living."** *20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(1) (A).* Congress emphasized in its findings that one of the reasons access to the general education curriculum "to the maximum extent possible" is so important for students with disabilities is not only to make progress in school, but also so that they can "**be prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives to the *maximum extent possible*.**" *20 U.S.C. § 1400(c)(5)(A)(ii).* So that supports and services are in place during school to help students with disabilities transition to their adult lives as independently as possible, the IDEA requires that a transition plan be devised no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team). 2*0 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII); 34 C.F.R. § 300.320(b) and (c).*

What is a transition plan? A transition plan has two required parts: 1. the student's postsecondary goals, *and* 2. the supports and services needed to help the student reach those goals. *20 U.S.C.1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII); 34 C.F.R. § 300.320(b).*

What are transition goals:? Under the IDEA, goals must be: 1. "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals," and 2. "based upon age appropriate transition assessments."

The goals must provide planning related to each of the following areas: **a. training needed to reach goals, b. education, c. employment and, where appropriate, d. independent living skills.** The goals must also take into account the student's input, strengths, preferences and interests. 20 U.S.C. § 1401(34)(B); 34 C.F.R. § 300.43(c).

Some state agencies recommend that "at least one annual IEP goal should be in place to support each identified measurable postsecondary goal." *Developing annual IEP goals to support the postsecondary goals,* Ohio Department of Education (March 22, 2014) (site provides examples of IEP goals to support transition goals). Also, "[g]oals

should be realistic and start during 9th and 10th grade," (**Tips for Transition**, Kellems, R. and Morningstar, M., Transition Coalition for the University of Kansas, Dept. of Special Education, 2009, p. 6).

What are "transition services"? Transition services are defined as "services (including courses of study) the child will need to help reach the postsecondary goals." *20 U.S.C. § 1401(34)(B); 34 C.F.R. § 300.43(a).* More specifically, transition services are a "coordinated set of activities" for a child with a disability that:

(a) is designed to be within a results-oriented process that is **focused on improving the academic and functional achievement** of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities,**including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation**;

(b) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and

(c) includes **instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.**

The California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) uses codes to identify and track transition services so to make sure your student receives the transition services needed, it is helpful for team members to know the codes used for transition related services and to make sure they are correctly reflected in the transition plan. Here are some sample codes**: 820 = College awareness/preparation, 830 = vocational assessment, counseling, and career assessment, 840 = career awareness, 850 = work experience education, 855 = job coaching (job shadowing, service learning, etc.), 860 = mentoring (coaching to help student with program), 870 = travel training, 890 = other transition services (e.g. program coordination, case management), and 900 = other special education/related services.**

When do transition services end? California Law and the IDEA require that FAPE be offered to all eligible students with disabilities until July 1 after the student with a disability turns the age of 21. *34 CFR §§ 300.101(a), 300.102(a)(1); California Ed. Code § 56026; **Lanterman Act** (Welfare and Institutions Code) § 4400.* **However, under the IDEA, once students graduate with a "regular high school diploma," they are no longer eligible for special education under the IDEA or the Lanterman Act.** *34 C.F.R. § 300.102(a)(3)(iv). See **Rights Under the Lanterman Act** and **Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act**.*

Author's Note: There is no requirement that a student earn a diploma in 4 years and, in many cases, students may receive free public education to earn a high school diploma up until the student "ages out." For students capable of performing the academic work needed to earn a diploma, but who still need transitional skills training to be successful as young adults, the team should consider designing a "hybrid" 5 - 8 year high school plan that combines transition training with diploma eligible classes so that the student can work towards both a diploma and development of functional skills needed for adult life.

If a district believes that a student with a disability is on track to graduate, "prior written notice" proposing exiting of the student from special educational services

upon graduation must be sent to parents. *34 C.F.R. § 300.503(a)(1).* Parents may object to the proposed change of placement if the parent does not believe the student has met the IEP goals and objectives, including transition goals. There is no requirement that a student obtain a diploma within 4 years so make sure that when planning the student's high school classes, that the student's academic and functional needs are addressed even if it means taking longer to earn the diploma. Students who qualify for services under the Lanterman Act have through age 21 to access educational services and/or earn a diploma.

B. General Transition Planning Resources

To get an general idea of what transition plans may involve, below are some resources to review. See also the "parent worksheet" image presented with this article. *(Note: A free copy of this worksheet created by the author may be obtained by emailing the author **Lucile Lynch**).* For resources that pertain to specific areas (e.g. education options, employment options, etc.), please click on the related section listed at the beginning and end of this article *(coming soon).*

1. Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities (Vermont Parent Information Center, 2008) (has excellent table and timelines for developing strong transition plans);

2. "Taking Charge of Your Education: Transition Planning for Your Future" (includes sheets to fill in to help develop transition goals). This guide was funded by a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services and is a collaborative effort of the San Diego State University Research Foundation, Employment Development Dept. of CA, the CA Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the California Health Incentives Improvement Project; and

3. CalSTAT's Transition Information and Resource Guide from the California Department of Education (164 pages). Includes table of sample goals, measures and standards.

C. Pre-Assessment Preparation

While not required, **it is highly recommended that parents and students preliminarily explore what postsecondary options exist in the areas of education, employment, living, transportation and community involvement** *before* **any postsecondary assessments are performed.** Assessments often ask the student or parents what the student would like to do after high school so being knowledgeable about options *before* the assessments may increase the expectations for postsecondary goals and better identify the services needed to reach the goals. (To learn more about postsecondary options in education, employment, transportation and other areas, please click on the preferred series part listed at the beginning of this article.)

The IEP team should also explore whether any school programs or services are available such as "**Career Cruising**," "**Naviance**", and/or **Workability** that can be added to the student's IEP to help the child learn more about careers that he or she may be suited for after high school and to prepare the child for the assessments that explore what he or she wants to do.

D. Assessment of the Student's Interests and Needs

Once a preliminary exploration of available options has been done, the team should formally gather information from the student and parents (because the student is a

minor) to learn what the student's goals should be in terms of education, employment, living situation, transportation needs, and community involvement. For example, after the 4 years of high school will the student pursue postsecondary education or pursue employment? What are the student's interests and what types of careers will build upon or feed those interests? Will the student be living independently, at home, in a semi-independent setting or in a group setting? Will the student be driving or need transportation assistance? Assessments and input from the student and others can help define the student's interests and areas of need so that strong measurable, realistic goals can be drafted. *34 C.F.R. §§ 300.43(a)(2); 300.320(b); 300.321(b).*

(i) Assessments: As noted above, the IDEA requires that age appropriate transition assessments be conducted before a transition plan is drafted in order to determine the needs for planning for training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills." *20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII).* There are two types of assessments that districts use -- formal and informal. Formal assessments are standardized with a norming process, proven reliability and validity, and usually require that the assessor have specific qualifications that requires specialized training in the administration of the assessment. Informal assessments are usually free, do not have a norming process, and share subjective information. See the **National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) toolkit** for more information.

Examples of assessments include:
- aptitude tests (to determine the student's skills or abilities),
- functional assessments (which have a child try a skill to see if they like it),
- interest inventories (to determine the student's preference for certain careers),
- adaptive behavior scales (help to determine how much assistance is needed to do activities),
- transition planning inventories (identify strengths in various aspects of adult living),
- self-determination assessments (allows the student to speak for himself, e.g. **AIR Self-Determination Assessment**, **ARC Self-Determination Assessment**, **Field Hoffman Self-Determination Assessment**, and more),
- observations of the student *(informal)*, and
- interviews or questionnaires to gather information from the student, parents and others (*informal).*

There are also nonverbal assessments and surveys that can be used in the event the student is not able to verbalize his or her thoughts or otherwise provide the needed input (e.g. **Picture Interest Career Survey**). The type of assessment needed will depend on the student's suspected areas of need so review with the IEP team the different informal and formal assessments and which ones will benefit the student in terms of transition planning. Some schools have programs such as **Naviance** that offer self exploration into areas and skills. Workability programs in the school can also provide assessments. For a quick summary of different transition assessments, consider reviewing the **4 page fact sheet** by the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (funded by the Office of Special Education Programs). *A list of assessments for specific areas can also be found here*:

1. **http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/SpecED/transi/TransAssessSamples.pdf**

2. http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/assessment_review/view.php?id=11

3. http://www.rpesd.org/AgeAppropriateTransition.aspx

4. http://www.naviance.com/college-and-career-readiness-platform/student-an...

(ii) Student Input: The purpose of the transition plan is to help equip the student with skills so that the student can successfully pursue his or her postsecondary goals as a young adult. Sometimes students are not sure what they want to do after high school which is why it is important to explore postsecondary options (set forth in other parts of this series)*before* asking the student what he or she wants to do after high school.

After the student and his/her parents have had an opportunity to explore the postsecondary options discussed in this series, the student (or someone acting on the student's behalf) should provide recorded input of what the student wants to do after the 4 years of high school so that the IEP team is aware of the student's interests and preferences. The student may use any form or method he or she chooses to do this (e.g. written form, a drawing, audio, a collage, etc.). The school may have a form it uses but there are many forms available online as well. See, for example:

a. **Imdetermined.org**: Provides transition videos, questions and guides for students and parents to review;

b. "**My Next Move**" online profiler to find out what the student likes/dislikes (sponsored by Dept. of Labor);

c. The **ARC self determination scale**;

d. the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (nsttac.org) for **sample forms**;

e. **Post Secondary Goals Input sheet**; and

f. Lake Shore Central School District **student interview forms** (and much more)

(iii) Parent Input: Parents are unique team members because they are the only team members who have known the child since birth, have the most complete understanding of the child's medical/social/developmental/educational history, have seen the child's activities across all settings, and who will probably be the only team members involved with the child after high school. Under the IDEA, districts must ensure that the IEP team for each child with a disability includes the parent of the child and are required to take steps to "ensure that one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present … or afforded the opportunity to participate." *20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(B)(i)*. Parents are members of the IEP team until the student turns 18. **It is important to note that in California once a child turns 18, the parent must have their child's consent to be involved in the child's IEP or transition plan unless the parent has obtained conservatorship or limited conservatorship of their child.** Click **here** for more details on conservatorship.

Before a transition planning meeting, parents should talk to their child to discuss their child's skills and postsecondary interests. The NSTTAC reported that students whose parents were involved were "more likely to be engaged in post-school employment and had greater stability in their employment status." **Council for Exceptional Children's DCDT Fast Facts: Parental Involvement** (prepared by the DCDT Publications Committee).

Parents should consider submitting a written report to the IEP team so that their parental insights about what the child may need in terms of supports and services as well as goals needs is presented. IEP meeting notes only paraphrase or summarize parental input so written input may be needed to provide a more complete or accurate representation of the parental concerns and thoughts. Parental input should provide insights with respect to what the student can or may do with respect to:

- education after high school;
- living after high school (what needs to be learned, health and safety issues, etc.);
- work after high school; and
- community connections (unique hobbies, youth groups, religious affiliations, sports interests, etc.).

Sample Forms:

a. The State Support Team for the State of Ohio provides a wide range of excellent **free forms** (and other resources) to help team members determine whether a student needs a postsecondary goal in a particular area;

b. The **Lake Shore Central School District** also provides an extensive list of forms for use. (see, e.g. "Transition Planning Inventory," "Parent Interview," and more); and

c. "**Transition Planning: Ideas for Parents**" (Shasta 21st Century Career Connections).

(iv) Teacher Input: Teachers provide valuable input into a student's strengths and likes because they see what the student does and enjoys at school. They will likely have insights about the student that are not reflected in the assessments. Teachers' valuable insights regarding the child's independence and social skills are significant when goal setting in the functional skills area. If the student has instructional aides, efforts should also be made to obtain input from the IAs because they often work more closely with the student than any other staff members. Many forms are available for teacher insights or input on the websites listed in the Parent Input section.

D. Devising the Transition Plan

After age appropriate assessments have been conducted to provide insights for planning the postsecondary goals for training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living, an IEP meeting should be held to discuss the assessments and devise the transition plan based upon those assessments. Goals should be provided in the areas of education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills (e.g. transportation, living, community connections). *20 U.S.C. § 1401(34); 34 C.F.R. § 300.43(c)*. The transition plan must be created before the child reaches age 16 but may be changed or updated at any time with the consent of the team.

E. Who attends a transition plan IEP meeting?

In addition to the regular IEP team members, the following persons "must" also be invited:

(i) The Student. The LEA "**must**" invite a child with a disability to attend the child's IEP meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals under §300.320(b). *20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B); CFR 300.321(b)*.

(ii) Outside Agencies. If a purpose of a child's IEP Team meeting will be the consideration of postsecondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to

assist the child in reaching those goals, the district, to the extent appropriate, and with consent, "**must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services"** to attend the child's IEP Team meeting. However, if the participating agency does not attend the meeting, the local educational agency or district is no longer required to take other steps to obtain participation of an agency in the planning of any transition services. *20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1); CFR 300.321(b)(1) and (3).*

Examples of agencies that may need to be invited include: the local regional center (e.g. the San Diego Regional Center), the Department of Rehabilitation, a "Workability" representative, Social Security, Social Services (mental health program, health department), Medi-Cal, reps from local college/vocational/training school, **Job Corps**, the Arc of San Diego, California Conservation Corps, Smart One Stop Center (Disability Navigator), and the like. Parents should also ask for a list of the contact information for their records.

F. What should be discussed at the meeting?

While many things will be discussed, below is a brief overview of what should be discussed at a meeting discussing a transition plan:

1. *Results of assessments* that reflect informal and informal assessments to determine the student's interests, preferences, strengths, and areas of need;

2. Realistic goals based upon the student's interest and skills in the areas of education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living;

3. Names and address of agencies, supported employment providers and applicable postsecondary services exist to help the student transition towards his/her postsecondary goals;

4. *The appropriate academic and transitional instruction and training*, including course selection, community experiences and post school living and employment objectives to help the student meet the transition goals;

5. What modifications and accommodations, academic advisement and adapted curriculum are needed for students bound for postsecondary education.

6. The Notice of Rights regarding the age of majority: Beginning no later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under Part B, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under *20 U.S.C. § 1415(m); 34 C.F.R. § 300.520*. All rights under the IDEA shift from the parents to the student once the age of majority is reached. **At least one year before the student turns 18, there should be a discussion with the student regarding the transfer of rights**.

F. Final Check?

Is the plan adequate? To help ensure that transition plans include what is needed, the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center has devised an easy-to-follow checklist: **NSTTAC Indicator 13 checklist: Form B**. If an area has not been addressed, additional exploration or assessment of an area may be needed to devise a goal and if so, reschedule a meeting until the assessment has been concluded and include in the team's meeting notes the action plan and dates so that too much time does not pass.

For some parents and students with disabilities, the idea of the student leaving the structured high school environment may instill a feeling of panic and uncertainty.

However, as options are explored and effective goal planning occurs, the expectations for the future can turn into excitement and hope.

Transition Planning Series: Postsecondary Educational Options

There are many postsecondary educational options for students with disabilities ranging from attendance at a traditional college to enrollment in a college "*experience*" program. **Some postsecondary educational options require a high school diploma -- but many do not.** So, before deciding what type of an educational goal to devise, review the below information to learn about the wide variety of programs available. It is important to note that youth **"with intellectual disabilities who participated in postsecondary education were 26% more likely to leave vocational rehabilitation services with a paid job and earn a 73% higher weekly income."** **Fast Facts (Vol. 1, 2009)**, by**ThinkCollege: National Center for Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilitie**s (*citing*the National Vocational Rehabilitation Database). Below are some items related to postsecondary education that should be explored to help a student make choices and take the necessary steps to increase his or her postsecondary options.

1. Accommodations on testing:

- For students taking standardized tests for college admission, make sure that the "**Consent Form for Request for Accommodations**" has been completed, is on file with the school and has been submitted by the student's case manager at the school (by end of 9th grade if possible). Click here for a **sample form**.

- **ACT:** When registering for the ACT, make sure that the needed accommodations are requested. Accommodations may include: extended time for taking the test (up to 50% more time) and other special testing support. Alternative formats are available and testing at a school site may be available to a student where needed. Click **here** for the ACT test accommodations for students with disabilities.

- **SAT:** This is offered at least 7 times a year (October, November, December, January and March) but registration times are around a month in advance. Students must apply for testing accommodations through the school by the spring before the first test to ensure that enough time is given to process the application for accommodations. (More information: **Services for Students with Disabilities**, **List of common accommodations**.

2. Enrollment in a program to earn a high school diploma after the 4 years of high school are over. As noted in**Part 1** of this series, many students have until age 22 to earn a diploma so discussions at an IEP meeting should explore what educational options exist to help students with special needs work towards a diploma after the 4 years of high school if they are cognitively able to do so. Most districts' adult ed programs are not designed to support students with special needs so accessible

appropriate postsecondary educational options may only be available through a community college's "**disabled students programs & services**" or adult ed program (e.g. Mira Costa **Adult High School program**), or through private schools that provide smaller instructional settings and supports for students with learning disabilities (e.g. **Cal Coast Academy**, **Fusion**, **High Bluff Academy**, **Halstrom High School**, **Pacific Academy**, and others). (See also "**High School and Getting a Diploma: Options for Students with Disabilities**.")

3. Enrollment in a "College Experience" program at a 4 year or 2 year university of college. In the event a student is not eligible for admission to a university or college, many colleges and universities still have programs (residential and nonresidential) designed to help students with intellectual disabilities have a college experience. Programs offer access to appropriate academic courses along with activities to help the student develop employment and independent living skills. **Think College** is an excellent resource for parents and students to explore to learn more about these programs. In some cases, programs may be paid for by a school district or regional center for eligible students in the event appropriate programs do not exist in the district. Below are some of the programs in California and related resources that may be of interest:

- **UCLA's 2-year Pathway Program**: UCLA offers a 2-year certificate **residential program** for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that offers students a "blend of educational, social and vocational experiences, taught and supervised by experienced instructors sensitive to the individual needs" of the students. Students are interviewed to make sure they possess the needed skills for the program. The program offers structured "learning by doing" curriculum to help students build skills in academics, career exploration and work readiness, life skills and transition to independent living. (Ages typically 18-25 years old). To request an application, call: 310-794-1235 or download application via the website.

- **College Living Experiences Programs:** These residential programs offer special needs students help with career development, academic tutoring, social activities and other supports to help a student develop independent living and social skills to successfully transition into adulthood. Programs are available in **Costa Mesa**, CA,**Monterey**, CA, Austin, TX, Denver, CO and Washington, D.C.

- **"College 2 Career" Programs at Community Colleges:** There are community colleges in California that provide **nonresidential** programs to regional center customers who are at least 20 years of age, or who have graduated with a high school diploma. Students are assigned "ed coaches" and, where needed, an ed coach can accompany the student to help with class participation, provide light

academic tutoring and more. Programs consist of 20-60 students and are funded through a grant from the Department of Rehabilitation. Sample campuses: **North Orange County Community College** (3 year program), San Diego Community College District, and **College of Alameda**.

- **San Diego Miramar "Trace" Program**: This adult transition program provides services to help with job placement, self advocacy, classes that promote life learning, domestic skills and more.

- **Taft College's "Transition to Independent Living" Program**: This **residential** program provides a collegiate experience, career education, self determination awareness, and empowerment through education. (Part of West Kern Community College District).

- **Coastline Community College ID Program**: Program offers classes for students with mild moderate intellectual disabilities at its campus in Fountain Valley, CA.

Many out-of-state universities also offer specialized programs for students with intellectual disabilities (e.g. **Chapel Haven West** (near Univ. of Arizona and the nearby **SALT Center** which provides learning support to college students with ADHD, etc.), Univ. of Tennessee's "**Future Program**," Vanderbilt University's "**Next Steps**" program, etc.)

4. Enrollment in a community college generally: Community colleges may be more accessible to some students for postsecondary education because **there is no minimum GPA requirement and a high school diploma is not required**. Generally, to attend a community college, a student need only: 1. be 18 years or older, *or* 2. have a high school diploma or equivalent (e.g. a GED), *or* be currently attending high school. Community colleges offer a wide range of academic and vocational courses that students with disabilities can take to further their education and develop their interests. Successful completion of certain courses may help a student automatically transfer to a state university (see "transfer admission guarantee" below) or obtain a certificate of expertise in the area studied to qualify them for a particular job. Local community colleges include **Mira Costa College**, **San Diego Community College District** and others.

5. Admission to the California State University System (CSU): CSU admission requirements for California residents are a little different that the admission requirements for the University of California system (UC). CSU requires that the student has graduated from high school after taking and passing certain courses with a C or better in each course. Also, if a student is worried about poor test scores, **Cal State Universities do not require test scores if the student's GPA is above a 3.0 and the student is a resident of California**. Click **here** for additional details. Applicants can easily apply to multiple campuses using the CSUMentor online program.

6. Guaranteed Admission from high school ("local admission guarantee"): CSU has entered into "memoranda of understanding" with several local school districts to

"guarantee admission" of students who graduate from high school and who have met certain minimum CSU requirements and deadlines. Examples of districts having these agreements include: Carlsbad Unified, Fallbrook Union High School District, Oceanside Unified, San Marcos Unified, Valley Center-Pauma Unified, Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel. So, as long as the student meets the minimum GPA (3.0) and other CSU requirements (e.g. required high school courses), admission is guaranteed. See this **memorandum** for an example of the local admission guarantee requirements.

7. Transfer Admission Guarantees (TAG): CSU and seven campuses of the University of California system offer students in California community colleges guaranteed admission as a transfer student under certain circumstances. The UC campuses that offer guaranteed transfer admissions include Davis, Irvine, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz.

The TAG program offers guaranteed transfer admission to students from all California Community Colleges if the UC TAG application is completed and submitted on time, the student has completed at least 30 semesters UC-transferable units at one or more California community colleges, and the last college the student attended in a regular session before admission was a California community college. For more details visit the following resources:

California State University TAG Program:

- **http://www.adegreewithaguarantee.com/AboutTheProgram.aspx**

- **https://www.calstate.edu/transfer/apply/priority-agreements.shtml**

The University of California TAG information:

- admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/files/tag-matrix.pdf

- **http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/transfer/guarantee/index.html**

8. Postsecondary Options for Students with Significant Disabilities, TEACHING Exceptional Children, Nov/Dec 2002, p. 73, Grigal, M., Nebert, D, and Moon, M. (supported in part by the Office of Special Education/U.S. Dept. of Ed.). This informational resource provides a sample schedule on what a day at college may look like with a table to help create support teams.

9. Disability Support Programs and Services for the San Diego Community College District: These programs support students with disabilities work towards their academic and vocational goals through accommodations under section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and American with Disabilities Act. Specialized support services and assistive equipment are provided to eligible students. Colleges within the San Diego Community College District include: San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, San Diego Continuing and Education.

10. "Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities", Hart, D., Institute for Community Inclusion, 2006 (prepared through grants from the U.S. Dept. of Ed.)

11. "Beyond Basic Access": List of Universities accessible to students with Physical Disabilities.

12. College Guide for Students with Special Needs: "Directions" - Lists factors to consider when deciding whether college is an appropriate option, websites for children with specific special needs (e.g. ADHD, Asperger's, Autism, Deaf Students, Psychiatric

disabilities, wheelchair friendly campuses and more), and many collegiate special ed support programs.

13. List of Colleges for children with special needs with strong support programs: This list, provided by"bestcollegesonline.com," not only lists college information but also a number of different posts that may be of interest (e.g. "**10 Impressive Special College Programs for Students with Autism**," "**25 Incredible Technologies for the Learning Disabled**" and more) and links to career descriptions for student exploration. Universities listed include:University of Iowa, W.V. Wesleyan College, Daemen College, Bellevue Community College, Gallaudet University (courses taught in ASL and English), Landmark College, Univ. of Arizona/Tucson, Drexel Univ., Mercyhurst College and more!

14. California College Pathways: Discusses college requirements and admission process in general.

15. "Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education – Know Your Rights and Responsibilities": Publication from the Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") for the U.S. Dept. of Education (2011). Rights of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education Publication: **http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/530901.pdf**

16. Disabled Students Programs and Support can help a student succeed in college. Visit the websites of traditional 4-year and 2-year universities and colleges to learn about what supports are available. Websites of local institutions include:

- **UC San Diego's Office for Students with Disabilities** (explains the supports available to access the campus and curriculum);

- **University of San Diego's Center for Student Success**;

- **Palomar College's Disability Resource Center** (offers a variety of services and equipment for students to while on campus to participate in the regular college curriculum); and

- **Mira Costa College's Disabled Students Programs & Services** (offers a disabled students program and services program to help with accommodations, tutoring, and other supports). For eligibility click **here**.

17. "17 Great Colleges for Students with Special Needs" (Friendship Circle blog with information on colleges).

18. Online Educational Options can enable a student to continue education at home. For students who would like to further their education within their home environment, there are countless online programs to help them work towards a degree or vocational certificate offered through public and private entities. Some programs offer "self paced online learning" modules that enable a student to learn at his or her own pace. Although there are typically no instructors available to help students, these programs may be helpful for students who are working full time, who have limited mobility or who otherwise are not able to attend a campus. Sample programs:

- **California Coast University**;

- **California National University for Advanced Studies**;

- **Charter Oak State College**;
- **Northern Arizona University** (Extended Campus) Program;
- **Colorado Technical University**; or
- **University of Missouri-Columbia**.

19. Vocational Schools: Through California's "WorkAbility" program, many community colleges offer vocational services to students with disabilities as part of a partnership with the California Department of Rehabilitation. The WorkAbility program provides guidance to help students acquire the skills needed to obtain successful employment. See, e.g. the **San Diego Community College District**. The San Diego area is also rich with vocational opportunities for students who have specialized interests to earn certificates in areas such as aesthetics, accounting/office skills, automotive, business, child development, computers/technology, cooking, electronics/soldering, fashion and textiles, graphic reproduction, HVAC systems, health career training, metal fabrication, plumbing, upholstery, welding and more.

Resources:

a. *"San Diego Continuing Education"* (for certificate programs that teach specialized skills in areas such as accounting, office skills, automotive, computers, culinary arts, electronics and soldering, HVAC systems, metal fabrication, plumbing, upholstery, welding and more); and

b. "Campus Explorer" (for links to programs and colleges offering vocational programs).

20. Persons with intellectual disabilities may qualify for scholarships and student aide: Per the **federal student aid** office of the U.S. Dept. of Education, there are numerous programs that may provide student aid (e.g. the federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study Programs). There are also lists on line with scholarships for students with specific special needs (e.g. asthma, autism, cancer, crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis and more).

Examples of lists:

a. *Special-Needs Scholarships; and*

b. "5 Scholarships for Students with Learning Disabilities," by Scholarship America for US News & World Report (Oct. 25, 2012) (for children with ADHD or dyslexia, etc.).

21. Learn more about Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Regional Occupation Programs: These programs are designed to help students successfully transition from secondary education to college and career through cooperative agreements with local school districts to create high level technical courses for juniors and seniors. For example in the San Dieguito Union High School District, the **ROP office** is located at the San Dieguito High School Academy and offers courses at Canyon Crest Academy, La Costa Canyon, San Dieguito High School Academy, Sunset High School and Torrey Pines High School. (Visit the California Ass'n of **Regional Occupation Centers** and Programs for more information.)

22. Review the CAROCP Resource and Tools for more information on colleges and universities, financial aid/scholarships and career planning.

23. The ARC of San Diego: ARC offers classroom instruction focused on communication, safety, money management, personal and social concerns, and life

skills. Specialty courses are available in art, ASL, behavioral management, bilingual instruction, computers, cooking, geriatrics and self advocacy.

24. Californiacolleges.edu: Free official source for college and career planning (explore colleges and careers, plan and pay for college, college admissions info, transfer information and more!)

25. Edupunks Guide: Has tutorials, 45 open learning resources for free textbooks, study aides, study groups, ideas on how to get into college, and more.

26. Private Transition Programs: Fusion Academy, Xcite Steps, and other organizations offer private transition programs that help with academic skill remediation, social connections, meal planning & shopping, employment preparation, money management, navigating college, independent living services, adult day programming and more. (Some entities, such as **Xcite Steps**, are Regional Center service providers so that the programs are funded by the Regional Center and free to the student).

Hopefully a review of the above information will expand the transition team's understanding of postsecondary educational options so that educational expectations of the student are increased!

Note: This author writes about information for the San Diego community so most of the resources focus on sources in southern California; however, the information will give readers outside of the San Diego area ideas on resources that may exist in their area.

Transition Planning Series: Postsecondary Employment Options

Even though many "typical" students have no idea of what type of work they want to do after high school, students with disabilities do need to get an idea about what they want to do for purposes of their transition plan. Learning a little about what postsecondary job opportunities exist before taking assessments may help a student identify a new interest or job area so that a transition plan includes adequate steps, training and services to help the student meet the goal. Also, for some students, it may take a while to acquire the skills needed for a part or full-time job so careful planning and training each high school year can increase the student's earning capacity. When thinking employment, there are many options other than simply a traditional part-time or full-time job that transition team members should discuss. For example, there are options such as "segregated employment" (a self-contained workplace with other persons with disabilities), "supported employment" (usually employment that is supported by an agency such as the Department of Rehabilitation), and "self employment" (a job that allows the worker to use his or her own skills to create a product or provide a service). After exploring the below information, talk to the student to find out if there is a particular type of job he or she wants based upon their interests and then start planning backwards to make sure the student has the skills needed for the preferred postsecondary employment opportunity.

When creating an employment goal for a transition plan and related annual objectives, the following items need to be preliminarily researched and/or assessed, and generally discussed:

1. The types of things the student likes to do and the kinds of environments can the student work in;

2. The career fields that let the student do these things or work in the preferred setting;

3. The types of jobs in these fields that the student can realistically do on a part-time or full-time paid or volunteer basis;

4. Any formal training and experience needed during the high school period to help the student get the job (e.g. interview skills, creation of a resume, how to complete a job application, the skills needed to do the job, etc.); and

5. The functional skills needed at home to keep the job (e.g. waking on time, dressing appropriately, personal hygiene, packing a lunch, transportation to the job, etc.).

Below are some tips and resources to help with the creation of postsecondary employment goals and identification of services.

1. Identify what the student likes to do, can do and needs to learn to do.

As discussed in **Part 1** of this series, "age appropriate assessments" should be performed before a transition plan is proposed to learn about the student's personality type, inventory of interests and skills, and career fields that the student may be the best suited for in terms of the student's interests, personality and skills. Assessments are

often done at high school through the Workability 1 Program funded by the California Department of Education for students with IEPs, or through third party programs such as the Naviance Online Program, **JobTIPS**, **Career Cruising**, **ASVAB Career Exploration** or other programs. **Click here** for a sample checklist of what should be done to assess student's employment skills.

Examples of other transition assessments for schools relating to employment (but see list at end of article for free sources):

- **ASVAB** (aptitude measures to predict future academic and occupational success in the military);

- **Brigance Employability Skills Inventory**;

- **Career Decision-Making System**;

- **Career Game®** (offers self-assessment workbooks, internet site, videos and more);

- Occupational Aptitude Survey and Interest Scale **(OASIS-3)**;

- **Reading Free Vocational Interest Inventory** (designed for students with intellectual and learning disable);

- **Self-Directed Search® Form E**;

- **Work Adjustment Inventory** (measures temperament traits);

- **WRIOT Platform** (by Pearson);

What is Workability? **Workability 1** is "**an essential component of transition services developed and supported by the CDE** (California Dept. of Ed.)." Ca. Ed. Code § 56470(a). Workability programs are required to provide instruction and experiences to students with IEPs that reinforce core curriculum concepts and skills leading to gainful employment." § 56470(b). The Workability program is a 4 tiered "learn to earn" program designed to prepare students with disabilities for entry into the labor market.

Who is Workability for? Workability 1 is the "tier" for high school students that is supposed to provide "comprehensive pre-employment skills training, employment placement and follow-up for high school students in special education who are making the transition from school to work, independent living and post secondary education or training" while students proceed with their special education in high school. **Ca. Dept. of Ed. "Workability 1: A California Transition Program - Students Learn to Earn.** Workability 1 is for all high school students (age 16 - 21) with an IEP**.*Source: **FAQ sheet on Workability** issued by the San Diego Unified School District.*

What if the student has not received Workability services but has an IEP? If the student has an IEP and is not receiving workability services, parents should submit a written request to the student's case manager or counselor asking for Workability services and support. Also, parents should ask for a copy of the annual schedule used by the high school Workability representative to see the different topics taught per month so that if a student with an IEP has mistakenly not received services, the student

can learn about what has been missed and request make-up sessions and/or copies of the materials used for the missed sessions.

What does Workability Include? Workability shall include: (1) recruitment, (2) assessment, (3) counseling, (4) pre-employment skills training, (5) vocational skills training, (6) student wages for "try-out" employment, (7) placement in unsubsidized employment, (8) other assistance with transition to a quality adult life, and (9) use of an interdisciplinary advisory committee to enhance project goals. Ca. Ed. Code § 56471(d). Students with IEPs qualify for workability services during high school to help them learn about activities they like, their own personal qualities and career options related to their interests and qualities. The Workability program seeks employers in the business community who will give students with special needs work opportunities.

The specific services provided by each tier are listed in the CDE's "**Array of Services Definitions**" found online. Examples of services that that can be provided through Workability 1 include:

- self and formal assessments,

- interest inventories,

- personality surveys,

- values assessments,

- career development assessments,

- computerized information matching of interests with jobs,

- career counseling,

- curriculum integration of work readiness skills,

- vocational/career tech classes, and

- independent living/functional skills.

For a comprehensive table of Workability 1 High School services, please click on the "Array of Services" (Doc; posted 12-May-20) found under the "Array of Services" section on the **California Department of Education Workability I webpag**e.

Workability Tiers: Familiarity with the different tiers can help students know what workability services are available during different phases of their educational or other pursuits.

- *Workability I* (an in school program designed to increase employability of special education students and provide career and/or vocational education training and specialized education work experiences);

- *Workability II* provides specialized vocation assistance to out-of-school youth and adults with disabilities;

- *Workability III* helps people with disabilities who are both community college students and DOR clients who desire and need employment; and

- *Workability IV* assists persons with disabilities who are both university students and DOR clients in transition form school to work.

2. Start early building a resumé.

To increase a student's chances of getting a job, start as early as possible having the student volunteer, enroll or work in programs or activities to show that the student can learn new skills, follow directions, show up on time, and handle responsibility. Involvement in programs and activities is not only important to help build a resume, but may also highlight areas in which the student needs more training (e.g. social or communication skills) so that supports and services during high school can be timely delivered. (As part of the employment assessment, employers should be contacted to get evaluations to provide input. Sample worksite evaluation forms: "**Worksite Evaluation Form**" by G. York, and "**Employee Evaluation Form**" (from the Iowa Department of Education sources/North Center Regional Resource Center).

Some ideas may include:

a. School Activities: Talk to the student's case manager to determine whether there are any jobs in the structured school environment the student can try (e.g. tutoring after school, working as an office assistant as an elective, work in the cafeteria or sports events).

b. Volunteer Activities: Consider having the student volunteer with an organization that provides supervision and which offers volunteer opportunities in areas the student likes (e.g. if the student likes animals - volunteer at an animal shelter, if the student likes baseball have the student volunteer at a high school baseball game, if the student likes moving heavy items, volunteer to help move boxes in the cafeteria, etc.).

c. Camp Programs: Enroll the student in training camps such as babysitting or camp counselor training such as the YMCA's leaders in training program.

d. Part-time employment at a local "Workability" partner or other employer as this may lead to full-time employment later.

3. Practice daily routines needed to help with independence.

In addition to working on the development of skills to *get* a job, the student needs to work on skills to *keep* a job (e.g. waking up and getting dressed in time, personal hygiene, social skills, getting to work on time, etc.). Make a list of what needs to be done every morning to get ready for a job and, where needed, use assistive technology to remind the student of what needs to be done and when (e.g. calendar or reminder apps with reminder alerts). A sample checklist might be:

- Set the alarm the night before;

- Set out appropriate clothes the night before;

- Wake up to the alarm;

- Brush teeth;

- Deodorant;

- Get dressed;

- Pack lunch;

- Take medications;

- Be ready by the car to go to school by a predetermined time.

Following a checklist with reminders from parents is a good start but the goal should be for the student to ultimately follow and complete the checklist on his or her own (with assistive technology to help as needed).

4. Develop a plan for the student to learn self-advocacy skills each year.

There are many laws in place to support students in the workplace but often students need to self-advocate to ensure they have a fair playing field at work. Discussions should be held with the IEP team to discuss how the student will be trained to self advocate in an effective manner. Students should learn select key parts of the applicable laws each year and role play "violations" so that when they leave high school, they are well equipped to protect and handle themselves in the workplace. For example, students need to learn whether employers can ask if they have a disability or need accommodations during an interview, and how to handle such questions if they are asked, what to do if they are asked to do something that is not normally part of their job, how to request accommodations and more.

Suggested resources that students and parents should review to learn about protections and common violations.

- **Guide to Disability Rights Laws** (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division) (discusses the ADA, Fair Housing Act, Rehabilitation Act, and many more laws);

- **Arizona Center for Disability Law** (has numerous links to ADA guides, Assistive Technology guides, and other helpful resources;

- **Employment Rights Under the American with Disabilities Act** (and other related laws) (by the Disability Rights Organization of California);

- **American with Disabilities Act** (ADA) or (ADAAA);

- "**Accommodations at the Workplace**" and "**Protections During a Job Interview**" (from the National Center for Learning Disabilities);

- "**Disability Discrimination in the Workplace: An Overview of the ADA**" and "**Your Rights to Reasonable Accommodations Under the ADA**" (by Nolo Law for All);

- "**Self Advocacy**" (Wrightslaw.com);

- **Service Animals in the Workplace** (Commonly asked questions and answers form the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division);

- "**Assistive Technology for Employment**" (Disabilities Rights Washington) (provides examples of AT as well as links and information on AT in the workplace).

5. Prepare an "Important Documents" Binder with the student.

As students transition to adulthood, they will need certain documents such as their birth certificate, driver's license, social security card and other items. They also need to learn when and when not to share information from these items. Students may need to work

on memorizing their social security number for job applications or have a copy of certain documentation for their jobs. Help a student organize their important items and keep it until they are able to safely keep this information on their own.

If employment is not a likely option for a student, the team should discuss options such as day programs with specialized activities and supports that allow the student to have social and other interactions in a structured manner to keep the student engaged and involved.

Other Employment related resources:

1. Naviance college and career readiness program: Many districts offer the Naviance K-12 program and curriculum to their high school students help them with college and career readiness. Naviance has research tools to help students assess themselves to learn more about college and career options, can help teams devise course plans to help students reach their goals, offers assistance with college applications, and provides other supports. If the student does not have a passcode to access this on-line program, discuss with the team how the student might be able to use this program.

2. Job Boards: Look at the job boards for persons with and without disabilities to learn about job options and job requirements for persons with or without a high school diploma. Good sources include: **National Organization on Disability**, Gettinghired.com (to learn of companies committed to working with qualified persons with disabilities),**EnableAmerica.org**, careerbuilder.com, **sdgoodwill.org**, indeed.com.

3. The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR): Contact the your local regional center or the local office of California's DOR to learn about employment services and eligibility because these may help make the student's pursuit of a particular type of employment more realistic. Students who qualify for services from the San Diego Regional Center need a referral to begin services. See "**Community Interface Services**." Generally, if a student graduates with a diploma, he or she will transition to the DOR for employment services if deemed eligible. If a student does not graduate with a diploma, the local regional center will provide supports to transition to work through appropriate regional center providers.

The DOR runs the largest vocational rehabilitation program in the U.S. Students must meet eligibility requirements to receive services. Once a student is eligible, the DOR offers individualized job development services for persons who qualify for DOR services. Discuss the DOR services with the regional center (if applicable) and the school so that information can be obtained early in the transition planning process.

The DOR offers "**community interface services**" to help with career exploration, job market information, assessment of job skills, analysis of jobs, worksite modifications and accommodations, on-the-job coaching, assistance with inclusion, mobility training, worker hygiene, social skills development, self-advocacy training and more. Other programs include: Assistive Technology program, Blind Field Services, Business Enterprises Program, Client Assistance, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Section, Disability Access Services, Orientation Center, Supported Employment, Traumatic Brain Injury and Workforce development, Work Activity Programs (paid work and services in a sheltered work shop setting). Discuss the availability of job shadowing and job coaching as they are not the same.

4. [California Career Resource Network](#): This network "provides all persons in California with career development information and resources to enable them to reach their career goals". This valuable site includes links to the:

- California Career Center (helps students map their futures by exploring information on a variety of careers and skill demands);

- the California Career Zone;

- Career Planning Center; and

- The Real Game California (classroom based career exploration).

The California Career Center section is especially helpful and has several links specifically designed for persons with disabilities. See also "[Additional Career Exploration Resources](#)" (has a career path worksheet, options to getting college credits, Career technical education, California pathways, and more!)

5. [Job Corps](#): Job Corps is a free education and training program that helps people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find and keep a job. Persons must be at least 16 years of age who qualify as low income.

6. SanDiegoatWork.com: The San Diego Workforce Partnership funds job training programs and offers access to the "One-Stop Career Center" network which provides special programs for youth, persons with disabilities, war veterans and military personnel. The centers hold job fairs which provide information on positions available in the area.

7. "JobTIPS" from do2Learn.com: Offers real world examples and assistance to teens and adults transitioning to the workplace (guided exercises, role-playing scenario cards, video modeling tutorials, visual prompts, printable checklists of "job tips," and more) to help students learn what to do in certain job situations. JobTIPS also offers job finding support, tips on how to keep a job, self assessment forms to help determine job settings and fields, and more. (Free student trial but most services are for pay -- around $149 for individual users per year).

8. Read "[On the Job](#)" – Stories from youth with significant disabilities about how they relied upon "natural supports" to find their jobs.

9. "[Talent Knows No Limits](#)" – A California public education resource for the employment of people with disabilities.

10. "[Jobtoberfest](#)": Every October, the San Diego Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities hosts workshops and a job fair for people with disabilities. Workshops range from SSI,SSDI and Employment to getting the most out of medicare. Jobtoberfest is the largest job fair for people with disabilities in San Diego with over 1,500 job seekers attending.

11. [The Arc of San Diego](#): The Arc has community employment services (ACES) to help find employment for persons with disabilities in the community. Employment can be performed in a group setting, in work crews or direct placement.

12. [California Career Café](#): Has a virtual career center to help students charge a pathway, get experience and more!

13. "Employment First" Law (WIC § 4869(a)(1): Authorizes the State DDS to contract with regional centers to provide support and services to individuals with developmental

disabilities through an individual program plan with the goal of increasing integrated employment for persons with disabilities.

14. Attend a SDRC "Job Club": The main center of the San Diego Regional Center has a monthly training forum on the 3rd Monday of each month at 10 am to help transition age job seekers ask questions and learn more about how to improve their employment opportunities. Contact: Todd Lordson at 858-576-2812 or Paul Mansell 858-503-4438 to learn more about eligibility and times.

15. Occupational Opportunities Classes: The San Diego Community College District offers free non-credit classes on "Occupational Opportunities" to help students with disabilities establish career/education/vocational goals.

16. California Minium Wage Information: As of the writing of this article, the minimum wages for persons working in California are $8.00 but as of July 1, 2014, the wages will go up to $9.00 per hour and then effective January 1, 2016, the minimum wage will go up to $10.00 per hour.

17. Transition to Adult Living Information and Guide: The California Services for Technical Assistance and Training (CalSTAT) has numerous guides and information online for persons wanting more information.

18. Impact Feature Issue on Postsecondary Education and Students with Intellectual, Developmental and Other Disabilities. Issue contains numerous articles and success stories that may be of interest (University of Minnesota).

19. Goodwill Supported Employment: Goodwill offers supported employment programs for eligible persons who have been referred to it by the San Diego Regional Center or California Department of Rehabilitation (e.g. "Ticket to Work" and other services).

20. Disability Employment with the Federal Government: The federal government actively recruits persons with disabilities and students may wish to explore **USA Jobs** to see what types of jobs are available or to learn of local opportunities where they might volunteer as an intern after school or over the summer.

21. Resource Books for San Diego area: The helpful resource guides offer information of services and supports: the **San Diego County School Distric**t and the **Temecula Special Needs Resource Guide**.

22. WhoDoUWant2B.com: Has posters and videos to watch to help viewers explore jobs in certain career fields, includes information about salary ranges, and other job related information.

23. "Job Training/Certificate Programs": Community colleges and continuing education programs such as those offered by the **San Diego Continuing Education Program** offer "certificate" programs that teach specialized job skills to help students develop job skills in vocational areas such as office skills, automotive, business, child development, computers, culinary arts, electronics and soldering, fashion and textiles, graphic reproduction, HVAC, health, metal fabrication, plumbing, upholstery, welding and more. The San Diego Continuing Education Program also offers **DSPS**(Disability Support Programs and Services) at no cost to students aged 18 and older and includes programs through Workability III to students who are clients of the Department of Rehabilitation (and enrolled in a class in the program).

24. Directory of Occupational Titles: This site has links to the career titles used to identify jobs and links to information relating to each job title that sets forth the skills needed for each job. Vocational rehabilitation experts often uses this to look up jobs students have an interest in to determine what skills are needed.

Transition Planning Series: Postsecondary Independent Living

Under the IDEA, transition plans are supposed to include goals related to independent living "where appropriate." 20 U.S.C. § 1401(34)(13); 34 C.F.R. § 300.43. Most students with moderate to severe disabilities will need independent living goals to increase their independence as they enter into adulthood. Independent living skills are skills that adults use to sustain themselves on a regular basis such as 1. self help/daily care, 2. transportation, 3. residential care, 4. financial management, 5. community relationships and 6. safety awareness. Most students will need training or education to learn independent living skills so the transition plan should include the agency responsible for the training (e.g. the school, SDRC, Department of Rehabilitation, Child Welfare Services, etc.) and the location, duration and frequency of the training/education so that all IEP team members are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities.

1. Self Help

Parents may not realize how many things they do regularly at home to care for themselves, their home or their student. To determine what the student needs to learn to increase the student's independence during adult life, ask the school to perform an independent living skills assessment or to take a "life skills inventory." Consider also doing an assessment at home because what is seen in a home setting may differ from what is assessed at school. An excellent table to help identify living skills is available from **Taft College** (which also has a postsecondary "college experience" residential program for young adults to learn transition skills). *Table:* **Taft College Transition to Independent Living Program Skills Inventory**. Other helpful forms can be found at: **Life Skills Inventory** & **Protocol** (Washington State Dept. of Social & Health Services), **Independent Living Skills Checklist**, and the **Transition Hub** (a nice assortment of different, free assessments).

Is prompting assistance needed? If a person has memory or attention deficits, assistive technology may be needed to help the student remember to do thing something (e.g. wake, brush teeth, put on deodorant, take medication, pay a bill, pack lunch, lock the door at night) or to remember how to do something (what to pack in a lunch, which bus to take, etc.) Calendar apps exist for computers and handheld devices that can be set with reminders at different time intervals. There are also talking reminder apps that allow the user to record a message that can state what needs to be done (e.g.**Voice Reminders app**, Smart Talking Reminder). Alarm clocks also exist with talking reminders (e.g. take medication, etc.) The use of Skype, FaceTime or other video conferencing tools may also provide direct "off-site" supervision for particular times of the day.

Is physical assistance needed? There are numerous tools available to help with physical independence and safety that are often overlooked. Many companies specialize in providing tools to help those with disabilities become more independent.

Examples of companies include: enablemart.com, disabilityworktools.com, lifesolutionsplus.com, and others. Below are some examples of tools that may increase independence:

- **Bathroom use**: higher toilets, seat lifters (to help a student with balance issues stand up more easily), safety or grab bars (to use the shower, toilet or get out of bed), hand held shower heads, clearly marked hot/cold faucets or knobs, bath seat or transfer benches to sit on;

- **Bedding:** adjustable or electronic beds to help users sit up or get out of bed;

- **Communication**: Picture phones (has photo slots with programmable numbers to help student know who to call), big button phones, voice command phones;

- **Dressing or grooming**: 1. "Good grip" button hook - to help student button shirts, larger loops for zippers, dressing sticks, 2. longer handled combs or brushes, 3. elastic shoelaces or shoes with velcro, 4. sock aids - help student put on socks without bending over;

- **Fine motor/Vision:** "Great Grips" make turning a door knob easier, large key phones, speaker phones;

- **Lighting**: lamp switch enlargers, light-it sensors under the bed can provide light when students get out of bed so that they don't have to reach for a light;

- **Driving:** Car starter key turner to help turn the key in the ignition;

- **Safety**: personal alert systems to wear as a pendant or on the wrist to alert someone if there is a fall or safety issue;

- **Technology**: There are numerous tools to increase accessibility such as specialized keyboards (e.g. larger print, keyless keyboards, big keys), adaptive mouses, eye or gaze tracking programs or devices (e.g. Eyegaze, myGaze, PCEye Go), head pointers, portable magnifiers, voice command centers and more.

One of the most important self help skills students need to develop are good "readiness skills" so that they can wake, get dressed and get to school or work on time. Often a student can get a job but keeping the job often depends on whether the student is able to get ready and get to the job on time.

2. Transportation

Some students with disabilities will be able to drive or use other transportation means while other students will need someone to transport them to and from their activities. There are different levels of transportation support ranging from transportation training (to help students take public transportation alone) to curb-to-curb options (which pick up the student at home and deliver the student to a location). Resources can vary from region to region but this article, written for San Diego readers, will share some insights on the types of programs that may exist locally. The student's transition plan should

include goals and services designed to help the student learn how to access, navigate and use the appropriate transportation option(s). (Note: Many of the organizations that provide support for independent living offer programs to help students get a driver's license -- e.g. **Chapel Haven West**).

- **Potential Drivers:** In California, the California DMV has a tiered program to get a driver's license. **For students between 15 ½ and 17 ½,** they must: 1. complete a state-approved driver's education course, and 2. pass the written driver's test to get a "provisional permit" (also known as learner's permit). **If a student is 17 ½ but under 18**, the student may get a permit without a learner's permit but will not be able to take the driving test until age 18.

  As part of a driver's ed program, students must complete at least 25 hours of classroom or online instruction. The DMV recommends the "Drive Safely" online program ($69.95 – $99.95) but there are others that are also certified and less expensive (e.g. igottadrive.com $14.95).

  After the Driver's Ed instruction, students must take the written test to get their permit. Driver's Ed **Curriculum** is available from the DMV website. Click **here** for sample practice tests. Drivers with a provisional permit may only drive when accompanied with an adult aged 25 or older. (For more details visit the CA DMV **website**).

- **Non-Drivers**: For students who are not able to drive themselves to their destinations, there are numerous programs and supports to help them become more independent. While some students may have access to parental or other support for transportation or carpools, below are a few of the other programs available that may be beneficial.

  ADA Travel Training: Many counties have transportation programs offer "mobility management programs" such as "travel training." Travel training is a 1:1 personalized training program to help persons with disabilities learn how to use public transportation. A travel trainer is assigned to a student to help the student find where to take public transportation, plan trips, pay fares, advocate to let the driver know to alert the student where to exit the bus, and other services. There are other supports as well such as "Peer travel," "Transit buddies," ADA travel supports and more. (The program also trains trainers and provides supports to seniors). For more information on Travel Training in North County San Diego, visit the North County Transit Department **website**.

  Travel training to foster independent transportation may be used in conjunction with the L.I.F.T program (below) in the event the student is unable to

independently take public transportation under certain circumstances (e.g. multiple streets to cross to get to destination, multiple buses to get to a destination, weather, etc.).

Peer Travel Training: Funded by the County of San Diego Mental Health Services, this program offers trained peer travel trainers to help mental health consumers learn how to use public transit such as the Coaster and Sprinter trains and Breeze buses. For more information in San Diego, call the Mobility Management Program at 760-967-2863 or visit the **website**.

The L.I.F.T. Share-ride program **(through ADAride.com):** For persons who are not able to get to or ride public transportation on their own due to a mobility, visual, or cognitive disability, the Federal Transportation Agency funds the LIFT program which is a share-ride, door-to-door program available for eligible persons. Persons must submit an application (available online) and have a care professional also fill out the form to verify the person's needs (e.g. a treating physician, SDRC case worker, etc.). The application review process takes approximately 21 days. Once a person has been deemed eligible, they may purchase ride tickets ($3.50 one way) and make transportation reservations to be picked up at their home or other address and delivered to another address much like a taxi service. This program is a share-a-ride program so persons using this service will need to plan on extra time to get to their destination. Personal care attendants (PCAS) are also available to accompany persons on LIFT, Breeze and Sprinters. **Lift Fact Sheet Flyer**

Breeze Bus Transit Program: Many students may need to take the bus to reach their destination. Routes and other information are available from this website. Single rides cost around $1.75 but persons with disabilities may obtain a reduced fare ID card. Click here for **application**. The **San Diego Metropolitan Transit System** offers**discounted fares** on fixed-route buses and trolleys.

Share Ride Programs: Many transportation districts have "Vanpools" or "**Rideshare**" programs where students can sign up to commute together and share the costs of driving. In San Diego, there are "share ride" programs through eRideShare.com and other similar programs.

Rides on Demand: Many companies now offer rides on demand such as taxis or other options. Some of the other options include **Uber**, **Lyft**, and **Sidecar**. Many of these programs have apps that will enable a user to request and pay for a ride via their phone. And, of course, there is always the local taxi program.

Other transportation options for nearby destinations may also include a bike, motorized bikes, scooters, **electronic scooters** and other similar items (note: be sure to check with **DMV** to determine what if any age restrictions, license, registration or insurance is needed for motorized devices). If the student has goals in the transition plan that include self advocacy goals (e.g. learning their rights under the ADA, etc.), then the plan should include the learning of transportation rights under the ADA. California's Protection and Advocacy program has a valuable publication "**Transportation Rights for People with Disabilities Under the American with Disabilities Act**" which can help a student learn his or her transportation rights. See also the Department of Rehabilitation **website** for information on public transportation.

3. Residential Care and Placement

There are many different physical living arrangements available to persons with disabilities. Options may include independent living, supported living (roommate), community care facilities (CCFs), Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) and CIT/group. There are also numerous supports and services available to increase a person's level of independence depending on the physical location selected (discussed below). Once a realistic postsecondary residential goal is devised, IEP team members should determine if there is a wait list for the living option selected and be sure to contact the agency directly to learn how to get on the wait list.

Common residential models and resources include:

- "Independent living" (student may need training to transition to an independent setting and these services are available from both public and private agencies);

- "Supported living" (student receives services from third parties to help him or her live on his or her own but with supports in place to help maintain independence);

- "Supervised living" (student may live with a peer or other person who can help provide daily in-home support);

- "Group Home" (student lives with a group of people in a home and with personnel trained to work with people with disabilities);

- "Intermediate Care Facility" (for persons with more severe disabilities who need daily treatment and continued training to try to develop skills to increase independence, funded by Medicaid. **Teri Inc.** provides at least 12 homes throughout Northern San Diego County for those needing a more supported living situation);

- **Sample residential homes** include those provided by: 1. The **ARC of San Diego** (has several residential homes in Pacific Beach, Kearny Mesa, National City, Chula Vista, Lemon Grove and Santee), 2. **Home of Guiding Hands**, 3. Hope Village (**Chesed Home**, Provides individualized services and a safe and nurturing environment with Jewish values for adults with mental illness), and 4. **Teri, Inc.** (provides residential placement and the support of experts to help

create menus, grow produce, and access recreational, social and enrichment opportunities);

- **Collaborative Private Arrangements**: To ease safety concerns, some parents of children with special needs form relationships with other parents to purchase homes or other properties to provide a home to their children. These arrangements can be made more formal (eg. a foundation or LLC) and can help parents share the responsibility of caring for a disabled child. Parents can share or divide responsibilities or collectively pay for the assistance of a third party to supervise their children;

- **Jerimiah's Ranch**: Located in Fallbrook, this family driven project will eventually be a community of homes offering different levels of care for adults with developmental disabilities where they can learn vocational, social and life skills;

- **Southern California Housing Collaborative**: This organization helps people locate and secure affordable housing;

- **Disability.gov Housing Resources**;

- **Life Works Program**; and

- **California Public Housing Agency**.

Common Supports and Services: Supports and services can be paid for privately or, for students eligible for services from the San Diego Regional Center, they may be funded at no or low cost to the consumer. Contact the child's services coordinator to ask about information and/or programs provided by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and request a referral so that the student can access the DDS services to learn more about living options. Independent living services may be provided through some of the educational programs discussed in Part 2 of this series (Educational Options) but below are additional sources of information:

- **Supported Living Services (**Dept. of Developmental Services, DDS): Supported Living Services are provided through a person's "Individual Program Plan" (IPP) from the local regional center (e.g. SDRC) and are offered as long and as often as a person needs them to help the m manage their daily lives. Services can include some or all of the following services: Assistance with selection and move into a home, choosing personal attendants and housemates, acquiring home furnishings, common daily living activities and emergencies, managing personal financial affairs and other supports.

- **SDRC "day program"** services to help a student maintain self-help and self-care skills, work on social and recreational skills, integrate in the community and develop employment skills that may enable the student to have a broader range of living options.

- **Foster grandparent and senior [companion programs](#)** (a/k/a/ "[senior corps](#)") provide assistance to students with disabilities by partnering them with low income seniors who are 55+ years of age. These partnerships build relationships between older adults and persons with special needs who need 1:1 support such as tutoring, mentoring and living support). Many programs provide the senior volunteers with a tax-free stipend, partial reimbursement for their travel, a meal each day that the senior volunteers, accident insurance, annual physicals and other benefits. See for example the Foster Grandparent Program through **[Catholic Charities](#)**,

- **[Arc of San Diego](#)**;

- **[Xcite Steps](#)**;

- **[Toward Maximum Independence](#)**;

- **California Supported Living Network:** The **[CSLN](#)** is an advocacy group that strives to enforce and develop rights for persons with disabilities to have supported living;

- **Creative Support Alternatives: [CSA](#)** provides supported living services and independent living services to people in San Diego and Valley Mountain Regional areas with developmental disabilities to help adults live in their own home and be engaged with their community. Helps people find affordable housing, complete daily living activities, create back-up support programs, develop a support team and more;

- **[SDGE](#)**: Offers TDD/TTY phone number, can have technician's mark controls so that they are more visible for persons with vision issues, offers bills in braille, has locations with handicap access and other access services.

Parents should remember that there are endless opportunities at home for students to learn skills to help them become more independent in their postsecondary living situation. Involve the student in regular home activities such as doing laundry, cleaning rooms and bathrooms, other regular activities so that the student learns how to use appliances and cleaning materials. Consider having certain activities performed on certain days so that the student develops a routine that can be continued into adulthood. The home setting provides a unique opportunity for students to learn how to take care of themselves and living area.

4. Safety Awareness: Persons with disabilities may lack the ability to determine whether someone or something is safe (or dangerous), or what to do in the event an emergency arises. Including a safety awareness goal in the transition plan can help the student learn important safety skills ranging from safety in the home to safety in the community at large.

Examples of common home safety skills: Locking up when leaving the house or going to bed, not answering the door if person is unknown, what to do in the event the stove catches on fire, use of knives, use of hot water, what to do if burned by hot water or a hot pot, what to do if the home is broken into, how to call 911 or to report a crime, etc.

Examples of common community safety skills: Avoidance of dark alleys at night, what to do if bullied, not entering a car of a stranger, what to do if lost, what to do if wallet, purse or phone is lost, etc.

Creating strong independent living skills rests largely upon the parent or caregiver's ability to identify the areas of need because most of the student's day is spent outside of the school setting. The earlier the skills needed are identified, the more time the student will have to work on the skills to increase independence later. Greater independence usually means greater educational, work and living options.

Safety related resources:

- "**Living Safely**" app by Ablelink Technologies: This app is designed to help persons with cognitive disabilities learn safety skills needed for home and community safety ($29.99). In the event a student needs to learn safety skills and has assistive technology at school, the addition of this app to the student's device should be discussed.

5. Financial Management: Financial management is often a difficult skill for all students, not just those with disabilities. When discussing financial management skills, it is important to start as early as possible because it is one of the more difficult skills to learn. The IEP team should consider having math goals that teach the student what a budget is, how to plan one and how to use support to track expenditures. IEP teams should also include training on how to use programs and applications that can help a student manage finances more independently.

Financial management is not only about managing finances but also about learning to identify which items should be included in a budget. Students will need to learn to identify income, expected expenses (e.g. electric bill, insurance) and have some savings or a budget for unexpected expenses (e.g. a special outing or trip). By the time they leave high school, they should also be able to identify forms of public assistance and apply for these benefits to make sure they are in place by the time they become adults (e.g. Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, etc.)

Other items or resources to consider:

- **Bank Account/Debit Card:** Consider opening a bank account with a debit/credit card to start teaching the student how to access and use money. Parents may want to be co-signers or users to provide extra support and to have access to expenditures to make sure the student has not been taken advantage of by a third party. Students will need to learn how to use an ATM machine, access print outs of their statement and know when (and when not) to use the debit or credit card. Consider depositing a certain amount in the student's account each week and create a short personal shopping list for the student to take to the store to

start learning where the needed items are in the store and whether there is enough money to purchase those items.

- **Assistive Technology:** There are many programs that can help students manage their fiscal affairs. Commonly used programs include Excel (Microsoft), **Numbers** (Apple), iReconcile, Expenditure, **Mint** (for Android and Apple products - brings accounts together to help create budgets and plan); **Manilla** (free for iPhone and Android - helps with the organization of bills, financial accounts and more), **Moneybook** (good app for setting a monthly budget to manage expenses and income), and **Toshl** (nice basic app that tells user the remaining balance of their monthly budget after expenditure is entered). Transition and/or IEP goals should include goals that target the learning of one of these programs so that the student can become more independent in the money management. If assistive technology is not being given to the student at school, the **Department of Rehabilitation** or the SDRC may be able to offer "AT" support to help the student become more independent.

- **Financial Services Programs:** Many organizations (usually funded by the SDRC) offer financial planning and support. Examples include Xcite Steps, Arc of San Diego and others. The Department of Rehabilitation also offers services to help its customers achieve economic independence so speak to the DOR or the SDRC to learn how to access financial support services.

- **Free Tax Preparation Help from IRS Volunteers**: The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) offers free tax help to persons making $52,000 or less per year and who need help preparing their taxes.

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**: SSI is a benefit paid to disabled persons based upon financial need.

- "**Benefits for Children with Disabilities**" (2014): This informational booklet by the Social Security Administration summarizes the different benefits available to children with disabilities.

- **Disability Benefits for California residents**:. (SSDI - California Department of Social Services website)

6. Community Relationships (Recreation, Hobbies, Volunteer Efforts): Community relationships are important to help nurture a person's interests, well being and social connections. Creating positive contacts outside the home or school setting based upon the students interests can not only help the student meet new friends but also offer another support system to help with the student's development generally. Faith based youth groups, hobby clubs, singing or performance groups, nonprofits and other

organizations are available in most areas and if a club that interests the student does not exist, help the student start one! (See, e.g. Nolo article on how to start a **nonprofit**.) There are countless organizations that need volunteers or which provide engaging activities but below are some clubs or groups designed to support those with special needs. Even if a student may be too old to participate, these organizations may provide good opportunities for volunteering in a structured "sensitive" environment that does something the student enjoys *(If you would like your organization listed, please write the **author** to add your organization to this list).*

- **Baseball**: **Miracle League** (RSF, Solana Beach), **Escondido Youth Baseball Morgan Division**, La Costa Youth Organization Champion League (South Carlsbad);

- **Basketball**: **Shooting Stars** (Part of the San Marcos Youth Basket Ball League);

- **Belmont Park** - **Accessibility Information**;

- **Bowling: "Perfect Gamers"** Bowling Club from Xcite Steps;

- **Disability Accessible Travel in San Diego** (recreational activities);

- **Disneyland - Discounted Tickets** (Disneyland notifies the SDRC in October each year of certain times discounted tickets will be offered to SDRC clients. Click **here** for more information. Disneyland also offers Disability **Access Service Cards** to accommodate guests with disabilities who are not able to tolerate wait in long lines - must be obtained from Guest Relations);

- **Flying: Challenge Air** (occasionally comes to San Diego at Brown airfield to give persons with disabilities opportunity to fly);

- **Horseback riding**: **Ivey Ranch Park** (Oceanside), **Reins** (Fallbrook);

- **Knott's Berry Farm** - **Guest Assistance Guide** and **Boarding Pass Program** for guests with disabilities;

- **Legoland** - **Disability access and information** (visit the guest relations window to request a special access pass for individuals with disabilities that allows guests to obtain a specific access time for rides with long waits);

- **Martial Arts**: **Orion Martial Arts** (San Marcos), **SwiftKick** (San Diego);

- **Performing Arts**: **Arms Wide Open** (dance and theater programs), **Banding Together** (provides music and social opportunities for youth and young adults with special needs); **InnerDancers** (inclusive dance and performance classes), **Miracle Movers Dance** (Encinitas), **Positive Action Community Theater** (Encinitas - offers improvisational and performing arts workshops), "**Rise and Shine**" (a free choir program for children with special needs offered by Clairemont Lutheran Church, San Diego);

- **Peer Support**: **The Friendship Circle** (non-profit that pairs local teenagers for weekly friend visits and provides other activities);
- **Recreational Resources Guide** (SDRC Publication);
- **Sailing**: **Heart of Sailing** (introduces sailing to children and adults with disabilities);
- **Skiing**: **Big Bear Mountain**, and **Mammoth Mountain**;
- **Special Needs Resource list** (San Diego Family Magazine);
- **Sports Program List** (from the Down Syndrome Association of San Diego);
- **Special Olympics**;
- **Sports for Exceptional Athletes** (San Diego and Temecula) (creates a wide range of sports related opportunities in the areas of hockey, surfing, swimming, soccer and more to create social connections);
- **Universal Studios** (California) - **ADA Information** (offers "front line" passes for extra charge);
- **Youth Groups**: **Capernaum** (Christian Youth Group for teens and young adults with disabilities), **Jewish Family Services of San Diego** (offers social and Jewish oriented groups for persons aged 16 - adult with developmental disabilities).

For persons interested in summer or winter sports, many areas have "adaptive sports" programs that provide adaptive equipment and lessons to help persons with disabilities learn techniques to help them access the selected sport. These programs typically provide 1:1 instruction and reduced costs to facilitate participation and access.
The **United States Adaptive Recreation Center** (USARC), for example, offers specially trained instructors and volunteers to help with activities such as kayaking, fishing, skiing and more. UCLA Recreation offers numerous adaptive programs such as**SOAR** (which introduces a new adapted sport each week). In San Diego, the **Adaptive Sports and Recreation Association** offers numerous year round and summer programs such as an annual junior wheelchair sports camp, wheelchair basketball, soccer, rugby, adaptive cycling and other sports clinics and events (as well as volunteer opportunities).

Helping students develop skills they need to lead the most independent, productive and rewarding lives they can is the underlying purpose of any transition plan. Identification of areas of need, exploration of options and writing goals based upon the student's interests is crucial to writing a strong transition plan. But, if done effectively, a transition plan can replace worries about the student's future into excitement!

Other resources that may be of interest:

1. **Access Pass to National Parks:** A free, lifetime pass is available to U.S. citizens who have a permanent disability to access more than 2,00 recreation sites;

2. **California Disabled Discount Pass**: California offers a lifetime disabled discount pass which enables the user to a 50% discount of fees and costs of all facilities

operated by the California State Park System (e.g. parking, camping, etc.) Click here for **form**;

3. Community Interface Services: **Independent and Supported Living Guide** (for San Diego and Imperial Counties): Guide for individuals with development disabilities, service providers and family members (June 2000);

4. National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center: a. Age Appropriate Transition **Assessment Toolkit**; b. Indicator 13 Checklist: **Form B** (to help make sure needed information is in this transition plan);

5. CalSTAT Transition to Adult Living: **An information and Resource Guide**;

4. **Imdetermined.org Transition Guide** (website includes films, plans and other resources, "good day" plans to help with self awareness);

6. Autism Speaks Family Services **Transition Tool Kit**;

7. Disability Rights Publication: "Special Education Rights and Responsibilities" **Manual** (Ch. 9 and 10, especially); and

8. Transition to Adult Living **Guide** from the CA Dep't of Ed.

Other articles that may be of interest:

1. **Reading: Is your student struggling and behind grade level?** Reading is a crucial academic and functional skill needed for adult life. If your student is behind in this crucial skill, consider reviewing this article to learn what kind of help your student may need.

2. **High School and Getting a Diploma: Options for Students with Disabilities.** Students with disabilities who are not able to take a full high school academic course load to graduate in 4 years may have up to 8 years to work towards their diploma. Learn how to help a student earn a diploma!

Note: The inclusion of a resource or organization in this article does not reflect an endorsement by the author. Listings are solely for informational purposes so that readers are aware of their availability.