***Transition Into the Adult World***

**Creating a Vision for the Future**

**What is Transition Planning and Why is it Important?**

Transition into the adult world can present challenges for all young people. The process of transition may be more difficult for some youths with disabilities and will require unique strategies to enable each student to achieve the maximum possible independence in working, living, and participating in the community as adults.

Transition planning is a process that brings together a student and those individuals directly involved in helping the student prepare to enter a post-school environment. It is designed to ensure that the student will be provided the necessary skills and services to make a smooth transition from school to adult life with as little interruption as possible. Unless the transition process is formalized, little thought or planning is given to the student's future service or program needs.

          When a student reaches  age 14 and for each year thereafter, his/her IEP must include a statement of the transition services needed by that student (such as participation in advanced placement or vocational education classes).

          When a student reaches age 16 (or younger, if determined appropriate), his/her IEP must include a statement of needed transition services including interagency linkages or responsibilities.

          Beginning at least one year before a student reaches age 18 (in Connecticut), his/her IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of his /her rights under IDEA that will transfer to the student upon his/her reaching the age of majority.

The IEP team meets to assist the young student in defining a vision for the future. Representatives from other agencies may be invited to the meeting, if appropriate. The overall value of the meeting is the sharing of knowledge about the student's strengths, interests, and preferences in order to create a map of where help is needed and what experiences are going to be valuable over the high school years.

Three areas must be discussed by the IEP team in a transition planning meeting:

1.      What is the student's long- term goal in the area of **Employment or Postsecondary Education?**

**2.**      What is the student's long- term goal in the area of **Independent Living?**

**3.**      What is the student's long- term goal in the area of **Community Participation?**

***Transition Planning as a Collaborative Effort***

No one individual or agency can provide comprehensive transition planning for a student. Transition planning requires the collective effort and commitment of all key stakeholders in a student's life. As the transition planning team begins to form, it is critical that members know why they were serving on the team and their role in assisting the student to identify and to plan for his/her future.

**What information should be gathered?**

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of student's abilities and strengths, the transition planning team should look at a variety of assessment information:

  Academic, achievement

  Interests, preferences

  Personal history

  Medical background

  Social skills

  Learning styles

  Daily living skills

  Employment related skills (Evaluation from job sites both in-school and in the community may be included.)

It is important to remember that transition planning is a collaborative effort and requires the participation and commitment of the student, parents, all appropriate disciplines in the school, community representatives, and state agency personnel, if appropriate.

The transition goals and objectives must be based upon an individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and include instruction (school-based learning activities) and community experiences (learning activities in the community). Transition goals are part of the student's IEP.

If the PPT meeting determines that the services are not needed in one or more of the areas specified (in the definition of transition services and/or IEP requirements), **the IEP must include a statement to that effect and the basis upon which the determination was made.**

Since the statement of transition services is a part of the IEP, the PPT must reconsider transition goals and objectives at least annually. The most appropriate time to do this is at the annual PPT meeting. This meeting does not preclude the request for an additional meeting to formulate transition goals and objectives if time at the regular PPT does not permit this to occur.

*(Adapted from Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities, Connecticut's Transition Systems Change Grant, Parent Trainer Network.)*