

# What Schools Can Do To Involve Families in Transition Planning

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## TRANSITION BASICS

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Life is full of transitions. For students with disabilities, leaving high school and entering the adult world is a process requiring great preparation and planning ensuring that this transition is a successful one. In fact IDEA requires transition planning to ensure success. Transition services are intended to prepare students with disabilities to move from the world of school to the world of work and adulthood. Transition planning and activities begin during high school but not later than the age of 16 but certainly may begin earlier. Transition planning takes place as part of developing the students IEP with the student and the students' parents being an integral part of the planning process. The student must be invited to any IEP meeting where postsecondary goals and transition services needed to reach those goals will be considered. In transition planning, the IEP team considers areas such as postsecondary education or vocational training, employment, independent living, and community participation. Transition services provided within the students IEP are a coordinated set of activities oriented toward producing results. All services are based on the individual students needs and must take into account the student's own preferences and interests.

## INVOLVING FAMILIES

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Parents and families provide youth with consistent support. They offer youth love and structure needed in the development of healthy independent young adult lives. For families the future can bring mixed emotions to parents. They may share in their child's excitement about future opportunities while also feeling uncertain about the barriers and challenges a young adult may encounter. They may worry about their child's vulnerabilities.

## INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILIES IN TRANSITION PLANNING

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Schools can assist families to be informed participants in their child's IEP transition planning process by providing meaningful opportunities to inform and involve parents in supporting their young adult with disabilities into their adult lives. Some suggested activities may include the following:

1. Hold parent and family workshops on how to help an adolescent with a disability during the transition years.
2. Host events where parents and students can access mentors including other parents and students.
3. Encourage parents of children with disabilities to participate in school



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- events including parent teacher organizations and back to school nights.
4. Encourage families to assist their youth in making their own informed decisions regarding their educational pathways and career choices.
  5. Share insights with parents about how the student learns and assist them in incorporating learning routines at home using those strategies that work best for the student.
  6. Host special education and transition parent workshops.
  7. Host youth self-advocacy building workshops.
  8. Host transition planning meetings and informational seminars to connect families and youth with futures financial planning, financial aid, and legal resources to establish guardianships etc.
  9. Connect families to disability and community organizations.
  10. Host a community family support group for families of children with disabilities.
  11. Develop connections with local employers and host a job fair for families and students.
  12. Host a resource fair with transition and community agency resources.
  13. Encourage parents and students to participate in advisory and leadership opportunities within the school and community level to improve services for students with disabilities.
  14. Dedicate a portion of the school or district website or social media to resources for increasing capacity about disability, special education, and resources.
  15. Invite parents to field trips to visit community agencies to learn about resources.
  16. Allow families to assist in designing and collecting satisfaction surveys about family's school involvement experiences and ways to improve services.
  17. Host a college and postsecondary information fair for families and students with disabilities.

## APEC IS HERE TO HELP

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APEC provides free training, information, and consultation to families. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at [www.alabamaparentcenter.com](http://www.alabamaparentcenter.com) or call our center.

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