

From Assessment to Action:

Using Transition Assessment to Guide Postsecondary Planning for Students with Visual Impairments

Kelley Challen, EdM, CAS
Director of Transition Services, NESCA
kchallen@nesca-newton.com
[@kelleychallentransitions](https://www.instagram.com/kelleychallentransitions)



Objectives



What is transition assessment in the context of the IEP?



Why is assessment essential for students with visual impairments?



What key areas and tools can be utilized for transition assessment?



How does transition assessment connect to the Massachusetts IEP?



What remaining questions do you have about assessment?

Ground Rules

- Brief questions about terminology, acronyms, or clarifying content are encouraged
- Tangential questions or questions about content that has not been covered should wait until the end
- Keep it general—No personal or overly specific assistance

Transition Planning Defined

NESCA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



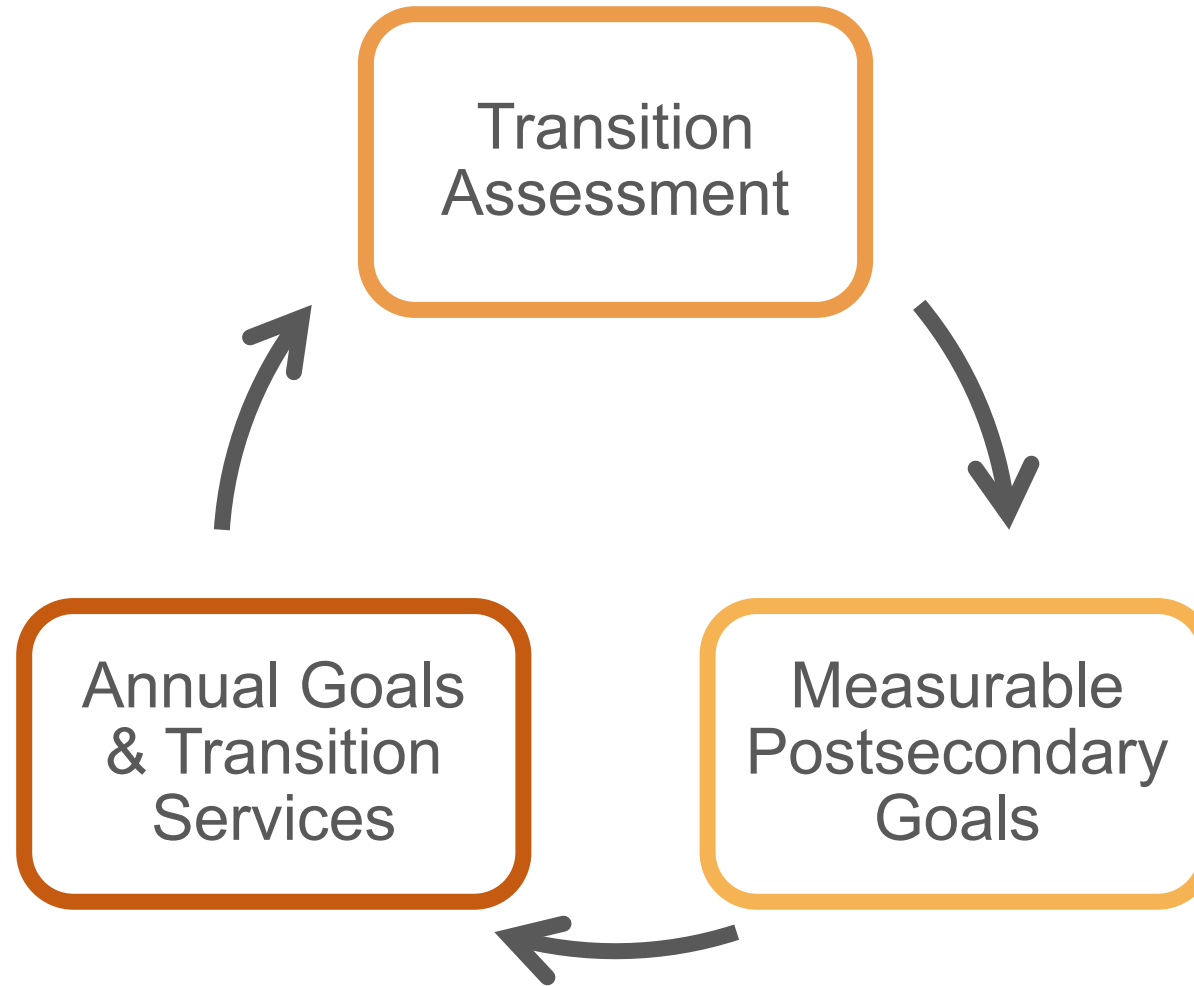
Law that guarantees students with disabilities an equal opportunity for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE)

Mandates special education and related services be designed to meet a student's unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living

IDEA 2004 Requires:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals
- Based on age-appropriate transition assessments
- Transition services to help the student reach those goals
- Focused on the student's strengths, preferences, and interests
- Included in the IEP by age 16 (14 in Massachusetts)

Transition Planning Involves



Postsecondary Goals in the IEP

OLD

<p>Vision Statement: What is the vision for this student?</p> <p>Consider the next 1 to 5 year period when developing this statement. Beginning no later than age 14, the statement should be based on the student's preferences and interest, and should include desired outcomes in adult living, post-secondary and working environments.</p>

CURRENT
(New)

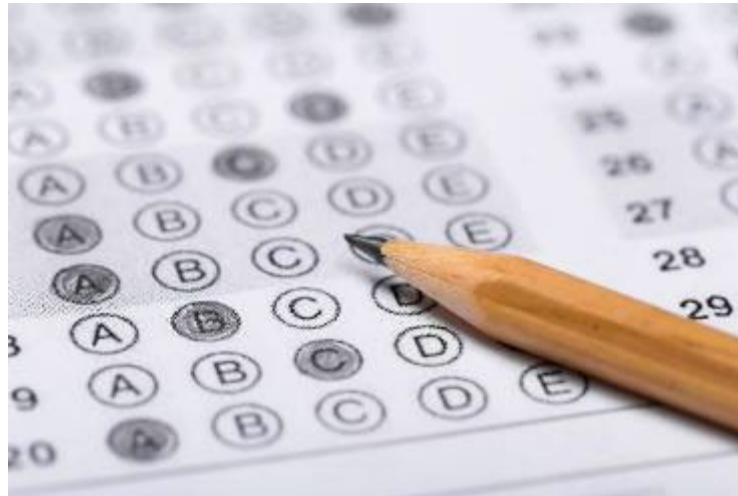
STUDENT AND TEAM VISION	
<i>Student's Vision (ages 3–13)</i>	
This year, I want to learn:	
By the time I finish (circle one: elementary or middle school), I want to:	
<i>Student's Vision/Postsecondary Goals (required for ages 14–22, may be completed earlier if appropriate)</i>	
While I am in high school, I want to:	
After I finish high school, my education or training plans are:	
After I finish high school, my employment plans are:	
After I finish high school, my independent living plans are:	
<i>Additional Team Vision Ideas</i>	
In response to the student's vision, this year:	
In response to the student's vision, in 5 years:	

Transition Assessment Defined

NESCA

Transition Assessment

An “...ongoing process of collecting data on the individual’s needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments.”⁵



© COPAA (2024) - All Rights Reserved

Assessment is Ongoing and Collaborative

- Students' skills, interests, and support needs change over time
- Collaboration ensures a holistic picture of the student
- TVIs, O&M specialists, school staff, families, and students all provide essential insights
- Data must be collected over time, not just at a single point
- Effective transition assessment improves postsecondary success



Formal and Informal Tools

Formal

- Achievement tests
- Adaptive behavior scales
 - Aptitude tests
- Functional academic tests
 - Intelligence tests
 - Interest inventories
- Learning style inventories
 - Personality scales
- Self-determination scales
- Quality of life measures
 - Vocational skills tests
 - Work readiness tests
- PLAN/PSAT/SAT/ACT

Informal

- Community based assessments
- Curriculum based assessments
 - Direct observations
 - Medical reports
 - Questionnaires
- Person-centered planning activities
 - Rating scales
 - Report Cards/Transcripts
 - Skill inventories
- Structured interviews and surveys
 - Talking with the student
 - Task/Environmental Analysis
 - Trial experiences
- Transition planning assessments

If a student is on an IEP, they have had “transition assessment”!

- Three-year evaluations
 - Cognitive, academic, speech-language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.
- Private evaluations
- Standardized testing
 - Achievement tests, PSAT, PLAN, SAT, ACT
- Report Cards/Transcripts/Progress Reports
- Counseling activities
 - Strengths, learning style, personality type, career interests
- Student and Parent Concerns and Vision Statements

Individual Needs Assessment

- What do we already know?
- What do we want/need to know?
- How can we obtain and measure that information?



Transition Assessment Planning Form – Mary Morningstar

TRANSITION COALITION			TRANSITION COALITION							
Transition Assessment Domains			Areas of Assessment to Consider		What do we already know about the student?					
Current and Future Employment	Occupational Interests & Values		Education and/or Training	Academic Achievement						
	Work Aptitude			Learning Styles						
	Work Readiness/ Prevocational Skills			Intelligence						
	Assistive Technology			Accommodations						
	Temperament/ Personality			Independent Living	Self-Awareness					
	Mannal Dexterity		Self-Determination/ Self-Advocacy							
	Work Environments		Money Management							

TRANSITION COALITION						
Transition Assessment Domains	Areas of Assessment to Consider	What do we already know about the student?	What do you need about the student?	How will you learn this information?	Who will gather the information?	When will the information be gathered?
Independent Living	Home Living					
	Recreation & Leisure Interests					
	Transportation					
	Personal Safety					
	Medical & Health					
	Communication					
	Adaptive Behavior					
	Interpersonal Relationships					
	Community Participation					

Gaumer Erickson, A.S., Morningstar, M. E., Lattin, D.L., & Cantrell, L. (2008) *Transition Assessment Planning Form*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, Transition Coalition

Transition Assessment Looks At¹


- Cognitive Performance
- Academic Achievement/Learning Skills
- Learning Style
- **Compensatory Skills**
- Accommodation Needs
- **Self-Determination**
 - Self-Awareness
 - Self-Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills/Adaptive Behavior
 - Communication
 - **Daily Living Skills** (Self-Care, Domestic, Community)
 - Socialization (**Interpersonal, Leisure**, Coping)

Transition Assessment Looks At – Cont.¹

- Vocation
 - Interests/Values
 - Aptitudes
 - Readiness/Prevocational Skills
 - Personality/Preferences
 - Attitude/Performance
 - Environments
 - **Assistive Technology**
 - Dexterity, **Mobility**, and **Sensory**
- Career Exploration Skills
 - Academic Planning Skills
 - **Career Awareness** and Planning Skills

Assessment and Visual Impairment

- Transition assessment is required for all, but students with visual impairments have unique needs.
- Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is essential. Make sure the team doesn't skip:
 - Technology & Assistive Tech
 - Compensatory Skills
 - Sensory Efficiency
 - Orientation & Mobility
- Traditional assessments may not fully capture the skills necessary for independence, career readiness, and community participation.
- **Ongoing, real-world assessment**



WHAT iF?

What is the biggest worry about transitioning to adult life?

Transition Assessment in the IEP

OLD

Student Strengths and Key Evaluation Results Summary

What are the student's educational strengths, interest areas, significant personal attributes and personal accomplishments?
What is the student's type of disability(ies), general education performance
including MCAS/district test results, achievement towards goals and lack of expected progress, if any?

CURRENT
(New)

PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE: ACADEMICS

Describe the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance in the relevant areas listed below.

Consider the areas of learning listed below and complete only the sections that apply to the student. Include relevant information and data from initial or most recent evaluations; documentation from classroom performance; parent(s), student, and teacher observations; and curriculum-based standardized assessments, including MCAS.

Briefly describe current academic performance.
Check all that apply:

- ☐ English Language Arts
- ☐ History and Social Studies
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Science, Technology, Engineering, and Art

Strengths, interest areas, and preferences

Impact of student's disability on involvement and progress in the general education curriculum or appropriate preschool activities

AND

- BEHAVIOR/SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
- COMMUNICATION
- ADDITIONAL AREAS

POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION PLANNING*

Complete for eligible students aged 14–22 and update annually. Complete also for students who are 13 and will turn 14 during this IEP period. The dotted lines indicate the pages of this IEP that are dedicated to secondary transition planning.

Postsecondary Transition Briefly describe current performance.	Strengths, interest areas, and preferences	Impact of student's disability on involvement in the general education curriculum and/or specific area of postsecondary transition
Education/training		
Employment		
Community experiences/postschool independent living, if applicable		

Example Assessment Tools: From Common to Creative



“Complete” Transition Assessments



- [Transition Planning Inventory – Third Edition \(TPI-3\)](#)



- [Informal Assessments for Transition Planning](#)



- [Revised Transition Rating Scales \(TRS\), ages 14-21](#)



- [Brigance Transition Skills Inventory 2 \(TSI 2\)](#)

Self-Determination/Advocacy

- [ARC Self-Determination Scales](#)
- [AIR Self-Determination Scales, all school ages](#)
- [ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Curriculum and Assessment](#)
- [Self-Determination Student Checklist](#)
- [Person-Centered Planning Activities](#)

A screenshot of the AIR Self-Determination Scales document, showing a table with various self-determination scales and their corresponding scores.

My child knows what s/he needs, likes, and is good at.	Never	Sometimes	Always
My child asks for or has one, gets to control, or works on the things s/he likes to do.	0	1	2
My child figures out how to use s/he likes to do.	0	1	2
My child figures out how to use s/he likes to do.	0	1	2
My child checks his or her own progress when completing his or her plan.	0	1	2
If my child does it well, my	0	1	2



Life Skills/Adaptive Functioning

- [Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales – Third Edition \(Vineland-3\)](#)
- [Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, Third Edition \(ABAS-3\)](#)
- [Life Skills Inventory \(Washington DSHS\)](#)
- [PEATC Life Skills Checklist](#)
- [Casey Life Skills Toolkit](#)
- [Assessment of Functional Living Skills](#)



CATEGORY	SCALE (BIL/ATTENED)			
	BASIC	ADV	ADV	EXCEL
A. Money Management/Consumer Awareness				
B. Food Management				
C. Personal Appearance and Hygiene				
D. Health				
E. Transportation				
F. Housing				
G. Employment				
H. Education/Training				
I. Life Planning Skills				
J. Job Motivation Skills				
K. Knowledge of Social Skills				
L. Knowledge of Community Resources				
M. Independent Skills				
N. Legal Skills				
O. Property Acquisition/Planning and Care				



Employment: Career Interests

- [O*Net Interest Profiler \(IP\)](#)
- [Career Decision-Making System-Revised \(CDM-R\)](#)
- [Strong Interest Inventory](#)
- [Picture Interests Career Survey, Third Edition](#)
- [Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory-Third Edition \(RFVII-3\)](#)



Employment – Functional Assessments

- Work Aptitudes
 - [Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation System \(CVES\)](#)
- Situational Vocational Assessment
 - Experiential learning in simulated/real work settings

Employment – Readiness, Attitudes, Motivations, Values, and Transferrable Skills

- [Becker Work Adjustment Profile-Second Edition \(BWAP-2\)](#)
- [Work Readiness Inventory](#)
- [Employability Skills Inventory](#)
- [Work Motivation Scale](#)
- [Job Search Attitude Inventory](#)
- [Transferrable Skills Scale](#)
- [O*Net Work Importance Locator](#)

Postsecondary Education

- Course of Study: State & Local Requirements, Standardized Testing
- Academic Achievement
- Executive Functioning & Study Skills
- College Planning, Search & Applications
- Overnight Experience
- Situational Assessment in College Setting
- [Auditing or Completion of Course at community college or postsecondary institution](#)



Postsecondary Education – Cont.

- [High School Checklist for college readiness by skills \(Perkins\)](#)
- [A Guide to Assessing College Readiness for Parents of College-Bound Children with Learning Disabilities or ADHD](#)
- [College Survival and Success Scale \(CSSS\) – 2nd Edition](#)
- [Postsecondary Readiness Rubric from New York State Education Department](#)
- [Students with Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for College Personnel \(Wolf, Brown, & Bork\)](#)
 - Appendix D: Identifying My Academic Strengths and Weaknesses
 - Appendix D: My Areas of Difficulty Checklist
 - Appendix D: Student Accommodations Needs



Transition Assessment Should include:

- A transition planning inventory/assessment
- Formal and informal measures
- Clear measurements of frequency AND level of support/dependence
- Student, parent, and school report through questionnaire and/or interview
- Functional measures of student performance
- Situational assessments in environments related to postsecondary vision/goals

Accessibility in Transition Assessments

- Common challenges:
 - Visual materials that are not adapted
 - Testing that assumes print-based literacy or visual scanning
 - Career inventories that don't consider adapted work environments
- Possible solutions:
 - Use/Make accessible assessment tools (e.g., adapted career inventories, oral interviews)
 - Involve TVIs, Certified O&M specialists, and AT specialists in selecting tools
 - Ensure assessment environments reflect real-world accessibility needs
 - Expand career exploration

Transition Services and IEP Development

NESCA

A Transition-Rich IEP

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance,
Postsecondary Transition



Measurable Postsecondary Goals



Measurable
Annual Goals



Annual Activities and
Services, including
Course of Study



Designated
Responsibility

Transition Services in the IEP

CURRENT
(New)

POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION PLANNING*

Complete for eligible students aged 14–22 and update annually. Complete also for students who are 13 and will turn 14 during this IEP period. The dotted lines indicate the pages of this IEP that are dedicated to secondary transition planning.

Postsecondary Transition Briefly describe current performance.	Strengths, interest areas, and preferences	Impact of student's disability on involvement in the general education curriculum and/or specific area of postsecondary transition
Education/training		
Employment		
Community experiences/postschool independent living, if applicable		

The identified areas of postsecondary transition will be addressed in the following section(s) of the IEP:

<input type="checkbox"/> Accommodations/Modifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Services Delivery Grid	
<input type="checkbox"/> Goals/Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Information	

Projected date of graduation/program completion:	
Projected type of completion document (diploma, certificate of attainment, or other locally defined completion document):	

Planned Course of Study

What requirements does the student need to meet to receive the type of completion document above? What is the student's planned course of study?

--

What is the student's current status regarding meeting those requirements?

--

* The dotted line indicates that this page of this IEP is dedicated to secondary transition planning.

Interagency Connections & Transfer of Rights

CURRENT
(New)

COMMUNITY AND INTERAGENCY CONNECTIONS

Agency	Description of Support Provided	Role and contact information of school staff who will be the liaison to the agency

TRANSFER OF RIGHTS TO STUDENT

The student and parent(s) must be notified at least 1 year before the student's 18th birthday that decision-making rights will transfer from parent(s) to the student when the student turns 18. Is the student 17 or will they turn 17 during the timeframe of this IEP?

☐ Yes ☐ No

On what date was the student provided with the notice of transfer of rights and a copy of procedural safeguards concerning special education rights?

On what date was the parent(s) provided with notice of transfer of rights and a copy of procedural safeguards concerning special education rights?

* The dotted line indicates that this page of this IEP is dedicated to secondary transition planning.

Decision-Making Options and 688 Referral

CURRENT
(New)

DECISION-MAKING OPTIONS FOR STUDENT*

Complete for student who has turned 18. Please indicate the decision-making option that the student or court-appointed legal guardian has selected:

- ☐ The student will make their own educational decisions.
- ☐ The student will share decision-making with their parent, caregiver, or other adult.
Individual with whom the student will share decision-making: _____
- ☐ The student has delegated decision-making to their parent, caregiver, or other adult.
Individual to whom the student has delegated decision-making: _____
- ☐ A court has appointed a legal guardian for the student who will make educational decisions.
Name of court-appointed legal guardian: _____

Date of determination: _____

TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICE AGENCY OR AGENCIES—688 REFERRAL

Is the student within 2 years of exiting special education services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, has the Team discussed whether the student meets the criteria for a 688 referral?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has a 688 referral been submitted for this student?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If so, date the 688 referral was submitted: _____)* <input type="checkbox"/> No (If so, date the 688 referral will be submitted: _____)* <input type="checkbox"/> The Team has determined that the student does not meet the criteria for a 688 referral.
If yes, please identify the agency to which referral was made:	

* The dotted line indicates that this page of this IEP is dedicated to secondary transition planning.

Transition Service Questions



- What experiences must the student participate in this academic year that are necessary for achieving the identified postsecondary goals?
- What services and specific instruction are essential this year for the student to develop skills and knowledge to attain their postsecondary goals?
- Do we know enough about this student's vocational skills to identify an appropriate post-secondary employment goal or design activities to support the identified goal?



Annual IEP Goals



For each postsecondary goal, there must be an annual goal or goals included in the IEP that will help the student make progress towards the stated postsecondary goals.

Annual IEP Goal Questions

- What skills and knowledge does the student currently have that support their postsecondary goals?
- What skills and knowledge must the student attain this academic year that are necessary for achieving the identified postsecondary goals?
- What services and experiences must the student participate in this academic year that are necessary for achieving the identified postsecondary goals?

Perkins School for the Blind Transition Planning Timeline

Age 14
and younger

By age 16

By age 17

By age 18

By age 19

By age 21
or until student exits
school or turns 22

- Register with state agencies for services, including your state's:
 - Commission for the Blind
 - Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Deafblind students should register with your state's deafblind project and be added to the deafblind child count.
- Learn about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre ETS), a federally funded program available through schools and local vocational rehabilitation offices.
- Obtain a Social Security card, if not done previously.
- Invite teens to participate in IEP meetings and begin transition planning with the school team. Ask about student-led IEPs to determine what level of participation is best for your student.
- Consider conducting a Person Centered Planning session.
- Consider any vision related services that may support your child (for example Orientation

- Schools are **required** to invite students to their IEP meetings. Learn how to prepare your child for their participation with your school team.
- IEP teams are required to develop transition goals with students to be reviewed and updated each year.
- Graduation plans must be discussed at the IEP meeting. Students may attend school until the end of the academic year in which they turn age 20 - 22, depending on your state.
- Begin vocational training at school sites or in the community. Ask the school team if Pre-ETS is an option.
- **Start the referral process for adult services.** For MA residents, your school district should complete a Chapter 688 referral. This inquiry can be made during the IEP when the transition planning page is reviewed.
- Consider setting up an ABLE account or Special Needs Trust.

- **Discuss eligibility** for adult service agencies and the levels of support that may be provided. Learn the processes specific to your state, your school team can guide you.
- Assessments, including cognitive, vocational, assistive technology and other related areas should be up-to-date for application to adult services. Updated assessment scores (within 3 years) are often required to determine eligibility.
- If appropriate, your student should take college entrance exams and complete applications. Read more tips on preparing for college.
- Plan for an Assistive Technology Evaluation and begin to consider technology the student will use as an adult, and how it will be funded.
- Begin discussions about housing, and prepare to apply for Section 8 housing on the student's 18th birthday, if appropriate.

- Apply for SSI the month after the teen turns 18.
- Explore decision making options including Guardianship, and least restrictive alternatives. Consider the supports needed to make health, financial, and life decisions.
- At least one year before the age of majority (18 in most states), notify the student of rights that will transfer to them on reaching the age of majority.
- Students planning to attend college should contact campus Student Disability Services to discuss accommodations.
- Finalize graduation plans, including certificates of completion and attendance, if appropriate.
- Students should register to vote and can begin voting in elections. Local self advocacy organizations, such as The Arc, are available to help your adult child prepare.
- Young adult males must

- Young adults should begin to make their own legal decisions about their life, health care, and finances, unless Guardianship or Supported Decision Making was assigned. Always consider the least restrictive option.
- Ensure Assessments are updated and completed for both vocational and assistive technology.
- Research different day program models with your transition team and assigned case manager, such as day habilitation and community based day support.
- Students should be able to understand and advocate for the accommodations they need for vocational or post-secondary programs.
- Deafblind students should connect with with Helen Keller International for advocacy, support and resources.

- Educate yourself about the transition from Entitlement to Eligibility and prepare to ensure the necessary supports will be in place after graduation.
- If your adult child continues to attend a public school program, know that Entitlement can stop at the end of the school year, or on the student's birthday, when they turn 20 - 22, depending on the state.
- **Applications for adult services should be complete.** These may include your state's Commission for the Blind, Department of Developmental Disabilities or Vocational Rehabilitation. Your school team will help guide the process.
- Be sure discussions about housing are well underway, such as applying for Section 8 housing support, or supported housing.
- Invite Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to any transition meetings the year of turning 22. Apply to DVR for services a few months

References & Resources

1. Gaumer Erickson, A.S., Morningstar, M. E., Lattin, D.L., & Cantrell, L. (2008). Transition Assessment Planning Form. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, Transition Coalition.
2. Mazzotti, V. L., Rowe, D. A., Kwiatek, S., Voggt, A., Chang, W.-H., Fowler, C. H., Poppen, M., Sinclair, J., & Test, D. W. (2021). Secondary Transition Predictors of Postschool Success: An Update to the Research Base. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 44(1), 47-64.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143420959793>
3. Mittnacht, M. (2014) Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2014-4: Transition Assessment in the Secondary Transition Planning Process. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Retrieved from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2014-4ta.html> December 4, 2023.

References & Resources – Cont.

4. Rowe, D.A., Test, D., and Fowler, C. Using Transition Assessment to Guide IEP Development – 3-hour presentation. [Slideshow] National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, Charlotte, NC, United States. Retrieved from <https://www.nsttac.org/content/table-contents-transition-assessment-presenter-guide/> July 24, 2023
5. Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & Leconte, P. J. (1997). Transition assessment: The position of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 20, 69-79.
6. Wagner, M., Newman, L., & Javitz, J. (2017). Vocational education course taking and post-high school employment of youth with emotional disturbances. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*. 40, 132–143.
7. National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) - Age-Appropriate Transition Assistance Toolkit - <https://transitionta.org/transition-assessment/>

Questions

