



# Community Transition Planning Overview for Caregivers

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## Transition is a Process – Start Early

Transition planning is not a single meeting or event. It is an ongoing process that should begin by age 14 and continue until your child exits school.

## Guiding Principles

- ✓ Transition planning should be student-centered and family-informed.
  - ✓ Early planning reduces stress and service delays.
  - ✓ Having the right documentation is essential.
  - ✓ Schools and community agencies should work together to support your family.
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## What Should Transition Planning Include?

Discussions about life after school may begin as early as grade 7, with more formal planning by ages 15–16.

### Key areas to plan for:

- Employment and volunteer opportunities
- Independent living skills (budgeting, cooking, personal care)
- Community participation and social inclusion
- Recreation and leisure activities
- Postsecondary or lifelong learning
- Adult services and financial supports

### Ask at each IEP meeting:

- What real-life skills is my child practicing?
- How does this goal prepare them for adulthood?
- How can I support skill development in the home?



## Understanding Transition Assessments

Schools may use different tools to understand your child's strengths and needs, such as:

- ✓ Student self-reflection tools
- ✓ Teacher observations
- ✓ Community-based experiences (e.g., job trials)
- ✓ Vocational interest inventories
- ✓ Life skills assessments in real-world settings
- ✓ Parent interviews, including questions such as:
  - What does your youth want for work or daily life?
  - What interests/hobbies matter most?
  - Where do you see them living or participating in the community?

### **You have the right to ask:**

- What assessments are being used?
- How do results inform transition goals?

## Knowing Your Child's Strengths & Support Needs

Once you have a clear picture of your child's goals after high school, the next step is to look at their strengths and areas where they need support, especially for skills they will use in the community. Understanding this helps the school decide what skills to teach and what supports to put in place during the secondary school years to prepare them for adult life.

### **Areas that may need to be considered, include:**

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Daily living skills
- ✓ Social and community skills
- ✓ Transportation/mobility skills
- ✓ Adaptive behaviours
- ✓ Level of support required (EA, mentors, co-op placements)



## Setting Meaningful Annual Goals

IEP transition goals should connect directly to real life.

### Examples:

| Area                      | Example Goal                        | How Progress Is Measured |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Employment</b>         | Explore two community work sites    | Participation logs       |
| <b>Independent Living</b> | Increase budgeting skills           | Weekly budget tracking   |
| <b>Community</b>          | Practice using public transit       | Documented transit trips |
| <b>Leisure</b>            | Join a community recreation program | Attendance record        |

### Ask:

- Is this goal building independence?
- Is there community practice involved?
- What can we do at home to support skill development?

## Partnering with the School

Remember: You are a key member of the transition team. Your voice matters!

### You can request:

- A transition-focused IEP meeting
- Copies of assessments from the Ontario School Record (OSR)
- Referrals to board psychologists (if reassessment needed)
- Information about community agencies

### Successful transitions happen when:

- Planning starts early
- Documentation is ready
- Adult service applications are submitted on time
- Real-world skills are practiced before school exit



## Important Age-Based Milestones

Use this checklist to stay on track with important age-based transition milestones:

### Ages 14-15

- Transition goals included in IEP
- Psychological assessment reviewed and up to date
- Updated assessment requested (if needed)

### Age 16

- Register with Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)
- Ensure documentation meets DSO eligibility requirements
- Begin discussing future housing and community supports

### Ages 16-17

- Continue building independent living and employment skills
- Gather documentation for adult services

### Age 17½

- Begin application for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

### Final Year Before School Exit

- Confirm DSO registration is complete
- Confirm ODSP application is submitted/approved
- Ensure referrals to adult agencies are made
- Receive copies of all school assessments and reports
- Attend final transition planning meeting