

New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership





An Introduction to Transition Planning

Produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP) for Transition at Cornell University.

Last updated on December 19, 2025



Disclaimer

The resources shown are designed to provide helpful information. Resources are provided for instructional use purposes only and do not constitute New York State Education Department (NYSED) endorsement of any vendor, author, or other sources. To the best of our knowledge, the resources provided are true and complete.

Meeting Norms

- Take care of your needs (water, food, restroom, etc.)
- Speak your truth—Use “I” statements
- Ask what you need to understand and contribute
- Listen with respect
- Push your growing edge
- Participate and struggle together
- Expect a lack of closure
- Respect each other’s needs

Materials

- Why Is Transition Planning Important?
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C) Predictors of Post-School Success by Outcome Area
- Elements of Self-Determination
- Transition Planning Across the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Transition Assessment Resources for Students with Disabilities
- Transition Assessment Resources for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Measurable Postsecondary Goal Template
- Measurable Annual Goal Template
- Current Diploma Requirements 2025
- Safety Net Options Available to Students with Disabilities to Graduate with a Local Diploma (March 2025)
- Postsecondary Transition Planning Checklist
- Adult Services Agencies
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Planner

Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify what transition planning is and why it is important.
- Name New York State (NYS) regulations and federal requirements related to transition planning.
- Identify the various places within the IEP where transition is reflected.
- Recognize the importance of transition assessments and the variety available.
- Compare the Multiple Pathways to graduation, diploma, and credential options.
- Explain the importance of student and family involvement in the transition planning process.
- Recognize the various agencies that provide services to students and adults with disabilities.

Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities



Self-Advocacy

Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.



Family Partnership

Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.



Specially-Designed Instruction

Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.



Research-Based Instruction

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.



Multi-tiered Support

Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.



Inclusive Activities

Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.



Transition Support

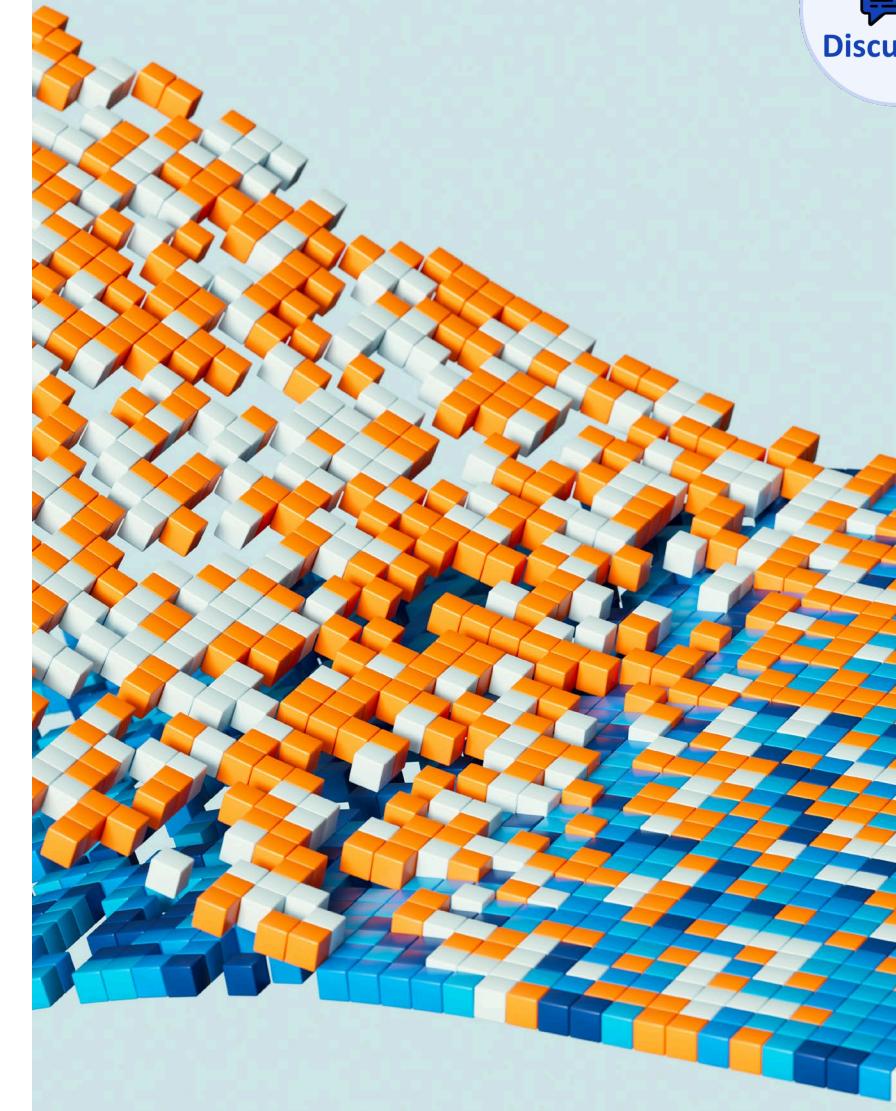
Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

Introduction to Transition Planning

Laying the Groundwork

When you think about transition planning...

- What does it mean to you?
- When do you believe it should start?
- When does transition planning start at your school?



What Is Transition Planning?

- Transition planning is an ongoing process that is student-centered, culturally responsive, and a collaborative effort to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school.
- Transition planning includes the following student-focused questions:

Where are
you now?

Where do you
want to go?

How do you
get there?

Why Is Transition Planning Important?



Improved Outcomes for Students with Disabilities in the Areas of:

Education

Employment

Independent
Living

Disability
Awareness and
Self-Advocacy

Graduation and
Dropout

How Transition Predicts Post-School Success

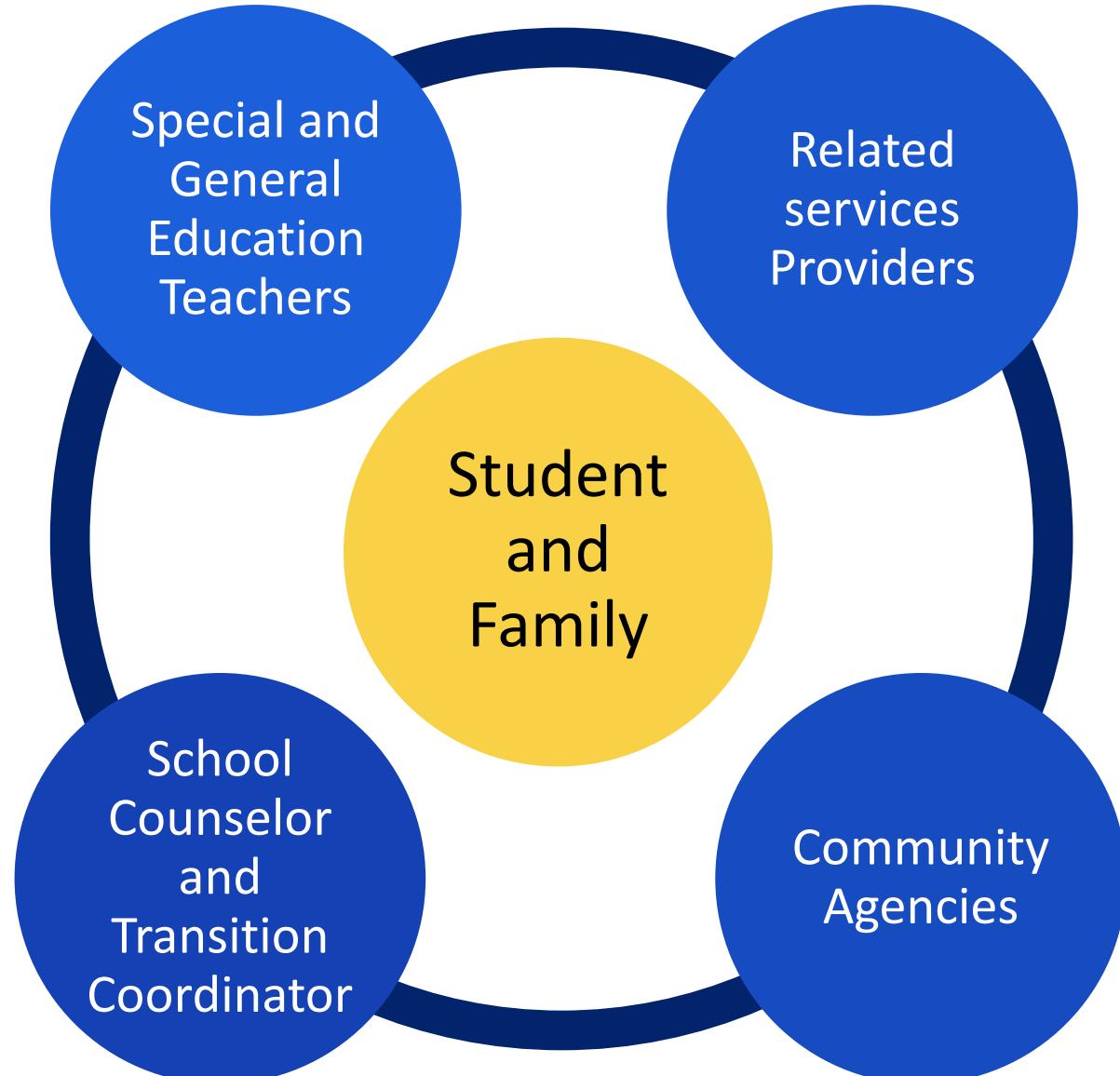
- Career Awareness
- Career Technical Education (CTE)
- Community Experiences
- Exit Exam/Diploma Status
- Goal-Setting
- Inclusion in General Education
- Interagency Collaboration
- Occupational Courses
- Paid Work/Work Experience
- Parent Expectations
- Parent/Family Involvement
- Program of Study
- Psychological Empowerment
- Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination
- Self-Care/Independent Living
- Self-Realization
- Social Skills
- Student Support
- Technology Skills
- Transition Program
- Travel Skills
- Work Study
- Youth Autonomy/Decision-Making



Who Should Be Involved in Transition Planning?

Tips:

- Focus on student strengths and cultural values
- Consider cultural and linguistic differences
- Elevate family's frame of reference and voice
- Take into account common barriers for family engagement



Centering the Student in the Transition Planning Process

Occurs within the context of the overall transition planning process

Specific roles vary and are individualized based on age, needs, and abilities

Approach can be utilized from Kindergarten through exit

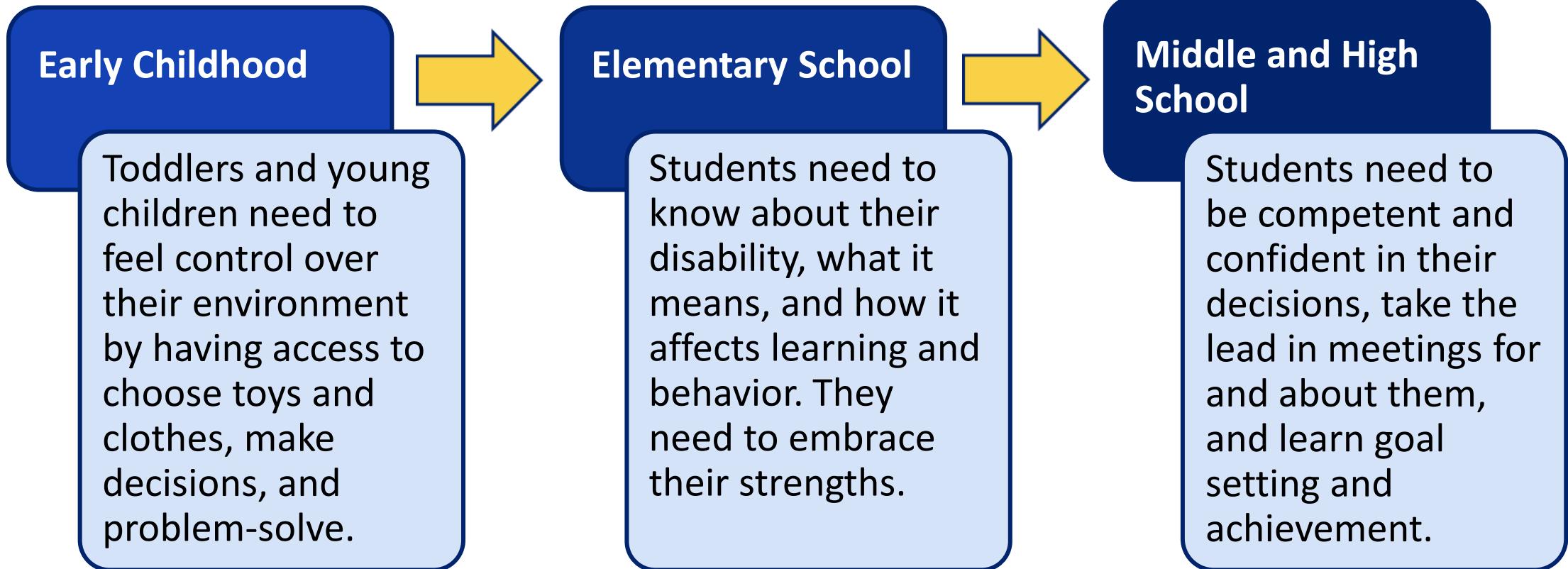
Requires an investment in preparing students and families



Consider the Transition-Age Student You Support

- Do they know what an IEP is?
- Are they aware of their disability and how it impacts learning?
- How comfortable are they making choices or speaking up about what they want and need?
- What might help students feel more confident sharing their thoughts throughout transition planning?
- How can we make sure every student's voice and family input is valued equally in the planning process?
- How can choice making be incorporated into lessons, at home and at school, to prepare students to take a more active role in their planning?

From Choice Making to Leading



Connecting it All: Self-Determination in Transition Planning



When we center student voice and build choice-making skills, we're actively developing self-determination — the foundation of effective transition planning.

Elements of self-determination include:

- Choice-making
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal setting
- Self-regulation
- Self-advocacy
- Self-awareness
- Self-efficacy/Internal locus of control

From Regulations to Practice: Documenting Student- Centered Transition Planning

Federal and State Transition Related Laws

Federal Laws and Regulations (i.e. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA])

NYS Laws and Regulations (i.e., Part 200 of the Commissioner's Regulations)

NYS Policy, Guidance, and State Performance Plan (SPP)

Committee on Special Education (CSE) Local Policy and Procedures

Foundation of System



Point of application to individual students

Transition Planning and NYS Regulations

NYS regulations require students age 12, and those referred to special education for the first time who are age 12 and over, to receive an assessment to determine vocational skills, aptitudes, and interests.

Transition planning can start at an earlier age if determined appropriate.

NYS regulations require transition planning be in a student's IEP beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is age 15.

Students are at the center of transition planning.

Invitation vs. Participation

Student invitation

Notification or invitation to the CSE meeting



Preparation for the meeting

Student Involvement in the IEP

Why Is This Cake on Fire?



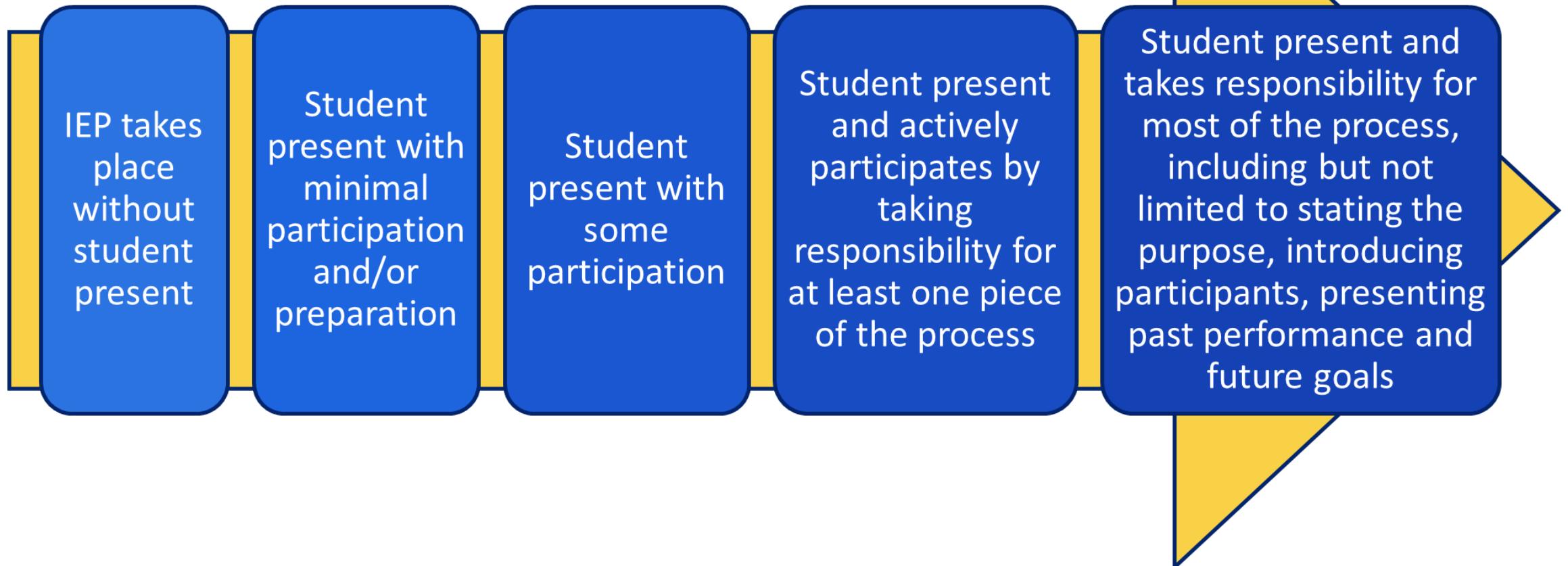
[Watch Video](#)

Turn and Talk



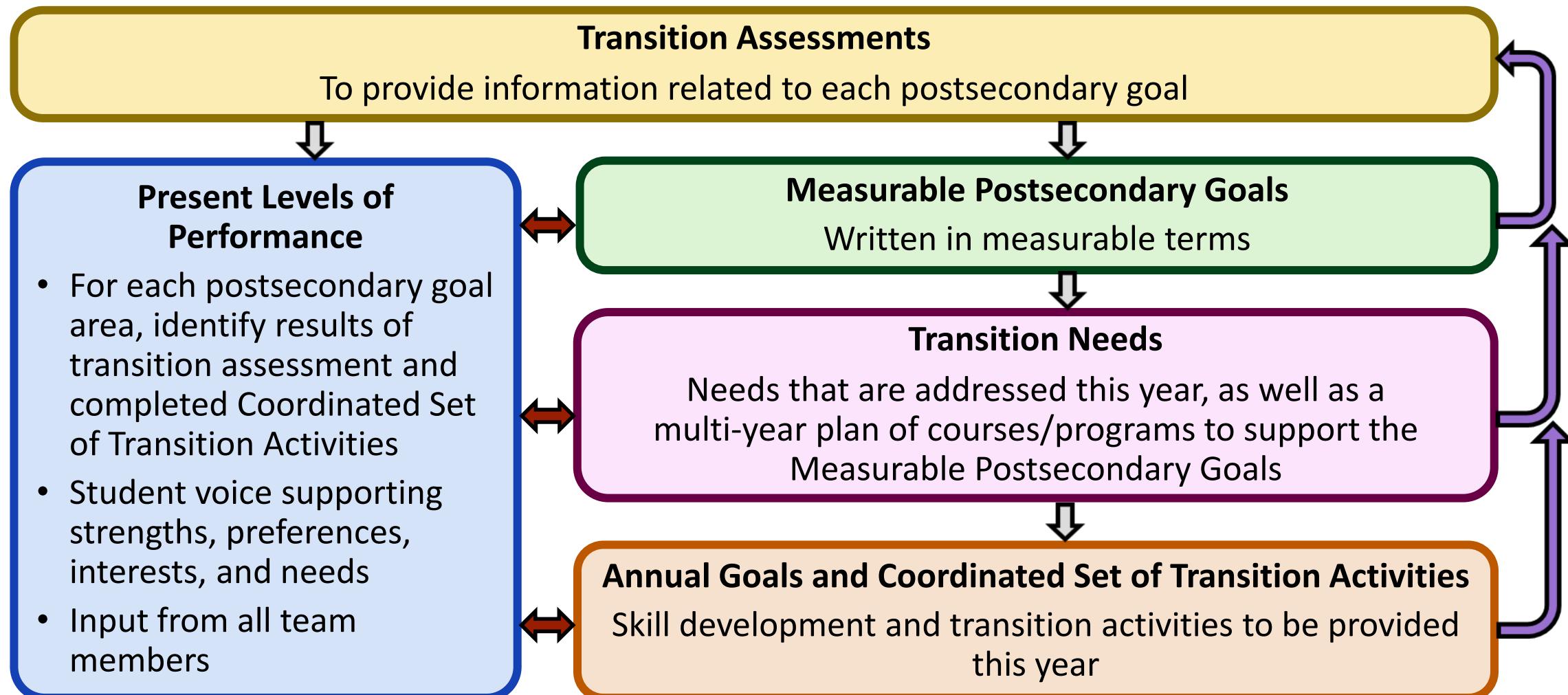
- How would you have felt about people planning your future without asking you what you wanted?
- Would their choices have aligned with your goals and objectives for your life?
- Why would it be important for you to be included in the conversations about your future?
- What important skills do you think you would gain from being an active participant in the conversations?
- What would make you feel comfortable, welcomed, and encouraged to take an active part in transition planning?

Student Involvement in the IEP Process Along a Continuum



Transition Planning Across the IEP

Connected Transition Plan in the IEP



Transition Assessment

- Is an ongoing process of collecting information on a student's strengths, interests, skills or aptitudes, preferences, and needs related to current demands and future career, educational, personal, and social environments.
- Provides a foundation for defining IEP goals and transition services and guides instructional decision-making.
- Results from initial assessments should be the starting point for transition planning.
- Helps students with disabilities identify the skills needed to achieve post-school goals.
- Serves as a guide for students to make informed choices and take charge of their transition planning process.

Types of Transition Assessments

Transition assessment includes a variety of instruments such as:

Interest Inventories

Self-Determination Scales

Situational Assessments

Adaptive Behavior Scales

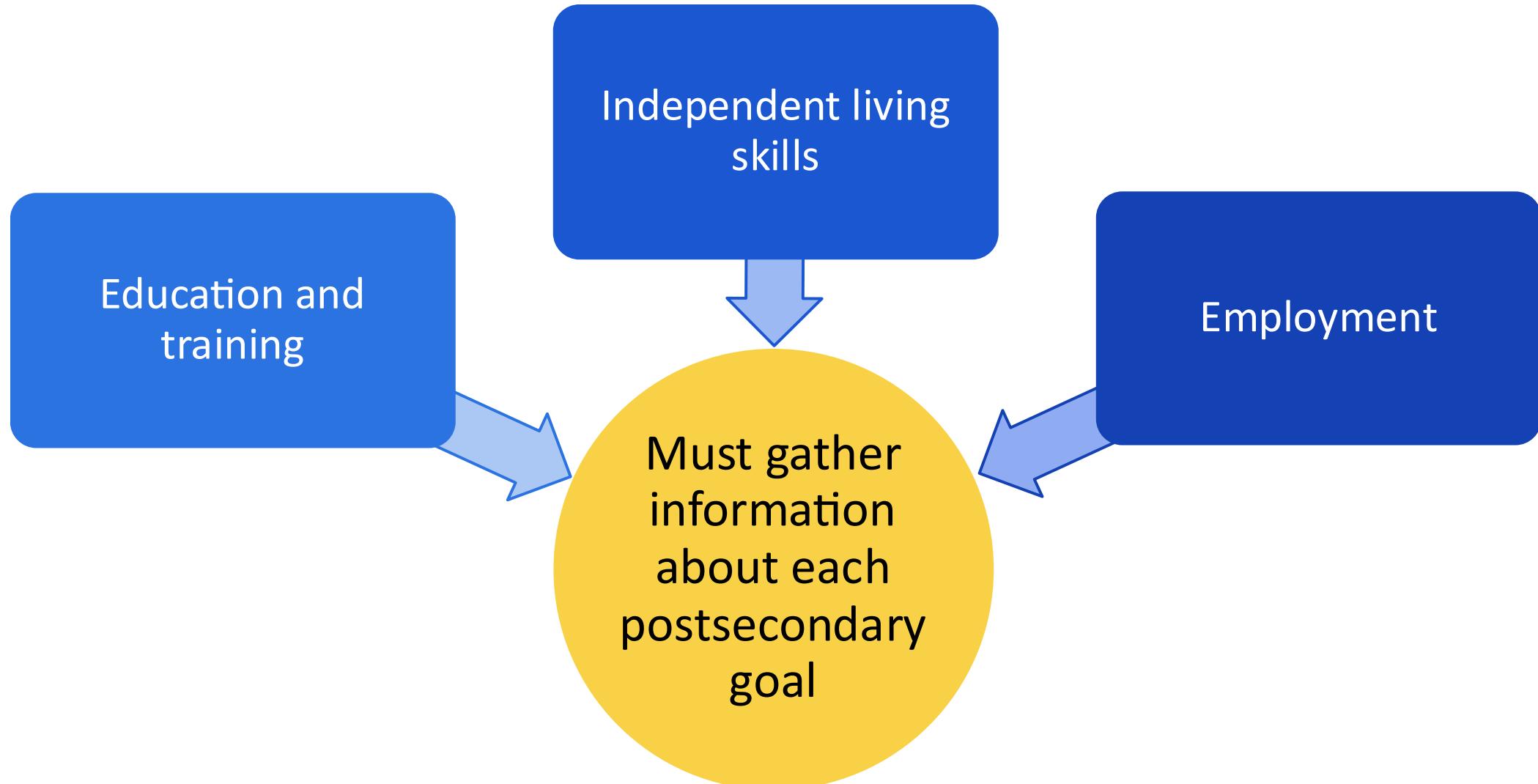
Task Analysis

Interviews and Questionnaires

Independent Living Skills Assessments

Study Skills Assessments

Transition Assessment Areas



Measurable Postsecondary Goals Defined

Post means *after*.

Measurable Postsecondary Goals tell us where the student will work, learn, and live *after* high school.

Must be *measurable* and *observable*.

Formula for Writing a Measurable Postsecondary Goal



_____ (After high school)

(After graduation)

(Upon completion of high school)



_____ (the student)



will

_____ (behavior)



_____ (where and how)

Identifying Transition Needs

What skills, behaviors, and experiences does the student need to develop or improve to achieve their Measurable Postsecondary Goals?



Courses of Study Aligned with Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Long-term plan of courses and instruction that the student will take while in high school which will support the attainment of their Measurable Postsecondary Goals.

Could include:

- Specific Regents coursework that relates to Measurable Postsecondary Goals
- Sequence of courses in a career or vocational field (CTE)
- Electives related to Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Measurable Postsecondary Goals Correspond to Annual Goals



For each of the Measurable Postsecondary Goal areas identified in the student's IEP, there is an annual goal or short-term objective included in the IEP related to the student's transition services/needs.

- Consider what skills and knowledge will be required for the student to achieve the postsecondary goal.
- One annual goal may link to more than one postsecondary goal.

What Are the Coordinated Set of Transition Activities?

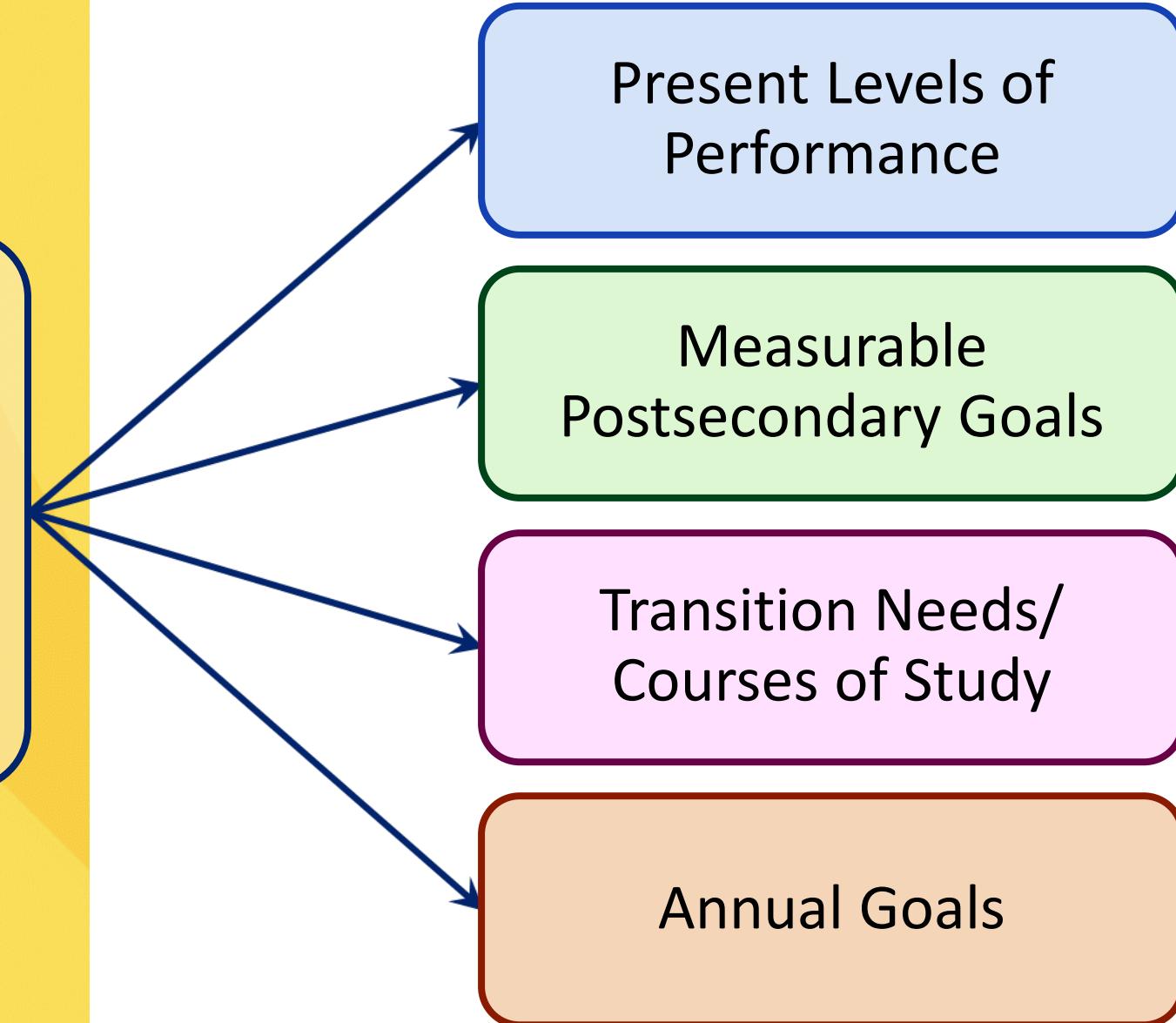
- Needed activities to facilitate movement from school to post-school activities.
- Descriptions of what the district will do to help the student reach their Measurable Postsecondary Goals.

Activities in the following areas:

- Instruction
- Related services
- Community experiences
- Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives
- When appropriate:
 - Acquisition of daily living skills
 - Functional vocational evaluation



Coordinated Set of Transition Activities Align With:



Student Centered IEPs



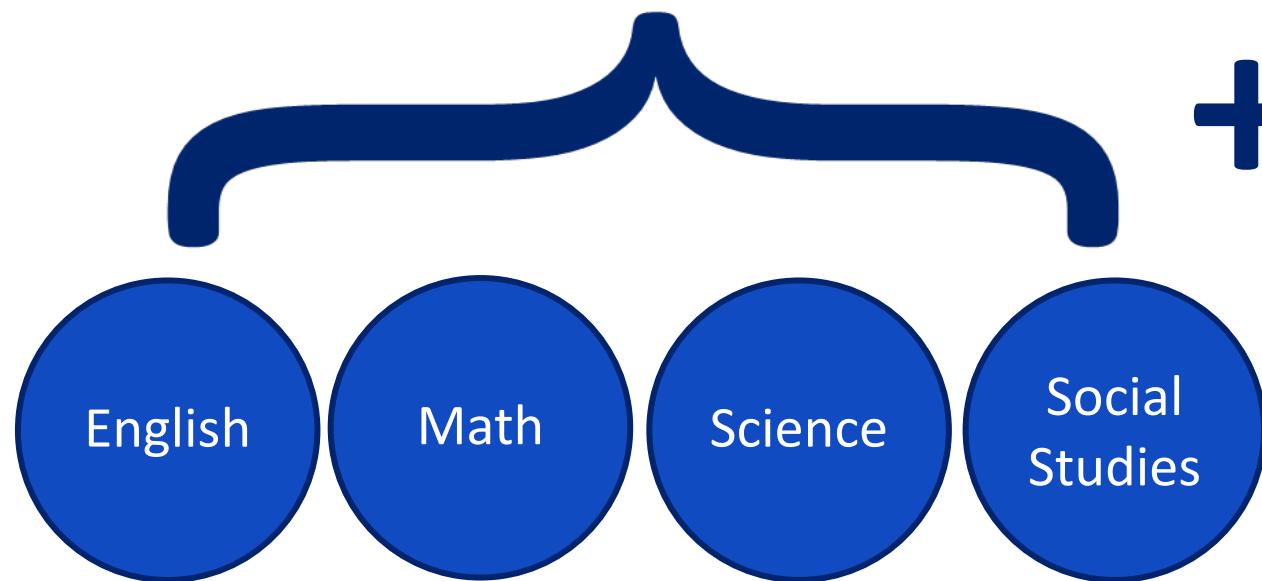
- How is the student incorporated into the IEP process before, during, and after the CSE meeting?
- How are the student's strengths, preferences, interests, needs, and transition assessment results reflected in their IEP?
- How do the goals in the IEP build the student's self-determination skills?
- What instructional strategies, supplemental aids, or accommodations help the student build independence and be more involved in determining their future?
- How are student skills in developing support networks being fostered to support their post-school vision when they exit school?
- What is one step that can be taken this year to make the IEP more student-centered than last year?

Diploma and Credential Options

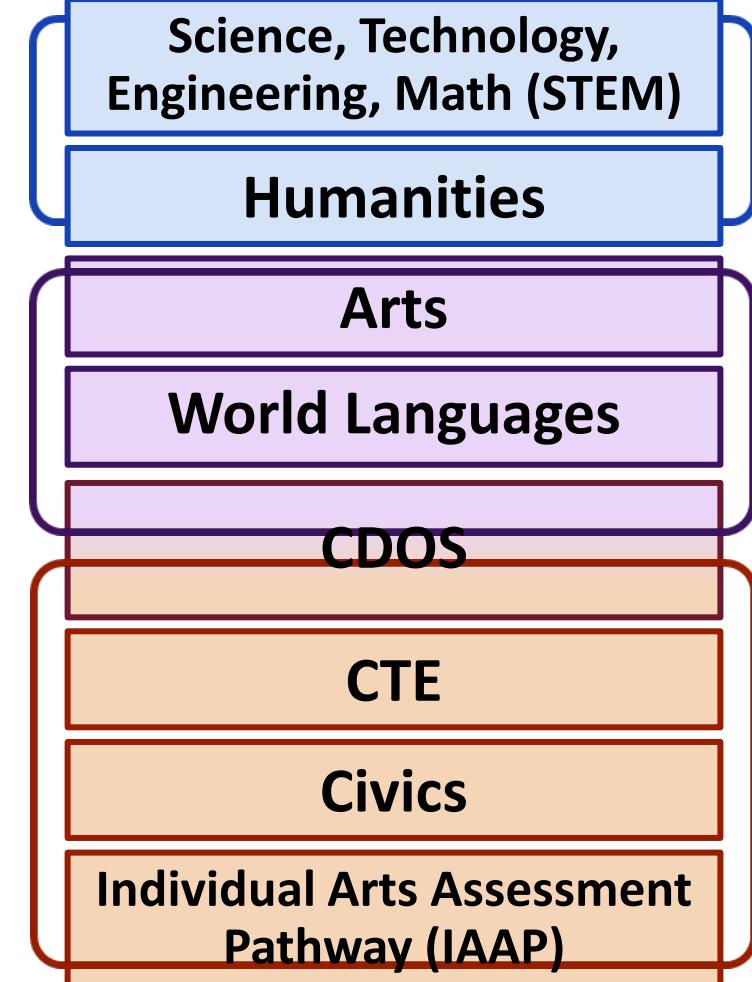
Multiple (+1) Pathways

4

All students must pass 4 required assessments (one in each discipline)



Pathways



Types of Diplomas



Local

22 units of credit

Used appeals, safety nets to meet assessment requirements

- **or** Superintendent Determination of a Local Diploma

Regents

22 units of credit

Earned passing scores (65+ for Regents Examinations)* on all required assessments (4 + 1)

Regents with Advanced Designation

22 units of credit

Earned passing score on all required assessments (7 + 1)

- Additional exams required:
 - +2 math
 - +1 science
 - 1 life, 1 physical

Completed a sequence

* A student can use one traditional appeal (60–64) and still receive a Regents diploma. Special appeals and exemptions can be applied to any diploma type.

Diplomas via Traditional Appeal for All Students

Regents Diploma via Traditional Appeal for All Students

- Meets credit requirements
- Meets assessment requirements using **one** successfully appealed **Regents Examination score** no more than 5 points below passing (60–64)

Local Diploma via Traditional Appeal for All Students

- Meets credit requirements
- Meets assessment requirements using **two** successfully appealed **Regents Examination scores** no more than 5 points below passing (60–64)

Students with disabilities seeking a local diploma may appeal up to two Regents Examination scores between 52-54.

Safety Net Options for Students With Disabilities



Local Diploma via Low Pass Safety Net

- Meets credit requirements
- Meets assessment requirements for a local diploma by achieving a score between **55–64** on one or more of the required Regents Examinations
- **May also appeal** up to two Regents Examination scores between **52–54**

Local Diploma via Compensatory Safety Net

- Meets credit requirements
- Meets assessment requirements for a local diploma by compensating Regents Examination scores between 45–54 (on any required Regents Examination except for English Language Arts and math) with a score of 65 or higher on another required Regents Examination

Safety Net applies to:

- Students with disabilities with a current IEP
- Students with a Section 504 plan, if documented on the plan
- Students declassified from special education in grades 8–12, if recommended by the CSE

Superintendent Determination of a Local Diploma

Eligibility requirements include:

- Student is currently receiving special education services through an IEP (not applicable to 504 or declassified students).
- Student participated in and passed all relevant Regents level coursework.
- Student actively participated in all required Regents Examinations.
- Student earned the appropriate 22 units of diploma credit.
 - If the request involves English Language Arts and/or mathematics assessments, students must ALSO earn the CDOS Commencement Credential.
- Student's parent or person in parental relation submitted a written request to the superintendent for a determination of a local diploma.

Commencement Credential Options

CDOS Commencement Credential

- Is a Board of Regents endorsed credential that recognizes the student's readiness for entry-level employment
- Can help a student earn a diploma, supplement a diploma, or serve as a standalone credential for students **who do not earn a diploma**
- Cannot be earned by students who participate in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) testing program

Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

- Can be earned by students who are assessed using the NYSAA
- Provides learning experiences both in school and in the community
- Includes a Student Exit Summary

NYS Portrait of a Graduate

6 Attributes

- A NYS high school graduate will be
 - Academically Prepared
 - A Creative Innovator
 - A Critical Thinker
 - An Effective Communicator
 - A Global Citizen
 - Reflective and Future Focused



Postsecondary Planning and Navigating Adult Services

A Collaborative Process

- As students with disabilities transition to adult life, collaboration among educators, families, and state and community agencies is crucial. This collaboration allows for the provision of necessary supports and services to facilitate a successful transition from school to work.
- Examples of collaboration can include:
 - Keeping lines of communication open.
 - Incorporating all parties in the development of transition planning activities.
 - Ensuring services are described in and connected throughout the IEP.
 - Inviting State and community agencies to the IEP meeting.

Postsecondary Planning Options



As students begin to plan for the future, they should be exploring post-school options in the following three areas:

Postsecondary
Education

Employment

Independent
Living

Entitlement vs. Eligibility

Entitled

- School-age students with a disability receiving special education services are **entitled** to receive services to access FAPE as outlined in the IDEA.
- Services are documented within the student's IEP as determined by the CSE and funded by the school district.

Eligible

Once a student exits school, **eligibility** for services and supports is determined through the requirements of an agency outside of the school system.

- Individuals may qualify for services but services are not guaranteed.
- Responsibility to obtain services is on the individual/parent/guardian.
- Services may be provided IF there is enough staff, capacity at the facility, and/or funds to provide services.

IDEA vs. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

High School (IDEA)	Postsecondary (ADA)
Parents/guardians and students advocate	Young adults self-identify and self-advocate
Parents/guardians have access to student records	Young adults have sole access to their records unless consent is given
School district is responsible for student's evaluation at no cost to the family	Young adults are responsible for their own evaluation
Parents/guardians and teachers set goals and management needs for students, including time management and organization	Young adults must organize and structure their own time
Grading and curriculum standards may be modified according to student' needs if the student is alternately assessed	Young adults attending an education/training program have grades based on merit
Provide related services	Provide access to any activity sponsored by the institution and/or agency
Transportation is provided if necessary	Transportation is the young adults' responsibility

NYS Agencies



Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

Office of Mental Health (OMH)

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services—Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)

The Five Pre-ETS



**Job exploration
counseling**

**Work-based
learning
experiences
(WBL)**

**Counseling on
opportunities
for enrollment in
postsecondary
education**

**Workplace
readiness
training**

**Instruction in
self-advocacy**

Community-Based Organizations

Independent Living Centers (ILCs)

Provide a variety of services to individuals with disabilities including peer mentoring, skills training, resources, housing, transportation, and employment.

Workforce Development Centers

Aid individuals seeking employment by providing workshops, local career fairs, and career counseling.

College Disability Services

Provide reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a qualifying disability and who self-identify.

Want to Learn More About Transition Planning?

Additional Training Topics on Transition Planning

Transition-Focused IEP Development

Graduation Rate

Family and Community Engagement

Student Engagement

Work-Based Learning (WBL)

Postsecondary Planning

Special Education Process

Transition Planning and Practices

Final Reflection

3-2-1 Exit Ticket



Please take a moment to share:

- 3 new things you learned
- 2 topics you would like to learn more about
- 1 next step you will take

Resources (1 of 2)

[ADA](#)

[Appeals, Safety Nets, and Superintendent Determination](#)

[Career Centers](#)

[General Directions to Use the State's Mandatory IEP Form](#)

[Guide to Quality IEP Development and Implementation](#)

[I'm Determined Module Three: Parents Developing Self-Determination in their Youth](#)

[ILCs](#)

[Multiple Pathways](#)

Resources (2 of 2)

[NTACT Predictors By Outcome Area](#)

[NYS Diploma/Credential Requirements](#)

[OSE Educational Partnership Resources](#)

[Part 100 Regulations of the Commissioner of Education](#)

[Part 200 Regulations of the Commissioner of Education](#)

[Pre-ETS](#)

[Student-Led IEP Programs](#)

References (1 of 2)

Kohler, P. D., Gothberg, J. E., Fowler, C., and Coyle, J. (2016). Taxonomy for transition programming 2.0: A model for planning, organizing, and evaluating transition education, services, and programs. Western Michigan University.

Mazzotti, V. L., Rowe, D. A., Kwiatek, S., Voggt, A., Chang, W.-H., Fowler, C. H., Poppen, M., Sinclair, J., and 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>

Papay, C., Unger, D. D., Williams-Diehm, K., & Mitchell, V. (2015). Begin with the end in mind: Infusing transition planning and instruction into elementary classrooms. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 47(6), 310–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059915587901>

Shogren, K. A., Raley, S. K., Burke, K. M., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2019). The self-determined learning Model of instruction teacher's guide. Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.

References (2 of 2)

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. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088572889702000106>

Sitlington, P. L., & Payne, E. M. (2004). Information needed by postsecondary education: Can we provide it as part of the transition assessment process? *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 2(2), 1–14.

Thoma, C.A., & Wehman, P. (2010). *Getting the most out of IEPs: An educator's guide to the student-directed approach*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Contact Us

TAP for Transition

Jessica Elliott, Director

TAPtransition@cornell.edu



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



This training was provided by the Technical Assistance Partnership for Transition at Cornell University. The OSE Educational Partnership is funded by the New York State Education Department Office of Special Education.