



Transition

A Lifelong Process

Transition is a lifelong process that involves changes in the passage from one stage to another. Important transition milestones occur when a student moves from home to school, from grade to grade, from school to school, or from school to community.

The transition planning process takes into consideration all major aspects of each student's life experiences and assists in determining appropriate educational resources, programming supports, equipment requirements, transportation needs, and accessibility. It assists in ensuring successful entry into school, supports students to remain in school and, at the end of their public schooling, ensures a plan for taking the "next step" in their lives.

A transition plan documents transition outcomes based on the student's strengths, needs, and aspirations. It is developed collaboratively by a program planning team as part of the individual program plan (IPP). (Policy 2.7, *Special Education Policy*, Department of Education.)

Effective transition planning involves

- early identification and assessment
- individualized program planning
- collaboration between home, school, and community
- informed and involved parent(s)/guardian(s) and, when appropriate, students
- knowledge of community-based programming and services
- understanding and respecting issues of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, culture, language, and sexuality
- accurate record keeping
- self-advocacy
- willingness of partners to be flexible
- clearly assigned roles and responsibilities
- an understanding and acceptance that transitioning is a lifelong process
- tracking, monitoring, and evaluating both the plan and the process

Home-to-school transition planning should consider, but is not necessarily limited to

- inviting and supporting parents/guardians to become active participants in the program planning process
- encouraging parents/guardians to share information about pre-school programming and services
- collaborating and sharing of information between school personnel and community agencies
- planning for individualized programming and services before attending school
- incorporating appropriate components of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in an Individual Program Plan (IPP)
- supporting students to become comfortable with their new school, the routine, and their teachers

> Transition outcomes are the result of the program planning team's collaboration. Transition outcomes are measurable statements identifying programming, services, and/or personal expectations.

> Self-advocacy is facilitated when students are involved in transition planning. They become knowledgeable about and able to explain their strengths, needs, and aspirations.



Additional information can be obtained from *Transition Planning for Students with Special Needs: The Early Years through to Adult Life* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2005), available at <http://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca>.

- > To gain knowledge of community-based programming and services, the program planning team will need to assess what their community has to offer to meet the educational, employment, and other requirements of youth.

Grade-to-grade transition planning should consider, but is not necessarily limited to

- reviewing and updating individual assessment and programming information with new teachers
- ensuring documentation is current and placed in the appropriate student records
- supporting students and parents/guardians to become comfortable with new surroundings and new staff by arranging orientation activities
- addressing student concerns associated with the impending change

School-to-school transition planning should consider, but is not necessarily limited to

- identifying the programming and support services that the student will need in the new environment and arranging transition meetings to address these requirements
- exploring career interests and focusing on the establishment of a career portfolio, particularly as the student transitions to junior high and then to senior high
- supporting students in the selection of credits relative to strengths, needs, graduation requirements, and their post high school options and plans
- organizing and implementing orientation activities for individuals and groups of students

School-to-community transition planning should consider, but is not necessarily limited to

- initiating planning as early as possible (age 14 or younger, when appropriate)
- identifying with the student and his or her family desired post-secondary school goals (education, employment, housing, transportation, recreation, etc.)
- identifying community or adult services that may assist the student in achieving his or her post-secondary school goals
- assisting with the coordination of student assessments that may be required for post-high-school disability support programs and services
- developing transition outcomes based on what the student wants to do, how he or she wants to live, and how he or she wants to take part in the community
- providing, where possible, school programming and services that will provide the student with opportunities to try out various roles and future life options

For more information about transition planning, or print copies of Department of Education resources, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Coordinator

Department of Education:
Student Services
(902) 424-7454

- > This is one of a series of seven Supporting Student Success fact sheets. Other topics in the series include *Adaptations, Assistive Technology, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Enrichment, Inclusion, and Program Planning*.

