



Guide to Transitional Services

Garden City School District

What are Transitional Services?

Transition refers to planning and services that are needed to prepare youth with disabilities for moving smoothly from school to post-secondary education, the world of work and adult living in the community. This process includes instruction, community learning experiences, or support services to develop skills, knowledge and abilities and other strategies to address post-school living, learning, or working needs. It may also include assistance in making applications prior to leaving school for services from community agencies, colleges, or employment. In New York State, transition components are built into the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) for special education. All youth with disabilities, aged 15-21, must have transition components in their IEPs with initial vocational assessments (Level 1s) beginning at age 12. Transition is not something to begin to think about when students, especially those with learning or behavior problems, reach their junior or senior year of high school. For students with more severe disabilities, this may need to be considered even earlier.



Special points of interest:

- ⇒ What are transitional services?
- ⇒ When should I begin to think about transitional services for my child?
- ⇒ What types of questions should I be considering related to transitional services?
- ⇒ What are some types of transitional services that may be available to my child?

When should I begin to think about family/student supports and/or transitional services?

Although we are speaking about transition to adult living and the world of work, some of the family and student support services outlined in the following pages are available to students with severe disabilities at an early age. For the majority of our special education students, the transition process begins at age 15. Like most students, your child may need a lot of support to make the difficult transition from school to adult life. There are many services available to young adults with disabilities to provide them with the support they need to succeed in all areas of their lives. As a parent, your job (along with the other professionals who are working with your child), is to find out about these services, determine which ones suit your child's needs and dreams, and then follow the procedures to secure eligibility for them.

What types of questions should I be considering related to transitional services?

As your child progresses through their education, these are some of the questions to consider with your school support team:

What are the goals for this child?

What kind of work situation is realistically attainable for the student?

What kind of living arrangements are possible for this student in adult life?

What kind of skills will be essential for this student to be successful in a competitive or supported work setting?

What kind of skills will be necessary for independent living in the community?

What kind of transportation skills will this student need to get to work?

What kind of problem solving skills will this student need to meet the demands of integration into the community?

How will the family be involved in this planning process?

What agency resources may be necessary?

Another important step is to talk with your child and find out what his/her dreams are for the future:

Some examples:

Where do you want to live?

- in your own apartment
- in a group living situation
- with family members

What do you want to do?

- what kind of work interests you
- what are you good at
- more school and training

What interests you during your free time?

- physical fitness
- enjoying activities with others
- individual activities (i.e. reading or playing video games)

How do you want to get around in the community

- use public transportation
- get rides from family, friends, co-workers
- drive your own vehicle

What are some types of transitional services that may be available to my child?

Community agencies and supports:

It is essential to familiarize yourself with community agencies and financial supports that are available to your child, if deemed eligible based on specific criteria. Some examples of community agencies include: The Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), The Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR formerly VESID). Each agency has its own criteria, eligibility requirements and procedures for review and service provision.



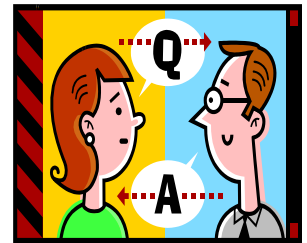
Office Of People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

OPWDD: This agency provides a wide range of services for both children and adults, such as: Family Support Services, service coordination, respite support, family and individual counseling, advocacy services, residential support (ISS), supported employment, community support services (in-home support, respite), environmental modifications (adaptive equipment), healthcare (Medicaid), recreational opportunities, information and referral, and much more. This agency assists in identifying appropriate housing, including independent living, assisted facilities, home sharing and a variety of other residential arrangements.

Service coordination assists persons with developmental disabilities and their families in gaining access to services and supports appropriate to their needs. OPWDD delivers almost all service coordination through its Medicaid Service Coordination program (MSC). MSC is provided by qualified service coordinators and uses a person-centered planning process in developing, implementing, and maintaining an Individualized Service Plan. MSC provides a vital link to information about service options. The service coordinator works with individuals and their families to develop a plan of care that assures individuals who are eligible for OPWDD services receive the assistance they need.

Criteria includes a documented developmental disability prior to the age of 22, including but not limited to intellectual disabilities, autism, epilepsy, neurological impairments, or closely related conditions that limit intellectual functioning. Documentation includes medical records, psychological assessments, and adaptive behavior scales. Application to OPWDD for determination of eligibility can occur at any time depending on the level and severity of disability. Please see their website (see below) for specific information and procedures. You can also contact your building's social worker (see last page) for assistance with the application and transmittal form. Once an individual is found eligible for OPWDD, he/she will then need to go through the Front Door for an orientation, intake, and service plan approval.

Website: www.opwdd.ny.gov



Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/ SSDI/ Medicaid

Supplemental Security Income: children younger than age 18 who have disabilities might be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. Most individuals should apply for SSI and Medicaid at the age of 18. On applications completed before an individual is age 18, parental income is accounted for to determine eligibility. SSI makes monthly payments to people with low income and limited resources who are 65 or older, or blind or disabled. Your child younger than age 18 may qualify if he or she meets Social Security's definition of disability for children, and if his or her income and resources fall within the eligibility limits. Most should qualify at age 18. Adults who become disabled in childhood might be entitled to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. SSDI benefits are called a "child's" benefit because it is paid on a parent's Social Security earnings record.

Eligibility criteria to be considered disabled by SSI currently includes:

- the child must not be working and earning more than \$1,000 a month in 2011 (amount changes every year)
- the child must have a physical or mental condition, or a combination of conditions, that results in "marked and severe functional limitations." This means that the condition(s) must very seriously limit your child's activities.
- the child's condition(s) must have lasted, or be expected to last, at least 12 months.

Website: www.ssa.gov

Office of Mental Health (OMH)

OMH: This agency provides a range of service for both children and adults with serious emotional disturbances and their families. They provide services to youngsters and their families who need supports and services including mental health, clinic treatment, day treatment, family support services, functional family therapy, home and community-based services waivers, single point of access (SPOA), vocational services, health care, recreation, case management, social services, residential resources and transitional services from high school into continuing education or the work force.



Criteria includes a documented mental health diagnosis, including but not limited to immediate needs because of psychosis, depression, anxiety, trauma, ADHD/ impulse control, anti-social behavior, and oppositional behavior. There must be persistent home and school problems, including but not limited to behavior problems and risky behaviors.

Application to OMH for the determination of eligibility can occur at any time depending on the level and severity of the emotional disability. Please see their website (see below) for specific information and procedures. You may also contact your building's social worker (see last page) for assistance with the application.

Website: www.omh.state.ny.us

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



ACCES-VR formerly VESID: This agency provides vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals to prepare them for employment. ACCES-VR skill training includes on the job programs, job coaching services, trade schools, college and university programs, vocational assessments, counseling and career planning, guidance counseling and job placement services to find suitable work. Additional services include: supportive employment, tuition reimbursement (depending on need) and acting as liaison between students and college representatives. ACCES-VR services those with very varied levels of disabilities.

Criteria includes a documented disability that impacts their ability to seek, secure, and maintain employment, including but not limited to physical, learning, or mental impairments, impairments that impede employment, and the need for the services to help overcome employment barriers. Application to ACCES-VR for determination of eligibility can occur during a student's final year at the high school or thereafter. Families will receive a letter regarding the referral process. Please see their website (see below) for specific information and procedures. You may also contact the district Pupil Personnel Services office for further assistance.

Website: www.acces.nysed.gov

Other Things to Consider as Your Child Turns 18:

- Does my child need a Driver's License or Non-drivers identification card?
- Does my child need working papers?
- Do I need to plan for guardianship with a private attorney and family members before my child turns 18 and becomes the legal age of consent?
- Do I need to set up a special needs trust with an attorney?
- Do I need to apply for Medicaid?
- Do I need to explore obtaining a health insurance rider for my child past the age of 18 or once they are no longer attending school?
- Does my child need to register for the draft (males 18 and over)?
- Is my child registered to vote (when applicable)?



Building Resources:

Primary Schools:

Jennifer DeMieri, LMSW—School Social Worker
478-1600 or 478-1700 or 478-1800

Elementary Schools:

Michele Vincent, LCSW-R—School Social Worker
478-1400 or 478-1500

Middle School:

Keegan Baker, LMSW—School Social Worker
478-3061

High School:

Lori Kuster, LMSW—School Social Worker
478-2617

Mandi Stefankiewicz, MS/CAGS- School Psychologist
478-2035

Pupil Personnel Services office:

478-1050

