The Journey Continues

With
Educated Transition Choices

Standard and Career Readiness Graduation Options

A Resource Guide for Families And Youth with Disabilities

Parents Reaching Out
Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

Winter 2010

"I don't know where I'm going...
but I'm on my way ! !"

A Message to Parents

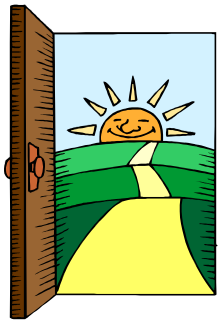
Hmmm…. Bet you thought all along that the older your children became--the easier you would have it and the less involved you would be in their lives. It doesn't really happen that way! We feel like the older our kids get--the more they need us. Our role just changes! Don't be fooled by all of the "professionals" who will tell you to "let him go...teach him responsibility, etc." The truth is that *we will never stop being parents*! Our challenge is "to let our children *grow!*"

Transition has become a huge issue for schools, families, and students. You're probably asking yourself right about now… "Why?" The fact is that students who have disabilities are not having successful outcomes when they leave the public school system.

While High School can be joyous and memorable, it can be painful and stressful as well. The key to having a good high school experience is planning. A well-developed Transition Plan should drive the IEP. Remember, that first year of high school is the most critical. There is nothing better than *getting off to a good start*. Be vigilant! Most students who drop out of school make that choice during their freshman year. Parents (and students) need to know:

- The number of credits needed to graduate.
- The classes (courses) required to graduate.
- The courses that are considered electives.

If a student falls behind, it is painful to make up ground, but it can be done. Communication between home and school is very often the key to successful outcomes for a student with disabilities. We encourage parents to use the IEP process to set up the communication links between school and home. Get it in writing! Plan how communication will take place between home and school. Will it be on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis? Will communication take place by: phone? E-mail? written notes? or weekly planner? Remember…start *early -- end well*.



When making a transition plan, remember your *VISION,* but don't forget your child's *DREAMS*! Let them be your guiding star. Now ask a few questions:

- "What are my child's *DREAMS*?"
- Ask yourself…" where will my child be at age 25?"
- "How are we going to get there?"
- "Who do we need to help us achieve those *DREAMS?"*

Remember, from this point forward everything counts! *Time is precious.* You cannot afford to waste a single minute of your child's education!

Yes, it is the schools' responsibility to educate our children and help them realize their potential. The *real truth* is that schools don't live with the consequences. If a student isn't educated and doesn't reach his potential, it is the parents and student who live with the consequences. As parents, when our children reach age 25, we will ask those "what if" questions. "What if I had done this? What if I had done that? Would the outcome be any different?" W*ith a good transition plan*, you will have fewer questions concerning your child's public school experience.

We encourage you to become *"Risk Takers."* Remember to take those risks through a carefully designed plan to help your young person become a young adult who is well on his or her way to reaching their potential.

We encourage you to "DARE TO DREAM" and "LET YOUR DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT!"

About This Book

The purpose of this guide is to provide information, practical suggestions, and questions to consider for students and parents of teens with disabilities to help them prepare for the transition to adulthood. This book does not attempt to provide all of the information about transition, nor does it attempt to answer all of the many questions you may have about this topic. It may apply more appropriately to some parents than others. As you begin to transition from being the parent of a high school student to being the parent of an adult, we invite you to use tools that might be helpful for you and your child. We encourage you to continue to ask questions and search every resource, including those listed in this book. Parents Reaching Out has developed another excellent resource: The Handbook of Parental Rights & Special Education Procedures. If you don't already have one, call PRO today.

Communicate
Cooperate
Commit

Encourage and expect that school personnel, adult service providers, you, and your child will COMMUNICATE, COOPERATE, AND COMMIT to developing a plan that will lead to a meaningful adult life for your son or daughter. If we, as parents, make that commitment and follow through, it is very likely that the rest of the team will follow our lead. Your role in the transition process is important. Educators see your role as **critical** to the transition process. Both federal and state laws give you the **right** and **responsibility** to be actively involved. Sam Kirk, a nationally known special educator, tells how he feels about the importance of parent involvement:

"If I were to give credit to one group in this country for the advancements that have been made in the education of exceptional children, I would place the parent organizations and parent movement in the forefront as the leading force"—
Sam Kirk

At times, your involvement may feel frustrating, stressful, or discouraging as it consumes your time and energy; but it is always important. You play a *major* role on the transition team. This guide offers information, suggests questions to ask, and provides tips for you to fulfill your role as an active, involved member of the IEP/Transition team.

"DARE TO DREAM" as you and your young adult
take a journey through a transition for life!

Parents Reaching Out
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Table of Contents

What is Transition Planning? 1

New Mexico's Graduation Options..... 3

High Expectations 9

Preparing for Transition Planning 11

Helping Your Child Discover A Vision 13

Record Keeping 14

Timetable for Transition Planning 15

Transition Planning Areas 19

Employment Traits Assessment 21

Post Secondary Training/Education..... 23

Start Early - End Well 25

Evaluations for Transition to Post Secondary Education 29

Other Options 31

Health and Medical Planning 34

IEP Meeting to Develop the Transition Plan 41

Student Led IEPs 42

Resolving Problems 45

Additional Information 47

- Age of Majority
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- School-to-Work
- Dropout Prevention
- Juvenile Justice

Colleges, Universities and Other Schools in New Mexico 53

Local Resources 56

National Resources 58

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Definition

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

(1) Is designed to be within a results oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes—instruction; related services; community experiences; the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives; and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.

34 CFR 300.43 (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(34))

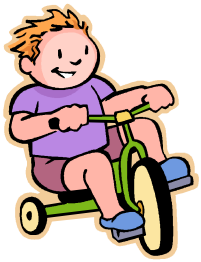
Transition – is a lifelong journey . . .

START building skills early on the road to success.

(adapted from Road Map to Success published by Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE)

Preschool

- Use appropriate behavior to meet needs
- Promote dramatic play related to jobs



K-3

- Teach appropriate decision making
- Teach literacy and number skills

4-6

- Improve literacy and number skills
- Teach self-determination skills

7-8

- Students attend IEP meetings
- Teach organizational skills
- Identify needs and build on strengths

9-10

- Encourage extracurricular activities
- Align course of study with post-school goals
- Job shadowing and mentoring opportunities
- Foster linkages to community supports and services
- Keep track of credits from now until graduation
- Foster a relationship with the school counselor

11-12

- Student directed-IEPs
- Foster linkages to adult service providers
- Apply literacy skills to employment, post secondary education
- Follow up on credits still needed to graduate
- Meets with counselors for testing requirements for post secondary schools, training, etc.
- Life skills classes

Continuing Education (18-21)

- Coordinate with other agencies
- Provide specific job and life skill training
- Encourage student participation in community activities
- Volunteer opportunities

Parents and schools work together to help students develop skills that will help them –

- *Complete post secondary education and training*
- *Find meaningful employment*
- *Become as independent as possible*
- *Contribute to the community*

What is Transition Planning?

The transition plan should drive the IEP! When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 1990, it recognized the need and included the first federal mandate for transition services. It clearly intended that those services be an integral part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Transition planning is designed to assist students with disabilities as they move from school into the adult world. It is the compass that guides the IEP toward the bigger picture… "Where will the child be at age 25?"

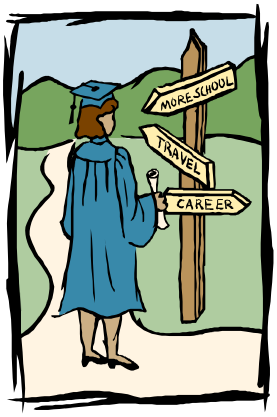
IDEA 2004 specifies that transition planning must begin no later than age 16 with a statement in the IEP of the student's transition service needs as they apply to his/her course of study. Transition services for a student are to begin by age 16, (or sooner, if it is appropriate for the individual's needs). NM, however, requires a Next Step Plan for all students by the end of the eighth grade that identifies transition goals and courses of study to reach those goals. If a student will reach the age of 14 during the IEP year, transition planning for secondary coursework must be included in the IEP for that year. The IEP for students with disabilities will have a transition plan in place by the end the 8th grade that includes the components of the Next Step plan and meets the requirements of IDEA. No student will have both plans.

The New Mexico State Statutes require that the IEP, including transition areas, must be reviewed annually to ensure that the long-range goals focus on strengths and abilities rather than just educational processes. Transition planning prior to age 14 may be especially important for students who expect to graduate with peers of their same age, have unusually complex needs, or who are at risk of dropping out. Parents of a student receiving accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be prepared to address transition issues when developing the 504 Plan. Our Parent Handbook offers more information on Section 504.

The goal of transition services is to maximize the self-sufficiency, employment, independent living skills, and positive community involvement of individuals with disabilities. These services will provide your young adult with opportunities to develop skills and use abilities that will provide opportunities for greater satisfaction as an adult. Active participation in society enhances the quality of life for your young adult and others - especially family, friends, and friends-to-be.

If people with disabilities are to become contributing members of society, it is vital that they have access to information, resources, and services to meet their identified needs. A well-coordinated transition plan is the dynamic result of efforts by student, parent, and other participants to focus on successful outcomes for the student. This plan is the cornerstone for adult life and is definitely worth the effort. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the key to identifying a student's needs and making plans to meet these needs. *For more information about the IEP process contact Parents Reaching Out (1-800-524-5176) to request your copy of our Parent Handbook.*

Essential Transition Components of the IEP



The transition components of the IEP, according to IDEA, must be based on the student's needs and take into account his interests and preferences. Components must be designed to promote movement from school to work for the individual student. They identify a coordinated set of services or activities that include his goals for post-school activities, objectives, timelines, and assigned responsibilities. Transition planning incorporates input from the student, his family, his teachers, special education administrators, and others likely to provide or pay for services.

IDEA 2004 specifies that a student's IEP:

- Includes a statement of transition service needs (by age 16). New Mexico requires this plan to be in place by the end of 8th grade (or by age 14).
- States what services are needed and identifies interagency responsibilities (beginning at 16, or younger- if appropriate).
- Is based on the student's needs.
- Considers the student's interests and preferences.
- Focuses on strengths and abilities rather than educational processes.
- Promotes movement from school to work.
- Is reviewed (at least) annually.
- Contains appropriate measurable post secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, where appropriate;
- Outlines transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals, including courses of study; and
- Includes a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to him or her on reaching the age of majority. This statement must be included no later than one year before the student reaches the age of majority under State law.

PRO NOTE: All students (including students with disabilities) in New Mexico are required to have a **Next Step Plan** in place by the *end of 8th grade*. The Next Step plan identifies **transition needs** and **courses of study** to reach identified goals. Transition planning for students with disabilities takes place through the IEP process, including the components of the Next Step Plan.

The Next Step Plan is an annual, individualized, written plan that specifies post-high school goals and courses of study (coursework and educational experiences) that will help the student achieve those goals. It is developed by a student in consultation with the student's parent or guardian and the school counselor/school official. An Interim Next Step Plan should be in place in grades 8-11. The Final Next Step Plan is to be completed during the senior year prior to graduation.

(HB522 amending the requirements for High School Graduation and Student Curriculum Plans Section 22-13-1.1)

New Mexico's Graduation Options

The New Mexico Statutes (NMSA) and the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) provide the legal framework for graduation requirements and options. These are regularly reviewed and updated in order to ensure that the students in our state exit high school well prepared for the workplace and post secondary education. Be sure to stay in close contact with your child's school in order to make sure that your child is completing the current requirements for graduation.

The IEP team plays a key role in the IEP graduation process. The team should consist of the student, parent, special educator, general educator, vocational educator, building administrator or designee, transition specialist, related service provider(s), evaluation/diagnostic specialist, adult service provider(s), and others per family request. The IEP team determines the most appropriate program of study based upon student needs and impact of the disability. Since the least restrictive environment (LRE) principle applies to all of the graduation options, the IEP team must ensure each student's access to the general education curriculum. The rationale for the particular program of study must be clearly documented in the IEP, with goals and objectives reviewed and updated annually. The IEP team has the responsibility of verifying that program goals and objectives leading to graduation and receipt of a high school diploma have been met. **The IEP team can not change a student's graduation option from the standard program after the 20th day of the senior year.**

Standards for Excellence

6.29.1.9 NMAC Procedural Requirements

The standard New Mexico diploma of excellence shall be awarded upon completion of any of the graduation options as outlined below *(Section 22-13-1.1 NMSA 2004).* The wording and visual appearance of the diploma shall be the same in all instances.

Standard Graduation Option – this program of study is based upon meeting or exceeding all requirements for graduation based on New Mexico Standards for Excellence, with or without reasonable accommodations of delivery and assessment methods. The student must pass all sections of the current state graduation examination under standard administration or with state-approved accommodations. Students will also participate in the statewide college and workplace readiness assessment system, which is designed to measure the readiness of every high school student for success in higher education or a career. In addition, students shall meet all other standard graduation requirements, such as the number of required units in each subject area.

Career Readiness Graduation Option – this program of study is based upon meeting the State Board of Education's Career Readiness Standards with Benchmarks as defined in the IEP with or without reasonable modifications of delivery and assessment methods. To earn a diploma through the career readiness option, a student must take the current state graduation examination and achieve a level of competency to be determined by the student's IEP team; earn the number of credits required for graduation through standard or alternative courses as determined by the IEP team; participate in the statewide college and workplace readiness assessment system; and achieve competency in all areas of the NMPED employability and career development standards, as determined by the IEP team and the student's interests.

Ability Alternative Graduation Option – this program of study is based upon meeting or surpassing IEP goals and objectives, with or without reasonable modifications of delivery and assessment. Typically, this graduation option is designed for students with severe cognitive and/or physical disabilities or students with severe mental health challenges. To earn a diploma through the ability program of study, a student must take either the current state graduation examination

or the state-approved alternate assessment, achieving a level of competency to be determined by the student's IEP team; participate in the statewide college and workplace readiness assessment system; and meet all other graduation requirements established by the IEP team.

For more details on each of the graduation options, you will want to consult *Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities* on the New Mexico Public Education Department website – www.ped.state.nm.us/ It is located in the Publications Library on the Special Education Bureau page.

Certificate of Transition

Students who have successfully completed four or more years of high school, but need more time to work on transition goals and objectives may receive a *certificate (of transition)*. A certificate will not be issued without a follow-up plan of action. Students that are receiving *a certificate of transition* will participate equitably in *all* graduation ceremonies with their peers. The certificate does not end the student's right to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE), and your child may continue to receive special education services in order to complete his or her educational program. Services may continue, if needed, until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22.

St**udents will receive a diploma upon completion of the follow-up plan.**

Q. If a senior student on the Standard graduation option meets all graduation requirements but does not pass the high school competency exam, can he/she receive a certificate with a follow-up plan of action?

A. Yes. The IEP team needs to develop an IEP that outlines the responsibilities of the district, student, and family to ensure that the student will have the support needed to earn the diploma. The student must return to school in the fall to complete his/her program and pass the exam. If the student does not return, he/she will be considered a dropout.

New Mexico's Graduation Requirements Are Changing

In 2007 and 2008, the Legislature made several changes to the Public School Code. For example, 9th graders entering in the 2009-2010 school year will need 24 units to graduate. Additional units for math and science have also been added. For the most up-to-date graduation information, stay in touch with your child's school, or contact the NM Public Education Department Humanities Bureau at 505-827-6573.

High School Competency Examination

According to state regulations, all high school sophomores (10th grade) are required to take the current graduation examination or the New Mexico Alternative Assessment. Students with disabilities that take the standard graduation examination may have appropriate accommodations in accordance with their Individualized Education Program.

- Students with disabilities may take the exam with standard administration or with pre-approved accommodations. Any accommodations that the student receives must be listed on their IEP. The accommodations the student receives during the testing situation should mirror those that he or she receives on a daily basis in the classroom.

- Students with significant cognitive disabilities may take the New Mexico Alternate Assessment in order to demonstrate attainment of expanded standards. The student's participation in the NMAA must be documented in his or her IEP. There must be substantial documentation to ensure that the student meets the criteria for taking the alternate assessment. IEP teams will use the "Participation Criteria/Eligibility Guidelines for the New Mexico Alternate Assessment" when determining a student's eligibility for the assessment.

- The bio-grids for both of the assessments contain bubbles for collecting all necessary information.

Please note that students receiving special education and related services who are on the *standard graduation option for* the diploma would need to pass all subtests of the current state graduation examination. They may use the accommodations that are listed in the IEP. According to the Revised Special Education Regulations (2002): *If a student on the standard program of study does not pass a subtest on the examination, the IEP team must meet to decide what supports and services the team will provide the student to prepare him/her to retake and pass the exam.*

Students receiving special education and related services on the *career readiness or ability graduation options* would need to participate in the current state graduation examination, using accommodations if necessary. *If a student in either of these programs of study does not pass a section of the exam, the student's IEP team shall meet and decide a realistic score for the student on the section.* The team must also determine what supports and services they will provide the student to prepare him/her to retake the exam and meet the criteria for success as set by the IEP team. Students on the *ability graduation option* who meet the "Participation Criteria /Eligibility Guidelines for the Alternative Assessment in New Mexico" would be expected to participate in the NMAA.

For more information, contact:
The New Mexico Public Education Department
Assessment and Accountability Division
(505)827-6577
http://www.ped.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AssessmentEvaluation/index.html

Q. If my child is reading significantly below grade level what should I do?

A. Preparing students for success in the reading comprehension portion of the High School Competency exam is not something that can take place at the last minute. During the reading comprehension section of the NMHSCE, a student is not allowed to have that segment read to him or her because the test measures "how well the student reads," not how well he or she understands what someone else reads! Consider a student in the 8th or 9th grade who has average intelligence but reads several grade levels below his/her grade level. Is it reasonable to expect this student to pass the New Mexico High School Competency Exam without significant reading interventions during the years prior to the exam?

Make sure that it is noted in the IEP that your child is reading significantly below his/her expected reading level. Ask the IEP team to document in the IEP how reading deficits will be addressed to close the gap *between the present reading level and the expected reading level.* Ask the IEP team to document how progress will be measured toward closing the gap and how often the progress will be reported to the parents. Progress should be reported several times a year. Parents should expect this and be sure the frequency of progress reporting is written into the IEP. *Ask for a research based reading program.* Even though there is a plan in place, the Career Readiness path to the diploma should be considered.

Q. Does a student on either the Career Readiness or the Ability graduation option have to take the current state graduation examination(s)?

A. Yes. Students receiving special education and related services through the Career Readiness or Ability options would need to participate in the state graduation exam(s) using state-approved accommodations, if necessary. If a student on either of these programs does not pass a section of the exam, the student's IEP team shall meet and decide a realistic score for the student on the section. The team must also determine what supports and services they will provide the student to prepare him/her to retake the exam and meet the criteria for success as set by the IEP team. Students in the Ability program of study who meet the "Participation Criteria /Eligibility Guidelines for the Alternative Assessment in New Mexico" would be expected to participate in the NMAA. If a student achieves an advanced level on the NMAA, he or she would need to take the standard graduation exam, with appropriate accommodations.

Q. Will institutions of higher learning accept all paths to the diploma?

A. Yes. All New Mexico institutions accept the Diploma, regardless of the graduation option. However, out-of-state institutions of higher learning may not, so requirements should be checked in advance of graduation. Students also need to make sure they are taking the courses that are required for admission to the post secondary institution they plan to attend. Check with your school counselor for current requirements.

Q. How many times may a student re-test?

A. Students on the Career Readiness and Ability options will first take the test to establish a baseline level. Then, based on that information, the IEP team will determine the student's passing proficiency level. Student performance on subsequent tests is monitored to determine if the student's program is appropriate to reach proficiency level, and if the proficiency level is realistic for the student to attain.

Q. Do IEP teams set scores by subtest or composite score?

A. The IEP team sets a level of proficiency for each subtest. The target score will vary depending on the student's areas of strength, course of study, and needed accommodations. For example, if your child has difficulty with reading, but is strong in math, the math score will be set at a higher level than the targeted reading score.

Q. How will I know when my student will be graduating?

A. Parents must be notified of their child's graduation (as a change in placement) with enough time to appeal the action. If state regulations have been followed, graduation should not come as a surprise to parents, since transition services would have begun at least by the time the student turned 14. School districts should have been holding IEP meetings which addressed graduation requirements as a part of the transition plan.

Q. How long will my child be able to receive public educational services?

A. Public education services stop when the student receives his/her diploma. Some agencies will not serve an eligible adult in day programs until they turn 22, even if he/she has graduated. A parent may not require the school district to withhold issuance of a diploma until age 22 if the student with disabilities has met the graduation requirements and transition goals on the IEP. It is important to make an informed decision when selecting a graduation option, and to make sure that it is recorded in the IEP.

New Mexico GED Requirements

For various reasons, some of our teens will want to earn their high school diploma by completing GED Tests. The following information, from the New Mexico Public Education Department, will answer some of the questions you may have. If you need additional information, contact the GED testing program office at 505-827-6702. Or, you can visit their web site at:

http://www.ped.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/GED/index.html

Q. What is the GED?

A. GED stands for General Educational Development. The GED Tests measure knowledge in the following five areas: writing, social studies, science, language arts-reading, and mathematics. GED candidates must also complete an essay.

Q. Who can take the GED?

A. New Mexico residents who have not graduated from high school and are not currently enrolled in a regular high school.

Q. What are the age requirements?

A. Applicants must be at least 16. If a person is under 18, parents must give their consent and the local school district must approve.

Q. Are Special Accommodations for GED testing allowed?

A. Special accommodations for testing are possible for some applicants. People with learning, physical, and psychological disabilities, in addition to those with ADHD, may be eligible. However, eligibility for accommodations is determined on an individual basis. If you think you would qualify, the local GED office can help you find the forms you need to provide documentation of a disability. In addition, some locations offer testing in Spanish.

Q. If I pass the GED Tests, do I earn a diploma?

A. New Mexico residents will earn the *New Mexico High School Diploma* if they pass the tests.

High Expectations

A Little History: In the 1970's, we (as parents) were happy just to get our kids with significant disabilities into school. In fact, we thought our children needed special schools and special classrooms with special teachers. We soon figured out that all the special stuff really did not help our children become productive citizens. Our children still dropped out of school at nearly twice the rate of their non-disabled peers. Our children stayed home after their school experience and were unemployed or underemployed. The truth is, not much has changed over the past 25 years.

When you look at the whole picture, youth with disabilities are still struggling and we don't see good outcomes for people with disabilities. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just point our finger at a single individual or system and blame them or it? It's not that easy! No matter what the cause, we all own a part of the reasons why outcomes for children with disabilities fall short of success!

Over the years, there have been only a few key strategies that have proven to help create positive outcomes for youth with disabilities. The keys to success are:

- A well thought out plan that is followed by all;
- Highly involved parents;
- Inclusive schools;
- Increased Vocational Education;
- Self-Determination Instruction;
- Life Skills Training

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Special Education is a Service, Not a Place!

Special Education is a Service, Not a Place! Good things happen for everyone when youth with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers. Self-esteem is greatly improved and expectations are much higher for all students. High expectations improve the outcomes for youth with disabilities. Even though special education provides many safeguards, supports, services, modifications, and accommodations for our children, these alone are not enough. The place where children are educated is very important. In fact, where they are educated may have more to do with who they are as adults than anything else. We learn from each other! Research has shown that academics alone do not produce better outcomes for children. In fact, children with disabilities who are educated with their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom have a greater chance of becoming contributing community members. The federal IDEA 2004 regulations even refer to children being educated in natural environments.

Following the step by step IEP process should lead to an appropriate program for your child in the Least Restrictive Environment. ***Only after supports and services have been provided in the regular classroom without success should an alternate placement be considered.*** Placement refers to a continuum of supports and services to help the child succeed. This decision is made at the IEP meeting by the IEP team. The placement decision is made after the team has shared all available information about your child, including present levels of performance and educational needs. The team then uses this information to develop appropriate goals and objectives. Placement is one of the last decisions made by the IEP team at the IEP meeting. The goal of this decision is to provide your child with a learning setting that will meet his/her individual needs. A child can succeed in a regular classroom with appropriate services! IDEA 2004 mandates that a variety of placement choices be made available for children with disabilities.

Q. ***What are some of the barriers to high expectations?***

A. We, as parents of children with disabilities, have been a barrier and have had low expectations in the past. At the very least, we have had "uninformed" expectations and have not pushed for plans that offered building blocks for success. (Sometimes that is what is known as 20-20 hindsight.) Schools as a whole are not skilled in developing and following through with good transition plans. In the past, this was partially due to the lack of solid research based information to lead them to best practice. Now that there is good research around the country on the outcomes of high expectations, planning decisions can be made based on sound practice. Other barriers to setting high expectations in the least restrictive environments are: a lack of trained staff, time (who has time to worry about developing *and* following a truly individualized education plan-IEP) and, of course, **m-o-n-e-y**!

Q. ***How do we overcome the barriers to developing a good transition plan?***

A. Even though the law is quite specific about transition, the burden for making it a reality still falls on parents to be the people who push the system. We must continue to push the system to develop trained staff and dedicate the time, as well as other resources, to help our children have better outcomes. Get involved with your child's school, your school district, and your community--at all levels. Contact parent information centers. **Parents Reaching Out** (PRO) is New Mexico's federally funded Parent Training and Information center (PTI). PRO offers assistance and information on transition (1-800-524-5176). Parents work wonders when they are "in the know!" Your ideas may be just the "untapped" resource that schools need to make a difference in the life of your child and many others!

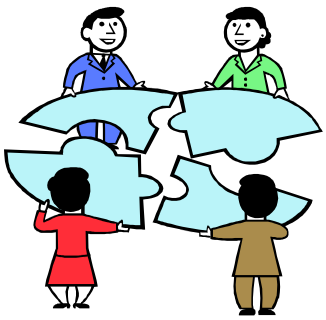
Q. ***So what is the message?***

A. We must have high expectations for our youth with disabilities. We must also have high expectations for ourselves and other adults in our youth's life. We must always go for the ideal. If we don't, we will never get there.

Q. ***Are there strategies that we might use to help ensure success?***

A. Yes, through the IEP process:

- Identify the title of the school personnel who will be responsible for each activity.
- Identify by when each task or activity will be completed.
- Identify how progress will be measured and how often progress is reported to parents.
- Follow through, if (as a parent) you commit to something. Your follow through sends a message of commitment to everyone.
- Involve the student and encourage him/her to participate as a team member. Better yet, give him/her "the leading role!"
- Build on the student's successes to overcome weaknesses. We often forget that we all need to experience success.



Preparing for Transition Planning

It is unlikely that anyone is more concerned about your child's future than you. As you learned about your child's disability and became better aware of the impact it would have on his/her life and yours, you may have avoided thinking about his/her adult years. Transition planning will help you, may even force you, to think about your child's adult years and the inevitable changes that lay ahead.

Understanding your Changing Role

As parents, you bring a wealth of information about your child that has great significance in the process of devising a plan for transition. You will provide details about your child's traits, interests, aptitudes, behaviors and abilities that you have observed in the context of family life and activities. Your observations, along with an expression of your values, help provide the transition team with a deeper understanding of what services may be necessary and appropriate for your young adult.

You are uniquely positioned to model attitudes, work habits, interpersonal skills, and appropriate self-confidence for your child. You will serve as advocates who are informed about transition planning and who seek out available services and agencies. Your role will change from "being in charge" to financial planner, teacher, mentor, helper, friend, and confidant. You will become Super Sleuth, the seeker and finder of information. The hard part begins as you help your young adult realize the value of that information. Then you wait until he/she starts to use it. (This process gives new meaning to the word patience!)

You will fill the role of record keeper when you recognize the value of saving information in writing about your experiences with educators, medical care providers, and service agencies. These records will be very useful in developing and monitoring your child's transition plan. Such documentation will be essential as you oversee how the plan is working. As you monitor the plan to make certain that the good intentions of the transition plan are being met, you may request follow-up meetings if adjustments are needed. It is important that you teach your child about the importance of record keeping and show him/her how to keep records organized. Finally, you may act as cheerleaders who encourage your young adult to be a self-advocate in planning and pursuing transition goals to realize his/her dreams.

Develop a record keeping system to help you keep track of which agencies, organizations, and providers have been contacted and the information you have received. You may even want to use "shadow records" to give your student practice in keeping records. A "shadow record" is a duplicate set of records kept by your child in order to learn this life-skill.

You can organize your records by having separate file folders, large envelopes or sections in a three-ring notebook for each agency. Keep all letters you receive and a copy of any letter you send. Review your records to refresh your memory about issues that may require follow up. *More information about record keeping is on page 14 of this booklet.*

Transition Tips

Parent to Parent Connection: As parents, we can learn from others who have been through some of the challenges we face as we try to navigate the systems in our lives. The following tips were shared by a parent in the hope that they might help other families.

- You are the only person in your child's life who can provide consistency and coordinated support. In one year, one of my child's Special Ed. teachers changed three times. You and your child must take the lead.
- Believe in your child and support his/her decisions.
- You must serve as the Case Manager to ensure that your child receives the services he/she needs and deserves.
- Maintain a copy of all school documents and keep records of all phone calls and meetings.
- Because of the shortage of teachers, you may have a teacher on waiver who does not know about transition planning or other requirements. Teach them.
- A school administrative representative is required at all IEP meetings. If they are not there, you shouldn't be there either. Request that the meeting be reconvened when an administrator will be present. (The administrator's signature on the IEP form should not be made after the fact!)
- Children do not just start being independent; you must include them in the decisions and choices about their lives, even if you don't always agree with their choices.
- Adult services won't come to find you and your child. You must find them and be persistent in searching and applying for services.
- Praise your school personnel when they do something good. They will be more willing to help you if you are firm, fair, and supportive.

"Let not our needs determine our dreams…
but let our dreams determine our needs."
Colleen F. Tome

Helping Your Child Develop a Vision

As parents, we play a vital role in helping our sons and daughters develop a vision for the future. We need to talk and *listen* to our children. What do they want to become (fireman, police officer, doctor, nurse, auto mechanic, teacher, engineer, or parent)? What are their interests? As early as possible, start introducing your child to the different people in those professions. Example: young girls, in particular, sometimes think they want to become a parent at an early age. Help her experience the realities of motherhood by babysitting on a regular basis. Don't be afraid to have the expectation that your child will someday go to college. Help your child see the possibilities! Like most things, your child's vision will begin to develop early, much earlier than required by law.

Students are an important member of the IEP team. Their input is essential in developing an effective transition plan. Your child's preferences, goals and dreams are the driving force of the plan. Encourage your young adult to dream — no matter how far fetched the dream may appear to be at the time.

When your child has a say in planning the future, he or she is more likely to be committed to making the plan work. A young adult who is following his or her dreams will be motivated from within to see them become a reality.

A key to transition for your young adult and others in the family is discovering a vision for the future. Sometimes the nature of a disability makes it difficult or impossible for people to think through or talk about their ideas and feelings. As a result, they may become more dependent on others. This may mean that they do not have experience with an essential life skill called *decision-making*. The following suggestions may help prepare a young adult to participate more fully in developing a transition plan.

- Begin by asking simple questions: Where do you want to spend time as an adult? Doing what? With whom?
- Compare his/her skills and abilities with those who succeed. Get information from other people with the same disability. They may have creative solutions to common problems.
- If your young adult is interested in an occupation clearly beyond his/her abilities, find out the reasons for interest in this job. The uniform or location of a job may be the main attraction.
- Discuss other jobs related to his/her interest, which might be a better fit for his/her strengths.
- Help your young adult learn about his/her disability and how it may affect his/her future.
- Talk about things that your young adult would like to do independently as an adult and ways to learn those skills.
- Consider what support services or technology may be needed to make your young adult's vision a reality. Tap resources to help figure out who could help make it happen. Building relationships within your community may lead to new possibilities and opportunities for your young adult.
- Encourage your child to have a paid job while in high school. Studies indicate that this is the single most important predictor of employment success after high school.

Record Keeping

Good record keeping can provide good information that will supply keys to a successful future as your child moves through school and transitions to life beyond high school. Records, including each Individualized Education Program written for your child, provide documentation to show what has worked and what has not. You can avoid the lost time, frustration, and wasted energy of repeating something that hasn't worked in the past when your documentation shows the results. Your records can help you and your young adult as you work with educators, service providers, and agencies to develop a successful plan for the future. If you haven't already set up a record keeping system, the time to start is now!

There are many ways to keep records. We recommend keeping records in order by date. Begin each section with the most recent information. A good way to organize your records is to use a notebook system. Some families use a notebook for each year their child is in school. Other families organize information in notebooks according to topic. You'll need to decide what type of record keeping works best for you. To get started, you'll need: one 3 ring binder, a package of dividers and a 3-hole punch or plastic sheet protectors (total cost: about $12.00). Plastic sheet protectors let you store your records without damaging any written parts of documents. Label the dividers with topics, like the ones listed below:

- **IEPs:** This will be a chronological record of your child's individualized education programs (IEPs). It should include: team's recommendations; progress towards goals; how progress will be measured, and any reports that address this progress.
- **Evaluations:** Keep copies of all evaluations and recommendations. Evaluations are the first place the team will look when trying to determine educational programming.
- **Doctor's Reports / Agency Reports:** These reports add yet another piece to the puzzle. You and the IEP team will certainly want to look at any agency or doctor's reports that might have a bearing on your child's success at school.
- **Correspondence:** Keep copies of all correspondence sent and received.
- **Phone Calls:** Keep a log of phone calls. It is very important to document the date and time of the call, who you spoke with, the subject of the call, and the call's outcome.
- **School Notices:** The district is required to notify you at different times while your child is in school. The district will send you notice of meetings, notices of evaluations, prior written notices of proposed actions (PWN), and other communications.
- **Work Samples:** Keep examples of your child's work. Don't just keep the good ones. Collection of the student's work and recommendations are being used more frequently to measure progress and may be more accurate than a formal assessment.

You will need other information for applications for post secondary education. This may include: community service, awards, clubs, community organizations, extra curricular activities, and letters of recommendation. This may sound like a lot, but when that 12th year of education roles around your stress level will be reduced if you have kept track of these things all along the way.

A Timetable for Transition Planning

This step-by-step plan provides a general guide for parents and students with disabilities to keep the transition process on track. Note: Even though IDEA 2004 requires that transition planning begin no later than age 16, in New Mexico, transition planning needs to begin by age 14 or 8th grade.

Grade 8

- Seek opportunities for full involvement in the general education program. *(Students who do not learn the same curriculum as everyone else do not have as successful outcomes as their non-disabled peers.)*
- Consult teachers, as needed, on how to become independent learners.
- Keep a calendar for activities and homework assignments.
- Actively participate in the IEP meeting and suggest IEP goals that focus on effective study skills, time-management, test-prep, and test-taking strategies.
- Begin to identify preferences and interests in vocational areas.
- Explore career areas through vocational classes, field trips to work sites, and volunteer work.
- Develop appropriate social skills and interpersonal communication skills.
- Be afforded opportunities that will foster self-determination and promote independence through increased responsibility at home and school.
- Develop money management skills and assist in meal preparation, shopping duties, and caring for clothing.
- Learn about high school expectations and offerings.
- Expand academic interests through electives and extracurricular activities.

Grade 9 **Keep track of credits needed for graduation from this point on. If a student does not have the right credits he or she will not graduate!**

- Continue to practice Grade 8 goals.
- Demonstrate independence by writing some of his/her own IEP goals.
- Enroll in remediation courses, if necessary.
- Develop and use social skills.
- Seek classroom teachers and learning environments that are supportive.
- Select classes with parent input that will prepare them academically for college or vocational/technical school (e.g., word processing, public speaking, study skills).
- Learn what learning disabilities are and are not.
- Develop an understanding of the nature of their disabilities and learning styles.
- Learn about his/her civil rights and the responsibilities of high schools and colleges under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Explore career options with guidance counselors or teachers.
- Consider working a part-time summer job or in a volunteer position.
- Use a folder or notebook to create a "personal file" that you will update each semester. Your "file" should include copies of report cards, IEPs, lists of awards and honors, dated lists of all clubs or organizations or community groups, lists of jobs (paid or volunteer), and copies of certificates or diplomas. (This "file" should be tied to an IEP goal.)

Grade 10

New Mexico sophomores take the New Mexico High School Competency Exam (NMHSCE). Schools provide families with information about the exam and when it will be scheduled. The student's IEP should include goals that are aligned with the NM Standards of Excellence content and benchmarks. The IEP should include specific accommodations (Category 1 or 2) needed to take the exam.

- Continue to practice Grade 8 and 9 goals.
- Self-advocate with parents, teachers, and peers.
- Provide input as to who should participate in the planning team.
- Review the IEP, including all transition areas, for any changes or modifications for the upcoming year.
- Arrange for a review of your psycho-educational report with a specialist or school psychologist to better understand your disability.
- Become a co-leader of the transition planning team at the IEP meeting.
- Try out accommodations and auxiliary aids that your IEP team deems appropriate (e.g., taped textbooks, note takers, laptop computers, and extra time on exams).
- Know how, when, and where to discuss and request needed accommodations.
- Arrange with counselor to take the PSATs/PLAN with accommodations.
- Gain a realistic assessment of potential for college or vocational technical school.
- Avoid the temptation of "retreating" to lower track classes, if college bound.
- Select solid college-prep classes.
- Be aware of peer advisement regarding which classes to take or avoid.
- Be wary of course waivers and carefully consider the implications of these choices.
- Use support and accommodations in math or foreign language classes, rather than seeking a waiver, if possible.
- Balance class schedules by not taking too many difficult classes in the same semester or classes that play into an area of weakness.
- Participate in extracurricular events and community activities.
- Meet with guidance counselor to discuss PSAT scores. Discuss strategies for improvement. Register for SAT II tests, if appropriate.
- Learn about technological aids, such as talking calculators, four-track tape recorders, voice synthesizers, word prediction software, optical scanners, and hand-held spell checkers. Know how to access information from a large library.
- Arrange with a counselor to explore career options through a computer-guided career search.
- Apply for a summer job or volunteer position.
- Continue to update your "personal file" with materials and information.
- Look for scholarship opportunities.

Grade 11

- Continue to practice Grades 8, 9, and 10 goals. Review IEP and all transition areas for any changes or modifications for upcoming year.
- Advocate for a complete psych educational evaluation to be conducted by the beginning of the 12th grade as a related service to reach post-school goals identified in the IEP.
- Arrange for PSATs with accommodations in mid-October.
- Review results of PSATs with counselor and plan for SATs based on results.
- Meet with local **Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** counselor to determine eligibility for services. If eligible, ask counselor for assistance in vocational assessment, job placement, and/or post secondary education/training.
- Find information about scholarships and financial aid at the **New Mexico Higher Education Department** website - http://fin.hed.state.nm.us/ Or call them at **505-476-8400**.
- Begin career exploration within a high school LD support group. Seek role models in school through a peer-mentor program.
- Check out your options for post secondary education and/or vocational training.
  - Consult several college guides. Meet with a college advisor to discuss realistic options. Use college computer searches to further define college choices. Explore advantages and disadvantages of community colleges, vocational-technical schools, and four-year colleges.
  - Start with a list of 15 to 20 colleges and request general information about the institution and specific information about the services offered.
  - Narrow your list to 10 preliminary choices based on competitiveness, location, curriculum, costs, level of support, etc. Request any additional information needed (e.g., applications to LD program, specific fee information, financial aid forms, etc.).
  - Narrow options down to five or six schools that range in competitiveness and levels of support.

- Finalize arrangements for the SATs or ACTs with necessary accommodations.
- Take SAT I and II or ACT with testing accommodations.
- Attend college nights at local area high schools. Ask college representatives your own questions.
- Develop a Personal Transition File (PTF), which includes current diagnostic testing, IEPs, grades, letters of recommendation, and other planning information. Family, teachers, and community mentors can assist with this process.
- Prepare a College Interview Preparation Form to use during campus interviews.
- Arrange in advance for campus visits and interviews. Consider sitting in on a class or arrange to meet college students with disabilities who can share their experiences.
  - Meet with the disability services coordinator to determine the level of support offered and assess the nature of the services offered (remedial, compensatory etc.).
  - Stop by the campus student assistance center to check on availability of services.
  - Follow up with a personal thank-you note after the campus visit.
- Consider enrolling in a summer orientation program.

Grade 12

- Continue to practice Grade 8, 9, 10, 11 goals.
- Update IEP, including all transition areas, and follow up on a quarterly basis.
- Retake SATs or ACT to improve scores.
- Confirm post secondary choices and options with guidance counselor and parents.
- Select several colleges that are "safe bets" for admission, several reasonable reaches, and one or two "long shots."
- Note all application deadlines. Finish application process carefully. Write a personal cover letter describing disability to accompany application, if desired.
- Use a common application form to several colleges, to minimize paperwork. Be alert to early application deadlines for some college programs.
- Submit completed applications to counselors at least 3 weeks in advance of deadlines.
- Role-play the college interview with guidance counselors or special education teachers.
- Carefully select persons to write letters of recommendation; recognize that such letters may include comments about the learning disability. Keep a personal copy in Personal Transition File. Keep a list of names, phone numbers, and addresses of post secondary contact persons and copies of applications in the Personal Transition File.
- Arrange to have high school midyear grade reports sent to colleges.
- Tap into the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). If eligible for job guidance, consider enrolling in internships, or job shadowing experiences that permit hands-on skill building. Discuss options for financial support after high school with DVR counselor.
- Pick up all necessary financial aid forms from guidance counselor. Remember that males (18 years old) must register for the draft to be eligible for federal aid funds.
- Wait for the news from colleges… If the news is good, then

  1. Rank-order post secondary choices based upon ability to compete successfully and the provision of support services to meet unique learning needs.
  2. Notify all schools of your decision.
  3. Pay housing deposit by May 1st, if appropriate.
  4. Arrange to have final high school transcript sent to the college.
  5. Hold an exit interview with guidance counselor and your IEP team.
  6. Carefully consider course load, the difficulty level of courses (depending on the competitiveness of the college), and time needed to work with support staff.

- Wait for the news from colleges… If the news is *not* good, then
  1. Appeal the admissions decision, especially if some new LD-relevant data was not considered.
  2. Pursue a variety of alternatives, including applying to a less competitive college with a rolling admissions policy, enrolling in a postgraduate year at an LD preparatory school, or enrolling in a community college with academic support services.
- Consider taking a college course for credit over the summer at a community college, or in conjunction with a special summer orientation program like the Summer Transition Program.

Transition Planning Areas

Once you have a vision for the future, the next step is to identify important planning areas. In order to make a successful transition from school to life in the community as an adult, consider these basic components:

- Employment
- Training and education
- Independent living
- Community participation
- Health care and medical issues

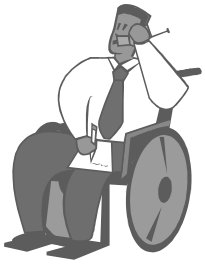
As you review these areas, compare your young adult's current skills with those necessary to succeed in realizing his dreams. Use these sections as tools to maximize your young adult's involvement in the planning process. Together you can identify skills that may need to be developed and included in the related transition components of the IEP.

Notes:

Employment

If you have a job you love, you will never work a day in your life.

Interest Inventories or Vocational Assessments



Most middle and high schools have interest inventories or vocational assessments that are given to all students. These tools help students discover their interest areas and strengths. They can be a part of the vision because the process allows the student to discover for himself what he might like. Yes, young adults often change their minds and that is OK. As parents, we need to be aware of our student's interest and current plans so we can guide him/her to explore those areas of interest. Contact the school to find out more about these useful tools.

Students - Identifying possible careers, which suit your interests and abilities, is very important to building your future. To help you do this, find out what School-to-Careers activities exist at your school and participate; no one can be excluded because of disabilities. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has valuable career information and assessments on their website – www.dws.state.nm.us/

Answer the following questions and complete the checklists to help identify activities and training issues that will equip you for successful employment.

What kind of work would you like to do? _____

_____

_____

What kind of environment will you enjoy working in? (indoors-outdoors, quiet-noisy, with other people-on my own, etc.)_____

_____

What kind of training do you think you would need for that work?_____

_____

Will you need on-the-job support? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, for how long?_____

_____

What kind of on-the-job support do you think you will need?_____

How will you get to and from work? _____

Other thoughts or questions:

_____

_____

_____

Employment Traits Assessment

Make copies of this assessment. The student rates himself on one copy and then asks someone who knows him well (like a parent) to complete another copy of this checklist. Compare the results and discuss the results as you plan for transition. The list below includes qualities that employers look for in employees. These traits are often skills that adults take for granted. These valuable qualities should not be taken lightly. They may be the key to a productive adult life.

	Needs Training	Needs Support	Does Now
Punctuality			
Is ready for school on time	☐	☐	☐
Shows up at expected time	☐	☐	☐
Dependability			
Calls if late or absent	☐	☐	☐
Rarely or never absent	☐	☐	☐
Respects Self and Others			
Tells the truth	☐	☐	☐
Respects others' belongings	☐	☐	☐
Accepts constructive criticism	☐	☐	☐
Takes Pride in Work			
Does careful and accurate work	☐	☐	☐
Attempts to correct mistakes	☐	☐	☐
Takes initiative to do new duties	☐	☐	☐
Appearance			
Good personal hygiene	☐	☐	☐
Wears appropriate clothing	☐	☐	☐
Communication			
Able to follow directions	☐	☐	☐
Asks appropriate questions at appropriate times	☐	☐	☐
Interpersonal Skills			
Works well with others	☐	☐	☐
Uses appropriate social behaviors	☐	☐	☐
Able to handle peer pressure	☐	☐	☐
Use of Transportation			
Able to get to work area from drop-off point	☐	☐	☐
Able to get to pick-up point from work area	☐	☐	☐

	Needs Training	Needs Support	Does Now
Flexibility			
Adjusts to changes in assignments	☐	☐	☐
Able to learn new, related tasks	☐	☐	☐
Job Productivity			
Handles equipment and supplies carefully	☐	☐	☐
Knows and follows the rules of the job	☐	☐	☐
Stays on task	☐	☐	☐
Works at adequate speed	☐	☐	☐
Has adequate endurance	☐	☐	☐
Competitive Employment Skills			
Can the student read?	☐	☐	☐
Can the student fill out an application?	☐	☐	☐
Can the student make a resume?	☐	☐	☐
Does the student understand the concept of time?	☐	☐	☐
Money and Budgeting Skills			
Does the student understand a checking account?	☐	☐	☐
Does the student understand a debit card & its use?	☐	☐	☐
Does the student understand a savings account?	☐	☐	☐
Does the student understand the interest on a loan?	☐	☐	☐
Does the student understand a monthly budget?	☐	☐	☐
Does the student prepare a monthly budget?	☐	☐	☐
Can the student pay his or her own bills?	☐	☐	☐

Money and budgeting skills are no laughing matter. Most students do not have these skills when they leave high school. Successful transition to life beyond high school depends heavily on how well students can manage their money or how they can receive support or guidance in money matters. Give careful consideration to planning goals in this area.

Review the following and check all that might be useful.

- ☐ Have a vocational assessment to find out what you can do best.
- ☐ Check with career guidance counselors to learn about the many career possibilities and School-to-Career activities.
- ☐ Get some work experience in school or the community such as volunteer work, a summer job, work-study, or job shadowing.
- ☐ Learn about supported employment services that help you learn to do a job successfully, like a job coach or a work enclave.
- ☐ Find out what career related courses are available in school to help you reach your goals (such as computer literacy, college preparatory, or vocational/technical).
- ☐ Check out eligibility requirements for adult services (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health Long Term Services Division, Social Security).

Post Secondary Training/Education

A Special Message for Students…

Another important step to building your future is determining what additional training and education you will need, along with finding the best place to get it. If you have a disability, your excitement about getting more education is probably mixed with some anxiety and self-doubt. Despite these feelings, *you can be successful in post secondary education.* In fact, you may find it easier to get accommodations and acceptance at the post secondary level. You'll want to acquire some skills and gather information. For example, you will want to know your rights as a person with a disability. You'll want to gain the assertiveness to ask for what you need. You'll also want to improve your study skills so you can "study smarter" instead of studying harder and longer. Pursuing post secondary education can be extremely stressful on a family. Getting an early start on your plans will greatly reduce your stress level. In this chapter, we will cover the following:

- The IEP/Individual Transition Plan and Getting Ready To Go To College.
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Community Service
- Letters of Recommendation
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Leadership
- Parents Role
- ACT/SAT
- Scholarships
- FAFSA
- Visiting the Institution
- Disability Office at Institutions of Higher Education
- Money and Budgeting
- Odds and Ends

Even though the school system has a legal obligation to provide a transition plan that is designed to help students with disabilities prepare for their futures, we (as families) also need to decide what we will be responsible for and what we expect the school personnel to do. What is their responsibility? Success depends entirely upon the follow through by each individual. *The* **Transition Timetable** *included in this book is designed to help families look at the big picture to make sure that all of the bases are covered. This will help to ensure more successful outcomes!*

As your student enters high school, remember -- *everything* counts!
The first years of high school are the most difficult.
Be vigilant!
Ask questions. Don't assume things are on track!
Most students who drop out of school, drop out early in their high school career.

Post Secondary Success

The Office of Civil Rights has developed guidelines to help students with disabilities successfully transition to post secondary education. Listed below are some of the suggestions from this document. Students should:

- Understand their disabilities
- Accept responsibility for their own success
- Take an appropriate high school curriculum
- Learn time management skills
- Acquire computer skills
- Consider additional post secondary preparation programs, ex. college summer programs

Differences Between High School and College for Students with Disabilities

For many students and their families, the transition from high school to college can be difficult. Not only do the legal protections change from one setting to the other, but the college's expectations of both the student and family differ dramatically from the high school's requirements. The student is an adult, and he or she is expected to self-advocate. Parents are not actively involved in the school's decisions regarding their child. The chart below illustrates some areas of difference that should be considered when planning post secondary education.

High School	College
IDEA entitles students to a free, appropriate Public Education. The emphasis is on the student's success.	Post secondary institutions have no legal obligations under IDEA. Students can be covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act Ammendments 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The emphasis is on access to educational opportunities.
Education is a right.	Education is not a right. Students must apply to the college of their choice and they must meet admission requirements.
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents rights regarding their children's education records.	FERPA rights transfer to the student at age 18.
The school must provide modifications and accommodations for the student.	Students must request accommodations from the college's Disability Services Office.
Parents advocate for their children.	Students need to advocate for themselves. College faculty seldom interacts with parents.

Start Early, End Well!

This section helps identify goals for training areas and steps to realize those goals.

1. What type of further education interests you most? _____
2. Where would you get it? _____
3. What supports and services will you need to complete your education? _____

Which of the following may help prepare you to achieve your employment goals?

- ☐ Community College (2 years)
- ☐ College or University (4 years or more)
- ☐ Trade or Business School
- ☐ Applied Technology Education

Other:

Make certain the courses you are now taking will enable you to qualify for entry to the program(s) you identified. Your school guidance counselor can help you do this.

- ☐ Study Skills
- ☐ Time Management
- ☐ Organizational Skills
- ☐ Understanding Entrance Requirements
- ☐ Preparing for SAT or ACT
- ☐ Locating Disability Services
- ☐ Submitting Necessary Applications
- ☐ Identifying Necessary Accommodations

The IEP and Getting Ready for Post Secondary Education

The individual transition plan should drive the IEP. It should answer the following questions:

- ☐ Where is this student going?
- ☐ How are we going to get him or her there?
- ☐ What will he/she need to be successful there?
- ☐ How are we going to get him/her what he/she needs?
- ☐ How will we measure success?
- ☐ How will progress towards the plan be reported to the parents and student?
- ☐ Who will be responsible for each goal area?
- ☐ The IEP should clearly state what modifications or accommodations are needed in every situation and who is providing them.
- ☐ The records should clearly indicate strategies, programs, modifications and accommodations that work, as well as those that do not work.
- ☐ *The IEP should clearly state the supports and services that the parents provide to the student*, not just the supports and services provided by school personnel. Parents help students in many areas, such as: tutoring, mentoring, help with homework, advocacy.
- ☐ Set clear timelines for each goal and monitor them carefully. Four years may seem like a long time. We assure you, though, that time will fly. If team members have not been vigilant, there will be many unanswered, "*what if" questions*.

Class Requirements and Grade Point Average (GPA)

As our students enter high school, we may hear stories about classes that are required or not required for post secondary education. It is vital that student and parents get clear information about what classes are required for entry into the institution of the student's choice. As parents, we sometimes do not realize that our student may or may not need a specific class until it is too late. A good example has to do with the foreign language requirement. It is often recommended that all students take at least two foreign language credits to enter post secondary education when, in all reality, they may need only one. This is important for a couple of reasons:

- Foreign languages are often difficult for students with disabilities. If your student has difficulty in a class, make sure the appropriate modifications are provided.
- For most scholarships, the GPA is a factor and just 1/100 of a point can cost you thousands of dollars in scholarships. If a student has an especially difficult time with a language, his/her grades may suffer and have a negative effect on his/her GPA. There is a fine line in identifying what is truly needed and what is making an excuse for the student. Consider the student's strengths!
- There are required classes for college entrance. Special education class alternatives may not meet these requirements. The IEP team should be prepared to gather information and check these things out as a part of the transition planning process. There is an appeal process for college admission. The team should investigate this process as well.

Community Service

Keep clear records of community service. Scholarship committees like to help people who help people. Here are a few ideas:

- ☐ Mentoring younger students
- ☐ Volunteering at church
- ☐ Working at a rest home
- ☐ Feeding the homeless

Letters of Recommendation

Identify people from all walks of life who have had positive interactions with your young adult. As time goes by, begin to ask them for letters of recommendation. These letters are often required for many scholarship applications. You might ask these people for references:

☐ Teachers ☐ Clergy ☐ Business people ☐ Friends

Extra Curricular Activities

Scholarship committees like to help people who are well rounded and active in lots of activities. A few examples include:

- ☐ Stators Club/National Honor Society
- ☐ Academic Decathlon/Odyssey of the Mind
- ☐ Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- ☐ Chess Club
- ☐ Mock Trial
- ☐ 4-H
- ☐ MESA
- ☐ Auto Club
- ☐ Athletics

Leadership

Positions of leadership are important to some scholarship committees. Keep good records of any positions of leadership your student holds over the years. Some examples are:

- ☐ Student Council
- ☐ Club officer
- ☐ Captain of a school team
- ☐ Public Speaking

Parents' Role: Parents need to be Super Sleuths - finders of information. Our role changes from being the one who is in charge to being the one who finds information. We present the information to our young adult in a way that will help him/her take ownership of the information. Change isn't easy and this new role is often difficult as you watch your child become a young adult. Now you may be setting up meetings for your young adult where he or she not only attends, but also leads the discussion. Your role is one of support for your child's *dreams. Y*ou may only occasionally ask questions for clarification. The whole experience can be awesome, humbling, and a bit scary --all at the same moment. Student led IEPs are not only good for the student, but others as well.

> **Note:** To get support at the post secondary level, it is absolutely <u>essential</u> that parents document and explain the support they provide to their young adult outside of the high school classroom. This information should be included as part of the IEP. *Learn more about the IEP process in the Parents Reaching Out - Parent Handbook.*

ACT/SAT: The ACT/SAT are tests that are required by universities for entrance. Each university has a minimum score requirement for entrance. *It is important to know the entrance requirements for any university your young adult is interested in attending.* In addition, the scores coupled with the GPA are used as a determining factor for scholarship awards. Students with disabilities are eligible for accommodations to take the test. Example: Extra time is permitted providing arrangements are made in advance of the exam. If a student is allowed extra time, be sure to request extra breaks for best performance. Research the requirements needed to receive accommodations. Accommodations should be identified the IEP process. The IEP team can help research the requirements. Your student will probably take the pre- ACT in the 10th grade for practice and take the actual test in the beginning of the 11th grade. A student can take the test more than once. In New Mexico, the ACT is generally required by institutions of higher learning. The SAT if often required for entrance to post secondary schools on the east coast. *Do your research ahead of time!*

Scholarships: Scholarships are easy to find and hard to get. ***The search for scholarships should begin as the student nears the end of the tenth grade.*** Scholarship opportunities become available at all times throughout the school year. Make yourself a calendar to keep track of due dates, etc. Each post secondary institution has scholarships that are available to all students who meet the criteria. Many corporations and civic groups also offer scholarships. Check with each institution as to what it offers and the requirements. The school counselor can provide lists of available scholarships. Stay "in the know" and build partnerships. There could be a big reward!

In 2007, state lawmakers passed a law that redefines the "full time" requirement of The Legislative Lottery Scholarship for students with disabilities. Students will be able to take less than 12 credit hours, but must take at least 6 credit hours. Students will need to contact the disability services office at their college or university for the forms they need.

As you begin to visit the schools, you will often find that different departments offer scholarships to the students in their department. The admissions office may not have this list so you will need to ask. The office of disability may also have scholarships that are available to students with disabilities. Students should develop their essay skills. Many scholarship committees require an essay as a part of their process. If this is not a strong skill, find a mentor to help build this skill. Keep copies of "practice" essays since this information may be used in more than one setting.

Financial Aid – FAFSA: *FAFSA means Free Application For Student Aid.* Unless you are just plain rich and have absolutely no need or desire for any type of assistance to attend post secondary education, you will be tired of the term FAFSA in short order. It is used for everything you can imagine. You can get the form from the guidance counselor or you may find it on line. During the senior year, parents should plan to file their tax returns as soon as possible— before February 15th. Parents' tax returns are required to complete these applications.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (P.L. 110-315), enacted on August 14, 2008, contains some important new provisions which will improve access to post secondary education for students with disabilities. The final regulations will be effective on July 1, 2010. **For the first time, students with intellectual disabilities will be eligible for Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and the Federal Work-Study Program.** There are specific requirements that students and the educational institutions must meet. For example, students must physically attend the school and must participate in courses and activities with students without disabilities.

This is an exciting opportunity for our children! Post secondary education may now be more affordable and accessible for our young people.

Evaluations for Transition to Post Secondary Education

Some institutions of higher education require recent evaluations before allowing a student to receive modifications or accommodations at their institution. Often school districts are reluctant to perform evaluations, as they can be costly. Prior to the beginning of the student's senior year, check with the post secondary institution to see which, if any, evaluations are required for the student to enroll and receive appropriate modifications and accommodations. Once you have this information from the post secondary institution, request an IEP meeting to identify and plan a timeline for the evaluations to be completed and reported. You may request this IEP by phone and follow up with a letter.

Evaluations that a student will need within a few years of leaving school should be included in transition planning and considered as a related service in the development of a student's IEP. In addition, for young adults who meet the criteria for vocational rehabilitation services, be sure to include their DVR coordinator in IEP meetings. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides an assessment to achieve suitable employment outcomes for eligible students.

Q. My child is graduating from high school and exiting from special education services. Should she request Section 504 eligibility?

A. Yes. If your daughter's IEP team determines that, based on your daughter's future goals, Section 504 eligibility is required; a referral should be made to the school's student assistance team. Each school should have a Section 504 coordinator who would be able to answer your questions about this process.

Visit the Institution

In order to give your young adult a taste of college life, plan to attend the open houses that are offered by Institutions of Higher Learning. Some schools actually offer weeklong camps to give students a real taste of college life. Visit different departments. Arrange for your young adult to meet the department heads to give her an idea about particular fields of study. Give your young adult opportunities to visit with other students. If he or she will be staying in a dorm, plan to include student housing during your visit. This gives you and your student a "heads up" in case there is a need to request specific accommodations. Don't leave things to chance.

One of the best things we can do for students who have disabilities, if possible, is to help them to attend concurrent enrollment classes during their junior or senior year. Concurrent enrollment sessions provide opportunities for students to get used to the change of pace in a college setting. This helps in three ways:

- Helps them to see what college life might be like.
- Helps them to begin to develop a vision for college and themselves.
- Builds college credits. (Make sure these credits transfer!)

Get a "jump start" on college, ask about concurrent enrollment classes!

Office of Disability

Each post secondary institution has an office of disability. As a super sleuth, you will want to check them out and make sure to "discover" what they require in order to provide your son or daughter the accommodations he or she will need. *(Here is another opportunity for parent and young adult to build a partnership to ensure success.)* You'll need to make sure that you get the required documentation needed by the post secondary institution at the exit IEP meeting from high school. It will probably be helpful to let the IEP team know in advance what will be needed. Plan a convenient time with your young adult to make an appointment to submit the paper work and have an interview with the office of disability. When you and your young adult take part in the interview, be sure to ask the interviewer about scholarships and other sources of support that are available to students with disabilities.

Something to consider as you are planning for post secondary education—institutions of higher education may require students who do not do well on the ACT or have poor grades to take remedial courses or test in to a class. Not to worry, the main thing is you are on your way!

The items covered in this section are not meant to address every issue your young adult will face in preparing for post secondary education. Hopefully, they will help you become a "Super Sleuth" to plan early for the days ahead. We hope that we have provided a path for the journey you will share with your child. As you share the work of record keeping, you will also share the hopes for tomorrow. It is their life, you know. It means so much more when they have ownership of their dream!

Check out the Transition Timetable for a more comprehensive list of what needs to be done on a grade by grade basis (grades 8-12).

Other Options

Maybe your teen is a bit more adventurous! He or she may want to explore the world a bit before continuing their education or entering the workforce. Or, he or she may want to share their talents with others. If your son or daughter is interested in any of these areas, be sure to work with the school staff to find the information he/she needs in order to make an informed decision.

Military - Each branch has its own age, education, and physical requirements, so check with the school counselor and recruiter. In addition, applicants need to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test. The different branches of service have varying passing scores, so make sure your son or daughter understands how to meet the requirements for the armed forces division he or she is interested in.

National Service – Programs such as Americorps give students the opportunity to travel while serving their country. They have the opportunity to meet new people and experience a different part of the country. There are a variety of programs for students to choose from. Their website offers students some interactive features to help them choose the type of program they want. Visit their website at: www.americorps.gov/

Volunteering – Perhaps your teen wants to stay close to home, but gain work experience and skills by volunteering. Many community organizations would be happy to have a young person share his or her talents. Volunteering is a wonderful way for your son or daughter to explore his or her interests and learn about the world of work.

On the Job Training – The school counselor or school-to-work coordinator at the high school should have a listing of the possibilities. If this is your teen's goal, identify it as a part of the transition plan with goals and objectives.

Apprenticeship/Internship Programs – Again, the school staff should have a listing of the possibilities. For example, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) offers an internship program called Entry Point! Students with disabilities work and gain experience in the areas of science, engineering, mathematics, computer science, and some areas of business. More information is available on their website at http://ehrweb.aaas.org/entrypoint/index.htm If your son or daughter has an interest in this area, this goal should be included in the transition plan.

Writing Goals

As you participate in your first transition IEP, you may be confused by the different types of goals the team is writing. As in previous IEPs, the team will write annual goals that are based on identified areas of academic or behavioral need. These goals, which are aligned with New Mexico's Standards with Benchmarks, are the types of goals that you have been helping to develop ever since your child first began receiving special education services. Now, however, you will also be developing Measurable Post Secondary Goals. These goals will be developed in the areas of Education/Training, Employment, and Independent Living (if appropriate). This detailed plan will look at your child's needs and the activities that will help your child reach his/her post secondary goals. Effective post secondary goals should focus on what the student will do in order to meet his/her goals, so you will want to include some specific activities. You will want to detail what will happen, when it will occur, who is involved, and who is responsible for completing the activity. Remember, you are looking forward to your child's future needs. The IEP needs to state how the goals will be measured and reported. Progress toward goals is reported to both you and your son or daughter.

Write some goals based on the information gained from the section on employment. Include some specific activities to help reach the goals:

Example: Goal: Get a part time job.
Activities:

1. Write or update resume.
2. Practice interview skills.
3. Contact and apply to three businesses.

Your Goals and Activities:

Goal: _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Your Goals and Activities:

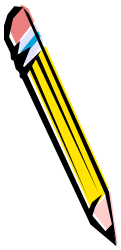
Goal: _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Write some goals that will help you get post secondary training and/or education based on your interest and the needs you have identified. Include some specific activities to help reach the goals:



Example: Goal: *Get certified as a nursing assistant.*
Activities:

1. Get information from school career center.
2. Visit two or three schools that offer appropriate courses.
3. Discuss needed accommodations with school representatives

Your Goals and Activities:

Goal: _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Your Goals and Activities:

Goal: _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Health and Medical Planning

Another part of your child's independence is responsibility for his or her health care. Decisions must be made about your young adult's ability to realize when he or she needs health care and whether or not he/she can communicate adequately with health professionals. It is also recommended that you address the issues of sexuality and reproduction.

Financial resources to pay for your young adult's health care must be identified. Medicaid may be available even if your child does not receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Medicaid covers basic dental care after age 21, but prior approval is required for some services. More information can be requested by calling your local Human Services office. The phone number is listed in your phone book under New Mexico State Government-Human Services Deparment.

Medical and Support Services
Youth who have special health care needs or take medication on a regular basis will need skills and/or supports to maintain their health on their own. Here are some questions to consider:

- Does the student understand his/her medical condition and what effect it has on daily living and productivity?
- Does the student have the skills necessary to set up medical appointments and/or seek assistance for health care or in case of an emergency?
- Does the student have the skills to self-administer medication?

These services may be needed for young adults to live successfully on their own.

- Access to medical & dental services
- Assistive Technology
- Insurance
- Counseling
- Managing personal medications
- Knowing when and how to seek medical help
- Personal care services
- Medical emergency information/planning

Helpful information on these topics is available from:

Parents Reaching Out
Family to Family Health Information Center (F2FHIC)
505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176

ARC of New Mexico
505-883-4630 or 1-800-358-6493

Center for Development and Disability Resource Center
505-272-3000 or 1-800-827-6380

Use the information on the following pages to help target skills and design activities or supports to address your young adult's health care needs.

Health Care Transition for Parents and Guardians

Here are some important issues and practical steps to take when your child becomes an adolescent —and they are ready to assume increased responsibility for their own health care. As a family, you will need to plan a transfer of care from the pediatrician to an adult provider.

- Begin by age 14, but plan over a period of time. Make a plan that is specific to your adolescent and his/her health care needs.

- If your son or daughter has a special health care need or disability significant enough to interfere with making independent financial and medical decisions, you will need to file a petition to the court to maintain guardianship or to initiate conservatorship no less than six months before your adolescent turns 18.

- Discuss with your pediatrician when to transfer your son's or daughter's care to an adult provider. Ask for help to find appropriate adult health care providers.

- Visit each provider with your son or daughter to determine if they will be a good match.

- Ask your pediatrician to transfer your adolescent's medical records to the new adult care provider.

- Ask your provider or nurse to identify others who can help manage your adolescent's care and ask who on their staff can assist you in care coordination.

- Ask the health care provider how and when age-appropriate information will be shared with your young adult. This includes information about the disability or chronic illness, sexuality, preparing for parenthood, genetic counseling, vocational awareness, work opportunities and leisure activities.

- Help your son or daughter understand the importance of the medication they take.

- Encourage them to make their own health care appointments.

- Encourage your adolescents to prepare for doctor visits by writing down questions in advance. Help them begin to keep their own health records and notes.

- Talk with them about their condition and or disability in a way that can be understood. Choose the key points and decide how to make them clear.

- Teach your young adult about his or her insurance coverage.

Health Care Transition for Adolescents and Young Adults

Be your own health care advocate by:

- **Learning** about your condition or disability
- **Knowing** the warning signs that mean you need emergency help
- **Knowing** who to call in case of an emergency. Carry that information with you.
- **Learning** how to make your own appointments.
- **Writing** down any questions you have before you go to the doctor's office.
- **Meeting** alone with your doctor, nurses, or others.
- **Speaking** up and asking your doctor questions. If you don't understand, ask again.
- **Asking** your doctor to explain all tests and their results.
- **Asking** for copies of medical tests or reports.
- **Carrying** your insurance card and other health information that is important.

Take charge of your health information

- Understand the medications you are taking. Learn their names and when you take them.
- Know how to call the pharmacy and how to fill your prescription.
- Keep a list of addresses and telephone numbers of all your doctors and nurses.
- Keep a notebook of medications, operations, and results of medical tests.
- Ask your doctor for a short written summary of your health condition.
- Know how to order and take care of any special equipment you use.

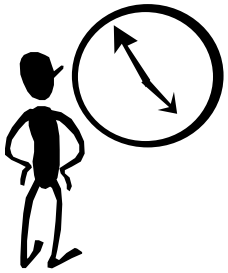
Plan for transfer to an adult doctor.

- Talk to your pediatrician about how and when to begin seeing a doctor who works with adults.
- Discuss with your doctor resources that might be helpful to you.

Health Care Skills Check List

Young adults and/or someone who knows them really well (like a parent or guardian) should complete this checklist of qualities that will help them in the area of personal health care. A parent or guardian working together with, when capable, a young adult, should complete this checklist to assess medical needs.

	Needs Training	Needs Support	Does Now
Disability/Illness			
Describes illness or disability	☐	☐	☐
Understands implication of illness/disability on daily life	☐	☐	☐
Knows about how drugs/alcohol effect illness/disability	☐	☐	☐
Makes contact with community advocacy organizations	☐	☐	☐
Discusses/understands general health maintenance	☐	☐	☐
Medical Information			
Knows health emergency numbers and carries them in wallet	☐	☐	☐
Health Care Providers			
Calls to schedule appointments	☐	☐	☐
Keeps calendar of appointments	☐	☐	☐
Prepares questions for health care providers	☐	☐	☐
Has identified a physician for adult care	☐	☐	☐
Knows how to hire and manage a personal care attendant	☐	☐	☐
Medications			
Understands the purpose of and how to use medications	☐	☐	☐
Takes medication on time	☐	☐	☐
Contacts pharmacy to get prescriptions filled	☐	☐	☐
Health Insurance			
Knows or carries coverage numbers or information in wallet	☐	☐	☐
Knows about medical insurance coverage	☐	☐	☐
Knows how to make an insurance claim	☐	☐	☐
Use of Transportation			
Uses public transportation to get to appointments	☐	☐	☐
Uses or has available private transportation for appointments	☐	☐	☐
Uses map or other device to locate addresses	☐	☐	☐



Writing Goals

Write some goals based on the information gained in this section on medical needs. Include some specific activities to help reach the goals:

Example: Goal: Make doctors appointment.

Activities:

1. Make a file of important medical phone numbers.
2. Practice making calls to set up appointments.

Your Goals and Activities:

Goal: _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Your Goals and Activities:

Goal: _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Activity _____

Independent Living

You may assume your young adult will continue to live at home with you, but he or she may have other plans! It is important to begin the discussion about living arrangements now, so you both know what to expect. The following areas are samples of possible topics for discussion.

Living Arrangements – Does your son or daughter want to live with roommates or, possibly, in a dorm? Does he or she want to live at home or, perhaps, with a relative? Is living alone an option?

Living Skills – What skills will he or she need for the desired living arrangement? Will he/she need to know how to cook? Who will do the cleaning and laundry? Would he or she be able to handle a home emergency such as a kitchen fire or plumbing problems?

Health Needs – Will your young adult be able to take care of basic health needs such as taking over the counter medications and administering basic first aid?

Finances – Does your son or daughter have checking and savings accounts? Will he or she use debit or credit cards? How will he or she acquire money – from a job or a parental allowance?

Decision Making – Has your young adult had opportunities to make decisions and experience the consequences? If not, what are some ways you and the school staff can provide these experiences?

Notes and Ideas:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Community Participation

We hope our children will become productive, contributing members of the communities they live in. Here are some topics to discuss with your young adult as he or she envisions life after high school graduation.

Hobbies and Interests – What leisure time activities does he or she enjoy? Are there other activities he/she would like to begin to explore?

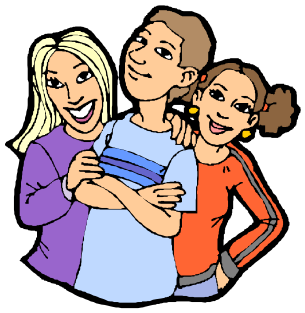
Services – Will your son or daughter need transportation or other services in order to participate in community activities?

Friends – Reflect on how important your friends are in your life. We want our sons and daughters to have the rewarding experience of developing long-lasting friendships with others. Once he or she leaves high school, how will your young adult continue old friendships and make new friends?

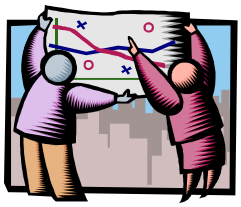
Successful members in any community are those individuals who can interact with others and form long-lasting relationships with others. Young adults with challenges will need support in developing relationships that will help them become active participants in the community. Teachers and support staff can help nurture friendships. Parents and family members play a key role in creating opportunities to build relationships through the types of activities they choose for the family. Friendships develop because people have something in common.

Friendships between students evolve naturally with shared interests and proximity. In any community or neighborhood, common interests bring people together. Friendships and the benefits of building social skills go beyond school years and translate into successful lifelong experiences for every child! Friends can share their highest hopes, deepest fears, and most impossible dreams. Friends can help one another tackle the biggest problems in the simplest way. They can turn everyday challenges into extraordinary solutions, if we unlock the doors!

Inclusive settings within the school and surrounding community provide opportunities to build on the strengths and gifts of each individual. Each person has something to contribute and deserves respect from others. It's important to plan experiences and develop social goals that will build confidence and self-worth. Transition activities that encourage young adults to get to know one another create paths for new friendships and teach life-skills for problem-solving and tolerance.



IEP Meeting to Develop the Transition Plan



The day has arrived for the meeting to develop your child's transition plan. As a parent, you have spent time and thought to prepare for this moment. You have spent time with your child discussing his/her future. You have heard your child's dreams. You have used the tools in this book, as well as other information, to get ready for this day. You have been in touch with the school staff and know they have been preparing for this meeting as well.

- **The best way to begin** the meeting is with **introductions.** Your young adult can take a "leading role" by introducing the participants attending the meeting or by asking them to introduce themselves. When it is your turn, as a parent, you may want to take this opportunity to remind everyone how important it is to develop a meaningful plan for your child.

- Following the introductions, your young adult should be prepared to share his/her dreams for the future. The team builds the plan from here! **Remember—the transition plan drives the IEP. Each goal and objective should be planned with the "big picture" in mind!**

- **To develop a useful transition plan**, the IEP team should begin by selecting and agreeing on priority outcomes in a statement of **long-range goals** covering, at least, the next three to five years. *It is in the best interest of students at risk of dropping out of school or students with complex needs to develop a transition plan before age 14.* Goals will be selected using the present level of educational performance and your young adult's strengths and interests.

- Based on the desired outcomes, the team can identify any barriers that exist and select strategies to overcome them. This is also the time to identify opportunities available. Written annual goals will specify ways your child can overcome the barriers and maximize his/her use of existing opportunities. The team will document needed services and available resources, as well as specific activities and experiences to help him/her reach the goals.

- The written transition plan in the IEP is specific to the individual needs of the student. The annual goals must be measurable and specifically related to the needs, preferences and interests of the student. Transition requirements in IDEA 2004 [614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)] state that: Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 and then updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include:
  - Appropriate measurable post secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, where appropriate;
  - Transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals, including courses of study;
  - Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to him or her on reaching the age of majority.

- **The written plan for transition must** also specify how different agencies will work together to provide needed **services.**

- **The final step is** confirming that team members understand their **responsibilities** and agree to them.

- *Before leaving the meeting, take time to express your anticipation of successful outcomes and your appreciation to the team for the part they will play in the process. A good working relationship with team members helps ensure successful results for your young adult's future!*

Student Led IEPs

Students are often their own best advocates. It shouldn't be a surprise that they are the ones who know best what they need and want. While this is not a new idea, rarely do schools take advantage of student self-advocacy in their day-to-day operations. Nonetheless, student self-advocacy is especially important as IEP teams make decisions about the student's future and transition to post-school activities.

Change is not always easy. It is uncomfortable treading on new ground. It is much easier to do things the same way, rather than build new paths. The old path may seem easy and more comfortable (especially for adults), but it may not always be in the student's best interest to do things the same old way. It is not surprising to discover that teachers may be somewhat reluctant to implement a student-led IEP program. However, when teachers experience success with this process, they often want to consider how to integrate student-led IEPs into the overall instructional plan for school-wide implementation. Think of the possibilities!

Now, more than ever before, students with disabilities are actively participating in their IEP meetings with abundant support from their teachers and families. Students with disabilities can make significant contributions to their educational plans. They may help draft their IEPs and present information about themselves at the IEP meeting. In some cases, students actually lead the meeting. At the very least, they understand the purpose of the IEP. The adult members of the IEP team play a key role in creating a safe and encouraging setting for the student to "test his wings!" In one situation, a student's peers offered to attend the IEP to share their first-hand experiences about the student's "unique" gifts. What a positive way to gather information about present levels of performance!

Why involve a student in developing his/her IEP?

Recent research indicates that teaching students self-advocacy skills in high school correlates with post high school success. Many students today exit high school without an adequate understanding of their disabilities. They often do not understand their individual strengths and needs or how certain accommodations will enhance their lives. Many students have not developed sufficient knowledge of their civil rights as supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This lack of understanding can seriously limit the opportunities for students, especially those who attend institutions of higher education. A recent study showed that few students with disabilities take advantage of the resources and accommodations available to them because they must ask for needed services. This requires important self-advocacy skills that they may not have developed in high school. Including self-advocacy skills in the transition plan, with opportunities to practice these skills through student-led IEPs may provide the missing link connecting the student with success well beyond high school.

Teaching students how to participate in their IEPs is one way of helping them to become better self-advocates. They learn to apply the skills of self-determination, goal setting, and self-evaluation. Self-determination and self-advocacy are interrelated. Self-determination involves making choices based on personal need, interests, and values. Self-advocacy involves the actions that one takes on one's own behalf. Teachers need to capitalize on these skills as they prepare students for involvement in their IEPs. To be a self-advocate, a student needs to understand his/her disability, understand what he/she needs to learn, and know how to get help. Student-led IEPs offer new opportunities. Students who participate and lead their IEPs have higher self-esteem, make informed decisions about their life, take ownership of their education, and assume responsibility for their future.

High expectations go beyond the successful outcomes we want for our students. *We must also have high expectations for ourselves and the other adults in a student's life.* As parents, we expect educators and service providers to follow the plan for transition. If this is our standard, as parents, we must be prepared to follow through on the commitments we have made as part of the plan. Successful transition takes place when everyone does their part—the student, parents, educators, and service providers. The pressure to succeed as a young adult in the community should not rest on the student alone.

Expect your child to do his best and likewise for all of the adults in his life.

Q. As parents, how can we help our child learn to lead his own IEP?

A. Request that the student have a goal area that is centered on leading his or her own IEP. You may use any of the several benefits mentioned in this section as objectives and then decide how they will be measured and reported to the parents. We also suggest that, as parents, you ask the teacher or teachers what they might need in order to be successful in the area of student-led IEPs. If training is needed, request it through the IEP process.

Q. What things can parents (or schools) do to help a student prepare to participate (or lead) his IEP?

A. Families and teachers can actually set up "practice sessions" to help students become more comfortable about taking part in their IEP. The kitchen table becomes the "conference table" and family or peers become the team. Role playing, mixed with a good dose of humor, can help the student relax and gain confidence. Other resources, such as videos, are available from Parents Reaching Out.

Q. What might cause a student to *not* want to participate in the student-led IEP process?

A. Actually, there are a few reasons why a student might not want to lead or even participate in the IEP process. One is confidentiality. We need to look at ways to encourage a student to begin to look their peers or others in the eye and really admit what is going on in their lives. This is a growing process. It needs to be planned and worked on over time. Another reason a student may be unwilling to participate in student-led IEPs may be the issue of "trust." The adult members of the IEP team (parents, educators, and others) must lay groundwork that builds trust. This, too, should be planned and worked on over time.

Values
Make Us Who We Are
and
Who We Become!

Values and Self-Determination

The following Values Suggestion List was developed by a group of students. Use it as a springboard for discussion with your young adult and put the values of self-determination into practice.

- People listen to my ideas about what I want for my future.
- Understand my challenges.
- Be able to understand IEP jargon.
- Have an understanding of the different meanings of independence.
- Have parents who support me in advocating for myself.
- Have skills to make my own decisions.
- Recognize me as integral team player.
- Have the ability to speak to teachers about what I need to be successful in their classes.
- Have knowledge of available resources.
- Have the ability to communicate my wants.
- Have information to make informed decisions.
- Have skills to achieve success.
- Have ability to manage the support I get from others.
- Use open and positive communication.
- Have success in school.
- Understand options and responsibilities.
- Have a place to turn to when I am stressed and need to relax.
- Understand my abilities and be able to share that information with others.
- Know how to ask for support.
- Have the opportunity to act on my own behalf.
- Be mature.
- Have support for independent action.
- Have educators (teachers, case managers) who support self-advocacy for youth.
- Have high self-esteem.
- Be a leader in my transition planning.
- Have ability to connect with community recreation.
- Have self-control.
- Have my parents understand my needs.
- Be able to show assertiveness.
- Have respect from team.
- Be my own change agent.
- Have the ability to make career choices.
- Know how to problem-solve barriers to my goals.
- Be a partner in decision-making.

After the Meeting

As soon as the plan has been developed, it is time to implement it. It is important to communicate with all of the IEP team members as you monitor your child's progress. Keep a written log of telephone calls and face-to-face conversations. Your "communication log" should include the date, the name of the program, and the person contacted in addition to a summary of the discussion. You should also keep copies of letters, notes, progress reports, homework assignments, IEPs, work performance reviews, and any other relevant records (testing results, medical reports, etc.).

The Transition Timetable included in this book will help you remember the many details that are important for your child. It identifies things that need to be done and when to do them. It is meant to supplement the IEP and assure that progress is being made. Keep in mind that the IEP must be reviewed at least annually. If a review meeting is not held, do not hesitate to contact the school to schedule a meeting. Cooperate with school staff in setting up a meeting of the team as soon as possible to reassess transition or any other areas of your child's IEP. ***Remember, an IEP meeting can be called anytime there is a concern.***

If short-term objectives are not being met, the team should determine whether or not modifications are needed. Request another meeting of the team if agreed upon services are not being provided or if strategies are not working. Any concerns about services or placements must be expressed in terms of your young adult's needs. In the case of disagreement, it is best to negotiate with the team. If negotiations break down, you have a right to mediation through a Due Process Hearing, State Level Complaint, or Third Party Intervention with the New Mexico Public Education Dept. (NMPED), Special Education Bureau (SEB). You can also request a Complaint Assisted IEP (CAIEP) with the Special Education Director of the school district.

Resolving Problems

The various laws affecting the education of youth with disabilities require compliance. That is why mediation and due process hearings occur. When they do, the IEP is examined carefully. When the IEP (including all transition components) is developed, pay close attention to its contents.

The **Parent Handbook** provides strategies and sample letters to use in resolving problems. Please call our office (1-800-524-5176) to request your copy.

Informal Resolution at the Local Level: In the case of disagreement, it is best to negotiate with the team and work to resolve the difficulties at the lowest possible level. If issues cannot be worked out with the teacher, invite her to go with you to her supervisor (usually that person is the principal). Most problems are settled at this level. Discussing concerns at the local level and working with those involved to brainstorm solutions that are focused on positive outcomes for your child is generally the best way to build partnerships. Sharing your concern in an open manner helps others to understand the problem and take steps to resolve the issues. *Remember to request an IEP meeting as soon as there is a concern.*

If you find that you are in dispute:

- Make sure that all requests are in writing and include reasonable time lines.
- Expect the answers to be in writing with reasons given as to why each of your requests was accepted or rejected.
- If issues are not resolved at the school level, follow the chain of command: School District Special Education Director; Supervisor, Superintendent of School District, and the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), Special Education Bureau.

State Level Complaint: If you have not been able to resolve your concerns informally, at the local level, you may file a state level complaint that clearly states your concerns to:

A copy of your complaint should be sent to:

Secretary of Education
NM Public Education Department
300 Don Gasper
Santa Fe, NM 87501-2786

Special Ed. Director
NMPED Special Education Bureau
120 South Federal Place, Room 205
Santa Fe, NM 87501

The NMPED will call you after it receives your letter of complaint to clarify the issues and, if possible, resolve complaints efficiently. The NMPED works hard with both of these steps in the complaint process. If the NMPED finds that your complaint has merit, they will provide technical assistance to the school and/or district to help them address your concerns at the local level. If they find that your complaint has no merit, they will send you a report explaining their reasoning. The NMPED is required to complete their investigation of your complaint and mail you a copy of their report within 60 days (beginning on the day the NMPED receives your letter).

Mediation: Disagreements between parents and schools often can be resolved in a cooperative, informal way through mediation. If you and the school agree to mediation, a trained, neutral person who is experienced in effective communication can help you solve your problem by listening to both of you and encouraging you to share information in a respectful way. The mediator will also meet separately with you and with school staff so that you each have a chance to tell your story in confidence. The mediator's job is to help you and the school work to reach an agreement, not to make decisions for you. Any written mediation agreement reached in an IEP meeting becomes a part of your child's permanent education record. Mediation can be requested at any time. PRO Note: If an agreement is reached, it is best practice to have an IEP meeting to incorporate the agreement into the IEP.

Due Process Hearing: If resolution has not occurred after a written complaint, you can request a due process hearing. This is a very formal legal proceeding that calls for an attorney, but do not be afraid to advocate for your child's rights. If you are considering due process, we encourage you to contact *Parents Reaching Out* for more information about these procedures.

Handling Problems Under Section 504: Section 504 falls under the management responsibility of the **general education program**. We recommend that you work to resolve differences at the teacher or school level by scheduling a meeting to discuss your differences. The next step is to set up a meeting with the school district's Section 504 Coordinator. If you are unsuccessful, ask for mediation, a free service for parents. If no solution is found, ask the Section 504 Coordinator how to file a grievance. The final step is contacting the Office for Civil Rights Region VIII, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Building, 1244 Speer Blvd., Denver, CO 80204-3582 (303-844-5695; TDD 844-3417: FAX: 303-844-4303.)

Things to Remember in Dispute Resolution

- Proceed carefully! Seek to resolve difficulties at the lowest level. Mediation is always available through the NMPED-SEB. You would contact the Alternative Dispute Resolution Coordinator at 505-827-1457.
- Remember to use good communication skills and be prepared to negotiate.
- Seek the support of a relative, friend, or advocate. Obtain advice from reliable sources.
- *Stay focused on the education/transition needs of your child at all times!*

Additional Information

Age of Majority

Reminder: At age 18, the student becomes an adult and parents are no longer required by law to give their consent for programs or services. The law requires schools to notify parents and students about the rights that transfer to the student at the age of majority (18). New Mexico does not have a procedure in place to allow parents to represent the educational interests of the child once the child turns 18. By law, your child will be responsible for making his or her own educational decisions. As an adult, your child can decide to exclude you from participating in meetings and making decisions about adult services. This change in roles underscores why it is so important for young adults to be active participants in developing their transition plans and IEPs.

Some young adults continue to receive special education services in the public schools through the age of 22. If this is the case for your family, be aware that all educational rights will still transfer to your child at age 18. Of course, you can still advise your child. Your son or daughter can invite you to their IEP meetings. You can continue to support your young adult through this transition time. The school, however, only has a legal obligation to include your child, not you, in decisions and meetings.

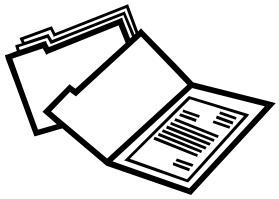
If you have concerns about your child's ability to make educational, health, or independent living decisions, you may want to look into obtaining guardianship. The Office of Guardianship (505-476-7332) can provide you with more information. You could also consider obtaining a limited guardianship or a durable power of attorney. These documents would clearly define your continued right to have access to all educational records and to make educational decisions for your child. Plan ahead so you will not be caught unprepared.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Your child must be disabled or blind to be eligible for SSI. Children may be eligible for benefits depending upon the family's income and assets, but when he/she turns 18, the family income is no longer considered. However, the benefits will be denied if he/she has more than $2,000 in accountable resources. This includes liquid assets like savings, stocks, bonds, etc. and real property beyond one vehicle which he/she uses and the home in which he/she resides. If he/she is deemed eligible for SSI, he/she is automatically eligible for Medicaid.

Written applications for SSI are submitted to the nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office. If you live in a metropolitan area, make an appointment to submit the application by calling their toll free number **1-800-772-1213**. This can reduce or eliminate a lengthy wait. It is important to begin this process six to eight weeks prior to your young adult's 18th birthday. SSA will also mail the application to you so that it can be completed before the appointment. Plan to bring the following information to the SSI application interview:

- Social Security card
- An original document to prove age (birth certificate)
- Evidence of citizenship or immigration status
- Records of earned and/or unearned income
- Auto registration
- Medical reports, Physicians' names and addresses
- Therapists' names and addresses
- IEPs for the last two years, and any testing results that verify the disability



You may also want to have written statements from others who will verify his/her inability to do things that others his/her age can do for themselves. Benefits are paid back to the month of

application, so if you are missing some documentation, submit the application anyway. For information or assistance, call your local SSA office or the toll free number. Whenever possible, SSI should be used as a stepping stone to economic self-sufficiency. The Social Security Administration (SSA) has developed programs to help people with disabilities achieve more independence. You can learn more about these programs by calling 1-800-772-1213 to request their publication Red Book on Work Incentives (SSA Pub. No 64-030).

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Your young adult may be eligible for services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The purpose of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to help people with disabilities achieve a suitable employment outcome. They provide school-to-work transition training to school districts, high school staff, and the public. They also work with Children's Medical Services (New Mexico Public Health Department) to coordinate referrals of students with disabilities who do not receive special education services.

DVR is part of the State of New Mexico, Public Education Department, and its program is supported by state and federal funds. To learn more about **DVR**, visit their web site at **http://www.dvrgetsjobs.com** or call their toll-free number **1-800-224-7005** or **TTY at 1-877-475-8226**. A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if he/she meets all of the following criteria:

1. The individual meets the definition of an individual with a disability:
   a. Who has a physical or mental impairment;
   b. Which, for the individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and
   c. Who can benefit in terms of an **employment outcome** from vocational rehabilitation services.
2. Vocational rehabilitation services are required in order for the individual to prepare for, enter, engage in, retain, or regain employment.

Every person who applies for DVR services must have an appraisal of their impairment before eligibility can be determined. The purpose of this assessment is to gather diagnostic information sufficient to determine eligibility. If your child is determined eligible for services, a DVR counselor will work with him/her to develop and follow an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This is the plan of services and activities that can reasonably be expected to lead to an employment outcome appropriate to the needs of the individual. Your young adult's DVR counselor should be involved as a member of the Transition Team. The IPE should be connected to the Individual Transition Plan in the IEP, if these services are appropriate to his/her needs.

School to Work

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 provides a framework and "seed money" for states and local communities to support all students as they progress from school to productive careers. Parent involvement is a key part of the School-to-Work (STW) program. STW is locally and community controlled so that programs to provide "real world" or "work-based learning" are designed to meet students' needs. The focus for School to Work initiatives is to provide expanded career choices for students as they pursue education in high school and beyond. Programs encourage partnerships among educators, parents, business, labor, and community leaders.

Dropout Prevention

Students with disabilities drop out of school at a higher rate than students without disabilities. If your teenager is struggling in school, he or she may think that dropping out is the answer. What your son or daughter needs to know, though, is that students who drop out face a difficult future. Students who do not graduate are more likely to be unemployed. If they can find a job, they will earn less than students with a diploma. Students who do not finish school are more likely to become involved in illegal activities and the courts. If your young adult is skipping school, failing classes, having significant discipline problems, or becoming involved in illegal activities, you will want to get help. These are signs that our teenagers have become disengaged from school and are at risk of dropping out.

Students who actively participate in school are more motivated to graduate. How can we help our sons and daughters become active participants in school? You may want to start with your son's or daughter's IEP team. As you meet with the team, consider the following questions. What supports can the school provide to promote success? Does his/her IEP have appropriate goals and accommodations? Does the instruction meet his/her needs? If behavior is a concern, parents can advocate for individualized behavior plans and modification of school policies, such as alternatives to suspension. Perhaps a functional behavior assessment needs to be done to pinpoint the situations that are particularly difficult for your young adult. Career education may help students maintain their motivation to stay in school. Vocational education integrated with academic requirements is often successful for at-risk students. Service learning gives students opportunities to develop social responsibility by becoming involved with their communities.

Students need to feel a sense of belonging in order to make the commitment to stay in school. Talk with your young adult about seeking our extracurricular activities at school. Encourage your teenager to seek out adults in the school environment who will take the time to develop supportive relationships with him or her. Most importantly, as a parent, continue to have high expectations and be involved with your young adult's education. Support your teenager's dreams and help him or her find a way to make those dreams a reality.

For more information about supporting our youth as they complete their high school education, visit the National Dropout Prevention Center's website:

www.dropoutprevention.org

Adapted from *The Role of Parents in Dropout Prevention: Strategies that Promote Graduation and School Achievement* by Deborah Leuchovius. In July 2006 Parent Brief published by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition and the PACER Center.

Juvenile Justice

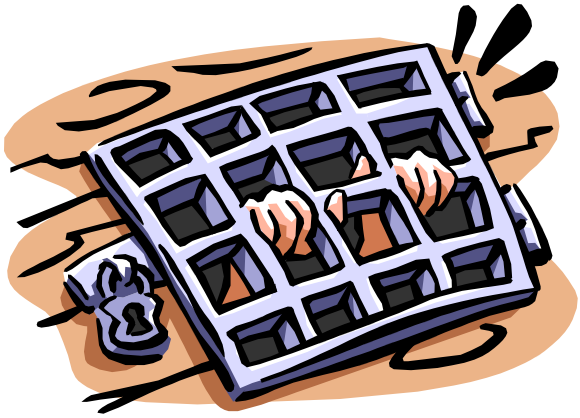
Most students with disabilities will never be involved with any criminal behavior. However, it is estimated that between 60-75% of young adults in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosed disability. As parents, we work hard to teach our children to respect the law. However, you may find yourself in a situation where your son or daughter becomes involved with the juvenile justice system. If this happens, you will find yourself advocating for your young adult in a new environment. It is important for you to know that your son or daughter keeps certain educational rights under IDEA, even in the correctional system.

If my young adult is in a detention center, will he/she continue to receive special education services?

Yes. Youth in the juvenile justice system are entitled to the free and appropriate education services they would be receiving in their home schools. These young people will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and parents will continue to be equal partners on the IEP team. Parents should ensure that their child's records are transferred from the school to the correctional facility. In addition, staff from the student's home school can be included in the IEP meetings. Students should receive appropriate special education services while they are incarcerated so they can be successful once they are released. When the student is to be released from the correctional facility, the team should develop an effective and appropriate plan for transitioning back to the community. The transition plan should be part of the IEP that your teenager will have at his or her home school.

Reference:

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. *Juvenile Justice Frequently Asked Questions.* Retrieved September 6, 2009 from www.ncset.org/topics/jjustice/faqs



Resources

Colleges, Universities and Other Schools in New Mexico

New Mexico Higher Education Department: http://hed.state.nm.us/

Baccalaureate Colleges / Universities

Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)
Admissions Office
1500 S. Ave K
Station #7
Portales, NM 88130
575-562-1011

New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU)
Admissions Office
Box 9000
Las Vegas, NM 87701
1-800-338-6648

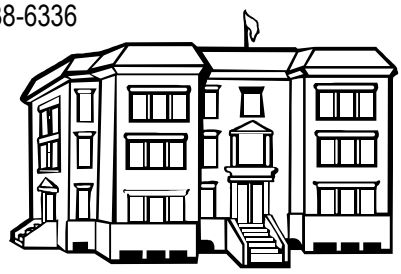
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMIMT)
801 Leroy Place
Socorro, New Mexico 87801
575-835-5434

New Mexico State University (NMSU)
Office of Admissions
PO Box 30001, Dept. 3A
Las Cruces, NM 88003
575-646-0111

Northern New Mexico College
921 Paseo De Onate
Espanola, NM 87532
505-747-2100

University of New Mexico (UNM)
Admissions Office
Albuquerque, NM 87131
1-800-225-5866

Western New Mexico University (WNMU)
Admissions Office
PO Box 680
Silver City, NM 88062
575-538-6336



Associate Degree / Community Colleges

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)
525 Buena Vista Dr. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
505-224-3000 Main
505-224-5551 Montoya
505-224-5301 Westside

Clovis Community College
417 Schepps Blvd.
Clovis, NM 88101-8381
505-769-2811

Crownpoint Institute of Technology
PO Box 849
Crownpoint, NM 87313
505-786-4100

Diné College
Crownpoint Center 505-786-7391
Shiprock 505-368-3500

Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell Branch
Box 6000
Roswell, NM 88202-6000
1-800-243-6687

Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso
709 Mechem Dr.
Ruidoso, NM 88345
1-800-934-3668

Luna Community College
366 Luna Drive
Las Vegas, NM 87701
505-454-2500
1-800-588-7232

Mesalands Community College
911 South Tenth Street
Tucumcari, NM 88401
1-575-461-4413

New Mexico Junior College
1 Thunderbird Circle
Hobbs, NM 88240
575-392-4510 1-800-657-6260

Associate Degree / Community Colleges

New Mexico Military Institute
Admissions Office
101 West College Blvd.
Roswell, New Mexico 88201
575-622-6250 / 1-800-421-5376

New Mexico State University-Alamogordo Branch
2400 North Scenic Drive
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-439-3600

New Mexico State University-Carlsbad Branch
1500 University Drive
Carlsbad, NM 88220
575-234-9200 888-888-2199

New Mexico State University-Dona Ana Branch
Campus Box 30001
Dept. 3DA
Las Cruces, NM 88003-0105
575-527-7500

New Mexico State University-Grants Branch
1500 N. Third Street
Grants, NM 87020
505-287-NMSU

Northern New Mexico College
921 Paseo De Onate
Espanola, NM 87532
505-747-2100

San Juan College
4601 College Boulevard
Farmington, NM 87402
505-326-3311

Santa Fe Community College
6401 Richards Ave.
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508
505-428-1000

Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI)
9169 Coors Blvd. NW (Box 10146)
Albuquerque, NM 87120
505-346-2324
1-800-586-7474

University of New Mexico-Gallup Branch
200 College Road
Gallup, NM 87301
505-863-7500

Associate Degree / Community Colleges

University of New Mexico-Los Alamos Branch
4000 University Drive
Los Alamos, NM 87544-2233
505-661-4692 800-894-5919

University of New Mexico-Valencia Branch
280 La Entrada Rd.
Los Lunas, NM 87031
505-925-8500

UNM - Taos Education Center
115 Civic Plaza Drive
Taos, NM 87571
575-737-6200

Specialized Schools of Higher Learning

New Mexico School for the Deaf
1060 Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-476-6300

School for the Visually Handicapped
1900 North White Sands Blvd.
Alamogordo, NM 88310
505-437-3505 or 1-800-437-3505

Private Institutions and Career Colleges

The Art Center Design College
5000 Marble N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-254-7575 800-825-8753

College of the Southwest
6610 Lovington Highway
Hobbs, NM 88240
505-392-6561

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
1900 Wyoming SE #202
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117
505-255-9409
110 East Sextapt Ave. Suite 2090
Cannon AFB, NM 88103
575-784-8763
P.O. Box 644
Holloman AFB, NM 88330
575-479-6892

Private Institutions and Career Colleges

Institute of American Indian Arts
83 Avan Nu Po Road
Santa Fe, NM 87508-1300
505.424.2331

National American University
4775 Indian School Road NE, Suite 200
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-348-3700

Troy State University
224 Holloman Learning Center
596 Fourth Street, Suite 203
Holloman AFB, NM 88330-8038
505-479-4410

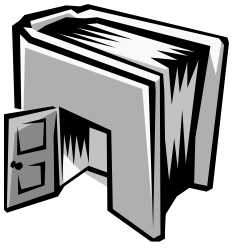
University of Phoenix
5700 Pasadena Ave. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113
505-821-4800

University of St. Francis
4401 Silver Ave. S.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87108
815-740-3807

Wayland Baptist University
5325 Wyoming NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505-323-9282
121 E. 4th St.
Clovis, NM 88101
575-763-0535

Webster University
4775 Indian School NE – Suite 300
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-292-6988

Western Governors University (WGU)
Academic Office:
Western Governors University
8880 E. 10th Place
Aurora, CO 80010
866-225-5948



New Mexico Resource Directory

Resource Name	Phone #	Description
Advocacy Inc. 6301 Fourth NW Suite 3 Albuquerque, NM 87107	505-266-3166 1-866-257-5320	Provides legal and support services, Guardianship, Adoption, Power of Attorney
Arc of New Mexico 3655 Carlisle NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-883-4630 1-800-358-6493	Advocacy for individuals with disabilities
Brain Injury Association of NM, Inc. 121 Cardenas NE Albuquerque, NM 87108	888-292-7414	Information and support for people who have suffered a traumatic brain injury.
Carrie Tingley Hospital 1127 University NE Albuquerque, NM 87102	505-272-2800 1-800-472-3235	Pediatric orthopedic rehabilitation hospital. Cerebral Palsy Parent Assoc. meets on a regular basis. Call: 505-272-5296 or 1-800-472-3235.
Center for Development and Disability 2300 Menaul Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87107	1-505-272-3000 1-800-827-6380	UNM Health Sciences Program Information and referral based on needs of individual
Community Options 2720 San Pedro NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-265-7936	Job development & job placement for people high school age or older who have a documented disability and need assistance finding work.
Disability Rights New Mexico (formerly Protection and Advocacy) 1720 Louisiana Blvd. NE Suite 204 Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-256-3100 1-800-432-4682	Information, training and legal advocacy for people with disabilities
Easter Seals 2041 S. Pacheco St. Suite 100 Santa Fe, NM 87505	505-424-7700 1-800-279-5261	Transportation to sheltered employment and other services for people with disabilities
Muscular Dystrophy Association 6733 Academy NE Suite D1 Albuquerque, NM 87109	505-828-1331	Information, referral and support for people with muscular dystrophy
Native American Disability Law Center 3535 E. 30th Street, Suite 201 Farmington, NM 87042	505-566-5880 1-800-862-7271	Information about services to persons with disabilities and their rights. Training, legal representation & system advocacy.
New Mexico Autism Society P.O. Box 30955 Albuquerque, NM 87190	505-332-0306	Advocacy, information, and referral for people with autism
New Mexico Commission for the Blind 2200 Yale SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	505-841-8844 1-888-513-7958	Services for the blind/visually impaired
New Mexico Family Network (formerly Parents of Behaviorally Different Children –PBDC) 1101 Cardenas Dr. NE Suite 202 Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-265-0430 1-800-273-7232	Support and advocacy for children with behavior difficulties
New Mexico Job Corp 1500 Indian School Rd. NW Albuquerque, NM 87104	1-800-992-2992 505-243-0299	Provides people 16-24 opportunity to prepare for employment (vocational, academic & GED)

New Mexico Relay Network 4600 Montgomery NE Suite 100 Albuquerque, NM 87109	505-889-0420 1-800-659-1779	Telephone relay network 1-800-659-8331 TTY
NM Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing PO Box 5138 Santa Fe, NM 87502	505-881-8824 (Voice/TTY/VP	Interpreting and referral services for eligible clients
NM Dept. of Health – Long Term Services Developmental Disabilities Division 5301 Central Ave. NE Suite 1700 Albuquerque, NM 87108	505-841-5500 1-800-283-5548	Full array of services dependent on Medicaid funding and eligibility Coordinates DD Waiver services. Answer questions/services related to Developmental Disabilities.
NM Department of Workforce Solutions 401 Broadway NE Albuquerque, NM 87102	505-841-9300	Job referrals and work related resources for people seeking a job.
NM Developmental Disabilities Planning Council 810 W. San Mateo , Suite C Santa Fe, NM 87505	505-476-7321 505-476-7322 1-800-311-2229	Advocacy, Capacity Building, Systemic Change
NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation DVR 5301 Central NE Suite 1600 Albuquerque, NM 87108	505-841-5600 1-800-432-5868	Services to people with a documented disability who need assistance to prepare for, enter or retain employment
NM Higher Education Dept. 2048 Galisteo Street Santa Fe, NM 87505	505-476-8400 Financial Aid Hotline-1-800-279-9777	Information on the NM Lottery Scholarship, other scholarships, and financial aid.
NM Learning Disabilities Association 6301 Menual Blvd NE #556 Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-821-2545	Information for families and teachers about learning disabilities
NM Public Education Dept./Special Ed. Bureau 120 South Federal Pl. Room 206 Santa Fe, NM 87501 http://www.ped.state.nm.us	505-827-1457	Monitors special education in NM and provides a variety of services to clients, including the general supervision of IDEA. Transition resources
NM Technology Assistance Program 435 St. Michael's Drive Bldg. D Santa Fe, NM 87505	1-800-866-2253	Assists with the technology needs of people with disabilities
Parents Reaching Out - PRO 1920 "B" Columbia SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	505-247-0192 1-800-524-5176	Support, advocacy, education and info for parents of children with disabilities
Social Security Administration 4300 Cutler NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	1-800-772-1213 1-800-325-0778 (TTY)	1) Aid for people with low income whose disability affects ability to work. 2) Aid for people with a disability: based on prior work income.
Southwest Autism Network 2300 Manual Blvd. Albuquerque, NM 87107	505-272-3000	Center for Development and Disability Support, information for families and professionals.
Transition Services (APS) Adult Centered Community Education and Support Services (ACCESS)	505-872-6800 X66818	APS program - young adults 18-21 with moderate to severe disabilities (work, daily living, community involvement)
Youth Development Inc. (YDI) 6306 Central SW Albuquerque, NM 87105	505-831-6038	Services that promote healthy behavior, development and relationships in youth

National Resource Directory

Academy for Educational Development
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009
Phone: 202-884-8000 http://www.aed.org

ACT Test Administration
301 ACT Drive
PO Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243
Phone: 319-337-1270 /319-337-1701 (TDD)

American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES)
Montana Center on Disabilities MSU-B
1500 University Dr.
Billings, Montana 59101
1-888-866-3822

College Board
Services for Students With Disabilities
PO Box 6226 , Princeton, NJ 08541-6226
Phone: 609-771-7137 / 609-882-4118 (TTY)

Council for Exceptional Children
1110 North Glebe Road Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone: 1-888-232-7733 or 866-915-5000 (TTY)
http://www.cec.sped.org/

Eric Clearing House
655 15th St. NW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
1-800-538-3742 www.eric.ed.gov/

Family Voices Inc.
2340 Alamo SE Suite 102
Albuquerque, NM 87106
Phone: 888-835-5669 or 505-872-4774
http://www.familyvoices.org/

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
West Virginia University
809 Allen Hall , Morgantown, WV 26506
Phone: 304-293-7186 or 1-800-526-7234

National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS)
900 Second Street, NE, Suite 211
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: 202-408-9514 or 202-408-9521 (TTY)

National Federation of the Blind
200 E. Wells St.
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-659-9314
Fax: 410-685-5653

National Center on Secondary Ed and Transition
Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
University of Minnesota 6 Pattee Hall,
150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-2097 www.ncset.org/

National Transition Network
430 Wulling Hall
86 Pleasant St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone: 612-624-1062
http://ici2.umn.edu/ntn/

Social Security Administration (SSA)
US Department of Health and Human Services
Phone: 1- 800-772-1213 or 1-800-352-0778 (TTY)
http://www.ssa.gov/reach.htm

Resource Connections

Beach Center on Families and Disability, **http://www.beachcenter.org**

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, **http://cecp.air.org/**

Healthcare Transitions, **http://hctransitions.ichp.edu/**

Healthy and Ready to Work (HRTW), **http://www.hrtw.org**

KASA – Kids as Self-Advocates, **http://www.fvkasa.org/**

National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities, **http://www.nichcy.org**

New Mexico Technology Assistance Program, **http://www.nmtap.com**

New Mexico Youth in Transition, **http://www.nmtransition.org**

Pacer Center, Inc., **http://www.pacer.org**

Parents Reaching Out, **http://www.parentsreachingout.org**

Special Needs, Special Gifts, **http://www.specialneedsadvocate.com/**

US Department of Education, **http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/**

US Government, **http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov**

Notes

Parents Reaching Out

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

As a statewide non-profit organization, we connect with parents, caregivers, educators, and other professionals to promote healthy, positive, and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. We have served New Mexico families for over twenty-five years. Our staff and Family Leadership Action Network volunteers reflect the unique diversity of the communities throughout our state.

Children do not come with instructions on how to deal with the difficult circumstances that many families experience. Parents Reaching Out believes that families' needs go beyond the bounds of formal services. *What we can offer to each other is uniquely ours. We have all been there.*

Our Mission

The mission of Parents Reaching Out is to enhance positive outcomes for families and children in New Mexico through informed decision making, advocacy, education, and resources. Parents Reaching Out provides the networking opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. This mission supports *all families* including those who have children with disabilities, and others who are disenfranchised. Parents Reaching Out achieves this by:

- Developing family leadership
- Connecting families to each other
- Building collaborative partnerships
- Providing families knowledge and tools to enhance their power

Our Beliefs

- Families need support wherever they are in their journey.
- All families care deeply about their children.
- Families may need tools and support to accomplish their dreams.
- All families are capable of making informed decisions that are right for their family.
- Families in the state benefit from our organization having the staff and materials that meet their diversity.
- Systems that listen carefully to the family perspective improve outcomes for our children.

We invite all families and those serving families and children in New Mexico to make *Parents Reaching Out your one stop resource for a stronger family*. Our publications, workshops, and Resource Center offer tools for informed decision-making and building partnerships in communities. Our trained staff and network of volunteers are here to serve you.

Parents Reaching Out is the home of:

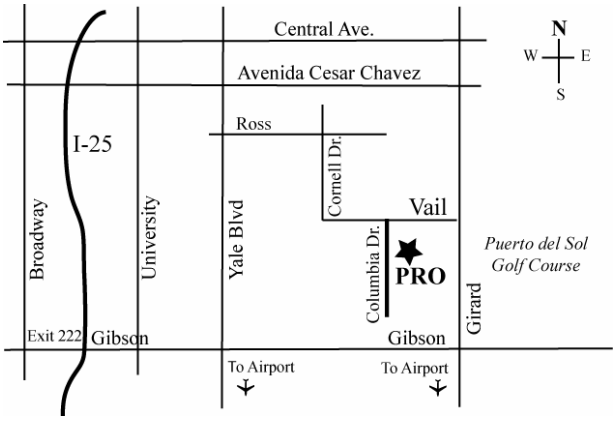
NM Parent Information and Resource Center (NMPIRC)

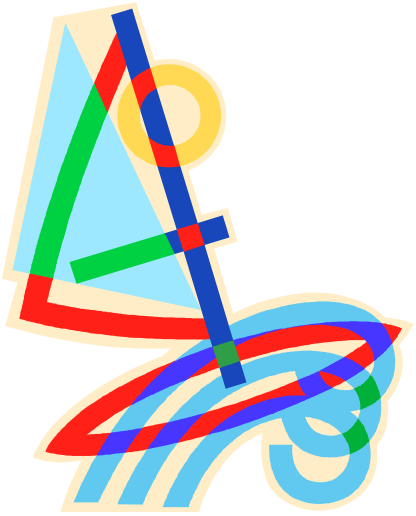
NM Parent Training and Information Center (NMPTIC)

NM Family to Family Health Information Center (NMF2FHIC)

Parents Reaching Out
1920 B Columbia Drive, SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
1-505-247-0192 ◆ 1-800-524-5176
www.parentsreachingout.org

From I-25—take the Gibson Blvd Exit 222 and go East on Gibson. Turn left at the third stop light (Girard). Turn left on Vail. Go one block to Columbia. Turn left on Columbia. Parents Reaching Out is on the east side of the street. Welcome!





New Oceans

We can not discover new oceans
unless we have the courage
to lose sight of the shore.

Anonymous