

1. Planning for the Future

Planning for the future can be both exciting and scary at the same time. When young adults first begin the process of planning for the future, they will need more extensive help and guidance. Both young adults and those who are involved in their lives want the planning process to be a success, so they can reach their highest potential. You can help to make that a reality.

Teachers and School Staff

As a teacher you may play a role in ensuring that young adults have:

- an up-to-date, Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- an IEP based on their goals, interests, needs, and individual preferences;
- a statement of transition service needs must be included in the IEP no later than the student's 14th birthday, or younger if needed; and
- needed transition services should be identified and included in the student's IEP by the age of 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team.

Steps You Can Take

- Set a time to meet with the young adult before the first transition planning IEP meeting (no later than age 14).
- Help them to identify what is important to them by providing examples of goals that are commonly worked on through the IEP.
- Help them develop a list of their top goals for the next five years that they can share with their IEP team.
- Ask them to share the list with their family members, so they can add to it or refine it with input from home.
- Help the young adult develop a filing system where he or she can keep important papers—such as, the list of goals for the next five years, a resume, grade transcripts, assessment documentation, a copy of the IEP, health records, awards, and accomplishments.
- Listen to the young adult's goals and dreams, and then help her or him pursue them.
- Use person-centered transition assessments that provide a range of career awareness and exploration activities to refine those goals and dreams.
- Practice/role play an IEP team meeting to familiarize the youth with the process.