



Life After High School

10 Transition Questions for Teens and Parents to Consider ~ TOGETHER

At some time in our lives we have all thought about what we want to do when we “grow up”. For most teenagers high school is a time when they have to move from thinking and dreaming to planning and working toward real goals. All students face the big transition from high school to the “real world” and students with disabilities may face that transition with extra considerations that need attention. Preparing **how** to meet those special needs is the purpose of *transition planning* for students with IEPs. The federal **IDEA** (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) **requires** transition planning and services for all students who have an IEP starting at age 16, however in Iowa these activities must begin at **age 14**. The most important piece of a transition plan is always the **student!**

Living, Learning and Working are the three areas focused on during transition planning, establishing goals and implementing the IEP. The student should be an involved member of the IEP team.

We all need the support of family and friends getting to where we want to go in life. That's why it is especially important that teens and parents discuss all of the issues that arise when planning for life after high school.

This article doesn't give you the answers—families will supply those!

Instead, these questions are designed to help you start meaningful discussions that will help prepare you for creating post-secondary expectations and taking steps to make them happen! The questions are written from a student's point of view to encourage their involvement.

1. What are my interests, strengths and goals for MY future?
2. Do I attend my IEP meetings and have the skills to advocate for myself?
3. Where do I want to live?
4. Do I understand and have the required documentation of my disability?
5. What supports and services will be available to me after I turn 18?
6. Do I have the skills I need to live independently, if I choose to?
7. Do I have the skills I need to manage my finances?
8. Will I need a legal guardian or representative? If so, what does my family need to do?
9. What skills do I need to go on to college?
10. Do I have the “everyday” skills (sometimes called *soft-skills*) I need to be successful at a job?

The answers will be useful as you meet with IEP teams, colleges, potential employers, services providers and so on!

