



What's Next after High School?

Transition Education Workshops for Chicago Public School Families and Students

This handbook provides an overview of five parent workshops and three student workshops related to the topic of transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and employment for students with disabilities. The workshops can be used in isolation or presented as a series over the course of a school year. Topics include understanding the transition process, navigating the Individual Education Plan, collaborating with community agencies, understanding disability benefits, preparing for college and employment, self-advocacy, and independent living.

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*Transition Education Workshops for Chicago
Public School Families and Students*

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Session I: Transition Overview

What's Next 101 Parent Workshop

Authors: Kimberly Mercer, Mariel Hamer, Justin Ladas, Joanna Keel, and Jessica Awsumb

In this workshop, parents are introduced to the concept of transition and what it means for their child and family. The scope of the workshop series is presented along with introductions of the facilitators. A brief overview of federal and state law, the “big picture” view of transition, and a transition timeline with benchmarks and activities for elementary, middle, and high school students are presented.

Tips for Presenting:

1. The beginning of this session is focused on families conceptualizing what transition means to them. With this in mind, introduce the session objectives and have parents complete the “5 Words” activity. Share out as a group.
2. Present slides on federal and state laws, then focus on transition as a “journey” and understanding the “big picture.” Have parents connect these concepts to their lives.
3. Finish the session by going to over the timeline of activities with the understanding that this is a brainstormed list of ideas. Have parents think about and share out what they want to **START** doing, **STOP** doing, and **CONTINUE** doing related to transition with their child.
4. Remind parents to bring their child’s IEP to the next session and handout supplementary materials if applicable.

Outline of Content:

I. What does transition mean to you?

- 5 Words brainstorm sharing activity

II. Federal & State Law

III. Transition Timeline Activities

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

Supplementary Material:

- Legal Advocacy Resources
- Guardianship FAQs
- Regional Transportation Authority
- Internet Resources

Session II: The IEP & Transition Plan

What's Next 101 Parent Workshop

Authors: Jessica Hovland, Joanna Keel, and Molly Buren

In this workshop, parents are provided detailed information about the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Transition Plan in CPS. The goal of this workshop is to facilitate an understanding of the IEP process and the transition plan, discuss issues related to the development and implementation of the Transition IEP, and examine the components of actual IEPs. Parents are encouraged to bring their child's IEP to this workshop in order to apply the information in the presentation to their child's educational program.

Outline of Content:

I. The IEP and the IEP Meeting

- The IEP Team & Your Role as a Parent
- Preparing for the Meeting
- Building Self-Advocacy Skills
- Attending the IEP Meeting

II. The Transition Plan and the IEP

- Overview of the Chicago Public School IEP
- Transition Defined
- Components of the Transition Plan

III. Transition Resources

- Websites for Eleven Organizations with Information on Transition and Disabilities

Supplementary Material:

- Parent Transition Survey/Questionnaire
- IEP Planning Form for Parents
- NICHCY IEP Guide for Parents
- Autism Speaks Family Services
Transition Toolkit: Self-Advocacy Section
- Chicago Public School Graduation Requirements

Tips for Presenting:

1. Introduce the presentation and objectives.
2. Using the slide "The IEP: Questions & Experiences", encourage parents to discuss their understanding of the IEP and how they feel about the process.
3. Use the Parent Transition Survey and IEP Planning Form for Parents when discussing how to prepare for IEP meetings. These can be distributed at the beginning of the meeting, or at the point they are discussed during the presentation.
4. Clearly explain how all the components of the IEP are related and how they connect to transition. This presentation works best if parents are looking at actual IEPs as a reference. You may want to have de-identified examples available!
5. Feel free to skip slides if parents are already familiar with the information!

Session III: Community Agencies

What's Next 101 Parent Workshop

Authors: Jessica Awsumb, Joanna Keel, and Jessica Hovland

In this workshop, parents learn about the difference between entitlement and eligibility, or receiving services under IDEA vs. ADA. With an understanding of the laws, parents learn about a group of community agencies that provide a range of services to adults with disabilities. Lastly, the session provides parents with a thorough understanding of DRS and how to apply for DRS services by making a referral in the final years of high school.

Tips for Presenting:

1. This session should adequately prepare participants to understand and approach adult service agencies that may be an appropriate match for their child's goals and supports for after high school (employment, independent living, recreation, etc.)
2. While presenting the content of the session, encourage parents to not be overwhelmed by the range of adult service options, but focus on a few agencies that match their child's needs.
3. Stress the guiding questions for community agencies by encouraging parents to approach adult service agencies like they are interviewing them about their success rates, the services they offer, the cost, etc.
4. Remind parents that DRS is only geared towards students who will work competitively. If this is not a life goal or possibility due to severity of disability, DRS is not an appropriate match for the young adult.

Outline of Content:

I. IDEA vs. ADA

- Group discussion activity: IDEA vs. ADA for your child

II. Community Agencies

- Questions to Ask
- A Sample of Agencies

III. DRS

- What is DRS?
- What services does DRS provide?
- Referral Process

Supplementary Material:

- College List
- Community Agency List
- Key Questions for Community Agencies

Session IV: Social Security Benefits

What's Next 101 Parent Workshop

Author: Mariel Hamer

This presentation provides in-depth information about Social Security Disability Benefits and Work Incentive programs by beginning with an overview of transition planning and the role of the transition specialist in CPS. An interactive myth versus fact activity stimulates participants' thinking about Social Security benefits and allows the presenter to determine how much parents know about Social Security for people with disabilities. This presentation provides parents invaluable information about financial resources for their children with disabilities including information about how to apply for benefits and take advantage of work incentives.

Outline of Content:

I. Transition and Benefits

- Definitions and IDEA
- Role of the Transition Specialist
- Benefits for People with Disabilities

II. Social Security Administration (SSA)

- Activity: Debunking the Myths
- Defining SSA Disability Benefits

III. SSA Eligibility and Application Process

- Disability Determination Services
- Appeal Process
- Steps to Eligibility
- Application Snapshot

IV. SSA Work Incentives

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)
- Medicaid and Working
- Plan For Achieving Self Support (PASS)
- Earning FICA Credits for SSDI

Supplementary Material:

- Assessment Clinics in Chicago Brochures
- Directory of Chicago Social Service Providers
- PUNS Brochure
- SSA 2014 Red Book (Disability Benefits)

Tips for Presenting:

1. Begin with an overview of the objectives for the workshop. If parents have attended prior workshops in this series, quickly review the definitions for transition. If this is parents' first workshop, spend a little time discussing the concept of transition.
2. Explain acronyms and the structure of the SSA. A helpful metaphor is to compare SSI and SSDI as members of the same family, but very different personalities! You can be creative with this!
3. Complete the Myth vs. Fact section in an interactive way. Don't give the answers right away and allow time for discussion and questions.
4. After describing SSA Disability Benefits, ask participants to match a type of benefit to each scenario on slides 23 and 24.
5. Talk through the eligibility process and work incentives, giving examples when possible.
6. If you're not sure about the answer to a question, contact the CPS Transition Team!

Session V: High School to College & Career

What's Next 101 Parent Workshop

Authors: Joanna Keel and Jessica Hovland

Transitioning from high school to postsecondary education is the major focus of this presentation. While families will learn about employment and vocational possibilities, most of the information relates to college options for students with disabilities. Families will discuss the various pros and cons of attending different types of postsecondary schools and receive information about accessing disability services at the college level. This presentation is geared primarily toward families of students who are planning to attend college, but there is information for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well.

Tips for Presenting:

1. Using Slides 2 and 3, go over the objectives of the presentation and ask families to share their knowledge as well as what they hope to learn from the workshop.
2. Provide examples of Age of Majority notices and Summary of Performance documents.
3. Encourage parents to talk with their children about the information on Slide 10 and talk through the questions on Slide 11.
4. Tailor the remainder of the presentation to the interests of the families and their questions about specific postsecondary options.
5. For families with young adults planning to attend college, provide copies of the College Readiness Quiz, Questions for Colleges, and City College information.

Outline of Content:

I. Age of Majority & Summary of Performance

- Legal Requirements
- Rights and Responsibilities of Young Adults
- Summary of Performance Document

II. What to Expect in College

- Deciding Options
- Pros and Cons of Postsecondary Options
- Differences between High School and College
- Rights and Responsibilities of Young Adults
- Disability Supports in College

III. Looking Toward Employment

- Rights & Responsibilities
- IDEA versus ADA
- Assessing Yourself (for young adults)

IV. Vocational Options & Community College

- Certification/Degree Options
- Contacting the City Colleges of Chicago

V. Alternative Postsecondary Options for Individuals with Disabilities

- Elmhurst College – ELSA Program
- Programs for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Supplementary Material:

- College Readiness Quiz
- Questions for Colleges - By: Beth Ruark
- Disability Access Center – City Colleges Brochure
- Dual Enrollment Admissions Checklist
- Article: “Helping Students with Disabilities Transition to College”

Session I: Working with Community Agencies

Deciding Your Future Student Workshop

Authors: Joanna Keel, Molly Buren, and Jessica Hovland

In this workshop, students discuss interagency collaboration and support services both in the community and at colleges and universities. Students are provided a comprehensive overview of the various employment and support services available and are taken through the application process for vocational rehabilitation services. Additionally, students are given a brief overview of possible accommodations and modifications offered at the collegiate level. The goal of this activity is to facilitate students' understanding of what options and supports are available after high school and how to obtain what they need in a variety of settings. The remainder of the workshop focuses on application of these new, real-world skills through a problem-solving activity centered on simulated scenarios of students with IEPs exiting high school. Students are encouraged to discuss and strategize the scenarios in order to practice interactions with agencies, colleges, and community services.

Outline of Content:

I. Deciding Your Future

- Agencies Overview
- Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Tips Sheet

II. College Services: Extending Your Education

- Support Services in College
- Activity: Practicing Self-Advocacy

Supplementary Material:

- Activity: Guiding Questions for Service Agencies
- Activity: "Deciding Your Future" Survey
- Activity: Student Simulated Scenarios and Charts

Tips for Presenting:

1. Introduce the presentation and objectives.
2. Open discussion with "Why community agencies?" slide. Ask students what they know about community agencies. Have students first turn and talk to each other before sharing out with the whole group.
3. Create a definition as a group and review slide.
4. Go through agency slides and have students stop and highlight possible services they may need from DRS on the "categories of services" slide. Discuss with students.
5. Using the "sum it up" chart at the end of the PowerPoint, put students into small groups and give each group one to two scenarios.
6. Each group picks a recorder, reporter, and discussion director.
7. In groups, students fill out and discuss the chart. Once done, students complete "what about you" chart.
8. To reinforce how to obtain necessary services after high school, review the tips sheet and practice guiding questions for service agencies with students.
9. To prepare for the next student workshop, students can fill out the "Deciding Your Future" survey.

Session II: Speaking Up For Yourself

Deciding Your Future Student Workshop

Authors: Jessica Hovland and Molly Buren

In this workshop, students discuss and practice important self-advocacy skills. After completing a questionnaire about their future goals, students are guided through key sections of their IEPs to identify their strengths and needs related to supports, accommodations, and instructional modifications. The goal of this activity is to facilitate students' understanding of how information in their IEP may assist them in college and employment. The remainder of the workshop focuses on how to be assertive when talking about strengths and needs in various settings relevant to adult life. Students are encouraged to role play several scenarios in order to practice assertive behavior.

Tips for Presenting:

1. Prior to the workshop, have copies of student IEPs ready as well as copies of all the handouts.
2. Discuss the agenda and workshop objectives. If students have not completed the "Deciding Your Future" Survey, it can be completed as a warm-up.
3. **Activity: Getting to Know Your IEP** - Using Slide 4, explain to students how to find information in their IEP. Discuss that the goal of the IEP Activity is to identify areas of strengths and needs relevant to college and job opportunities.
4. Now that students have read how their teachers explain their abilities, it is their turn to put it in their own words! Use Slides 6 and 7 to discuss assertiveness. Then, use Slide 8 as a quick check for understanding.
5. **Activity: Role Playing Assertive Behavior** - Ask students to work in groups of 3 and distribute the UAA handouts. Briefly go through the tips on "Speaking Up For Yourself" and then have the students demonstrate how some of the tips might look on the "Tips for Being Assertive" handout. Show the 8 scenario options on Slide 10. Students should pick at least 3 to role play (one for each person), but they can do more! While one person practices with another, the third group member will use the "Assertive Behavior Checklist" to make sure the person is being assertive! Remind students that the written feedback is also a chance to be assertive - they are not insulting their peers, but instead, giving them helpful feedback. They will switch roles!

Outline of Content:

I. Understanding Key Parts of Your IEP

- Student Questionnaire: "Deciding Your Future" Survey
- Activity: Getting to Know Your IEP
- Handout: IEP Activity

II. Speaking Up For Yourself: Being Assertive!

- What does it Mean to Be Assertive and Why is it Important?
- Aggressive, Passive, or Assertive? Check for Understanding
- Rules for Assertive Negotiation
- Activity: Role Playing Assertive Behavior
- Handouts from UAA Plans: Speaking Up for Yourself (pg. 40), Tips for Being Assertive (pg. 39), Assertive Behavior Checklist (pg. 42)

Supplementary Material for Teachers:

- "It's My Right" Lesson Plan from www.imdetermined.org
- UAA Center for Human Development- Lesson Plans for Teaching Self-Determination

Session III: What to Expect in College & Employment

Deciding Your Future Student Workshop

Authors: Molly Buren, Joanna Keel, Mariel Hamer, and Jessica Hovland

In this workshop, students discuss and engage in tasks centered on postsecondary options. Through interactive activities, students review the pros and cons of common postsecondary choices, analyze the different realities of high school versus college, examine ways to pay for college, and discuss documentation needed for postsecondary support services. The goal of the first part of the workshop is to facilitate student-driven decision making related to the options, barriers, supports, and realities of life after high school. The second portion of the workshop focuses on social security benefits and vocational programs offered at City Colleges of Chicago. Students are encouraged to research vocational programs online using a graphic organizer for information on classes, certification types, and requirements. This workshop can be separated into two sessions.

Outline of Content:

I. Deciding Your Future

- Activity: Deciding Post-Secondary Options Walkabout
- College Pros & Cons
- Activity: Passing Notes
- Paying for College

II. Looking Toward Employment

- Rights & Responsibilities
- Activity: Myth or Fact?- SSA Benefits
- SSA Work Incentives

III. Vocational Options & Community College

- Activity: Researching City College Options

Supplementary Material:

- Activity: City Colleges of Chicago activity sheet
- Handout: Teacher Workshop Powerpoint
- Activity: Myth Vs. Fact

Tips for Presenting:

1. Introduce the presentation and objectives.
2. Briefly discuss the various options with students but don't go in-depth until after the walkabout activity.
3. Have posters spread around the room with markers. Each poster lists a different post-secondary option.
4. In groups of 3, students spend a few minutes writing what they have experienced or want to know about the option on the poster. Students move to the next poster and repeat the activity until each group circles back to their original poster.
5. Instruct students to stand next to the poster that representing the option they want for their future. Students discuss amongst themselves then share out in whole group debrief. Use slide "Deciding post-secondary options" to help guide discussion.
6. Using the next 5 slides, review the pros and cons of different educational options and discuss differences between high school and college.
7. Students get into groups of 4. Students fold a blank sheet of paper in fourths and write 1-4 in the four corners. Students respond to the writing prompts on "Passing Notes" slide. Students fold the paper, pass it to their left, read the next students' writing and comment in box 2. This continues until the students get their original sheet back. Discuss in small groups.
8. Briefly review documentation needed for college support services and ways to pay for college.
9. Discuss the general options for employment and social security benefits. Review rights and responsibilities in the work environment.
10. Conduct myth versus fact exercise using attached worksheet.
11. Review local city college vocational programs.
12. Students practice researching programs using activity sheet with explicit directions.
13. Conclude with silent, independent reflection activity using the final slide. This final activity can also be a whole group, small group, or partner discussions.

Resources:

Autism Speaks:

Autism Speaks is an advocacy organization for people with autism. The website provides toolkits to guide families through many aspects of life with autism.

Website: <http://www.autismspeaks.org>

Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004

This government website provides updated resources and legal information relevant to educational rights for children with disabilities.

Website: <http://idea.ed.gov/>

Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research:

This center is located at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of Disability and Human Development. The focus of the center is research and advocacy for individuals with disabilities. The center specializes in secondary transition for youth with disabilities.

Website: <http://ccbmdr.ahslabs.uic.edu/>

Center for Parent Information and Resources (formerly the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY):

This national center provides information on children with disabilities, programs for babies and youth with disabilities, IDEA, and research-based information on effective practices for children with disabilities. The NICHCY website was removed on September 30th 2014, but all resources are still available in both English and Spanish.

Website: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/resources/>

- Webpage dedicated to IEP information:
<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/iep/>
- Webpage for students to learn about getting involved in their IEP meeting:
<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/student-involvement/>
- Webpage with training modules about IEP development and parent involvement: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/legacy/>

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC):

This agency seeks to enhance educational outcomes of people with disabilities. CEC provides resources to professionals to promote evidence-based educational practice.

Website: <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS):

DRS is a state agency devoted to assisting individuals with disabilities in achieving their goals for employment, education, and independent living. Contact information: dhs.webbits@illinois.gov

Website: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/>

Family Resource Center on Disability:

Offers information and training related to special education rights for parents of students with disabilities.

Website: <http://www.frcd.org/>

I'm Determined:

This is a wonderful website filled with information about how individuals with disabilities can become determined to help themselves. This site has specific resources for parents and students about becoming their own advocate. This site was created by the Virginia Department of Education.

Webpage: www.imdetermined.org

- Parent resources for IEP participation: <http://www.imdetermined.org/parents/>

LDOnline:

LD Online is a website offering resources related to learning disabilities and ADHD. It includes sections for parents, educators, and kids.

Website: <http://www.ldonline.org>

National Center for Learning Disabilities:

This organization aims to enhance the quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities. The center works with parents to increase the long-term success of individuals with learning disabilities.

Website: <http://www.nclld.org/parents-child-disabilities>

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center:

NSTTAC is the nation's technical assistance center for transition. This center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to support states, districts, schools, and other transition stakeholders in evidenced-based practices in transition.

Website: <http://www.nsttac.org/>

Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services – Chicago Public Schools

This department of Chicago Public Schools is devoted to providing high quality and specially designed instructional supports and services for all diverse learners within their least restrictive environment.

Website: <http://cps.edu/Pages/DiverseLearners.aspx>

The Pacer Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights):

This center was created by parents of children with disabilities to help other parents feel confident in their roles as advocates.

Website: <http://www.pacer.org/>

Transition Coalition:

Transition Coalition provides one of the most comprehensive websites for information on transition by the University of Kansas.

Website: <http://transitioncoalition.org/>

Wrightslaw:

Wrightslaw is a legal website focused on education and advocacy for students with disabilities. This comprehensive website is useful for schools, families, attorneys, and community advocates.

Website: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

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