

Transition Information: Kentucky

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - The transition planning process usually begins at the latest when the individual is 14 years old. A transition team should start constructing a Transition IEP based on the individual's strengths and desires for the future.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - The IEP must go into effect by the child's 16th birthday and the child must begin to attend and be invited to all IEP meetings. At this point, the IEP should include prospective course study for high school and any other services related to pursuing that course of study.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Kentucky is 18)
 - Individuals must be informed that decision-making rights will be transferred before their 18th birthday.
 - If families and students feel uncomfortable with the transfer of the decision-making abilities to the student, the prospective guardian needs to petition for guardianship at the local probate court.
 - The vocational rehabilitation process should begin at least 2 years prior to high school graduation.
- *Before the age of 18:*
 - Apply for Social Security benefits, Social Security Disability Insurance and Medicaid.
 - If ineligible for Medicaid, look into other health insurance options, as it is likely the individual will no longer be covered by the parents plan after age 19 if not enrolled in college or covered by Medicaid.
 - Add your name to the waiting list for residential placements in the state. Regardless of future residential plans, it is good to be on the waitlist, as these lists can be extremely long, and it is easy to remove your name than it is to add it.
- *At age 18:*
 - Register to vote.
 - Upon an individual's 18th birthday, he or she changes from a system of being entitled to certain rights and privileges to a system of eligibility.
 - Male students should register for the draft, no matter the level of functioning.
 - If applicable, individuals should apply to adult agencies for vocational and day programs, as well as for supported living.
- *At age 21:*
 - The right to FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) ends at age 21.

Starting the Transition Process:

The transition planning process usually begins at the latest when the individual is 14 years old. This is usually around 8th grade. The IEP must go into effect by the child's 16th birthday and the child must begin to attend and be invited to all IEP meetings. At this point, the IEP should include prospective course study for high school and any other services related to pursuing that course of study. The transition IEP should include services that will help the student prepare for life in the real world and complete high school according to the path that was chosen for the student with regards to graduation from high school and post-school outcomes. Any services that are included in the IEP must be provided by the school at no expense to the families, including assistive technology. The IEP must also include any external individuals that can provide services or have special expertise in relation to the services needed by the student through the transition period.

All students with disabilities in Kentucky participate in the state-required *Assessment and Accountability Programs*, which involves assessing the severity of certain disorders and determining the best way to treat those disorders.

Education:

The IEP should discuss future course work for the student and also indicate what path the student wants to follow, such as a path towards higher education (college), or a vocational training path that will allow the individual to find employment in the future. The IEP should also include what type of diploma the individual wants to attain. If an individual wants to attain a standard high school diploma, he or she has to get the required course credits from the school that will allow the individual to graduate with a standard diploma. Otherwise, the individual can elect to pursue other options that signify his or her achievements in secondary education.

Pertaining to high school graduation, the state provides minimum requirements for graduation, but LEAs can choose to add to them. Kentucky has the following diploma options: honors diploma, standard high school diploma, a certificate of attendance or a certificate of occupational coursework. The state allows for alternate courses to be taken that will lead towards a standard high school diploma. Kentucky does not have a state exit exam for graduation.

The rights to FAPE begin at age 3 and continue until age 21.

Guardianship/Conservatorship:

The age of majority in Kentucky is 18 years old. This means that at the age of 18, all rights to make decisions about individuals with disabilities transfer from their guardians to themselves. Individuals must be informed that the rights will be transferred before their 18th birthday. If they are incapable of making responsible and informed decisions, a person can petition to provide a legal guardian to the disabled individual, which will be brought to a trial in a Kentucky district court. When a petition is filed with the local court, an evaluation will be done to determine if the person is incapable of making decisions about his or her welfare and a hearing will be held. The disabled individual will have a right to an attorney to ensure that his or her desires are being met. The team that will determine if the person is incompetent will be composed of a doctor, psychologist and a social worker who will independently examine the individual. Then, the judge will choose who is best to serve as the individual's guardian. After that, periodic reports will be filed to ensure that everyone's needs are being met.

A less severe procedure compared to full guardianship is the power of attorney. This will allow the disabled individual to allocate certain responsibilities to other people, but the person must still be viewed as completely competent and clear-minded in making his or her own decisions.

A Family Guide to Guardianship in Kentucky: Questions and Answers
<http://kyjustice.org/node/568#ADULT>

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation provides vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities to assist with entry or re-entry into employment and productivity in the workplace and community. In order to receive services, an individual must meet eligibility requirements. A vocational rehabilitation counselor will perform an assessment to determine eligibility for services. Once eligibility is determined, the counselor's role is to provide information, resources, guidance and counseling, and choices related to an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, capacities and abilities so the individual can prepare for and enter a job. This may require more assessment. An eligible individual will work closely with the counselor who has specialized training and experience. The individual and the counselor will jointly develop an Individualized Plan for Employment. The Individualized Plan for Employment will list the vocational rehabilitation services that will be provided to assist the individual in reaching the individual's vocational goal.

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has programs dedicated to job placement, program planning and development, rehabilitation technology, the "Ticket to Work" program (by the Social Security office), and their supported employment branch. They have fifteen main branch offices and a vocational training center in Thelma, Kentucky, with 52 offices around the state and 140 vocational rehabilitation

counselors. The services will help assess the student's needs and provide him or her with counseling and guidance to decide what the individual wants to do in the future. The individual has to complete the referral form two years before he or she leaves high school.

Visit <http://ovr.ky.gov/programservices/district.htm> to find the VR office in your district.

Social Security:

Benefits should be applied for before the student's 18th birthday and then be re-evaluated after the student's 18th birthday. It is also important that the office be contacted well in advance before the student's 18th birthday to understand that eligibility and application process.

Applicants may apply online or by contacting Social Security directly. Local Social Security offices can be found using SSA's office locator or by calling 800-772-1213.

- *Social Security Administration:* www.socialsecurity.gov
- *Social Security Benefit Application:* www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityonline
- *Social Security Benefits for People with Disabilities:* www.ssa.gov/disability
- *Social Security Office Locator:* <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

Housing Resources:

Kentucky Public Housing Agency Contact Information:
www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/ky.cfm

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Kentucky
<http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/kentucky>

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:
www.disability.gov/resource/disability-govs-guide-housing

Kentucky Resources

Kentucky Department of Education: Special Education

Division of Learning Services

(502) 564-4970

<http://education.ky.gov/specialed/excep>

Transition Information: <http://education.ky.gov/specialed/excep/Pages/Transition.aspx>

Kentucky Transition One Stop

www.transitiononestop.org

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

(502) 564-4440

ovr.ky.gov

Find your local office: <http://ovr.ky.gov/programservices/district.htm>

Transition from School to Work for Students with Disabilities:

<http://ovr.ky.gov/programservices/transition.htm>

Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education

Pathways to Careers and Special Programs

(502) 564-4286

(800) 223-5632

<http://kytech.ky.gov>

Kentucky Division of Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities

Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services

(502) 564-7700

<http://dbhdid.ky.gov/ddid/>

Kentucky Department of Education Technical Assistance Manual on Autism for Kentucky Schools

<http://education.ky.gov/specialed/excep/pages/form-and-documents.aspx>