



Transition Information: Missouri

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - All special education students must begin working on the transition component of their IEP during their freshman year of high school if not earlier.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - Individuals with autism must complete some form of transition assessment before they turn sixteen years old. They must then create a transition team to develop a transition plan for the student's IEP.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. The age of majority in Missouri is 18.
 - The student should be informed of the pending transfer of rights, and a statement of consent should be included in the IEP. The student should spend that year preparing for the transfer.
 - 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.
- *Before the age of 21:*
 - Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is provided to students until they achieve a regular high school diploma or when they turn 21 years old.
 - Individuals will receive a certificate of attendance if they are unable to complete the graduation requirements by the time they turn 21 years old.

Starting the Transition Process:

Individuals with autism must complete some form of transition assessment before they turn sixteen years old. They must then create a transition team to develop a transition plan for the student's IEP. All special education students must begin working on the transition component of their IEP during their freshman year of high school if not earlier.

The IEP should include information about post-secondary goals, and any transition services that will help the student achieve those post-secondary goals, including instruction, development of vocational skills and training for independent living. These goals should be listed in the IEP with a list of annual goals. IEP meetings should occur annually to monitor the progress of the student and see if the student completed his or her IEP goals. At these meetings, the transition team should also alter any of the prospective services and outcomes depending on the student's progress. They should be invited to participate in making the decisions about their future. Their preferences and strengths should be what dictate the services and the provisions of the student's IEP. Therefore, if the individual is not in attendance, someone needs to ensure that his or her wishes are taken into consideration during the process of creating the transition plan.

Education:

FAPE is provided to students until they achieve a regular high school diploma or when they turn 21 years old.

The state has minimum graduation requirements and LEAs can add to them if they feel it is necessary. Diploma options include a regular standard high school diploma or a certificate of attendance. Individuals will receive a certificate of attendance if they are unable to complete the graduation requirements by the time they turn 21 years old. However, that is not counted as a dropout, and if they are able to meet their IEP goals, it is possible to graduate with an equivalent high school diploma. Any allowances must be addressed within the student's IEP. Missouri also does not require a state exit exam to receive a diploma.

Within a student's IEP, there should be a list of prospective coursework and instruction that will enable the individual to achieve his or her long term goals. If this is done, schools will have a clear curriculum to administer to the student. This will allow the student to better understand and prepare for what he or she must do in school. The course work can lead towards getting a high school diploma, continuing special education programs until age 21, going to college or even preparing for some form of vocational training or employment. The IEP should also include whether the student is

planning on going to college and what graduation plan (diploma vs. certificate) he or she is planning on pursuing.

Guardianship:

The age of majority in Missouri is 18 years old. At the age of 18, all rights to make decisions about a disabled individual's welfare will transfer to that individual from his or her parents or legal guardians, unless the student is deemed incapable of making those kinds of responsible decisions, such as medical or financial decisions.

If a court finds that the student is incapable of making such decisions, they can appoint a guardian once a petition has been filed in the court by a desired guardian. A guardian will be someone that the probate court feels is capable of taking care of a person who is determined by medical professionals and the court to be "incapacitated", and therefore unable to make certain decisions. Alternatively, one can have a conservator appointed to protect the property of someone who is also determined to be too disabled to make the best financial and property decisions for themselves. Usually, parents or family members are appointed as guardians or conservators. Individuals above the age of 14 with no living parents can ask the judge to consider their choice of guardian if they are deemed capable of making that decision.

Once the petition is filed with the local court, the disabled individual and the other party must appoint attorneys to represent them during the hearing. The duties of a guardian/conservator are to fulfill the individual's wishes and protect his or her best interests. The guardian's duties are specified in the court, based on the severity of the person's disability. Nevertheless, if the court feels that the guardian is not appropriately fulfilling his or her duties, the court can terminate the guardianship. The guardianship can also be terminated if the individual is later considered capable of making responsible decisions.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is made up of three core programs: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Disability Determination Services (DDS), and Independent Living (IL). All three programs are dedicated to providing quality services to our consumers and to increasing their independence. Most students begin vocational rehabilitation programs when they are in high school and have a VR counselor who helps assess their skills and develop a plan that will lead towards employment (IPE), including various training and placement programs. To find a local office, visit <https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation/vr-offices>.

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:

Missouri Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/mo.cfm

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Missouri

<http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/missouri>

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

www.disability.gov/resource/disability-govs-guide-housing

Missouri Resources

Missouri Office of Special Education

Division of Learning Services

specialeducation@dese.mo.gov

<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education>

Post-Secondary Transition Information

<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/compliance/post-secondary-transition>

Transition Programs

<https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/effective-practices/transition-programs>

Vocational Rehabilitation

Missouri Department of Education

(877) 222-8963

<https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation>

Transition Services: <https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation/transition-services>

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Missouri Department of Mental Health

(573) 751-4054

Toll free: (800) 207-9329

ddmail@dmh.mo.gov

dmh.mo.gov/dd

Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative

Division of Mental Health

www.autismguidelines.dmh.mo.gov