

Transition Information: Oklahoma

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - The transition planning should begin, and the transition part of the IEP should begin to be developed.
 - The IEP should contain information regarding post-secondary goals in the areas of instruction, employment and living skills.
 - Age-appropriate assessments should be conducted to assess the current skill set of the student and the predicted skill set of the student once he or she has completed his or her IEP goals.
 - A transition team should be formed.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - The transition plan goes into effect at age 16.
 - By the age of 16, the IEP should include any training, instruction and rehabilitation programs that the student will be involved in over the following few years, as well as any agency participation that is specific to the transition process.
 - By the age of 16, individuals should be involved in the creation of their transition IEPs and should be invited to the annual IEP meetings to review goals and state their preferences and interests
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Oklahoma is 18).
 - At 17, a statement of consent and acknowledgement must be included in the IEP that states that the student and the family understand that this transfer of rights will occur, as well as the responsibilities that result from this 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.

Starting the Transition Process:

Transition planning must begin when the student is 14 years old. At this age, there should be information regarding post-secondary goals in the areas of instruction, employment and living skills in the IEP. Age-appropriate assessments should be conducted to assess the current skill set of the student and the predicted skill set of the student once he or she has completed his or her IEP goals.

The IEP will go into effect when the student turns 16. Post-secondary goals should be concrete by age 16. Information regarding the future course work and training the student will receive should be included in the IEP. It should specifically detail which agencies will be used and any other related services that the student will require. If other external agencies will be used, representatives of those agencies should be contacted to be part of the IEP meetings. IEP meetings should occur annually, at which goals are revised and progress is assessed. The transition team should include the student (after they turn 16 years old), their parents, teachers, therapists, agency representatives and other people that know the student well and have been involved in their educational and vocational lives in the past. IEPs should also include a summary of performance to assess the progress of the student.

Education:

Prospective coursework should be included in the IEP for every level of the student's schooling so that the school and the local district have an idea as to how the student's curriculum should be organized based on the goals of his or her education. If higher education such as college is being considered, preparation for that goal should be included in the IEP, including time to prepare and take the required standardized tests, and to complete the applications with all the necessary information. Also, vocational training and skill-specific training should be included in the IEP. A specific diploma option and prospective graduation date should be included in the IEP.

FAPE is available to students with disabilities until they complete their educational programs or until they turn 21 years old.

Pertaining to graduation, the state has an established set of minimum requirements for graduation, which LEAs can add to. The only diploma option that the state of Oklahoma mandates is the achievement of the standard high school diploma. The allowances for those requirements include alternate courses to achieve required credits and extensions for assignments. Any other allowances need to be approved and included in the individual's IEP. There is a state exit exam required to achieve the standard high school diploma, but disabled students are not required to take the exam unless it is specified in their IEP.

Guardianship:

The age of majority in Oklahoma is 18 years old. At this age, all rights will be transferred from the individual's guardians (e.g. parents) to the student, which includes the rights to make decisions about their own welfare, such as health-related, financial or educational decisions. The student and their parents should be informed of this transfer by the student's 17th birthday and some form of signed acknowledgement should be included in the student's IEP by then. Throughout that year, the student should prepare and be reminded of the upcoming responsibilities they will have and the possible consequences of making the wrong decisions.

If they feel uncomfortable about making these important decisions or if their families feel that the student is too incapacitated to understand their best interests and the responsibilities of their decisions, a guardian can be appointed for the individual. This process should begin as early as the student's 17th birthday so that the legal proceedings have time to take place properly. A petition should be filed with the district court declaring that the person is considered to be incapacitated and therefore in need of a guardian to make decisions for them. Lawyers should be appointed for the prospective guardians and the disabled individual who will represent the two parties during the court hearing. Medical professionals should provide evidence to the court concerning the level of disability of the student, as well as whether or not the student is capable of making informed responsible decisions about their welfare. The judge or jury will decide whether it is necessary for the individual to have a guardian and if so who the best guardian for the individual will be. There are other options besides plenary or full guardianship. These options include conservatorship (to look after the finances and property of the individual) or limited guardianship (whose powers and terms will be detailed by the judge during the hearing). There are also special guardians who are appointed for short-term periods of time.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) expands opportunities for employment, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency by helping Oklahomans with disabilities bridge barriers to success in the workplace, school and at home. There is a transition: school-to-work program, which includes vocational counseling, guidance and assessment to determine what the best interests and opportunities for the student are. They also offer work-study programs and work adjustment training to ensure that the student can adapt to working within their daily routine. They have supported employment and job placement to help the students find a place for themselves after they leave school. This process usually starts two years before the student graduates high school, so at approximately 16 years old.

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:

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

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

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

Oklahoma Resources

Special Education Services

Oklahoma Department of Education

(405) 521-4869

<http://www.ok.gov/sde/special-education>

Secondary Transition for Students with Disabilities: www.ok.gov/sde/secondary-transition

Oklahoma CareerTech

Department of Career and Technology Education

(800) 522-5810

okcareertech.org

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

(405) 951.3400

(800) 845-8476

www.okrehab.org

info@okdrs.gov

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: www.okrehab.org/drupal/job-seekers/dvr

Developmental Disabilities Services

Oklahoma Department of Human Services

(405) 521-6267

www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/dd