

Transition Information: Alabama

Timeline

- *Before the age of 14:*
 - The transition planning should begin by the time the student turns 14 years old.
 - A transition team should be assembled and families should gather information regarding the strengths and preferences of the student and the possible paths that the student can take towards a specific long-term goal.
- *Before the age of 16:*
 - The transition IEP must be in effect by age 16 and meetings should be conducted and the IEP must be updated annually. This should outline the strengths, weakness and the individual's desires for their future.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The vocational rehabilitation process should begin at least 2 years prior to high school graduation.
 - The individual should meet with a counselor and discuss the best employment and living options for the student.
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin (if applicable). (The age of majority in Alabama is 18)
 - 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 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.
- *Before the age of 18:*
 - 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.
 - Changes to the IEP must be made before the student's 18th birthday
 - 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.
- *At age 18:*
 - Register to vote.
 - 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.
 - Begin the guardianship process. The age of majority in Alabama is 19.
- *At age 19:*
 - All education rights switch the adult at age 19. The guardianship process should be complete before age 19, the age of majority in Alabama.

Starting the Transition Process:

Transition Services must begin not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16 or earlier if appropriate and is updated annually thereafter.

Education:

Students with disabilities have three pathways for earning the Alabama High School Diploma (AHSD). Students may choose between the General Education Pathway and the Essentials/Life Skills Pathway. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for the Alabama Alternate Assessment are eligible for the Alternative Achievement Standards (AAS) Pathway to earn the AHSD.

Learn more at

<http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Diploma/Diploma%20Pathways%20for%20Students%20with%20Disabilites%20PowerPoint.pdf#search=occupational%20diploma>

Guardianship:

Alabama state law states that all educational rights shift to the adult student at age 19. The changes to the IEP that need to be made need to be made before the student's 18th birthday and the student should be informed of the aforementioned changes before their 18th birthday.

If one believes that the student is unable to make their own education-related decisions, families can choose to appoint an *educational representative*, which can be a parent or any other adult individual. This is less expensive and less formal than trying to ascertain formal guardianship over the student. However, the educational representative only has power over educational decisions.

If the student is thought to be incapable of making an informed decision on educational decisions, the families must fill out *The Certification Form of the Inability of a Student to Provide Informed Consent for Educational Decisions Made Under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act*. Learn more about the procedures for determining the inability of an adult student with a disability to provide informed consent when IDEA rights are transferred at the age of majority at

<https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Policy/Procedures%20For%20Determining%20Inability%20To%20Provide%20Informed%20Consent.pdf>.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The types of services available through VRS are as varied as the people it serves and are designed specifically to meet the needs of each individual. Available through any of the 21 VRS offices statewide, services can include educational services; vocational assessment, evaluation and counseling; job training; assistive technology; orientation and mobility training; and job

placement. The most information on vocational rehabilitation can be accessed on the website for the Alabama Department for Rehabilitation Services: www.rehab.alabama.gov/individuals-and-families/vocational-rehabilitation-service-general

To be eligible, you must fill out an application for the rehabilitation program and be a recipient of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or a beneficiary of Social Security Disability Insurance. (SSDI)

Various offices for rehabilitation services in Alabama can be found in the Vocational Rehabilitation Service Consumer Guide at www.rehab.alabama.gov/docs/vocational-rehabilitation-service/consumer-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=0

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 (voice) 800-772-1213 or (TTY) 800-325-0778.

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:

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

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

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

Alabama Resources:

Alabama State Department of Education

(334) 242-8114

Web: www.alsde.edu

Transition Services Homepage: <http://alex.state.al.us/specialed/transition.html>

Alabama Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

(334) 281-8780

www.rehab.alabama.gov/individuals-and-families/vocational-rehabilitation-service-general

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council

Alabama Dept. of Mental Health

(334) 353-7197

(334) 353-7062 FAX

www.autism.alabama.gov

Alabama Department of Mental Health

www.mh.alabama.gov

1-800-367-0955 (Toll-free in Alabama)

(334) 242-3454