

Transition Information: Alaska

Timeline

- *Before the age of 14:*
 - If the IEP for age 14 and older is to be outcome-oriented, a statement of transition service needs to be developed by age 14 or younger.
- *Before the age of 16:*
 - All IEPs must include a statement of needed transition services, which include the strategies and activities associated with the individual's post-secondary education and training
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Alaska 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.
 - The vocational rehabilitation process should begin at least 2 years prior to high school graduation.
 - Students should meet with a counselor and discuss the best employment and living options.
- *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.
 - 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.
 - The guardianship process should be complete.

Starting the Transition:

If the IEP for age 14 and older is to be outcome-oriented, a statement of transition service needs to be developed by age 14 or younger.

For every student starting at age 14, transition services need to be discussed at every IEP meeting. The IEP should consist of ideas about post-secondary outcomes pertaining to employment, education and independent living. The plan should be as detailed as possible for the next few years of the student's life. It should be in agreement with the student's preferences and therefore, if the student is unable to participate in their own IEP meetings, then, someone should be present at the meeting that will advocate their preferences. The items of discussion increase upon the individuals 16th birthday.

By age 17, the transfer of rights must be discussed at the age of majority, which is 18 years old in Alaska.

Education:

By age 16, all IEPs need to include a statement of needed transition services, which include the strategies and activities associated with the individual's post-secondary education and training. This will include relevant information in instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment, other post-school adult living objectives and if necessary, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation .

"The statement of transition service needs is the identification of, and planning for, educational courses (required, elective, modified or specially designed courses as well as other educational experiences in the school or the community) that the student will be taking in each grade after turning 16 years old." (PART IV_ IEP)

From age 16 onwards, the student must be allowed to attend any IEP meeting.

The High School Graduation Qualifying Exam is required for all students seeking a diploma and graduation. The exam is usually taken the spring of sophomore year. It can be taken with or without accommodations and modifications, but the final decision must be made by February 1 of the student's junior year of whether to attempt to graduate with a state high school diploma.

Read the Notice of Procedural Safeguards: Parental Rights for Special Education here: https://education.alaska.gov/tls/sped/pdf/FY14_General/ProSafeguards.pdf/

Read the Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments here <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/Assessments/accommodations/ParticipationGuidelinesDec2014.pdf>.

The most widely-used alternative is the Alternate Assessment program. This program is specifically for those who cannot complete the state-issued graduation requirements and still want a certificate of completion for an alternate educational program.

Guardianship/Conservatorship:

The age of majority in Alaska is 18. At this age, the rights to make all decisions related to the student's welfare transfer from the parent or guardian to the student. The student should be informed of this transfer at least a year before the transfer is set to occur, which means that the student should be informed of the transfer by their 17th birthday. A statement of consent should be included in the IEP and the student should spend that year preparing for the transfer. This means that the parents should remind the student of the transfer and teach them how to make appropriate decisions, relating to their health, hygiene, finances and education.

If the student feels uncomfortable about making decisions about their welfare, or if the family feels that the individual's disability impedes their ability to properly take care of themselves, the proposed guardian can file a petition at the local circuit court.

Since the court process can take longer than four months, it is best to begin at age 17 at the latest in petitioning for guardianship. It is important that the individual at least tries to choose the person who becomes their guardian.

Alaska Office of Public Advocacy: Family Guardianship Program: doa.alaska.gov/opa/pg

Vocational Rehabilitation:

To qualify for vocational rehabilitation, an individual must be having trouble finding a job due to a mental or physical disability and have some form of certified assessment of the condition, and must have the needed services to get and keep a job. Also, it will help if the individual is receiving SSI benefits.

Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: <http://labor.state.ak.us/dvr>

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:

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

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

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

Alaska Resources:

Special Education

Alaska Department of Education

(907) 465-2800

www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped

Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

(907) 465-2814

(800) 478-2815

Fax (907) 465-2856

labor.state.ak.us/dvr

Transition Tools for Teachers, Parents and Students:

<http://labor.alaska.gov/dvr/transition.htm>

Alaska Youth Transition Handbook

From the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

<http://labor.alaska.gov/dvr/alaska-youth-transition-handbook-2012.pdf>

Alaska Department Health and Social Services: Autism Program

(907) 269-3400

(800) 799-7570 if calling from outside Anchorage.

www.hss.state.ak.us/autism

State of Alaska Special Education Handbook:

[www.asdk12.org/forms/uploads/AK SPED Handbook.pdf](http://www.asdk12.org/forms/uploads/AK_SPED_Handbook.pdf)