



Transition Information: Maryland

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - Transition planning and transition services should begin in the school year when the student celebrates their 14th birthday.
 - Students should be involved in creating their IEP at the **age of 14** by explaining to their transition team and school staff what they want to do after they finish secondary school.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - By 16, the transition plan should include a coordinated set of activities and linkages or her needed transition services as well as those services they will need in the future.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Maryland 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.
- *At age 21:*
 - Individuals are entitled to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) until age 21, or they have completed either a diploma or certificate program. After that, they must meet the eligibility criteria of the schools and service providers.

Starting the Transition:

In the state of Maryland, transition planning and transition services should begin in the school year when the student celebrates their 14th birthday. These services are specifically supposed to lead to results that will help the student successfully transition from school to other post-school outcomes, including higher education or employment. It should also take into account a student's needs and preferences and include services related to future education, training and living skills.

Students should be involved in creating their IEP at the age of 14 by explaining to their transition team and school staff what they want to do after they finish secondary school. The services and goals that are included in the IEP should also be in accordance with the assessments that the student undergoes and the student's current and predicted skill set. It should include prospective coursework and there should be annual IEP meetings with the team to discuss any alterations that need to be made to the plan and to monitor the progress of the student.

By 16, the transition plan should include a coordinated set of activities and linkages or her needed transition services as well as those services they will need in the future.

Another helpful related document for transition planning is the *Maryland Exit Document*. In conjunction with either a state standard high school diploma or a state certificate of completion, the exit document is supposed to provide future employers, teachers and service providers with an idea of what the student can do and what the student needs. IF the document is completed while the IEP is being created, it can serve as a guide as to what the student wants to do when they complete school, and hence, can serve as an important resource for the transition IEP. The sections included are: demographic information, course of study, educational accommodations/supports, employment preferences, personal attributes, personal interests, employment accommodations, basic skills ratings, work history, and references. (mdexit.org)

Education:

All students are eligible to receive the Maryland High School Diploma if they complete the state-mandated requirements for graduation. They must earn 21 credits and complete 75 hours of student service. These requirements could be different depending on the local school system. They are also required to take a High School Assessment Test for every subject they try and receive credit for. The state does provide allowances for getting this diploma as long as these allowances are listed in the IEP. Individuals are also often and given extensions for completing their credits. However, all students are given the same test and require the same score to pass. If a student fails the test, he or she can retake the same exam as many times as it is offered, which is three times per year.

Individuals who are unable to get that degree can be awarded a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion if they either have 1) spent four years beyond 8th grade in a school and is to have developed the necessary skills to enter the world, or 2) completed four years beyond 8th grade and will be 21 years old at the end of their current school year.

Individuals are entitled to FAPE until they turn 21 or have completed either a diploma or certificate program. After that, they must meet the eligibility criteria of the schools and service providers.

Guardianship/Conservatorship:

The age of majority in Maryland is 18, which means that all rights to make life-related decisions transfer to the student from their parents or former guardians. However, if the person is thought to be incapable of making decisions about his or her own welfare, a guardian can be appointed well before the student's 18th birthday. The court system appoints the guardian for the individual, and there is a priority of individuals who are eligible to become his or her guardian. The first possibility is someone that the individual chooses. Other possibilities are blood relatives or close family friends.

To begin the process, a petition must be filed in the circuit court of the county that the disabled individual resides and state the reasons why a guardian needs to be appointed, and over what the guardian would have control (e.g person, property, etc.). It should also include a description of the individual's assets. It should contain two valid certificates from medical professionals who have described the necessity of appointing the guardian for that particular individual and any other legal information.

After the petition is filed, the court will send a request to the respondent and their lawyers to respond to the guardianship request within three weeks of the order being issued. The disabled individual will with a lawyer to the hearing for the requested guardianship and a judge or jury will decide whether it is necessary.

Maryland State Bar Association: Appointing a Guardian:

www.msba.org/publications/brochures/guardian.aspx

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The division of rehabilitation services provides vocational guidance and counseling, career guidance and assessment, job training, technical training, job placement, supported employment and rehabilitation assistive technology.

To learn about the VR process, visit <http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/Pages/expect.aspx>

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:

Maryland Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

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

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Maryland

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

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

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

Maryland Resources

Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

Maryland State Department of Education

www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv

Family Support Services for Families of Children with Disabilities:

www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/about/family_support_services.htm

Maryland Transitioning Youth

Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities

www.mdtransition.org

Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services

Maryland State Department of Education

(410) 554-9385

www.dors.maryland.gov

Autism Spectrum Disorder Services:

<http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/specialized/Pages/autism.aspx>

Workforce & Technology Center:

<http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/WTC>

Services for High School Students

<http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/specialized/transition>

Maryland State Department of Education Transition Planning Guide: *Preparing Children with Disabilities to Move from School to Appropriate Postsecondary Outcomes*

www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/5F4F5041-02EE-4F3A-B495-5E4B3C850D3E/23109/TransitionPlanningGuide_updatedJan2010.pdf

Developmental Disabilities Administration

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

(410) 767-5600

<http://dda.dhmh.maryland.gov>