

Transition Information: Utah

Timeline

- *By 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.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - The IEP will go into effect by the time the student turns 16 years old. It should include a statement of needed transition services.
 - This should include all activities and courses that the student will be taking through high school and beyond high school, any experiences to foster community involvement skills and any vocational rehabilitation services.
 - Students should begin to look into Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Utah 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.
- *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:*
 - Special education programs are terminated once the student fulfills their IEP goals or when they turn 21 years old.

Starting the Transition Process:

Transition planning should begin when the student turns 16 years old. This means that the IEP will go into effect then, which means it is best done to prepare the transition portion of the IEP at least by 14 years old. To begin the process, it is best to prepare a transition team of those who understand the student best. It should include the student when they turn 16 years old, the parents, teachers, therapists and any other representatives from any external agencies that are either currently being used or will be used in the future to help the student achieve their post-secondary goals. Also, assessments should be conducted to determine the current skill level of the student, both academically and functionally.

The basis of the transition IEP is to explain the student's desired post-secondary outcomes, including detailed outcomes relating to post-secondary education and instruction, employment and independent living situations. The student's post-secondary goals should be based on their preferences and also should be appropriate for their expected level of skill and appropriate for the age that they plan on beginning their adult life (after they complete school). The transition team should include a statement of needed transition services, which relate to the student achieving their post-secondary goals. This should include all activities and courses that the student will be taking through high school and beyond high school, any experiences to foster community involvement skills and any vocational rehabilitation services. It is also important to identify any transition services that will be paid for by other agencies or are provided free of charge.

IEP meetings should occur annually to monitor the completion of all the short-term objectives and the progress that the student is making. These short-term objectives should help the student achieve their final post-secondary goal. Depending on the progress, the team can choose to alter the post-secondary goals of the student to match the level of progress the student is making.

Education:

The student's IEP should include a detailed curriculum of each course that the student will be taking through high school and at what level of schooling the student will be taking each course. This will help the school have the proper preparation and services that they need to implement that curriculum and choose the program that is most beneficial for the student achieving their post-secondary outcomes. The IEP should also include any courses or instruction that the student will be taking outside of school. It should include information about post-secondary education, if applicable. If the student is planning on going to college, it is important to include when the student will be taking the required standardized tests and completing their applications. Also, it should include

what diploma option the student wants and also a prospective graduation date. There are many college preparation programs available at the aforementioned website.

In terms of graduation, the state provides a set of minimum requirements for high school graduation, which LEAs can add to if they see fit. There are many diploma options for students with disabilities, including the standard high school diploma and the certificate of completion available to students who have not completed all graduation requirements. For the certificate, if the student receives the diploma, this either indicates that student passed all subtests on the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT). Students who did not pass all parts can only graduate with diploma if they have met all district course requirements, participate in UBSCT remediation, and have documented at least 3 attempts to pass the UBSCT, UNLESS student's IEP team determines that student should take Utah Alternate Assessment (UAA). All districts should provide criteria for students who have not met diploma requirements to exit school with a certificate. The state also allows students to take alternate courses to earn the required credits, and grants extensions on getting those credits. All allowances for graduation requirements must be approved and included in the student's IEP. The state of UTAH provides FAPE until the student turns 22 years old.

Guardianship:

The age of majority in Utah is 18 years old. 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. Some 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 such decisions, or the family feels that the student is too incapacitated to make those decisions, it is possible to petition for guardianship at a local court. The desired guardian or conservator should file the petition. After that, the disabled individual will be granted a hearing, and will be represented by legal counsel. It is best if both sides are represented by attorneys. After evidence has been presented of the student's level of disability, the judge or jury will make the decision whether plenary guardianship or full guardianship is necessary. If they feel that that is too restrictive, there are other alternatives, including limited guardianship, conservatorship, representative payee or power of attorney. The terms of the guardianship will be set by the judge and also any methods of termination will be set by the judge. The guardian's usual responsibilities are to determine the individual's living situation and provide them with their basic needs, help them with any medical issues and maintain their financial affairs.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The program offers a variety of services that help teach students about how to get a job and maintain a job. The process begins by completing the required application and contacting a local VR office to obtain a meeting with a counselor after your application has been approved. After this, they will conduct an evaluation of the student to assess the current level of vocational skills the student has and knowing that information, the counselor can work with the student and their families to get them services that will help them prepare for the job market, through counseling, assistive technology services, career information (which will allow them to choose a job that they feel most comfortable in and are interested in doing). The VR offices also have independent living services and benefits planning services that will help the student get social security benefits if needed. They have the Work Ability program and the Choose to Work Program which provides the students career resources to learn more about each possible industry they can work in. Also, those programs provide job development and placement services, on-the-job training and other job supports.

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:

Utah Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

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

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Utah

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

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

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

Utah Resources

Special Education Services

State Office of Education

(801) 538-7500

www.schools.utah.gov/sars

Utah's Transition Action Guide: for Students with Disabilities and Agencies

www.schools.utah.gov/sars/Programs-Areas/Transition/GuidelinesAction.aspx

Work Ability Utah

(877) 246-9675

www.workabilityutah.org

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

(801) 538-7530

www.usor.utah.gov/division-of-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation

Division of Services for People with Disabilities

Utah Department of Human Services

(844) 275-3773

www.dspd.utah.gov

Utah Parent Center

(801) 272-1051

Fax: (801) 272-8907

www.utahparentcenter.org