Transition Planning

Integrating required compliance with the spirit of the law.

Krista Robbins

Purpose

The purpose of this training:

to increase competency and understanding of the transition planning and implementation process.

Transition Definition
as defined in IDEA 2004

"a coordinated set of activities for a student that:

▶ A. is designed to be within a **results-oriented** process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to postsecondary activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

Transition Definition cont.

- B. is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's **strengths, preferences, and interests**; and

- C. includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other postsecondary adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation." (Section 602, (34)).

3 Major Principles of Transition Planning

Transition is:

- Student-centered

- Results-oriented

- A coordinated effort

Student-centered

▶ IDEA **requires** educators to focus on more than just **needs**. Since 1990, the focus of transition planning has included the student's **preferences** and **interests**. The inclusion of student **strengths** was added with the 2004 amendments.

▶ According to IDEA 2004, transition services must be based upon "student **needs**, taking into account student **strengths, preferences, and interests**."

Student-centered

▶ Student is actively engaged in the transition process and planning for their future. The plan is centered on the student's dreams. It is also centered on what the student can already do.

▶ The student's and family's dreams for the future are at the center of the planning process.

Student Centered Planning

Students with disabilities who have strong self-determinations skills and who understand and participate in the development of their IEP have better academic and transition outcomes. In addition, students with disabilities who have learned self-determination skills experience better post-school employment outcomes, a higher quality of life, and greater independence.

(Konrad, Fowler, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007; Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenbark, & Little, 2015)

Common Questions about Involving Students

Where do I begin?

Start small. Begin with one student or one piece of the transition planning process.

How can I fit this in with all of my other responsibilities?

Figure out what works for your class. This may mean providing individualized or group instruction on the IEP process, including transition planning. Always present information in a way students can understand. Another option is to weave this process into your existing self-determination curriculum or general education curriculum.

What if my students don't wish to participate?

Help students to recognize the value in their involvement, but be prepared to be patient. Students with little or no experience in the IEP process might take some convincing. One way to accomplish this is by scaffolding the process and allowing them to begin with a manageable component, thus increasing their chances of early success. Students who experience success are more likely to feel empowered and more willing to take an active role in the process.

What about students with more complex disabilities?

Every student can participate at some level. It's up to you to find a meaningful way for them to contribute, be it through the use of gestures, by showing pictures depicting their strengths and goals, or by activating a switch to begin a slide presentation. It's usually as easy as adapting communication strategies already in place.

Will the meeting still be effective?

When students offer their input, IEP meetings focus on what's important—a future that the students themselves are helping to define. Don't worry. There will still be time to present your data and make your recommendations. In the meantime, you might be surprised by the new, more positive tone of your meetings.

What if parents or my administrator are not onboard?

Gaining support from other members of the IEP team is important, but first you may find it necessary to show them the value of this change. Start by communicating the benefits of the process and of allowing students to make small contributions (e.g., make introductions or share assessment results in the IEP meeting). Then build from there.

(https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tran-scp/cresource/q1/p02/)

Ultimate Goal: Student led IEP meetings, but this doesn't happen overnight.

Results-oriented

- Requires that the focus of transition planning be on measurable postsecondary goals that include postsecondary education, integrated employment, and full participation in the community.

- requires that schools be held accountable for providing an educational program and transition services that will facilitate the movement from high school to postsecondary goals such as employment, postsecondary education, and independent living.

Results-oriented cont.

- ▶ focuses on academic, as well as functional student achievement.

- ▶ all goals and activities found in the IEP must reflect what the student is expected to know or be able to do to meet his or her measurable postsecondary goals.

- ▶ The entire IEP, then, becomes a transition IEP there should not be anything in the IEP that does not lead to the identified measurable postsecondary goals for the student.

Coordinated Effort

- Schools are required to work with outside agencies, families, and the student themselves in order to effectively *implement the transition plan.*

- *LEAs (local education agencies, or school districts) are required to invite* agencies who might be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to attend IEP meetings.

Coordinated Effort cont.

- ▶ required to coordinate transition services by linking with all of the various agencies and support services that are involved in a student's life.

- ▶ requires a coordinated set of activities with a shared responsibility between people within and outside of the school setting.

- ▶ documented by the signed release of information and inviting a representative from an outside agency to the IEP meeting.

Pre-Employment Transition Services PreETS

Schools, in collaboration with Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, will need offer PETS to transition age students with disabilities (ages 14-21). As spelled out in WIOA, (PETS) include:

- **Job exploration** counseling

- **Work-based learning experiences**, (which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experience outside the traditional school setting including internships, that are provided in an integrated environment)

- Counseling on opportunities in comprehensive transition or enrollment in **postsecondary educational programs**

- Workplace readiness training to develop **social skills and independent living**

- Instruction in **self-advocacy/**peer mentoring

Adult Services/Resources

- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**-funds the "project Skills" program, paid work experience program available for students age 16 or older who qualify. Assists individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment. Services include counseling, training, job placement, and more.

- **Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)-**Can offer services to individuals who have blindness or a visual impairment. Services include blindness training, rehabilitation counseling, assistance finding and keeping a job, tools and supplies needed to reach goals, vocational training,, postsecondary preparation, assistive technology, and more.

- **Social Security Administration**-SSDI and SSI: provide monthly income for people with disabilities, but the rules that affect eligibility are different for both.

Adult Services/Resources cont.

- **Centers for Independent Living**-Serval centers throughout the state can assist with housing, community resources, independent living skills, peer support, employment, self-advocacy, personal safety, individual rights, and attendant management.

- **Mental Health Centers**-provide a full range of mental health services including: emergency care, evaluations, case management, consultation, and outpatient care.

- **One-stop Career Centers/Career Learning Centers**-Provides job listings and help with completing applications and employer contacts.

- **Adjustment Training Centers**-provide day and/or residential services to individuals with developmental disabilities, primarily age 16 and older, including community living training, home/community based services, follow along services, pre-vocational and vocational training.

Adult Services/Resources cont.

- **Advocacy Services**-provides services such as information and referral, advocates, client assistance programs, self-advocacy training and more.

- **Resource/Service Coordinator**-Assist individuals and their families with accessing services.

- **Post-secondary Schools**-private/public colleges, universities, community colleges, technical colleges, and business and traditional schools. Postsecondary schools have staff specifically assigned to counsel students with disabilities.

- **Easer Seals**-serves persons with disabilities of all ages across the state. Family services include medical equipment loan, equipment matches, wheelchair clinics, hearing aid lending, AgrAbility, and more.

Compliance on Indicator 13

Minimum requirements for Missouri State Improvement Plan compliance

Component **One**: Post-school goals
IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

▶ Must be written in 1st or 3rd person

▶ Must be something that takes place *after* graduation (ex. will attend, will take, will join, will continue working, will live, etc.)

▶ Must be measurable (test: if this goal was revisited years later, either yes or no would be the answer. Did they attend classes…yes or no. "Will explore, will consider, would like to, is planning on" are not measurable)

Component One: Post-school goals

▶ There must be a measurable goal, that takes place after high school, that addresses Education and/or training, employment and (if applicable) independent living.

▶ If the team doesn't feel that an independent living goal is necessary, it should be documented on Form C that "The team decided that it is not appropriate for [Student] to have a postsecondary goal for independent living."

Component One: Example

Upon completion of high school, Scott will attend automotive classes at an area community college.

After graduating from high school, I [Scott] will work as an auto mechanic.

Writing a goal for an unattainable dream…

▶ Writing a postsecondary goal for an unattainable or unreasonable dream may involve some creative thinking to include student desires and preferences.

▶ Ask "wh" questions:

  ▶ *Why do you want to do that?*

  ▶ *Where do you want to be?*

  ▶ *What do you like about that job?*

  ▶ Ex: Katie wants to be a veterinarian. Katie may be basing this on her desire to care for animals and enjoyment of working with animals.

Component **Two**: Updated annually
IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Were the postsecondary goals addressed/ updated in conjunction with the development of the current IEP?

Does the student still want the same things, or have they changed their mind in the past year? We all know this happens.

Component **Three**: Based on Appropriate Assessments IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Is the use of transition assessment(s) for the postsecondary goal(s) mentioned in the IEP or evident in the student's file?

There is a section of the PLAPF that specifically addresses assessments and their results.

This section needs to indicate that a **current** assessment, such as an interview, including date and interviewer name and title, was conducted that indicates the students preferences for employment, education/training, and independent living, their strengths, interests, and needs.

Component **Three**: Transition Assessment

► either (a) documented in the PLAAFP or (b) attached to the IEP in the file

► chosen to assess the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs.

► If an assessment is administered to all students as part of a grade, class, or school wide, then consent does not need to be obtained.

► If the student does not participate in the assessment (i.e. teacher survey or checklist), it falls under the category of an observation and consent is not required.

What is the purpose of transition assessments?

Transition experts have identified assessment activities as those which:

- identify the student's interests, needs, strengths, and preferences;

- determine postsecondary goals;

- develop relevant academic and functional skills instruction;

- identify appropriate transition services;

- identify necessary interagency supports and linkages; and

- evaluate instruction and supports already in place (Noonan, Morningstar, & Clark, 2005).

Age Appropriate Formal Transition Assessments:

- yield scores, which can be used to determine how a student compares to the "norm", if a skill is a deficit, and age and grade equivalencies.

- formal Assessments are available for use and bring with them assurance of validity and reliability.

- can be purchased for use with students with disabilities.

Formal Assessments

include the following:

- (a) achievement, (b) intelligence and cognitive performance tests, (c) adaptive behavior scales, (d) personality and behavioral-emotional status assessments, (e) aptitude tests, (f) interest assessments, (g) quality of life scales, (h) self-determination scales, (i) prevocational and employability scales, (j) vocational skills assessments, and (k) transition knowledge and skills inventories (Clark, 2007)

Examples of Formal Assessments

▶ Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)

▶ Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (WISC)

▶ Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ)

▶ ACT

▶ PLAN

▶ ASVAB
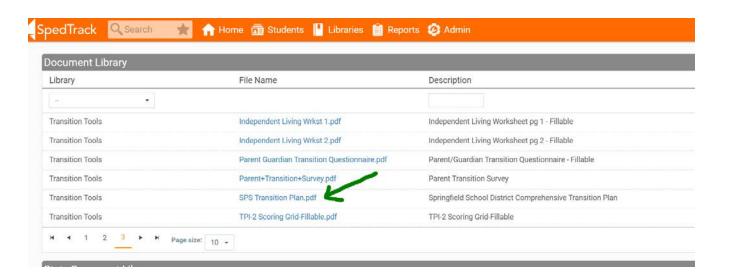
Age Appropriate Informal Transition Assessments

- consist of interviews, surveys, and checklists that provide more relevant and personal anecdotal information.

- can be expanded on if the administrator determines further, more in-depth assessment may be required to obtain additional information.

Informal Assessments

- provide information that will be used to plan transition services and activities, as well as identify areas where planning and instruction need to occur.

- The domains addressed by informal assessments include employment, further education/training, daily living, leisure activities, community participation, health, self-determination, communication and interpersonal relationships.

Springfield District Transition Assessment Plan

Each Assessment is linked within the document

Springfield District Transition Assessment Plan

Elementary: Grades K-3

Moderate to severely impairment-Prior to the IEP meeting, have parents sign release of information. Determine if the family is a client/consumer of the Regional Center. Before they can get any targeted case management or service coordination (Next Steps), they have to be consumers of the Regional Center.

- Postsecondary Considerations Elementary-Student
- Elementary Transition Inventory – completed by teacher
- Parent Transition Survey

Middle School: Grades 5-7

Moderate to severely impairment -Prior to the IEP meeting, have parents sign release of information. Invite Next Steps, or any other appropriate outside agency, to the meeting.

- Postsecondary Considerations Interview Grades 5-7
- Middle School Transition Inventory – completed by teacher
- Parent Transition Survey
- Missouri Connections or Career Interest Inventory - - Pictorial Version (if appropriate)
- TPI (for students who are up for reevaluation and going to be 16 before the next triennial)

High School: Secondary Grades 8-12

Prior to the IEP meeting, have parents sign release of information. Invite Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional Center (Next Step), Southwest Center for Independent Living, or any other appropriate outside agency to the meeting.

Verbal, mild to moderate

- Postsecondary Considerations Interview Grades 8-12
- High School Transition Inventory – completed by teacher
- Parent Transition Survey
- Missouri Connections
- Independent Living Assessment

Significant to severe

- Postsecondary Considerations Interview Grades 8-12-may/may not be effective. See "Note" as the bottom.
- High School Transition Inventory – completed by teacher
- Parent Transition Survey
- Missouri Connections or Pictorial Interest Inventory (if appropriate)
- Independent Living Assessment
- Vocational Evaluation (Grades 10-12)

Informal Transition Assessments:

- Parent Interviews/Family Questionnaires
- Teacher Surveys
- Behavior Observations
- Situational Assessments
- Observational Rating Scales
- Observational Checklists
- Person Centered Planning
- Environmental Assessment

Examples: E-JAM, C.I.T.E. learning styles inventory, Miller Individual Reading Inventory, and structured interviews.

Component **Four**: Transition services IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

▶ compliance only requires that one service be listed under each postsecondary goal. If there is only one service listed, it is typically listed as the school's responsibility.

▶ consider services in each area for each postsecondary goal:
  ▶ instruction
  ▶ related services
  ▶ community experience
  ▶ development of employment and other post-school adult living objective
  ▶ provision of a functional vocational evaluation (if appropriate)

Component **Four**: Example

- assist in setting up an appointment with community college

- walk through application process

- provide military practice through ROTC

- practice completing job applications

- practice job interview skills, give job shadowing opportunities, etc.

- collect information regarding the student's desired postsecondary educational involvement.

- collect information regarding the student's desired employment and career interests for adult life beyond college and/or postsecondary vocational training.

Component **Five**: Course of Study
IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

▶ Must align with the student's postsecondary goal.

▶ A multi-year description of coursework from the student's current grade to anticipated exit year designed to help achieve the student's desired post-school goal(s).

▶ Courses related to each postsecondary goal. Can be listed once on the form, or attached as a four-year plan.

Component Five Examples

If a student is interested in auto mechanics, then their course of study should include auto tech classes and other classes that will give them experience using tools and vocabulary associated with mechanics, as well as core content.

If a student is interested in graphic design, then their course of study should include art classes, creative design, computer classes, etc., as well as any core content.

Component **Six**: Annual IEP goals
IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

▶ college bound: reading, writing, and math are appropriate.

▶ not college bound IEP goals should show how they are going to make progress towards employment, education and training, and (if applicable) independent living goals. This is a focus on necessary skills rather than remediating weaknesses.

▶ For all students, these goals must be related to progress towards their postsecondary goals.

Component **Seven**: Student Invite

IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

▶ Is there evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services were discussed?

▶ For the current year, is there documented evidence in the IEP or cumulative folder that the student was invited to attend the IEP Team meeting?

Component **Eight**: Outside Agency Collaboration IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

- Are there services that are likely to be paid for by other agencies?

- Was consent obtained from parents or student if they are of age?

- If yes to both, then you must invite an outside agency representative to the meeting.

Determining Which Outside Agency

- ▶ If the student needs service coordination (developmental or intellectual disability) then the family needs to be linked with the Regional Office.

- ▶ If the student prefers to live independently, link the family with Southwest Center for Independent Living.

- ▶ If the student wishes to work competitively, link them with Vocational Rehabilitation.

Component **Eight**: Examples

- Regional Office
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Military Recruiter
- Area college disabilities services
- Representative from area Technical Schools
- Employment Agencies
- Preferred Family Health
- Job Coach
- Center for Independent Living
- Community integration specialist

Regional Office

One of our biggest responsibilities is to create these linkages with outside agencies. For our students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, one of the most important linkages is with the Regional Office. In order to access targeted case management and/or support coordination, families will have to have an open case with the Regional Office first, so it is important that we are helping to facilitate that we facilitate that connection.

The Spirit of the Law

What is it that makes the difference?

Using transition assessment results, to develop individualized transition programs that have meaning, lies at the heart of the transition process.

Making Transition Meaningful

Three principles of meaningful transition programming:

▶ Program of study

■ Community Experiences

■ Interagency Collaboration

Program of Study

- A program of study, as defined by Rowe et al. (in press), "is an individualized set of courses, experiences, and curriculum designed to develop students' academic and functional achievement to support the attainment of students' desired post-school goals" (p. 27).

- The student's interests and preferences guide the development of their curricular programming (Mazzotti et al., 2009).

- ensures that the student has exposure to classes and experiences that will facilitate success after graduation.

Program of Study

▶ should reflect occupational courses, work experiences, transition programs, and/or vocational education (Test et al., 2009).

▶ allow them to learn skills necessary to prepare them for this career field, it will also allow them to participate in specific courses to see if this is truly something in which they are interested .

▶ activities that teach life skills, adaptive skills, vocational skills, and self-determination, should be embedded in these courses.

Community Experiences

▶ Rowe et al. (in press) defined community experiences as "activities occurring outside of the school setting, supported with in-class instruction, where students apply academic, social, and/or general work behaviors and skills"(p. 25).

▶ According to Gaumer and colleagues (2004), community-based instruction programs are designed as alternatives for students with disabilities as a component of individualized transition planning and may have positive implications on postsecondary goal attainment.

Community Experiences

- are located outside of the high school and support youth skill development and generalization within the community.

- may include many different locations, such as hospitals, apartments or homes, local businesses, or any other locations within an individual's community setting where instruction might occur (Gaumer et al., 2004).

- increase student competence in the community by providing "meaningful learning experiences" (Wehman, 2013, p.61)

Interagency Collaboration

▶ Rowe et al. (in press) "interagency collaboration is a clear, purposeful, and carefully designed process that promotes cross-agency, cross program, and cross disciplinary collaborative efforts leading to tangible transition outcomes for youth" (p.29).

▶ This collaboration "encompasses formal and informal relationships between schools and adult agencies" (Noonan, Morningstar, & Gaumer Erickson, 2008, p. 133).

Interagency Collaboration

▶ Transition assessment results are used to determine which outside agencies are appropriate to support each student depending on their strengths, preferences, interests, and needs.

▶ Once identified, schools should facilitate collaboration between families and outside agencies, to build relationships, which will promote collaborative efforts to support successful outcomes for youth with disabilities (Noonan, Morningstar, & Gaumer Erickson, 2008).

Preparing for Postsecondary

Knowing the options

Responsibility as a Special Educator

- Know the different options for employment, education/training, independent living, and decision making.

- Know what outside agencies are in your area.

- Be knowledgeable of resources.

Options for Employment

- **Competitive-**performed within an integrated setting. Wages are at least minimum wage or higher and at a rate comparable to non-disabled workers performing the same tasks.

- **Supported-**assisted with obtaining and maintaining employment through job crews, enclaves, or job coaching. Supported employment is considered to be one form of employment in which wages are expected, together with benefits from an employer in a competitive workplace.

- **Sheltered-** segregated programs designed to help individuals with disabilities who are not able to work in a competitive employment setting. Sheltered workshops, day treatment, and work activity centers are examples of sheltered employment programs.

Options for Education/Training

- **Volunteering**-learning the skills specific to an environment in a non-paid position.

- **On the Job training**-Learning the skill set specific to the job you will be doing while being paid.

- **Postsecondary Education**-College classes that provide specialized instruction to help students build or refresh the basic academic skills necessary for success. OTC-AEL (Adult Education & Literacy), MSU-BEAR Power, MSU-BEAR Power, UMC-Thrive, UMSL-SUCCEED, UMKC-Propel

Options for Independent Living

- **Section 8 Housing-** Allows people with mild or moderate special needs and low incomes to live on their own in the community. However, it usually takes years to obtain a Section 8 voucher and, once acquired, there may not be any available Section 8 units for rent in the individual's community.

- **Shared Housing Arrangement-**Shared housing is defined as an arrangement in which two or more unrelated people share a house or an apartment.

Options for Independent Living

- **Assisted Living Facilities-** assisted living facilities house residents in their own apartments, or within a building or complex of buildings. The residents can cook in their units or eat in a communal dining hall, and they receive non-skilled care in their units, including assistance with bathing, cleaning and sometimes administration of medicine.

- **Group Home/Supported Living-**Live in supportive group homes with several other people with special needs. These homes could be staffed with counselors and other workers who help the residents live on their own, or, in some cases, the residents live without live-in assistance.

Options for Independent Living

- **Living with parents or family members-** Live with their parents or other family members. People with special needs who live with their parents don't have to experience the sometimes stressful transition into a different type of housing when they become adults, and they are usually surrounded by caregivers (their family members) who have experience with their specific special needs. As parents age, it may become impossible for them to care for their child anymore, and the transition from a life-long residence could be more traumatic for the child than if he had moved out when he was younger.

Decision Making Options

- Supported Decision Making (SDM)
- Medical Power of Attorney
- Durable Power of Attorney
- Limited Conservatorship
- Conservatorship
- Limited Guardianship
- Guardianship

Supported Decision Making

Supported decision-making (SDM) is an alternative to guardianship that allows an individual with a disability to work with a team and make his or her own choices about his or her own life. Under this model, the individual designates people to be part of a support network to help with decision-making.

SDM promotes self-determination, control and autonomy. It fosters independence.
Unlike substituted decision-making where guardians or family members or caregivers make decisions for the individual, supported decision-making enables the person to make his or her own decisions with assistance from a trusted network of supporters.

Why SDM is important

- People under guardianship experience a kind of "civil death" because they have no rights to make their own decisions about their personal health care, their finances, whether to marry and raise a family, with whom to associate, and other day-to-day decisions others take for granted.

- Guardianship removes rights from the individual, resulting in feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, low self-esteem, passivity, and inadequacy and incompetency.

Self-determination

- Rights = Choices = Self-determination
- Individuals with greater self-determination are:
    - Healthier
    - More independent
    - More well-adjusted
    - Better able to recognize and resist abuse

Why SDM is Important

- School personnel are the most frequent source of recommendations that parents seek guardianship.

- Individuals who do NOT have a guardian are more likely to:

  - Have a paid job

  - Live independently

  - Have friends other than staff or family

  - Go on dates and socialize in the community

  - Practice the religion of their choice.

Power of Attorney

▶ A **medical power of attorney** is a legal document that authorizes someone you trust (called an agent, attorney-in-fact, or surrogate) to make medical decisions on your behalf if it is determined by your doctor that you are incapable of making such decisions, or you are unable to communicate your wishes, if you're in coma, for example.

▶ The **durable financial power of attorney** a legal document that authorizes someone else to manage your finances in the event that you become incapacitated and are unable to make those decisions yourself. … More precisely, it grants someone legal authority to act on your behalf for financial issues.

Conservatorship

- **Limited Conservatorship -** Limited conservatorship applies when a person is determined by a court to have limited incapacity in handling his/her financial affairs. The court will grant certain powers and duties to a limited conservator, allowing the person to remain somewhat independent by handling those financial affairs that they are still capable of managing.

- **Conservatorship -** Similar to a guardian except that the person appointed by a court is to handle the financial affairs of a minor or another person who has been legally determined to be disabled and/or lacks the capacity to handle his/her finances.

Guardianship

- **Limited Guardianship -** A court finds a person has limited incapacity in making decisions affecting his/her care. Based on the person's abilities, the court determines what powers and duties shall be given to the limited guardian and what may be retained by the person to allow as much independent decision-making as is appropriate.

- **Guardianship -** A person appointed by a court to have care and custody of a minor or another person who has been legally determined to be incapacitated after the court determines a person's inability to make decisions affecting his/her care. If it is determined that the person lacks this capacity, a guardian is appointed to make decisions on behalf of the individual.

Wrapping it up

For a significant number of families and students, the school is the main source of information and guidance. It is important to remember that, when thinking about an individual student's needs regarding outside agencies and other necessities. Assume that you are the soul source of information and referral for the families and think about the whole child.

Questions

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