

Transition Timeline for Students With Disabilities Working Toward a Commencement Credential

Transition planning is an individualized and unique experience for each student. This is a suggested timeline of best practices in transition planning for students who are not working towards a diploma.

Age 12–14: Early Awareness, Self-Advocacy, and Foundations

Develop an understanding of your disability and how it affects learning and daily life.

- ☐ Practice communicating your needs and preferences (self-advocacy). Review NYC Public Schools' [Family Guide to Special Education](#) and *Family Guide to Transition Planning*.
- ☐ Participate in annual vocational assessments (student interview, parent questionnaire, teacher/related service provider questionnaire).
- ☐ Begin [consistent career exploration at home](#), school, and in the community.
- ☐ Make connections between schoolwork and real-world skills (e.g., math → budgeting, statistics → news).
- ☐ Build independent living skills: communication, travel basics, social skills, daily living routines, self-determination.
- ☐ Begin exploring transportation options and awareness of public transit systems, including travel training through school or other support programs and MTA programs (Access-A-Ride, Reduced-Fare MetroCards).
- ☐ Start identifying whether your child may be on a diploma or a commencement credential pathway.

Age 14–16: Active Participation, Career Exposure, and Early Work Experience

- ☐ Students should attend and participate in IEP meetings starting at age 14..
- ☐ Discuss diploma vs. credential options.
- ☐ Confirm whether your child is on a commencement credential pathway.
- ☐ Create a list of supportive adults (family, school staff, community members).
- ☐ Obtain working papers if under age 18.
- ☐ Learn about disability rights in high school vs. adulthood.
- ☐ Apply for work-based learning, SYEP, internships, volunteer roles, or NYCPS Training Opportunity Program (TOP).
- ☐ Continue annual vocational assessments .
- ☐ Continue building independent living skills at home and school.
- ☐ Explore transportation training options (school-based travel training, MTA Reduced-Fare MetroCard, Access-A-Ride).
- ☐ If needed, request updated assistive technology assessments or educational evaluations. Begin identifying long-term career interests and aligning them with coursework or CTE opportunities.

Age 16–18: Work Experience, Evaluations, and Connecting to Adult Services

- ☐ Participate in work-based learning, job shadowing, internships, or community volunteering.
- ☐ Research appropriate postsecondary options: [inclusive higher education programs](#), vocational and job programs, and independent living skills programs.
- ☐ Connect with adult service agencies, if appropriate:
 - ☐ ACCES-VR
 - ☐ OPWDD
 - ☐ OMH
- ☐ Ensure your final Mandated Three-Year Re-evaluation is completed (preferably in your last year of high school).
- ☐ Gather documentation needed for future accommodations:
 - ☐ Most recent IEP
 - ☐ Medical documentation
 - ☐ Disability evaluations
- ☐ Research workplace accommodations and meet with disability support offices during program visits.
- ☐ Apply for government benefits if eligible: SSI, SSDI, SNAP, Medicaid.
- ☐ If already receiving SSI, prepare for the Age-18 Redetermination.
- ☐ Keep copies of all documents submitted for benefits or services.
- ☐ Build financial literacy skills (banking, budgeting, saving).
- ☐ Continue practicing independent living skills and travel training.
- ☐ Continue exploring career pathways aligned with your interests and strengths.

Age 18 & Older: Adult Services, Independence, and Post-High School Planning

- ☐ Apply for SSI if not already receiving it, or complete the SSI Age-18 Redetermination. Consider guardianship or alternatives only if appropriate; begin court petition if pursuing guardianship.
- ☐ Register to vote at age 18.
- ☐ Obtain a government-issued photo ID (NYS driver's license, non-driver ID, or IDNYC). Increase awareness of changes in disability rights laws from IDEA (school-based) to ADA (adult systems).
- ☐ Collect all financial and disability documentation needed for adult service systems.
- ☐ Research, tour, and apply to postsecondary programs, training programs, or adult disability service programs.
- ☐ Connect or finalize enrollment with ACCES-VR, OPWDD, and/or OMH. Complete an assistive technology assessment if needed.
- ☐ Explore housing options: living with family, supported living, or independent living.
- ☐ Explore adult healthcare providers and insurance options.
- ☐ Participate in your final IEP meeting and obtain your exit summary.