

## Frequently Asked Questions –Age Appropriate Transition Assessments

### 1. How do I conduct an age appropriate transition assessment?

Transition assessments will vary depending on the actual instrument(s) and procedures being used and various student characteristics. The following guidelines may be followed when selecting methods to be used in the process.

1. Assessment methods must incorporate assistive technology or accommodations that will allow an individual to demonstrate his or her abilities and potential.
2. Assessment methods must occur in environments that resemble actual vocational training, employment, independent living, or community environments.
3. Assessment methods must produce outcomes that contribute to ongoing development, planning, and implementation of “next steps” in the individual’s transition process.
4. Assessment methods must be varied and include a sequence of activities that sample an individual’s behavior and skills over time.
5. Assessment data must be verified by more than one method and by more than one person.
6. Assessment data must be synthesized and interpreted to individuals with disabilities, their families, and transition team members.
7. Assessment data and the results of the assessment process must be documented in a format that can be used to facilitate transition planning.

Finally, selected methods should be appropriate for the learning characteristics of the individual, including cultural and linguistic differences.

### 2. How many and what types of assessments are required?

IDEA does not require a specific number or type of age-appropriate assessment. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) has provided the following process of selecting appropriate instruments and methods for each student:

**First**, become familiar with the different types of transition assessments and their characteristics. It is recommended that you use multiple evaluations and do them on an ongoing basis.

**Second**, select assessment instruments and methods that assist in answering the following questions with the student:

- Who am I?
- What do I want in life, now and in the future?
- What are some of life’s demands that I can meet now?
- What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community?
- What are my options in the school and community for preparing me for what I want, now and in the future?

**Third**, select instruments and methods that are appropriate for your students. Key considerations include the nature of their disability, their post-school ambitions, and community opportunities.

For example, students with more involved disabilities might be best served by a person centered planning approach. The nature of their disability may preclude the relevancy of most standardized assessments, notable exceptions include

interest inventories that do not require reading (e.g., Beck's Reading Free Interest Inventory, Wide Range Interest and Opinion Test – Revised) and other instruments that require minimal reading levels (Career Decision Making System, Self-Directed Search Form E). Similarly, some students may need special accommodations during the assessment.

### **3. When do I need to include Formal Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments? Is a Formal Age-Appropriate Transition assessment required in every IEP?**

IDEA does not require a specific number or type of age-appropriate assessment. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) has provided the following process of selecting appropriate instruments and methods for each student:

- 1) Become familiar with the different types of transition assessments and their characteristics. It is recommended that you use multiple evaluations.
- 2) Select assessment instruments and methods that help the student to answer the following questions:
  - a) Who am I?
  - b) What are my unique talents and interests?
  - c) What do I want in life, now and in the future?
  - d) What are some of life's demands that I can meet now?
  - e) What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community? And
  - f) What are my options in the school and community for preparing me for what I want to do, now and in the future?
- 3) Select instruments and methods that are appropriate for your students. Key considerations include:
  - a) The nature of their disability (e.g., reading level and general intelligence);
  - b) Their post-school ambitions (e.g., college versus other training options or immediate employment); and,
  - c) Community opportunities (e.g., local training options, employers and adult service providers).

### **4. What kind of assessment should I do if my student has multiple and complex disabilities?**

Teachers and Case Managers should follow the same process provided in the Age Appropriate Transition Assessment Toolkit—National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). However, students with more severe or complex disabilities may be best served by a person centered planning approach. The nature of their disability may preclude the relevancy of many standardized assessment, notable exceptions might include interest inventories that do not require reading (e.g., Becker's Reading Free Interest Inventory -- Revised, Wide Range Interest and Opinion Test – Revised) and other instruments that require minimal reading levels (e.g., Career Decision Making System, Self-Directed Search Form E).

### **5. Can we still use formal assessments from greater than three years ago?**

Each formal assessment should have a manual that outlines who should conduct the assessment and how long the assessment is valid. If the student is transitioning to another agency (college or vocational rehabilitation) that requires assessment for eligibility, the school district should contact the other agency to assure coordination of assessment tools.