

Know the student!

- Results of age-appropriate transition assessments
- Student's preferences, needs, & interests

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

For students who turn 16 when the most recent IEP is in effect or who are older than 16, the IEP contains Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance including the **student's preferences, needs, interests**, and the **results of age-appropriate transition assessments**. §300.320

Excerpt: Oregon Standard IEP

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

The Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance must include specific information addressing:

- The strengths of the student;
- The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child;
- The present level of academic performance, including the student's most recent performance on State or district-wide assessments;
- The present level of developmental and functional performance (including the results of the initial or most recent evaluation);
- How the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum; and,
- **The student's preferences, needs, interests, and the results of age-appropriate transition assessments.**

Age-appropriate Transition Assessments ...ongoing process of collecting data on the individual's needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Types of transition assessments include:

- Behavioral Assessment Information;
- Aptitude Tests;
- Interest And Work Values Inventories;
- Intelligence Tests and Achievement Tests;
- Personality Or Preference Tests;
- Career Maturity Or Readiness Tests;
- Self-Determination Assessments;
- Work-Related Temperament Scales; and,
- Transition Planning Inventories.

Formal Transition Assessment Methods

Formal assessments are standardized instruments that have been tested and have data to show that reliability and validity measures support their use. Generally, these instruments also have independent reviews in texts.

Adaptive Behavior Assessment information

Adaptive behavior assessment helps determine the type and amount of special assistance that people with disabilities may need. Each test relies on a respondent such as a parent, teacher, or care-provider to

Excerpt: Age Appropriate Transition Assessment Guide, National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)

provide information about an individual being assessed. With some tests respondents are interviewed; with other tests respondents fill out a response booklet directly.

General and Specific Aptitude Tests

An aptitude test is a measure of a specific skill or ability. There are two types of aptitude tests: multi-aptitude test batteries and single tests measuring specific aptitudes. Multi-aptitude test batteries contain measures of a wide range of aptitudes and combinations of aptitudes and provide valuable information that can be used in career decision making. Single aptitude tests are used when a specific aptitude needs to be measured, such as manual dexterity, clerical ability, artistic ability, or musical ability.

Interest and Work Values Inventories

Interest inventories gather data concerning individuals' likes and dislikes for a variety of activities, objects, and types of persons commonly encountered. The work value inventories provide the opportunity for individuals to compare their interest with those of individuals in specific occupational groups or selected peer groups

Intelligence Tests

Intelligence tests involve a single test or test battery to assess a person's cognitive performance.

Achievement Tests

Achievement tests measure learning of general or specific academic skills. Achievement tests provide results that can be linked to most occupational requirements while helping to identify potential areas needing remediation (such as vocabulary). They are usually either general survey batteries covering several subject areas or single-subject tests. They can be criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, or both. Achievement tests are usually identified by grade level. It is important to establish the specific purpose for giving an achievement test to decide what type to use.

Personality or Preference Tests

Personality inventories measure individual differences in social traits, motivational drives and needs, attitudes, and adjustment. Personality measures offer a means of evaluating support for, or opposition to a career under consideration. The score alone should not be viewed as a predictor of success or failure but rather should be compared with other data, including abilities and interests.

Career Maturity or Employability Tests

Career maturity inventories are designed to measure developmental stages or tasks on a continuum. The degree of an individual's career maturity is determined by the individual's location on the developmental continuum.

Self-Determination Assessments

Self-determination assessments provide information as to one's readiness to make decisions related to their postsecondary ambitions. Such assessments provide data to help a student identify their relative strengths and limitations related to self-determination and factors that may be promoting or inhibiting this outcome.

Work-Related Temperament Scales

These tools assess work-related temperament and can help develop individual transition components of the IEP for students with disabilities.

Transition Planning Inventories

Transition planning inventories involve a process which identifies transition strengths and needs. These areas encompass various aspects of adult living, including employment, postsecondary schooling and training, independent living, interpersonal relationships, and community living.

Informal Transition Assessment Methods

Informal assessments generally lack formal reliability and validity measures. These assessments require more subjectivity to complete and should be given more than once and by more than one person to strengthen their validity.

Interviews and questionnaires

Interviews and questionnaires can be conducted with a variety of individuals for the purpose of gathering information to be used to determine a student's needs, preferences, and interests relative to anticipated post-secondary goals. In other words, what is currently known about a student, and her family, that can be used to help develop post-secondary goals and to plan a course-of-study that will help the student reach her goals?

Direct observation

Direct observation student performance should be conducted within the natural or school employment, educational, or community setting. Direct observation data typically includes task analytic data of steps in completing a task, work behaviors (e.g., on-task, following directions, getting along with co-workers), and affective information (e.g., is student happy, excited, frustrated, or bored).

Environmental or Situational Analysis

Environmental analysis, sometimes referred to as ecological assessment involves carefully examining environments where activities normally occur. A critical part of a job analysis should be to identify types of accommodations that could be provided to help a student perform the necessary functions of a particular job (e.g., job restructuring, modifying equipment, acquiring an adaptive device, re-organizing the work space, hiring a personal assistant). Perhaps the best source for on the job accommodations is the Job Accommodation Network (www.jan.org)

Curriculum-based assessments (CBA)

CBAs are typically designed by educators to gather information about a student's performance in a specific curriculum and to develop instructional plans for a specific student. To gather these data an educator might use task analyses, work sample analyses, portfolio assessments, and/or criterion-referenced tests.

Why conduct transition assessments?

Transition assessments may be undertaken for several reasons. These reasons include:

- Develop IEP goals and objectives for the transition component of the IEP,
- Make instructional programming decisions, and
- Include information in the present level of performance related to a student's interests, preferences, and needs.
- Learn about individual students, especially their strengths outside of academics and their career ambitions (Kortering, Sitlington, & Braziel, 2004).

The results of transition assessments should be used in making recommendations for instructional strategies, accommodations in instruction, and environments to meet the student's strengths and needs. The results also should help students make a connection between their individual academic program and their post-school ambitions.

How do I select instruments and methods?

First, become familiar with the different types of transition assessments and their characteristics. Again, 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 would 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.

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.

Where can I get more information?

The 2009 Transition Resource Materials contained descriptions of many types of formal and informal assessments <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3085>.

Preferences, Interests, Needs, and Strengths (PINS)

The IEP Team **must** actively involve the student in developing his/her IEP. By identifying the preferences, interests, needs, and strengths, the IEP Team will understand what the student wants to do when he/she has completed school (e.g., further education, employment, military, etc.), how they want to live (e.g., independent living, apartment, group home, etc.), and how they want to take part in the community (e.g., transportation, recreation, etc.) after high school.

Why do we want students to be an active part of IEP planning?

Engage youth (and families) in transition planning

- Help students set attainable employment and postsecondary school/training goals
- Use age appropriate transition assessments

Prepare youth (and families) for their future

- Teach self-determination & self advocacy skills
- Provide opportunities for students to practice these skills
- Self-Directed IEPs

Keep youth in school

- Build relationships with youth
- Set high expectations and provide support
- Make content meaningful and relevant

Results when teachers prepare students to lead their IEP meetings

- Students were involved and did contribute to meetings.
- Students knew about their disability rights and their accommodations.
- Students gained increased self-confidence and were able to advocate for themselves.
- Parental participation increased.

General educators described students who lead IEP meetings as:

- Interacting more positively with adults.
- Having greater knowledge of their legal rights.
- Assuming more responsibility for themselves and having more support.

