

MARCH, 2016



FEDERAL PARTNERS IN TRANSITION

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUTH TRANSITION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES¹

The Federal Partners in Transition (FPT) workgroup presents *What to Know About Youth Transition Services*. This fact sheet was created to address the compatible outcome goals and policy priorities identified in *The 2020 Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy* and provides a quick glance of available resources. Please click on the links to learn more about each fact.

GENERAL

1. What is meant by transition for youth with disabilities?

The Federal Partners in Transition workgroup views transition as the period of time when adolescents are moving into adulthood and are often concerned with planning for postsecondary education, careers, health care, financial benefits, housing, and more. There is a particular need to provide continuity of service for youth from ages 14 or 16 to ages 25 or 30 across both child and adult service systems.

2. The transition from youth to adulthood is critical for every young person.

This is particularly true for students and youth with disabilities. Ideally, during the transition years, youth acquire knowledge and learn [skills](#) they will need to maximize their independence and [self-sufficiency](#) in their communities. This process may involve accessing [educational](#) and employment opportunities including [career and technical education](#), [obtaining employment related services and supports](#), finding stable [housing](#), and acquiring [health insurance coverage](#), transitioning from pediatric to adult health care, [financial aid](#), and other supports and services to assist in their future planning and development towards adulthood.

¹ Youth with disabilities is defined differently by various programs and systems, including the contributing agencies. Consequently, a standard definition is not used in this document.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

3. Being connected to programs, services, activities, information, and supports helps to maximize youth success.

Learning about education, [competitive integrated employment](#), and [disability-related programs and services](#), helps youth become aware of their options and make [informed choices](#). Areas of importance include civil rights, community life, education, emergency preparedness, employment, [benefits](#), [work incentives](#), health, housing, technology, and transportation.

4. The *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* expands services to better support students and youth with disabilities in career development and transition planning.

Title 1 of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) authorizes the provision of career planning for eligible individuals.² Career planning offers a person-centered approach to coordinate necessary support services before and after job placement.

At least 20 percent of local Title I Youth formula funds must be used for work experiences including:

- Summer and year-round employment opportunities
- Pre-apprenticeships
- Internships and job shadowing
- On-the-job training.

Moreover, activities that help youth transition to postsecondary education and training are also explicitly included within the list of [Title I Youth program elements](#).

Section 113 of the [Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA](#) authorizes [Vocational Rehabilitation agencies](#) to use Federally reserved funds, and any funds made available to State, local, or private funding sources, to coordinate with local educational agencies to provide students with disabilities pre-employment transition services including the following required activities:

- a. job exploration counseling;
- b. work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
- c. counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- d. workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- e. instruction in self-advocacy, (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring.

² Eligible individuals are defined by 29 U.S.C. §3164(c)(2).

5. Substantial, coordinated, well-designed services can improve transition outcomes.

Extensive collaborative partnerships are needed to ensure a “continuum of services” across agency boundaries. FPT partners have several examples of interagency activities, collaborative projects, and coordinated services that impact transition outcomes. These include the Social Security Administration’s [Youth Transition Demonstration](#) (2006-2012), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s [Health Transitions program](#) and the Department of Education’s [National Technical Assistance Center \(NTAC\) on Improving Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students with Disabilities](#). Given that no single agency can address all the transition needs of youth with disabilities, designing service delivery consistent with the [Guideposts for Success](#) and other [similar frameworks](#) can help to ensure that youth receive the services and supports they need to succeed.

6. Education and Training systems for preparing low-skilled youth with disabilities for marketable jobs can be complex and difficult to navigate.

[Career pathways](#) offer an efficient and customer-centered approach to training and education. This approach integrates the educational instruction, workforce development, and human and social services and supports that are linked to labor market trends and employer needs, leading to stackable credentials.

HEALTH CARE

7. Health care transition, the purposeful, planned movement of youth from child-centered to adult-centered medical care, is important to success in all other aspects of transition.

Because managing one’s health and wellness is critical to going to school, learning, and transitioning into employment, youth with disabilities with chronic health conditions, need to learn how to manage their health care transition. With support from family, health care providers, workforce professionals, and others, youth can gain self-care and decision-making skills to learn about their options for health insurance coverage to make sure they and their families stay healthy.

8. A number of provisions in the *Affordable Care Act* expand access to health insurance coverage for youth with disabilities.

The *Affordable Care Act* ensures that young people have quality, affordable health insurance choices, regardless of how their lives change. This is critical as youth frequently change or hold part-time or temporary jobs. Through the elimination of pre-existing condition exclusions, expansions of dependent coverage to age 26, Medicaid eligibility expansions, and subsidized private plans, new coverage opportunities are available. Youth, either by themselves or with their parents, can confidently [purchase insurance coverage](#) that includes essential health benefits, including mental health and substance use disorders services, prescription drugs, rehabilitative services and devices, preventive and wellness services, and chronic disease management.

9. Access to Medicaid can support successful transition for youth with disabilities and chronic health care needs.

[Medicaid](#) is a joint Federal and State program that is partially funded by the Federal government and administered by States. Through various programmatic authorities, it provides States with opportunities to promote [employment](#) and successful [community living](#) for youth with disabilities in transition. States also have the opportunity to promote employment and successful community living through the Medicaid Buy-In program, which permits States to allow higher income limits or no income limits for working individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities in transition. Forty-six States currently have Medicaid Buy-In programs.

FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

10. Families and other caregivers play an important role in helping youth with disabilities envision their life as an adult.

Transitioning into adulthood requires that youth with disabilities and their families thoughtfully plan for a future that is rooted in high expectations. Families can help ensure that these youth have access to services that facilitate a seamless transition process by supporting them in the development of their [individualized education program](#) (IEP), [individualized plan for employment](#) (IPE) and/or [individualized learning plan](#) (ILP). Although developing these youth-driven and strength-based plans requires [significant time and support from families and other caring adults](#), research shows that they increase youth engagement which leads to positive outcomes.

11. To equip youth with disabilities with the necessary skills to take charge of and manage their own transition plan, youth with disabilities need support from caring competent youth service professionals, including educators, workforce professionals, health care providers, and other providers.

Research shows that high-quality professional development for [youth service professionals](#) to attain skills and knowledge through training or experience leads to better practices, improves program quality, and increases positive outcomes for youth with disabilities.

This document was created by the Federal Partners in Transition (FPT). FPT is a workgroup with representatives of several federal agencies, including the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Social Security Administration, which are involved in promoting inclusive service delivery for transitioning youth with disabilities from school into postsecondary education, the workforce, and independent living. Additional information about FPT's shared vision, compatible outcomes goals, and policy priorities can be found in [The 2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy](#). The report is available at: <http://youth.gov/feature-article/federal-partners-transition>.