



IEP Essentials: Lesson Learned Through Legal Analysis

Strategies for Advocates

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If the school says ...	An advocate may respond ...	Relevant resources
Adult service agencies have responsibility for planning post-school programs.	The shared responsibility for agency planning was clearly specified when transition services were first defined in the 1990 amendments to IDEA: “The preparation of students with disabilities for movement from school to postschool environments [should] not be the sole responsibility of public education” but rather a “shared responsibility”. Both IDEA and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act require a formal interagency agreement to specify the responsibilities of providing transition services to individuals with disabilities. IDEA requires the agreement to include the identification of financial responsibility, reimbursement conditions, coordination or service procedures, and methods for resolving interagency disputes	(House of Representatives Report 101-544, 1990). 20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(12)(A).
Not many students with disabilities need adult services	A study by the U.S. Department of Education found that approximately 80% of students with disabilities require adult services to achieve employment and independent living goals. Yet, interagency collaboration remains fragmented nationwide. In a statewide study investigating the procedural compliance of 282 transition plans, Tillman and Ford (2001) found that only 30% of the plans demonstrated linkages to community agencies, despite the finding that 73% of the transition plans indicated students needed employment assistance and demonstrated other postschool-living needs. According to Agran, Cain, and Cavin (2002), although rehabilitation counselors play a pivotal role in adult services for many students, special education teachers reported	(U.S. Department of Education, 1996) Tillman, J. D., & Ford, L. (2001, April). Analysis of transition services of IEPs for high school students with special needs. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, Washington, DC. Retrieved February 25, 2005, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ Agran, M., Cain, H. M., & Cavin, M. D. (2002). Enhancing the involvement of rehabilitation counselors in the transition process. <i>Career Development for Exceptional Individuals</i> , 25, 123–137.

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	<p>that those counselors were never or rarely invited to IEP transition meetings. The counselors frequently reported that neither parents nor school districts contacted them as resources. Williams and O’Leary (2001) reported that special education teachers infrequently interacted with service providers and that the teachers were unfamiliar with the services offered by agencies and their referral procedures. Furthermore, delineation of the responsibilities for the adult services agencies is often absent on transition plans (Everson, Zhana, & Gillory, 2001).</p>	<p>Williams, J. M., & O’Leary, E. (2001). What we’ve learned and where we go from here. <i>Career Development for Exceptional Individuals</i>, 24, 51–71.</p>
<p>Positive behavioral supports for young children are difficult to identify.</p>	<p>A variety of evidence-based behavioral interventions are available in the empirical literature. Interventions such as adjustment of task difficulty, individualized instruction, incorporating student interest and student choice may be selected for the BIP. Interventions such as selective seating, problem-solving instruction or social skill instruction may be incorporated into the BIP. Empirically-validated strategies such as auditory adjustments or assistive technology to reduce classroom distractions may be effective options for the BIP. Other valid interventions such as self-monitoring and reinforcement may be considered. In selecting strategies or interventions for the BIP, IEP teams should solicit ideas from the student, as appropriate, to enhance student involvement in behavior change and self-determination.</p>	<p>Buggey, T. (1999). Look! I’m on TV!” Using videotaped self-merling to change behavior. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i>, 31(4), 27-30.</p> <p>Brown, K. E., & Miranda, P. (2006). Contingency Mapping: use of a novel visual support strategy. <i>Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions</i>, 8155-165.</p> <p>Hune, B. J., & Nelson, M. D. (2002). Effects of teaching a problem-solving strategy on preschool children with problem behavior. <i>Behavioral Disorders</i>, 27(3), 185-207.</p> <p>Lane, K. L., Wehby, J., Menzies, H. M., Doukas, G. L., Munton, S. M., & Gregg, R. M. (2003). Social skills instruction for students at risk for antisocial behavior: The effects of small-group instruction. <i>Behavioral Disorders</i>, 28(3), 229-48.</p> <p>Stromer, R., Kimball, J. W., Kinney, E. M., & Taylor, B. A. (2006). Activity schedules, computer technology and teaching children with autism spectrum disorders. <i>Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities</i>, 21(1), 14-21.</p>
<p>Behavior observation is sufficient as a progress monitoring tool</p>	<p>Progress monitoring may also be enhanced by the inclusion of additional, authentic measures of performance. Informal conferences with students help teachers assess student performance (Alexandrin, 2003). Teachers may summarize the conversations in anecdotal notes included in a student’s IEP file. Portfolio approaches to progress monitoring might also be considered. A display of</p>	<p>Alexandrin, J. R. (2003). Using continuous, constructive classroom evaluations. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i>, 36(1), 52-57.</p> <p>Kleinert, H., Green, P., Hurte, M., Clayton, J. & Oetinger, C. (2002). Creating and using meaningful alternate assessments. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i>, 34(4), 40-47.</p>

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	<p>student work samples may be important indicators of progress toward IEP goals. Students should be involved in the construction and evaluation of their portfolio work (Kleinert, Green, Hurte, Clayton, & Oetinger, 2002). Portfolios may be constructed for students with severe disabilities through the use of assistive technology (Denham & Lahm, 2001). Videotaping may similarly be an effective supplement to other measures designed to monitor progress toward goals and objectives. Videotaping may be shared with parents to show a child's level of performance and improve parents' awareness of the child's progress.</p>	<p>Denham, A., & Lahm, E. A. (2001). Using technology to construct alternate portfolios for students with moderate to severe disabilities. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i>, 33(5), 10-17.</p>
<p>Only academic goals require progress monitoring</p>	<p>Often academic goals for students with disabilities are specified in the IEP document, while behavioral goals are included in a behavior intervention plan (BIP). The means of evaluating the effectiveness of BIP's have only recently been addressed in the empirical literature, but should include both direct and indirect measures (Wheeler & Richey, 2005). As with academic goals, the who, where, and when for progress monitoring BIP's must be clearly specified.</p> <p>IEP teams must also recognize graduation as an academic goal, and plan to collect data supporting a student's readiness for graduation. Importantly, the IDEIA reauthorized in 2004 requires that appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals be developed for students with disabilities [20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)]. Progress monitoring of postsecondary goals will help to ensure that transition plans and services are appropriate and that students with disabilities are "prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives" [20 U.S.C. § 1404(c)(5)(A)(ii)].</p>	<p>Wheeler, J. J., & Richey, D. (2005). <i>Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports</i>. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice-Hall.</p>

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