

Transition to Elementary School

For students receiving special needs programming through ECS, the move to Kindergarten will likely be the first major transition. These students may be anxious about being in a larger setting and uncomfortable staying without their parents.

Parents may also be anxious about the transition into elementary school and may have a variety of questions such as the following.

- What happens when my child arrives at school?
- What happens at lunch?
- Where is my child's classroom located? May I go to the classroom to help her or him get settled?
- Who supervises the playground and what kinds of activities do students do?
- What kinds of opportunities do students have to work together?
- What kind of special support is available for my child?

Sample strategies

Sample strategies to support the transition to elementary school

- Be prepared to answer parents' questions such as those listed above.
- Identify the skills students will need in the next environment. Share this list of skills with parents and other members of the learning team, and plan ways to help the students learn these skills.

Appendices

See Appendix 8-C for a sample list of preschool to Kindergarten transition skills.

- Listen to students' concerns about transitions. Discuss upcoming transitions and highlight the positive aspects of new environments. Consider ways to reassure the student. For example, a parent might send a picture or special toy to ease the transition of going to a new school. The Kindergarten teacher may arrange to meet early in the new school year to support the child's adjustment to the classroom.
- Communicate with the receiving teachers about the student's strengths and areas of need. If the student already has an IPP, discuss its contents and the accommodations required in the upcoming year. If possible, schedule a meeting at the end of the school year and a follow-up progress meeting for early fall.

Transition to Junior High School

The transition to junior high brings many changes such as multiple teachers, larger schools, new subject areas and an increased expectation of independence.

As a student with special education needs enters junior high, it is not uncommon for the student to have questions such as the following.

- What happens when I get to school?
- Do I use a locker?
- How many teachers will I have?
- How many classrooms will I use?
- Is there a school cafeteria? What does it cost to have lunch at school?
- What kinds of activities can I join?

Sample strategies

Sample strategies to support the transition to junior high

- Encourage students to identify their learning strengths and interests.
- Give students opportunities to monitor their own progress and share their perceptions with the learning team.
- Teach students strategies for time management, note taking, test preparation and test taking.
- Explore appropriate assistive technologies and create opportunities for students to develop keyboarding skills.
- Discuss adaptations and accommodations that have been successfully used in the past, keeping in mind the demands of a junior high classroom.
- Ensure that specific supports that need to be in place at the beginning of the year are included in the transition component of the IPP.
- Take advantage of an orientation day if the new school provides one. These sessions may include a tour of the school and an opportunity to meet teachers and receive information about rotations, clubs and other school-related activities.
- Host a team meeting with the receiving school in order to share information about students, including strengths, interests, dreams and areas of need.
- Ensure that students have a safe place to express their opinions, expectations, questions, choices and concerns about the transition.

Appendices

See Appendix 8-D for a sample student questionnaire.

Transition to Senior High School

As students approach senior high school, they need to take increased responsibility for their learning. They also need to begin exploring options for the future, including career paths, and identifying resources and services they will need to reach their goals.

Students entering senior high school may have questions such as the following.

- Where is my homeroom, gym, library, administration office and other key points in the school?
- Is there a cafeteria in the school?

- What kinds of sports and clubs are at the school?
- Where do I go for help if I am having difficulty with a class?
- Do the senior high school teachers know about my learning needs and the adaptations I had at my old school?
- What will happen with my IPP?
- What courses do I need to graduate?

Sample strategies

Sample strategies to support the transition to senior high

- Create opportunities for the student to begin exploring career options.
- Educate students and their parents about multiple paths in senior high school and which ones lead to different post-secondary studies.
- Provide students with access to learning and study strategies.
- Ensure students have access to appropriate adaptations and assistive technologies where needed.
- Create opportunities for students to begin developing self-advocacy skills.

Appendices

See Appendix 8-E for a sample tool for recording information needed for transition.

Transition to Post-secondary Settings

Planning for Transition at the senior high school level is critical for students with special education needs. At this level, the IPP process must be a comprehensive and well-coordinated plan that goes beyond one year and beyond just preparing a student for graduation. Planning for transition needs to outline what the student will be taking and doing in school as well as how to prepare the student for life after senior high school. As a part of this type of planning the learning team needs to:

- identify and plan for the programs of study and educational experiences the student will be participating in from Grade 9 to the end of senior high school
- develop a plan for post-school adult life based upon the student's dreams and interests
- identify and begin to coordinate needed services, programs and supports before the student leaves the senior high school setting.

Planning for transition often involves investigating opportunities for post-secondary training. Over the last decade, the range of post-secondary options available to all students has greatly expanded. Colleges, universities, community agencies and private training companies are now more willing and able to offer appropriate training opportunities for adults with special needs.

A number of colleges and universities now have specialized services to support students with special needs. Some institutions' application forms

have a box to check or a line to complete that identifies a disability. The institution's disability services office then contacts the student to discuss what kind of support will be needed. If the application form does not have a place for self-disclosure, students (and if necessary, their parents) will need to contact the disability services office.

For most students, Canada Study Grants and Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) funding will cover disability-related supports that students need to complete their education. To ensure this funding, students will need documentation about their disability and the supports they received in senior high school. If they do not have sufficient documentation, they will have to be assessed so appropriate supports can be identified. These assessments are coordinated by the institution's disability services office and can take up to four months to complete.

The disability services office will use information from documentation and assessments to develop a service plan. This plan, also known as an education plan or accommodation plan, outlines the supports students are eligible for. Every student's plan is different and could include services such as the following:

- note taking
- alternate format texts (Braille, large print, audio)
- exam accommodations
- assistive technology
- interpreters
- captioning services
- tutoring.

Post-secondary institutions may also offer some or all of the following services for students with special needs:

- orientations for new students with disabilities
- student-run disability organizations (for more information, see the National Educational Association of Disabled Students Web site at www.neads.ca)
- advocacy for students, if necessary (most disability services offices believe that students need to be equal partners in their education and will encourage students to be their own self-advocates)
- Inclusive Post Secondary Education (IPSE) programs that provide adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in a modified post-secondary educational experience. In IPSE programs, students are included in regular college or university classes as auditing students and are supported to participate to their fullest potential. Their education goes beyond the classroom to encompass four main components:
 - relationship opportunities
 - life-enriching experiences
 - career development and education
 - scholarship and/or financial information about potential sources of funding.

For more information



Sample Checklist for Comprehensive Planning for Transition

Beginning of Junior High

- Identify learning preferences and the necessary adaptations to be a successful learner.
- Begin to look at career interests and skills, complete interest and career inventories, and identify additional education or training requirements.
- Select/review high school courses.
- Participate in job-shadowing activities.
- Explore options for post-secondary education and admission criteria.
- Identify interests and options for future living arrangements, including support.
- Learn to effectively communicate your interests, preferences and needs.
- Be able to explain special education need(s) and the accommodations needed.
- Learn and practise informed decision-making skills.
- Investigate assistive technology tools that can increase community involvement and employment opportunities.
- Broaden your experiences with community activities and expand your friendships.
- Pursue and use local transportation options outside of family.
- Investigate money management and identify necessary skills.
- Acquire Social Insurance Number and the ability to communicate personal information.
- Identify and begin learning skills necessary for independent living.

Beginning of Senior High

- Identify community support services and programs.
- Invite adult service providers and other people who support you to the IPP transition meeting.
- Gather more information on post-secondary programs and the support services offered, and make arrangements for accommodations to take any entrance tests.
- Determine the need for financial support.
- Enroll in driver training, if appropriate.
- Learn and practise appropriate interpersonal communication and social skills for different settings (employment, school, recreation with peers, etc.).
- Begin a résumé and update it as needed.
- Practise independent living skills (e.g., budgeting).
- Identify needed personal assistant services and, if appropriate, learn to direct and manage these services.
- Know your special education need(s) and keep documentation.

Last Year of Senior High

- Identify the post-secondary school or program and make arrangements for accommodations.
- Practise effective communication by developing interview skills, asking for help and identifying necessary accommodations at post-secondary work environments.
- Participate in community activities.
- Consider supported employment placements.
- Take responsibility for arriving on time to part-time job, appointments and social activities.
- Assume responsibility for health care needs.
- If 18, register to vote.



Appendix 8-B

Sample Checklist for Annual Planning for Transition

Name _____ School year _____

September to December

- Initiate discussion with parents and students about Individualized Program Plan (IPP) and planning for transition.
- Develop an IPP for the student. The transition plan should be built into the IPP.
- Ensure the programming decisions are based on the understanding of the student's strengths, areas of need and goals as well as those of the student's family.
- Ensure students are aware of their learning strengths and the types of supports and accommodations available to them in dealing with their learning difficulties.
- Review the IPP and transition plans at the time of the first report card.
 - Successful transitions require planning well in advance of the actual move.
 - Planning should be future orientated to ensure program continuity and that the student knows what's coming up.
 - Make sure that planning for transition is an active part of the school program.

January to March

- Plan ongoing formal and informal discussions with parents and students throughout the school year to ensure the student's emotional, social and academic needs are being met.
- Ensure assessments are completed as required by each student.
- Discuss transition plans for each student with a program consultant or school administrator prior to spring break.
- Communicate placement options available for the student to his or her parents.
- Where possible, contact the receiving school prior to year end and share pertinent information.
- Gain as much information as possible about the new program and share it with parents and students.

March to June

- Ensure documentation is in place prior to the move. This may include the following:
 - registration form
 - current and preceding IPPs
 - current assessment results
 - medical information
 - classroom assessment results
 - listing of supports in place to accommodate the student's learning, e.g., counselling, teacher assistant, speech therapy, mentorship support.
- Encourage parents to visit the program in advance by making an appointment with the new site.
- Have students write about what they like, where their strengths lie and where they experience difficulty to share with the new teacher.

Adapted with permission from Edmonton Catholic Schools, "Transition Plan" (Edmonton, Alberta, 2003).



Sample Skills for Successful Transitions from Preschool to Kindergarten

Social Behaviours and Classroom Conduct

- Understands role as part of group
- Respects others and their property
- Interacts and defends self without aggression
- Plays cooperatively; shares toys and materials
- Expresses emotions and affection appropriately
- Takes turns; participates appropriately in games
- Is willing to try something new
- Follows class rules and routines
- Lines up and waits appropriately
- Imitates peer actions
- Sits appropriately
- Plays independently

Communication Behaviours

- Follows two- to three-part directions
- Initiates and maintains peer interactions
- Modifies behaviour when given verbal feedback
- Asks peers or teachers for information or assistance
- Recalls and follows directions for tasks previously described
- Follows group instructions
- Relates ideas and experiences
- Answers questions
- Communicates own needs and wants

Task-related Behaviours

- Finds materials needed for tasks
- Does not disrupt peers during activities
- Complies quickly with teacher instructions
- Generalizes skills across tasks and situations
- Follows task directions in small or large group
- Replaces materials and cleans up work space
- Monitors own behaviour; knows when a task is done
- Begins and completes work at appropriate time without extra teacher attention
- Makes choices
- Stays in own space
- Follows routine in transition
- Uses a variety of materials
- Seeks attention appropriately
- Attends to teacher in a large group

Self-help Behaviours

- Recognizes when a problem exists
- Locates and cares for personal belongings
- Avoids dangers and responds to warning words
- Takes outer clothing off and puts it on in a reasonable amount of time
- Tries strategies to solve problems
- Feeds self independently
- Cares for own toileting needs



Appendix 8-D

Sample Student Questionnaire for Planning for Transition in Junior and Senior High School

Name _____

Date _____

1. What classes do you enjoy the most? Why?

2. What classes do you least enjoy? Why?

3. Do you ask for help when needed? Who usually helps you?

4. Describe your special education needs.

5. What kind of job would you like to have when you finish high school?



Sample Senior High Planning for Transition Inventory

Current School Program

Examine the student's current school program in light of the student's vision for the future. Course selections, resource support, classroom accommodations, content modifications and other relevant issues need to be considered.

- Is the student identifying academic areas of interest related to his or her goals for the future?
- Is the student enrolled in courses that will give him or her the opportunities to move toward his or her goals?
- Does the student require additional support to succeed academically?
- Is the student moving toward independence?
- Is the student developing specific academic skills to realize his or her goals?
- Is the student aware of the necessary learning strategies for success?
- Is the student developing knowledge of the use of technology appropriate for his or her special education needs?
- Is the student in need of a reduced course load in order to be successful?
- Is there a need for the student to have knowledge of distance or online courses and/or summer schools that are available?

This appendix adapted with permission from New Brunswick Department of Education, *Resource for the Transition of Students with Exceptionalities from School to Work or Post Secondary Education and Adult Life* (Fredericton, NB: New Brunswick Department of Education, 2001), pp. 20–24, 27–29.



Sample Senior High Planning for Transition Inventory (continued) page 2/6

Post-secondary

Consider the skills and areas related to applying to a post-secondary institution, including course selection, requesting transcripts, working with guidance counsellors, preparing information required by student services departments at post-secondary institutions and choosing appropriate campuses.

- Will the student require documentation identifying the modifications made to his or her current program to be forwarded to post-secondary institutions?
- Will the student require documentation identifying the accommodations given to support him or her in the current program to be forwarded to post-secondary institutions?
- Will the student require assistance in researching post-secondary institutions to ascertain commitment to making accommodations for his or her particular disability?
- Does the student have a good match between high school courses and career aspirations or training prerequisites?
- Is the student developing the skills necessary to enable him or her to approach the faculty or student services department of a post-secondary institution and articulate the nature of his or her special education needs and the accommodations or services required to address his or her needs?
- Is the student developing time management, organization, study skills or note taking?
- Is the student aware of restrictions that may apply to scholarship or student loan applications (minimum course load)?
- Is the student exploring his or her technological needs and services for post-secondary studies and/or the Canada Study Grants for Students with Disabilities?
- Is there a need for current (within 2–3 years) assessment or related documentation for access to post-secondary services?
- Is the student developing a résumé and references for his or her personal career portfolio?
- Is the student exploring post-secondary/career information sessions and documenting this in a personal career portfolio?
- Does the student need to arrange a campus visitation?



Sample Senior High Planning for Transition Inventory (continued) page 3/6

Co-/extracurricular Activities

Identify activities in which the student is currently involved at school or activities which may assist in developing skills for the future.

- Is the student currently involved in any clubs, groups or associations within the school?
- Is the student evaluating his or her likes or dislikes with regard to the school activities in which he or she is involved?
- Are there other activities at school that the student would like to be involved in?
- Does the student have or is he or she developing a circle of friends at school?
- Is there anything required to assist the student in becoming aware of and more involved in activities at school?

Employment

- Is the student developing a personal career portfolio?
- Has the student identified or is the student taking part in activities that address career- and job-awareness exploration experiences?
- Is the student involved in volunteer, part-time or summer employment?
- Is the student developing a résumé, and recording the names and addresses of potential references?
- Is the student involved in work-experience opportunities at school?
- Are the student and his or her parents exploring the supports that would be required in the workplace?
- Is the student being mentored, or does he or she have assistance in volunteering in job and/or career interest areas?



Sample Senior High Planning for Transition Inventory (continued) page 4/6

Personal Management

Consider the personal management skills required for adult life, such as social skills awareness, peer relationships, living arrangements, banking skills, budgeting, voting, etc. In most cases, the student's family will have the major responsibility for this area.

Evaluate those activities that are performed on a regular basis.

- Is the student acquiring the knowledge and skills for planning and preparing a nutritious meal?
- Is the student acquiring the knowledge and skills to manage proper care of his or her clothing?
- Is the student acquiring the knowledge and skills to manage his or her financial affairs?
- Is the student acquiring the knowledge and skills to maintain a residence room, an apartment or home independently?
- Is the student developing an awareness of, and an ability to make arrangements for, accommodations related to his or her disability?
- Is the student acquiring knowledge of and developing skills for personal grooming?
- Is the student acquiring knowledge of and developing skills regarding social relationships?
- Does the student and/or parent need assistance in locating community resources regarding appropriate housing?
- Is the student or parent investigating the technical equipment the student will need for independent living?



Sample Senior High Planning for Transition Inventory (continued) page 5/6

Community Resources

Community clubs, groups or teams can be a source of social support for a student in the future. In general, the student's family will have the major responsibility for this area.

- Are the student and/or the parents developing an involvement with, or awareness of, the various local community service clubs, self-help groups or social groups that may be of assistance in helping to support the student in the future?
- Are the student and/or the parents developing an involvement with, or awareness of, self-help and advocacy groups available in the community or provincially/nationally?
- Do the student and/or the parents need further guidance and assistance in contacting community resources for support?

Funding/Support

A transition plan needs to consider what skills related to researching funding sources, investigating scholarships, bursaries, loans, awards, Canada Study Grants, Training and Employment Support Services or Youth Futures funding, among others, are needed by students and/or their parents.

- Are the student and/or the parents developing skills regarding budget formation and management, and the predicting and tracking of expenses related to loans or support payments?
- Are the student and/or the parents developing a familiarity with municipal, provincial and federal services and youth programs?
- Are the student and/or the parents developing a familiarity with application procedures for scholarships or bursaries?
- Are the student and/or the parents developing a familiarity with application procedures for student loans, employment insurance, disability pension or other support funds?
- Are the student and/or the parents developing an awareness of possible tax deductions related to the student's special needs?
- Are the student and/or the parents developing an awareness of the financial considerations available through various public and private agencies (e.g., bus pass for public transportation)?



Appendix 8-E

Sample Senior High Planning for Transition Inventory
(continued) page 6/6

Interagency Linkages/Services

Explore the service resources available either in the local area or at a post-secondary institution.

- Are the student and/or the parents investigating or initiating contact with the coordinator of services for the disabled or the student services department at the post-secondary institution that the student is interested in attending?
- Is the student in need of career counselling or other services?
- Are the student and/or the parents identifying the agencies that may provide assistance in reaching the student’s personal goals as an adult?

Comments: _____



Sample Parent Questionnaire for Planning for Transition in Junior and Senior High School

Name _____ Date _____

This questionnaire can be used as a guide to think about the areas you believe to be important for your son or daughter. Your insights are important to the planning for transition process. Please bring your ideas to the IPP meeting scheduled for _____.

1. List the jobs your son or daughter has had, including volunteer experiences.

2. What do you see your son or daughter doing after high school?

Daily Living Skills

1. In which of the following areas does your son or daughter show confidence in?

- handling money
- budgeting
- managing time
- using a calendar
- scheduling appointments
- meal planning
- food preparation
- medication use
- telephone skills

2. In what type of living arrangement do you believe your son or daughter will be successful?

- Independent
- With family
- Supported



Appendix 8-F

Sample Parent Questionnaire for Planning
for Transition in Junior and Senior High School
(continued) page 2/2

Leisure/Recreation

1. What types of leisure activities does your son or daughter participate in:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies | <input type="checkbox"/> Team sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual sports |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performing arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs | |
| _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | |

Community Involvement

1. Check the following consumer services your daughter or son can use independently:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery store | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank | <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> Post office | <input type="checkbox"/> Stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty/Barber shop | | |

2. Does your son or daughter have a:

- Social Insurance Number
- Driver's licence
- Other _____

3. What type of transportation can your daughter or son use?

- Personal car
- Family car
- Public transportation
- Bicycle

Sample IPP - Lee (continued) page 7/7

Planning for Transition

Lee will be moving to a middle school next year and he will need to be ready for:

- longer and more complex written assignments
- increased note taking during class activities
- longer and more complex unit tests
- increased reading demands including managing varied reading levels of material
- increased responsibility for organizing and managing materials and information.

These skills will be part of regular classroom instruction throughout the year and we will also look for additional strategies to help Lee manage these new demands.

Lee's mother also reports that Lee expresses concern when substitute teachers replace the regular classroom teacher. Mrs. A. will look at some possible social scripts that might help Lee manage these situations with less anxiety.

Signatures

I understand and agree with the information contained in this Individualized Program Plan.

Parents

Date

IPP Coordinator/Teacher

Date

Principal

Date