

## FAQS

### **What are some tips on implementing a student-led assessment model?**

Allow the student to be actively involved in the assessment process by informing the student of the process beforehand. Students need a great deal of preparation prior to their IEP meeting. Simply asking what a student wants to do after graduation at the IEP meeting is not sufficient. Students can participate in collecting specific information about themselves by completing self-reports, participating in interviews, and conducting self-evaluations of their own progress using self-monitoring checklists and devices.

Another tip for implementing a student-led assessment model involves the use of person-centered planning approaches that consist of interviewing the student and the student interviewing people close to them to gather useful information for the transition plan. It is also critical to prepare students to use assessment information by participating in assessment and instructional activities regarding the IEP process, as this helps students feel more comfortable about expressing their own opinions at the meeting. Furthermore, share the results with the student. It is important that your students know how these results can help the team identify their preferences, interests, needs, and strengths and potentially improve their quality of life after high school.

### **How can I incorporate person-centered planning in the process?**

Person-centered planning approaches help students find their voice in the transition planning process, and provides opportunity to improve self-determination skills. There are many different person-centered planning approaches that can be used, such as Making Action Plans (MAPS) and Planning Alternative Tomorrows for Hope (PATH). These approaches follow specific instructional guidelines and procedures. While these are not specific assessments, these approaches can capture what the student desires for his/her future, and provide students with an on-going circle of support. Show students and family members the process with examples. Set aside a time with the student to formulate ideas of what he/she wants their future to look like, and review his/her assessment information. For more detailed information on person-centered planning approaches as it relates to student-involvement in the IEP and assessment, visit our ‘Developing a High-Quality Plan’ course, and check out the “Student-Led IEP lesson”.

### **How can I use Indicator 13 to guide transition assessment?**

Indicator 13 is the component of IDEIA 2004 that guides quality transition assessment and planning. This



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evaluates whether students' postsecondary goals are comprehensive, measurable, and based off of age-appropriate transition assessment. Indicator 13 is an eight-item checklist and includes things like "is there evidence that the measurable postsecondary goals were based on age-appropriate transition assessments (s)?" Teachers simply check yes or no to if there is evidence of these eight components. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) provides a great resource called the Indicator 13 checklist (<http://transitionta.org/transitionplanning>) that can help guide you in making each IEP individualized and comprehensive.

### **What strategies can I use to assess a student who is nonverbal?**

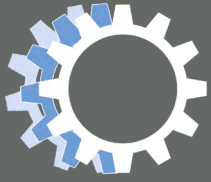
Make accommodations that meet the needs of the alternate mode of communication in which the student uses, such as the use of augmentative or alternative communication devices. Capitalize on their communicative strengths. For example, if your student has strong receptive communication skills, use an assessment that incorporates receptive identification and answering. Refer to our online assessment database to find assessments that may better accommodate communication deficits. In addition, check out our downloadable resource that shares tips on using accommodations/modifications with assessment.

### **What strategies can I use to assess a student with severe/multiple disabilities?**

It is important to incorporate strength-based assessments and approaches that can help the IEP team capitalize on existing strengths to further enhance and improve the outcomes of students with severe disabilities. Furthermore, it is equally critical to assess the preferences, interests, needs, and strengths of students with severe disabilities from multiple perspectives, particularly the family. Find assessments that specifically targeted students with more significant needs. Capitalize on the student's strengths when assessing, and use appropriate accommodations and modifications in the process. Visit our online assessment database to view some assessments specifically designed for youth with severe/multiple disabilities across several planning areas.

### **How do I incorporate families into transition assessment?**

Provide the family with checklists or observation forms to use in the home environment. Train families on scoring assessments and implementing assessments accurately. This can help understand behaviors that occur in all environments. Families provide the team with valuable information about home and community environments, goals, and future endeavors. Open communication pathways between yourself and your student's family. Take the family's cultural values into strong consideration and find out what the family's goals are for the



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student. It may be necessary to provide accommodations and assistive technology to allow for families to access assessments and be able to contribute fully without concerns of a language or cultural barrier. Family and student goals are very important in the transition process because they will be the ones who are integral in upholding the expectations after high school. Refer to our downloadable resource sharing tips on family involvement and the transition planning process.

### **How many assessment tools should I use?**

Assessment should be individualized, and each domain should be assessed using multiple forms of assessment tools based on the needs of that student. It is critical to use an abundance of assessment approaches (e.g., direct observation, interviews, standardized tests, situational assessments) when assessing students' preferences, interests, needs, and strengths. Our online assessment database provides a range of assessments available for use, the domains each assessment addresses as well as other components like costs, language, and different versions used.

### **Are there any assessments that can be used to assess multiple domains of transition?**

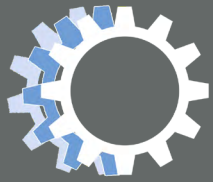
Yes, many transition assessments are used to assess multiple areas. Particularly, curriculum-based assessments, like the Brigance Transition Inventory Series provides teachers with a large set of assessments to choose from across many planning areas. For more, refer to our online assessment database to get a better idea of assessments that cover different domains. Can't find what you are looking for? Click the "I can't find what I'm looking for" button and provide the assessment domain you are seeking information on and our team will work to supply you with an assessment that meets your current needs.

### **How do I decide what accommodations need to be made in the assessment process?**

If a certain accommodation (e.g., extended time, visual supports, read aloud) is in your student's IEP, it should be incorporated throughout the assessment process. Use your general knowledge of the student and come up with ways to accommodate based on what you know about your student. If a portion of the assessment is not working well for the student, this is a good indicator that a different or revised accommodation/modification may be needed.

### **What if there is a language barrier working with the student and his/her family?**

It is critical that families explicitly understand each component of transition assessment. Simply ask the family what they need to better close the communication barrier gap. Always give the student and families information in their native language, this includes using a translator and changing receptive information to fit the family's



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linguistic needs. Using assessments that incorporate the student's native language can provide a clearer look into the student's areas of need. For more information on assessments using different languages, take a look at our online assessment database that provide assessments offered in different languages.

### **Who all needs to be involved in the assessment process?**

Professionals, like employers, related school personnel, teachers, families, vocational service providers, and of course, the student, should all be included in the assessment process. There should also always be a general education teacher and liaison present. Be sure to include the family and the student in making decisions on who should be present during the transition meeting. This not only involves conducting assessments, but sharing and interpreting assessment findings.

### **Where should I assess for each domain?**

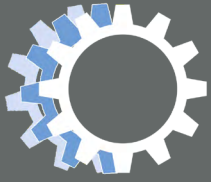
It's important to provide opportunities to learn new skills and periodically assess how these skills have developed over time. The first choice to consider when observing a student's new skills is to observe in the actual environment in which he/she will be performing the skill. If that is not possible, try and make artificial environments, like simulated job sites or grocery stores as closely aligned to the real environment. Much of what artificial environments have to offer cannot show a true picture of the demands of the actual environment and does not provide students with the opportunity to learn skills within a real-world setting. Only use this as the last resort when observing students' new skills.

### **What transition assessment timeframe is appropriate?**

Transition should be an ongoing and continuous process beginning at the age of 14. Good transition assessment is the foundation to understanding students' desires and supports needed for the transition to adulthood. Refer to our age-based/grade-based transition timeline as this illustrates best practices that should be addressed in the process.

### **What if my school doesn't have the assessment I want to use?**

Look into the resources that your entire district has. If the test is unavailable, many of them are available for purchase. Speak with your school representative about this or consider a close alternative that your district does have available. Also, many transition assessments are available for free online, as well as, data collection sheets, like checklists and task analyses! Visit our online assessment database which indicates the cost of each assessment with a link directing you to a site for purchase and/or free download. Remember if you can't find what you are



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looking for, click the “I can’t find what I am looking for button” and put in a request for an assessment.

### **Can a para-educator implement a transition assessment?**

Yes! Para-educators spend a lot of time with the student. They can assess student’s strengths and areas of need as well. Be sure to train the assistants, and any other professionals, to ensure procedures are being correctly administered and followed through. Be sure the teacher of record and IEP team, not the para-educator, are the ones to make any instructional decisions based on the information gathered.

### **How can I ensure that the transition assessments are age-appropriate?**

Observe tasks that other same-age peers without a disability are performing. Administer the assessment on a willing peer without a disability and check to see whether the results are measuring what they intended to. This can help to assess if the assessment is age-appropriate for the student in question.

### **Can I assess multiple students at a time?**

Yes, as long as the assessment process is individualized to meet each student’s needs. Some assessments are better suited to assess multiple students at a time.

### **At what age should I start the assessment process?**

The assessment process should begin no later than the age of 14, as is legally required in the state of Tennessee. Refer to our age-based/grade-based transition timeline as this illustrates best practices that should be addressed in the process.

### **What if my student has difficulty attending to assessments for long periods of time?**

Break the assessment into multiple days/chunks of time. Frequently provide reinforcement for participation in the process. Provide a contingency review before conducting the assessment and remind the student that it is important to give their best effort. Remember, this process is individualized and appropriate accommodations/modifications for your student should be a priority. Refer to the accommodations and modifications tip sheet as this provides more strategies for handling students with difficulty attending to assessments for extended periods of time.