Ongoing Transition Assessment

A Team Planning Guide

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

Realizing Employment First for Youth

What is Transition Assessment?

Transition Assessment is defined as an "…**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)" (Sitlington, Neubert, & LeConte, 1997; p. 70-71). Federal law requires "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills" IDEA (§300.320[b][1]).

Transition Assessment must be future focused – always looking at what the information means for the youth's future adult life. It is an ongoing and cyclic process of planning for, implementing, reviewing, and incorporating new data into the youth's transition and future adult plans.

What is the Goal of Transition Assessment?

The goal of Transition Assessment is to provide valid and **individualized data** for youth, families, and professionals to use as the basis of the decisions they make as a team for the youth's successful transition to adult environments. Transition Assessment and the resulting **Youth Profile** is used to identify adult outcomes and needed services and supports.

Planning for a youth's transition to adult life should answer three basic questions:

1. Where is the youth going?
2. Where is the youth presently?
3. How does the youth get there?

Questions 1 and 2 above are addressed in the Assessment process. Question 3 is addressed through the process to develop a coordinated plan.

What Tests are recommended for Transition Assessment?

Transition Assessment is **NOT** a test, a set of tests or a protocol of tests administered to all youth during pre-set time periods or at certain grade levels. Transition Assessment is an ongoing process individually tailored to a youth's needs. Assessment tools and strategies are chosen because they will yield information that **answers specific questions** about the youth's skills, interests, needs, preferences, resources, etc. in relation to the youth's desired adult outcomes.

A comprehensive Transition Assessment process will use some combination of the following **types of tools**, methods and strategies: Paper/pencil tests, web-based surveys, structured student and family interviews, community or work-based assessments (situational) and curriculum-based assessments.

These assessments or procedures come in two general formats – formal and informal. **Informal measures** may include interviews or questionnaires, direct observations, anecdotal records, environmental or situational analysis, curriculum-based assessments, interest inventories, preference assessments, and transition planning inventories. **Formal measures** include adaptive behavior and independent living assessments, aptitude tests, interest assessments, intelligence tests, achievement tests, personality or preference tests, career development measures, on the job or training evaluations, and measures of self-determination.

Who should participate in the Transition Assessment process?

All agencies require assessment processes to be completed for the people they serve, including transition youth. Therefore, it is a perfect opportunity for schools, community organizations, and adult **agencies to work together** with the youth and family to design and implement a plan for Transition Assessment. The information generated from Transition Assessment in many cases is the same information needed by adult serving agencies. Some information will help establish eligibility. Some information will help agencies know how to better serve the youth into adulthood.

The resulting Transition Assessment data provide a **foundation for a coordinated transition plan** implemented collaboratively by schools and agencies. This tool has been developed to assist multiagency teams in developing a collaborative plan for Transition Assessment.

When does Transition Assessment need to be completed?

Transition Assessment is **ONGOING!** It begins early in a youth's life, but no later than age 13. The cycle of Transition Assessment continues to guide the team's planning as the youth progresses and new questions to be answered are generated.

How does a team start to plan the Transition Assessment process for a youth?

Transition Assessment is planned through discussion by a multi-agency team. This Discussion Guide structures the process of planning Transition Assessment that is intended to answer five basic questions:

1. **Outcomes:** Where is the Youth going?
2. **Youth Profile:** Where is the Youth presently?
3. **Right Match:** How do the Youth's plans 'fit' with the Youth's Profile?
4. **More Details:** What other relevant Information and data is needed about the youth?
5. **Assessment Plan:** What assessment tools, methods, strategies will be used to answer the assessment questions?

Transition Assessment data is most useful when the youth's performance is referenced to demands of adult environments and skills expected in the workplace. When planned well, the same data should also provide educators with data referenced to academic and school contexts.

Transition Assessment is a bit like 'peeling an onion' – answering the first set of questions leads to the next, deeper layer of more questions. Spending time up front planning for Transition Assessment ultimately leads to a **more time and resource efficient process**. Because the questions originate in the information about a specific youth, the assessment process is tailored to the needs of the individual.

The **Youth Profile** that results from Transition Assessment provides critical information needed to 'tell the story' of how the youth's current skills and abilities relate, or compare to the level and types of skills needed to achieve his/her adult outcomes.

How is Transition Assessment used to develop a Coordinated Transition Plan?

After implementing the Assessment Plan to gather data, the team is ready to develop a Coordinated Transition Plan. Teams can start to develop a coordinated transition plan by asking questions such as these to address Question 3 (from p. 2) **'How does the youth get there?':**

- Is there a gap between current and needed future skills?
- If so, what (skills, experiences, agency linkages, etc.) are missing? What other data or information would be helpful?
- What needs to occur to narrow the gap?
- What type and level of services, support and instruction will be necessary?

A multi-agency team can represent a variety of school based and adult serving entities, each having their own required forms of documentation. The purpose of agency forms is to document that agency's compliance with federal and state requirements in making commitments to serve transition age youth. No single agency document serves as a 'coordinated transition plan'.

A companion tool to this Discussion Guide is the Backwards Planning template. The Backwards Planning template can be used to systematically identify needed activities, services, instruction and support that will assist to move a youth closer to his/her desired adult outcomes.

The Backwards Planning template is available as part of the Employment First Transition Framework materials.

Question One - OUTCOMES: **Where is the Youth Going?**	**Initial Planning Date:** **Date(s) Planning Epdated:**
What are the Youth's Plans? Begin by posing questions about what the youth is interested pursuing in his/her adult life. The answers to these questions may be vague and undefined. Or they may be specific and detailed. Or some combination of the two. At this point, capture what is known about the future adult life plans. Questions to facilitate discussion: Does the youth have preferred adult outcomes/goals? What does the youth plan to do as an adult? What are the adult goals related to working, learning and living? How will he/she • earn a living? • continue learning? • participate in the community and live?	**Adult Employment Outcome** **Adult Learning/ Continuing Education Outcome** **Adult Community Living / Independent Living Outcome**
What is the Team's knowledge about the community's expectation of the selected adult outcomes? The 'measuring stick' for Transition Assessment is adult demands and expectations. To view the youth's skill through an 'adult lens' teams may need to add to their own knowledge. Questions to facilitate discussion: • What skills, training is required for the type of work the youth desires? What academic background is necessary? • What personal, worker, social, communication, or other skills are needed? • What are the predicted labor market needs for the industry or business? • What are the salary/benefit expectations or impact? • What options are available for postsecondary education/training? • What self-determination/independence skills will the youth need? • What is necessary to achieve the type of adult living situation described?	**Team's Knowledge about the nature of the Youth's Adult Plans**

Question Two - YOUTH PROFILE: **Where is the Youth Presently?**	**Initial Planning Date:** **Date(s) Planning Epdated:**
What are the Youth's Preferences, Interests, Needs and Skills (PINS)? The Youth Profile provide critical information needed to 'tell the story' of how the youth's current skills and capacity relate, or compare, to the level and types of skills needed to achieve his/her adult life goals. Think about the knowledge and skills associated with the youth's outcomes. It is useful to identify and consider what is known about the youth in four broad categories: Questions to facilitate Discussion: • Preferences – what does youth like/dislike? Sensitivities. Motivations. People. Places. • Interests – things or areas that capture the attention of the youth, like to spend time doing, reading about, exploring, hobbies • Needs – can be similar to a preference. Types and intensity of supports, situations or environments when/where needed, needed to gain a skill, improve, areas such as academics, communication, and independence • Skills – what does the youth do well? Consider all types of skills- including those that may not be traditionally identified during assessment processes • Use current (within previous calendar year) assessment information - formal or informal – to help identify and describe the youth PINS • Start with what the team collectively knows about the youth. Organize the information into a Profile that describes the youth's PINS. Highlight information that can be used to show how the PINS connect to, support, influence, or challenge the youth's desired adult life goals.	**Youth Profile**

Question Three - RIGHT MATCH **How do the Youth's Future Plans 'Fit' with the Youth's Profile?**	**Initial Planning Date:** **Date(s) Planning Epdated:**
What are the potential 'gaps' or disconnects between the youth's skills NOW and the skills NEEDED? Based on what is known at this point, describe how the youth's current interests, skill set and supports match the demands of the intended adult life outcomes. Be sure to consider the skills and supports that will be required as an adult in those roles. Is there a skill gap that needs to be addressed in transition planning? Include questions to addressed through further assessment and ideas for instruction, supports, services, and experiences to be included in the youth's transition plan. Questions to facilitate discussion: • How do the adult goals make use of the youth's skills? • How do the environments in which these outcomes take place match with the youth's preferences? • How are the youth's needs able to be supported within these outcomes? • Does the targeted work, adult learning, living situation, community participation reflect the youth's interests? • Do these plans constitute an adult life that is valued by the youth/family? Is meaningful for the youth and family? • Related to intended adult outcomes, how do the youth's current skills compare with those needed to achieve the outcomes? • Is there a gap that will need to be addressed?v	**Information to Support a 'Right Match'**

Question Four - MORE DETAIL: **What other relevant information and data is needed about the youth?**	**Initial Planning Date:** **Date(s) Planning Epdated:**
What questions need to be explored with further assessment? By this point, the team will have discovered much information and may already have a place to begin with transition assessment. However, most teams also identify that additional information will improve and refine transition planning and the identification of services. Questions to facilitate discussion: • Does the team need more information about the youth's employability/worker skills, independent skills, "soft skills" transportation, health care, self-care, self-determination or any other aspect of the youth, his/her support system? • Is deeper or more formal data needed about youth's current skills and how these skills compare to what will be necessary to realize the adult outcomes? • Does current assessment need to be updated or extended? • What information is missing?`	**Identify questions/topics that need to be further assessed**
Some teams need more information about the intended adult goals in order to create a meaningful coordinated transition plan. Questions to facilitate discussion: • What skills, education, academics, training are required for the type of work the youth desires? • What personal, worker, social, communication, occupational or other skills are needed? • What are the predicted labor market needs for the industry or business reflected in the youth's goals? • What are the salary/benefit expectations or impact? • Desired postsecondary education/training options? Who provides and where/how is it available? • What self-determination and independence skills will the youth need? • What is necessary for the adult living situation described? • Are agency linkages/support necessary?	**Identify information the team needs about the intended outcomes**

Question Five - ASSESSMENT PLAN:
What assessment tools, methods and strategies will be used to answer the assessment questions?

Some types of Informal assessment measures:
- Interviews, questionnaires or surveys
- Direct observations
- Anecdotal records
- Environmental/situational analysis
- Curriculum-based assessments
- Interest inventories
- Preference assessments
- Transition planning inventories
- Community or work - based observations

Some types of formal measures:
- Adaptive behavior assessments
- Independent living assessments
- Aptitude tests
- Interest assessments
- Intelligence tests
- Achievement tests
- Personality or preference tests
- Career development measures
- On the job or training evaluations
- Measures of self-determination

Some domains to include for assessment:
- Assistive and mobile technology
- Self-care skills
- Employability skills
- Orientation and mobility, travel training
- Safety and Health care needs
- Mental health needs
- Communication skills and/or systems
- Orientation to the community
- Daily living skills
- Decision making/problem solving skills

What does the team need to know? (Question Four Information)	Tools/methods to be used/ considered to answer the question	Who is responsible for collecting the information?	When will information be collected?	When will information be reported to team?	What answers were discovered?
1.					Date: Update Plan Information
2.					Date: Update Plan Information
3.					Date: Update Plan Information
4.					Date: Update Plan Information
5.					Date: Update Plan Information

Once the assessment data is gathered, the multi-agency team is ready to develop the youth's coordinated transition plan. Use the Backwards Planning template to develop a comprehensive plan in a single easy-to-follow document.

Question Five - ASSESSMENT PLAN:

What assessment tools, methods and strategies will be used to answer the assessment questions?

Some types of Informal assessment measures:

- Interviews, questionnaires or surveys
- Direct observations
- Anecdotal records
- Environmental/situational analysis
- Curriculum-based assessments
- Interest inventories
- Preference assessments
- Transition planning inventories
- Community or work - based observations

Some types of formal measures:

- Adaptive behavior assessments
- Independent living assessments
- Aptitude tests
- Interest assessments
- Intelligence tests
- Achievement tests
- Personality or preference tests
- Career development measures
- On the job or training evaluations
- Measures of self-determination

Some domains to include for assessment:

- Assistive and mobile technology
- Self-care skills
- Employability skills
- Orientation and mobility, travel training
- Safety and Health care needs
- Mental health needs
- Communication skills and/or systems
- Orientation to the community
- Daily living skills
- Decision making/problem solving skills

What does the team need to know? (Question Four Information)	Tools/methods to be used/considered to answer the question	Who is responsible for collecting the information?	When will information be collected?	When will information be reported to team?	What answers were discovered?
6.					Date: Update Plan Information
7.					Date: Update Plan Information
8.					Date: Update Plan Information
9.					Date: Update Plan Information
10.					Date: Update Plan Information

Once the assessment data is gathered, the multi-agency team is ready to develop the youth's coordinated transition plan. Use the Backwards Planning template to develop a comprehensive plan in a single easy-to-follow document.