

Transition Planning

Transition planning is essential for many exceptional students. There are many transitions during a student's education. These include:

- Transition into school (sometimes called entry to school)
- Daily transitions between activities
- Year to Year transitions
- Transition from elementary to secondary school, and
- Transition from secondary school to work, further education and/or community living

Ministry of Education regulation 181/98 and the IEP Standards require that boards develop a transition plan for students at age 14. The ministry has developed a document to assist boards in this process: *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)*.

Successful transition involves the participation of teachers and other school staff, parents, the student, as well as community organizations, when indicated.

Entry to school:

Some students with special needs received early intervention services prior to school entry. The Ministry of Education has prepared a Resource Guide, **Supporting Entry to School (2005)**. Transition protocols have been developed with some of these initiatives (e.g., the preschool speech and language services, Toronto Partnership for Autism Services (TPAS). TCDSB has developed an intake process to ensure that there is a smooth transition for students.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is also one of sixteen boards participating in a ministry demonstration project, *Connections for Students*. The Collaborative Service Delivery Model for Students with ASD is focused on ensuring a smooth transition for students receiving intensive behaviour intervention (IBI) services through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to full time school. Transition teams are established six months ahead of discharge from IBI, and students are followed on a regular basis until six months after discharge. TCDSB is collaborating with the School Support Program at Surrey Place Centre to implement this demonstration project.

Transition from elementary to secondary school:

Ministry regulation 181/98 and the IEP Standards require that boards develop a transition plan for students at age 14. The ministry has developed a document to assist boards in this process: *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)*.

Within TCDSB, planning takes place between elementary and secondary schools to ensure effective transition planning for exceptional students. This involves a variety of activities and strategies, such as exchange of information meetings, parent evenings and school visits.

Exceptionality Specific Transition Planning:

Autism Spectrum Disorders:

In recognition of the challenges that students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) have with transitions, TCDSB has initiated a transition to high school service for students with ASD. The service includes workshops, specialized transition resources for students with ASD, parent information sessions and school visits prior to high school. Workshops are also held with elementary, secondary staff and parents. An instructional DVD has been developed about this initiative. TCDSB works in partnership with the School Support Program at Surrey Place Centre to deliver this service. Ongoing evaluation of the transition process is incorporated into service planning.

Learning Disabilities:

Successful transition of students with learning disabilities to secondary school has been facilitated by:

- At the individual student level by APTs, PATs and other Joint Team members working jointly with the student, schools, staff and parents.
- At the school board level through offering a half-day workshop to teachers and parents of grade 7-8 students of learning disabilities and with the students themselves. The purpose of the workshop is to provide information on the secondary system, expectations and requirements for students, and strategies and skills necessary for success (organization and time management skills, self-advocacy skills). The importance of home school partnership is also highlighted.

Transition from School to Work or Further education

Planning for exceptional students takes place at the school level through co-op placements, involvement of the Guidance Department. The system level supports are provided through the support of the Post Secondary Transition Service.

Post Secondary Transitional Services:

Service is provided to parents and teachers of special needs students in collaboration with any existing community support services which might be in place. The purpose of the service is:

- to ensure that each student accesses appropriate government funding sources;
- to build a lifetime community support network for each student;
- to ensure each student has appropriate, quality post-21 programming in place upon
- graduation.

a) *Government Funding Sources:*

- SSAH to enhance skills development using the community as an extension of the classroom;
- ODSP to ensure a lifetime quality standard of living

b) *Community Support Network:*

- families are assisted with access to community based Social Workers and appropriate services to prepare for and assure the continuation of quality living after their child has graduated from the school system;
- families are assisted with access to appropriate recreation and leisure activities within their child's home community for an ongoing healthy lifestyle.

Post 21 programming:

- while in school, all students are encouraged to participate in Co-operative Education or work experience commensurate with their individual abilities in order to determine the most appropriate post-21 setting;
- students demonstrating skills for the workforce are introduced to Employment Training programs
- students requiring a more sheltered and protective environments are introduced to life skills and in-house training programs.
- Coordination also takes place with the adult service system, Developmental Services Toronto (DST), to ensure that students and families are connected with appropriate supports.