



Secondary Transition in Illinois

A One-Page Fact Sheet for Families

What is Secondary Transition?

Secondary transition is the process of preparing students with disabilities for life after high school. It includes planning for further education or training, employment, independent living, and community participation. In Illinois, transition planning should begin by age 14½ and be updated yearly through the IEP.

Key Facts Families Should Know

- Transition planning is required under IDEA and must be included in the IEP.
- The transition plan should be based on the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs.
- The IEP should include measurable postsecondary goals (education/training, employment, and independent living if needed).
- Schools may provide transition services such as job exploration, work-based learning, and self-advocacy instruction.
- Students may pursue inclusive college options with supports, including programs highlighted through Think College.

Questions Families Can Ask at IEP Meetings

- What are my student's goals for life after high school (work, education, independent living)?
- What transition assessments have been completed and what do they tell us?
- What skills does my student need to build over the next year?
- What classes, activities, or work experiences will support these goals?
- How will my student practice self-advocacy and decision-making?
- What adult agencies should be invited (DRS, college disability services, community providers)?
- What will happen after graduation, and what supports will end or change?

Helpful Resources for Illinois Families

Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR) – Secondary Transition

parentcenterhub.org

NTACT: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

transitionta.org

Think College (College options for students with intellectual disability)

thinkcollege.net

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) – Secondary Transition Resources

isbe.net

Illinois Center on Transition and Work (ICTW)

ictw.illinois.edu

Quick Tips for Families

- Start early and revisit the transition plan every year.
- Encourage your student to attend and participate in IEP meetings.
- Ask for real-world experiences: job shadowing, community activities, and work-based learning.
- Keep copies of evaluations, IEPs, and transition plans for future adult service applications.