



Transition Timeline: Age 14½ to Graduation

Planning for Life After High School (Illinois Students)

Age 14½ – 15 (Freshman Year)

Start Planning Early

- Transition planning begins in the IEP
- Identify strengths, interests, and preferences
- Create a One-Page Profile
- Explore careers and postsecondary options

Supports to Know:

- Learn about DRS (Division of Rehabilitation Services)
- Begin discussing PUNS (waitlist for adult services) with family

Age 15 – 16 (Sophomore Year)

Explore & Build Skills

- Take career interest surveys
- Participate in job shadows or volunteer work
- Build daily living and communication skills
- Practice self-advocacy (speak in IEP meetings)

Important Steps:

- Make sure you are on the PUNS list (if needed)
- Connect with school transition staff

Age 16 – 17 (Junior Year)

Get Real Experience

- Apply for DRS services
- Develop a postsecondary goal (job, college, training)
- Participate in work experiences (paid/unpaid)
- Learn workplace expectations

Build Independence:

- Practice transportation skills
- Manage schedule and responsibilities
- Learn about money and budgeting

Age 17 – 18 (Senior Year)

Finalize Your Plan

- Confirm graduation pathway (diploma/transition program)
- Apply for college, training programs, or jobs
- Connect with adult service agencies
- Update resume and practice interviews

Critical Connections:

- Work with DRS counselor on employment plan
- Update PUNS information annually

Before Graduation

Prepare for Adult Life

- Know how to request accommodations (college/work)
- Gather important documents (ID, records, IEP, medical info)
- Understand healthcare and supports
- Identify your support system

For Students with Higher Support Needs

- Ensure PUNS enrollment is current and accurate
- Explore residential/day program options
- Plan for guardianship or alternatives (if needed)
- Connect with adult service providers early

For Students with Lower Support Needs

- Practice independent decision-making
- Learn to request accommodations independently
- Explore college disability services
- Build job and career skills

Key Reminders

- ✓ Start early and update your plan every year
- ✓ You are the center of your transition plan
- ✓ Use your voice—your goals matter

Bottom Line

Transition planning is a step-by-step process. The earlier you start, the more prepared you will be for life after high school.

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