



Special Connections

A newsletter connecting our Special Kids, Families and Schools

TRANSITION IN CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD: MAPPING A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

WHAT IS TRANSITION?

The transition process in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is a continuous and collaborative process of moving from school to adulthood. Transition planning is a map of the student's vision for his/her future developed by the student, family members, school personnel, adult service providers, and agencies.

Transition planning is learning about school and community resources. Initiated by the school, transition meetings focus on designing a program that identifies the resources available to meet the post-secondary goals of student and family.

All students need support as they prepare for independence. Transition planning is critical in providing students with disabilities and their families with the knowledge to empower them to successfully chart their future.

WHAT ARE TRANSITION SERVICES?

Cypress-Fairbanks approaches transition services as a set of activities/services designed to act as a compass to assist the student in moving successfully from school to post-secondary life. The needs, interests, and preferences of the student determine the services a student qualifies to receive. Specific activities/services may include instruction, employment, post-secondary education, housing, transportation, recreation and leisure, reaching age of majority, and physical and mental health needs.

WHAT DOES TRANSITION START?

Every Cypress-Fairbanks student and family has dreams about what the future holds. Discussion of these dreams and plans for the future should be ongoing in the family setting and at school throughout the student's school career.

In Cypress-Fairbanks, beginning in the sixth grade, transition planning will address the student's secondary and post-secondary goals. In high school, an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) will be developed. At least annually, transition meetings are held to review the student's transition plan. In high school, as graduation becomes a reality, adult service providers, agencies, and post-secondary education representatives should be involved in the planning process.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN TRANSITION?

A multidisciplinary collaborative team that includes:

- Student
- Parents / Guardians
- Teachers
- Vocational representative
- Counselor
- Adult service representatives
- Post-secondary education representatives

Cypress-Fairbanks parents and/or the student are encouraged to bring relevant information, resources, and invite other participants who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student.

HOW CAN STUDENTS PREPARE FOR TRANSITION PLANNING?

- ✓ Identify interests through academic subjects he/she enjoys and develop hobbies
- ✓ Think beyond high school to post-secondary education and employment
- ✓ Become familiar with career cluster areas that "fit" with his/her interests
- ✓ Identify areas of strengths and needs, learning preferences, and work habits
- ✓ Talk to family members, teachers, counselors, and friends about goals after graduation
- ✓ Develop an employment resume
- ✓ Gather information about colleges and/or technical schools
- ✓ Assist in identifying and setting goals for school
- ✓ Complete a four-year plan

HOW CAN PARENTS PREPARE FOR TRANSITION PLANNING?

- ✓ Complete and return the parent survey sent home from the school (middle school/high school)
- ✓ Discuss plans for the future with your son/daughter
- ✓ Set goals for yourself and your son/daughter for post-graduation life
- ✓ Assist your son/daughter in identifying areas of strengths and needs, learning preferences, and work habits
- ✓ Assist you son/daughter in gathering information on career clusters and post-secondary education options

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

- Your child's special education teacher
- Mike Mize - Cy-Fair ISD Transition and Family Services Coordinator
- Or any state agency listed below

The ABC's of Parental Preparation for an ARD Meeting

By Ginger Sewell

Always prepare for your child's ARD meeting. **B**e prepared to discuss strengths/challenges/goals and placement. **C**ommunicate with your child/spouse about items they want discussed. **D**etermine two/three goals that are important to you for your child. **E**xamine current educational/ medical records that might need to be discussed. **F**ind someone to go with you if you feel uncomfortable going alone. **G**ive copies of any new information that you might have to the school. **H**ave a clear idea of what you need to have discussed. **I**nquire if you have any questions. **J**ot down items that you want to remember. **K**now your child's strengths. **L**earn all that you can about your child. **M**aintain notes, IEPs, and other educational records in chronological order. **N**otify the school if you are bringing others. **O**ptimism is always helpful. **P**ositively communicate with the school. **Q**uestion whatever you do not understand. **R**emember that advocating doesn't have to be adversarial. **S**eek information about your child's disability. **T**eamwork is the best approach. **U**tilize support groups. **V**isualize a successful meeting. **W**illingly listen in the ARD. **E**Xamine your child's records thoroughly. **Y**ou are your child's most important teacher. **ZZZ** get a good nights rest knowing that you are properly prepared for your child's next ARD meeting.

Ginger Sewell is the parent of a young adult with a disability and a former Director of Special Education. Currently an educational consultant, she is the recipient of both the Parent of the Year and Professional of the Year awards from the Learning Disabilities Association.

School Notes

SpecialConnections Newsletters can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.cfishd.net/dept2/curricu/speced/specialconnections.htm>

UPCOMING FEATURES

Tips and resources for parents to help with reading improvement, and maintain reading interest during the summer months.

STATE AGENCIES PROVIDING SERVICES FOR POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION

Texas Commission for the Blind (TBC) – 512-377-0500 or 1-800-252-5204, TDD 713-880-8002
Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TCDHH) – 512-407-3250, TTY 512-407-3251
Texas Department of Health (TDH) – 1-888-963-7111, 512-458-7111, TDD 512-458-7708
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) – 512-475-3800
Texas Department of Human Services (THC) – 1-888-834-7406, TDD 1-888-425-6889
Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR) – 713-970-7070, TTY 1-800-735-2989
Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) – 1-800-252-2400, 512-438-4800
Texas Education Agency (TEA) – 512-463-9734
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) – 512-427-6127
Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) – 512-424-6700
Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) – 713-334-1613
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) – 1-800-735-2988, TDD 1-800-735-2989
Texas Youth Commission (TYC) – 512-424-613